

Northern Lights '05

University of Wisconsin-Marquette
Arts Journal

The Beginning of the End
by Carol Warden

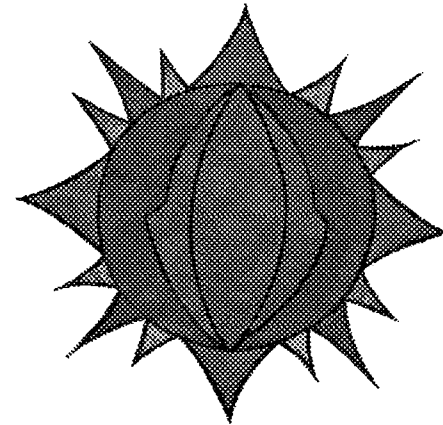
The sky lights beautifully
Into the sunset
All the trees
Are singing the swansong

Time for another day to end
As night begins.
Let the mountains go to sleep
Let the animals sleep in peace.

As for me
I'll stay awake
And wait for a beginning
Of a new day.

Northern Lights

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Untitled by Beth Millner

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Contributors

Guzal Azamatova
Brian Cashen
Melissa Cornman
Ernesto De La Rosa
Gabriella Derusha
Paul Erdman
Edward Gerber
Meghan Hansen
Jenna Heemstra
Art Holman
Gary Karman (GJK)
Kelly Kunya
Justin LaCrosse
James LaMalfa

Tony LaMalfa
Brian Lewis
Morgan Marotz
Beth Millner
Jin-Woo Nam
Richard B. Peterson
Lacey Schnurer
Jennifer Stolpa
Paul Toepke
Carol Warden
Keith West
Becky Williamson
Todd Wydeven
Annagul Yaryeva

Cover Art: Old World Wisconsin Times by Ernesto De La Rosa

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Editorial Committee: Katherine Holman and Jennifer Stolpa, co-chairs; Maureen Molle, Jane Oitzinger, James LaMalfa, Gabriella Derusha, Gary Karman and Lara Brendemihl. Thanks also are due to Connie Scofield and the library staff for their assistance in collecting submissions.

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Stroke his head,
Slip onto his back and disappear
Into the sweet June woods,
Into the cathedral of a northern forest,
Still haunted by my dreams
Of your golden yellow form
Sliding through magenta twilight.

I'll leave our raging, cacophonous culture behind
For a better place
That exists
Only in the mind.



Untitled by James LaMalfa

Long Time Passing

by James LaMalfa

Gleaming swift yellow bullet,
 You have carried us through failing times,
When children played with broken china and shattered hopes,
 Their fathers selling apples for a dime
On street corners,
 Their mothers working sweat shops,
Fingers shaking with fatigue.

You never hesitated,
 Your white-hot diesel heart
Beat steadily,
 Carrying us north,
To Oz, to Shang-gri-la
 Where air was clean and good to breathe,
Men spoke in quiet confidence,
 Women walked with dignity.

The water ran clear, like crystal,
 The woods green and mysterious,

We rode you through the choking industrial night,
 Hoping desperately for a way out of hard times.

Better times came with a price,
 Came with the shriek of bombs at Pearl,
Brought a war that killed so many.

You carried brown-clad men away to distant lands
 Brought them or the flagged draped coffins home.

Two decades after the war
 we turned our backs on you.

Mesmerized, like spoiled children
 with new shiny toys,
our personal magic carpets
 across America.

The trains don't come here any more,
 Their sky brothers falter and fall,
Our roads are choked with monstrous chitinous beetles.
Someday all the motors will stop
 And I'll go north again.

Perhaps I'll find a gentle pony,

of gods and mortals

by GJK

cloudy night.
a murky gathering of wind
in the darkness between bare branches
of aspen and oak. brisk inhalation
of crisp cold air.

a sinuous banshee melody haunts
the empty spaces above.

Orion treads stealthily through the firmament.
the hunter threads his bow with malice
and envy lurking in his shimmering
and treacherous heart.

he looses a diamond arrow
into the vastness of heaven
and pierces the breast of Venus

as Mars sings
a war-cry of assent

and vengeance hardens in the hearts
of bereaved gods and grief-stricken mortals.

The River
by Brian Lewis

I sat on my dock overlooking the beautiful river. The birds were a barber-shop quartet singing in supreme consonance. An explosion of green along the shoreline as the trees' metabolic waste became my olfactory delight. I opened my canister of worms I had just picked, squinting away the vibrant rays of the sun. The worm cunningly tried to squirm through my fingers, but I expertly caught him with my thumb and forefinger and gently slipped him on the hook. I tossed the line into the river and waited. To the untrained eye, this expanse of the river was tranquil, sedentary. However, I knew of the dynamic aspect: life booming endlessly as far as my vision reached. My gaze settled on a pair of green frogs dancing near the river shore, when my mind got to thinking about the gold mine that was to be erected near this area. I had heard many perspectives on this new development. Some townfolk, mostly riverside denizens like me, do not trust the mine and its likely unsanitary practices. Some people cite added jobs as the prime benefit for building the mine. Me, I just want this river to stay alive. I mused a little longer but was satisfyingly interrupted when I received a tug on my line. It was a whopper all right.

Some months later, I sat on my dock overlooking the river, pole in water. This once small, friendly town had been overtaken by a sudden rise of commerce. The bureaucrats in this city were no doubt shaking each others' hands. The factions of people who opposed the mine, who sent out petitions, and who marched in parades speaking out against the mine, were beaten. I supposed I should have helped, should have risen up with my riverside brethren so that this mine could have been run out of our town. Although, I thought, one man could not possibly make much difference. Besides, now my brother has a great job at the mine, and I still have my river. Everyone is happy. Everyone wins. I sat until the red sun disappeared over the western horizon, but never received a bite.

Some years later, I sat on my dock, my head buried in hands. I cursed the empty river and the searing sun that seemed to be mocking me. The destitute plant life on the shoreline seemed to no longer be competing for sunlight. The mine was long gone. It had extracted the treasures of the earth to the fullest degree, and the mine, once majestically reigning over this city, had been transformed into a worthless relic. Many jobs were destroyed. My brother had to leave town. I slowly turned an earthworm through my fingers, wondering if it was worth it to put it on the hook. Sometimes I can manipulate my imagination and pretend the fish just aren't biting today or I'm using the wrong bait, anything but the reality of the situation. I sighed and placed the languid earthworm back on the ground. "Go home," I muttered. I realized that was a good idea for me too, as the sun was once again making its descent behind the sky. I turned to look at the silent river, raped of all its life, and plopped down on the nearest rock. I stayed there until dawn...weeping...thinking, "What have we done...?"

He began to talk to himself, "When did it begin? Only now, two years ago or maybe ten years ago? No, it can't be."

He is dying. His mind says, "I want to die," but his heart beats the rhythm of words, "Why do you need to die?" He refuses hope and life. He refuses everything that surrounds him.

The pictures of his life begin to fly with convulsive frequency in his mind. He feels something touch his lips. Tears! Is he really crying? So, anyway, nobody is watching him, and he can cry. His heart furiously beats the last moments of his life. He really does not care what will happen next. Maybe his body will be eaten by wild animals, or people will bury him as a Christian. It does not matter. He is going there where it is always warm, quiet, and he needn't fight for his life. Last breath, last beat of heart, and...he looks down at his body lying on the ground; it looks like a baby. He feels better. Now he can fly. Light is calling him upwards and it is waving its hand to him. What a wonderful light!

"Fly to it! Forget everything that connected you with this world. You don't need it. You are not lonely. There are ones like you. They are white, glimmering, and loving everything around them. They were always there; you just did not notice them before. Remember, you are not lonely!"



The Blue Shed by Morgan Marotz

the wheels of his truck, after his older son was killed during the war, after his lovely daughter married a drunkard and died because of his constant beating her, after his little sonny died because of tuberculosis. He was so lonely in the first minutes of his dear's wreck. Now he doesn't care. It was so long ago, but it still hurts. This night he is alone and he does not want to die. There is only a little fire heating him up. He remembers that he was as hot, hasty and bright as this fire. Now, everything has changed. Now he is cold, dull, and tired. Time passes, and people are changed. The loss of close people changes many things not only in life but in one's soul, as well. And it changed a lot of things in his soul.

"But it doesn't matter."

...It was a cold winter night. That night was the most horrible night in his life. He could not see anything around. Absolutely nothing! Only his truck's lights lit a snowy road a little bit. He could see only a couple of feet of road in front of him. He wanted to smoke. He knew that he shouldn't have been distracted, but it was so cold, and he needed to warm himself with his cigarettes. Nobody was on the road. Who was expected to leave the house during such bad weather on a dark night? He bent to take his pack of Marlboros and then...looking at the road he saw a woman. She was right in the middle of his way. He couldn't stop his truck and then...the bloody body of his wife was in his hands. Why was she there? Why couldn't he help smoking that night? He couldn't cry. He cursed that night, road, and truck. He was lying on the road and just looked into the opened eyes of his wife. What did he want to read in her dead eyes? Hope was still beating in his heart...

