



[sic]

# *[sic] Volume 1, Issue 1*

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All submissions for future issues should be sent to [ivytechliterarymagazine@yahoo.com](mailto:ivytechliterarymagazine@yahoo.com). All inquiries about joining the staff or Creative Writing Club should be sent to [abayer2@ivytech.edu](mailto:abayer2@ivytech.edu)

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## **Faculty Advisors:**

Annie Gray  
Emily Bobo

**Editor:** Ashley Bayer

**Assistant Editor:** Jeanette Stewart

## **Staff:**

Daniel Chzran  
Rebecca Dille  
Collin Caudell  
B. Tyler Margison  
Chris Johnson

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"let's start a magazine  
to hell with literature  
we want something redblooded

lousy with pure  
reeking with stark  
and fearlessly obscene

but really clean  
get what I mean  
let's not spoil it  
let's make it serious

something authentic and delirious  
you know something genuine like a mark  
in a toilet

graced with guts and gutted  
with grace"

squeeze your nuts and open your face

[e.e.cummings]



## *A Sheet from a Closet* [Melly Reed]

[Lee Calzadilla]



What would happen if you unfolded  
Yourself to me?  
A sheet from a closet  
Crisp, in thirds, smooth  
And untouched. High on the stack  
Of other sheets, shelf above, I pull you down  
Over my head, laughing, discovering.  
I'd cover myself with you  
In bed,  
Finding warmth and dreams  
I could slip into, unannounced,  
As if I had always been there.....  
Here a supporting character -  
There a tree, a flight of stairs,  
The blue sky in your falling dream.  
You'd look up just in time  
To see how safe it was  
To fall in love.

## *Whispers* [Patrick L. Mann]

If I could sail myself into the whispers  
that your lips graciously cast into the night  
I could hide among them until time chooses us both  
a thousand miles from my heart to yours  
your love  
my passion  
our obsession  
to live without you my harbor is isolated  
in an endless grey water front  
so paint the way to your dreams  
and in them I'll sing melodies of silly love  
for our tears of weep will soon be rinsed away  
like the rain bleeds into the earth



[Lee Calzadilla]

## *Average* [Emily Bobo]

My father taught me to shoot for just above "average."  
When I turned thirty, my mother asked, "Is that how you felt? That you didn't fit in anywhere?"

It wasn't hard in a town of nine hundred people to determine the average, acceptable personality, dress, gender, sexuality, occupation, talent, hobbies, social circle, etc.

In a town of nine hundred farmers, ranchers, bankers, and sports enthusiasts, it was not hard not to fit the average. Some of us were simply born to it.

My father's family moved to Lebo from the next town over when he was six years old. They moved into the trailer park on the south side of the tracks that split our town in half, the tracks that were meant to be laid in Arvon, an abandoned Welsh town three miles north of Lebo, just southwest of Sundance Point on the Marais des Cygnes River Valley Reservoir. There's a bait shop on the corner that marks the turnoff. The town holds five or six empty houses, a boarded-up church, and a cemetery tucked beneath a ring of big-leaved catalpa trees where my uncle Gene is buried.

After Gene's funeral, I sat in the back of my mother's car with my stepfather and my new husband. Stepfather was quiet, not looking outside the car at the families, not looking in at us. We had been talking about the trees and a balloon ceremony that Gene's graduating class had planned for the next day. Stepfather was sure the balloons would get caught up in the trees—not that he believed in any of that, but he understood the symbolism of the act and knew it would be ruined if the balloons couldn't just float away.

I was thinking about how I had had sex with a boy who had a mullet and a rusted blue Camaro—it had been the 80s—here in high school when Stepfather said it:

"If I were to do it, I would use a gun."

And my attention was drawn back into the car with an audible click.

"I wouldn't do it in the car, though. Not in a running car." He looked up with level eyes.

I looked away, looked outside the car and saw Evan, Gene's father, Stepfather's cousin and best friend, a kind, philandering, smiling-drunk of a man, not smiling now, for the first time I could remember, not smiling. He was helping his wife into the backseat of a long, dark car. His age-splotched, gnarled-knuckle, clutch of a hand cradled hers.

