

Northern  
Lights '98

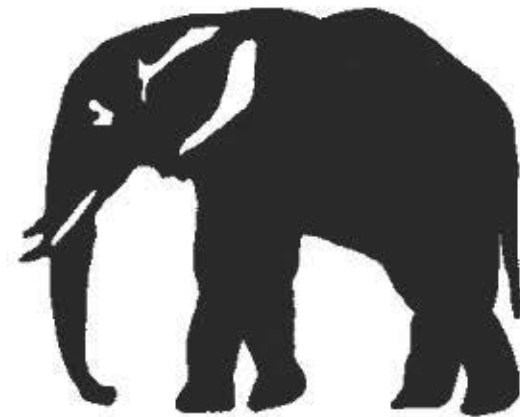


University of Wisconsin - Marinette  
Arts Journal

# Northern Lights

1998

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University of Wisconsin  
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Elephant  
Kevin LaCombe

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## Contributors

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Mary Armbrust         | Tracy Maas         |
| Kerri Borths          | Autumn Peterson    |
| Dana Dziedzic         | Wendy Ott          |
| Claudia Eggerschwiler | Kathi Pollard      |
| Tim Evans             | Zoila Poou         |
| Jason Grode           | Stacey Riley       |
| John Hallfrisch       | Aaron Rogers       |
| Michell Hampton       | Terri Stolpa       |
| Corinne Hunkeler      | Karrie Tomaszewski |
| Dan Kallgren          | David Turner       |
| Bill Krah             | Brad Washuleski    |
| Kevin LaCombe         | Marne Watson       |
| Matthew Lauters       | Bob Westberg       |
| Jenni Hallfrisch      |                    |

Cover Art: Medieval Dragon by Matthew Lauters

## Acknowledgments

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Editorial Committee: Jane Oitzinger, chair; Maureen Molle, Mary Armbrust, Shirley Evans, Katherine Holman, James LaMalfa, Kathi Pollard and Dan Rock.

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## Reborn

Kathi Pollard

I peer deeply into  
the windows of your soul  
only to discover my own reflection  
an expanded version of myself  
no mirror had yet revealed.

You unveil my beauty  
with an adoring gaze across the pillow  
and all the indifferent glances  
of a thousand eyes before  
are washed away and forgotten.

In a singular moment,  
I am reborn.

My Love  
Kerri Borths

I guess I could say  
My love for you  
Reaches higher than the stars above  
Or deeper than the ocean floor.  
But that has all been said before,  
So I will tell you in my own way.

My love for you is greater than that of my favorite teddy bear.  
It is better than ice cream on a summer day,  
It is more beautiful than a full moon over the bay.  
It is stronger than a steel beam,  
And it will last until my last heartbeat.



Janet Jackson  
Michell Hampton

Sacred Union  
Kathi Pollard

I rise up from your presence  
As one who leaves the altar,  
Humbled and awed by the mysteries  
Of love and adoration.

The fragrance of our union  
Lingers like incense at the tabernacle;  
I drink your rapacious gaze as  
One reverently taking the communion cup.

I prostrate myself before you,  
O beloved priest of my soul.  
Let the ritual begin anew,  
For my faith in the divine is aflame.

It is to you alone that  
I will confess my devotion,  
For only with you do I find  
revelation of the sacred.



Rock Castles in the Sand  
Jenni Hallfrisch

## Sandy Tracy Maas

Sandy was still pretty in her old age, but she was sickly. This led her to do odd things in the eyes of a healthy observer. Just when I started to believe she was thinking clearly, she would insist on getting her drinking water from the tub faucet instead of the sink. When questioned why, she always met the care-giver with an unwavering stare, silence and persistence.

Her family asked me to be her care-giver for a week while they went on a holiday in Arizona. Because I care about them, I could care for her.

Oh, she was thin. She didn't say much as I prepared the first meal and she ate with little gratitude. The house, like her, was very cold during what should have been a warm September. All the thick drapes of the south-facing windows were shut, and the smell of sickness mingled with the stale air of inactivity. It would be a long week.

I opened the drapes and turned up the thermostat. Sandy and her family could complain about my energy waste after I was gone. Perhaps my help would never be volunteered again.

I left Sandy to go to work and she waited by the door to watch me leave. I hesitated but decided she didn't have anything to say. She was just watching, maybe reflecting on her past freedoms.

Working second shift caused me to return to Sandy shortly after midnight. She startled me the first time I heard her hobble down the stairs. Her feet hit the boards with surprising, heavy thuds, and I feared she was falling or stumbling. But she strolled up to me and greeted me as though I had always lived there.

I asked if she was hungry and received a shrug. Because I was, I prepared our meals with good will, and we snacked together. When I slipped into my designated bed, she followed me. I was confused but relaxed and allowed her to remain under the covers. She seemed happy to do this.

Our routine persisted and on the second night, I lightly held her in my arms before heavy slumber rolled me away from her. I didn't know if it was right, but it didn't feel bad. She liked being cared for, but she loved being cared about. And to my surprise, I loved to care. Our

routine was private but important. Her happiness became all that mattered.

When the bargain was over and her family returned, I slipped away and the drapes were closed again. Sandy died soon after. I felt special to her for a little while and she created compassion I never knew existed in me.