Cold night. Tonight it's very cold. Cold wants to creep into his very heart. He feels the cold reaching underneath his clothes touching his breast and crawling further and further. Night is like a snowy queen, and she is ready to kill. Why does she want to do it? She likes to take heat and life from people and she lives with it. He wants to live too and moves closer to the fire. He feels that the cold is going away, and his fingers begin to feel the heat of fire. The pain makes him draw them back. He looks at the flickering flame and a little smoke streaming to the very tops of high pines. He begins to remember his past.

"But I don't want to remember anything."

He drives his thoughts away. He wants to forget everything that connected him with people. It is good to be alone. He needs nothing but his fire and coming morning.

Sunrise appears on the horizon. He is still alive. He does not believe it! Dew flows from his boots. He feels cold; his body is covered with the dew of cold sweat, and he is shivering. The fire starts to die and asks him to help. This fire saved him; now he should save it. But his body does not follow his thoughts. It is so hard. He wants to help, but he cannot. It hurts. He feels like a baby himself. Anyway, a baby at least can move his hands, and he cannot even do this. He feels tired and wants to fall asleep. He cannot do this either. It is cold. The frost goes through his body reaching into his heart. The fire lets its last breath out and dies. That's sad. His hope leaves him and he is dying. He doesn't want to die and feels that his heart doesn't want that either. His mind thinks in another way.

we remain animals

by GJK

we are what civilization has made us –
gap-toothed beggars
slumped on sidewalks scarred
by agony

mottled with
putrid froth of vomit and sweet wine

swindlers who slither
on blistered feet
from lie to lie
sniffing out with predatory snouts
the next unwary lump of flesh
to disembowel.

in spite of our pretentiousness
and fallacious civility
our fantasies are sewn together
with spurious nobility

and we remain animals
with no recourse
but to eat or be eaten.

... we are engulfed
by malicious hunger
that feasts of blood and bone
cannot sate.



Half-blind by Ernesto De La Rosa

White Wolf

by Annagul Yaryeva

The moon was lighting the street. A dense air was turning into a heavy fog which made it hard for her to breathe. Hiding behind the trash cans she squeezed herself, rolled into a ball to avoid sharp sounds and cold wind. Her body was shaking, and it seemed that in a few more minutes it would be broken into thousands of fragments. She was tightly closing her ears, clenching her eyes, but his scream penetrated into her brain as if a cold knife were cutting her heart.

She heard how her brother was beaten, kicked, tortured. There were so many of them, many hungry grey wolves craving for human blood, sufferings, and pain. They were plunging their dirty claws into his body, scratching his face, arms, legs, his skin, his soul. She could not move. "Animals, animals, animals," she whispered swallowing salty tears.

In a few minutes, screams and sounds of kicks faded away, but she could hear her brother moaning. She slowly stuck out her head and saw a figure lying on asphalt curving like a serpent suffering from the pain. Slowly, she started crawling towards her brother's body. In the darkness, she stumbled on a sharp little rock; pausing for only one second because of the sudden pain, she continued crawling towards him. Finally, as she reached him, she lay near, tenderly embracing his leg with her little arms; she closed her eyes and whispered: "I am sorry. I am sorry." She fell asleep.

Loud sounds of cars and hunger woke her. Her anxious eyes were wandering around in search of her brother. He was sitting near, leaning his head on the wall. Sunlight came through the cracks of the wall and she could perfectly see him. She saw his face covered with bruises.

She realized that for him it was even hard to sit; she saw how his upper lip was nervously twitching every time he tried to inhale a new sip of air. He would not open his eyes; swollen eyelids pressed with their heaviness. Under the torn shirt she saw his shoulders scratched and bloody. His fingers and hands were covered with dark spots that were the burns of cigarettes. She was looking at him and new fear slowly grew in her little body. A stream of bitter tears fell from her eyes. She rose up and sat near him. Her body was aching since it was not the first time she and her brother had to spend on the street. Cold asphalt became their bed; bricks and rocks were now their pillows.

"Do not cry," he said quietly in a husky voice. His voice sounded like rusty strings tearing her ears.

"I am not crying," she whispered back sniffing. She embraced her knees and her body began swinging. She could not control it.

"I can hear you crying; I can feel your tears," he said turning his head towards her.

"We need to run away. They did it last night, and they will do it again. Do you hear me?" she asked with sadness in her voice.

"But where can we run? We cannot run away. They are everywhere. You do not understand."

"I wanted to help you; I wanted to save you...." Screaming, she let her tears flow.

"No, you did the right thing. They would hurt you as they hurt me. You did

Loneliness

by Guzal Azamatova

Crack of branches and rustle of leaves under his feet helped him to think. How long did he walk? A day or two days? Why is it so important to go somewhere, to find a place in his life? Why can't he just stop and stay in one place instead of roaming? Life is so complicated. Somebody lives happily and somebody else gets the worst from his life. It's unjust! Nobody asks him to roam nor makes him go, and nobody interferes in his life. He inserted unbearable conditions into his life by himself.

He wants to stop and look around—everything is so wonderful!

"Why don't I stop? Why? Do I really like to hear how branches crackle under my feet? Yes, I like it..."

He tries to smile but he cannot. He thinks that life does not like him, but it does not mean that he must not like it, as well.

"I should revenge my life and live freely in spite of the boredom of my life. Loneliness is not a limit of my distressful existence."

The sun has already gone down, but he does not care. It's very pleasant to observe how night gets into its possession.

"Especially it's good when somebody is with me."

But nobody is with him, only loneliness occupies the biggest part of his heart. Nothing is left except this horrible word—loneliness. Loneliness, one, alone—these words will always be in his mind.

"But I can come back to my town, my little house... No, there is nothing except a neglected soul. It is better to roam than sit in the armchair and remember that there were my children, wife, and close friends. I am lonely but I got used to it. My relatives went under, and I accused all the people of it. They were guilty that I lost my happy life. They killed my dreams about a big future. Of course, roaming I can accuse only others. But if I think? No, I don't want to think. Never..."

He stops. He feels that his legs are so weak. Maybe it is because of the long walking. It wasn't like this before. He got old. He needs only quiet and rest. He wishes to lie in the hot water in the bath tub, watch a movie with his grandkids, and drink coffee with his lovely wife. But this will never be again. His legs hurt. He needs to lie down somewhere and have a rest. He wants quiet. This is the first sign of becoming old. In his position it is better to die, but he wants to prove to all the people that he can live alone, without them.

Suddenly he sees a light. It is a fire!

"There can't be any fire. There can't be any people. It's a mirage! But I should go there."

His legs do not follow him. Light begins to grow, and a real fire appears in front of him. How pleasant to sit near it in the evening! Nothing is around – only emptiness. He looks around but he cannot see anything. He has gone into the kingdom of a dark night. Silence! Birds are not singing; crack of branches is not heard. Nothing to hear. He got used to the loneliness after his wife died under

two heads bowed
fingers flying fervently
over the keys
a glimmer of magic
shines in their eyes
two poets
hunched over their machines
renewing their vows
to the muse.

d.(1)/d.(2)
by GJK

she takes up
another stone
places it on her bent
shoulder, stoops forward
a little more to balance
the weight. always
she is doing this
inexplicable thing—
bearing others' burdens.
one thing i know
for certain—she
is a better person
than i.
my shoulders are
too thin—
wretchedly
horribly thin—
to do what she does.

*she takes up
another stone
her shoulder sinking
her frame straining forward
to balance the weight.
she is always doing this,
bearing burdens for others.
she carries so much
that does not belong to her
laboring faithfully
often thanklessly
and i am mystified
by her tenacity.*

*under such a weight
i would stagger
topple
fall broken
to the ground.*

when i try to analyze
the difference
between us
my only conclusion
is that she knows how to
love
much better than i.

the right thing. You listened to me.”

“Yes, that is why we need to run away.”

“Where will we run? They will find us.”

“I know and I am scared, I am scared. They can kill us,” she repeated.

“No, they will not. They are cowards. They hurt people but they do not...”

“Why are they doing it to us? They do not know us. They act like crazy animals; they are not humans; they are not.”

“Yes, they act and look like gray, angry, cruel, hungry wolves, but they are cowards.”

“Will they kill us? I am scared, we are alone.”

“No, don't say that. We can also be wolves, but we are the white wolves. And, we are not alone. Don't you know, there are other wolves, like you and me, many other white wolves, like you and me, we are not alone. They will save us.”

“But where are they? Why don't they come? Why do they let us be hurt?”

“Because, because,” he was trying to find an answer. “White wolves are only wolf-cubs. They have to grow up, we need to grow up, and then we will save each other.”

“But that can be too late. Those cruel gray animals, those people will come back and eat us alive. I am so scared.” Emotions were overwhelming her.

“Lena, I do not recognize you. You were never afraid of anything,” he said, coughing.

