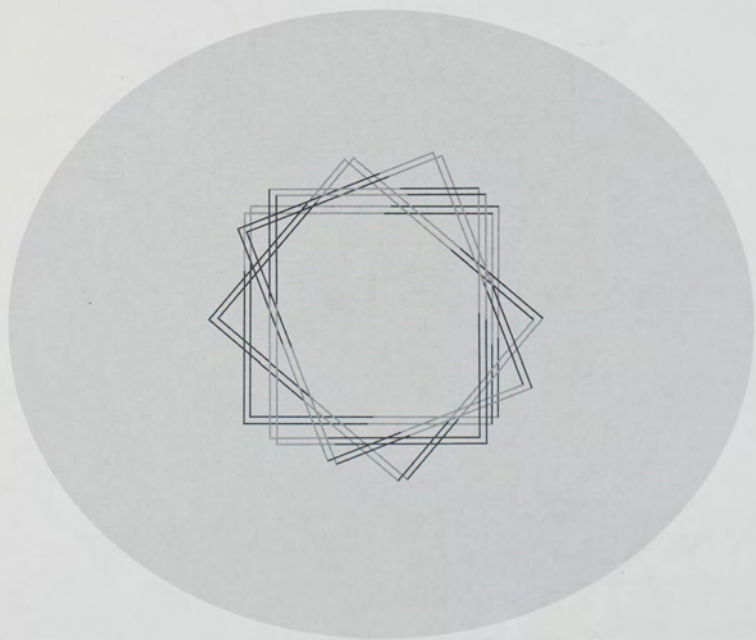


ShoreLine

rhode island college magazine of the arts



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Table of Contents

Fiction:

The Piano Recital <i>by</i> Frank McGee.....	1
The Bus Lady <i>by</i> Terry Anzaldi.....	7
Room <i>by</i> Frank McGee.....	23
Scenes From A Lighthouse <i>by</i> Anthony Loffredio.....	18
The Same Wonderful Yellow <i>by</i> Kathryn Duhamel.....	29

Poetry:

An indefinitely small space of time <i>by</i> Kathryn Duhamel.....	6
Treeline <i>by</i> Anthony Lofredio.....	15
Forging Maria <i>by</i> Benjamin Goulet.....	12
Dining Alone <i>by</i> Anthony Lofredio.....	32
The Photo Session <i>by</i> Leigh Avila.....	31
Cinema Kings <i>by</i> Larry Marshall.....	27
Leaf <i>by</i> J. Peters.....	28
Daylight Savings Time <i>by</i> Derrith Silva.....	35
Calm inside the storm <i>by</i> Jessica D Abrosca.....	13
To Julian About His Wedding <i>by</i> Jessica Scarlett Clark.....	17
Sister <i>by</i> Jessica Scarlett Clark.....	25
Moshe the Beadle <i>by</i> J. Peters.....	33

Wavefront

From the Editors.....	37
Untitled <i>by</i> Kathryn Duhamel.....	38
Perspective <i>by</i> Koo Olson.....	39
Imagenes de Imagenes <i>by</i> Janel Paquin.....	40
How I Wrote the Poem <i>by</i> Janel Paquin.....	41
Finding Homeless Children in Rhode Island <i>by</i> Mary-Jane Shorts.....	42
Perspective <i>by</i> Nicole Mollica.....	47
Los Jovenes Fugitivos <i>by</i> Mary-Jeanne Latina.....	48
How I Wrote the Poem <i>by</i> Mary-Jeanne Latina.....	49
Perspective <i>by</i> Corrine Tate.....	50
Getting Ready / The Doorway <i>by</i> Charles Bibeault.....	51

t h e p i a n o r e c i t a l

by

F r a n k
M c G e e

I'm going fourth this year. The annual piano recital takes place in the Greek church. Mrs. Kanopolis, our teacher, gets the good piano unlocked and tuned, and for about the third time each year the cover is taken off and it's rolled onto center stage. The janitor sets up rows of metal folding chairs in the auditorium that doubles as a basketball court. Mrs. K puts on her shiny dress, jewelry and perfume. All the boys wear suits and ties and the girls wear their spring dresses, all frilly with bows and floppy collars. The worst players go first and the best last. I'm twelve and this is my third recital. The program will list my full name: Benjamin Michael Morse, Jr.

I've got *Fur Elise*. I wanted Grieg's Norse Song, a slow dirge-y piece, but someone has to play *Fur Elise* every year. I'm real nervous because everyone knows the song by heart, so if I screw up it'll be obvious. Everyone's nervous and shaking when they get up there anyway, except Jeff. Jeff usually goes last. He's the best player but he's being punished this year by Mrs. K. She's been telling everyone about his big mistake, about how he's going to Berkeley to study jazz. All her best players go to the New England Conservatory, she's on the board of directors and gets them in with scholarships. Katherine, a high school senior like Jeff, is going to the Conservatory. She's going last.

I'm not very good. I don't really know why but I just get nervous and screw up and that makes me more nervous and I screw up more. Mrs. K tells me to relax. People who are real good don't seem nervous. I wonder if that's what talent is. I can't concentrate either. Ever since my grandfather died things have been bad at the house. He played the piano. My dad doesn't really like us playing the piano, and he really hates paying for lessons. He wants me to quit taking lessons. My sisters quit because they never practiced and hated it anyway. My dad told them they were smart and wished some other people around the house were as smart as them when it comes to not wasting money. I practice a lot but I'm not getting much better. But in three years I've gone from second to fourth. That's something, right?

"Oh, you're not wearing that, honey, are you?" That's my mom about my tie, a blue solid one and she goes to get one of my dad's striped ones. My dad is pacing the house like a madman, "Every goddamn year...LATE...keep moving." My mom is telling my sisters to change their dresses upstairs. My dad's in the mirror downstairs with his tie, "Same thing every year, get the picture, the goddamn thing starts, and HERE THEY COME. Late again. Look everyone...here's the late people. I should have turned the car around..." Now the car is running with all the doors open and we pile in. My dad starts backing out while we try to close the car doors and then he slams the car into park, "Where the hell's my goddamn wallet?" He storms back into the house. We sit in silence as the car runs and my mom breathes big sighs. She goes back into the house, "Jesus, every single time."

Mrs. K spots us coming in the door and looks at her watch, shaking her head. They've waited for us. Jeff is slumped in the end chair. Mrs. K moves him to the second to last chair and seats us in our places, me in the fourth chair, Katherine at the end. John Bates is third, I passed him this year. He's better than me but he's a stopper. He gets into a piece, screws up,

stops and then goes back to the beginning. Then he just keeps going back at every mistake. He went fourth last year. He went to get hypnotized so Mrs. K says he'll be fine this year.

It's Mrs. K's rule that everyone has to play in the recital, even if you just started taking lessons. Like the first kid that's playing, Lawrence. He's only been taking for three weeks so he's still on the first piece, which is called "Here We Go Now." It's just the right hand, and only seven notes long, with a repeat. So it's 1-2-3-1-2-3-1, repeat, starting on middle C. Lawrence is a little squirt, about nine, with big glasses. He walks to the piano, scared out of his mind, shoulders up by his ears, and starts. He hesitates after the third note but continues on, finishing the first half. All he's got left now is the repeat. Come on Lawrence, you can do it. He's nailing it but then gets cocky and tries to accent the final note for a big finish. Raising his thumb high he slams it down, hitting the B and the C together, a minor second, making a big nasty sour note ring through the echo-y hall. DONG. It mixes with Mrs. K's clapping. She looks over so we all join in with applause as Lawrence's red face exits the stage. The clapping makes it worse, like we're saying, "Nice try," "Good effort," or "Congratulations, Lawrence, you suck."



Dan Larson Relief Print

Next is an adult woman who plays by ear but is learning to read music. She's good. I've heard her play some honky tonk piano and I wonder why she's putting herself through this. She plays in a restaurant and isn't nervous at all. She smiles at the audience as she puts her music on the piano. She plays a song called "Donkey Ears" which has a hee haw motif at the end of each line. It's a stupid song but she plays it well. After Lawrence we need a little good feeling. "Have you seen my donkey with the big ears?" Hee Haw, Hee Haw. The beginning piano books put silly words in between the staves. "He's been my donkey for sixteen years. Hee Haw Hee Haw." She changes the end a little bit like a honky tonk. She doesn't care. She's not going to the Conservatory. Mrs. K claps lightly for her as a communal sense of dread fills the hall. Next up is John Bates, the stopper.

John's playing a Chopin Prelude. He's been practicing it since the last recital so he won't screw up. He starts it and misses a few notes but keeps going. Yes. Yes. He's doing it. He repeats one little thing but goes on. I look over to his parents and they're smiling. He's a rich kid and they live in this big house on the ocean. He's heading into the last cadence and I hear a voice behind me. It's my dad. I hear my mom whisper. "What?" He says something louder and my mom says. "What?" I hear him louder say. "I said, I guess there will be no crying this year. Last year John Bates started crying. My dad got the biggest kick out of that. He thinks all piano players are sissies and crybabies. His voice, loud anyway, was loud enough that everyone heard it, including John Bates and Mrs. K and after a brief silence we hear the worst thing we could possibly hear: the opening notes of the Chopin Prelude. John Bates, after giving the audience a deer in the headlights look, has started the piece over. We all shudder. We know it's going to be bad. He stumbles, starts again, then again, and then like a scene in a horror movie where the character goes crazy, he starts repeating the opening over and over and.... Mrs. K has hold of his arms and is pulling him with the bench away from the piano. The bench scrapes on the floor as he resists and she gets between him and the piano, like she's afraid he may run back. We applaud as she guides him back into his seat and taps me on the shoulder to hurry to the piano.