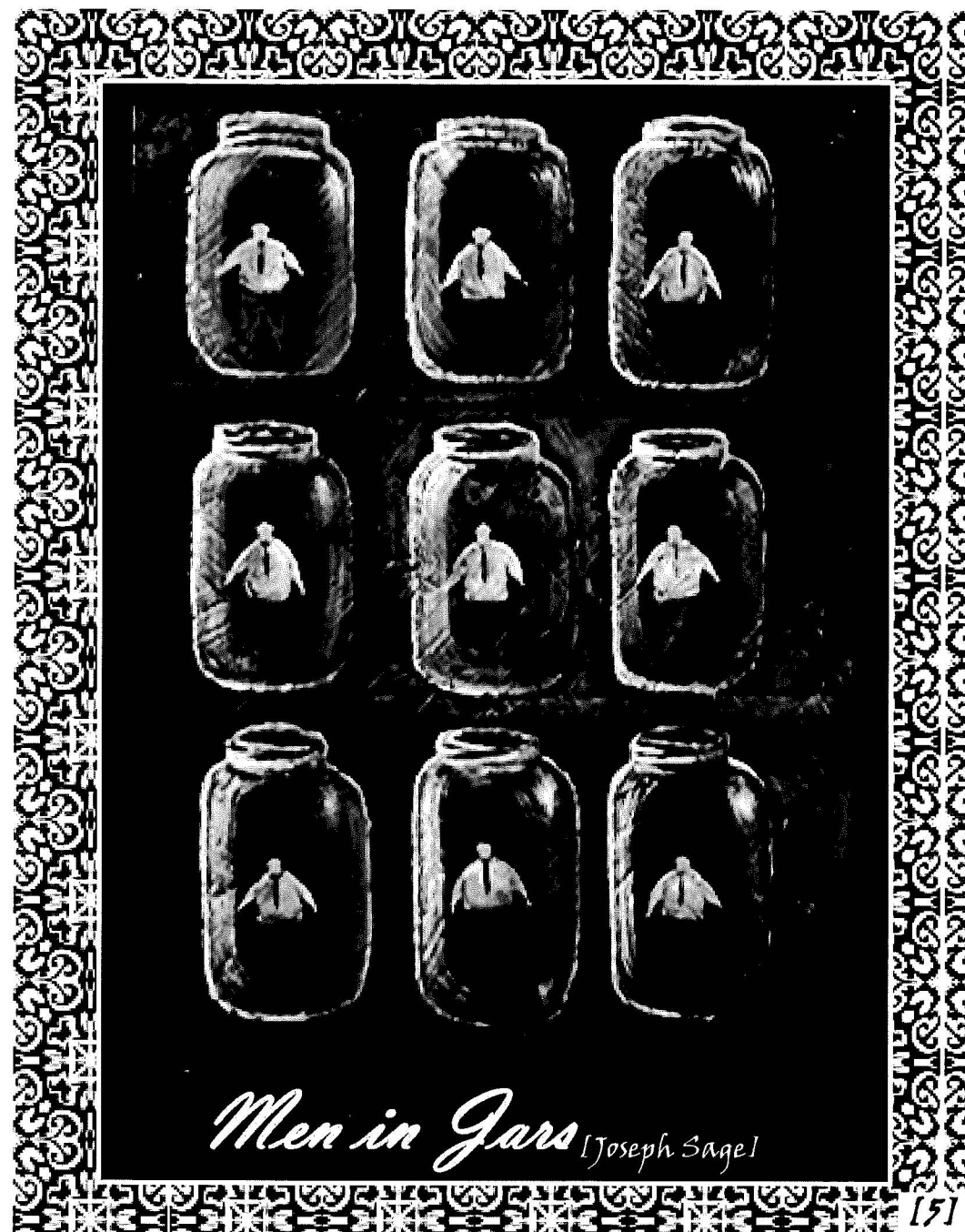
I cried then. Not because Gene had killed himself while his wife ran back into the house for a coat, purse, keys; not because he had worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters and would help no more children; not because his parents, his sisters, his wife, would set one less place each Thanksgiving and Christmas; not because his wife buried her husband with no seed in her womb; and not because I would never know this man who so many seemed to love and care for—I cried because I knew the man who sat across from me, who so calmly, so matter-of-factly laid his choices out in front of me, had weighed his options, had already come up with a plan.


And I cried because I had my own, but I couldn't share it, couldn't make it public, couldn't let the man who raised me be a part of it—this closed-off, satirical, reserved, taut muscle of a man who would've done anything for me, bought anything for me, but who struggled to speak anything real to anybody, was sharing his suicide plan with me and I couldn't reciprocate. He had finally opened up, but I wouldn't invite him in, not even then.

*Death is private, I thought.*

*My death will be mine, I thought. The one thing I can keep all to myself, the one thing that I don't have to try to make fit in with anyone.*

But he was older. He was closer. And I think he knew, as he looked over at me and at my quiet, new husband, that our deaths are never really just our own.







November 28, 2008:

To my Brother [Katie Reidy!]

The sky was so dark you seemed to say  
Stepping outside into the wide scary world  
And I guess we just weren't ready  
As we shouldered those burdens like we were happy  
So they're happy at our expense  
Yes clearly we weren't ready  
For these problems, for these hurts, and these memories  
For these memories, clearly we weren't ready


He attacked, it wasn't your fault  
As you build towers and fortresses about yourself  
And gave up, because you thought it was your fault  
Yes clearly we weren't ready  
And I don't know what to say anymore  
To make you feel better, to make you ready  
So I'll wave from behind my walls to yours  
Because we're the only ones who know what it's like



I protect you as the sun goes down  
And the vast beauty of the world surrounds  
And here we are safe and pretend to be ready  
For all that is to come  
Yes clearly we weren't ready  
For shifting tides and change of hearts  
And chances slipped away like sand through hands  
And we couldn't pretend anymore

Because I'm older, I will be the ready  
And I wish you were always safe and happy  
But that's just a great pretend  
That no one's prepared to be ready  
As we hide our faces and wish it were over  
For we are young, but I am older  
For the weight is heavy and the nights are long  
And how could children ever be ready

And you've grown so big and angry  
And I wish it just weren't so  
I wish we were young and carefree  
I wish for you to be okay  
And we won't ever be ready for these  
fights we've laid  
Because we've had fights, o yes clearly  
some fights  
And you think you're so strong and tough  
But you won't ever be ready