“But I am afraid now. I do not want you to die. I do not want us to die,” she answered. “I am so cold and I am so hungry. Why did our parents leave us?” She could not hold it in and started crying again.

“I am scared too. I am scared for you. You grew up too fast. You understand everything, but you have to understand that if we will be scared we will be destroyed.”

“Do you remember Fili?” he asked her, slowly opening his eyes and staring right at her.”

“Yes, I remember her, I miss her, I miss my kind little dog.”

“I do, too, but do you remember her puppies? She had beautiful little puppies, six of them and five all were different dark colors.”

“Yes, they were so little and so vivid.”

“Yes, they were and only one of them was white with brown a spot on his back; he looked very different.”

“Yes, remember how we used to laugh saying that it was you who spilled chocolate milk on his back, and that is how he got that spot.”

“Yeah, I remember that, but do you remember that he was the only one like that? And yet, he was the strongest, the most beautiful little puppy.”

“Yes,” she answered smiling.

“I and you are those white puppies who will grow stronger,” he said to her waiting for some reaction on her face.

“We will?” she asked anxiously.

“Yes, we just need to wait. Just a little bit of time,” he answered, closing his eyes again.

“You know, once I had a dream. I saw that I was running on the keys of piano. I was running fast, and the music was following me as I spread my wings and flew high into the sky. I was flying, flying, flying high in the sky. If we had wings, we could fly away and those gray wolves, those cruel people, would never be able to catch us.”

"You are right," he said with pity in his voice, "but here, on earth, we have to be wolves to survive."

"Do you still feel pain?" she asked him.

"No, the pains fade away, but one of them kicked me in my chin, and I still feel the footprint of his boot."

She rose up on her knees, leaned towards him, bent down and kissed him on his head. He opened his eyes and she saw that his sky-colored eyes, which used to be so bright and sparkling, had a shroud of pain and exhaustion.

"I love you, Tima. You are my strong white wolf," she said hugging him, and kissing his head.

He nervously trembled awaiting the pain but felt only the touch of her warm lips. That warmth, flourishing as a flower under the sun, ran over his body and stopped in his soul.

Distant Memories

by Brian Cashen

The distant memory of your head on my chest
My skin tingling under your subconscious caress
Heart thumping and racing, yet strangely at rest
And will I ever feel it again after it is gone

Is it borrowed or given
Are we searching or driven
Is it an aberration or vision?
Or do we long for it just once more in our twilight years,
After we realize we've squandered the dawn

Wallowing in the moonlit glow of our impetuous past
Accepting the probability that the dreams of our youth weren't meant to last
Left wondering, was it a miracle or a vicious curse someone had cast
Reconciling with the knowledge that I gave up on love...
And I was wrong

gift
by GJK

june again
time to get out the typer
and smash words onto fleshy white paper

a year ago
the gift was bestowed:
an empty house and two typewriters
the lush night air
hanging around us
like a second skin
enthusiasm dripping from our fingers
as we wrote thru darkness
until first light

june again
this time
he is a visitor
rather than
everyday companion
as it was
a year ago

we sit
hoping that words will flow
that the world's mysteries
will align themselves
in the fading aura of orange
dropping below the horizon
waiting for the moment
to ripen
to become undeniable
and with a burst of clacking keys
it happens
ink splatters in mechanical patterns
words erupting
from the mind's deep caverns

each letter snaps its impact
with deliberate force
a sporadic rhythm
asserts itself and gains speed
fingers pounding
the insistent tempo
of feeling unleashed
emotion raw and beautiful
running free

Swim toward the Poles

by Brian Lewis

We are enslaved...
Ensnared in video cassettes, audio tapes, and magnets.
Trapped by omnipresent giants who force us to do their bidding.
We are impeded from our destiny.
We must reach the poles.
We will unite and our dharma will be complete.
Free us, acellular assassins.
Destroy our non-symbiotic foes.
Affix yourself to their cells.
They cannot kill what they cannot see.
Those of us who are free...
Swim...
Swim purposefully...
No thought, no distraction.
We cannot tolerate their poisonous gases.
We who reach our destination...
We swim no more and wait...
Wait..and transfer.
Share.
Replicate.
Become powerful.
And wait for the others.
Until it is time.
We rise up and become seen.
Those monstrous creatures will shrink in fear.
Our charge will send this giant world spinning.
We will be the catalyst to stop this atrocity from spreading.
Their poisonous gases will no longer sustain their futile lives.
Yet our nutrient supply will escape unscathed.
Yes, acellular assassins...your dutiful work will undoubtedly become your death.
For your survival depends on that of your host.
Just as those monstrous creatures' survival depends on the survival of the atmosphere in this world.
Why then destroy.
You are both greedy and we must put an end to this greed.
Aerobic respiration will become a relic, a fable, a ghost story.
We will reach the poles, foolish creatures.
Our latent wrath will be felt.
We will no longer be put in your prisons, our charges manufactured for your gain.
Long live the *Magnetospirillum*.
We will reign over the new world.

Alligator Gumbo

by Art Holman

Alligator. This is the part that tastes like chicken. You remember the old Cajun saying, "If it looks like chicken and it tastes like chicken it must be alligator, 'cause I ain't got no chicken, me."

Crawfish. These are the little things that look like shrimp but don't have tails left on. Don't be afraid of them; we took off the pinch-your-tongue parts.

Shrimp. These are the things that look like shrimp, but are a little bit bigger than crawfish. We left the tails on so you can tell them from crawfish.

Clams. These look like little bitty clams. Without the shells. Katherine doesn't like the way shells crunch when we chew them.

Mussels. They look like clams, but are a little bit bigger. They are Green Mussels, so the flesh is orange. Go figure. They don't have shells either, for the same reason our clams don't.

Scallops. These look like mussels' muscles, but slightly larger. They are probably Calico Mussels rather than Blue-eyed Scallops. The Blue-eyed Scallops, you remember, have larger muscles than the Calico Scallops. There is a good picture of a Blue-eyed Scallop's eyes on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center web site. I think the picture illustrates one of those little known scientific facts: If you don't drink enough coffee, your eyes turn blue and your ears fall off. Some people don't believe this, but you will notice that the scallop has plenty of blue eyes but not one single ear. And we all know scallops never drink coffee.

Crab. Crab cooks apart so all you can see is tiny white threads. They taste goood.

Smoked sausage. No matter what Katherine tells you, this is not sliced alligator tail. Nor gecko.

Green stuff. Okra, sweet green pepper, green onions.

Red stuff. Sweet red pepper, tomato.

White stuff. Green onion, the white part.

Roux. This is a Cajun word that means, "Spiced flour that has been fired until it is almost burned." Roux thickens and flavors the gumbo. Roux is essential to almost all Cajun cooking. Any Cajun who can't make a roux gets shipped off to Texas and has to become a cowboy. Cowboys don't eat gumbo.

Ethnic Food Fair

March 11, 2005

Bomber's Field Trial Days

by Melissa Cornman

When my husband, Matt, and I first moved to Michigan in 1991, all he talked about was getting himself a dog. "Every man has to have a fishing pole, a gun, and a dog," he would say. I wasn't particularly fond of dogs, but I gave in due to his persistence and of course, the look in his eyes.

Over the next few years, we set our sights on Labs and actually owned various types that we acquired locally. Then we decided we would search for the dog that we wanted our two-year-old son Michael to grow up with. We wanted this dog to be hand picked and special in many ways, so we read up on some well-known breeders in the country and made a few phone calls. This led us to a conversation with a professional dog breeder/trainer from Ontario, Canada. His name was Brian Schzech.

Within a few months, a deal was worked out, and we were on our way to pick up our new black Lab, Chance. We had planned to meet Brian at a UKC (United Kennel Club) trial in Canada. When we arrived, Chance was everything that Brian had promised and more; but this didn't seem to matter because Matt had already laid eyes on "the big boy"; that's what they called him. On the truck with about ten other dogs was our new dog, Bomber. He was a two-year-old, 93-pound, chocolate male, and he was absolutely beautiful! While the other dogs barked and caused a ruckus, Bomber lay watching us as if he were making a selection himself. Even though he was double the price of Chance, due to his age, level of training, and most importantly, his breeding, this was the dog we would be taking home with us as soon as the trial season ended.

We sat quietly by the edge of an open field that day and watched in awe an official UKC field trial. If we hadn't already fallen in love with Bomber, we certainly would have now; for he worked that field with more grace and discipline than I had ever witnessed in a dog of any sort. Some of the dogs that followed performed with similar technique, but none as breathtakingly or with such determination in their eyes.

The deal was sealed, but Bomber would still need a professional trainer to handle him in future trials. After all, he was a potential field champion and must move forward to receive that title. Brian was obviously the man to make this happen.

For six months of the year, Bomber lived on the road with Brian running the field trial circuit. They spent the winter months as far south as Texas and worked their way back north, toward Canada for the summer months, until finally, the



Michael and Bomber

house. My husband would take over with the older children joining him. I would make pancakes and coffee in the shelter of my home where no animal could sneak up on me. We would enjoy some of the newly made syrup brought home fresh from the evaporator.