Mrs. K rents a studio where she gives lessons. Just off the studio is a waiting room. Jeff has his lesson right before me. The waiting room has ratty furniture and a shag rug. I lie on the torn couch and read battered copies of Reader's Digest while I wait for Jeff's lesson to end. I'm reading a real life story about a guy trapped in a car underwater. Jesus told him to be patient and let the water fill most of the car before trying to get out. That way the water wouldn't flood in all at once and drown him. I hear Jeff arguing with Mrs. K. Well, first of all, she's always telling him to sit up straight. Jeff is totally relaxed at the piano, hunching over it with his long fingers attacking it. If I could play like him I wouldn't let anyone tell me anything. What difference does it make how you sit at the piano. But it bugs Mrs. K and I think she's jealous because he plays better than her. Now she's saying, "When the theme is reintroduced, come in softly, ease the listener into it, let us enjoy it, Think of the audience. Jeff says, "It was soft the first time, now you reaffirm it, you accent it. "Look at the notation, see," Mrs. K is getting annoyed. "It's pianissimo, see it. "That was put in by some editor," Jeff shoots back. "It's not in the original music, I looked it up." Mrs. K is pissed. "I think, my dear boy, that a trained musicologist knows a little bit more about how this piece should be played than you."

Jeff starts back in playing as I'm still laying on the couch. Man, can he play, and I start fantasizing like I'm Jeff playing and kicking ass and hunched over the piano and Mrs. K is pissed and she starts smacking me on my hands with the ruler and I just dig in and play better and she's behind me in her black shoes and whacking me with the ruler and my grandfather is watching me from heaven and smiling at how well I'm playing even though I'm getting beat to shit and I'm getting turned on, getting harder and writhing on the couch as I reintroduce the theme loud and hard, pounding and now I'm coming to the end. I'm just about to come when the music ends and I have to finish on the couch and I start to panic. Should I yes, no, yes, I could get caught, I hurry and finish as I hear my name being called. I smile. No one can ever accuse me of being a stopper.

I go clomping across the stage in these brown shoes that are new and a little too big. It seems like you have to be uncomfortable when people look at you. I sit down and adjust the piano bench and it scrapes loudly on the floor. My heart is racing and I try to breathe. Telling myself it will soon be over, I begin, and the opening goes o.k., it always does because that's the part you practice the most. I'm kicking ass and I start to think, hey what's going on, because something must be wrong. Maybe this is it, maybe this IS the big breakthrough, like I knew would happen soon. I knew my playing was getting a little better and I've been waiting for the big leap. Maybe this is it. I can show everyone that I am a piano player. I am a musician, see. I finish the first section like a pro. I pause, bow my head like those guys on public t.v. who play concertos with a whole orchestra, very serious and deep.

The second section is waltzy. Although the whole piece is in triple time, 3/8, the second part really feels like a waltz, like in old movies with the big hoopy dresses swirling around an open air ballroom. I start to feel pretty good and even start to have a little fun which is rare for me, trying to be serious and do well. The downward run is perfect, not much expression but I hit all the notes. Now I reintroduce the theme. Slowly and I look at Mrs. K, who's nodding to the beat and she looks pleased.

My general life plan is that if I can get really good at piano I could do something that no one in my family has ever done, that is to be a professional musician. My family are all workers, in business, at companies and I think my parents hope I make a lot of money at some regular job. But I'm different. I don't think like them. I never know what to say to them and I feel left out at holidays and in general. That's why I think I can do it even though my parents laugh at people who want to be professional musicians in our town, like people in bands. Poor souls, they call them, not like the good boys who get married, get a regular job, a house and kids, new cars and dress nice. But that's not me. I don't fit in with those people, like the popular regular kids at school. Jeff. I'll be as good as him soon and I'll show them assholes.

The last part of *Fur Elise* is the best. It's fast and noisy. I play it when I'm bummed out, like when my parents are fighting and screaming. I play it loud and bang and drown out the yelling and crying and throwing stuff. It's like I'm not there. Lost in the song, thinking how it'll be better when I'm famous and I make my family a success. I wonder what was happening to old Beethoven and Elise during this part, whether they were fighting or...you know, getting it on. One time I asked Mrs. K what she thought this part was about and she just looked at me with a big eye. "It's just a song," she said. "It's not about anything except playing it well, so people will like it. But I think she's wrong. I think Beethoven must have been feeling something, he walked around in lightning storms for fun. I bet he was weird like me. They'll see when I'm famous. But now as I'm playing I start to think about bad things, like what if everyone is jealous and hates me. That's when I start to screw up. I lose my place in the song.

I go back to the beginning of the fast part and I hear some nervous chairs start to scrape. I'm thinking how if my grandfather were in the audience it would be all right, and I'd remember everything. But for now it's all enemies and scared people, no one really cares, like you can't care if you're scared and have to think about yourself, not like my Pepere. I put my head down and just start to play whatever I can remember even though it's random and wrong. Now they know, for sure, they all know. I'm playing the arpeggio in a different key and all wrong notes and it sound like serial, atonal music that Mrs. K says is written just to annoy people. I keep going, to hell if it sounds like shit, because it will soon be over and this is not my year, no one will be jealous, as I chicken out and limp to the end, a coward making my humble exit. Everyone is probably saying, "well he tries hard but just doesn't have it." I take my bow just like Mrs. K taught us, one hand in front, one in back.

On the ride home my dad says, "Well, that was pretty good." My mom says "You did wonderful, hey, better than most of them." "I had it going for a while," I say, "But then I started thinking..." "Compared to that John Bates," my mom interrupts. "You were GREAT!" My dad jumps in, "That John Bates is a riot, he makes it worth showing up. "He should quit, he stinks," my little sister says. "He's just queer," my older sister says. Bates likes her and she hates him and always puts him down. She says, "He tried to talk to me after the concert, he wants to be a professional musician, even Benny's better than him, and that's not much. "Cool it," my mom snaps, knowing I'll smack my big sister in a minute, "Just thank God that it's over for another year."

Next year I'll do it. Next year will be the breakthrough. I feel lucky to have a whole year to get ready. It's probably good I didn't do well because then everyone would know my secret about being famous. My parents would have to talk me out of my dream and my sisters would laugh and tell everyone. There's enough problems in the house already. Everything's worked out for the best, I think, because, at least for now, my secret is safe.



Fred Tindall

an indefinitely small space of Time

by Kathryn Duhamel

(house dark with grey rain you waiting there in the dark house smelling damp and rich like soil you in the house waiting after waking up i left you sleeping in the morning moist rain fogging the windshield breathing my own warm breath in the car, wet and dark. *coq au vin* simmering, moist, sweet, red on the stove, the decadence of a whole chicken steeped in wine on such a dark moist day, humid and close, the windows edged with steam, you sitting on the chair, reading what would we do? what would we do?)

house dark with grey rain you waiting there for me i see you in another city and i am driving and i am tired and hungry after taking the test, breathing in my own stale breath, breathing the moist headache air, the light through the windshield is grey, rain splatters between the blades, splashing my fingers and nose cold inside the car and when i get home and knock on the door in the rain and hope you hear i am hungry and don't want to give you a kiss but the shine of your smile when you open the door, i am hit by the wall of your smell, that underground smell, the smell that i want to take home, that reminds me of the time before i was born.

coq au vin in simmering in a pot on the stove, the meat dissolving from the bone, the small white onions turn translucent, then pink, then red and sweet, no one is paying attention, your body is small, you're as small as me, and always look new under your clothes, covered with thick hair and dark package of skin, love like a consolation, a wish, a memory, because there isn't anything else, love that is sad and necessary, that when anyone holds me i think of someone else, just to break my own heart.

the smell that i want to take home, that reminds me of everything, i want to carry it with me everywhere, i can break out sobbing in the parking lots of shopping malls, tearing my hair out, eyes red, collapsing between the rows of shiny cars glinting in the sun, a smell like the mushrooms in the *coq au vin*: dark, musty, slick, firm to the tooth, warm, the chicken (the whole chicken!) simmers quietly on the stove, quietly falling apart, the gutted cavity filled with the sweet st. teaming liquid, later i will strain the broth with a colander and put it on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, where it will congeal into a cold red gel.)

the Bus Lady

by
Terry Anzaldi

The table set for six in the dining room lit by candles, lace tablecloth, linen napkins with shining silver rings -- candlesticks, silver too. The light gleaming off each facet in Grandma's crystal goblets sitting next to Mama's best wedding china -- still brilliant after twenty years. The house filled with fresh scrubbed faces, smiling, laughing -- always laughing: full of love and hope and anticipation.