Sandy was a cat.



Tiger  
Stacey Riley

### Please Speak

Karrie Tomaszewski

You interest me  
I think about you  
We exchange curious glances  
But you don't speak

You draw me to you  
Pull me to you  
Make me crazy  
But still you don't speak

Make my life easier  
Satisfy my desires  
Make me happy  
If only you'd speak!

## Conscientious Objector

\*A response to Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man"  
Mary Armbrust

Angry-Man, whose songs are Black and Blue,  
What is someone like me to do  
To convince you  
That I'm not the enemy?

You declare yourself invisible, but that's not quite right;  
Though seemingly so, you're here in plain sight  
With white-knuckled hands holding a veil ever-so-tightly  
Over your face, your pain, your heart and soul, clouding the issue.

What unnecessary suspicions: my mission is justice; I'm not into spying  
On your inner sanctum, or deciphering  
Some secret-code message that on the surface belies  
The shell-shocked suffering you endure.

In fact, your signified criticisms, discrete and so subtle, have been more  
than clear,  
And have set me to wondering: I fear  
That although I have said it, your ears could not hear it,  
You might not have heard *me* when I declared: I am not your enemy.

Do not judge me because I feel no shame for the mistakes of past  
Generations of arrogant others, the taskmasters  
Whose unbridled hatred caused scars that have lasted  
From generation to generation: I am not responsible for those  
abominations.

Nor do I swell with pride over The Emancipation Proclamation,  
Nor the amendment to The Constitution of this nation  
That ushered in freedoms for those whose station  
In America was not equal to that of their white counterparts: others  
deserve credit, not I.

My significance in race relations lies in the here and now,  
And in what might be achieved, if, somehow,  
My generation and my children's generation continue to espouse  
Face-to-face, not race-to-race, dialogue: person-to-person is my natural  
style.

No hatred, nor avarice, nor disrespect  
Emanate from my face, contrary to what you might expect;  
So, do not fail to detect  
The unabashed truth: the veil may, in fact, be your own worst enemy—  
*not me.*

I am only a conscientious objector, waiting for the war to end.



Owned  
Terri Stolpa

Politics  
Dan Kallgren

And what  
then  
Am I to believe in  
With those Plans and Plans  
shot down  
Discredited  
he says  
Those once thought true  
Now brought into question  
And him  
So smug  
With all the answers  
God, how I would like to see him see himself  
Fail  
Then bring into question  
Those he thought true  
discredited  
I thought  
shot down  
What he believes  
And  
What then?



Caught in the Moment  
Stacey Riley

The Blasted Hellride  
By  
Tracy Maas

Now please, stop whatever you are doing...Close your eyes...Stretch out your limbs...One at a time... Relax...

If you can do this, you are not currently confined to a single seat wedged in the fetal position. Instead of watching television, you find yourself watching forty-nine other people—all of you destined for the fountain of youth—Florida.

Fifty people, forty-eight of them passengers, forty-seven of them crazy; I volunteered to help the other two drive.

This hell started at noon when twelve unsuspecting UW-Marinette fools boarded the bus willingly. Oh! We were so happy! We were so gay! Our ice coolers were resting in the aisle and our bodies were draped across as many seats as we could touch. We were as light as bubbles until Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Okay, twenty-three more people, that isn't bad. There are still a few empty seats, eleven to be exact. No one can walk the aisle anymore because of all the coolers; it is like inverted monkey bars, but we are happy! We are on our way to Florida for spring break!

Waukesha, Wisconsin, twelve more people, eleven less seats, and twenty-four more hours to go. Shit. The logo across the front of the bus reads, "Have Group Will Travel." A good substitute might be, "Have Twelve friends, Will Ride in One Car for Thirty Hours," but no one could be friends for that long. The word "group" alone has the connotation of four or five. This is an allied resistance with a purpose to drink too much and act cool by definition of our peers. This trip is unlike our responsible behaviors at college. After fifteen minutes of togetherness, the resistance divides into sub-groups.

Group #1: the Rear group

This group is the roughest, loudest, and toughest looking. They control the toilet. When someone walks to the back, the smoke slaps the unsuspecting person on the nose and about ten pairs of eyes stare the person into a state of paranoia. When the bus stops, about ten pairs of lungs sigh and ten throats moan. Out of the smoky haze a single voice yells, "Why the fuck are we stopping now?" The rest of the passengers sit low in their seats to avoid any associated involvement. The rear group also has the loudest radio, the meanest music, and they don't drink to get a buzz.

Group #2: the "Us" or "We" group

"We" consists of Colleen, Diana, Matt, Dieter—the German



boy,—and myself, Tina. We could be ten people. However, one Waukesha person was forced to sit with Matt, and the people two seats across from us are looking nervously about. Next wayside open is 64 miles away. Ours is a shy and passive group. Our one form of rebellion is to read. We have no radio; we do not smoke; but we do have liquor stowed in the coolers. Acting as middle-men between the ghetto, Group #5 and the Pop-culture, Group #3, we determine that our best defense against riot attacks will be the tossing of free liquor and running to the nearest exit.

Group #3: The Top-forty or Pop-culture group.