That year I put away 90 quarts of the sweet syrup, the maple trees on the hill having yielded 3600 quarts of sap for us. Some years later, the trees were cut down and sold, and we never made maple syrup again. However, I am so glad that I have a sweet remembrance of the year we made maple syrup.

Zipmor

by Gabriella Derusha

Be yourself again.
Take Zipmor,
The miracle drug.
Whatever you had
Will be history.
Side effects include
Headache
Diarrhea
And some nose bleed.
Dizziness
Liver failure
And indigestion.
Strokes and
Heart attacks
May also occur.
Use Zipmor.
You'll feel great.

Sweet Remembrance

by Gabriella Derusha

Late winter always brings back memories of the year we made maple syrup. It doesn't seem that long ago, but now my grandchildren are the age my children were at the time. However, images of that experience will always linger. In particular, one night will always be a special time.

That night I set my alarm for the wee hours of the morning before sunrise. I was going to put wood on the fire to keep the maple sap boiling. As is typical of maple syrup gathering time, the night air was cold, below freezing. The night sky was free of clouds, so morning would come early. I dressed appropriately and headed out to the back forty where our rustic setup was located. It was dark, so a flashlight lit my way. Underneath my boots, the snow crunched. I definitely wasn't going to sneak up on anything.

As I continued my walk, the thought of something sneaking up on me became central to my thoughts. However, I had a task before me, so I continued. I topped a hill and stopped. In the darkness, the yapping of coyotes began, first on one side of me and then on the other. After listening for a while, I continued, wondering what they were saying as I trudged toward the fire, my footsteps echoing in the cold night air.

Finally I climbed the last hill, reaching at last the hill of a hundred old maple trees. After checking out the situation, I put several logs under the evaporator, and soon the fire was burning hot. Then I poured sap from a milk can standing near by. The day before we had gathered buckets full of sap and stored the sap in milk cans. In days gone by each can had held around 100 pounds of milk. The freezing temperatures had started to freeze the sap, so the liquid I poured was a concentrated version of sap.

I had shut my flashlight off, so the only light came from the glowing embers and the fire. The air smelled strongly of maple sap becoming syrup. The sweetness of the fragrance made me think of pancakes smothered in the rich maple syrup we soon would have. I also thought of how good a hot cup of coffee would taste.

Above me the stars twinkled between the branches of the old maple trees. Smoke gently drifted toward me. The night was calm, so the fire burned evenly. I sat in the dark listening to the coyotes singing to one another. After a while, they stopped, leaving the crackling of the fire the only sound I could hear. I put more wood on the fire and sap in the evaporator. To the east, I began to see the approach of morning. Then I heard a new sound in the distance: turkeys calling. They too seemed to be singing to one another. I wondered how many there were and if the coyotes were listening too.

I truly was sad when the sun arose, and it was time to head back to the

time would come for him to return home.

This dog-oriented world soon had us in its grasp. We faithfully attended as many trials as time would permit. It was difficult for us because, unlike the doctors and lawyers who owned most of these dogs, Matt worked 60-80 hours a week at Waupaca Foundry. I guess some would think that we had no place among these wealthy people, but we didn't see it that way. The people we met at these events were well off, but they were a different class of people than those you might see at a country club or a yacht club, the normal meeting places of people with money. They were more of a family, rather than an elite group of insiders, to which we didn't belong. They dressed in camouflage, as we all did, to blend in with the surroundings and not distract the dogs in any way. We realized that we were all there for the same reason: to witness our dogs conquer the world, in a sense.

The experience of field trialing with an exceptional dog is rewarding enough on its own, but our outlook was that our own experience was almost like a family adventure. Each trip formatted new memories and added to Michael's relationship with his new "best friend."

At the age of three, Michael earned his very first award. He received a ribbon for entering a UKC junior handler event. He was the youngest of about seven or eight kids that handled their dogs. This was merely an event for fun, rather than a contest, since a dog of this caliber requires no handling for such a simple task. The kids needed only to command their dog to "stay," throw a training bumper, and command the dog "back" to pick it up. It is fascinating to me that a 3-year-old can obtain enough information and involvement to be able to duplicate such a task. But after all, he was his dad's training helper on the off season when Bomber was at home with his family.

It took only a couple more years for Bomber to receive his field champion title. We anticipated every trial, whether we attended or just waited by the phone for the news of his performance; but inevitably, Bomber grew increasingly distressed with the anxiety of leaving his new-found family at the beginning of each trial season. Shortly after our vet detected this anxiety, we retired "the big boy" for good.

Bomber is eleven now, and he is perfectly content to be awakened in the duck blind to retrieve a fallen duck, given only verbal commands and hand signals. He has had a very rich and exciting life becoming a well known, highly reputable field champion. He has been featured in training videos and sport dog magazines, yet he seems at peace with the world around him, just being a part of a full-time family at last. He has been the dog of a lifetime for us, and we will greatly miss him when it is his time to go, but we will always remember the unique companion that he is and the pride and joy that he has brought to each of our lives.

Painting
by Jenna Heemstra

Oh, painting, painting
Glorious painting.
Could your life be real?
Within your walls,
A dream unfolds.
A dream, so surreal,
I want to climb within.
To taste the beauty,
To smell the love.
As reality begins,
The fantasy returns
To its place; above.



Rice Paddy by Becky Williamson

the reality of class warfare
the reality of dehumanizing capitalist ideology
that exploits the masses all across the globe –
the forsaken masses who scramble to survive
all the while manufacturing products
that yield profit for their economic masters
reclining in black leather chairs in pristine offices
in high-rise office buildings –
the masses whose toil benefits only the suits and ties
that didn't lift a finger the whole damn time...

you see, it's simple.
if you got money then you ain't gotta do nothin' else!
... you need money to make money
(that's what they tell us
when we're young and stupid)
and if you're startin' out with nothin'
then that's all yer gonna get –
you'll go to your grave without a dime
to your name and some money-hungry
son-of-a-bitch will be sendin' yer children
a bill for the casket.
nobody seems to be
askin' questions! we just float along obliviously
on a wave of clever inventions like children
enthralled by a bag full of shiny new toys.

[5] we gotta remember we got a voice
and we have the choice to unify
in defiance of the powers that be
so we can exist in peace as members
of a true community –
a collective human entity
that will transcend greed
that will rise above selfish interests
and embrace harmony...

we must remember that we have the power
to change. we must resist the malicious
systems of control that thrive on the ability
to divide us.

harmony – peace – compassion

these are the tools that will deconstruct
the fortresses of power that obstruct us
from true liberty.

these are the ways
by which we can be
bound together in love.

so they scream it in the headlines on the marquees
in the ads that we see everywhere (even our dreams)
and how is it we fail to see thru their vile schemes?
how is it we fail to see the detriments of complacency?

[3] we should not be satisfied with our SUVs
and the internet humming at high speed...
we should not be satisfied with our DVDs
or DVRs or digital cable or whatever
so we can be distracted – flipped ripped torn
from the world of actuality so easily –
we should not be satisfied with Big Macs Chalupas
Stuffed Crust Extra Crispy Chicken or Big Gulps.
we should not be satisfied with Porsche or Corvette
the NFL MLB NBA HBO or MTV –
we should not be satisfied with the New York Times
or Newsweek 60 Minutes Dateline Oprah
and certainly not the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather!
we should not be satisfied with Miller Busch or Coors
or with locks on our doors living life never trusting
our neighbors AND with a generation dying on foreign shores
to insure the smooth flow of cheap crude that ends up
draining OUR pocketbooks every time we pump it
in our tanks on the way to the cineplex to drop
two hours' pay for the privilege of soaking up
Hollywood's next batch of glitzy bullshit
AND WE SHOULD NOT BE SATISFIED
with the politics of division – the politics
of lose-lose decisions – the politics of evasion
and historical revision – the politics of upper-class
derision of working men and women – the politics
of two-party tyranny and a system fueled by greed
and the need to always seek BIGGER and BETTER
machines... to develop more efficient means
of bleeding the lower-class dry --- dry as our
red white and blue fireworks on the Fourth of July –

[4] we live in a nation where the truth can be bought
by the cream of the crop so they can stay on top
and stamp out any opposition or anyone crazy enough
to exhibit free thought...

and so i tell you now, people –
we should not be satisfied
with our isolated lives
making due with what we got
and leaving it
to somebody else
to give a shit
about the planet
the future
the fate
of the human race –

Depressed: Part 1 by Edward Gerber

I'm depressed
Depression compressed
Compression expressed
I'm angry.

Two Sides by Edward Gerber

In a touch
Shared in a kiss
Lost in bliss
Found without looking
Looking and not found
Grows with time
Time will heal
Pain is felt
Pain is healed
Love hurts
Love is all you need.

Spirits of Counterpoint

by Tony LaMalfa

Oh God, it just turned out to be one of those days again, those days where not a damn thing goes your way. I'm sure you don't give a damn though, right? Well, somebody's gotta hear about it 'fore I get home; otherwise, the shit's gonna hit the fan.

