

# SHORELINE

THE RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE MAGAZINE OF ARTS AND LITERATURE



F A L L · 1 9 9 2

3 DOLLARS

# SHORELINE

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# Do You Know What It's Like?

by Gerard A. Siino

It was a 45-horsepower Evinrude outboard.

I wasn't there. I wasn't even born. But I'd heard about it enough. How the motor had splintered Bobby Leahy's fingers, sliced open three gashes on his stomach and cut his penis almost clean through, leaving only one good testicle and a semi-permanent case of impotence. How his blood had cascaded down his legs, flooded the boat, covered spent beer cans and life jackets.

You could hear that story at Jake's Tap, if you wanted to. But I didn't. That's not what I was doing there. It was raining and I'd just found some old photos of somebody I'd used to know. She was long gone but I kept remembering things, all of them good. And, for the life of me, I couldn't recall what I'd done — the one bad thing I'd done — which made her not there anymore. Just one bad thing. And I didn't know what it was. I thought a drink or two might help me remember.

"Nils," Bobby Leahy said, "let's have one more before we go, my mother won't mind if we're a little late."

"No, Bob," said Nils, "Lilly will be waiting. Dinner's almost ready, I think. And I've had enough. So have you."

"Oh, come on, Nilsy, she won't mind."

Nils just stared at him.

Bobby said, "Well, I'm having one. Fuck it." He pulled his silver money-clip from his pocket and removed three ones. With his mangled hand he motioned to the bartender to bring two more.

"Here's to my mother — Lilly," toasted Bobby, "and to you, Nilsy. The happy couple." They drank down their mugs. They didn't see it, but I drank to them, too.

Two young guys from the factory, and a hooker who was negotiating doing them both, also sat at the bar. There were some others playing pool, sitting at tables, booths. The usual crowd, nobody special.

The two guys and the hooker got up to go.

Bobby was a regular customer of the hooker's. Her name was Janice, I think. But we called her The Hooker because nobody wanted to get too close, like we were all friends or something.

"Hey," Bobby said, smiling and stumbling onto The Hooker. "don't get all used up tonight. Save some for me."

The shorter of the two guys pulled Bobby off her. She thanked him and told Bobby she'd maybe see him later.

"No," Bobby said. "Now. I want a little preview."

"Bobby," Nils pleaded, "don't do this. Let's go home, Lilly's waiting."

"Be right there, Nils, I'm just going to get a kiss."

"But Lilly's..."

"Fuck her, Nils, she'll have to wait!"

The short one drove his fist into Bobby's gut. Bobby bent forward in pain, holding his stomach. He spit up some of the beer he'd just had. The Hooker left with the other two in tow.

Bobby pulled out a gun and went out the door with Nils close behind. They ran onto the street. The rain was heavier.

I heard a shot. And then a yell. I saw the lights of a car pass by and heard a sound like it had hit something, maybe a trash can.

When I got out there, Bobby was sitting in a puddle across the street and Nils was draped over a fire hydrant. There was no car, no hooker. Nils was sort of hugging the hydrant, his right leg extending forward farther than it should. The rain sounded like quick drum beats on the back of his nylon coat. There was no blood. None. It surprised me.

The ambulance came and took Nils away. Somebody called Bobby's mother. Dinner had gotten cold, why go home? Bobby stayed at the bar.

We always stayed.

The Hooker came back a couple of hours later. By then we'd all toasted Nils a lot. Bobby said that Nils had catapulted high into the air. He said it was majestic.

She sat next to Bobby and ordered a white wine.

He pulled out his money-clip and laid a twenty on the bar.

She smiled at Bobby, "Thanks, hon," and went to a booth. Her ass brushed against my knees as she passed.

Bobby sat next to her. He didn't say anything. He took deep breaths. I thought he might be hyperventilating. She unzipped her top and let her breasts fall out.

He put his arm around her shoulders, his nose between her breasts and breathed.

Her hand disappeared under the table.

I tried to look away—and I did once. I looked at everybody else in the bar. Nobody seemed to notice them.

Then one of his hands went below the table. His other hand, the good one, was clamped around her neck. She moved a little, almost struggling. He pinned her against the wall. She seemed to be trying to get free. I almost stood up to see if something was wrong.

But she held his head to her chest. And he just kept taking deep breaths. Her eyes were closed. She faced the ceiling.

"Oh, yes," I heard her say, "you're on tonight, honey."

And then he stood up and screamed, "No, bitch!"

She looked at him, confused. Her breasts were just sitting there. The handprint on her neck was red and defined.

Bobby staggered back to the bar. No one looked at him. Not even The Hooker, who had zipped up, walked to the door of the men's room and seemed to be negotiating another deal with somebody inside.

He stood in the middle of Jake's. He covered his ears and screamed "No, no, no," but nobody listened.

He pulled out his gun and held it in his good hand. He rotated in place, with the gun pointed out. He seemed to love the look on their faces as he aimed at them, that sudden realization that this could be it, maybe they'd bought it.

Then he pointed it at me. Right at me. At my head.

He said, "Do you know what it's like?"

For a second I thought about the 45-Evinrude, and how could just one bad thing do so much?

*"Bobby said that Nils had catapulted high into the air...He said it was majestic."*



## Reasons Why Stevie Won't Ride His Bike Anymore



It started at a bad time  
His legs feel good now.  
what with the divorce, her blue eyes  
Cigarettes taste like dirt.  
and his propensity for leg-watching.  
The lock is rusted shut.  
there was nothing he liked better  
And the key is missing.  
than a Valentine's Day surprise  
Better to just forget about  
replete with all those vague promises  
That smooth-riding black twelve-speed.  
conjuring hopes - no - fantasies -  
A hundred yards and his ass aches.  
and many more than what is commonly viewed  
Pumping in tenth gear. Potholes.  
as acceptable in today's action -  
Breathe and you get a fly  
out of touch with the new rules of disinformation  
In your mouth. Drivers opening doors  
like Rip Van Winkle's pledge to the aristocracy.  
Without looking. Unheeded stop signs.  
if he'd only known what wanting guaranteed,  
Can't wear a helmet without a dulling  
and that he should have stayed off the Schwinn  
Of the senses. Can't look good either.  
until he figured how to ride it again.  
Traffic cops and training wheels.

Gerard A Siino

## How To Get Ready To Write

By Bethany Mott

Chew  
a stick  
of tangerine gum.  
Make sure  
your hair  
is tangled (tie knots  
if you must).  
Your toes  
should be free.  
Let them  
get cold.  
Don't forget  
to have  
an even number  
of warts.  
Nearby keep  
something brass  
or marble  
or glass  
(though a rock  
from under the porch  
will do). Avoid  
shells. Avoid  
trees. Don't  
let ice cubes  
clink on a drink.  
Drink a purple thing.  
Find some fiction.  
read three books  
at once—a page  
then a page  
then a page  
(only go for  
a chapter or so).  
Throw all the lamps  
in a closet.  
Go to your desk  
where the loose leaf waits.  
crinkle  
a single sheet,  
open it, smooth it,  
press it over your face  
and trace (a light  
outline is fine, don't  
puncture an eye).  
Fold the paper  
neatly and pin it  
to the back of your shirt.  
Floss your teeth  
until your spit turns pink.  
Pick up a gray bird  
feather from the wet street,  
super glue it  
to the middle of your mirror.

Clip  
your grandmother's  
toenails.  
Talk to a man  
wringing a brown cap.  
Or, unfurl  
a sleeping bag  
(musty rayon, army green).  
Lay it on the wood floor,  
climb in  
head first  
to the end,  
hold your breath,  
hold yourself  
around the knees.  
Take a hot shower  
at six a.m.,  
drip dry.  
Lock a door,  
try to pick it  
with your mother's  
bobby pin  
(don't spend  
too long on this).  
Avoid music. Avoid  
stationary stores.  
Roll up  
an orange extension cord  
or a mud caked garden hose.  
Untie a plastic bag  
filled with old  
film negatives,  
hold each strip  
up to the light.  
Taste the zipper  
on your father's  
tobacco pouch.  
Masking tape  
your mouth shut,  
recite  
the pledge of allegiance  
then rub your thumb  
across the tape  
(in a Bogart sort of way).  
Let your little brother  
finger paint  
over your  
high school diploma.  
Unwrap a bar

Bite  
the rolls  
of the dog's fat neck.  
Stick your nose  
in a glass of water  
until you smell it.  
Find a calendar  
from 1982,  
read the days in March.  
Hide  
all the pool balls  
under your bed.  
Toast bread,  
crunch it in your hand.  
Unsnap  
all the snaps  
you can find.  
Try to fit  
the curly phone cord  
(from the kitchen)  
in your mouth.  
Make a mobile  
with peas.  
Dump  
all the board games out.  
Arrange the colored pieces  
in tiny dessert bowls.  
Search your body  
for a bruise.  
Fill your dresser drawer  
with macaroni necklaces.  
Now,  
take a second sheet  
of paper from the pile  
and write  
(in flowery script):

Roses are red.  
Violets are blue.

Then, take the black crayon  
from your pack of sixty-four  
and color over those words,  
pressing  
down  
hard.  
That done,  
you may begin.

## Cocktail Hour: Age 5

A glass of whiskey  
lifted from  
a watery circle  
on polished oak.

"More ice,"  
he says.

I drag a stool  
across L-shaped tiles,  
climb to the counter,  
kneel, balance and push  
back the door.  
Metallic freezer breath  
escapes while I  
scrape the corners  
for ice pieces, my arm  
in a cast of cold.

I back myself  
down, one foot  
at a time  
to the wobbly stool  
and open my fist  
to the translucent teeth  
melting in my palm.

His newspaper rattles.  
"The ice,"  
he calls.

Oily swirls swish  
as I walk.  
I tilt the glass  
to make a fat  
scaloped trim.



A splash then a spill  
over the side  
onto my shoe.  
I quickly lick the drips  
around the glass,  
like my mother neatening  
my ice cream cone.  
The smell  
on me now  
is him  
breathing in my ear.  
And the bitter taste  
is his fumbling good-night kisses.  
I walk slowly,  
careful not to spill again.

"Dad?"  
He holds his paper  
and looks past me.  
Bloated worm fingers  
brush my hand  
and take the drink.

I watch him wince  
as he swallows.  
"I'm sorry,"  
I start to say.  
"Go play,"  
he tells me.

Down the hallway,  
I slide my hand  
along the cold wall.  
My scuffed shoes  
stare up at me,  
the black buckles menacing.

## Snail Notes



Snail Notes  
 "You may find yourself  
 with uninvited guests,"  
 the handbook says.  
 Pond snails  
 spotting my aquarium.  
 Sitting on green plastic plants  
 like birds perched in trees.  
 Positioned in new patterns  
 whenever I happen to look.

Chocolate gum chewed  
 and stuck everywhere.  
 In shells like dirty  
 fingernails, curled  
 and curled. An ear,  
 a french horn, a party favor  
 that won't unfurl.  
 A deaf thing.

Tied umbilical cord  
 scabbed and dropped  
 from a baby's healed belly.  
 Alive again, it's grown a shell.

Flattened foot of mud,  
 raw skin dragging itself  
 along gravel and glass.  
 Climbing surface to  
 surface like a disease.  
 Always connected,  
 holding tight in calm water—  
 never free  
 unless dead.

Then empty shells  
 swirl lightly  
 in the filter current.  
 Fragile as ribbon candy,  
 they crack and crunch  
 in my hand.

These featureless creatures  
 breed like mad.  
 Although slow,  
 slow, it takes all day.  
 Under bright lights,  
 below orange  
 and blue striped fish,

## The Princess with Unruly Thoughts (after Anne Sexton) by Rebecca Poole

Dear hearts,  
 golden ones:  
 Never question your elders.  
 No one wants a pretty girl  
 who thinks.  
 Not even Phil Donahue  
 and the women who love him.

Not even Shakespeare  
 and his ideal sensitivity  
 can suffer contradictions to live.  
 It's only a gasp  
 before Will gets wind of beauty.  
 Ms. MENSA, a faceting jewel,  
 and sets her up with some flawed prince  
 who'll cut out her tongue,  
 lop off her hands, leave her  
 a stick to mouth  
 dead truth in wet sand.

And that's assuming the guy likes his mother.

Think you're too bright to be  
 strung along, strung up?  
 Well, Mr. Bard may insist you choose  
 a stairway to Paradise,  
 your favorite escape:  
 a bag of asps, poison, daggers, a lake.

Attention, ladies!  
 Brains drained  
 from too much racking?  
 Mommy dead before Act I?  
 Shrink on vacation?  
 Jester playing Vegas?  
 Dial 1-900-SUI-CIDE;  
 You can take tragedy into your own hands!  
 If you're lucky.