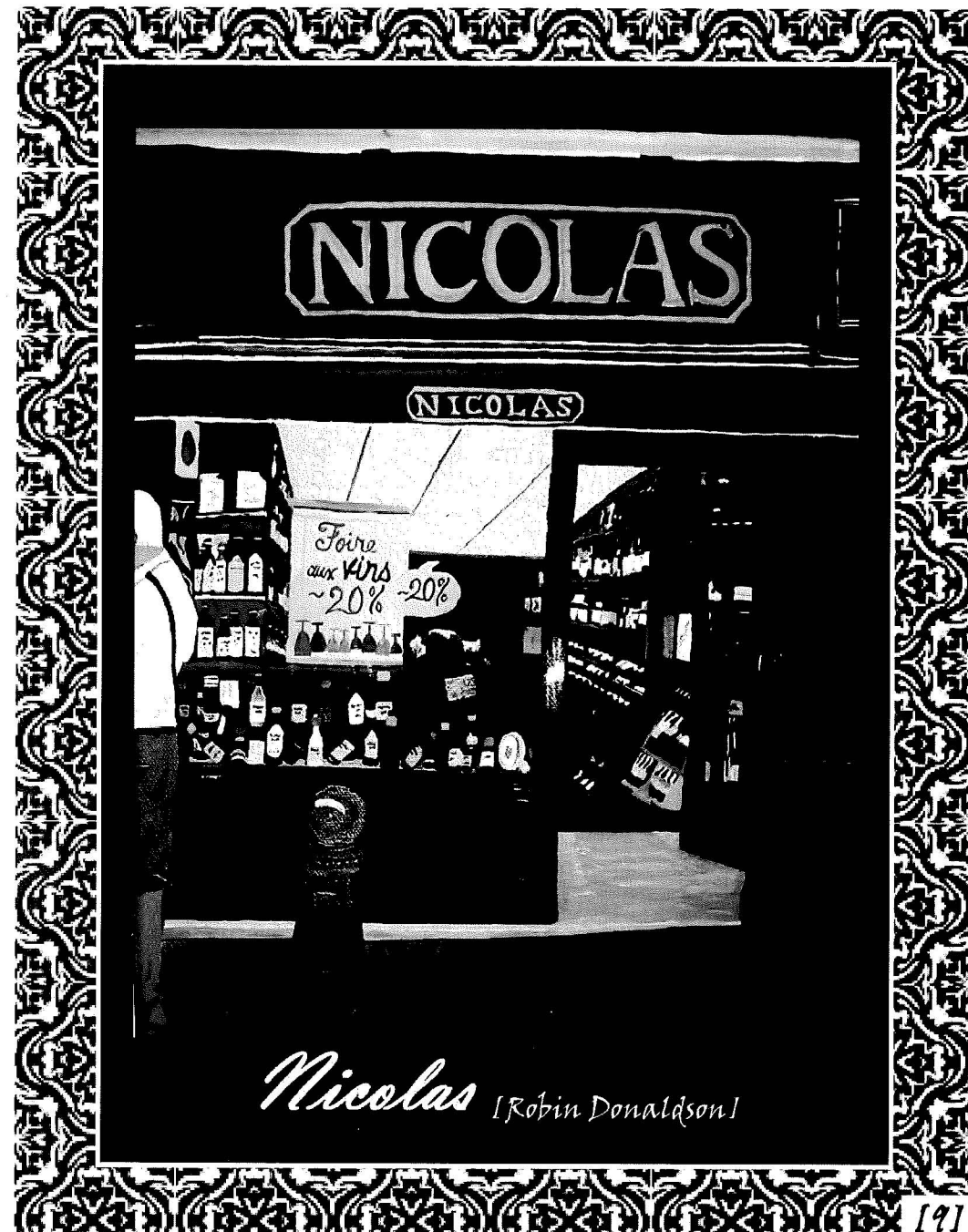




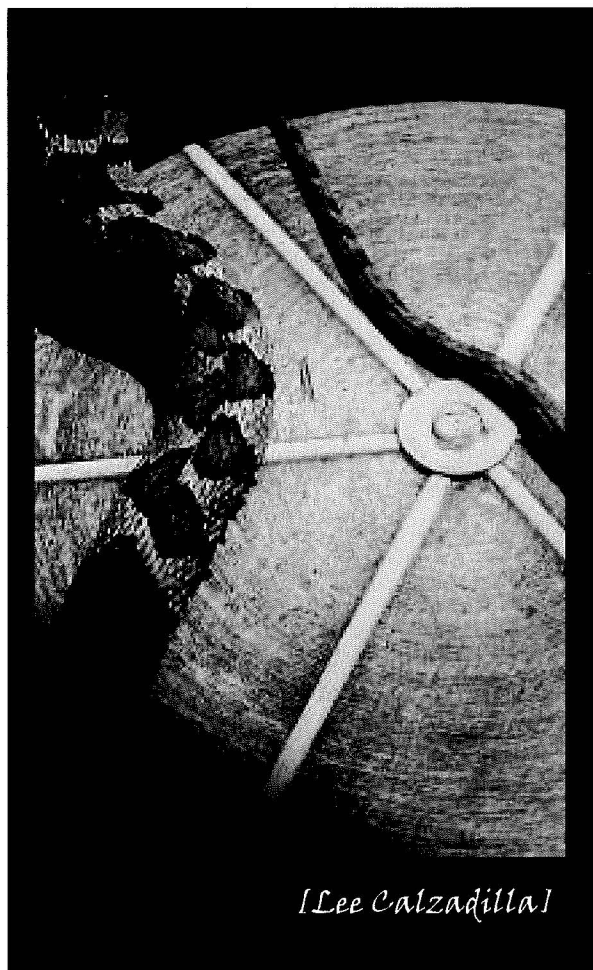


These crashes were just accidents  
And we hope for these wishes to come true  
We can pretend as long as we like, no one's to blame  
As we remember what happy feels like  
Yes clearly we weren't ready  
To be locked in this battle so long  
And it's this that's worn us away  
As you ask me if I'm ready

And I'd do anything for you  
As we each carry our broken hearts in hand  
As we both search for what we're missing  
But you can't wait forever for that  
Yes clearly we tried to be ready  
As we smile and whisper of theories in the night  
As we wish on stars for it to be better  
Because how could you ever be ready for this.



*Nicolas* [Robin Donaldson]



*[Lee Calzadilla]*

## *Raging River*

*[Gina Demaree]*

Black slithering snake  
a current of venom  
pulling,  
pulling him  
deeper,  
sweeping my brother  
away.

I saw his arms--  
helpless silken white tendrils  
amid the cloudy waves.  
I stood, wet and shivering  
watching my life go down  
into that inky darkness--  
the better of twins  
drowning.

I no longer want  
to take another  
look at the earth  
that tore my brother  
from me  
vicious earth who  
nurtures  
its monsters.



## *A Song yet to be Sung*

*[Jennifer Leah Gosselin]*

I'm sure you control the moon and sun,  
Yet you seem to think that I'm the one,  
In your hand you hold my heart,  
To my life, you're an important part  
Just like the storm passing by,  
Pain and worry leave with a sigh,  
Not forgotten in every way,  
But put aside, 'cuz they've had their day.  
My love seems to grow,  
And why it does I think you know,  
Because I am your queen and you my king,  
together we'll survive anything.  
Just like the storm passing by,  
Pain and worry leave with a sigh,  
Not forgotten in every way,  
But put aside, 'cuz they've had their day.  
If one day our time must end,  
Losing more than my heart, I'd lose a friend.  
I'd survive, of that I'm sure,  
But my trust in love would be no more.  
Just like the storm passing by,  
Pain and worry leave with a sigh,  
Not forgotten in every way,  
But put aside, 'cuz they've had their day.  
You have opened my eyes to how it can be,  
Now I can say that I finally see,  
While two people can never be one,  
Together our future is a song yet to be sung.  
Just like the storm passing by,  
Pain and worry leave with a sigh,  
Not forgotten in every way,  
But put aside, 'cuz they've had their day.