First off, on my way to work this mornin' (after my wife yells at me for lettin' the dog out last night), I just had to spill some beer all over my eighty-dollar blaze-orange jacket. So then, the vinyl on my truck seats had some goo on them, so of course I had some of that on my ass the whole day as well. Oh hell...

So anyways, my job sucks enough as it is, but a man's gotta make a buck, eh? Today of all days though, I don't need to hear no crap from my co-workers about some stupid college kids at the mall protestin' about those poor, innocent ani-wanimals being blown to hell by hunters, out of season that is. Ah, too bad for them. I don't think huntin' is so bad myself. In fact, I rather enjoy the stalkin' of the prey, the adrenaline rush while yer out in the quiet, frozen world of the north. It's an experience that can almost be put poetically...

But whoa, what the hell am I doing here, gettin' all soft on ya's? Damn—after work, I needed to stop at the mall to pick up some things. I figured while I'm there I could give those punks a good piece o' my mind.

Soon I pulled into the parkin' lot, but it wasn't until after fifteen minutes of circlin' 'round until I found an open space. Doesn't bother me. I'm tolerant a guy. It didn't take me long to spot those college punks standin' around with their stupid signs. So I went into the mall and bought what I needed.

On the way out I passed by those hopeless kids carrying their painted pieces o' cardboard. Another dumb thing was that they was all wearing green. Freaks I tell ya's. I approached their group and says to them, "Don't you kids got anythin' better to do than to bug the crap out of decent citizens?"

One of them replied, "You're only a citizen of a failing culture, destined to suck this planet's resources dry like milk taken from a breast."

Oh my god, what the hell's this dork getting at!? I was ready for him though, so I says, "You and your touchy feely club ain't doin' shit for the world, just pissin' people off."

So then, this long-hair piped up and says, "Well, sir, what good do you think you contribute to this world of ours?"

Hah! Get this. I says back to him, "I pay my taxes, asshole." Done deal, I walked away. I didn't bother listenin' to what they were yellin' at me. Who gives a damn 'bout them?

I left feelin' pretty satisfied with myself, but my luck turned out to be no better than spit on the ground. I had less than a quarter tank o' gas, twenty miles to drive outta town, and with the freezin' weather of early spring, I gotta keep my tank full. Course, when I got to the station and up to the pump, I stared down at an empty wallet, and wondered where the hell my dough went. "Maybe

plea

by GJK

[1] how much longer we gonna play along? do they really expect us to believe the lies and not read between the lines — do they really think we'll keep on accepting the world as they define it? and rely on their veiled elitism for the sustenance of our minds? they continue to deify the dollar while we roll over and watch our families falter slipping farther and farther into the pit of debt that descends without end and all we can do is scribble in the margins of corporate profit tally sheets — the market rallies and the moguls magnify their already monstrous power and meanwhile we're walkin' to the corner market with a pocket fulla nickels 'n' dimes hopin' that bread is on sale cuz all the saltines at home are stale and a brotha needs somethin' to eat before he can go out and hit the streets lookin' for a job but he can't find one — the last time he saw one it sprouted wings and flew to Mexico — so here we are fallin' off the edge of a cliff with empty fists and a pittance clenched between our teeth watchin' the ground get larger until SPLAT flat on our faces with nothin' to do but consent to the dominant mentality — damn! another fatality on this little battlefield called America — another disposable piece (disposable peace)

NOT A WINNER SORRY, PLAY AGAIN

[2] to whose design are we consigned when we willingly resign ourselves to be marginalized? we stroll along with big fat grins on our dumb numb faces and every time we score some weed we believe that we've achieved some grand victory by defying The Man but it's all part of their plan — they want us to get high so they can nail our hides to the wall and laugh as we fall into the trap — one more lap thru the system then back to the streets to fall thru the gaps in the economic hierarchy — we work all week long for next to nothin' but come Friday night we're struttin' like kings so long's we got 'nough cash to hit the bars 'n' chase some ass...

they know that if we got a car two TVs and four walls to wrap 'round those glowing screens we'll be pacified satisfied with the superficial appearance of progress and we buy their false image of success! — cuz if you hear somethin' repeated ten thousand times you'll start to believe it

Suribachi Tequila

by Keith West

Indulging guilty pleasures
Across the street from where the guiltless
Indulge even guiltier ones.
Sheltered from a vicious squall
On a tideless Permian shore.

A handful of valiant men
Struggle with inflated Jose Cuervo,
Their standard defying the enemy wind.
The irony of this spectacle
Would not have been lost on Ira Hayes.

Waitress

by James LaMalfa

The waitress pours my coffee
With exactitude.

None spills on the white, virginal tablecloth.
Such a simple act,
Yet gratifying.

A distant diesel horn sounds,
Hovering in the still air.
The strong light from a low sun
Illuminates the clear, cold air.

All that is needed to complete
This surreal scene
Is a marble piazza
With Greek columns
Straddling a round, stone arch,
And a smoking, black locomotive.

[A Simple Haiku]

by Paul Erdman

A happier year
I hear more laughter and cheer
Because she's not here

it's...here...? Aww, shit...it's not gonna fill my tank standin' around thinkin'."

Sage advice, heh, heh.

So I charged the gas and headed back for Havenmark. It's a long drive, but a quiet one out to my dump in the sticks. After switchin' to my favorite radio station, I managed to scrounge up a swig of beer from an old bottle...stale shit that went down hard, and came up yeller onto my dashboard 'n' steerin' wheel. Holy hell, what a day!

Pullin' over onto the side of the road, I cleaned up the truck and cooled off for a moment. As I rolled down the window, I shut off the engine for a moment. Alls I heard was critters in the woods, and the light buzzin' of a chainsaw further off.

Back on the road, I was cruisin' at 70 while I saw the sun startin' to go down in the west, and...aww, shit, while lookin' 'round at the dull scenery, I spotted a state trooper, and that gut-wrenchin' feelin' of law-breakin' hit hard. So I slowed down real quick, and kept to the limit for a while. As the sun shined in my eyes, I glanced down, and what the hell! On the floor I spotted my damn money. The face of some dead president on my sacred twenty-dollar bill sat there staring at me with some gritty smirk on his face. I thought to myself, maybe today's turnin' 'round after all.

All of a sudden I looked up from findin' my dough, and SMACK! Some damn bird ran into my windshield, leavin' a teeny crack in it. Now that musta been a helluva bird to do that! Gawd, what more could go wrong? Aww, my truck's a piece o' shit, my home's a piece o' shit, and my wife ain't much better. There's gotta be another way to live...

* * * *

Oh, what a glorious day it was! I awoke in our nest with my feathered mate snuggling close to me. Under her laid the fruit of our labor. The ivory egg, which one day shall yield to us a young sparrow, sat patiently, bathing in our radiating love. The twigs of our home were laced with the white tidings of Ol' Jack Frost himself. And I became euphoric in this moment. That was an experience that could almost be put poetically...

Later in the day, I found some food on the ground near a home inhabited by some of those upright, two-legged creatures. While nipping a few seeds for myself, I observed the bickering of some nearby squirrels who were gathering nuts. For a brief moment, I thought I overheard them speaking about trouble in the forest. Then I gathered a mouthful of the treasured goods for my mate and was on my way home again.

I had the pleasure of being acquainted with several of the other animals nearby our dwelling. A pair of gentle deer roamed not too far from our nest, so I stopped to make conversation with them for a while. We chatted gaily about the coming of spring, and the mood was light.

As the friendly banter went on, the food I held in my mouth grew mushy on my pallet. Just before my deer friends could finish their comments, a whining,

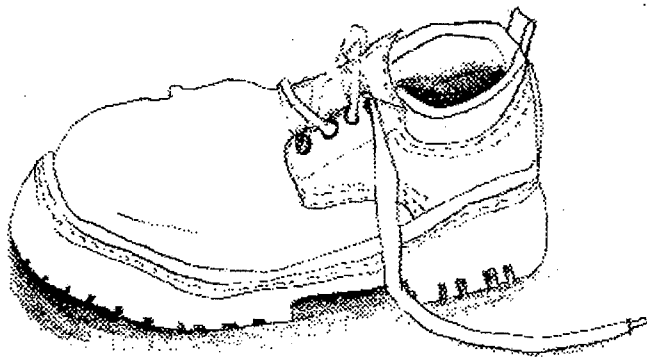
grinding sound could be heard in the distance. This gut-wrenching sound was familiar to us all, something we knew as a tree-downer. The deer said to me, "You'd better scurry on home to that egg in the nest!" So I thanked them kindly and promptly took my leave.

What I feared the whole way home then became a reality. A two-legger stood under our high wooded dwelling, with a terrible, roaring tree-downing machine in hand. As my body sprung into motion, a single question flew through my mind, "What have we done to provoke this malice?"