Otherwise,  
 Mr. Comedy,  
 Mr. Stratford-on-Avon-Calling  
 peddles pretty brain samples  
 (dowries included)  
 island-to-island, door-to-door.  
 Shrew in a bottle to the first  
 Pinocchio who dominates.

Rest in peace,  
 Royalty who keep you  
 pale, hollow-eyed,  
 lost in the woods, a pliant Barbie,  
 uproot, your body, your trust  
 fund, your life.

Bethany Mott



Never.  
Better to dance well with a gardener,  
the compost man, than to chance  
crap with a prince, snake-eyed.

Not long ago,  
the Queen of Sweden died in childbirth.  
She left the king  
a daughter brilliant as a diamond.  
As the princess grew,  
everyone admired the luster  
of her skin, eyes, hair  
in the sunlight, moonlight, firelight.  
No one remembered her mind  
could cut glass.  
So it molded for sixteen years,  
buried under gold lame' curls,  
gathered dust balls and mouse droppings  
next to crock pots and jello molds.

Meanwhile,  
the king stuck to his daughter like Poligrip.  
He'd already lost his wife,  
and refused to risk his child.  
He turned hot-tempered, agoraphobic and Republican.  
He forbade the princess to wander  
beyond the moat or into a classroom.  
Poor meatball.  
Permanently grounded.  
No skinny-dipping. No Junior prom.  
Day and night playing poker, monopoly,  
Trivial Pursuit with Daddy.  
Poor meatball.

Inevitably,  
curiosity took her like chicken pox,  
a communicable itch. Yet,  
she feared scars would pit  
if she scratched.  
So what's an ingenue to do?  
Life ain't so rosy  
when you're young, blonde and Swedish.  
Haagen Daaz rich.  
Breasts spilling like soup  
down the front of your blouse  
(Cream of tomato).

Inevitably,  
the princess snack out.  
She picked flowers and rested on a log.  
Poof!  
a lizard-witch popped up  
at her feet like a toadstool.  
The creature was so tiny and shriveled

that the girl began to snicker.  
The witch swished its scaly tail,  
yowling: you've stolen my roses,  
my children from their beds!  
I will make sure no one calls you Wife.  
I will make sure everyone points and laughs.  
With that, she croaked words of knowing,  
her breath an electroshock,  
and vanished.  
Poof!  
The princess' cranium swelled, suddenly  
a subway filled with gangs  
of facts, questions, opinions.  
Her I.Q. skyrocketed.  
She ran whee-whee-whee all the way home.

At breakfast  
the next morning  
the poor girl could not keep  
her thoughts under control.  
Neurons played raquetball  
against her skull,  
rattled her coronet until  
it fell in her oatmeal.  
The king growled:  
Child, where are your manners?  
You look ridiculous.  
The princess shook her curls like Medusa.  
Listen, she hissed,  
that scrambled egg's been  
in your beard for a week.  
You're about as demure  
as a head cheese sandwich.  
Her father ground his teeth like a Doberman.  
He clutched his chest and turned purple.  
Maids scurried to pin the crown straight,  
but nothing could secure it for long.  
Courtiers and servants snickered,  
empathetic as hyenas at a kill.

Time for you to get married!  
the king wheezed.  
He offered daughter and kingdom  
to the first man who produced a non-slip tiara.  
Scores of princes tried and failed.  
And, of course,  
no one wanted a wife  
who wouldn't behave,  
wear a crown and swimsuit  
like the girls in Sports Illustrated.

One day,  
three suitors dropped by  
for brunch and a bride.  
They had spent four days

searching for the Master-dwarf,  
a little man licensed  
to market magic headgear.  
Two were certified princes,  
sporting gold crowns on silk pillows.  
The third claimed he'd lost  
his I.D. in a swamp.  
He tried to hide  
cuts, bruises, and a dead flower  
behind his back.

Time for the dance-a-thon!  
The ultimate test.  
Princess and crown  
took opposing corners  
till Suitor #1 closed in.  
He muttered, Smile, darling.  
Don't think, keep your eyes on the floor.  
The princess thought,  
What an asshole.  
The crown went to the mat  
in the first round.  
Suitor #2 followed,  
flicked his tongue in her ear,  
tripped over his crown  
and hit the ground.  
The king began to cry.

Shyly,  
the third touched  
the girl's arm.  
He twisted his wilted bloom  
in her hair, whispering,  
Wear this instead of gold.  
He and the princess whirled around like a gyroscope:  
around the marbled hall,  
through the castle doors,  
and deep into the woods.  
When the king finally found the pair  
necking behind a tree,  
the flower had resurrected,  
wound into a green crown,  
dotted with white star flowers.  
It could be removed or worn  
as the princess desired,  
remaining fresh through the wedding  
and forever after. Guaranteed.  
Without pins, without parents,  
without a playwright.

Good for two years or twenty-thousand miles.

## Fourteen

Safe in the crib of the car,  
my sister and I would fall  
asleep as Mom drove me to ballet.  
Sarah always took the back,  
and I'd jump in front:  
the death seat, Mom kidded  
before turning on the classical station,  
her favorite,  
turning over the day's pain.  
I was fourteen, the oldest,  
thin and true as a knife,  
and I joked,  
said school was fine, things were fine, my life  
a perfect incision.  
I knew only children  
could show hurt, so I closed  
my eyes, focused on trees and skies,  
all dancing against the engine.  
I never dreamt of accident, just the cutting  
perfection of my body, lulled by nothing  
but music and movement. I wanted to be  
nothing. I wanted to slip  
free of the belt holding me up,  
hugging me in and down until the stillness,  
the hand on my knee, the voice  
keeping time: We're here. You awake?  
I jerked back, knowing  
I'd be late if I didn't  
scramble for the belt,  
the door, the kiss goodbye as I left  
room for my sister to climb from behind.

## Giving



Yet  
purple becomes me. All shades  
intensify the value of my eyes and hair,  
and nothing's lovely as a bruise,  
a cloud before a good scream  
slams its heat into heathered knolls,  
groundless. Nothing's sensitive  
as an overripe plum, each bite  
drooling sticky down cheek and chin.  
Nothing's vital as the lilacs  
seeing October through, still dressed.  
Yet  
nothing's sweeter than the crop  
a sacrifice of blue-red will  
yield. Even low crags can bleed  
amethysts. Even oysters, irritated,  
snap their raisin backs to hatch a pearl.  
So with violet lids glued open,  
I break my ritual bonds,  
and cram the rest  
of July's blueberries into my mouth:  
Swallow.

Rebecca Poole

## Pink Sex

Smells of sex linger in the air.  
I lay naked with my lover  
Silky hair tickles my breasts.  
Kissing my pink nipples,  
We drift into sleep.  
My lover smells of breasts  
And lies with sleepy hair.  
Silky sex tickles my kisses.  
Naked air drifts in the pink  
That lingers in my nipples.  
Tickling my silky lover  
My naked hair lies  
Over my pink breasts.  
Smells of sleepy nipples drifting  
Sex lingers in our airy kiss.  
Laying with my naked lover  
I tickle my hair with silky breasts.  
Smelling my nipples kiss  
I sleep in lingering air.  
Drifting into pink sex.  
My lover kisses my naked sex  
Tickling my pink hair.  
Drifting in the silky nipples  
My breasts' smell lingers  
And the air lies asleep.

Danielle Willis

# Blossoms 4 Sale

by Alicia Lobdell

I was sixteen, and standing on the corner of Whalley and Church Street, selling flowers to the Yale students. My mother wasn't happy about my hours, but knew that I needed a job. So she would try to pick me up in the middle of New Haven three nights a week, a half an hour after the bars closed. The other people who worked at the flower stand lived in the city, so when my mother was at work, I would stay with them and take the public buses back up to my high-school in the morning.

But one night a girl got raped right outside of Demery's pub at a flower stand, and we all got really scared. My mother wanted me to quit, but where else could I get \$5.50 an hour plus commission? My boss called us all together and told us that all the girls would have to work on a new buddy system after ten pm. That was cool because we would still get paid the same, but commission would have to be split in half.

That's when I met Linda LaCava.

At about 8:45, my mother dropped me off at the stand and beeped her way around the city block. I sent Robert home, but he said he would stay until my new buddy partner arrived. He also said that he'd had a good night so far. In his four hour shift, he had made 125 dollars. I was glad to hear that my partner and I would be busy for our first night together. Robert was waiting on a drunken freshman with two girls on his arm when I saw this blackened-clad woman approach the stand. My eyes followed her swaying hips, but became frightened to her eyes when she greeted me a throaty hello.

"You must be Sarah. Hey, I'm Linda. Robert, d'jew have a good night?"

"Yeah Linda, the preps are coming out in droves. Have fun." And her burgundy lips parted, stretching into a smile, which pushed a dimple into her left olive cheek. Her black eyes ran from my eyes to my knees as my face began todden. I turned quickly to wrap the drunk man's tulips in the plain white paper. I never did say hello to her.

Robert left, kissing me on the forehead, and told me not to worry. "She's really warm... on the inside," I wanted to tell him that she was warm on the outside but I didn't.

I couldn't keep my eyes off her. Her hair, black as paint, blew into her face while she talked to passers-by and I wondered if they, too, felt her warmth. I kept most of the business going that night, trying to avoid conversation, so I could keep watching her move. She was lovely.

When I got home that night, I saw Linda's face on my ceiling, smiling, and moisturizing her burgundy lips with her tongue. And I never wanted to see her again.

I kept working at the flower stand. A month had gone by and the weather was much better, so sales had gone up. I went to work on a Saturday and saw Linda sitting on a milk crate behind the stand. I froze.

"Hey, Sarah. Thought you died or something. I'm doing a double shift. Everybody must have gone to the beach today, it was so slow. But it should pick up tonight. It's a great drinking night! Check out that hippy puking by the library."

Her raspy voice made my arm fair dance. I didn't want to work. But I couldn't turn my feet around. They walked right beside her and forced my mouth to say, "Hi Linda, I've been thinking a lot about you lately."

My face ran hot and my eyes stung. I didn't want to say that. But before I could argue, she reached an arm around my shoulder and said that she had hoped so... I'm still not sure what that meant, but somehow her touch made me stop shacking.

By some sort of coincidence, Linda and I began doing buddy shifts together a lot. She would often stop at the package store before work and get vodka and orange juice; which for some reason cooled us off in August and warmed us up in October. She took care of me at work when a homeless person would beg me for change. She gave me good advice on how to stay in high-school and put up with my folks. She even pushed me to the side of the road once to avoid being hit by a taxi cab. Linda knew the city. And she seemed to know me.

One night in early November a fellow employee whose home I usually stayed at when my mother couldn't pick me up, came by the stand as Linda and I were counting out. She told me that she was leaving town for a week or so and I would have to find some other place to stay. I shivered as she finished her sentence. I pleaded with her to house sit while she was gone, but she gave me some excuse about the landlord checking up on the place, and housing a sixteen-year-old was illegal. Once again Linda placed an arm around my shoulder and I stopped shacking.

Linda walked me to 31 High Street on the fourth floor and handed me the key to let us into her apartment. I couldn't find the keyhole in the dark, so she guided my hand. I opened the door to a dark flat lit only by streetlights shining through the windows. She lit candles, as she claimed not to have electricity; or a phone for that matter. I looked around

at the deep purple tapestries hanging on the wall beside a poster of Einstein and dried daisies hanging upside down. There was a king-size mattress on the floor and several bean-bag chairs surrounding it. I noticed two old aquariums on the floor. One was filled with green and blue rocks, and I counted four newts and a frog. In the other was a long chameleon dozing on a large stick. There was one couch, a marble kitchen table with three unmatched chairs, and a smell of salt that penetrated my pores. Off the main room was a galley kitchen and a small bathroom. On the other side was a walk-in closet with several black articles caught in the door frame.

I was sweating.

Linda reached for my hand and led me to the couch. I sat, and intently contemplated if my fingernails needed trimming. "How long have you lived here, Linda?"

"About a year. Can I get you anything? A beer, soda, water?"

"Water, please." As I heard the cabinet close, I jumped off the old couch and stared out the window and witnessed a three car collision, but did not find it strange. Linda walked into the main room with two drinks and handed me my water. She took a swig from her beer and her burgundy lips made a wet pop as she pulled the neck away from her mouth.

"Where exactly do you live, Sarah?"

"In Bethany, off the main road, in the trailer park. It's about twenty minutes from the Demery's corner." My ice was making noise against the glass and I placed it down on the window sill.

"When did you leave home, Linda?"

"When I was 17."