Consisting of 12 people, they drink beer and sing love songs extremely loud. Self-appointed team-drink captain, Ben, is downing team-drink # 28. If you have not had your 28th, then maybe you had better join our group or find Group #4.

Group #4: The Nice group.

They receive my most sincere pity. Approximately sixteen of them, these poor wretches get to sit up front making small talk among themselves or with the bus drivers. There is little incidence of motion sickness as they stare straight ahead at the picturesque highway to hell. They have come to know each other so well, they have exchanged addresses. I can only hope this doesn't dissuade these people from believing spring break is everything movies promise it is: drinking, sex, and sunburn.

Only eighteen hours and fifty minutes to go. This may be a hell ride, but heaven is waiting because I can almost see that Florida sun rise over the ocean. Can you smell the orange blossoms too?

It is 3:22 p.m. The digital watch on my wrist is my only source of amusement. I have counted the first I-95 sign. I spot a sign for Miami: 305 miles. I guess Daytona is not so far after all.

3:27 p.m. I spot another I-95 sign. I really have to use the toilet.

Group #1, the rear group, would be more than happy to sit up front with the drivers now. The combination of smoke, beer, sweat, and an exceedingly used toilet is more than the nose cares to inhale.

The "Us" or "We" group is still reading.

Group #2 is still drinking, but the team-drink captain stops yelling out team-drink opportunities to slam when he detects a mutiny rising. He resigns when one team member suggests he be quiet or ride with the luggage. It is sad he is given a choice at all. I thought college students could be more creative.

Group#4 has terrific kidney control. I have not seen one of them

use the toilet since Milwaukee. Now that is a nice quality to be remembered for.

3:44 p.m. I count a third I-95 sign.

3:50 p.m. I-95 sign #4. The next sign reads, "Daytona next 3 exits." We never made it to Daytona in high school because when we saw the sign, "Daytona left," we went home.

4:10 p.m. Rear group's radio finally synchronized with the Pop-culture's radio.

We are driving through Daytona city. It is a dark sky. The appearance of the town is sort of gloomy too. A lot of buildings are victims of the salt air and need paint to cover the bare wood patches. The people walking the sidewalks stop to stare at yet another invasion of spoiled college kids. Some wave and if you wave back, they only shake their heads. "Poor, poor fools," they are probably thinking.

My stomach, like everyone else's is doing flip-flops. The anticipation is the same I have experienced before giving a speech. What is waiting for us out there? I can only wonder. For the first time, everyone on the bus is in silent agreement.

The bus halts before a stop light. A barefoot young man, wearing a mesh, cut-off shirt and ragged shorts, dances and twirls out to the bus. He drinks some beer and then peers into the nearest window. He tips his hat at the person and another trapped group member knocks on her window. He springs and spins to that window and stares wide eyed at her. She shows him her middle finger and he wags his pointer finger back as if saying, "No, no, no. That's naughty." Everyone laughs. The bus lurches when the light turns green and he twirls away with the grace of a ballet dancer, never appearing to spill a drop. Apparently, Daytona can not afford a welcoming committee.

4:36 p.m. We are still on the bus. "Have Group Will Travel" is having trouble finding the Thunderbird Inn. Matt has passed a type of map to the front of the bus. "Ert and Bernie," our ever faithful drivers, are considering all possible routes. Another member of the welcoming committee rushes out to greet us. She is dressed in a black top and jeans and also holding a beer. She slaps the windows as we pass slowly. "You are all going to hell!" She screams. I think, "Lady, you're nuts if you think it would be hell to get off this bus."

4:46 p.m. After revisiting all possible routes in the S. Atlantic area, "Ert and Bernie" are now visiting the N. Atlantic area.

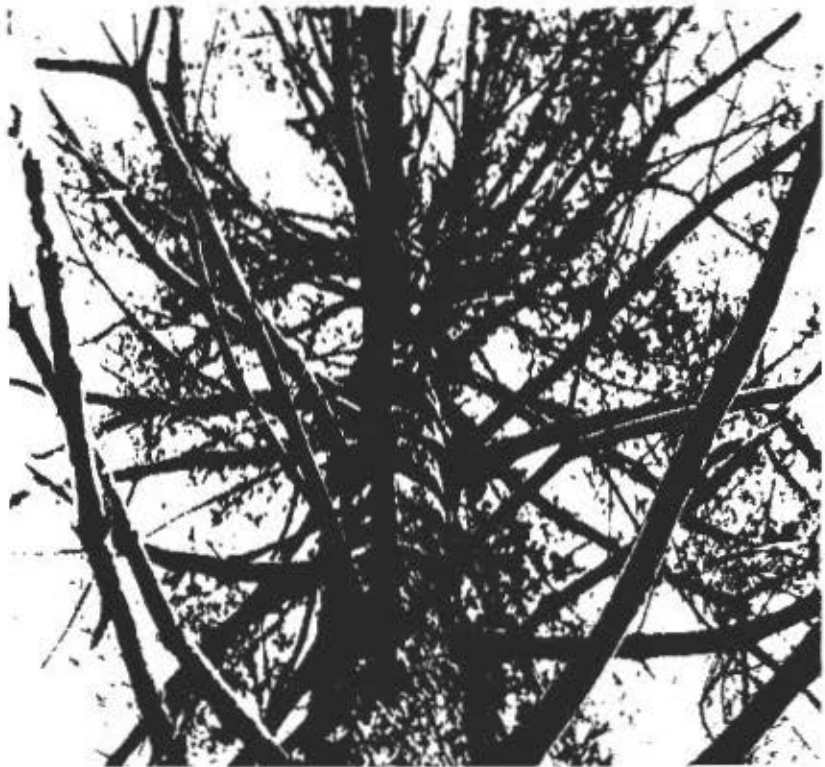
5:06 p.m. "Have Group Will Travel" stops. The sign is impressive. It must be sixty feet tall with the proud name: THUNDERBIRD INN.