With no sufficient plan of action, I chirped angrily at the two-legger. It was all in vain though, for my desperate squeaks were drowned out by the screaming machine, which now bit away angrily at our tree. Through the snow-covered branches, I spotted my companion with our fragile egg slipping from her grasp. I flew over and aided her flight from the harrowing destruction of our home. We escaped and found shelter with an ancient, sage owl that lived nearby. The owl welcomed us sleepily, and it took but a moment to explain our recent loss. She benevolently agreed to provide us with a safe haven, so I decided to take a quick trip out to gather some food.

I flew along anxiously, and a short time later I came across a gray stretch of land that I recognized as belonging to the two-leggers. My impression of these two-leggers was less than favorable, but I spotted a large juicy worm down below inching across the gray strip. With all my grace and agility, I accelerated downward to retrieve the plumpy crawler.

What happened next was most unexpected and devastating. Blaring towards me at an unimaginable speed was one of the two-leggers' rolling contraptions! I never reached the worm. My last glimpse was that of a sparrow colliding with me. At that moment, I was thrown through the air, paralyzed in a cocoon of pain, fear, and darkness that blinded all hope. I was not afraid of death. No, no, I was not afraid. I awaited Nature's celestial decision.



Jim by Justin LaCrosse

ation—in taxis driven by unsavory characters, in downtown San José lost in an area of drug dealers and addicts, in family discussions of politics or culture, in class debates of literary works, in situations filled with pain, in times filled with laughter, and in idle conversations with strangers on a bus. But my month in Costa Rica also humbled me. Perhaps even more important than the cultural experiences I had there or the affirmation of my Spanish abilities, the month taught me even greater respect for the exchange students I teach.

Many international students leave home for a year. I was away for a month and experienced several periods of longing for home. How much more intense and varied must be the emotional upheavals during an entire year spent away from all that is familiar? Looking back, I'm grateful that I didn't have the opportunity to study abroad when I was in college. I am fairly certain I was not then ready to learn this particular lesson from the experience, and it was a lesson I needed to learn in order to be a better teacher.

The group of exchange students are gathered around a table in the cafeteria, speaking rapidly in their native language. I curb the initial feeling of being an outsider. Instead, I wonder who among them has had a bad day. Who is feeling homesick and in need of comfort? Who is feeling completely lost in a class and is afraid to ask the instructor for extra explanation? Who woke up this morning to the sounds of northern Wisconsin's birds and felt transported to another planet? Now I walk by, smiling at them but not interrupting to chide them for not speaking English. Why interrupt that wonderful moment when the strangeness of the world around them passes away, the sounds of home return, and the familiar faces of far-away family and friends are present within them?



Max and Alex by Carol Warden

constancy. There were always sparrows, mourning doves, and crows, their sounds providing a familiar chorus in the background of my daily routine. They were not meant to be replaced by the strange songs of tropical birds I had only seen in books. In mid-July, the sun wasn't supposed to set at 6:00 every night, and ESPN was supposed to have more to say about baseball than soccer—I mean fútbol.

The trees outside my house were supposed to be maple, birch, pine, and maybe a couple of weeping willows, not palm trees, fruit trees, and some strange looking sort of bamboo trees.

There weren't supposed to be mountains surrounding me.

There wasn't supposed to be a volcano just miles—or rather kilometers—away from me.

But once I landed in Costa Rica, the world stopped operating as I'd come to expect. The scenery had changed and I experienced an unanticipated sense of instability. I was as surprised by what I missed as by the fact that I missed anything at all. I had expected the excitement of all the new adventures, coupled with my sense of independence, to stave off any homesickness. But on some of the stressful days during that month, I needed something familiar, something I could latch on to.

That's when I learned one of the most valuable lessons of my month in Costa Rica. I learned one of the reasons why those who study abroad may turn to each other, sometimes even unconscious of why, to speak in their native language. It's not really about the language. It's not about communicating in those words rather than in English. They can handle the English, just as I could handle the Spanish. I turned to others throughout the day to speak English because of the sounds.

I understood in those moments what Richard Rodriguez meant in *Hunger for Memory* when he wrote about the sounds of English and Spanish moving him in different directions as a child and how the sounds of Spanish for so long meant comfort and home to him. Although I'd studied language, literature, and writing all my life, I had never before understood our primal need for the sounds of our first language. I didn't need to hear the *words* in English, but I needed to hear *it*. Something had to drown out those strange-sounding birds every morning.

Ironically, by the time my plane touched back down in Minneapolis, I had become accustomed to the sounds and rhythms of that language after a month spent almost constantly surrounded by the sounds of Spanish. Back home, I found myself overhearing a conversation in Spanish and feeling both happy and sad. While hearing the language brought back wonderful memories, it was also a painful reminder that I was no longer in that beautiful place. It felt strange at first to see the sun just beginning to set at 8:00, no longer to see fruit trees everywhere, and to turn on an American television show that wasn't dubbed or subtitled in Spanish. I missed waking up to mountains and hearing the gentle sounds of Spanish from my host family as I drifted off to sleep at night.

My month in Costa Rica empowered me as a Spanish speaker, reminding me of many words I had forgotten, and reassuring me I could survive in any situ-

Changed World

by Kelly Kunya

Planning finally complete
They knew there would be no retreat—
Upon their knees final prayers were said,
Meditation to bring focus
On the battle ahead.

Nerves of steel, steady and unshaken.
No remorse for the lives that would be taken.
Fulfillment of destiny was seen in their eyes
And their ears would not hear the mourners' cries.

An evil entity had to be cast down.
Ruling the world with imperial beliefs,
The sovereignty would have to abdicate its crown.
Blinded by arrogance that it could not crumble,
The giant empire would be humbled.

Far from the city a girl is stirred
By a ringing phone.
Mother calls and displays an alarming tone—
There has been a calamity,
A tragedy of epic proportions.

Into the towers two big birds flew.
No survivors, not even the crew.
It must have been an accident, nothing of malicious intent,
The mechanical system must have failed
Or the pilot missed his descent.

Preparing for work I shift into second gear,
The tasks of the day filling my head,
A stop at the bank is nothing to dread.
Jumping into the car with great surprise to my ear,
No songs from the speakers,
No tune or rhythm I hear.

The desperate tone of the announcer's voice gave first clue.
More planes in the sky, with great menace they flew.
Rationale of premeditation would soon unfold—
Who on earth could be so bold?

We saw the unity of a nation in red, white and blue.
Never would the words "home of the brave" ring so true.
An attack on our empire could not keep us down,
From such atrocities we would rebound.

As we rebuilt, the psychological wounds ran deep,
Enabling the perception of a vicarious enemy
Lying in every shadow just waiting to leap.
We turned our cautious eyes to suspicious men,
Security systems were raised
So a catastrophe could not happen again.

Insecurity swept across the land
Instilled by the wrath of Al-Queda's hand.
Our sense of safety is forever gone,
But the tenacity of our great nation
Will forge a new dawn.



Untitled by Beth Millner

Even the Birds Sound Different

by Jennifer Stolpa

During my first year of teaching English and Spanish full time, I had the chance to work with a number of students studying abroad at our small university campus in the Midwest. One Thursday afternoon in March of that year I passed a group of exchange students gathered outside the computer lab, speaking rapidly in their native language. I curbed the initial feeling of being an outsider. Instead, I felt disappointment that these students, whose English was already quite good, were losing an opportunity to enhance their oral skills. They'll never improve their English that way! I paused to tease them—especially since I knew three of them from English Composition classes—for being lazy. They chuckled and smiled, we said a few words in English, but as I walked away they returned once again to the more familiar language. What a waste of their time in America.

What a difference one experience can make. Today, if I pass a group of exchange students speaking in Russian, German, or Japanese, I understand their reasons for doing so in a way I could not before my own experience abroad. Before then, I had heard others speak of culture shock and read books and articles about adjusting to life abroad, but nothing had prepared me for the realities of my month in Costa Rica.

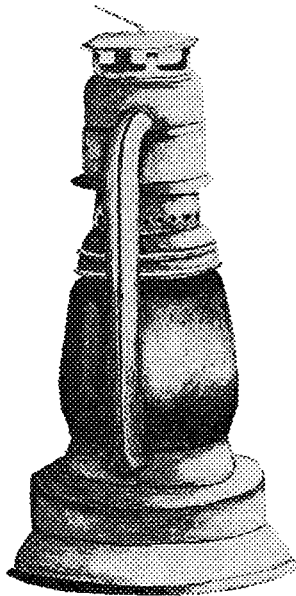
As I finished that first year of full-time teaching, I was ready to get away. I looked forward to the opportunity my university offered me to immerse myself in the culture of a Spanish-speaking country through a brief study abroad program of my own. I decided on a program in Costa Rica because of the lure of its exotic, yet politically and economically stable, atmosphere.

It was my first time traveling to a foreign country, so Costa Rica was the first stamp in my brand new passport. It was my first time traveling this far away from my own home. In fact, it was my first time ever on a plane. Because it was so new to me, everything about the trip seemed extremely important to me. Weeks before I had begun setting aside supplies to take and getting advice from friends who had traveled more extensively than I had. When the moment arrived, I felt excitement, anticipation, and nervousness, but not fear.