I pulled out a cigarette from a pack in my back pocket and tried to steady the lighter's flame. Linda asked for a drag and touched my hand as I passed it to her. She took the fullest breath I ever watched and replaced the cigarette between my quivering lips. She exhaled through her mouth and nose at the same time. Through that smoke, her words came lower than usual, "Do you want me?"

Did I want her? It was a question I hadn't been prepared for. One I wasn't even aware existed. I was a ... but, why was I shaking my ice cubes? Why did I follow her hips? Did I want her?

I was 16 years old and didn't know what or who to want. I was angry at her for asking. Delighted that she thought I did. Scared that she didn't want me. Confused as to why the question was taking so long to answer.

"Does it matter?" The sage cop-out came from my mouth like dust when I sat on her sofa. Did it matter that the girl got raped outside Demery's?

"It does to me, Sarah. I think you are a beautiful woman. I would be honored to make you feel good." But that wasn't what I wanted to hear. The excitement had left and was replaced by fear. She took another swig off her beer bottle

and added, "May I caress you? May I love you?"

I stared at her left shoulder and pushed my head to a nod. She reached me, pressed against the wall of her flat, and touched my firm sixteen-year-old breasts with her cupped, olive hands, and watched for fear in my eyes.

I continued to get goose-bumps when I saw Linda crossing the intersection to the flower stand. She continued to buy vodka and orange juice, and to caress me in her candle-lit flat after our buddy job. A week before Christmas, after closing with another girl, I walked myself over to 31 High Street, while hurrying past the alleys full of eyes, and knocked on the fourth floor. After what seemed like minutes, Linda and her wine-stained lips met me.

"Hi, just got off work. Did I wake you?" "Um, no, Sarah." I walked past her to put my bag down and saw the shape in her king-size mattress. My eyes shot to the ceiling and I noticed that it needed a fresh coat of paint.

"Excuse me, I didn't know you had company." I grabbed my bag and reached for the door. Linda caught my hand, but this time I only shook more. I guess my eyes made her answer my silent Why.

"Sarah, it's not you. It's got nothing to do with you. But



I have different needs that are fulfilled by him. Can't you understand? I love you. I love you both."

No. I could not understand and I left with a lump in my throat.

About a week later, Linda was my buddy partner, and the lump returned. Her burgundy lips were on everyone that walked by that night - from Officer Donalds to Ralph, the bum. And, though I still saw her mouth, I could not see her eyes.

The once black pupils of this woman next to me had run into a grey mass. Her olive skin looked a bit jaundiced. But those wine-stained lips still held brilliance, even if they could no longer pierce a crease in the side of her cheek.



# Insomnia

Ice drips, kissing the snow  
and seducing the snow into cool,  
monotonous rivers.  
The rivers drive along, cutting  
cruelly through and over dead yellow grass,  
messing up the dreams of the sleepers.

Loving sequin drops fall from every finger  
of the yard, falling into secret spots  
and going on to join the rivers.  
Falling into thick, white caves of privacy  
and making the dead bugs shiver again,  
dried little brains and little leg parts  
disconnecting and floating like leaves  
out from under shadows.

It would be nice to stop that dripping,  
seeing the way the leftovers of the living  
are exposed,  
tumbled over and over so disrespectfully,  
little bug back shells like so many boats  
riding into a new season,  
little spirits exposed to flashbulbs  
of fresh, new light.

Hold your skull together,  
tightly between the fingers of your strong,  
living hands. Hold it all together,  
like the beetles tried to do.  
Try to enjoy the smell of green when it explodes,  
the softness of petals and the taste of clear water.  
Enjoy the starting over,  
But build yourself a nice, quiet, impenetrable  
crypt somewhere in the dark,  
so that you won't be a spectacle on that first  
wonderful spring day that you miss.

# Daydream



The first man I fucked was a friend of the family;  
old jeans, shit on his shoes, mouth full of Skoal half the time  
and smelling like livestock.

He keeps an old Libby's can in the front seat of his truck  
and aims at it as we pass each telephone pole, targeting  
the miserable, brown-flecked sea at the bottom.  
The sides are rusty and slick, and I can't help staring  
down into the raging depths as we cover jarring, rutted roads.

Only the blank windows of the pot roast kitchen watch dully  
as we turn away. Nothing cares.  
The fields lie dead at the end of summer. The mailbox hangs  
empty from a splintered stump. Meager chickens scratch  
hungrily at the dirt.

Whenever I come home, distempered cats stagger dismally  
to my feet as if they are drunk, but they are only weary with  
death. I know I should pity them.

My parents awaken from better worlds of sleep and assume  
that I've just been out keeping myself alive, and I have been.

I do the only thing I can think of to make the days seem  
less like black holes, caving in on themselves.  
There is nothing but school in tiny, bleak classrooms;  
the same five girls and twelve boys each year, staring up out  
of windows masked in grey wire mesh. Sometimes  
there are trains to hop and ten-horse parades and blizzards  
to cover things up.

I like to look off towards that place at the end of our land.  
An old barn sits balanced on the edge of eighty acres,  
wanting desperately to drop to its knees and dig itself a  
grave. There is a dead cow in one of the ancient stalls, just a  
smooth yellow hide supporting a few sharp bones.  
It looks like a cruel magic trick; someone shook her by the  
hind legs and the body disappeared. There is a lot of uneaten  
hay up in the loft.

In my dreams, the barn looks more like a castle.  
I yearn for foggy days to come along and envelop it like  
the apparition that it is in my mind, but the air is always dry.  
When I'm alert, it is unmistakably a barn.  
In my fantasies, the man coming up the drive in his pickup  
is a little more like a hero, and my life is more like  
a readable book.

## And on the Eighth Day God Created...

by R. Todd Corayer

I guess that I should have been paying more attention to what was going on and not to the people around me. I was in sort of a daze, my eyes just fixed on that lovely, heaven-sent creature in front of me. It did not seem possible that our meager Earth could have produced such a wonderful creation. Who needs the pyramids? My friends used to tell me that my parents thought I was a treasure, so they tried to bury me. I'd claim anyone who said that about this treasure. I think I would snap their neck. Maybe it would be better to break their legs first. Then I knew they could never get away. I tried not to think about that now because I was on live television and I was on a roll, so to speak.

Pat snapped me out of my loving trance when he asked me to spin. I wanted to blacken his pretty little eyes. I asked for the letter "L." I got two. The game was so easy I was winning by five thousand dollars. The two little ninies next to me hadn't even had a chance to spin. I was winning everything. The game was pathetic. I sort of felt bad for the ninies. They looked like they had spent all night quizzing each other with the Random House Dictionary of the English Language. I never could figure out why someone would pay fifty bucks for a book they could steal from the library. All I ever did was peel those little metal strips off from the inside of the binder and BINGO, instant home library.

Well, I spin again, to the tune of five hundred samaras. Then I guessed another word. When I had won the round, I got to watch my Vanna clap those pretty little hands in perfect harmony. Soft as rose petals, they were. I never realized how wonderful the sound of clapping hands could be. I was naturally glad that I won, but all I really wanted was the money so I could give it all to my Vanna. Then she saw how much money I had. But then Pat Sayjerk stepped in. He had a strange look in his eye. At first I thought it must have been because I was winning everything. But then I started to really ponder the look on his dweeby little face. I couldn't place that look. He told me I had to buy things from the showroom. I asked the little wuss if I could just have the cash. The whole audience laughed which made me very angry. I had asked very nicely. I was very embarrassed and decided that after the show I would break his knuckles, maybe one at a time. I did what he said and wound up with a whole shit-pile of green vinyl lawn furniture from Portugal.

Just what every guy needs. I live in an apartment. With the money I had left over, I bought some foolish looking vase that was supposed to look like something that was a replica of something that some dead king used to spit in. I thought it looked more like something my dead Uncle Henry bought at a yard sale because it looked like something a circus clown used to keep his change in. I bought the damned thing and decided that I could give it to my mother as a present. I knew she was watching the show, but I figured she'd forget by Christmas, if she was still kickin' by then.

We cruised right through the next game with yours truly winning everything in sight. During the commercial, the old bag next to me told me that if I didn't let her win something, she would get her son to beat me up. I told her to shut up or I'd kick out her walker. Once again, I was guessing the words with only two or three letters. One of the words was "SHEEPDIP." I thought it was kind of funny because it had my lovely Vanna blush for a moment. I marveled at how gracefully she blushed.

Pat had that smarmy look on his face again, and this time I figured it out. He must be sleeping with my goddess. That little snout-nosed ground slug was sleeping with the woman I had devoted my life to. He must have known how much I loved her and he was gloating. There was nothing I could do except think about sticking his tongue in a toaster and running him over with my mother's pickup truck. The real one-ton kind.

After this, I was forced to buy more useless crap. I got a bedroom set made for pregnant women and a couple of wall hangings. They had pictures of some dumb river and some bent over dead trees. I figured I could use them as bath mats.

*"I wanted to blacken his pretty little eyes."*

Winning the last round put me in the final run, the biggie. That's what I got really excited. I hoped no one noticed. Not only did I have the chance to win a pink car from some country I couldn't pronounce, but I could get the chance to hug my Vanna if I won. Even the bottoms of my feet were sweating. She was making the sweat roll off my forehead and down into my ears. Thank God I don't wear glasses. They probably would have slid off my face and smashed into a thousand shards, getting glass in everyone's eyes and then some old geezer would have a coronary and I'd get sued for everything, including my bathmats and then my mother would never let me go over to her house and then I would never be able to take the T.V. Guides out of her mailbox before she saw them.

Pat walked up and looked into the camera. He tried to make some gesture of confidence or something by smiling and putting his arm around me. I thought about him in the sack with my goddess and I got very warm. I wondered what Vanna would be to bed. Probably the pink chiffon gown she wore on the eleventh.

I smiled back politely and stepped my 11 1/2 D's on his sissy little movie-star shoes. With a grunt and a grimace, he pointed to the word board. It was going to be a three-word phrase. I figured it would be something to embarrass me, like "YOU BIG CHUMP" or "GO HOME WISEGUY." He gave me a little hint that it was something that a coach might yell to his player. All I could think of that was, "WRONG GOAL, JERK" or "RUN, YOU PANSY." I never liked sports when I was in school. (I gave it some serious thought.)

While a commercial rolled by, I wondered if Vanna liked to drink beer and watch roller derby at three in the morning. I was going to ask her, but I changed my mind and decided, instead, to watch the crew touch up her makeup. It had never occurred to me how much makeup stars wore. I stalked up behind Patty and asked him what type of eyeliner he preferred. I guess having a lot of money makes people lose their sense of humor, because Patty didn't laugh. All he said was that I was never going to be on another game show this side of the Greenwich Meridian Line. I wasn't really too worried, but I had to decide if that was a joke or a threat. Pat was a wimp.

After the commercials we were back on the air. Pat told me to pick four consonants and two vowels. I was happy because I knew I was going to see my Vanna turn those letters around. She would turn letters around just for me. I picked my letters with some help from the audience. I never remembered people being so happy to help someone else win prizes. As I stood gazing into my Vanna's eyes, one particularly loud cry came from the front row. When Pat and I turned to see just who was so damned happy, it turned out to be my wife and my three kids. I had forgotten that my family was in the studio. I had forgotten I had a family.

While I had been looking with horror at my family, my Vanna had turned around all the letters I had chosen. I missed it. Now I was really mad. I just had to win that foolish car, that actually looked more like a lawnmower, or I would never get the chance to touch my goddess. Nothing as dumb as a wife was going to ruin my finest hour. I felt terribly nervous when it came down to the point where I had ten seconds to figure out the word. I hadn't felt nervous before this, but now there was so much resting on my thoughts. Vanna White would never marry a man who couldn't figure out a couple of words.

The lights went dim and I just knew I was going under. Great, live television and I faint like a feeble schoolgirl seeing her first frog. Then I remembered that they always dim the lights at this time in the show. Relief washed over me as I strained to concentrate on the three words. Everything that I had practiced at home was gone. Why did they have to put Vanna directly in my eye line. Maybe that was their point: they wanted to screw up my concentration. There was no way to see the board without seeing Vanna. They weren't going to cheat this guy.

The big yellow numbers above the board said 5 seconds left. I decided to go for it. All of a sudden it hit me like a salami to the throat. GO FOR IT, GO FOR IT, GO FOR IT. That was the phrase. GO FOR IT. I shouted it out with one second left on

the clock. I was right, I had done it, I had done the impossible. My life's work was coming to fruition.