## *Because We Were Moving in Together*

[Emily Bobo]

He said, I'm going to miss this.  
And I agreed. And  
when we said "this,"  
what we really meant was  
the hyperactivity of cells  
reintroducing themselves,  
of pioneering hands, after days,  
weeks, months of separation;  
what we meant was  
the excitement of mouths  
learning to accommodate words  
from another tongue; we meant  
missing the erratic  
punctuation of letters, silences,  
with these swells, these  
remissions of heartache.

## *Birth*

[Jeanette Stewart]

The inspired umbilical chord  
Binds the under-  
Developed neck  
It suffocates.

A placenta of  
Metaphor nourishes  
Simile purging.  
Cliché.

The stimulated mind labors  
Thoughts contracting  
The belly of creativity  
To deliver.

Fingertips push  
Keys in sporadic  
Fashion; a gradual  
Conception.

Lines crown  
Into stanzas  
That distend  
Into a birth.

## *My Storm* [Jesse Spencer]

The clouds race across the sky  
The storms develop in my mind  
The vision I see is neither false nor true  
Merely a path that I must choose  
The lightening rages on  
Calling me to come along  
I have ran from it my entire life  
Now I walk into its path  
Awaiting its wrath



## *Paranoia* [Joseph Sage]

## *Hamming it up* *with Grandpa* [Melly Reed]

I used to wonder where I got my interest in technology and music and writing. But I didn't have to look too far to know from which direction the answer came. The writing comes from my Aunt Faris, but that's a subject for another day. It was from her brother, my Grandpa Eddy that I got interested in technology and music.

He used to work on his Ham radio up in the attic of the house on Wildwood while I would sit patiently in the corner so as not to interrupt him from this magical conversation across the airwaves. I was buried deep in old books that belonged to my aunt and my mom when they were little girls. So we usually didn't speak and most times no one spoke back from those big black boxes with the tubes exposed that he had built himself from spare parts. But every once in awhile, in-between the static and the occasional "CQ, CQ", I would hear him say, the magic would happen. There would be a voice from far away. Then he would put me up on his lap and let me speak into that amazing chrome grilled upright microphone. Later, with pride in his voice, he would tell me we were speaking to someone clear across the country. That was just magic to me then. When my brother and I stayed overnight, I couldn't wait to go up and listen in. But then other things happened in my life: school, band, summer music camp, friends, and soon Grandpa and the little attic at the top of the stairs on Wildwood faded into the static of history. Now when I sit and muse on those times, I realize just how much I miss him.

He was a dark man. So dark they used to call him Hawaiian. And yet when he was five years old he had long blond hair like the Buster Brown boy.

His father was a railroad man and he was killed when my grandpa was five, caught between two cars coupling on the tracks. I often wonder what that really did to Grandpa on the inside. I'll never know. People in our modern day seem less tough, unable to see a thing through these days. But my grandpa was a steady man and took care of his family by going to work every day at the Chrysler plant as an Inspector. It meant so much to the family that most of them have never bought another make.

He gave all his pay checks to my grandmother because he knew she'd take better care of them. He took a big, black pitched-roof lunchbox, the kind where the thermos fits in the top, to work and brought it home everyday and laid it on the top of the refrigerator in Grandma's kitchen just as soon as he got in the door. Then he

was off to his recliner and some wrestling on TV, adding his wicked-fun commentary on all the commercials in-between.

Yes, Grandpa had his wild side, too. He used to play drums they say for the strippers at some dives in downtown Indianapolis and also for small gigs at the Indiana Roof Ballroom for a few dollars. When he was retired he got a banjo for his birthday to remind him of those days and he would often sit out under the elm tree at Wildwood and pick a few chords as he chewed on an old toothpick and stared intensely into the fret board, squeaking his fingertips across the strings.

You see, Grandpa smoked for most of his life, Camels, until the doctor told him they'd kill him one day. Then he came straight away home and gave his last pack to my grandmother and told her to get rid of them for him. It was the last day he ever smoked. After that he took up the toothpick habit. He "smoked" toothpicks like a 3 pack-a-day man. He used to tell the joke on himself that he was going to die of Dutch Elm's disease.

I can see him almost right now walking out into the cold midnight air reaching into the sleeve of his suit coat, one sleeve half on one arm and the other empty sleeve hanging in the air while he puts a toothpick from the restaurant we have just eaten at into his mouth and begins to chew on it. Odd, how a child codifies the gesticulations and movements of an adult and somehow years later emulates them in programmed homage. I know whenever I pick up a toothpick, my memory banks look up the data and send back the request so that I know just how it's supposed to be chewed on.

Sometimes, when I get to missing him a bit, I watch the end of *The Shawshank Redemption* where Red gets out of prison and walks through the gates of Shawshank with that suit on, that rumpled brown suit hanging on that tall, lanky body. The tie is pulled away from the neck for comfort and the brown fedora brim is creased sideways like a sailor's cap and set back on his head as if he'd been out after church service too long on a warm day and the clothes were ready to get back on the hanger. I want to run up beside him and grab that arm and hang on him as I used to do. Just to feel the magic of his presence. Morgan Freeman reminds me a lot of my grandfather with his slow, laconic ways and ambling gate. Eddy Myers was a slow man, too. A slow man with a mischievous sense of humor almost like a five year old little boy that was still looking to tease his older sister but he just had too many chores to get done. I sure do miss him.





## *In this Moment* [Patricia Cole]

In this moment,  
Alike but different from all others

I sit on the edge of the bed in a bathing suit  
It is Tuesday and tomorrow, Wednesday

We go to Lake Michigan  
It is May, Cold

But perhaps, who knows  
I'll wear a bathing suit

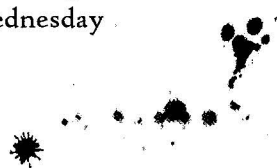
Where is the voice in this moment with its list of things to be  
done?  
And an even longer list by not following the list

In this moment, I collect myself  
What must be cared for? What?