Our humbled group remains seated as others start to collect their things. Everyone else rushes over the coolers to retrieve the precious suit cases "Ert and Bernie" are now flinging toward the sidewalk.

The parking lot I see is filled with people sitting on their luggage apparently waiting for another bus to take them away. I feel a nervous twist inside my stomach.

"There must be 100 or 150 people out there and none of them look happy," I say to my friends. With our noses pressed against the glass, "Ert and Bernie" ruthlessly yank our stuff out of the bus's gut. We drag the coolers to the door and set foot on Daytona beach for the first time. We leave behind the predictable world of hell and enter the world of chaos.

A piece from "Home Again with a Cold"  
June 1989

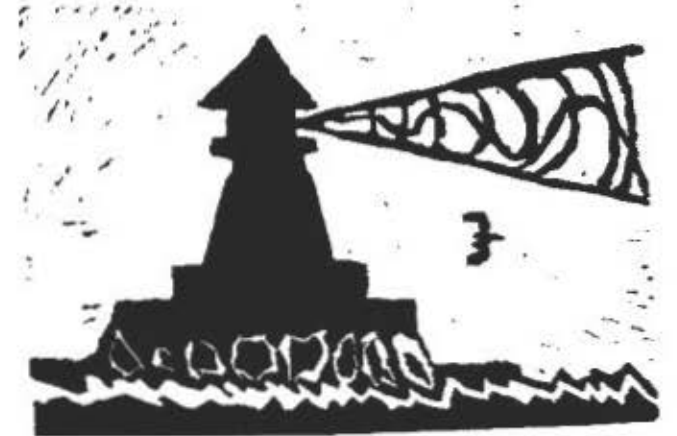


Tree  
Autumn Peterson

## A Pleasing Plea to the Sea, or a Pirate's Curse Written in Verse

Tim Evans

Fish chewers and ale-pissers, Rejoice!  
Our ship has harbored. To the Seven Seas we  
Rogues and scoundrels sail, perched fore and aft  
On our able craft, we hail the horizons with  
Visions of pillage and plunder.  
Under the noon-day sun our wind-fattened sails will  
Strain like a fullfigured corset in a sailor's dreams.  
Voice your excitement lads: with piratical curses and  
Treasure-filled screams.  
Port cities, BEWARE, of the scourge surfers of liquid highways,  
Inland byways,  
And I, bein' the captain, Har, we do it my way!  
A penny mayhap or even a nickel, but  
Never, Never shall we give quarter!  
All who ask life's length, shall find it shorter.  
From the vast Pacific, to the Little Sturgeon,  
We seek strong drink and the fairest of virgins.  
Mighty are the tasks to which we endeavor, but  
If we live to tell lads, why we'll live forever.  
Raise the bones and skull, scrape the barnacles from the hull.  
Load the cannon and man the plank,  
We follow Red Beard's footsteps, and to him give thanks. Harr



Lighthouse  
Matthew Lauters

## And She Slept

David Turner

Molded and sculpted cheekbones swept  
Back from eyes where love did dwell  
Life she once had, but there she only slept

There was no spark of life inside  
No semblance of blush or heart  
Cold and barren breasted, dead she at my side

Oh sweet hand, fair and gentle fingers  
Would they could touch my face once more  
But in them life no longer lingered

Dead my love, fair sweet child  
Lost to me, lost to earth, gone far away  
As if life no longer held the joys we need

Would that I could follow her to rest  
Stand guard over her and protect  
But she has passed and left me

No, such was not my fate  
She was taken, she alone  
Leaving me no hope or love

Father creator, cruel oppressor  
Taking life from one so young  
How dare you rise and kill her

Oh, pain, she is gone, lost forever  
Gone from me, into darkness  
Presence denied, souls severed

Nevermore shall I feel angelic air  
Nor shall sweet heart beat near mine  
Where shall I find her, yes, where

Pain is my lot, my boon  
There remains nothing more for me  
Life so short, death so soon

In that place of light and joy,  
Where the darkness cannot touch  
And pain is but a memory, I shall search

High and low, open-hearted  
Search until I find you  
And become whole once more



Night Watcher  
Marne Watson

My Pyre  
David Turner

The fires burn inside  
Eternal, unquenchable  
They are within us  
Consuming us  
Fed by our being  
Yet part of us  
Of man not in man  
All life they feed  
The fuel they need  
Is produced by their  
All too furious fire  
Like the phoenix  
Those eternal flames  
Rise from their own ashes  
And burn themselves  
Inside once more  
Eternal cycle of renewal  
They bring us life  
Birth joy and love  
Engender pain and hate  
They tear and destroy  
While building that  
Which they consume  
Death they bring  
And the flames  
Give no peace  
Within their fold  
In either burn or ash  
They drive us on  
Create what we know  
Give us hope and joy  
Steal our dreams in sleep  
The flames burn on  
Within us all, born  
Of life, for death  
They are our dreams  
As much as thieves  
In death they pass  
Onward to others  
In memories brought  
By life and the world