As the lights came back up, I saw my wife and my kids come running towards me. I wanted no part of that. My head filled with blood and I was crazed with excitement. I realized that my wife was going to ruin everything. I had little time to act. In one great acrobatic move that had impressed the shorts off P.T. Barnum himself, I reached out and landed a tremendous uppercut, right to the skinny chin of the gaily smiling Sayjerk. He fell to the floor like dead weight. He was dead weight. And now my path was clear. Lights flashed all around the studio. My wife yelled something, but I was too caught up in the heat of the moment.

*"I told her to shut up or  
I'd kick out her walker."*

I jumped forward and wrapped my arms around the goddess. I had waited so long for. Unfortunately, my acrobatics left me a little off balance and both me and my love went crashing to the tile floor. My wife and those pestering little food mongers that I had fathered came running over so quickly that they piled right over my goddess and me. I didn't really have time to see the whole thing, but they went piling right over us and crashed into the backdrop of the 14-day vacation to Cuba.

Then it all happened so fast. The big WHEEL OF FORTUNE sign came slamming to the floor on top of the lawnmower-car. The whole roof just smashed right to the seats. Pat tried to scurry away but I grabbed one leg of his sissy-trousers and tripped him back onto his nose. Noses make such a dull sound on some floors.

The wall that had been supporting the sign went flying backwards as a hundred people from the audience tried to grab more treats. It caused lights to blow out all over the studio. The worst part is that fell backwards right into the middle of another set. Who would have thought they tape Vanna's show and the Dukes of Hazard in the same building. The last thing I saw was another car getting its roof bashed in and a lot of people running around crazy.

To protect her form all the sparks, I tried to cover her whole body with mine. I figured she'd be safer that way. I even tried to protect her makeup by putting my cheeks right against her. Then that fat sheriff came running out with little burning embers all over his white suit. There were little pieces of glass in his hair and even his makeup was running. I started to think that maybe I was the only person who didn't wear makeup.

The audience was everywhere and there were security guards running around, but none of them seemed too prepared to deal with all the people. Someone grabbed the rack of ties made from pressed guava pulp and recycled cardboard. Then someone snatched a pair of imitation fur Mickey Mouse slippers that were as big as Hawaiian mums.

This caused a whole series of fist fights when everyone chose an object and another studio audience member disagreed with the choice.

Vanna screamed something unrepeatable that even made the rushing security guards stop in their tracks. I had never thought to ask anyone if my Vanna knew how to swear. Now, most of America knew. I tightened my grip around her perfect waist and kissed her as many times as I could. I thought about opening one eye to see if Pat could see me kissing my goddess, but then I remembered that it is rude to open your eyes when you're kissing. Especially when you're trying to use your tongue.

Then my wife arrived. She seized a good portion of my hair and tried to leave in the opposite direction. There was no way I was going to let my 105-pound ugly wife take me away from my true love. However, the security guards were over their shock and were fully prepared to bring things to order. I guess that's why they had those big sticks in their hands.

Some of the more industrious members of the studio audience had decided to help themselves to a few souvenirs, like a leather living room set with matching end tables and some very nice green lamps shaped like dinosaurs. In my attempt to get free, I saw the biddies skipping out the door with some paper flowers and my vase. Then the one without the walker turned around and grabbed the wheel.

Sometime after the confusion was over and I was unlocked from the closet, I was led out of the studio. Nothing, save for the bolted down items, was left. Ol' Pat gave a good tug on my handcuffs and promised to see me in court. I wondered if he had a separate wardrobe for court. I also wondered if Judge Wapner would be presiding. As a city policeman was leading me to the door, my Vanna came out of her dressing room. She had fixed makeup and lipstick. She was wearing a new, flowered dress. She, as usual, looked divine. She gracefully glided over to where I was being restrained and smiled the biggest smile ever thought humanly possible. I knew she had forgiven me and realized I acted only out of passion. My Lord, I thought, she is even forgiving. I smiled a little smile in return and looked at the floor, embarrassed. Her eyes got a certain glaze as she stood next to me. With the graces befitting a queen, she leaned back and punched me in the nose. This surprising action was followed by a series of quick blows to the kidneys. I knew then that she liked to watch wrestling. Then she kicked me in the privates. Real hard. I went black. As she strode away, I could faintly hear the cop saying something about his contacts and that he couldn't see a thing. On the way to the stations he mumbled something about getting glasses.

R. Todd Corayer

## The Footlocker

They told us to kneel down facing the plane.

I did it, smelling fresh green paint

as interlocking fingers rested

on the beaten, sticky lid.

The platoon sergeant made his inspection

With the chaplain right behind. They said we were in a hurry.

A knife with a sweat-stained handle,  
a sewing kit. Six once-blued 30-round clips  
empty except for carbon (no live rounds 'till we left.)  
Two canteens half-full of stale water  
to show the holes. A first-aid kit.

The chaplain made the sign of the cross—

A camouflage-pattern poncho, green, brown,  
and black like face paint for hiding—

on the back of the neck where they say it's painless,

and a flashlight with dead batteries for finding.  
Ten pairs of faded, heelless socks  
with foot powder. Two worn out boots,  
unpolished and kept because they cost so much.  
A brand-new kevlar brain bucket, not worth  
the space it takes up. A theoretically  
leak-proof shelterhalf, and a frame pack  
with dry red mud that wouldn't scrub off.

I stood up, wondering how everything they gave you  
Fit so perfect in one box.

But actually it was only a loan.

They took it all back when you got out.

Shawn St. Jean

*"I remembered that it is rude to open your eyes when you are kissing...especially when you're trying to use your tongue."*



# Sam Malory

by Sue Jensen

Sam Malory played with worms. She was tall for her age and gangly and had long coarse, stiff braids and thick round glasses that slid off her nose because she was fair-skinned and Mrs. Malory was always coating her with sunscreen or spraying her with bug repellent. Sam sat for hours trying, with Pavlovian determination, to train any worm she thought displayed an aptitude for it, to be in the "World's Greatest Worm Circus" that she put on annually in her back yard, under a big top fashioned from stolen sheets and clothesline. Mrs. Malory thought playing with worms was revolting and unsanitary so she bought Sam a cat to lure her away from them. "See how clean cats keep themselves, Samantha?"

Sam dressed the cat up in her doll's clothes and made it sit in the audience next to her younger brother Todd. She dressed Todd up too, in her old party dresses and made him pretend to be the cat's mother. And as the cat's mother it was his job to endure his child's scratches and nips as he tried to keep it from hissing and screeching during the show.

Todd is married now, and a father. His wife is a feminist and gives Sam partial credit for their successful marriage, claiming that it was Sam's forcing Todd into a "gender role reversal" that has made him more sensitive to what women often go through with their children. But I was there when it happened and I can tell you that Sam's motive was purely to torment him.

Sam has always been a little strange. She is the only person I have ever met who can, or even has had the desire to, pick her nose with her tongue. This talent however was a side show and would cost you an extra quarter to see.

Sam had spent the entire previous summer in the field between our houses, digging for the devil. She unearthed two blue bottles, a hand forged nail, a rock that she still has and swears to this day is an Indian arrow head, and a cat's skull that convinced her she was getting close. It is also when she discovered worms and I think secretly, she related to them. They were both skinny and slimy and had spent the summer in the dirt.

The closest Sam ever came to actually physically transforming herself into a worm was much later the summer he turned thirteen and decided she was tired of being pale. She took the money Mrs. Malory gave her to buy sunscreen

96 or whatever number it was she used, and bought a bottle of "Tan in a Can" and turned herself an orangy, pinky, brownish Oompa Loompa color.

Sam didn't care. She went to school all the same. She was used to public humiliation, especially in school. In first grade we were forced to march around the gym in our halloween costumes. And although the "Parade of Costumes" was only a smaller part of the larger "Fall Festival," the pressure and excitement of it all was too great for Sam and she wet her Twenty Bird suit, bringing the whole thing to a cataclysmic halt. Gypsies and pixies, goblins and ghosts, magic birds and cartoon characters, even the plastic superheroes looked on in awe and a walking pay telephone fell on its side. It couldn't get up. It just lay there laughing, out of order.

Sam was always picked last in gym class after that and it took a lot of bargaining and sacrificing of "good players" to get her on a team at all. The one time somebody finally hit the ball far enough out to reach where they always made Sam stand, she had wandered off to pick flowers. Sam didn't even notice that it was time to switch places. She was too far out, as much in her mind as in the field, carefully picking just the flowers she wanted.

It was this sort of defiance of rules and her ability to focus on just what she wants to, that impresses me the most about Sam. I think she must have gotten her ability to focus from Mrs. Malory, who used to decorate Christmas trees at Macy's for their window displays before she was married; and who has made a sort of ceremony of decorating the family Christmas tree all her married life. She begins in October, assembling the huge tin tree, strings the lights until Thanksgiving then arranges ornaments until Christmas Eve. Sam was never allowed to hang the ornaments she made in school on it because they were "kitch" and "hokey" so she hung them on our tree because nothing is too hokey for my family.

I don't think Mrs. Malory really believed they were too hokey either. But she thought Christmas for her family should be only the best, Macy's perfect, and clothespin reindeer didn't fit in. Sometimes, by giving their best, mothers leave no room for their children's and neither one is happy. Mrs. Malory was probably as proud of Sam's ornament as Sam

was. They were both disappointed but neither one knew. Mrs. Malory and Sam are like a lot of people. They just don't communicate.

When Sam was eight she found Mrs. Malory's maxi pads and inserted them in all her shoes thinking they were cushion insoles. Nobody would have ever known except that one rainy day her teacher saw them while Sam was changing from her boots to her patent leather Buster Browns and sent her to the nurse who sent her home with a note for Mrs. Malory advising her to tell Sam what maxi pads are really used for.

Sam has always been innovative. For her honors history project in high school she constructed a replica of the Globe



Theater completely out of tiny bricks made from wet toilet paper. It has developed into quite a hobby over the years and she is currently working on the Kremlin and is planning to color it with Easter egg dye to make it look authentic.

She spent the entire fall semester of our sophomore year in high school learning and perfecting the fine art of tying a cherry stem into a knot with her tongue because she read in a magazine that it made you a better kisser. She made me swear not to tell anyone that she used to pick her nose with this amazing instrument of love and told Todd that if he ever said anything she would tell all his friends that he used to like it when she dressed him up in her old dresses.

When Sam was at NYU she changed her major four times before finally deciding on anthropology. She told Mr. and Mrs. Malory that when she graduated she was going to go to East Zimbabwe or to an ancient Zulu village or something (I know it involved a "Z") or go into the Peace Corps. Mrs. Malory knows a horror story about every event in the human experience and told Sam's advisor that she knew a woman whose daughter went into the Peace Corps and developed a growth on her tongue that turned out to be cancer. The girl had to have part of her tongue removed and needed to relearn to speak and that she did not intend for that to happen to Sam and wanted to know what he was going to do about it. He told her there was really nothing he could do about it but for her not to worry. He assured Mrs. Malory that it was quite common for college students to consider going into the Peace Corps. He said it was most likely just a phase and that she would change her mind as quickly as she made it up.

Sam's advisor was right. It was just a phase. Whether it was a genuine loss of interest or a fear of losing her well trained tongue to cancer I don't know. But she did change her mind. She withdrew from NYU to work as a salesgirl in the sleepwear department of Lord and Taylors. She chalked up her mother's disapproval to disappointment that she was working for Macy's competition.

Sam is afraid of the dark and sleeps on a futon because only small monsters, if any at all, can fit under it. She sleeps in the buff, but as a precautionary measure wears socks so any particularly agile or small monster that may have gotten under the futon can not grab her toes and drag her away in her sleep. Her cat is still alive. She sings to it to put it to sleep—and to ward off the monsters. She usually sings Beatles songs or the Monkees' Greatest Hits. It is a good watch cat, I know because it tried to kill me once. It lunged at me from under the futon. I think it thought I was a monster coming to hide.

Sam's fears are not totally unfounded. Mrs. Malory is from the city and believes that type of violence happens everywhere. Every night she shuts off all the lights in the house and went from room to room peeking out the windows at the neighborhood looking for murderers, psychotics and "preverts" as she called them. Only when she was satisfied that all was safe could the Malorys go to sleep.

In response Sam has turned to voyeurism. It is probably hereditary like her red hair and her walk. But unlike Mrs. Malory who stays inside her dark house, looking out its immaculately clean windows at the same neighborhood, Sam walks through different ones and looks into the windows of the lit houses to see how other families live. She is not looking for criminals or "weirdos"; she is just curious. She doesn't think she is sneaking because she does it in the open. And unlike Mrs. Malory who was happy to work behind Macy's thick, soundproof windows, Sam chose to work out on the floor. Every generation of women gets a little farther from confinement. Mrs. Malory's mother probably never held a job in her life and Sam's daughter just might join the Peace Corps.