Stripping and washing the sheets  
I want to write about the bed

I want to write about taking this moment to myself  
Holding it to my bosom

Cradling it in my lap  
Kissing and cuddling, holding it to myself



It is me this little form of time  
It is a child, a girl, a woman

It is new, unshaped  
Completely new

Nothing large from the past  
Where is this new voice?

Can I find it?  
Will I sing my song?

I sit on the unmade bed  
Feet in socks on floor

Bosom breathing, exposed  
Arms, thighs, freckles, lumps, double chin - bathing suit  
I will wash the sheets, make up the bed  
This new voice, my voice

Tender, a new born shape  
Forming in this moment



# *Last Year's Present* [Nadia Deeb]

I'm hurting--feeling so replaced  
traded me in so easily--i guess for a prettier face?  
Before now i felt so important-- your pride and joy  
But i was put away, set aside on the top shelf--about as important as  
an  
old toy  
So now i watch--from a distance as you put all of your attention into  
something new  
And i sit here helpless--because there's nothing I can really do  
On the top shelf--attracting nothing but dust as she attracts you  
Time slowly passes-- losing my colors, no longer trying to keep my glow  
i let myself die out--i've been outshined and there's no hope  
How can you beat a new toy--more advanced and up to date  
my own worst enemy--it's change i begin to hate  
Time passes a little bit more and i'm taken off the shelf-- excited  
thinking i have one more chance  
Hope flickers through me-- my heart begins to dance  
Nope you just need my batteries--so you can put energy into her  
Didn't even waste your time putting me back on the shelf-- just threw  
me  
on the floor  
Mistreated and taken apart-- i don't think i can take any more  
Still more time passes-- and you find this new toy has a defect  
You throw it away--disappointed and loss of all respect  
Suddenly you think of me--run to your shelf but i'm not there  
Don't you remember-- you threw me down without a care  
You search through everything-- remembering all the memories we had  
shared  
Realization hits your blood drains from your face-- and you slowly take

a  
seat

Let's take a step back -- remember after you got that new toy, your mind  
begins to play in repeat  
After that night you tossed me on the floor- you thought you didn't  
need  
me and i was given away  
To another person --after he took me in his arms he couldn't believe  
the  
luck he had that day  
He said something to you--do you remember those words  
His eyes were shining "How could you let a treasure like this go--but  
those words you had ignored  
Now you think back and you realize what he meant--I was always there  
when  
you needed a "friend"  
I may not have been new and flashy--but i was loyal and loving til the  
end  
That person you gave me away to--he's a gentleman treating me kind  
Blessed and thankful--He is treating me like the "treasure" he had  
claimed  
to find  
I know it's easy for you-- to receive another present or two  
There are plenty of new toys looking for a new home -- I had just hoped  
i  
meant something more to you  
You know I was good to you -- but you don't have me anymore  
Even though i'm gone-- I sometimes think back on the times we had  
before  
When you first saw me, the light in your eyes--the love in your touch  
I'm not going to lie--I still love and care for you so much  
But I was set aside, mistreated, taken apart--there was no way i could  
have stayed  
I do want to tell you that if you find something special again and  
another  
new toy comes to play-- please think before you throw "last year's  
present" away

## *Losing the Wild* [Ashley Bayer]

In the kitchen—

The little lion came as tame  
As I was lame. She lay a Mute,  
Softly restrained against my hand  
Across her mane of peach fuzz fur.  
Exposed to show her shameful scar.

At the hospital—

I folded down, leg sprawling out  
As some stiff, stoic stump of flesh  
amongst a glade of silent men  
who all wore white, held pointed pens.

On the field—

The smell and taste of swampish green  
Echoed, approached the squeamish pop  
That cried inside my tattered knee.  
Calm eyes could see the parts of me,  
A naked jigsaw puzzle piece.

In their eyes—

My leg became a clouded glass,  
The rest, a wooden puppet goon  
To pirouette, to tiptoe in  
On strings, pulling to barren rooms.

As the lion—

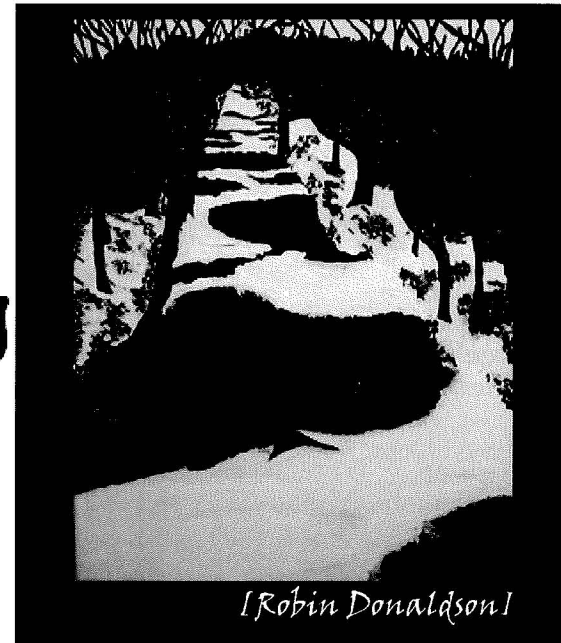
The plastic cone, it chokes the face,  
disguising woes we wild things make.

## *Beauty and the Beast* [Joshua Volk]

The beauty stood there before me,  
The beast hidden within, unseen  
She showed me her love through passion unending  
and bared her fangs with anger unbending  
She tried to hide the beast within  
but once unleashed, it is impossible to chain again  
She lied through her sweet little teeth  
Then slowly drew a knife from its sheath  
She drew me in for a gentle embrace  
and kissed me sweetly on the face  
That knife she plunged into my back  
by innocently and clearly stating the facts  
The woman I once loved was never there  
Her true beast has been laid bare.