"I was just sitting here remembering. It's funny how all those memories come back to you, especially the memories of being young. Maybe it's because everything seemed so easy then; your head not yet filled with all the worries it has when you get older. Oh, I guess there were some sad times but now I seem to be mostly remembering the happy ones. I especially remember all of the faces. My mother and father, such a lovely couple. My father was so stern and businesslike but my mother could always make him laugh. He loved her so. She was a beautiful woman, my mother. She had the most lovely hair; full and thick, not like my hair: always curling up in the most odd ways. Even when she got sick my mother's hair was still beautiful. My brothers all got my mother's hair. My they were handsome young men. I was the oldest so it was up to me to help my mother care for them. There was always something happening in a house with three boys. I can tell you. They were always getting into some kind of mischief. Nothing serious you know, not like these kids today. I remember once when I was about fourteen, my youngest brother John was seven and he got it into his head to climb to the very top of the neighbor's pear tree. Mrs. Albright, my how she hated anyone climbing that tree. He figured that no worms could climb up that high, you see, and ruin the pears. Well, of course you can imagine what happened; he got all the way to the top and couldn't get down again. We had to call my father home from work to climb up there after him. After that my other brothers always teased him, calling him Tarzan the ape boy until he started to cry. Those boys almost drove my poor mother crazy with their foolishness. She loved them though, it broke her heart when the oldest boy, Tom, went to fight the Germans. He came back though, but he was never the same man as he was before those Nazi's got a hold of him. He was always so distant after that, like he just couldn't get the memories out of his head. All those faces I remember. They're all gone now, some dead, some half dead, some sitting around wishing they were dead. Me, I'm all alone. I never had any kids of my own. Never even had a husband. My mother got sick so fast after Daddy died. The cancer, you know. Spent most of my marrying years looking after her. In my day it was the duty of the eldest child to look after a surviving parent especially if you were the only girl. I didn't mind though, Mama looked after all us kids when we were growing up, it was the least I could do to look after her as she grew old. I'm happy though, I've still got my health thank the Lord, and I've still got my mind which is more than I can say for some of these poor old people. Look at that man over there. The one sitting two rows up on the other

side. He's just as crazy as a loon, poor thing. Babbling to himself like he's got money in the bank or something. Half the people that ride these buses are crazy; they ride all day because they don't have any place else to go. Me, I always have plenty to do; I take advantage of all the activities they offer to Seniors these days. I especially like the shows they put on for us. They put on a lot of nice shows for the Seniors to enjoy. Sometimes the nice man from Senior Services comes to drive me but mostly I take the city bus. You have to study the schedules real good if you want to get where you're going but it's not so bad once you get the hang of it. I usually go on Wednesday to see the matinee. Sometimes I go on Saturday too but I never go out at night anymore, it just isn't safe. It's these kids nowadays, they have no respect for the elderly. I hear they're all on drugs, every one of them, isn't that something. I go all kinds of places besides just shows. Sometimes I go out to eat, usually I go alone but sometimes I go with one of the ladies from my building. I've been to a lot of nice restaurants but I think I like that little chicken place the best. Have you ever been there? It's the one in that big plaza out where the drive-in used to be. There's one of those video places on one side and a pharmacy on the other. It's very good and the prices are reasonable, you have to pay attention to those sorts of things when you live on a fixed income. Anyway, you should try it sometime. The number seventeen bus will get you there in no time. Oh. Well, I guess this is your stop. I'm going on a little further. I'm going visiting today. Hope I see you again sometime. Hold on now, don't fall. These drivers like to stop real sudden. Bye, Bye."

The frozen pond glimmered under the late afternoon sun. Skaters in earmuffs and mittens whirled round and round. Children sprawled on the ice crying for their mothers. Couples arm in arm smiling into each other's faces. Teenaged boys clowning, trying to get attention; teenaged girls giggling, giving it to them. The trees covered in snow. Icicles dripping off each branch like giant diamonds, yet much more precious.

"There was so much more snow when I was young. Nobody seemed to mind though, we just bundled up good and went about our business. There were no big complainers like there are nowadays. These days it seems like everyone's got something to complain about; all these people on this bus just bellyaching day after day, from the time they get on till the time they get off. Always blaming everyone in the world for their problems and never looking at themselves for the reasons why their wife left them or their bosses are threatening to fire them. I was talking to a woman just yesterday that told me how bad she felt that she didn't have the money to send her daughter on a skiing trip with the school. Can you imagine that woman feeling bad because of something like that? When I was young there was so much to do; so much joy to be had in simple things. Now everyone has to spend money to be entertained or they get bored. I remember it like it was yesterday: getting up early to dress by the stove, Mama chasing after us if we ran out forgetting our hats. Oh, we just skated and skated all day long. Then, when it got near to supper we would all pile into the house excited and tired and there would be Mama waiting at the door with hot cocoa and dry socks. So much fun to be had in those days and mind you, it didn't cost us a penny. I seem to be remembering those days more and more now, not that I'm unhappy, you understand. I'm happy and busy these days still, I am. I'm on the go all the time, every day. Visiting, eating out, shopping, going to the shows that they put on for us Seniors. We get in for half price, you know. Yes, I lead a full life, not like some of these old people just sitting around all day watching their stories and waiting for the Meals-on-Wheels people to bring them their dinner. I was telling a lady this morning that you can get just about anywhere on these city buses. No need to be stuck in those stuffy high rises all day. Places get like a tomb sometimes. You have to study the schedules real good and you can go anywhere you please, and for free too, if you're a Senior. But you know how old people are; they never want to change, so they sit around all day thinking up new sicknesses they can complain about when their kids come to visit, if they come to visit. Oh, is this your stop already? I'm going on up the line a little bit, going visiting you know. Like I said, I'm always on the go. You won't catch me sitting around on my heinie all day. It was nice talking to you. Have a good afternoon."



Jason Major "Forms" Charcoal on paper

The scent of a freshly cut spruce filling the parlor. Candles glowing on the ends of every branch. Homemade ornaments because Mama wouldn't have store-bought on her tree. Every year new ones would appear until all the kids were grown then the old ones were pulled out, becoming more tattered but somehow more beautiful every year.

"Out shopping, I see. My goodness that's a lot of packages. I don't have to do that much shopping anymore. I just pick up a few things for some of the ladies in my building; mostly for the one's who don't have any family. Nobody should have to be alone on Christmas with no gifts to unwrap. I usually just buy them some candies or maybe some fruit or nuts for the one's who have the diabetes. Oh, when I was a girl we used to have such wonderful Christmases. I had three younger brothers, you know. The house would always be bustling with activity. Mama cooking for days. Daddy grumbling about money. Not that we had a lot back then, not like these kids nowadays. My goodness, they have so many expensive things to buy for kids. Sometimes I see them when I'm in the mall just yelling and hollering about wanting this or that. We used to get some candy and some fruit. If we were very good Mama would save up some of her grocery money and get each of us a toy. One year I got the most beautiful doll with a porcelain face and a red dress with real lace. I still have that doll sitting on my bed in my apartment. Daddy could never figure out how Mama saved so much money and we still always had plenty to eat. He said it was Mama's Christmas miracle. Today things are so different. The kids get so much that they just don't appreciate the small things anymore. It's a shame, really. Takes all the meaning out of the holiday. I don't think that I'd know what to buy for a child if I had to. My nieces and nephews are all grown up now and I really don't see much of them or their kids. Sometimes they send me pictures. Would you like to see them? I think I still have them in my purse. Oh, well maybe I'll see you again sometime and I can show them to you. They're darling children. You have a nice holiday. Be careful, those packages look heavy. Watch your step now. Bye, Bye.

The sun reflected off the shiny mahogany box; I just knew that it would leave marks in Mama's new carpet. I guess she won't care now though. Daddy was gone, lying in his final rest inside that shiny box and Mama didn't care about anything anymore. The company was finally gone for the day; the house too quiet. Tomorrow they would be back to see that we made it to the church all right. The room looked so different with all the furniture pushed back and that box taking up more than half of it. Tomorrow it will be gone with nothing left to show that it or Daddy had ever been here except for the marks in Mama's carpet. Faces again, the same as before only this time there was no laughter, no smiles, only grim determination to get Mama through.

"Oh, I'm fine thank you. I was just remembering the day my father passed on. I like to try and remember only the happy times but sometimes at this time of the year I get a little melancholy. Nothing serious, it's just the way of old people. Going home for dinner are you? That's nice. Dinner always tastes good after a hard day's work. Not that some of these young people would know. I swear most of them ride this bus back and forth from stop to stop all day long. In my day, young people never had so much free time on their hands. We worked hard and still we had to struggle to make ends meet. Even the youngest children had to help out in those days. After my father died all three of my brothers had to go out to work to help Mama keep the house running. We did all right though. Always had enough of everything. Sometimes I don't know what's going to become of this world; seems nobody wants to work anymore, everyone just looking to find an easy way. That's why they all play the lottery every day. Hoping they'll strike it rich so they can spend the rest of their lives sitting on their heinie's drinking fancy drinks out of coconuts. Ah well, at least I won't have to be here to witness it. Right now I've got plenty of my own business to attend to instead of worrying about a future that I won't be a part of. I've had a good life and still do; there's so much to keep us Seniors busy these days. Like tomorrow, for instance, I think I'll go up to see that new mall on route nine. I hear they have a lot of nice little shops and a big restaurant with glass ceilings. My friend Ida was there last week with her son Ira. Yes, Ida and

Ira, imagine that, she said you could see birds fly overhead while you were eating. Isn't that something? It really isn't that far; these days the city buses go just about everywhere. Time for you to get off now? Wells you have a nice dinner. I suppose your family's waiting for you. That's nice, there's nothing like a family to come home to. No, I'm going on a little way. I'm going visiting you know."



Jason Pimental Lithograph

Forging Maria



Renee Dupree Lithograph

between your shaking hands
and the newspaper
in your lap
is the plane ticket.
Over and over
saying
how sad it is
that after years
of drinking your mother to memory,
after his cancer had finally spread
from throat to brain,
your father needs a functional hand
to bang in the nails,
straighten out the bedsheets,
and sign the will
in the house
he designed on a
barmaid's paper coaster.

In his letter,
an account of a dream,
he was dancing between
wax paper trees,
signed at the bottom:
please come please,
bounces in the glove box
as I-95 gets worse underneath
our wheels.

You sigh
and look to the right
as I turn on the annoying
badoomp
badoomp
badoomp
of the windshield wipers.
Driving into snow
the radio predicts
to be heavy all night.