## Generations

Framed,  
In black and white,  
My best friend  
Stewart and me  
At the beach.

Our names  
Masking taped  
To plastic baggies  
Identify the pieces  
We are holding up.

Beach glass,  
Misc. crab parts.  
Snarled fishing line,  
Seaweed that pops,  
And plum pits.

Discards  
Left  
In the sand,  
Sifted and saved  
Through discerning eyes.

We hold the bags up  
By spaghetti thin arms  
Freckled with scabs  
From scratched  
Mosquito bites.

We squint  
Past the plastic  
Into the sun.  
I am missing  
Two front teeth.

I smile  
Lopsided and scalloped.  
Like moonstones,  
I search for  
My own bones

In the sand,  
Poking a starfish,  
Stewart finds  
A shark's tooth  
And gives it to me.

Seven months old,  
My niece plays with it  
Dangling  
From salt-soaked leather  
Around my neck.

She doesn't have teeth  
To lose yet.  
But will —  
Soon.

## Sea Change

In your voice,  
like a shell,  
I can hear the beach.  
I remember it,  
remember you,  
as sand remembers being  
crushed into shards.  
Sifting through disintegration,  
I want your words  
to fall  
into place  
like a dictionary  
not sedimental pyramids,  
slippery pieces sliding over themselves.  
Silicone particles like dangling particples  
make me dissect your speech in waves,  
grind into syllables  
your sieve-like language  
that refuses  
to hold water.  
A full fathom five  
you will lie  
derelict  
in relics  
to be washed ashore  
and interpreted as you are:  
fragment  
by  
fragment,  
grain by grain.  
I will let you pour,  
brush you off,  
and leave  
you,  
translucent,  
to remain.



Laura Moran

## The Kiss of an Axe

One axe full of surgery reveals  
Years in concentric rings once sealed.  
We number them, remember them, name them  
According to the round resolve of our lives.  
Our years turn back upon themselves,  
Back from the harsh brush of bark,  
Back from the falling of leaves,  
Back to place when  
We were green like saplings.  
Our hair like needles  
Sang time with the wind.  
Thunder shook our roots.  
We rippled like rain,  
We lived, our arms outstretched  
To catch ourselves in lightning.  
We lived, our laughter with the crows  
For those who could not bend,  
Whose backs snapped,  
Who lost their grip on gravity,  
And lay, unanchored,  
Silent in our wake.

But, bark like moss grows, too—  
And hardens like scabs.  
It seals what is vulnerable,  
Heals what remains after  
Laughter subsumes into  
Patience and waiting.  
Patience. Waiting.  
For the face of the sun,  
For the heat reflected  
By a mirror glass lake  
Holding more than a  
Lightning vision of fate.

In time, the bark swells.  
The growth recounts you,  
Traces the rings of your life.  
If, by chance, you encounter  
The splitting of knots,  
Splintering like fingers  
From hands unclasped,  
Your shell might crack.  
The leaking cut drip sap.  
And you will remember,  
As you laugh,  
The ecstasy of thunder  
Sung from the kiss of an axe.

Laura Moran

# ANN HOOD

An Interview by Mary Hurley

**Shoreline:** Do you remember at what point you decided to become a writer, or was there any one point?

**Hood:** Well, I was very young when I knew I wanted to write, but I remember more the day I realized the power that words have, which was somehow connected with deciding to become a writer. I was in third grade, and the day would start with morning exercises, you know, a moment of silence, and all that, I was sitting at my desk reading *Little Women*, and I was just getting to the part where Beth dies, and I couldn't put the book down. I just couldn't believe that she was really going to die, and I kept reading and all of a sudden I looked up, and I had read through everything. They had done the Pledge of Allegiance, they sang America the Beautiful—everyone was standing up except for me. It was just one of those embarrassing moments in school, but I was so choked up by what I was reading that I hadn't even been aware of noise or anything. I realized then that words were powerful and they could really make people feel something, so I think that's the moment that I decided to be a writer.

**Shoreline:** Was it difficult for you to get published?

**Hood:** No, but I'm a terrible example for people who want to write, although I guess ignorance is bliss as far as that's concerned. I always wrote, it was just something I had to do, so after I left U.R.I., I went to work as a flight attendant, and I kept writing and pursuing it while working with TWA, and at one point, I was laid off during the recession, you know, that never-ending recession that we're still in. It just seemed like an emotional kind of moment in my life, and I had all these stories that I'd never shown to anyone. It was just something that I did privately. So, I decided to take a writer's workshop at NYU, and the writer there, at the first one I took, really liked what I was doing, and he was so encouraging...You have to understand, I was very innocent of the whole process. I didn't know any writers, and in high school and even college, every writer we read was either male or dead. Or if it was a woman, you always heard about her tragic death. Writing just didn't seem like a viable thing.

**Shoreline:** Right, like how many people do you know who are writers?

**Hood:** Exactly. Or you always heard about them dying tragically, do you know what I mean, as if in order to do it, you somehow had to have some type of terrible...Anyway, this man was so encouraging to me, and I had just moved to New York, and all of a sudden, I was around writers my age being published, and it opened up this whole new door for me. And then I started writing like a demon, I was so inspired. So I went up to Breadloaf for two weeks in August with the first four chapters of a book I had been writing, and the writer that I worked with there loved it, and asked if she could show it to her agent. So the agent took it, sold it, and I was published. And I think that if I had been more aware of what the process was like...I mean, I was just stumbling my way through it.

**Shoreline:** So, you weren't sending your manuscript to all these agents?

**Hood:** No. I never got a rejection letter until after I was published...which eased it a little, I think.

**Shoreline:** In *Something Blue*, when Lucy finally gets published, she seems just totally awestruck. Is this basically how you felt?

**Hood:** Yes, I was floored. I still am floored. I think I had been pursuing a writing career for many years, I know have accepted what it meant. But as it was, I was almost unprepared. I am always surprised to see a display of my books, or if someone says I've read one of your books...not that I don't know that they're read one of these.

**Shoreline:** You were first published in—

**Hood:** 1984, so it's still pretty new. When *Somewhere Off the Coast of Maine* first came out, it really got a lot of publicity, in New York City, at least, and I used to try to disguise myself a little and go out with my camera and take pictures of the store window displays.

**Shoreline:** There's a character in *Something Blue*, an editor named Nathaniel Jones, who calls Lucy "babe," orders her food for her in restaurants, and is generally pretty obnoxious. Is he based on someone you know in the publishing field?

**Hood:** No, he isn't. Actually, all the people that I deal with are women. My editor and agent are both women. I know sexism is still prevalent in literature and publishing, but I think I'm lucky to be writing now, to have a voice that's being heard. And so I like to subtly somehow get across—

**Shoreline:** A woman's perspective?

**Hood:** Yes, or just what it's like to be a woman, and that entails a lot, you know. That's why I like to write about women and their relationships with each other, as well as their romantic relationships.

**Shoreline:** That's something that I really liked in *Waiting to Vanish*. Daisy is just so different from Mackenzie. I mean, here she is, selling Mary Kaye, driving around in a pink Cadillac, and yet you didn't seem judgemental at all. She seemed to go through as much growth as Mackenzie, the "intellectual."

**Hood:** One of the things, as you know, that I write about a lot is women's relationships to women. And I don't really believe the myth that women bond in a strong way. I think women are worse to women than men are. And I like to write from all points of view. You know, it's funny, but I think I can say, across the board, is that the character that I didn't like in the beginning is the one that I like the most in the end.

**Shoreline:** Does that come easy?

**Hood:** No, it's a whole process. There's always one that I most relate to, not necessarily that she's based on me, but just that maybe she's more my type. And then there's a foil for that character, and oftentimes, in the beginning, you are judgemental of that character, but then you see things from her point of view. It's really a learning experience for me, too. But I always know which character is the strongest in the end—it's the one who was the weakest in the beginning.

**Shoreline:** Like Daisy?

**Hood:** Right, like Daisy. It took me a long time to really handle her.

**Shoreline:** So, do you plan out your books before you start?

**Hood:** No, not at all. I'm very image-oriented rather than plot-oriented. *Waiting to Vanish* started from a single image of a woman (who became Mackenzie), driving up to her house on Christmas and finding it gaudily decorated with garish bulbs hanging over the bushes, and everything. The image just haunted me, and I thought, well, why doesn't she live there anymore? It just raised all these questions.

**Shoreline:** So, it started with one image in your head, and you went back and moved the character side to side—

**Hood:** And upside down. Really, there's no chronological order in my books until later. I'll get these ideas, like shapeless lumps, and I try to get them in some sort of order. Then my agent reads it, and says it's not in any kind of order, so I go back and literally create a time line and write down what happens when. Then I move certain sections here, or realize that I've lost track of a character for ten years, and decide, well, I'd better do something about that.

**Shoreline:** Well, that's one of the things that I like about your books, that they're not very linear, you know, this happens and then this happens...

**Hood:** Yes, it's more fluid.

**Shoreline:** It seems more whole, you get a more wholistic view that way.

**Hood:** I hope so. That's what I try to do, I like to write in layers upon layers upon layers. I think it's more true to life.

**Shoreline:** If you could give a writer, who's just starting out, some advice, what would it be?

**Hood:** I would say two things. The first is to read. I meet too many people who are writing without any sort of context. They don't know what's being done, and they don't know what's been done successfully in the past. I mean, if you're writing short stories, why wouldn't you read Chekov to see how it's done? And the other thing is to write—not to get published, but just write in order to write. Writing is hard work, and I still sit down sometimes and write a bad short story, or a bad chapter. It's probably easier for me to handle because I've been published, but I still write a lot of stuff that's bad.

**Shoreline:** Do you think everyone's given this sort of allotment of bad stuff they have to get through?

**Hood:** Yes. I think of writing as having three stages, but unfortunately some people never get out of stage one, or they stay in it for 25 years. The first stage is this autobiographical, confessional writing, where you tell your life story—which is only interesting to you, or your family. And everything is about yourself. It's very self-indulgent.

**Shoreline:** Which is why you get a lot of stories about dead grandmothers in writing workshops.

**Hood:** Exactly. But this is valid, you know. I'm not making fun of it. This is really part of the bigger truth that all writers need to find, a universal truth. And then there's the imitative stage, where you write like your favorite author.

**Shoreline:** And the third stage?

**Hood:** Well, the third stage is finding your own voice, but I think you have to get through the other two in order to find it.

**Shoreline:** Speaking of finding your own voice, how do you feel about being called a "sweeter, gentler Ann Beattie?"

**Hood:** That Chicago Tribune quote. I'll never forget it. Well, just like everything else, they have to market you, and they like to link you with another writer. I would much rather it be "this is just my voice," but I'll always be compared to other writers. In a way, it's a compliment. I mean, it could be worse. It could be a "harsher Danielle Steel!"

## MUSIC



Cornerstones  
worn smooth  
as wormwood  
your bones

placed next  
to mine knock  
in the tremor  
of her sex

She shifts  
in bed pulls  
the covers to  
her head lifts

herself to see  
her lovers wed  
the firmament  
Dreaming she

hears what only  
fools and madmen  
hear that music  
of the lonely

seven spheres  
and the odd tone  
of bone on bone  
within her ears

Gary Whitehead



## DROUGHT

At night, when it's dropped  
down to the seventies, she  
creeps across the dark yard  
with a juice jug of rusty  
water dark as her conscience,  
to keep the tomatoes alive.  
She denies her own thirst;  
skips her first coffee at five  
when she rises, has instead  
the last of the juice with her  
slice of buttered sweetbread.  
The dark garden gives a whisper  
her husband gave on his death-  
bed, a dry hiss for the taste  
of rusty water, pungent breath  
in the wilt of another August  
night without wind. And still  
she drinks it in; she swallows  
it all like the plants the spill,  
the thirst quenched until it goes.

Gary Whitehead





## Arsenic and Old Lace

Consumer murmur  
and the drum beat  
issuing from some  
hidden source puts  
the room to music.  
In the corner one  
lonely skeleton  
stands, the spew  
and spume of rot  
about him. Jars  
of dried herbs,  
roots, and spices  
enchant one wall,  
the concoctions  
for what ails us  
or makes us whole.  
Behind the counter  
Wiccan women, dark  
garbed, adorned  
with crystals and  
rings, count cash,  
explain the magic  
of this or that.  
The scent of herb  
and oil cannot  
mask the smell of  
rot, and the musty  
dust sits too thick  
and tomblike, and  
the shawls of lace  
embrace the odd  
crannies of the  
place and make me  
think of growing old.