## *Midnight Wanderings* [Rebecca Dille]

she glows with an  
otherworldly luminescence  
making the trees cast  
long, dark shadows  
their forms barely visible  
in the twilight  
hazy clouds twist their mist  
about her glowing radiance  
not a sound can be heard  
her only companions  
the silent, shadowy observers  
with their long, dark shadows



[Robin Donaldson]



## Wide-Open Window

[Luke J. Hilton]

Wide-open window,  
Framing a warrior's widow.  
Bestowed a triangle flag,  
And a green duffel bag.

Car bombs explode,  
Next to a soldier she's told.  
Beneath a 12 gun salute,  
Above the stomping of boots.

Her eyes sail away,  
Like her husband that day.  
On a river of tears,  
Washing into oceans of fear.

All the joy and delight,  
Of past days and long nights.  
The memories of a naked stranger,  
Turning into her naked lover,  
Turning into her naked husband,  
Turning into her naked soldier,  
Now she's naked, by herself.  
Now she's the stranger, to herself.

She'd give all the best days of June,  
Every phase of the moon,  
To be constantly swooned,  
By the man who was buried at noon.

The sad lullaby,  
That is her goodbye,  
She'll mean every word she sings,  
Know all the sadness they'll bring.

But, without hesitation,  
She sang it out.

"My soldier,  
My soul dies here,  
My dear,  
I Die here.  
Body,  
Adhere.  
Or Still,  
Die near.  
My soldier,  
My soul dies here."

And she sang it loud,  
To a non-existent crowd,  
From that wide-open window,  
But a gunshot threw off the tempo.

## Untitled [Shelley Mason]



I'm from a beginning of chaos,  
and a young woman surviving it all.  
I'm from memories of late nights in the counselor's office.  
I'm from cowboy boots and blue jeans.  
I'm from watching my mother cry because she had lost all  
hope.

I'm from the smell of cigarette tobacco  
reminding me of home.

I'm from a young woman kneeling  
down in prayer.

I'm from the taking of communion.

I'm from coming to a place of silence and no  
One to talk to.

I'm from nice and neat.

I'm from "one day at a time, sweet Jesus and  
he's got the whole world in his hands."

I'm from Easter baskets all tied up in bright bows  
and hearing the Pentecostal choir sing  
"Onward Christian Soldier".

I'm from the woman being beat for  
going to church by my father.

I'm from suck it up and go on.

I'm from the step-father preacher  
Vietnam veteran and well-educated

who wanted me to be perfect.

I'm from being raised as the only child.

I'm from thinking I have to make up for it all.

I'm from a life of solitude.

I'm from when I lay my head down at night, thinking

that I owe my mother everything, but I wonder if it's separation

anxiety that makes me feel this way, or is it that I am so scared of this life happening  
all over again





*[Rebecca Phero]*

# *Chuck Norris Wins the War on Terror*

*[Joshua Volk]*

Chuck Norris stood surrounded by over 100 terrorists. Only ten of them were within arm's reach. He jumped straight up into the air and spun in a roundhouse kick, taking all ten of them down before he hit the ground. Before any of the others could attack he dove to his left and tackled the next nearest terrorist. He punched this man in the jaw, knocking him out, and picking his body up, used it as a shield. The terrorists fired at him with their AK-47s, but he caught all of the bullets with the first terrorist's body. He tossed the body at a cluster of seven terrorists and caught a stray round in his teeth. He spat the round back at the person who fired it, and the man fell over clutching a fatal chest wound. To buy himself some time, Chuck Norris dropped to the ground and did a single rapid push-up. The resulting earthquake set all of the terrorists staggering. He did a cartwheel over to the largest group of terrorists and proceeded to roundhouse kick these people in the head.

He turned to find himself facing the remaining 75 terrorists, all pointing their rifles at him.

They fired as one.

Chuck Norris extended his hand and yelled "Stop!"

All of the bullets stopped in mid flight and fell to the ground in fright. Several of the terrorists wet themselves. He let out a low chuckle and glanced around the room. He ducked low as they opened fire again and pulled a fighting knife from his boot. He threw it at a terrorist and watched as it sped through the first terrorist's body, through the man standing behind him and into the chest of a third terrorist. Without slowing down he tucked into a roll, caught a terrorist's feet in a scissor sweep and threw him at another cluster of terrorists.

One particularly smart terrorist dove at Chuck Norris with a bomb strapped to his chest. Chuck Norris jumped over his head as the bomb went off and used the power of the explosion to propel himself up unto the balcony where some of the terrorists had been shooting at him. He landed on one of the terrorists and kicked out at the other. The kick propelled that terrorist's body off the balcony where it landed on one of the other terrorists, who was

finally recovering from the first roundhouse kick.

Chuck Norris jumped down off the balcony and caught a terrorist's rifle in his hand as he fell, bending the barrel so it couldn't fire. He then picked the terrorist up by the rifle barrel and threw him at the other group of terrorists who had finally recovered from the push-up. They all fell down again and didn't get back up. Seeing that there were only 50 terrorists still standing, Chuck Norris kicked a Kalashnikov into the air and snatched it with one hand. He spied another one five feet away and dove after it. A line of bullets traced towards him, but instead of hitting him, just knocked the rifle out of his reach. This made Chuck Norris mad. He dove over to the rifle and picked it up. It was jammed.

Without thinking he hurled his rifle at the gunman and watched as it slammed into the terrorist's head, knocking him off this mortal coil. A round zipped past his head, and without thinking he reached out and snatched the next one out of the air in mid flight, then hurled it back at the vehicle the man who had fired it was now hiding behind. The truck exploded in a spectacular fireball, killing three more of the terrorists. Readjusting his cowboy hat, which had become unseated in the explosion, Chuck Norris scanned the room. 40 people were still standing, and seven more were still conscious.

There was a sharp crack and a high caliber sniper rifle round zinged at his face. Chuck Norris frowned at it, and the bullet changed direction in the middle of its flight. He heard some very un-religious swearing in Farsi coming from the rafters. Two more shots followed in quick succession. Chuck Norris laughed as two bullets hit his side. "Stop, that tickled."