Inside and without  
All continues on  
Within tracks nonexistent  
Following a path  
Never made or seen  
The flame's a cycle  
The cycle is time  
So all things burn  
and all things return  
We live, we die, we travel, we burn



Mick Jagger  
Corinne Hunkeler

## The Promise and the Darkness

David Turner

An idyllic haven of cobbled road and shaded groves cooled by the living presence of flowing water may greet one yet, and still may be seen at mid-day, that place of light which did lend warmth to the generations as they marched off to war. So calm a place, so peaceful and removed, too pure and seemingly virginal to have stood witness to such a sight as must have greeted it when life's sons were bled off into the lands of war. Yet it did so too frequently, reliving events which the stroke of time had cleansed of any impression but that of honor and glory, forgetting each successive generation's lesson, making sacrifice and suffering examples of complete futility. With each cycle, there assembled a troop of the town's downy-cheeked and bright-eyed young men, spindly limbed and untried all, bent upon fighting for god and king, country and peace. With great pomp and trumpet flair, the heretofore sleepy town rose to send off its young for glory's service. The bands did play, the flags were displayed with the greatest of pride, the politicians strutted about and shook hands, and an amalgam was achieved, a bridging of all old rifts, an abandonment of personal barriers and vendettas as the glorious sight was exposed for all to witness and revel in. Children gaped open-mouthed with awe at the glittering symbols of rank, the stout and imposing helmets, the tall and foreign weapons of warfare, all too much for them to possibly take in stride. Their little hearts swelled with a naive and juvenile pride, their very bodies aching with the desire to share in the wonder they felt must await those who so soon would face the darkness. And even those whom the town did seek to honor and pay homage to were forced, through the intoxicating revelry of the town, to abandon their unconscious fear for future, and thereby allowed themselves to be buoyed by those promises of war, to be swelled by and caught up in the idyllic ferocity of the blood-lust-filled little hamlet. Nothing could break the spell they knew; no god would see cause to forsake so brave and honorable men as themselves. With heads held high and glistening eyes did they parade across town square turned parade ground. Quick legged and with puffed out chests they marched for the town, garnering its praises and a reciprocation of those feelings of invincibility due ones so young. With great alacrity they dispersed themselves amongst those persons who might see fit to aid in the swelling of their heads further with grand tales of past glories or impress upon them the nature of the honor which had been bestowed upon them by allowing such men of the town a chance at service to crown and country. So grown up did they feel, so alive and vital, so powerful and commanding. Confident and boisterous with courage and not a little pride did they gratefully submit themselves to war. What

could possibly befall them? What pain could await which might hope to outweigh and destroy their glory and might? What hell would dare tarnish the memories of peace and love which they carried from that youth's haven left swirling in that little eddy of time which had comprised home and world for all of their known lives? No, they were the invincible, the chosen, the mighty, hope's champions.

So they marched from under the kind mid-day sun and smooth poplars, across the cool canal and its terraced banks, away from that land of light and into the gathering clouds of war and death's murky fog. The band spirited them away; the men raised their voices in soul shaking hurrahs; the mothers and sweethearts wept with pride; and the children ran alongside, shouting and waving little flags until they could no longer stay the course. All their world watched as the ranks retreated into the mists of distance, and even when no longer could be glimpsed those weapon's flashing with their own life, or the dust's parched blooms, the town worshiped the horizon as if it would offer up some sign or omen of things to come.

In time, those young men did return from their trial of fire, wrapped in the glory they had set out to garner for themselves, and as each flag-draped casket and the body ensconced therein filed past the again assembled crowd to the tune of a somber funeral dirge, those tears which had flowed so freely before, came again, bringing that bittersweet pain of pride-filled loss to hearts which had too recently swelled with joy. Much was made of their sacrifice, of the snuffing of burgeoning life, and word and tear flowed liberally over their grief, assuaging unconscious guilt and cleansing their memories of all things painful by way of self-preservation.

An old woman, worn and bent by time and fate, stood apart from the subdued revelry which so engrossed the town, staring with sad eyes into the distances as if glimpsing the flow of time and things long past. Her eyes glistened and the old and creased forehead furrowed deeper with emotions plucked from that flow of time. From those depths of black which marked both color of eye and quality of soul came a piercing intensity of unfocused remembrance, and across those features so long held stony by pain's killing effects there passed a story so akin to that which she now stood witness to, that any who bore its pain should immediately succumb to death. Unconsciously, feet moved in unison, taking her unawares from the scenes of present, into the distance of space and memory. As that place of light grew distant, there came a darkening of soul and sentiment until all snapped round and the very internal world set to steady burn. The path led on into the mists, and as those feet traced over ground they knew better than any other, the mind was freed to ponder all of life until it arrived at the death brought to attention so recently. Those ancient feet reached their destination as the