Benjamin Goulet

like sick irony
the water breaths
its fire-
over the wall
of stone
set there for
our protection-
up then down
the deep
breath of Edourd
fills the
sea in an
everglade of
power

a lone swell
plays and laughs-
mocking me
throwing its
white foam around
my throat

Jessica
D'Abrosca

Calm Inside the Storm

there are no words
to be said
in this
private moment between
storm and sea-
admiration respect and
love consummate
the bond-
mortal and indestructible
come together
forming intertwining limbs
of icy
water and flesh,
the peace here could never
be constructed
through talks in a distant
middle east-

pit in my stomach
arms of the sea
drawing me closer
into darkness so bright-
the game begins
and I-
the guest of honor-
am ready



Willy Plante Lithograph

treeline

Anthony Lofredio

It was a cold clear fall evening
and the night's lid remained half closed
over its only white eye, and I watched you
as you watched the last memory of the day
flicker and fade like some fire set to burning
a thousand miles away
behind the mystery of the treeline.

There was a wind from the north
and I watched from the porch, dead leaves
chasing in circles around your courderoyed legs
and shivering ankles.
I watched the leaves scale your dancer's body
and gather and dance with your dancing brown hair
and it was then that I knew-
when the shoulder of the universe
finally turned it's back on the sun and
the sun finally turned it's back on you,
darkness covered your shoulders
and it was then that I knew-
as I entered your darkness, letting the light
of the moon pull together
our blue eyes and shivering lips
it was then that I knew I could not lie
and that I loved you.



Nina Palumbo Liching

To Julian About His Wedding

I try not to think about you
or her
or what she looks like
or if you gave her a really big ring
or if she refilled the part of you
I kept like a well worn blanket,
not really wanting it but not
having the heart to toss it
because it was my one consolation.
I tried real hard not to wonder about
the church, the dress, the cake
or the cloying flowers
your little sisters
would strew along the aisle.
But wise men say that planned actions
are never completed,
which was our innocent glitch
in the first place.
Every morning I try not to think
about you
or the letters with the wasted words
you never answered.
There are no images
there are endless images
for the urgencies in which
I could swim
or drown
or float like a tepid tea bag.
They could drive me mad,
so I try not to think
or dream
about you or her
or your life without me.

Jessica
Scarlett
Clark

Scenes From A Lighthouse

by
Anthony Lofredio

It was old and quite abandoned. The wind breathed heavy on it and the ocean spat in its face. The tide was so strong tonight that one would think the fish were drowning. Drowning in undertow.

Somewhere, the sound of voices, somewhere high above, lost in the wind, sat two figures. They sat on the outside catwalk on old porch chairs, and looking into the whirlwind emptiness, their voices could be heard in the silent moments between the noise of the tide hurtling itself up onto the land.

Will and Hal sat on the lighthouse cat walk. The lawn chairs were old, but the wind was older, and cold enough to make them both pull their shirts closer to their necks. The wind wasn't full of winter cold, but it bit with the sharp chill of early fall. Will zipped his sweater up until it would zip no more and shivered, looking out across the water and into the darkness beyond.

"Do you think we were followed?" Hal asked, looking all around as he spoke.

Will looked back towards the mainland. "No way, we were out of the store before she even saw our faces. Besides, she's new there and probably won't remember us the next time we go in. But you know, we wouldn't have this problem if you could just pay for a book for a goddamn change."

"But she saw me take it. She saw it in my hands then she saw us walk out the other door. Christ Will, she even called us back. We didn't go. She's probably already called the police."

Will scratched his head, shaking it back and forth before finally looking at Hal. "Look, I don't know, but who cares. It's just a fucking book."

Hal stopped pacing, looked down at the book he'd been carrying and tossed it into the empty chair. "What the hell's wrong with you?"

"I don't know, it just seems so unimportant right now. Besides, is Ginsberg really worth getting caught over anyway?"

"Everything's worth getting caught over."

Will didn't answer. Hal stood against the lighthouse railing waiting for him to say something, say anything, knowing that his silence wasn't about the book at all.

"So, have you decided what you're going to do?"

Will shifted in his chair, "Me?" Will looked up from the chair and brushed his hair back from his face. "I don't know yet."

"Have you thought about it at all?"

"I try not to think about it, it's better that way."

Hal shifted his gaze away from the emptiness of the invisible ocean. "Sometimes its good to think," he said, "It's healthy."

"Yeah, and sometimes it's not."

"But man, you've got to admit, it's good to think here. Easier or something. At least here we're safe from the book police and all that shit going on back there."

Will gave Hal a sideways glance and then looked away. "I don't know, it's just that, me and her, we've been at it for so long." He never looked at Hal while he talked. Will had a way of not looking at the person he was talking to for a long time, especially if the talking was serious.

Hal sat upright in the chair, "It has been a long time. Another couple of months will make it what, almost four years now?" Hal stopped for a second, noticing the clouds moving across the half full moon. "Do you think she'll understand?"

Will stood up from his chair and walked over to the rail. He leaned over the side and looked down at the rocks below. He put his forehead against the rail and said, without looking up, "I don't know."

The light house had been standing for over a hundred years, abandoned for at least the last thirty. It was almost hidden along the Rhode Island coast, only half way restored by the Preservation Society. Now it just sits there at the far end of a long brush choked peninsula, far from the mainland, letting time do its work. The lighthouse was a place hardly anybody ever went to, located somewhere on the edge of a world that did not matter. But it was a place that Hal and Will always went to. They never told anyone else about it and they both liked it that way.

"This is a good place to be do be," Hal repeated, taking a long pause in between words. "Do you even think you could do it after all this time?"

"Maybe, maybe not."

"Hell, how good can it be to do one thing for such a long time, anyways?"

"I don't know. But I get this feeling when I've done something for too long, and I finally change it, I'm usually happier than I was before. But those were small things."

The clouds moving across the moon made irregular shapes in the lighthouse window. All Hal could see was the faint outline of his blue sweater and Will's hands hanging down from the sides of the rail.

"And now I'm twenty two," he continued, "And I feel almost married, and Christ, at twenty-two, four years is a long time to do anything."

"I don't ever want to reach that point," Hal said.

"What point?"

"The point where change doesn't matter. But don't get me wrong, I understand what you're saying. And it is hard. Christ, I don't know what I'm gonna do either. I mean, it hasn't been four years for me and Sarah, but its been long enough." Hal looked back out across the water, "And I can tell you this much, there's been too many mistakes and too much time wasted, that's for sure. At least you and her have gone through all this together, you know, grown up a lot." He looked over at Will, "But I've just grown up with these shithead mistakes."

Will lifted his head from the rail, "Yeah but four years wasted on four or five different relationships is better than four years wasted with one. I mean, is it that bad that you think you need to cut it out with Sarah? Is it really that bad?"

"I don't know Will, sometimes," Hal walked along the railing as he talked, watching the waves crash against the rocks below, smelling the salt of the sea spray. "There was a point when we just cut-off the rest of the world, her friends, my friends. Do you remember seeing me less and less over the past year and half?" He stopped again, grabbing onto the cold metal rail and leaning back so that he could look up into the sky. "Now, I've just got this feeling, like I want the world back or something. I think I love her. I really do, but it gets so hard sometimes when you feel like you have to choose."

After he finished, Hal sat back down. He couldn't help remembering, remembering that other world. He remembered a pool on a summer night, one built deep in the ground and surrounded by tall bushes swaying in the wind like giants in the dark moments of the lighting. He remembered how crazy they were for skinny dipping in the heat lightning and how funny and crazy it was to have a big pink house all to themselves with no one to answer to. He could see Eddie and Will prancing around the pool. Eddie in his mother's swim suit, talking like the chain smoking homosexual he was. Eddie who

worked only midnight shifts and had at least at one time, fallen in love with each of them, and had, at least at one time, been made fun of and denied by all. Hal remembered how strong the power of the summer was and how it paled now, here, sitting at the lighthouse wondering why it was getting so damn cold so soon. Looking back, Hal could see them in the pool, the big pink house towering above them in their nakedness, only back then they didn't notice it watching over them. Back then they didn't hear it saying that only the things they loved would be the things they'd lose.

Hal leaned his head against the salt stained lighthouse window and looked into the now dark light tower. He stood there, watching his reflection turn on and off with moonlight, trying to turn everything that had happened in his life into a cohesive whole, searching for some way to bring himself to understand what it was now. He stood there and said nothing. He thought of relationships ruined, his father going away on a trip that never brought him back, the cage of the sea side small town and all the commitments he'd made. He was lost in the emptiness and in the time he knew was already wasted in arguments and in stupid jobs with stupid people.

"Will, do you remember how it used to be?"

"Yeah, I remember"

"We never did any one thing for too long a time."

Will sat back down in the chair and nodded, "Oh yeah" he said, laughing a little. "And that actually worked a little better then things do now. But we were younger then. It's different, you know what I mean?"

"So do you think that it actually did work then?"

"What?"

"Not doing one thing for a long time?"

Will smiled a little, looking out at the water, "Jesus, if we could be that goddamned irresponsible again. If only I could not give a shit about all the things that I don't have the balls to do. So many changes so quick, and here we are without balls wondering how to get them back."

Hal leaned into his reflection further, putting his head against the glass. He stood within the outer edge of the sea side wind and felt the cold air under his clothes. It made him shake. Inside, he felt even colder, as if he knew that something was going away from him. He felt himself getting older with every movement of the ocean, as if he were running out of time. Time to escape, time to do what he wanted, what he and Will wanted, what Sarah wanted. He started thinking that the tide was only there to remind him that his watch, and all the clocks of the world, were still ticking, no matter what it was they needed to achieve.

Hal looked around on all sides. He looked down at the water and up at the sky, he wondered why it didn't feel like summer here when it was only late July.