Gary Whitehead

## Dusk

On the side of the house  
where there were no windows  
I used to lie on the ground  
and pretend my body was part of the earth;  
skin brown like clay,  
breasts like dandelions  
still new and strange,  
and there were nettles  
crushed beneath my back  
and trees sprawled  
across the sky above me,  
their branches connecting the stars  
like dots that pulsed  
if you looked really hard;  
if dinner was late  
I could come out after dark  
and weave my hair with the grass,  
while lying beside an old man  
who hid in the bark of a tree,  
thick crevices giving him a ragged beard  
making him look like somebody's grandfather,  
or God, if God had a face;  
I asked him questions  
and prayed, for a new bicycle  
the kind with two wheels instead of four,  
and that the girl next door  
might stop teasing me  
about my father  
who had left the year before,  
my dreams crumbled in his pocket  
like a half-smoked  
pack of cigarettes.



Heather Moreau

# Am I Trespassing?

by Michael Gianfrancesco

My car grips the sudden turn as firmly as I grip the steering wheel. I feel myself lift out of the seat as each hill slips behind me. I see a sign, it says "Speed Limit 15". My speedometer reads 35. My right foot finds the brakes and as it applies pressure, the car slows. I drive past a row of white condos.

The nature here is artificial as condominiums. The trees are planted in locations ideal for any one of the sun's myriad of positions. The bushes are sculpted twice a month and the grass is greener on this side of the fence.

I reach a dead end.

The car seems to cough as I take the key out of the ignition. I wait a moment before I step out. The sun dips in the west. I look at my watch, it reads 5:00. When I was a kid, and there were woods here, my cousin Benny and I would tear through the leaves and fallen branches at 4:45 to get home by five for supper. The woods were mapped in our heads. We even named each rock by its appearance. I look again at the setting sun, it's almost supper time.

"Benny, it's almost supper time, we have to hurry!"

"Look, there's the Babe Ruth Rock, we're almost there, stop whining."

"I am not whining. I just got in trouble yesterday about being late, my mom gets mad."

"Are you happy, now, crybaby?" Benny points to the dune beyond which lie our houses. "There it is!"

There it is. The sand where Benny and I would play. I walk to the edge, stepping over a newly paved curb. The dune extends about a quarter of a mile in every direction, almost a perfect circle. The cliff slopes down about 50 yards, but it extends around the edge of the dune in a half-circle. Three pillars of clay rise majestically in the middle of the pit. Perhaps this was a place for strip-mining, perhaps it was a potential landfill stopped by concerned residents, the kids in the neighborhood made it their playground. It was a place to charge around in every direction, to let imagination go.

I back up my car, nearly tripping over the curb and take in the condo development behind me. The dusk smells like fall. Nature can touch this place after all! I thought it impossible, what with all the cloned buildings lining the generic streets. The curbs are all painted an eggshell white color, as far as I can see, not one curb is chipped or dull. There are speed bumps that seem to be placed strategically, so that pedestrians can't see them. The entire scene arrives like a hiccup, each section like the last. It wasn't always like that. Once, we rushed, but on a different path. We followed a dirt path on Huffy bikes, not asphalt.

"Michael, hurry up!"

"Benny, it's hard to ride my bike down this hill like this,

there's rocks and trees..."

"Just steer, let's go!"

"I m...", the trees rushed past my bike and the red, green and brown leaves blurred into a single maroonish color. Ahead of me I caught sight of a tree, branching from the ground in a "V"-like shape. My handlebars caught each of the extending trunks perfectly and the bike stopped short. I, however, did not. A latent gymnastic ability on my part lit up the woods as I did an unintentional somersault over the handlebars and landed on my back a few feet from the bike.

Benny wiped tears of laughter from his eyes, lifted me up, picked a branch or two from my hair, and said, "Are you okay? Wow, over the handlebars!"

"Yeah, good thing for all these leaves."

All these leaves are now possessions. The woods that were here are gone. Shaved away by the razor of progress—a clean shave, not even a bit of stubble.

I hear the sound of a screen door open, and turn to see a woman staring at me from her unoriginal doorstep. She squints to make me out over the closing darkness.

"What are you doing out there?"

"I'm sorry," my hands go into the pocket of my jeans for my keys, the tightness resists, and my hands sting with chill, "am I trespassing?"

"Well, no," she pulls her sweater more tightly around her shoulders, and I can see even less of her now as she tries to conceal herself behind the door, "nobody but residents of the plat come in here."

"Oh, well. I just came up to check a few things out, I used to hang out here before...," I trail off, the woman looks disinterested, and I begin to wonder if it is her business anyway.

"Yeah, well, some people might call the police or something. I wouldn't stay too much longer." The door slams shut as porch lights blink on up and down streets.

"Sure." I say to nobody, cursing the woman to myself, but I know that I am the stranger now. I start my car, my hidden lights come up and cast a glow onto the tallest clay pillar. A telephone pole casts a shadow across the pillar that seems to split it down the middle. My car glides off down the road, just as once, Benny and I used the rocks and dunes as roads for our matchbox cars.

"My car goes down the road."

"Michael, you jerk, this is clay dune, there are no roads."

"Yes sah, I made them with the matchbox steamroller."

"Oh, I forgot, but you gotta make it flatter to be a real road."

"But there's too many rocks and grass."

"So get rid of them, tear them out and throw them down there."



# Upon Entering the Public Restroom

I noticed all the stalls were occupied,  
and cried a while for Palestine.  
I thought about world government,  
and assumed the role of moderator,  
almighty omnipotent adjudicator,  
a side show philosopher.

I noticed every stall was equal,  
four walls and a porcelain throne.  
Envisioned all the men ruling  
their own truly personal kingdoms,  
and assumed the role of mind reader,  
psychologist, a half-assed postulator.

I saw one man dead with a smile  
curling across his face,  
musing over the fact that shortly  
his stench would be King.

A poor man was meticulously  
constructing an extremely crude bomb  
for the simple reason of regaining  
his equality, which he felt was long gone.

One man read the Communist Manifesto,  
another the Federalist Papers,  
and still yet another an article  
on bisexual dwarves who favor  
a cut in the capital gains tax.

One man was wadding up tissue paper,  
entertaining the idea of lurching  
an attack against his neighbors  
to once and for all resolve the issues.

The future President of the U.S. of A.  
was scribbling a description of his genitals,  
laughing at an 'old man from Maine' joke  
he'd recently read near a urinal.

One man was religious and pure.  
He sat there counting tiles,  
only half-dreaming of the lurid photos he'd seen  
in a news story about pedophiles.

One man sat paranoid,  
shivering within his skin,  
positive that all four walls  
were inching in around him.

One man read some Nietzsche  
and subsequently renounced his God.  
"Religion was made for the weak," he said,  
while swallowing a pill for his failing heart.

And one man got angry  
at all the injustice around him,  
kicking and beating on the walls  
that so completely surrounded him.

The paranoid man began sweating  
upon hearing the rage of the other,  
and becoming all the more nervous,  
screamed out in vain for his mother.  
And the Future President peered from under  
the walls to see the commotion,  
as the Manifesto Man, in one motion,  
tried to rip apart all the divisions  
and embrace his misguided brothers,  
while the man who half-worshipped divinity  
made the sign of the Holy Trinity,  
and the failing heart of Herr Overman  
played out its final pathetic melody,  
but not before the tissue clown  
launched his issue solving missile,  
which hit the face of the dead man,  
turning his smile into a frown,  
and the poor man who felt slighted  
set a flame to his makeshift fuse,  
counting off the final seconds  
before all hell of hells broke loose.

It was then I had a revelation.

I thought about modern communication,  
computer link-ups, fax machines, and isolation.  
I assumed the role of Christ  
come back for an encore presentation,  
pinched my nose to put off the fumes,  
and talked about my father's house,  
the one with many rooms.

I preached until I heard some muttering:  
"Who died and made you King?",  
and saw all at once this human dimension.  
I turned my back and walked away.

# GAILWAY KINNELL

An Interview by Sue Jensen, Laura Moran,  
Michelle Recchia and Gerard Siino



**Shoreline:** How does it feel to be back in Rhode Island?

**Kinnell:** Wonderful. I enjoy Rhode Island. I'm here usually once a year or so. I have a fantasy, perhaps more than a fantasy because it is coming clearer in my mind, to buy a house in Rhode Island, near the ocean. Not right on the ocean, but near.

**Shoreline:** It seems to be a unique trait of native Rhode Islanders to want to either stay close or not leave the state at all. When you were younger, did you feel that you wanted to escape from here?

**Kinnell:** Yes! Yes!

**Shoreline:** What did that feel like for you?

**Kinnell:** When I finally escaped?

**Shoreline:** Yes. Have you? Or are you still here, in some ways?

**Kinnell:** I suppose one is always still here. But still one leaves. When you're growing up, or at least when I was growing up, Pawtucket seemed to be the world and Providence was the edge of the world. I knew there was a world somewhere else but I didn't know anything about it. I had a kind of difficult childhood and I wanted to start over. (Laugh) I wanted to start my life again and do it better. I felt that could happen somewhere else better than here. When I did leave, and it happened, I felt much better. But it wasn't Rhode Island's fault that I had an unhappy childhood. It just happened to be here that I had it.

**Shoreline:** When was the last time you were in Rhode Island?

**Kinnell:** I was here about a year ago. I gave a reading about a year ago at the Pawtucket Poetry Contest.

**Shoreline:** What will you be reading this evening?

**Kinnell:** There are some things from *The Past* which I thought I'd read because they're kind of set in Rhode Island. Perhaps I'll read the last half of "The Seekonk Woods." Plus maybe I'll read some new things. I've got one which is rather...oh...it upsets some people.

**Shoreline:** Why is that?

**Kinnell:** Well (Smile), it's called "Holy Shit." (Laughter) It's really about restoring dignity to this perfectly natural substance which is part of the life of every mammal. But some people get offended by that. Do you think I should read it?

**Shoreline:** Yes! The theme of restoring dignity comes up in

your writing throughout your career—for example, in the treatment of the creatures in your poems. It's in "Freedom, New Hampshire," and later in "St. Francis and the Sow." It seems that the ordinary becomes transfigured, brightened. Do you find that this is a natural theme for you?

**Kinnell:** Well, I'm glad you find dignity in the creatures in my poems, but actually that wasn't my intent. It wasn't trying to bestow or restore their dignity. But in the case of this poem, I actually set out with a project to do this. I wrote an essay about twenty-five years ago in which I said I hope that someday somebody will write a poem called "Shit" which will show that this substance is just part of the natural cycle of things. But nobody ever did. So last fall I decided I would myself.

**Shoreline:** Did it turn out to be what you wanted?

**Kinnell:** I didn't know what I wanted it to be or I probably wouldn't have written it. If I had already the conception and knew where I'd get to, it wouldn't be interesting to read. I just set out to see where the subject would lead me. It went quite a long way. It's not a short poem.

**Shoreline:** How does a poem begin for you?

**Kinnell:** In different ways. This one was a matter of having a subject that I wanted to deal with and thinking about it quite a bit before actually writing it. While I was writing that poem, last fall in Vermont, there were flies that kept coming out of their hiding places whenever I'd light the stove. They'd cover the sunny windows and land on me and sit on my hand as I was writing. I became quite interested in the flies. Every so often as I noticed something about the flies, I'd write it down on a bit of paper beside me, and then go back to what I was working on. But at a certain point, the flies became so interesting to me, that I just put the poem aside and took these bits of paper and I wrote quite a long poem about flies. So it happened entirely unintentionally when I was trying to resist writing about flies, because I wanted to concentrate on this other subject.

**Shoreline:** Do you wonder if "Holy Shit" will be accepted by the general public?

**Kinnell:** Yes.

**Shoreline:** What do you think the reaction might be?

**Kinnell:** Let's see. (Smile) What adjective might they apply? Not "pornographic." Maybe they'll call it a "filthy" poem; disgusting and wallowing in filth. "That's not poetry. That's just shit!" (Laugh) But I hope they don't say that. Perhaps they'll think that.

**Shoreline:** In another interview, you said that you were reading Keats and Dickinson. Who else do you like to read?

**Kinnell:** These days I've been reading Whitman because this is the centenary of his death. I've been giving many readings of his work all over the country. I'm giving one tomorrow night in New York. I haven't prepared for it yet. I was thinking about it on the train... I think I forgot my Whitman. (Smile)

**Shoreline:** The freshman literature text that we use at Rhode Island College has cut out all of the Whitman except for two poems. What is your reaction?

**Kinnell:** I don't think it's a good idea, but I have to see what other works they include. Is the text shorter or have they added?