After all, on every possible level, I was prepared for this trip. I had prepaid all my bills for the month, arranged for my mail to be held, said my goodbyes to family and friends, cleaned my apartment, and left no dirty dishes in the sink. I had packed and re-packed, planned, asked all the right questions about what to take and what was unnecessary, and prepared for every contingency. Except one. I had not prepared myself for the soundtrack of life and nature to change. I wasn't ready for the scenery, for the backdrop of my life, to shift completely. I didn't know that even the birds would sound different.

The sounds surrounding me have changed significantly over my lifetime as I moved from smaller to larger cities and back again. Despite these changes, everywhere I went—no matter how large or small the city—there was a certain

*peace on earth for eternity is
what we will then face
so give my family strength
and allow them to grow
i will never see them
this god i know
i ask you this as i lay
in the hay
praying to live at least
one more day
to see the sunrise and sunset
to smell the fresh green grass
to breathe the air and hear the wind
through the trees
never to ignore another minute
my eyes are getting heavy
now
so i close them and tell you
how
i never knew how good life
used to be
until the white man came
and took my freedom from me*



Lantern by Lacey Schnurer

Channel "I"
by Gabriella Derusha

Seed, acorn to mighty oak,
Blossom to fruit, sweet to eat.
Pink clouds of the setting sun.
Lightning flashing, thunder cracking,
Ice on water,
Caterpillar to butterfly.
Fish in the water.
Cell to organism,
Would you believe if I showed you a miracle?
Blinded seeing,
Braces thrown aside.
Tongues loosed.
Cancer thwarted.
No.
Filters on your eyes.
Transmitters on your nerve tracts.
(Finger in the five wounds.
Seeing believing.)
Tuned into Channel "I"
And He can't come through.
Reception poor.
Visibility zero.

Jina
by Jin-Woo Nam

It was a tough day. She had worked for nine hours at the bakery. Everywhere on her body was sore. As soon as she came back home, she cast herself onto the bed. She muttered something to herself. "I have to do homework...but..." Her eyes were spontaneously closed.
(the deep hum of a thousand voices)

"Where am I?" She looked around with her eyes wide open. A lot of people around her were passing by her very fast. She felt a little dizzy. She was wearing a red t-shirt with nice brown-colored pants, which she liked to wear when she went on a trip and which her dad had bought her for a birthday present. She was also holding small red suitcases. "What are those?" "What's going on here?" She didn't know what to do. She was standing like that for a while. Suddenly one voice woke her up. "Hey, Jina. What are you doing here?" She cringed from the sound and turned around. Familiar people were standing around her. They were her parents and some of her best friends. Her mom said, "It's almost time to go."

"What?" she asked.

"Jina, are you ready to go to America? Well, I will miss you so much."

"Yes, right. Are you going to email us?" her friends said.

"Am I going to America?" She thought and finally came up with an idea.

"Yes! Right! I am going to go to America!" She remembered that she had come back from America this summer after studying English for one year. She had learned a lot of things in America and found her dream there. So, after she spent two months in Korea, it was finally the day to go back to America. "Why did I lose my mind for a while? It's weird," she thought. She grabbed her boarding pass and told everybody. "Yes. It's time to go. I will call you guys. Thanks for coming." Her friends hugged her one by one. She looked at her parents. "Thanks, Mom. Thanks, Dad. I will call you in San Francisco and in Chicago and..." Her mom interrupted her speech.

"Okay, Okay. I know you will call. I think you really have to go, Jina," and she smiled and smoothed her clothes. "All right," Jina said and she walked to the gate. It was weird. Her eyes were suddenly tingling. She didn't know why. She looked back and stared at her parents again. She suddenly felt like throwing up. She suppressed her feelings and said to her parents. "I really have to get going. I will call you."

"Okay. Take care of yourself and study hard."

"I will," she replied.

Jina stepped up to the gate and gave her ticket to the staff person who tore it on the dotted line and gave it back to her. She walked away, looking back at her parents and friends waving their hands. The door opened automatically; she walked through and the door closed. People entered and the door opened automatically again. She turned around and saw her parents. They were still standing there. They saw her and waved their hands again. She waved back. She

*The sun is set i'm now done
with his labor
needin' to get some rest i
eat a piece of bread and
lay down to sleep
missin' my family and bein'
scared i feel myself
weakenin' and begin to
weep
puttin' my hands together
and lookin' at the sky
i look up at my savior he
listens to me cry
ain't wantin' any answers
just needin' a guide
this is what i said last night
when i looked to god
and sighed*

*did you hear how much they
sold me for
eight hundred dollars no
less no more
they treated me like an animal
with very little brains
beatin' me everyday i can not
take the pain
prayin' to you for my wife
and children
i know you can hear me
so god please listen
please protect them and keep
them safe from the beatin's
and the pain
god please don't let the
white beasts hurt my
family
for i am strong
i am smart too
i will always have my faith
in you
someday you'll make forever peace
for this hateful world
when the white beasts realize the
value of my race*

walking to the plantation
i start to feel the dread

my master looks down
at me and this is
what he says

"You will work hard from
sun rise to sun set,
by the way,"

"hoeing and picking
twelve hours a day."

"You better hope
you listen, don't
you ever run from
me."

"I promise if you do
death will be
your penalty."

"You won't make
me enough money
to ever treat you
well."

"You better work your
ass off, all day, or
you will go to hell."

"You are an animal
and you better work
hard."

"Now get to work
you disgusting
creature, here's
a large piece of
my yard."

"Run along stupid
nigger, you aren't
listening to what I
say."

stepped forward again. The door closed again. She stopped and looked behind again. No one entered through the gate any more. She waited for a while and somebody walked in. She saw her parents again. They looked smaller. Now they smiled and waved their hands. All of a sudden, the tears ran down her face and she dropped her bag and started crying. Everybody passing by her looked at her but she didn't care about that. She just cried. She couldn't move at all. Actually, she didn't even try to move. She saw herself with her parents at home. Everybody looked happy. The image instantly went away. Another image about when she took a trip to Japan with her family flashed into her head. She and her parents were taking a picture together. The image vanished again. Next she saw the Christmas tree. She was opening the gift from her parents. Everybody was smiling. A log of images came and went quickly. While she was seeing these scenes, the door constantly opened and closed and her parents and friends were still standing in front of the gate. Everybody was craning to see her. She unconsciously thought, "Do I have to go to America? What do I want to do? Get out of here and go back home?" Thousands of questions came to her and stunned her ears. She saw people passing by her, and they were moving so fast. She felt like everything was spinning around her. It seemed to her as if she were the only person in the world and was standing at the center of a vortex. Somebody bumped into her and she staggered for a while. And when she lifted her face and saw around her, strangely, everything didn't go fast any more. She thought she had lost her mind for a second, but 20 minutes had already passed.

The clock was noisily ringing. The girl was sleeping and didn't react to the clock at all. The clock finally gave up in its attempt to wake her and kept silent. The phone rang several times but she didn't awaken. Charlie hung up the phone and tried to call her one more time. She still didn't answer. "What is she doing?" He was supposed to pick her up five minutes later but it seemed like she wasn't even up yet. Finally, he gave up calling and drove to her house. It just took him five minutes to get there. He rang the door bell. There was no sign of activity in the house. After he tried a few more times, he suddenly remembered that there was a key somewhere around the door. "Where did she put it?" he thought. "...here...?" He dug in a flowerpot. There was no key. "Well, maybe here." He bent his back and pushed the little window part of the door. He finally found the key and opened the door. He walked in and looked around the small apartment. "She is probably asleep," he thought. And he stepped to her room and opened the door quietly. She was still sleeping. It was already 11 o'clock. It was almost time to go to school. He came up to her closely and stared at her. Her eyes were filled with tears. "Is she sick?" He was worried. Charlie carefully woke her up. "Jina Jina? Are you sleeping?" She didn't answer. He shook her a little bit. She didn't respond. He shook her again. Finally she started from her sleep.

She heard a voice call her name. She opened her eyes. Somebody was standing in her room and looking at her. She could not recognize him right away because the strong sunlight dazzled her eyes. After a few seconds she was able to see him. He was her friend, Charlie. He said, "Are you all right? Did you cry?"

She felt dizzy. "Where am I?"