Before he had a chance to asked Will interrupted. "Maybe its the bad winter we had, maybe it just hasn't left us yet. Maybe that's why we feel so shitty." Will kicked a piece of deadfall over the side of the deck. "We've had more snowfall this year than we did during the blizzard of seventy eight."

"I don't even remember the blizzard."

"Well, that's what the weather man with the stupid smile on his face said."

"What weather man with the stupid smile?"

"That guy they have on the news every night."

"What's wrong with his face?" Hal asked, turning away again from the window.

"Forget it," Will said, "Just watch more television the next time it snows."

"You know Will," Hal said, tapping the back of his head against the lighthouse window, tapping a piece of the past, a piece of memory, "We know damn well what the problem is but we do nothing. I think of the consequences all the time and I think godamnit, out of all of the problems, out of all these wasted relationships and wasted summers and fights and let downs, what if she's the one. What if I

never find this again, what if, in a world so full of shit, I never find anything ever again?"

Hal banged his head harder against the glass, making their reflections jump again, "What if after all of this, all the shit, the screaming on the phone, screaming in the street, the money I've never paid back, the crank calls in the middle of the night wondering which one it could be, what if she is the only mistake I'll never make again?"

The wind punched hard and shook the large window panes. Will sat very still in the chair, hands folded, head down, without an answer.

Hal didn't say anything else. He was sick of talking about it. He looked out at the ocean and wondered why when problems are so obvious, it was still so hard to do what your gut tells you to. He listened to the long cold surge of the surf play its ghostly drum-like rhythm against the sand, forever moving, playing like a partner with the wind and the moon, telling time in great motions of sound and water. He could see himself in the window, one lonely figure lit up in moon light, screaming against all this power, all the power in the world, screaming I am here and this is me and that somewhere it all really did matter and that somewhere lighthouses were still run by humans and somewhere there are still echoes of an answer bouncing off the question and bringing the question right back. He watched himself standing there against all that emptiness, cowering in the darkness with all the small consequences of his life dwarfed in miniature by something so vast that the emptiness outside suddenly became the emptiness within.

Hal started walking around the circular catwalk. He stopped, walked another circle, sat down, stood up, then sat down again.

They both sat there, in silence, until they noticed lights coming up from over the horizon. Will stood up as the lights came up high over the hill on the roadside. For a moment, everything down below was bright. The lights jerked Hal back into time and as he moved. He grabbed Will from the railing, and they both crouched down just within the doorway leading down into the staircase. The police car rounded the last bend in the road leading down towards the end of the peninsula. The car's flood light flashed across the area around and beyond the lighthouse. Hal and Will scurried back outside to grab the old chairs and throw them back into the brush. Will jerked Hal's arm towards the stairs leading below,

"Come on let's get the hell out from up here before he shines his light up into the windows."

"Do you think they reach that far?" Hal whispered.

"I don't know, but I know they can point directly upward, so he might catch a shadow or something. Come on, we're safer in the stairwell."

Outside, the car did another circle of the perimeter, but the policeman only paused for a minute to shine his light up and down the length of the lighthouse... From below, Hal and Will heard the loud squawking sounds of the man's radio thunder through the distance, through the cracks in the wall. They both listened to his engine fade away in the distance, but neither moved until all was silence and ocean again.

Hal and William both walked back into the tower and looked back towards the small hill leading out to the main road.

Hal spoke first, "Godamit, you don't think there looking for us do you? I've never really known them to come this far out and searching around. What the hell do you think they're looking for anyway?"

Will shrugged and put his hands in his pockets, "Well I doubt it's us, the serial book stealer and his accomplice. I guess there's been some trouble out here with all the kids coming out to the dunes. Couple of big parties get out of control, you know, typical bullshit. There was even a fire here some-



Linda Bricker "Window" Etching

where down shore last week. Some idiot set an old rowboat on fire and about eighteen feet of that dead yellow shoreline grass with it. The fire department had to thrash through the brush just to get close enough to put it out."

Hal back up out onto the platform, "Figures. If they see us around here they'll probably kick us out now." Hal walked over to the rail again and leaned over it. "Do you think they'll come back?"

"I don't know. Come on, let's go anyway."

Both Hal and Will descended the old rotting spine of the lighthouse staircase. It creaked loudly and the noise echoed through the lighthouse tower. The stairwell was dark and darker still as they descended into more darkness, down the spine of the past, and into the dim pale light of the present. Will walked out and Hal shut the door tightly behind him making sure it was locked. They could always go back in through the window if they wanted.

Will waited for Hal and they both walked off down the dirt road that lead to the main land. As they walked, they both glanced out into the ocean, taking turns talking. Hal looked straight into the wind as he talked. "You know, maybe we should just get the hell out of here, away from this town, take my car, and just get the hell out."

Will looked away from the ocean, down at his feet and finally across at Hal. "Yeah, sounds like a good idea but you know we'd never go back to school."

Hal shook his head slowly. Every now and then a bat would fly up from the twisted tangled mess of grass and thorny brush that bordered both sides of the dirt road. Hal watched them fly away until the night swallowed each one whole.

"But then again, I think we'd never go back to a lot of things."

Together they walked back into town, pulling their sweaters closer to keep warm in a summer that felt like fall. The ocean kept crashing and drumming its tireless chorus of time and age. The wind blew stronger behind them, gathering strength from its dwelling place in the center of nothing. The tide leapt out of the ocean to erode the shore, and as they walked, the ocean surrounded the world on all sides.

R o o m

Things on top of other things. The room is filled with layers of newspapers, coffee cups, beer cans, plates and some with old food, pens, gears, wires, stereo equipment and small paths worn through this stuff. The furniture is lined like hostages against the walls. Or like sea walls holding back the sprawl. The sea is shimmering and moving in the television light. Did I mention hammers, light switches, cases of old Coca-Cola bottles (antiques, and valuable someday), antennae, and of course, books. Lots of books. Books like Loompanics Catalog, Inc. which can direct you in how to start a country, change your identity, buy a government surplus tank (demilitarized), build home explosives (for information purposes only), grow weed, sell weed, get weed, get out of jail, get someone into jail, start a commune or learn tantric sex and mantric chanting.

A stand up radio, about four and a half feet tall, has books piled up next to it hiding some of the wood that's peeling after water damage. It's neat looking, curved like an arch at the top, like a big phallus with giant knobs and an eye that holds the station call numbers. The knob turns manually and points to the numbers. It was a bastard carrying that and most of this other crap up here. But we had to, because it's valuable, because it would sit in the car, because everyone wanted it and it would get stolen, because we'll regret it if we don't, because it's already come this far and what's two flights of stairs and because it's easier to just DO IT than sit in some dive and argue about it all day.

I thought the white sofa and love seat had looked dirty in my old apartment but they're not even white here. They've taken on this greyish-brown color that makes the floral prints invisible on the arms and seat. The light blue velvet chair has held up pretty well due mainly to the fact that velvet kicks ass as a material, is hard to kill and easy to clean as long as you know the direction (always with the nap) to move the cleaning wand. Fewer people sit in that chair too, preferring to flop onto the sofa or love seat, where the t.v., on a single milk crate, is closer to eye level. The velvet chair makes you feel high above this, throne-like and kingly as it is. But then it depresses you. The kingdom that you are presiding over, while interesting as hell, needs some...well, dumpsters.

There is a wire leading from the front of the t.v. set onto the ground to one bare speaker, no cabinet, propped facing the mattress lying in a corner. I move quietly across the landmines of full ashtrays and empty cigarette packages. The cellophane crumples under my shoes, rustling as the late night car salesman screams from the t.v. set. "Pay no money now, no money tomorrow, no money next week, no money next month, no money next year, pay no money this decade, or CENTURY...Yes, you can even let your children pay..." I find the plug wire on the back of the t.v. set and trace it to the wall. I jiggle the plug up and down pulling it back from the socket. The booming silence rips the room causing a huge commotion.

Frank McGee



John Rapczak "Dissappointment 1" Etching

Sister

Misha, my sister, shaman and bodisatva of humor
with your curly head in my
cross legged lap after dance class
while I massage your neck.
Your sweat is oil.

For us, love is muscle, stretched taught over bone-
ancient in its mechanics,
pliant as rubber, a versatile gift.
Spring's baby, green shoot; late summer's lazy
sunflower; autumn's eternal glow- dervishes fan out
watts of cedar, sage, patchouli,
the sassy, bursting spice of a gypsy princess.

Those summer nights of discovery, with our coffee
we walked, talked without noise and laughed
secrets out loud, delighted by the tandem of our
lacy, stoned imaginations,
dancing through parking lots after midnight.
We stained stone walls with our persistent stare,
trying to understand, knowing we would never
return, wanting to save the moment.
Here it is.

Sometimes, you say, you need to look sideways
to get straight ahead. And you smile with a
naughty lemur look, shaking your ring tail like
a maraca before you scurry back up your tree.
Misha, my sister, my sensible primate.

Distance surrounds us like sun light on a silent,
spanning sea, but here I am adoring you,
holding you in me like a nesting doll contains another.
We travel with each other like breath and exist ever loved
like a fresh peach in my open heart's palm.



Cara Impagliazzo Etching

Jessica
Scarlett
Clark



John Rapczak "Grover and Eva" Etching

Cinema Kings

by

Larry Marshall

I am just an extra at the Dunkin Donut Cinema
left of center by the window, a writer
pallid and pixie thin.
I watch the credits roll,
snazzy designs and logos
"Buy a Donut get one Free After Three PM"

the setting:

purple tables and electric humm to drive away loiters
flourecents to blind the elderly

And now for the stars, Olga and Martha,
two wenches in starched uniforms that speak harshly to
the villains- homeless, drag queens, pimps, the lonely writers-
we are all scum in their eyes.