**Shoreline:** They added, with the apparent goal of a more diverse cultural representation. Do you have a favorite Whitman work?

**Kinnell:** I like best those poems he wrote in the first five years, 1856-1861. Most of them I like. I don't like many things he wrote after that. I like "Song of Myself," and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and "I Sing the Body Electric."

**Shoreline:** What is it about these poems that draws you in as opposed to the later ones?

**Kinnell:** He only had about six years of creative life. They're much more alive and not self-conscious. He has a lot to say and a terrible urgency to say it. He says it with a kind of divine originality without worrying whether it will be acceptable to the people. He suffered from being neglected—from being unpopular. It made him a little paranoid. He had a little coterie of friends around him who worshipped him and that made him a little swell-headed. And that combination of high self-esteem and paranoid self-loathing was very bad. So his work suffered as a result of the confusion he was going through. He also tried to make his later work more acceptable to the people—more like other poetry. So, other than a few later pieces which I do like, it doesn't seem as good to me.

**Shoreline:** Whitman's poetry was very original because it broke away from tradition.

**Kinnell:** Yes. It was very original. It still is.

**Shoreline:** The atmosphere of poetry was much different then, than it is now where we have so many creative writing programs in existence. The issue of originality is very important for creative writing students. The question often asked by students is: "How do I make this sound new? How do I make it my own?"

**Kinnell:** I don't think that's the right approach. If you have



something to write about, you write it as well as you can without worrying about the reactions of people. I'm worrying about the reaction to my poem, but I didn't worry about it while I was writing my poem. I've read it in many places, but I don't want to offend the people back home. (Laugh) But I will read it anyway. I think that if you start to worry about how to make your poems sound original, that suggests that it may not be original, but you find some way to make it sound original. And how do you write out of your heart, you don't know what you sound like. What keeps poets from sounding original to others, however, seems to me to be their failure to be free. Their inhibitions prohibit them from expressing or discovering the things that they really think—they don't know what they think, because they never dared think it—such as inhibitions against knowing what's awful, what's shameful, what's conventionally thought to be unspeakable. I think the degree to which one can break through those conventions, as Whitman certainly did in his first book, is what makes a book startlingly alive and recognizably the work of a particular poet.

**Shoreline:** Do you think that works might get watered-down because they have to be handed in for a grade, and because there are so many workshops?

**Kinnell:** Actually, I don't think poetry should be graded. There's some contradiction involved there that should be considered. Workshops could be inhibiting because you don't want people to laugh at you or to think you've gone off the deep end—so maybe you're kind of right, maybe you do restrain yourself. But if the spirit is right in a workshop, they want you to go off the deep end. They want you to embarrass yourself. They like you better. So, I think it depends on what you have for a workshop.

**Shoreline:** Tell us about your workshops.

**Kinnell:** I have my goals. And I have my methods. But they can't really be imposed upon a group. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't work so well, depending on who's there. But the goal is to have people writing appreciably and recognizably better by the end of the workshop than at the beginning—even if it's just a weekend workshop—have them writing better Sunday afternoon than they were Friday evening. The method is simply a completely supportive atmosphere where nobody is worried too much about what's wrong with the poem. They're interested in seeing what's exciting about it. Here, of course, I can't control whether some of the people in the workshop may want to pounce on some detail they may not like. But I believe that the small details should be left for further discussion privately in conference later on. The workshop should be a place for displaying how far one has gone. This supportive atmosphere is one thing. And the other thing is a kind of daring of one another among the participants. "If she can say that about her

life, why am I being so timid? Why do I hold back? Maybe I can also step up and say some truth that I've never dared to utter before." This kind of mutual stimulation is a response to the daring of another by stepping up with some daring of one's own.

**Shoreline:** How many people are in your workshops?

**Kinnell:** It varies. This year I have ten, I think.

**Shoreline:** As an undergraduate, did you participate in workshops?

**Kinnell:** No. (Pause) There actually was a workshop, but I didn't take it.

**Shoreline:** Why not?

**Kinnell:** I was afraid of being... (Smile)...I was afraid of this kind of will to criticize, to fault find. The leader of the workshop was R.P. [Blackmuir], who was a very severe and famous literary critic. I just didn't believe he would like my poems, which were not very well-made. I thought they might have something, but I didn't know if they did. I didn't feel like submitting them to someone else to judge them at that point in my life. I was very backward.

**Shoreline:** Do you find that you write very differently depending on where you are? Is there a place you prefer to write? Vermont? New York?

**Kinnell:** Not really. I can write any place where I feel at home. I don't think I write over the short-term very differently; over the long-term, of course, the experiences you have in your life have an effect and are bound to show up. I can be working on this poem, "The Flies," in Vermont and carry it to the Baltimore Hotel in Providence, and then to New York and just keep working on it. It doesn't seem to make much difference where I am once I'm writing. The world you live in makes itself the subject without your intending it to. So in that sense the subject is different. I don't know if the way is different.

**Shoreline:** Do you ever feel like a subject takes you?

**Kinnell:** Yes, I do.

**Shoreline:** Sometimes when you read what you've written, do you think, "Did I write it or does it simply come through me onto the page?"

**Kinnell:** I don't think of it as "coming through" me. I think of the subject as being kind of a given. The metaphors, the images of the poem are certainly given. As you walk out of your house and you're still thinking about this subject, you'll see something which will provide, or seem to provide, a perfect metaphor for what you're trying to express. And that

thing belongs to the place where you are.

**Shoreline:** Where were you when you wrote "Seekonk Woods"?

**Kinnell:** I wrote the first draft of it rather swiftly, while I was in the Seekonk Woods. I worked a long time on that poem, probably wrote it in a dozen places.

**Shoreline:** What do you think about the revision process?

**Kinnell:** (Pause) Revisions are kind of dangerous because they tend to rationalize and normalize odd things that come out in strange but interesting ways. Then, the next day you look at it and say, "Well, that's not really good." The result is that you take out some of the peculiar life. More poems probably have been destroyed by revision than by any other single force. (Laugh) When my students come to me with poems that they want to show me, I ask them to bring any prior drafts because I know from experience that the early drafts are going to be better than the later ones. Occasionally the later drafts are better, but ninety percent of the time it comes out best the first time. So, the rule that applies to automobile engines applies to poems too: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. (Smile) But, you know, on the other hand, I do a lot of revision and sometimes I damage the poem. But I know that, so I always keep my versions and at a certain point I go back to Version 3 and start again. But there are some things in Version 33 that are useful, that I can put into Version 3. I compulsively revise poems, but at the same time I'm aware of the danger. I try to compensate for my revisions by a faithful respect for my earliest drafts.

**Shoreline:** Did you revise "Blackberry Eating" many times?

**Kinnell:** (Smile) What do you think?

**Shoreline:** No.

**Kinnell:** (Laugh) I did—a lot. Well, I'm glad you didn't think so, though. That's the point of revision—to make it seem, as Yeats said, "a moment's thought," as though it just came to you. But it might take a lot of struggle. There were just certain places in that poem where the transitions were hard to get. I had to try one thing and then another to get from the blackberries to the words.

**Shoreline:** I like that one a lot.

**Kinnell:** (Smile) Well, thank you. I'll read it tonight. That's how I decide what to read. Somebody flatters me. (Laughter)

**Shoreline:** For you as a poet, is it more exciting to read in studios who have never been to a reading before?

**Kinnell:** For me as a writer, it's more exciting to read to people who know my work, and who know poetry. But for

me as a person who wants to expand the audience of poetry and serve poetry, as I've tried to do all my life, the new audience is more exciting. So they're both exciting for different reasons.

**Shoreline:** What made you choose to write poetry as opposed to working in another genre?

**Kinnell:** (Pause) It wasn't exactly a choice. I felt that there was a greater satisfaction for me in writing poetry rather than in writing short stories. I think that's because poetry is the one art where a person says what's going on with him or her, what it is for him or her to be alive, saying it directly in one's own voice and speaking about one's self. Writing fiction you kind of create a world, but you never have a chance, except occasionally through a character who stands for you, to say what's on your mind, and then it has to be shaped into the whole narrative. It's that wonderful moment of...well, it feels to me like what a bird must feel like when it sings. It wakes up and sings its note, its song. The song is obviously extremely satisfying to the bird. It's something that I imagine I feel, and that poets feel and that human singers feel when they speak, or half-sing, the words that tell about what it is for them to be.

**Shoreline:** What is the future of poetry?

**Kinnell:** (Smile) This used to be the topic, "Whither Poetry," at the luncheon meeting of the Central Falls Poetry Society. (Laugh) "Our local poet will address the subject, Whither Poetry." I think there's kind of an interesting and unusual, and perhaps unprecedented, thing going on in poetry in this country. So many people are writing quite seriously. I don't know if that's ever happened before. Probably there are societies where people write and exchange poems. But there's a kind of ferment in this country, networks of poets, workshops all over the place, readings all over the place. People in the workshops, then, have their own workshops where they may teach or organize other people into writing groups. I can't see that this has reached its saturation point. I think it will continue to develop, especially as pleasure diminishes because of the way our society operates—there's a kind of resistance to social conformity which can be expressed in poetry. I would imagine—I think it's possible anyway—that fifty years from now poetry will be written in even much greater density and energy. It might even have some effect on the society. It will become not only a force for individuals, but once again a social force.

## Pontius Pilate



Rome, even a wolf cannot kill a tiger.

I can still see them, up on that hill,  
Crying and waving at the sky  
Like it will bring him back.  
Everyone else is out in the streets  
Cavorting with that fiend Barabbas,  
Who should have died instead.

The first time they brought him to me,  
I could hardly believe my eyes.  
I thought I had been imagining  
The voice that prophesied his coming  
And told me that when he came,  
I would have to kill him.  
When I saw him, I was so scared  
Of what I knew had to be done  
That I sent him away, and hoped  
That Herod would kill him instead.  
But I knew he wouldn't, really.  
I knew it would all come down to me,  
And I hated knowing that.  
Even at the last moment, I tried  
To delay, and prayed the mob would choose,  
And choosing, fear a savage  
More than that innocent before me.  
But again I knew it would not.  
I wanted to kill him even less  
Than he wanted to die.  
But I killed him, and he died,  
The two of us serving one purpose  
That neither of us really understood.

There is no voice now. It left me  
The moment his cross was raised.  
That terrible sense of purpose  
Is gone, too. When I was flogging him,  
I could have listed two score reasons  
For why he had to die. But now  
I can not think of one.  
I can not explain that force  
Which made decision so elusive,  
And commitment seem so fleeting.  
I have been forgotten.

Today they say that poor dog Judas  
Was found dead, swinging in a tree.  
I feel the worst for him—scolded, leashed  
Like that, merely for returning  
The stick that was thrown to him.

Jeff Major

## The Hammerkop

With roots of the plumbago tied  
Around the true believers' necks,  
The Xhosa hurled their assagai.  
The prophet Mlanjeni cried,  
"The white man's bullets of black lead  
Will melt and turn to hot water!"  
But rifle fire overhead  
Was quick to lay the Xhosa dead.  
Could Mlanjeni see them fall  
While sitting by the river bank?  
This ruin he could not forestall,  
Or surely he'd have told them all  
That Lightning Bird can stop the rain  
Before the river starts to flood  
But Lightning Bird can't stop the pain  
When all the water turns to blood.

July brought the great Xhosa king,  
Sarhili, to the river's edge.  
Young Nongqawuse, there preaching  
That the dead would soon be living,  
Told him of strangers come to warn  
The Xhosa of a prophesy:  
"If we kill cattle and our corn,  
Our ancestors will be reborn."  
But famine, slow death, and the drone  
Of human suffering soon turned  
The Xhosa nation into stone.  
If only the young girl had known  
That Lightning Bird can stop the rain  
Before the river starts to flood  
But Lightning Bird can't stop the pain  
When all the water turns to blood.

It's raining in South Africa.  
The hammerkop hangs upside-down,  
But still the water's rising.

### Notes:

The hammerkop, also called the lightning bird, is a South African bird that, according to tribal myth, brings the heavy rains. Witch doctors would hang the bird upside-down over flooding rivers at the height they wished the water to stop rising. The lightning bird, they reasoned, would make the rain stop to keep itself from drowning in the rising river.

Mlanjeni (emsh-lan-jay-nor), a prophet of South Africa's Xhosa (ko-sah) tribe, led an unsuccessful rebellion against the occupying British forces from 1850-53. He gave his followers, who were armed with spears called assagai, charms made of roots of the plumbago plant and told them the charms would make them invincible against the British rifles.