final death of soul swept over the heart of that old woman of pain. With now unsure steps and trembling mind she walked forward into the shadows. A tear coursed down great time-traced rents from an eye fixed no longer on nothingness, down a chin so long held firm against life's trials that it knew nothing else, and off into depthless space, defying logic as it held place for a fleeting eternity, catching in its limitless vortex all the world as it hung where none but she could see. It fell with deafening silence upon time-blackened stone, glistening for a moment before it merged with the aged surface and disappeared from view. The old woman watched with disheartened wonder at that tear drawn from a well so long thought dry and followed its path ever downward, grasping at it as if it were her last claim to life. Ancient and gnarled fingers traced over letters they knew by heart as she felt of the gritty if minute pain the stone offered up, digging as if in its surface there was stored those emotions necessity had demanded she banish from her all-too-human heart. She stared long at the name which the stone held captive, eyes dry because all the tears granted her had been shed long ago in another life, one from which she had forced herself hide lest she be utterly consumed. She sat upon the unnaturally cold ground and wrapped arms around hard and unyielding stone, trying to draw from it the life whose passing it marked, trying to feel of it once more and thereby revel for one moment in the vivifying fire of unrequited love which alone could return the life she had so long forfeited to fate's cruelty. But the stone yielded nothing of life or death, merely stood impassive witness to all that was.

As the sky clouded and the faint whispers of the funeral dirge echoed in the distance as it had so long before and drew to a heart rending close, she pressed her face ever harder into the cold surface of stone and tried to weep. She lay awaiting the death she had unconsciously prayed for for nearly all her life, dying in the presence of her life's pain, trying to force herself upon death, to hasten an end she knew was not forthcoming, for death would have no part in her escape and turned back towards suffering and silent prayers as it had so many times before.

As the once again glowing sun sank into the purple haze of distant horizon, she painfully brought herself from upon the chill ground and brushed from her clothes those errant grains of sand which had alighted upon them, unconsciously removing, as always, those reminders which would signal again her pain, and bring past to consciousness's forefront. As feet traced their original course, she briefly halted and turned face towards that again abandoned sepulcher, staring with empty and lifeless eyes at the resting places of first love and lost son, drowning in remembrance of two generations of personal hell. With a silent sigh from within her deafened heart, she left that place of

darkness and ventured once again from the death she had all but felt.

Darkness swept over the land, raising eerie shadows amongst the ordered rows of death as it progressed, creeping ever onward with every passing breath. It caught her in mid-flight, wrapping round, as if trying to darken blackness. But darkness was outstripped by darkness, and the old woman appeared even blacker as the sky dimmed, passing beyond a thing it could not touch, lingering but a moment more as if in wonder before enveloping all in its steely velvet folds.



Runnoe Park  
Brad Washuleski

My Daughter  
Dana Dziedzic

As I look into  
your dark  
dark  
almost black  
eyes,  
I see an  
old soul.

What name will  
symbolize the  
wisdom  
and eloquence,  
strength, yet gentleness  
I see in your  
dark  
dark eyes?

Olivia!

Yes my daughter  
I shall call you  
Olivia.

For the times you  
are spunky  
feisty  
and sporty,  
I then shall  
call you  
Livie.

Makenzie!  
Bill Krah

Mary, Nikki, Nancy are fine.  
Sandy, Carrie, Megan are too.

A name is just a name, until it belongs to you.

We took all the names, put them in a hat,  
When we picked one out, we said we couldn't name you that!

The name we chose for you was Makenzie,  
The selection process became quite a frenzy.

We took the usual questions,  
Who, Why, Where.  
And finally came to the conclusion that we just didn't care.

We love the name we chose.  
It is strong, confident and true.  
It is beautiful, warm and kind, just exactly like you.

The more you grow we see, we made the right choice.  
You always seem to make us laugh just with the sound of your voice.

Makenzie!



Treehouse  
Jason Grode

## Painted Baby

Kathi Pollard

Strawberry-blond curls  
frame a cameo-like visage  
a splash of rouge  
highlights chiseled cheekbones  
raspberry gloss sweetens  
plump, tender, pouting lips  
a slight blush covers exposed cleavage

a revealing last look in the mirror  
black leather and ruby stilettos  
proper attire to meet the elusive Wizard  
on the fantasy-lined streets of Oz  
where pink-bodied girls are sold  
like trinkets at a flea market  
and the coral serpent of death  
slithers closer with every sleazy motel  
and back alley fix  
blurring Kansas from her memory

in Heartland, mother's tears  
run crimson with grief  
the garnet glow of sunset  
brings her to calloused knees  
swollen, blood-shot eyes are buried  
in the palms of work-worn hands  
she keeps the vigil

and prays for her painted baby

## Momma's Back

Aaron Rogers

He's so weird," said Scott as Flash stumbled past a group of neighborhood kids from Thirty-second Street. "He walks like he just drank a bathtub of beer." Scott stood up from his grassy seat and pretended to act like Flash. He made his eyes droopy and walked in front of his friends, tripping every few feet. The group of kids from Thirty-second Street laughed. Jeff started to throw rocks at Scott because he was acting like Flash for too long. "Scott always does this," thought Jeff. "Once everybody starts laughing at him, he keeps on acting like an idiot because he has everybody's attention." As soon as the other kids saw Jeff's rock hit Scott, who was now lying on the ground pretending he was having a heart attack, they also started pelting him with rocks.