The sound track is simple: a street musician who is mute
because no music can play here without an entertainment license.

Rising action: Martha and Olga in an argument
about who does the donuts better. Two young hustlers
fight inside over donuts and coffee. Boys of blue come with
the wail of sirens and pepper gas. Fight turns a mess
then more blue boys and more blue boys. Olga and Martha
scream at each other for not cleaning up before closing.
Donuts come out fresh in the morning.

Denouement: a group of Sunday Baptists come in, calm everything
down. And the writer that's me, stays until the twilight
fades.

leaf

the brittle curve of its body
is an old man's hand,
crooked veins and fingers.
each whispers something, admits defeat.

it holds a cane, pushes teeth
into mouths, crumbles at a touch.
it holds its own dust
in those small lines, those hands,
how did it get so small?

it is brown, weak, a paper hand
torn at the edges and left to drift.
it should have learned to fly.
it should have grown wings
instead of fingers.

it should have been a moth
instead of an old man,
and walked on incandescent ground,
still excited at its new wings.

j. peters

The Chinese man walks in, taller than anyone in the room, his cigarette longer than his thin white fingers. A ribbon of smoke hangs in the air behind him. I'm wearing a velvet dress dark like a red tongue, standing with one arm on the bar. He is so tall, too tall, he smells of ginger and gutters, entrails and smoke, a deep earth smell, a smell that doesn't come from his body but is woven into this clothes. He travels in these underground circles with such ease, such grace as to make me seem imaginary, as to make the room dissolve into dream.

I wake up in my tiny room, a rickety addition nailed to the back of the house. One wall is covered in yellow shingles.

I suck in air through the white sheets, breathe it out so it billows white in the air. The window is open and cool air, wet March air, Easter air that smells of new spring fills the room. The washing machine thumps against the house wall. The Chinese man is frying eggs this morning in my kitchen. The eggs are yellow and white, and he smiles as he cracks them into the pan, to hear the sizzle. His smile is unexpectedly friendly, even charming. I want to touch his shoulder to test the reality of the figure, the solidity of flesh. Of course, he is not there. In my kitchen the wallpaper is a pattern of blue flowers, large blue flowers. My mother papered it herself, standing on a grey wooden ladder holding a bucket of paste.

On this March day the sun is high overhead like it hasn't been for months. The light is summer white in the sky. There is mud and greening, and back in the garden the dog is running in the place where there will be tomatoes and fennel, tearing the ground where I will plant rosemary and lavender after the last frost.

The dog is breathing heavily, panting in a high wheeze outside. She has collapsed in front of the screen door. The Chinese man smiles at me knowingly. I put my hand out, but it goes through his face. He's transparent. We're eating breakfast in the sun in my blue flowered kitchen this morning. The eggs are good and salty. I like to eat them on buttered toast. Later I'll start digging in the flower beds. The dog will dig holes all over the yard too and we will laugh the Chinese man and I, and he will fill in the holes with an extra spade.

Marigold, pansy, sweet william, johnny jump up, violet, mexican heather, snapdragon, hyacinths, daffodil, tulip, iris, impatiens, petunia, phlox, morning glory, daisy, indian paintbrush, butter and eggs, thistle, lavender, heather, mum, dahlia, gladiola, hollyhock, marigold, marigold, marigold.

My mother loved marigolds.

The Chinese man holds me as I start to cry. My face and hands are smeared with dirt and I'm kneeling in cold mud, holding a trowel caked with soil. I remember sitting on the walk in front of our old house peeling apart dried marigold heads, shriveled orange tops which opened to reveal a tiny paintbrush collection, perfectly packed inside. Always I scattered the contents, fully aware winter would

the same
wonderful
yellow

by
Kathryn
Duhamel

kill each seed The dog is confused and barks. She says, who lives in this house? I can never tell if you are alone.

The Chinese man walks in, taller than anyone in the room, a long ribbon of cigarette smoke twisting in the air behind him. The bartender slides a glass into his hand. He looks straight through me as he downs the scotch and water and slams the glass down on the bar.

"Where are you from?" I ask.

L.A. " he says, and downs another scotch.

"I mean originally," I say.

The Chinese man smiles knowingly, brushing his black hair back with long fingers. He seems suddenly kind. Standing in the garden, my dog at his feet. This is a dream I keep waking from. My dog running circles around his feet, her paws scratching the ground as she tries to get a hold on the earth around him.

"My family's from China," he says, stabbing his cigarette into the ashtray. He unfolds a bill from his wallet and places it on the bar. He lights another cigarette on his way out the door, his hands cupped against the wind.

I wake up breathing golden air and dog fur, sun and cool air filtering through the curtain. This room was the laundry room, nailed on the back of the house like an afterthought. Sometimes I would sleep in this room on a pile of laundry, wake up with the thumping of the washing machine in its spin cycle. The warm enamel of it. The electric hum, the water splashing, like home.

A swift breeze, the Chinese man walks into the room. He's wearing overalls and a wide grin. He's carrying a bucket and a paintbrush. He's going to repaint my house. I follow him in my pajamas, see him high on the porch roof, splatting paint on the house with the wide end of the brush. It splashes back into his face and he's covered in yellow spots. He hasn't scraped or sanded or even washed the old paint, and I don't care. I'm laughing. He's doing this to make me laugh, painting my house the same wonderful yellow as the shirt he's wearing.

"Why don't you talk to me?" I yell to him and the painting slows. Then he's gone.

The Chinese man, Oh the Chinese man is all right, just a bit homesick. His head in his hands as he sits on a stool by the fireplace. His hands flickering orange reflections of the fire. His long fingers over his eyes.

Outside, the garden is covered with yellow leaves. A mash of leaves, they've melted together underneath. A carpet decaying into brown. The underside is slippery with worms and slime. Layers like pastry. Wet. The Chinese man looks out the window and laughs and points at the dog, who has buried her nose in a hole under the rhododendron. This is the dream I am always waking from.

It has been raining for hours. The blankets are heavy with moisture. Outside, the mud is ankle-deep, the seeds I planted washed all over the yard. The dog is scratching at the screen door, muddy-pawed, her hair hanging in wet clumps. Her feet leave heart-shaped marks on the linoleum. I go back to bed. The rain is insistent.

When I lie down again to sleep March curls up, white and fluffy on my head like a cat, the furnace rumbles and the warm dust smell of heat fills the air over and around the bed, the baseboards click, the sound of rain still falling outside. Just falling out of the sky, splashing on roads and cars and hats and arms checking the mail, people jogging across the street, newspapers and arms and shopping bags held over heads, we're all chimpanzees in the rain...

The Photo Session

by

Leigh Avila

Cold, bitter night air
flows through
huge slabs of concrete
Stars up above
smothered by smog
The glowing dome
of the capital
peeks from across
the busy downtown street
at a girl's silhouette
She's poised
in lingerie and heels
Exploding in light



Natalie Markward

Dining Alone

by

Anthony Lofredio

It's such a positive thing,
dining alone.
Sitting there,
smiling at the empty seats around me.
I bring a book
so I don't have to watch
other people eat.
I hate watching
other people
eat

And I can actually read that book,
be a rude bastard
read about five sentences
before I acknowledge the waitress'
existence.

I don't have to speak much
or eat much
or think much
about the dull drone
record player skipping sound
of a companion's voice.
I don't have to care much
about anything political
who's fucking who
how drunk someone was
how stoned someone is
how terrible the food tastes.

because there is something about it,
dining alone which
makes you look up at the other tables
flickering candle lights
swaying in loneliness,
dancing in the wind storm
of dining room conversation.
I wonder how many people are sitting there
with the person they're sitting with,
in the restaurant they want to be in,

in the life they've kept from starving
by not working on weekends
and going out to eat.

I know there are at least three people
who look up, see me
think "oh how sad,"
and "thank God" that I am
not one of them
when they don't even know me,
sitting there alone
finally able to become
the person I already am.

Moshe the Beadle

in the forest of Galicia,
near Kolomaye,
I dig graves,

I part and lift the earth
with my shovel.
the sweat from my brow
stings my eyes.
the sweat from my hands
darkens the shovel.
I part and lift the earth.

I think of Sighet
and of you, Eliezer,
and of the talks we used to have.
you did not know why you prayed.
you did not know why you wept.
I prayed for the strength
to ask God the right questions.
I wept when I did not understand
his answers.

but here I do not pray,
and God does not answer.
here I watch our deaths
(I see them in the deaths of others.)
yesterday I gave a mouthful
of bread to a child
who sang like you sang,
and he looked at me
as you will look
at the man with the shovel
before you climb down.

J.Peters



Melissa Guillet Etching

Daylight Savings Time

We run through the house in search of Safety
knocking memories to the floor.
The scab on my knee is peeling off
and with it the fear of angels' hands,
Mom makes us take a bath every night now.
I like to stay in until my fingers and toes
wrinkle up like pink raisins,
but she'll know the truth when
she checks behind my ears.
I can't brush the tangles out of my hair.
The monsters don't live under the bed anymore,
now they jump up and down near my feet
until I feed them the flower shaped soaps
I keep in the back of my underwear drawer.
The smell of Mom's perfume makes me smile.
She has worn it ever since the day
the man who said he was my father
came with the skirts;
green for me and pink for my sister.
I am waiting for the kitchen floor to dry
and the smell of Pine-Sol to leave my nose.
Maybe it will never leave
and I can blow it on the plastic Christmas tree.