Nongqawuse (non-ka-wu-say) was a fifteen-year-old Xhosa girl who claimed to have been approached by mysterious ancestors who promised that if the Xhosa killed their cattle and burned their corn, their dead ancestors would return and the whites would be expelled from South Africa. The ensuing Xhosa Cattle King (1856-57) decimated the Xhosa nation.

Jeff Major

## Remembering Those Who Died in the Train Station Fires

Denture-Dropper was found teaching  
Bar stools and empty glasses  
To sing and dance like Jolson.  
"You ain't seen...you ain't...hold it..."  
I remember the first time he got me  
By letting his teeth fall into my drink.  
At last the soft blue light was all his,  
And he could keep them in his mouth.

Charon was still on her barge  
When they pulled it from the scene.  
She used to pilot that thing across  
The linoleum river, laughing,  
Chasing late-comers to their trains.  
When they brushed her off, the finish  
Underneath her hardly looked touched.

Tuxedo-clad Stands-In-Drains,  
Who used to roll around in the pools  
Of urine on the men's room floor,  
Making love to his dead wife, was still  
Lying on that floor, kissing the tiles.  
His grapefruit foot wasn't even burned,  
Just scaly and pink and purple  
From walking in the snow with no shoes.  
It never kept him from running, though—

No way:  
Even before that spark was struck,  
Those three were years out the door.

## September



The only cars allowed  
on the road  
are silver.  
I imagine you with a wife  
who blushes the moon to her breast.  
She is a foreigner  
a mediocre spy.  
She stirs in the pot too much.

I hold a pretty gun to her head.  
Both apples and leaves  
fall.

You say you've not ever  
loved her.  
The metallic sparkles in your hair  
are new.  
I believe you  
in the dark lane  
worn as our old couch.

The giant autumn  
descends, a large cat  
on a small road parading a black paw.

## A Daily Watch

And the end of the day comes,  
mourning used, sadness and pain  
a few days after his passing,  
when Gram says in that way

curbed in Russian; take this watch,  
though not his good one. My smile  
saves her apologies  
when I see his life there.

Just some moments really,  
the hands of a sun scratched face:  
time to get to the market,  
crunching sand on Mainstreet

sidewalk, under swaying sunshades,  
the elbow of the morning paper -  
hiding him. He'd hurry glances  
full of true Irish prejudice by

ignoring the greetings of Rodriguez  
children. They'd make fun of the skinny,  
suspended stranger, like his grandkids  
did, too young to understand grand-fears

of Silver Lake undertows - said some girl  
drowned there, sucked right under. Then  
those slow drives to crazy, crammed kids  
in the world of a small backseat, places

vars are known to begin. He never  
understood that weight, or of the endless  
hours of news reports, and always steak  
broiling sure at 5:30 aside baked "podatoes,"



I can still hear the tin-foiled sizzle.  
After dinner our eyes rich with time  
saw his worries as silly as the same  
card tricks we all knew the answers to,

but wanting to be fooled by the old joker,  
who pushed us on purpose to fall to peals  
in such pishposh. Quiet and worried,  
retired Seawitch bar man to us kids,

until the spying, groggy eyed child  
dreaming a glass of midnight water  
bumped into his knee bent shadow at the  
Victorian sofa, praying. The sad bow

of an irreligious man, sloped shoulders  
to a beloved lost Ireland and heaviness  
of young death of a thirteen year-old  
sister, my aunt removed, who

Mom said went straight to Jesus. I  
guess Gram didn't believe it, hands  
balled un-haughty, asking and I was  
sacred and sorry wanting to hug him

but when the reflection of the gold  
watch glinted in the moonlight  
made by streetlights, I crawled back  
to a day in the warm sheets, to

a part of his daily life for years  
and years unknown to even Gram, and  
up to this watchface, my child's  
loyalty has held me silent.

Michelle Recchia



# Black Belly

by Michelle Recchia

Every child at Hopedale Grammar School knew that they're not supposed to play in the alley.

Missy couldn't tell him that they chose her. That it was her turn. First it was Andrea's turn. Why didn't Andi come in here too, and help tell? She wanted Andi to come and tell because Andi talked all the time.

The green telephone near the principle's right hand rang and Missy's neck tingled on both sides. She stared at the dots on her dress while Mr. Manilla talked on his phone.

The gaunt squares of sunlight on the floor seemed to tag the toes of Missy's shoes. The sun was dull now. It seemed dark, not like this morning when it happened...

Among the hand of freshly dressed, hatted, and kissed good-bye children, Missy looked out the window. She couldn't wait to get off the bus into the busy playground. As soon as she got off, she dropped her lunchbox near the fence, behind the already growing row of colored metal markers; each box saving a "place" in the morning line up. She scuffed across the playground to find Andrea.

She looked for Andi at their place on the edge of the Big Sidewalk. She wasn't there. She had to be somewhere, Andrea's purple lunchbox was third in line where it always was. She found her playing near one of the boarded-up factory buildings. She was with some boys Missy did not know. She walked over to them, catching them by surprise.

"Andrea? Andi? What are you doing?" Missy called out.

Three pairs of bewildered eyes met Missy's. She stopped walking toward them. They stopped whatever it was that they were doing and let Andrea's arms drop to her sides. Andrea's normally colored cheeks were scathed in smears of dirt and her eyes opened wide while Missy stood there. The girls' glances met as if they both knew a scary secret. The boys turned all the way around to face Missy. They looked mad. Then both of them started to smile as they walked toward her; Andrea didn't move. Missy broke into a run.

One of them said, "Get her!"

She darted across the playground toward the alley between the red brick lunch building and the sixth grade building. She didn't think they would follow her there. She ran fast and hard, her body screamed for air. The sound of her shoes slapping the asphalt mixed with the excited laughs and screams of children playing, and the noise echoed in her head so loud she almost couldn't see where she was going. The alley was just up ahead. It seemed so small today, as it shook in her sight.

One of the boys was at her heels and dirty hands flailed about, trying to grab her sweater. Missy pushed harder. They

followed her down into the alley as she headed for the lunch doors. And as the doors bounced before her eyes, she remembered how Regina got it yesterday for entering the building before the morning bell rang. She turned to her left, rounding the corner of the blurry, gray mass. To her horror, one of the boys headed toward her.

He smiled with delight as he and she realized she could not get away now. She sought refuge under the rusty metal grating of the fire escape, a place even more forbidden than the alley.



"Get her! Get her!" Said the one who cut her off.

"Me first! Me first!" Said the other as he grabbed the sleeve of her sweater. They showed each other, not letting go of her arms. The boys were like metal clamps that got tighter as she tried to pull away from them. He pushed her backward with his whole body, guided by his arm.

"No, me! Me first." The other said.

The ugly t-shirt did not listen to his partner, as he pressed Missy against the cold roughness of the granite wall. His eyes were gleaming, while an arm and an elbow stabbed her neck, stealing her voice away. She felt the cold of the building through the back of the wool sweater that her

mother had made for her. It no longer kept her warm in the chill of this early October morning as the boy put his dirty hands on her shoulder. His breath smelled like sour oranges and his clothes like pee. Missy turned her face, side to side, hitting her head against the wall, her hair getting caught on the jutting granite chippings, pinching her head like pins. She pushed forward and to the side, and the boys held her faster, sandy pebbles crunching beneath them. She knew what was going to happen, a body pressed against her. She knew. She couldn't move now, crushing sneakers on her brown shoes; she gasped under the weight of them.

Where's Andrea?

The boy thrust his face to hers. He kissed her full on the mouth. Once. Then again. His lips were dry, and felt like a tissue that rubbed against a sore nose from a cold. The eight year old boy was stronger than Missy. He didn't let go of her arms and he kissed her even harder, she felt a knee in her leg.

The hard kisses made Missy feel cold and ugly in her brown dress. She could not breathe. She twisted her shoulders and shook her head away from the hazel eyes and smiling teeth, but it was as if he got stronger, pressing and shoving her. The boy pulled his face away smiling. Missy remained twisted in agony. The smell of pee made her feel sick. He kissed her again, and she felt a turn in her stomach; his lips were mushy and wet, like the black belly of a spoiled oyster. Fear and pain and sickness shuddered through her. His partner eagerly awaited his turn. He pulled at the other's sleeve, getting mad now.

"Let me, let me." He said.

Missy pictured herself running, as hard as she could, like in gym class races. At that moment a scramble of children ran by chasing a blue ball. The two boys turned quick. Missy lunged forward against the surprised faces and fingers still clutching her sweater; rustling free with all her might and bolted away. She ran toward the lunch doors again dashing by the monstrous blue dumpster parked at the left hand side of the alley. Before she jumped up onto the cement step, she heard a dull thud and a yelp come from behind her.

Missy stopped and turned to see the boy who did not get "his turn" staggering backwards with blood gushing from his mouth. Missy stood still. So did the rotten one, who gazed at him in shock. The injured boy had immediately covered his mouth and fell to his knees, shaking. Blood seethed through his finger, combined with the wetness flowing from his eyes, and dripped to the ground.

Missy's feet seemed stuck to the cement. She could not move. She wanted to help, to go get someone, anything, but no, she, like the small boy on his knees by the blue dumpster could not move.

He stood behind his desk, hands resting behind his back. His shirt was very white, his tie perfectly straight. He began to pace back and forth from the windowsill to the desk while Missy sat perfectly still on the large wooden chair in front of the name plate that read: Principal R. Manilla. She didn't look at him while she held the seat of the chair real tight. It felt like her throat was closing and it was as if she was shivering inside and could not stop. She had never been in the principal's office before, but it didn't seem to matter to him. He stopped pacing and looked at her with suspicion.

"Why were you playing in the alley?"

Although the sound of his voice was much nicer than Missy thought it was going to be, cold ran through her. She felt the tears filling up in her eyes but she didn't let them come. The air of the stuffy office made the pain she felt inside hurt more. She wanted to tell him but she just couldn't.

He asked again, and again she did not answer. Her shoulders were rounded; she stared at the scrapes on each of her knees from two different bicycle accidents. They didn't hurt anymore, not like this.

She knew it wasn't fair. But how could she, in her brown cotton dress and white socks, tell this man that she didn't want to play the stupid game? How could she, when he had seen her standing there in the alley with his own eyes?

And it was funny, she knew Mr. Manilla was not going to call her mother. She wasn't afraid of that. If he did call, her mother would understand.

Missy looked up to the mustached silent face staring down at her and said, "They were chasing me. The boy didn't look where he was going." Mr. Manilla was not interested in her game.

"Why were you playing in that alley?" He asked again.

By this time, the alley was teeming with terrified children. Still, Missy did not move. She watched from the step as Mr. Manilla and old Mr. Hartch, the janitor, ran to the aid of the boy. Meanwhile, the other boy remained behind them, gibbering in her direction, and the boy with an outstretched arm, pointed his finger accusingly at Missy. Mr. Manilla's eyes awakened with a mixture of anger and disgust. Missy felt like one of the white dots on her brown dress. The man and the boy looked like they were getting smaller, getting further away. She knew they could see the redness and the hotness she felt.

And here, in the antique chair, her hands were damp as she held onto the smoothed wood of the seat. Her heartbeat quick and uneven. Her forehead and cheeks got hot. She did not let go of the seat.

Missy wanted to tell, but she couldn't. She couldn't tell him that they chose her. Chose her to kiss her. Chose her to chase her, and make the boy get hurt.

"I don't understand why you children cannot listen. Why?" He asked with his hand resting on the green phone as he stood there. "Why? What were you doing in the alley?"

Painfully the words came. "We were just playing." Missy said as she looked down at the scrapes on her knees. The tears came again and again she fought them.

"You do know that you are not supposed to play anywhere in that alley? Don't you?"

Her cheeks got even hotter as she piped out a weak yes.

"That boy is seriously hurt, young lady. Seriously hurt."

She did not look up. "Do you understand that that boy might lose his teeth?" He asked, but didn't wait for an answer. "Now, I certainly hope I don't ever hear of anything like this again." He sat down, his tie slapping the edge of the desk. He shook his head again.

He breathed in deeply. He dismissed her and handed her over to her homeroom teacher, Miss Evans. She had been waiting outside the office. Miss Evans looked sad. From there she escorted Missy back to the classroom in a quiet frown. Even she did not understand.

Missy sat through the morning spelling lesson without looking up from her workbook - not even to see if Andrea was at her desk. Miss Evan's voice buzzed from somewhere in the classroom, spelling the word 'playground' as Missy stared at the pages blankly, only to see the face of that boy and the blood, dripping to the ground. Her tears wouldn't come and she got all cold inside. She felt stuck like a bug whose wings are in molasses, and pinned under the weight of a big, black belly.

*"Andrea's normally normally colored cheeks were scathed in smears of dirt and her eyes opened wide..."*