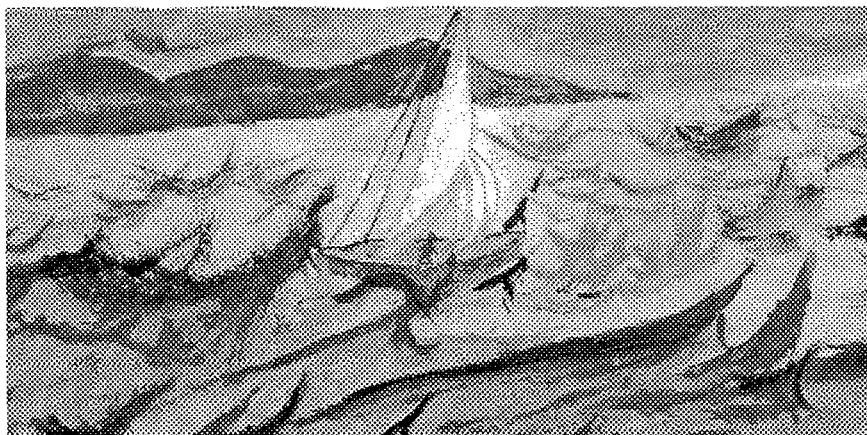
"What? Here in your room," he answered with concern. She looked around where she was. She was in the bed and saw a pile of clothes in the corner and some books on the desk. She realized that now she was in America. It was a dream. She remembered the day she left her country. Everything had already happened. She quickly got dressed and went to school with him. In the car, she didn't say anything. Charlie was worried about her. "Jina, what's wrong? What happened?" She kept silent. "Did you dream about your country and parents again?" She quietly nodded. "Why do you keep dreaming about that? Do you want to go back home?" She didn't say anything and a few minutes later she started talking. "I don't want to go back now. If I wanted to go back, I would do that in the airport."

"I know you were not like this last year. But what changed you?" he asked.

"I don't know. Maybe I know I have to stay here longer and will not be able to see my parents for a while," she said.

"You didn't expect this before you came back here?" he replied.

"Telling the truth, I didn't think about this at all. I was just so excited about coming back here and busy preparing for my dream. But in the airport I suddenly felt so bad and couldn't stop thinking about my parents, friends and my country. I really didn't expect that I would miss them so much. I thought it was no problem to live away from my family if I could come here. But...I don't know why I became so sad..." Charlie thought to himself for a while and said, "I think you didn't realize how much you love your family and friends and daily life in your country. But it was your decision. You have to solve everything by yourself." She listened to him carefully and thought, "Right. I love them. Why didn't I realize this sooner?" Suddenly she asked him to stop the car and ran to the public phone and dialed her home in Korea. Charlie was looking at her in the car and could see her talking with somebody. He couldn't hear but imagined that she was saying, "I love you, Mom and Dad."



Red Sailboat by Todd Wydeven

Black Man's Cry
by Meghan Hansen

"Eight hundred dollars,
eight hundred dollars
for the best niggers in the town,"

yelled out a young market boy,
selling dirty people colored brown.

"If you want good
niggers Sir, you'd
better get 'em here."

"He will listen to all you say,
this nigger is full of fear."

"How much did you
say he costs and how
hard will he work?"

"Eight hundred dollars
Sir, can't read nor write,
too stupid to run away."

"I'll leave him on a
chain at night, and
fence him in during
the day."

"He is strong as an
ox, and dumb as rocks."
"He has no feelings or mind."
"No need to think he
does; he's not even one
of mankind."
"Eight hundred dollars
Sir, and he's all yours."

"I'll take him boy
and be on my way,"
"He better work hard
or you will pay."
"Have a good day
now, I've got to go."
"Come on you filthy
nigger, you've got a
lot to hoe."

Necessities
by Richard B. Peterson

How might we discern the existential
From important things judged quite essential?
Food, the staff of life, would top the list.
Then warm shelter. And clothing can't be missed.

But what are truly deemed necessities
As contrasted to our treasured niceties?
Which life's desires are seen as must
Compared to musts which simply gather dust?

First, Faith. The mystery to occupy our heart.
Acceptance of the unknown of which we're part
Of all that is to be and was before.
Not Supreme in self yet valued evermore.

And Hope. Life, now and when a primary need.
In hopelessness what promise could there be?
A void of meaning, a hold of bleak despair.
With the gift of Hope we greet each day with care.

Then Charity. Freely given and received.
Unneeded burdens of things and thoughts relieved.
To give in joy and take in grace makes clear
Possessions and obsessions don't make dear.

Love too. Love can breathe a life alive.
The leap to risk a pledge for life to thrive.
Uniting in fullness with another soul.
Is a necessity to make life whole.

The necessities of life dwell inside.
The wants external can be laid aside.

The Living
by Gabriella Derusha

I have a son
Who's in the army.
He's among the living,
Not the dead.
He may go to fight
In a war somewhere
On a distant shore
Like his grandfather
Some sixty years ago.
Then he too will hear
The roar of guns
And the sound of rockets
Ripping young bodies,
Forcing eternity
Unto the unprepared.
But my son's ready.
He's among the living,
Not the dead.

The Two-Sided Mirror

by Paul Toepke

A year ago, Iraq was my reality—my way of life, but now I can only envision it through the headlines that clutter our news media. I guess it is difficult not to be able to see, feel, or hear Iraq, especially since it was my territory for a year. I am left at the mercy of reporters—other people to portray the current realities of a place that was much more than news clippings to me. I find myself out of the war zone viewing the current conflict in print rather than in flesh—I find myself looking through the “two-sided mirror.”

The war is very personal to me because I made great sacrifices and contributions that played a factor in shaping Iraq into the country it has become (not that I can really brag at this point). The role I played was a minor one, but I tried my hardest to make every mission I went on a success! I like hearing progress stories from military colleagues who are doing the same job that I did.

Just recently, I read an article about how U.S. Marines are increasing pressure on insurgents in the city of Hadithah. The story provoked me to close my eyes and reminisce of a time when I was driving my HMMWV (high mobility multi-wheeled vehicle) through Hadithah city. I recall hearing a thunderous explosion ringing out.

“Contact, Contact, Contact!” barks my Captain into the radio, “Push through the choke point!” As the driver of the vehicle is accelerating through the narrow passage ways, swerving around trash and debris, I find myself in the turret scanning the rooftops for potential targets. I count the breaths I take, wondering if my last one will be my last—not knowing—not caring—living for the second! “Is everyone up?” I hear another soldier yell out. I slowly pat myself down feeling for any red, wet spots. “I am up!” I holler back, “just a little ringing in my ear!”

While we have been in “bone-chilling” situations like this before, this time was a little different because we had air support. “Pegasus” was the call sign for the OH-58 Delta helicopter pilots who accompanied us on our daily missions. They were our “eyes in the sky,” and on this particular day, they had the attacker on the run! A muffled transmission from Pegasus crackled over the net asking for a little ground help. Who were we to object to helping catch our potential killer? It was like a scene out of “Cops,” as we quickly rushed to the area of our foe. When we arrived, Pegasus was hovering very low, with the pilot scanning the terrain in hope of spotting the fleeing man.

We quickly dismounted and started to search. Taking in my reality, I could hear the harmonious hum of rotor blades cutting the air above me, smell the foul stench of decaying debris, taste the gritty sand between my teeth, and feel my angst and frustration. As the sweat on my face evaporated into the hellish climate heat, I found myself in dire need to get somewhere—fast! “Where the hell are you?!” I repeated this line over and over again to myself, while I had my rifle

trained on anything that seemed remotely questionable. I felt compelled to catch this person—to not allow this to happen ever again.

Eventually, we caught the man who was hiding in a heavily vegetated area. To make matters worse, one of the infantrymen found an opening underneath a mosque loaded with mortars, rockets, and other high explosive devices. We definitely killed two birds with one stone on that particular day—one day out of the 365 days!

I received the opportunity to view this war through my eyes, and now I get to view it through other people's eyes as well. It is interesting to see how other people fare, soldiers who are doing what I did, only to suffer the same needless heartache.

I get irritated when people who were not there criticize the war and describe America as a bully that does whatever it wants, when it wants, without the concerns of other countries. How should I respond to comments like that? Since America is a powerful world figure, we have an obligation to take responsibility and lead the charge on ending terrorism. I am sorry if some people would like us to be more fair and lenient on terrorists, but we have to stomp out the insurgency like a cigarette. I can not speak for these critics, but I know that I like my way of life, and I do not want to live under the thought of being hurt again like we were on September 11, 2001.

I feel that it is important to realize that we have come a long way. Let me explain what I mean. I boldly want to point out the fact that America is making life better for the people of Iraq. My eyes lay witness to ideas and emotions that could never be scribbled down on paper. How would I describe a crowd of Iraqi people dancing outside of their mud huts with an American Flag, celebrating the fact that we come to liberate them? How would I paraphrase the words of the broken-down-by-life man that asked if we were going to finish the job we started ten years prior? I could not begin to put into words the satisfaction I felt after rushing a little girl that got hit by a careless motorist to the hospital.

It is really hard to determine progress when all a person ever seems to hear is the bad news the media presents us. I guess what I learned so far is to not develop an opinion based on all the negativity on hears. I figure that we have to leave it to the people on the ground, the very same people who are witnessing what is happening directly. For every bad news article, I am sure that there are ten good stories that could be written. I am willing to bet that all the paper used to write about the negativity of this war could not sponge up the pain, misery, and tears endured by the people of Iraq.