After the friends became tired of beaming Scott with rocks, they started throwing them at each other. Eventually, Mike broke away from the rock fight and started to chuck rocks down the street at Flash.

Although he was drunk, Flash's senses were still pretty keen. At first, he heard this strange whizzing around him. "Damn May flies," he thought. "It's late June and they're still here."

The first rock reached Flash but it didn't hit him. Instead it punched a hole in the paper bag that Flash held in his left hand and hit the chilled forty ounces of Miller High Life. Flash heard the sound of the rock hitting the bottle and turned around to see where it came from. A second rock, which was much bigger, hit Flash's blaze orange baseball cap that read "Old Fuck Fart" and kicked it off his head.

"Those damn kids," thought Flash. "No respect for their elders. They don't know me. They don't understand what I've done in my life. I'm a veteran of World War II," he pondered proudly. "I charged the bloody beach of Omaha on D-Day. Some of those young guys never made it to the beach. They were shot dead in the water by Nazi snipers or they drowned. But those kids don't understand. They just don't know."

Flash was right. Those kids didn't know. Flash was a decorated World War II veteran (he had been awarded the Purple Heart for carrying two wounded comrades, at the same time, to a medic during heavy German gun fire.) After the war, Flash married his high school sweetheart, Alice. Flash and Alice built a house with government money that was awarded to veterans who received the Purple Heart. After Flash and Alice's first child



was born, Flash decided to use his G.I. Bill and go back to school. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Business and Economics and became a successful financial planner in a few years.

Things were going very well for Flash until one hot August day in 1960. Flash had just set his work briefcase down when he received a phone call that made him drop the receiver and almost piss the urine his bladder had held during the long drive from work. It was a call about death. Alice had been killed in a car accident. Some young, inexperienced semi-driver, who had just graduated two days before the crash, fell asleep at the wheel and crossed the center line. The doctors said the head-on collision killed Alice instantly.

"Instantly," Flash thought. "That's what *all* doctors say when they are trying to ease the grieving of the victim's family. Sure, her death may have come instantly, but there must have been that split-second of pain between Alice's life and her death. I still can remember what she was wearing that humid August day and how proud she looked sending her baby boy to his first day of high school.... Don't think those thoughts," Flash said to himself. "That happened 37 years ago. But I miss her," he said. "My God, do I miss her."

Flash walked on towards his home. He crossed Twelfth Avenue and rounded the paint store which was on Thirty-fourth Avenue. As he walked, he looked down at the cracks in the sidewalk. Even though the sidewalk was spinning and his brain was numb with intoxication, Flash could still remember the sidewalk game he played as a child. "Step on a crack, you'll break your momma's back," Flash mumbled.

Up ahead on the avenue, fishing line was slowly being unrolled by two little, anxious hands.

"Is he on the avenue yet?" Jeff asked as he laid out the fishing line.

"Yeah, he is! He just went past the Paint Palette," shouted Scott. "Boy, is old Flash in for it this time," thought Scott. "The old drunk won't know what tripped him."

"This is going to be even better than the time you shot Flash in the butt from your bedroom window with a BB gun!" Scott exclaimed to Jeff.

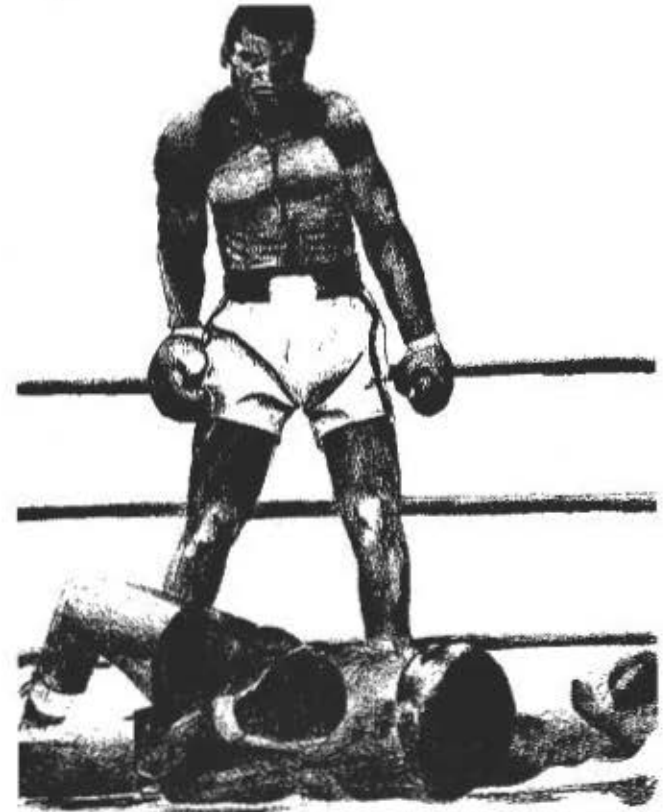
Scott was glowing with pride. His plan of tripping Flash with fishing line was the talk of the neighborhood. If this plan of Scott's was successful, he was sure his prank on Flash would be talked about for months. If it failed, Scott wouldn't be worried. His parents were planning on putting a swimming pool in their backyard this summer. Swimming pools make unpopular kids famous overnight.