We go to bed when it is still light outside.
Mom says we need our rest.
I cry for the children still playing outside,
their mothers do not love them as much.
Sometimes I wear my underwear to bed.
Sometimes I melt into a puddle on the floor
and scoop myself up just in time
to see my sister swallow a penny.

I lie on the floor of my bedroom-
my head in the doorway
and the angel offers her foot as a pillow.
I am trying to see the television.
Mom thinks I am sleeping.

Derrith Silva

WAVEFRONT



William Ballard Relief Print/Collage

From the Editors:

Although this is the second issue of *Wavefront*, the editors would like to re-introduce this section of the *Shoreline* magazine. *Wavefront* was conceived of as a "magazine-with-in a magazine" that would not only act as a spring board for conversation, but would also offer those other than English and Art majors a literary voice. Though your submissions, the magazine has been able to meet this goal by including Social Work Majors, Communication Majors, Psychology Majors, and Modern Language Majors, as well as English and Art Majors, and because of your responses *Shoreline* has achieved an exciting first—for the first time in its ten year history, poems written in a foreign language have been included in the publication. We extend our thanks to all who have submitted materials and look forward to your participation with the next issue.

The next issue's conversation will be sparked by the annual "October Series" run through Dean Richard Wiener's office during the month of October. This issue's "October Series" was titled "Children on the Street" and it hosted a number of forums that were designed to raise the awareness of homeless children in the Rhode Island area. As is the case with previous series, the Bannister Art Gallery displayed art work that shared the series' theme. The featured artist this go-around was photographer Jim Golberg, whose artwork (*Raised by Wolves*) includes his ten years of photographs and video tapes of runaways on the streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Hand written letters and the story of "Echo," a teenaged runaway who gets pregnant on the streets and later returns home, were also included in the exhibit, as were video's of Echo's childhood. The following pieces came mainly as a response to his exhibit.

Untitled

Arm thin like a needle
wavy on the sidewalk
I see to my fingertips
the rest is already gone.

Kathryn Duhamel

Perspective

by

Koo Olson

Too much T.V. watching, radio listening, newspaper reading—numbing your senses to what is really an American tragedy. Something deep in my subconscious jerks at my nerves, screaming *something is terribly wrong here*. I've found myself in the deepest recesses of a stranger's own private hell. My eyes are rummaging through someone's private drawers. My self-consciousness, mixed with an over powering flush of pity, tells me not to look, *don't look—you might catch it*, yet I dare to look, stare even. Pain, agony and defeat hangs in front of me caged behind a piece of glass and a frame, forever frozen in time. Eyes staring back saying, "Yeah, I'm a piece of shit," but I want to say, "No you're just a little sheep. You lost your way, took a wrong turn, found yourself in a world where numbness is King, where memories don't exist, and the future is only another hit away."

I pull myself together, my mind shifts to an objective point of view. Great piece of journalistic propaganda; Newsweek blown up to theatrical proportions. *Is this art?* A rotten piece of fruit on a pedestal constitutes the same thing. But I can say this: I can feel this way, you know why, because I can walk out that door, back into my own reality. I think to myself as I go through the exit, *"This show didn't really touch me."* So why do I have such a bitter taste in my mouth?

I talked to some other art students about the show. For the most part, the over all consensus was that it really didn't effect them. That's why the thought of the numbness of the American culture came to mind. We are bombarded with things like this every day. A professor said to me that the state of unhealthiness (in appearance) is almost a part of pop culture. Maybe that's another reason for the lack of impact.

Imágenes de Imágenes

Vida sin esperanza,
Esperanza sin vida,
Rica pobreza,
Pobre riqueza,
Reinas de la noche,
Niños de la calle,
Viejos de la vida,
Todos esperan.
Esperan esperanza.
Esperan comida.
Esperan compasión.
Esperan descanso.
Quieren tener
Lo que no tienen.
Quieren esperar
La muerte
Con esperanza.

Janel Paquin

How I Wrote the Poem

When I first saw the exposition "Los Niños de la Calle" (Children on the Street), I was shocked yet deeply moved by the images that I saw. The young people, the elderly, the drug addicts, the prostitutes, the affluent, the poverty stricken—they all seemed to reflect a sense of hopelessness that I found extremely difficult to accept.

In "Imágenes de Imágenes," I have attempted to underscore this emotion through the repeated use of the verb "esperar" whose double meaning (to wait, to hope) seems best to convey my thoughts. In addition, though I left the exhibit with a feeling of disquieting despair, I ended my verses with a faint glimmer of hope--my own way of "softening" the harsh reality depicted in the photographs that inspired this poem.

Janel Paquin

Finding Homeless Children in Rhode Island: A Personal Experience

by
Mary-Jane Shorts

In retrospect, one's personal experiences videotaping "Summer Academy 1996" and "My Home is the Shelter, Any Home is the Street" for the "Children on the Street" October Series 1996 at Rhode Island College.

Over the past summer, I was approached by several faculty members, including Dean Weiner, who wanted me to tape some footage for two video presentations in conjunction with the exhibit, *Raised By Wolves*, by Jim Goldberg. I was told by those involved with the exhibit that they wanted two ten-minute pieces confronting issues facing teenagers today.

For the first project I was told by faculty members that I would be interviewing "Asian gangs" in Rhode Island. In my mind, "Asian gangs" were like the kids in my neighborhood, situated between Chalkstone Avenue and Smith Street, the kind of kids who hung around the front of Seven-Eleven, fronting and glaring at people as they went inside to make their purchases. Based on their semantic description, I assumed that this was the crowd that I would be interviewing.

Chhem Sip, the director for the Socio-Economic Development Center, or SEDC, was my main contact. I paged him and he returned my call. I told him who I was and what I would be doing for SEDC. He in turn gave a brief description of what SEDC was about. It was a summer youth program whose purpose was to keep "Asian youths" out of trouble, such as gangs, violence, drugs, pregnancy and other problems facing teenagers today. He then gave me directions to the Feinstein Center at Providence College where the group met daily.

It was a Monday when we first met. SEDC was going to United Skates of America, a roller skating rink, and I was invited to tape the kids. Thus, my very first taping was of about a hundred or so "Asian youths," ranging from ages five to seventeen, having fun in a skating rink! This was a far cry from the "Asian gangs" that I was supposed to interview. Subsequent tapings included these same "Asian youths" engaged in similar activities of wholesome, good-natured fun!

In the middle of taping, I stopped by Dean Weiner's office one day to check in with him about SEDC and the other projects that I was working on. While I was waiting, I browsed through the *Raised By Wolves* catalogue. From the very first page all the way to the end were photos depicting the harsh realities of life on the street for runaways, throw-aways and other kids in trouble. These kids, which included Echo, Goldberg's main focus for the exhibit, were either high, strung out or burnt out, trying to escape the trauma of their lives. In comparison, my footage looked like a clip of the Brady kids performing "Sunshine Day." I told the Dean what I had. He said it was perfectly fine and to just continue taping what SEDC wanted, which was a graduation memoir of the Summer Academy. So I did.

In all fairness, there probably were some crossed messages between the faculty and SEDC as to the focus of what the other was doing for the symposium. Was it about gangs or gang prevention?

October 16, 1996 was the night of the symposium, which was held at Bannister Gallery. I went with some apprehension because I knew my video fell short of what was supposed to be an academically stimulating and enlightening discussion. Chhem arrived on time. This was to be the first time he got to view the footage. I again informed all involved, including Professor Maryann Bromley, the emcee for the discussion, that this was nowhere near as gritty as Jim Goldberg's photos. They said that

it was all right.

There was a small turnout for the discussion panel. The introduction was about troubled youths, none of whom were even remotely depicted in my video. I again informed the small gathering that this was not as in-your-face as the surrounding exhibit.

I watched as the tape played, content with the intricate edits that I had accomplished. However, I could see on the faces of those gathered that this was not what they were expecting, despite my forewarning. There were no kids in pain or danger, no emaciated, "tragically hip" Calvin Klein models in distress. The only mention of gangs was during the taped interview with Chhem, and even then he said that there were some "potential candidates for gang activities." Needless to say, an otherwise boring evening dwindled into a rather meaningless discussion. No poster kids to analyze... save for the ones on the walls.

The next video taping was more in keeping with the subject matter of Goldberg's exhibit. As I was wrapping up the taping of SEDC, I was approached by Dean Weiner to tape some footage on runaway and homeless youths in Rhode Island. He gave the names of some contacts. I called each one to set up an appointment. I was to meet all three at the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. They all knew who the others were because they had worked with each other in the past. They were Tonja Kobas-Meyer of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, Fred Trepassi of Traveler's Aid, and Haven Miles of Kidstart, a division of the Providence Center.

My main concern was how to phrase questions about the experience of homelessness so as not to come off as crass. In other words, a question like, "What's it like to be homeless?" seemed ignorant and inconsiderate at best, not to mention obvious in the answer that it would generate. But all three reassured me that a question like that would not be out of line because if someone was willing to talk about it, then the question wouldn't seem so offensive. Another question which they wanted me to ask was, "What could have been done to prevent the homelessness in the first place?" I hadn't thought about asking that question because I thought answers such as more decent paying jobs and affordable education were the most likely solutions. However, what I found from the participants were simple insights based on common sense.

Tonja wanted a video which dealt with the effects of homelessness on children. Haven concurred with her and advised me to drop by Kidstart one morning to see if there were any very young children with families willing to let them talk. I dropped by the Kidstart facility one October morning and, fortunately for the families who were able to thwart a crisis situation for a time, it was a slow season.