He looked up and saw a man holding a .50 caliber Barrett Sniper rifle, trying to jack a new clip into the rifle. The man was so scared he couldn't seem to get it into the receptacle, so Chuck Norris just used his Kalashnikov to shoot the terrorist's feet. The others were finally standing again, and all 47 turned to face Chuck Norris.

"Infidel, now you will DIE!" a terrorist screamed as he charged headlong at Chuck Norris. Chuck Norris stood there like a statue as the man ran face first into him. There was a sound like a hammer striking a steel barrel as the terrorist's head hit Chuck Norris's chest. The audible crunch of a neck snapping made everybody cringe.

Chuck Norris reached down and picked up a second assault rifle, then started firing at the crowd of terrorists with both guns, one in each hand. Within thirty seconds the smoke had cleared and all of the remaining terrorists were dead.

Chuck Norris stepped into the back room of the cave and saw Osama Bin Laden hiding in a corner, a yellow stream running down his leg.

Without a word Chuck Norris tied him up, frog marched him out to his trusty Dodge Ram, and threw him in the back. He drove to the nearest airstrip and drove his truck onto a waiting C-130 Hercules. Within ten minutes the plane

[26] was airborne for the United States. The war on terror was officially over.



*Massacre* [Joseph Sage]

# Best Left Forgotten

[Rebecca Dille]

It had been raining for two weeks. One of those bone chilling rains that leaves everything slightly damp for hours after being out in it. The south side of town had a perpetual gloomy aspect to it, but the rain always intensified that feeling. The shadows had long since claimed the alleys as their own. She was walking home from work. It had been a long day and an even longer night. Her umbrella wasn't doing a very good job of keeping the rain off her, causing the body numbing cold to set in. Her typically sleek red hair hung in a long, wet mass. She wanted nothing more than to escape the gloominess of the streets. She hated nights like this one. They always reminded her of things better left forgotten. Her mind started to wander. How long had it been since that night?

He had walked into the restaurant and glanced around. There, at the bar, her long red hair was shining even in the dim light of the room. She had had a drink in front her. It looked as though she'd been there for awhile. He had briskly covered the distance between them and took up the stool next to her. She had sighed. She'd spoken to him without looking away from her drink.

"You're late. Again."

"I know. I'm sorry. It took longer than we thought it would. It won't happen again."

"That's what you said last time, Zane. And the time before that." She turned toward him. "You never make it on time."

"I said I'm sorry."

"And you say that every time, too, but you never mean it."

"I wouldn't say it if I didn't mean it."

"If you meant it, you'd have been here on time. But you weren't. And the best excuse you can come up with is 'It took longer than we thought it would?'" She thrust some money on the counter for her drink and stood up to put her coat on. "At least if you're going to lie to me, say you had to help an old lady out, or something like that, because I'm not going to believe you

anyway." She stormed out into the dark night. The weather had matched her mood perfectly. The cars streaked past her. She moved forward to hail a taxi.

"Wait." Zane had followed her out of the restaurant. There was a hint of remorse in his voice. She turned around to look up into his piercing blue eyes.

"What do you want from me?" she choked out. Through the rain he could see the tears streaming down her pale cheeks. He placed his hands on her shoulders and just stared at her. For once he was at a loss for words.

"I just can't do this anymore," she breathed. "I'm always worried that something's going to happen and you aren't going to make it home. And the cops have been staking out our apartment for the last week. Nothing is safe anymore. I just don't know what to do." She started to shake.

He wrapped his arms around her. "You're safer if you stay close to me. It'll get better. I promise."

She pushed away from him. "That's what you keep saying, but I'm starting to think just the opposite." She wiped the tears from her face only to have them replaced by icy raindrops. She moved toward the waiting taxi.

"I'm sorry," she had said as she climbed into the taxi. Zane had stood there in the rain and watched the love of his life disappear into the night.

She'd taken her things and gone to stay with a friend, but Zane was never far from her thoughts. A month after that night she had gotten a call.

She'd just changed into her pajamas and was getting ready to go to bed when her phone had rung. She picked it up.

"Hello?"





"Abigail? It's Lucas." Lucas, he was one of Zane's "friends," the one with the scar across his eye. "It's about Zane...he's been missing for two weeks." A searing pain stabbed through her chest. When she didn't respond Lucas went on. "The last anyone heard from him, he was on his way—"