"Here he comes," Scott shouted. "All right everybody, take your places." Scott climbed into a hedge on one side of the sidewalk and Jeff hid behind a car across from Scott.

An ant stopped at the fishing line that lay flat on the sidewalk. The ant had been crawling a long time in the hot sun. It needed to rest. It needed to quit crawling before it was too late. It needed shelter desperately.

Flash swayed back and forth but moved on forward down the avenue. His feet felt heavy and his body was sweating. He wished he were sitting at home.

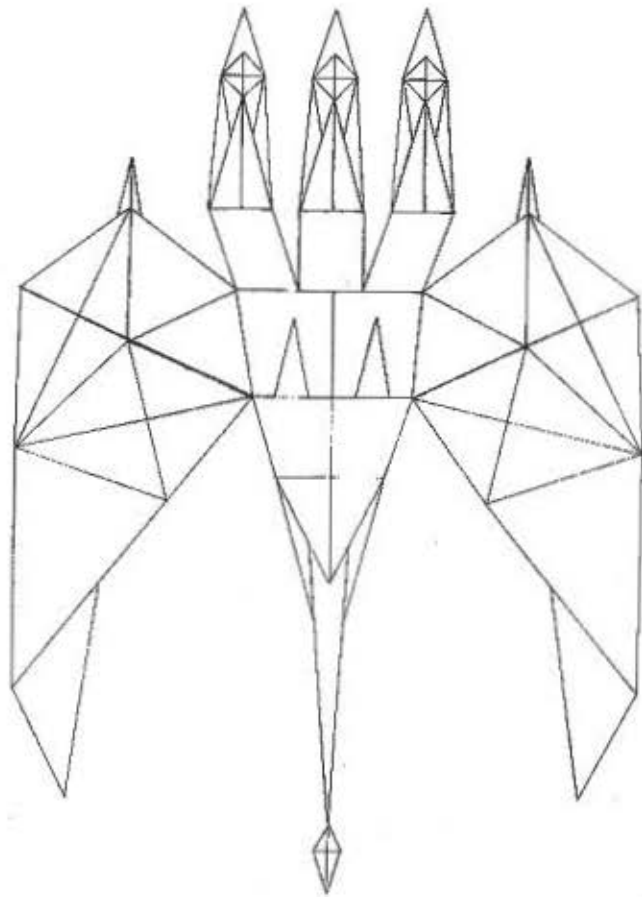
As Flash put his left foot down, a hot, tired ant was squashed. Then the fishing line elevated six inches off the sidewalk. Flash lifted his right leg and tripped over the line. He now could feel his face on the burning sidewalk. He lay there desperately.



Muhhamed Ali  
Michell Hampton

On the Beach  
Dan Kallgren

Red sand between my toes  
I trudge  
with A Dripping Nose  
and turn  
and look  
What a car wreck



Untitled  
Bob Westberg



On the Water  
John Hallfrisch

## Tender Heart

\*God's Song of Love to Mike, and to Anyone Who Has Ever Been Ridiculed  
Mary Armbrust

Tender heart...wounded soul...longing for peace and to be made whole,  
Know my love will cover the pain in the night,  
I will stay with you for the rest of your life.  
come to me and rest for awhile...  
For you are mine.

Tender heart...in the dark...do not try to hide from the love I impart,  
For my love is perfect, it casts out all fear,  
Take my hand, allow me to draw very near.  
If you listen closely you'll hear...  
that you are mine.

Tender heart...running scared...if you'll stop all this dancing, I'll show you I care,  
If you look for me in a quiet place,  
I will hold you close, in a tender embrace.  
If there's room in your heart, you'll find...  
That you are mine.

Tender heart...trust in me...you are made exactly the way you should be,  
I, who formed you into the person you are,  
I am near you always, how precious you are!  
I will give you peace for all time...  
For you are mine.

Tender heart...blinded one...open your eyes, see the face of the one  
Who has loved you so, made you free to go  
To the world and tell them what you have seen,  
And believe in your heart, for all time...  
that you are mine...  
You are mine.

## The Cherry Tree

Zoila Pooa

A cherry tree is like a sea  
of flowers in the wind.  
Whose boughs bend with every breeze,  
as the birds come swooping in.  
Now and then Mother Nature will lend,  
a miracle to the tree,  
in order that it fruit may bear,  
for all of you and me.



Tree  
Claudia Eggerschwiler

## He Holds Me

Wendy Ott

Verse 1

Let down by my friends  
Exhausted in my strife  
I need someone to hold me  
To take care of my life.

Struggling with temptations  
It's hard to keep control  
Can't anyone see in me  
The burdens of my soul.

Chorus

He holds me in his arms  
When no one seems to see  
The hurt I have within me  
That needs to be set free.

He takes away the anger  
The sorrows and the fears  
Thank you Lord for caring  
And wiping away all my tears

Verse 2

Searching for directions  
It seems they can't be found  
I want someone to guide me  
To set me on the ground.

I don't know where I'm going  
My life seems to be lost  
Won't anyone please help me  
Doesn't matter the cost.

(Chorus)

Verse 3

I've finally found the answer  
It's easy now to see  
How much he really loves me  
And I'm completely free.