We were able to get three young women willing to talk about their experiences. Two of my contacts came from Fred, and the

*There were no kids in
pain or danger, no
emaciated "tragically
hip" Calvin Klein
models in
distress.*

other came from Haven. The participants from Fred were two young women who were runaways. It was a Saturday morning at Traveler's Aid when I was ushered in by Carlos, Fred's co-worker. The first young woman I interviewed was Cheryl with her infant daughter, Desiree. By her account, Cheryl came from a dysfunctional home. Both parents were alcoholics who served liquor to her when she was a child. In her words, "I started drinking with them [her parents] when I was nine, and...they thought it was cute to see me get drunk and stuff." She continued detailing the downward spiral that was her life, of how she fell into the wrong crowd, hanging out at Traveler's Aid with the "cool" people. She eventually received help from Traveler's Aid social workers who were able to turn her life around. During the fifteen or twenty minutes we spent talking, Cheryl's baby, Desiree, was busy gnawing and drooling on a large checkers play piece that Carlos handed to her earlier.



Cheryl and Desiree

"I started drinking with them [her parents] when I was nine, and...they thought it was cute to see me get drunk and stuff."

The next young woman was a minor who will be called "Helen." Helen was a throwaway who basically didn't fit into her mother's agenda. Helen's mother had a boyfriend. Needless to say Helen did not get along with him. According to Helen, the boyfriend, along with her mother, beat her on several occasions. Helen even alleged that her mother's boyfriend raped her. When she tried to tell her mother about the abuse, her mother did not believe her. Things became intolerable to the point where Helen eventually stayed with her aunt in Puerto Rico. Helen returned to the U. S. and stayed with several other relatives. She moved to Rhode Island to stay with her boyfriend and his mother. When she spoke about her relationship with her mother, Helen said, "When he [her mother's boyfriend] came into the picture, she just...like...you could say blew me off." At the time of the interview, Helen was attending school and working.

My third interview was with Cynthia, a single mother with three young children. She escaped an abusive relationship with her ex-husband. She had been through the shelter system, including those for battered women. Also, she had been to other agencies, including Kidstart, where she met Haven Miles, who arranged this meeting.

When I interviewed Cynthia, it was at her home. It was evening when I arrived at the tenement where she lived. I rang the buzzer a couple of times but it didn't work. A woman came up to the porch

and stood next to me. She asked me who I was looking for and I told her. She belted out Cynthia's name and a woman came to the second floor window. She tossed the keys out the window and onto the ground so the woman next to me could open the door to let me in. The hallway was pitch black. I had to feel my way to the first step. There obviously hadn't been an occupant on the first floor for quite some time. I stepped carefully up the winding staircase until I saw some light at the end.

I knocked on the door and Cynthia let me in. As her kids were querying me about my camera, she told me in passing that she was not currently paying rent because the landlord knew that the place was a dump. Downstairs was flooded and the wiring was bad. It was a fire hazard waiting to happen. Cynthia's friend, who was the woman that let me in, followed shortly after. As I was about to begin the interview, the woman asked me if I was going to be long and I said, "No." I rushed through my questions as politely as possible. Cynthia chronicled the deterioration of her marriage and the effect that it had on the kids. Many of her responses reeked of talk show lingo, such as problems with low self-esteem, a controlling partner, etc. But when I finally reached the last question, "What could have been done to have prevented your homelessness?" Cynthia's answer was blunt: "If you want to not be homeless, the best thing is for the man to have to leave the house and not be near the situation. He needs a wake-up call just as much as the woman does, ...you shouldn't have to leave your whole house."



Cynthia

Cheryl was introduced to alcohol in her preteens. "Helen" was blown off by her mother. Cynthia had to flee from her husband. Of the three, Helen stood out to me. Because she was a minor, I had to obscure her identity on tape. With some help from the video mixer, I changed her face to a negative and used a mosaic to further distort her identity. Hearing her talk about wanting to kill her mother's boyfriend, wanting to return to when she and her mother were friends was startling. It was like watching a sea of blue gems.

Needless to say, these interviews were a lot more fruitful in terms of content. On October 29, 1996, I again arrived at Bannister Gallery, this time, more confident that I had something that might hopefully stir and ignite some conversation. The turnout was better than the previous symposium. Tonja, Haven and Fred made their opening presentations about their respective agencies and the roles that their agencies played in mitigating homelessness in Rhode Island. After their introduction, I played the tape. Again, I watched the crowd watch the tape. They appeared engrossed by what the young women were saying. My discomfort level was less than during the SEDC symposium.

Overall, the evening seemed to be a success in terms of raising the audience's awareness about homelessness in our own backyards. Although the video was not up to broadcast standards, Tonja, Fred and Haven were impressed enough with the footage to request continuation the project this time adding some men and, if possible, children, in order to lend some balance to the piece.

If this article seems selfish, it is. I spent more time talking about my contributions to the exhibit than my views about the *Raised By Wolves* exhibit. Jim Goldberg spent ten years chronicling the lives these kids, primarily Echo and her friends. I only spent about a month and a half on both of my pieces. Goldberg had to interpret, filter, decipher and piece together for gallery visitors the letters, photos and home movies of Echo's childhood. I had to edit and present what I felt was an accurate representation of "Helen's" life. By no means do I consider myself in Goldberg's league. He is a seasoned photographer. I am a novice. However, I do feel that both of us made conscious, deliberate, selfish choices, in the name of public awareness, for our respective presentations of kids in crisis. Echo was his representative. Helen was mine.



Chhem Sip, Director SEDC

Perspective

The art displayed in the Bannister Gallery represented harsh reality! Society closes its eyes to this type of crime, abuse, poverty and addiction. If it's not happening in our family, we tend not to worry about it at all. The photographer was on target. He got to the heart of the matter. He brought reality to those who try to close their eyes to it. This display of work was very sad, very painful—it hit home for some and appalled others.

I believe this type of display should be viewed by those who make laws that do nothing to help fight against poverty and homelessness. Crime, drug addiction, harmful behaviors and chaotic lifestyles may be the effects of inequality, the unequal distribution of resources and wealth, and discrimination against the poor, minorities, and women and children.

In being the devil's advocate, one would ask, to what extent this work should be viewed on this level and who, if anyone, will benefit from this work?

Nicole Mollica

Los Jóvenes Fugitivos

Muchachos, muchachas, fugitivos:
vagando por las calles apiñadas y ruidosas de la ciudad,
sus caras descarnadas y tristes caídas abajo,
sin alimentos, sin zapatos, sin hogares,
carente de las necesidades elementales de la vida.

Jóvenes, pobres, descuidados:
comiendo de las latas de basura, robando de las tiendas,
sus cuerpos delgados y desnutridos, magullados por el abuso y la negligencia,
tiritando, temblando, llorando,
desesperadamente tratando de sobrevivir.

Rodeados por las crueldades y los peligros de la vida,
La condición de estos niños pinta un cuadro muy deprimente!

Pero, aún, hay esperanza!

Con la asistencia de algunas personas, interesadas y cariñosas:
quizás ustedes y yo que hemos sido bienaventurados con las cosas buenas de la vida,
un día, a pesar de los puntos de ventaja,
estos fugitivos ganaron *la fuerza* de levantarse por encima de esta existencia triste,
justamente como el muy pequeño *botón de oro* se empuja por las grietas en el argamasa,
ofreciendo una *vista hermorsa* a todo el mundo!

Mary-Jeanne Latina

How I Wrote the Poem

Who? Runaways--Children on the Street
Photographer and Lecturer Jim Goldberg

What? Multimedia exhibit entitled "Raised by Wolves"

Where? Rhode Island College--Banister Gallery

When? October 10 - November 2, 1996

Why? ?????

Why? Indeed, this was the unanswered question. *Why* was I consenting to view this exhibit? *Why* was this exhibit chosen by the Faculty of the Arts and Sciences at Rhode Island College as a part of their October Series of exhibits, colloquia and performances? *Why* did someone devote so much time and effort to such a depressing topic? *Why* did the author, Jim Goldberg, in his explanatory prologue, deny any intention of creating a statement of social-consciousness? *Why* were these children victims of such violence and abuse? *Why* them: why not me?

The intriguing title gave rise to a certain curiosity in me. A desire to satisfy that curiosity led me to travel there that cold November night. The poignant photography, the sights and sounds of the videos and the writings of the victims themselves triggered several emotions within me. Confusion, pain, anger, depression and sadness filled my body and soul as I departed the scene.

Writing this poem neither afforded me responses to the "why's" nor erased the sadness but, rather turned my thoughts to optimism and hope for the future. My eyes had been opened! Hopefully, through awareness, understanding, caring and action, we can encourage young people to beat the odds. Someday they will become those buttercups which push through the cracks in the trampled pavement, offering to all who stop to notice an *amazingly beautiful sight!*

Mary-Jeanne Latina

Perspective

To say the least, the exhibit is upsetting. No one seems to have a purpose except survival—where are the next meal and drug high coming from? Street kids whom no one wants. Street kids who form their own society, where their kind understand each other. Desperation leads to violent acts.

Echo seems not to have had much support at home throughout her childhood. What kinds of relationships are *not* fostered? Is running away the answer to being raped by her step-father?

Corrine Tate



Melissa Desmond

Monoprint

I. Getting Ready

Hips locked—he has her pinned against the graffitied wall, her legs held mid-air. They are necking—her arms tightly locked around his slender bare black shoulders. His body hides all but her head, her hair, her arms and her legs. Beside them a rat scurries across the dirty torn mattress that will later become their bed.

II. The Doorway

She is standing by the doorway eating Cheerios from the box. Through the doorway—the panty, where the cupboards are empty. Through the doorway and the window, it is a dark night, dark as the roots that show through her bleached blonde hair. She stands by the jam in those grey stretch pants that show off her thighs and her hips, that show off her rounding belly.

Charles Bibeault