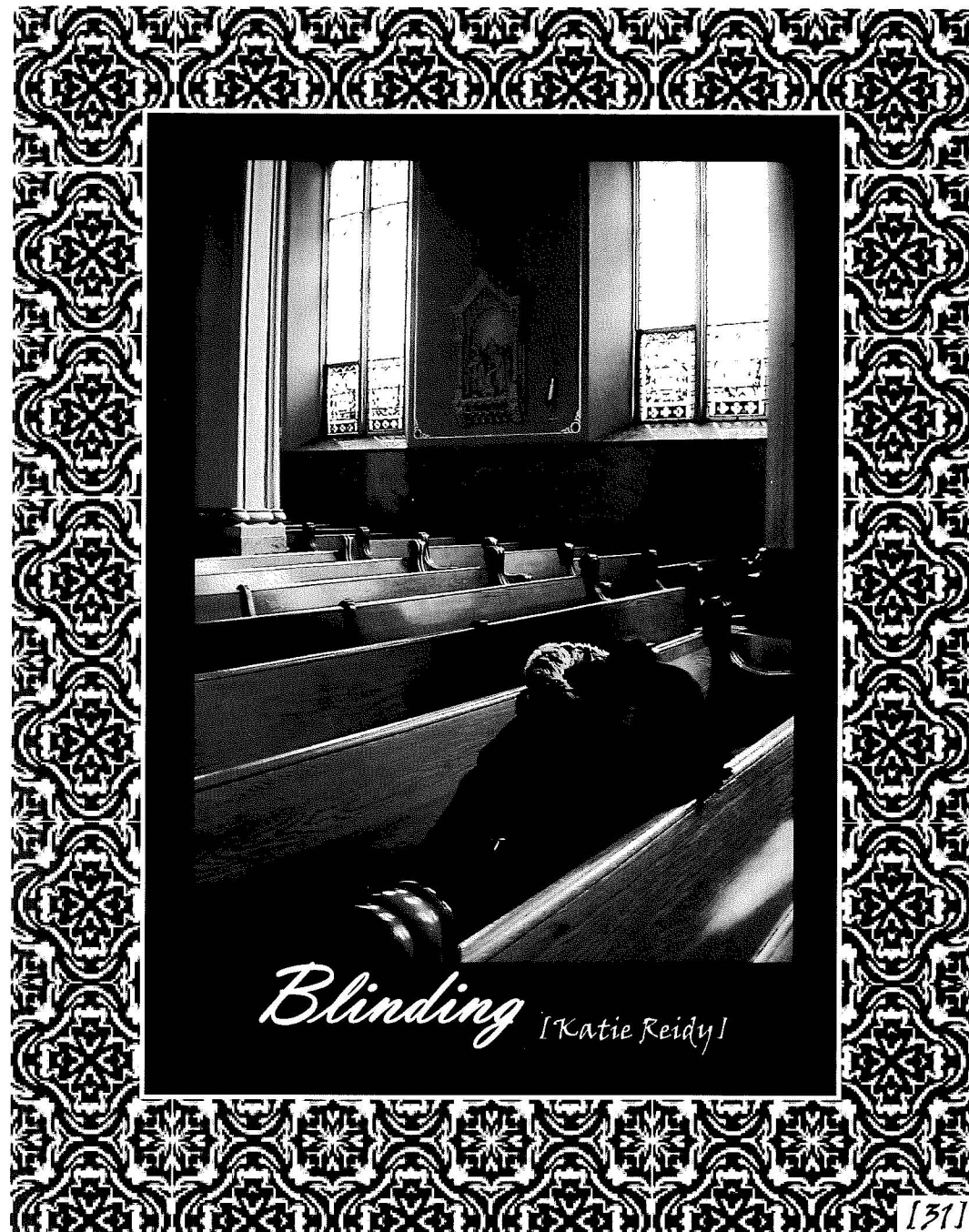
"Thank you, Lucas," she cut him off. She didn't want to know what he had been getting himself into.

"Well, if you need anything, you know where to find us."

"Thank you, Lucas." Without waiting for Lucas's response, she'd hung up the phone. Oddly, she hadn't cried. She had wanted to, but the tears just hadn't come out. She just sat there. And stared. Eventually she had cried; she had cried for three days straight. It had taken her two years to get past Zane's disappearance. She wished she could go back to that night. She would do so much different, but it was too late now. Zane was gone. Lost, forever...

The sound of garbage being dumped bought her back to the present. She had reached her apartment without even realizing it. Her unlocked doorknob jerked her out of her memory daze. Slowly she pushed the door open. The table lamp in the living room was on. Someone was sitting in the chair next to it. She started to turn tail and flee, but the sound of the man's voice stopped her dead in her tracks.

"Hello, Abby," Zane said.



*Blinding* [Katie Reidy]



# *The Cost*

[Kyle Chambers]

Look out onto these streets  
What is it that you see?  
Empty souls with backseat confessions  
Covered up with an overcoat of deception  
Who is it you serve?  
The words that you believe  
Or a sign that has faded to green  
With nothing in between

(Chorus)  
Take hold of your life  
We can learn to play for keeps  
Maybe we'll finally earn our keep  
Here's to innocence  
Beauty will fade when we learn how to survive  
Survive  
(I don't care what it costs)  
We will survive  
In these gleaming lights  
What is it you see?  
A clear reflection of what once was  
And what will never be  
Who is it you serve?  
The one you call self  
Or the devil that's within  
Let this world catch fire

(Chorus)  
Take hold of your life  
We can learn to play for keeps  
Maybe we'll finally earn our keep  
Here's to innocence  
Beauty will fade when we learn how to survive  
Survive  
(I don't care what it costs)  
We will survive

(Bridge)  
You grew up too fast  
You went to change your life  
To stand on your own  
The edge was too steep  
And you cut yourself in half when you fell  
To find yourself  
To find your true escape

(Chorus)  
Take hold of your life  
We can learn to play for keeps  
Maybe we'll finally earn our keep  
Here's to innocence  
Beauty will fade when we learn how to survive  
Survive  
(I don't care what it costs)  
We will survive



## *A Ghost of Summers*

*[Ashley Bayer]*

You beckoned me home with a piece of the sun  
And I followed, traipsing through grass  
In the wake twilight left behind.  
I could see you blinking at me  
From the highest room,  
The only star I could ever trust.  
I thought you were immortal.

We sipped the nectar from the flowers,  
Our fat fingers dignified with youth.  
Our wide eyes traced the stem  
That climbed the gate to the garden  
While we drowned in the taste.  
"Sweeter than honey," you said,  
"but not sweeter than you."

One day you stopped blinking  
And the sun forgot to rise,  
Oh the stars, they ceased their smiling!  
That day the fireflies slept in past dusk  
To leave me lonely in the field  
Where the grass wouldn't even  
Brush the skin on my ankles anymore.

You returned while I lay dreaming.  
"Who were we when we were children?"  
Silence settled in.

"We were better then." I said.  
Then you disappeared from the garret window,  
Flashlight and all you were fading  
Like sunlight stalking darkness.



8-15-06-

## Gaining Youth

[David McGrath]

These inhalants are only a solution  
For this specific sector of time  
Constrictive tubes collapsing  
Restricting my right to respiration

O unalienable right, where art thou?  
I want to revive you, but I don't know how  
Grasping at straws is what it's come to  
Relying on luck and chance to renew my stance

Life, please come back to me  
I miss connecting with you at every whim  
Warm looks and open arms will be your greeting  
Your surplus of absence is leaving me thin

Constraints and constriction  
Collapse and conviction  
Revolt, reacquisition  
Real revolution  
Defeating degradation

I miss the feeling

[36]

[Lauren Neely]



[Forget to send something in? Here's the last couple pages.  
Make your mark. Something genuine, something "gutted with grace". ]

[37]