



quadrangle  
2002

canisius college  
**quadrangle**

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## art credits in order

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matt zogby, photograph
adam zyglis, pencil

## **There is something to be said for a finished product.**

I want something I can hold, something I can touch, something some part of me can belong to. I like holding books, feeling the way their pages fall, the little black letters in seemingly endless lines. I love records—the physicality of vinyl, the crackling of the needle in the grooves. I like the way guitar strings sound, the ends dangling uncut, when I brush against them in the morning.

Our expressions of art are just a way of putting a name to the moments we experience. That painting is the way his fingers felt clasped around hers. That song is the way the sky looked on the thirtieth day of December, a gray that pulls apart his heart. His melody line slides on top of chords and becomes that color. That poem is the way his voice sounded on the phone, a little empty and faraway, from a restaurant on the 403.

It is an artist who can notice the way art weaves its way into the world around us, who understands the value of art not as mere entertainment or a way to fill the seconds as they slip past, but as an essential expression of our humanity. This is ours, we offer it to you. Hear the stories we have lived, understand heartbreak gray on the bottom of the clouds of a late December day.

You can feel an ice cube at the back of your tongue, blades of grass between your toes in August, a draft that slides between the boards of the windowsill, but this is another type of feeling. This is one that slips in beneath your bones before you even notice. It is something like the drop in your stomach when you remember someone you ought to forget.

There is a reason why we sketch on paper napkins, pull guitars out in the middle of the night when we can't sleep, and write at traffic lights, even into the green. This, these pages, this book, is part of it.

**janet mcnelly, editor-in-chief**

**paul stukowski**  
**roller coaster**

A cool breeze picks up as we creep towards the peak. People are screaming (just to be annoying) and the tracks clack as we are pulled onward. The crest doesn't lead to that high a drop, and I fail to see why everyone needs to scream out. We edge over (clack!). Then the wind hiccups.

As we rush forward, up and down, through loops, upside down, the wind shrieks and mist from the lake below makes it feel cold. The supports are shaking and the car jumbles violently. My ears hurt from all the yelling.

We fly up the final peak, the lake below shimmering in the sunlight. We hit the top and then plummet down, the wind shaking everything. The track shakes violently. Halfway down, the wind blows apart the supports in front of us, the track falling away.

The water is cold as we hit.



**annemarie mikowski**  
**mango woman**

I want to be a mango woman  
able to enjoy abundant fruit  
and let juice drip down my chin,  
lazy,  
then lapped up by lovers.  
Mango women do this daily,  
rubbing juicy fingers together  
with meditative clarity of  
their goddess power.  
Eat  
the fleshy fruit womb,  
a plump trophy  
of our gender  
wrought to be ingested  
by the soft stomachs of our bodies.  
Can a man eat mangos?  
Yes,  
but he can never learn to shine  
or drip with juice as we do.

**four men**

at the coffee shop table,  
a band of friends to make up  
for the lack of bands  
on their hands  
sipping espressos and throwing  
quick glances at college girls.

They palm  
    their empty mugs.  
They tug  
    their turtlenecks.

These become the unmarried uncles  
The single brothers-in-law  
The bachelor cousins  
The blind dating undatable.

Tell your sisters, wise women  
or they will  
palm  
at you.

**catherine shannon**  
**bad penny**

Odie, the Buffalo lover-boy  
tied up hussies from the Old Pink  
in sordid attempts to embrace  
rockstardom. One of his  
conquests came into my life,  
intriguing me  
like a child  
who curiously examines  
the likes of another.

Saggy brown Puerto Rican skin  
droopy black eyes that saw  
no shame,  
withered hands reminding me  
of my seventy-five-year-old grandmother's.

She celebrates her fortieth every year  
clinging desperately to her  
days of wild, drunken vice  
glorified every time she announces  
how bad she really is.

Pushing Stoli in my face  
I sat completely aware,  
unsure if I should  
praise her notoriety  
or berate her hideous behavior.

I last saw her from behind  
on her way to the pub  
down in the West Side  
her squat figure wobbling  
with one inept foot  
dragging limply behind the other.

**frank dejulius**  
**mud**

sitting by the stream  
the water slides by

passing my fingers  
soaking the flow

calmly I reach  
drawing the lands  
soft shoulder

pale brown salt  
rolling over my  
hands stealing the  
earth's body dirt

cupped in the other  
I hold the stream  
its warm gentle blood  
silk sheets in my cuff

I unite brothers  
pressing the message  
molding the form

my work brings  
them together  
they dance for me  
a solid peace

glancing at my hands  
splashed brown  
the thick of my child  
precious soil I made

the world is our putty  
we mold its form

sculpting the ink

## andy thomas (poem)s

r(each)  
in(side)  
th(is)

word

meaning  
locked in  
its  
he(art)



in sand my  
love is carved  
with a stick  
there in those  
sheets we softly  
kissed, sucked the  
salt waves from  
our naked pores  
we left with  
the high tide  
never to look  
back, our love  
lost somewhere forgotten  
in the sea



you entered  
without words  
a tepid smile  
cold, inert  
like worn steel  
white wrought  
iron gates  
loosely fastened as  
the embers of your  
eyes die into ash

—this is how it is

rigid clockwork  
theatre in  
stone, to mute  
applause  
we undress

i enter with  
unfolding groans  
my metallic love  
lurching inside

your face  
lit in the  
leaden light  
your tears  
burning in  
the darkness

## michael nosek rabbits

“Rabbits scream like little girls.” This is Dave. Ben was in the pissier and this is what he says to me.

What, I say.

“Rabbits, they scream when they get hurt.”

We’ve been telling jokes all night. Bad ones. What do you tell your wife when she has two black eyes? Nothing, you done told her twice. That one got a laugh.

Okay, I’ll bite. Get me another beer, I say.

“Sure,” he says.

“I know you’re thinking that I’m going to tell another joke. This shit really happened.”

I wave my hand at him and roll my eyes as I slug my new beer. It tastes like foamy water. Whatever. Let’s go.

“I was in Boy Scouts when I was younger.” Dave with the tattoos that cover his arms like sleeves as a Boy Scout. “I was working as a kind of counselor at a summer camp,” he says. Dave with the Neo-Nazi shaved head and beard. “I’m working at the archery range.” Dave who was just telling me that getting your dick pierced doesn’t really hurt. “I was a lousy shot. I mean it’s fucking August and I still can’t hit the targets.” Most of what Dave is saying comes out in one long, slobbery word and I nod but “fucking August” comes out fuggin’ agos. “So I’m at this camp and we’re closing for the day. It was me and two older guys, that were like, seventeen. It’s still light out and this fucking bunny rabbit hops out in front of the targets. So we’re poking around watching this fucking rabbit and smoking pot and Joe says, ‘Dave, fucking shoot that shit,’ and hands me this bow and target arrow. So I aim and I let go. I fucking aimed at the hay bales because I didn’t want to actually hit it.”

You hit it, I say.

“Fuck. Yeah. Fucked up thing is that we all sit there and stare for a minute. It was just sitting there. I thought I killed it.” Dave’s eyes are wet and he takes a long drink. “Thing starts fucking screaming then. We were twenty feet away and it was so loud it hurt my ears.” Putting his palms over his ears little kid style, he says, “I put my hands up like this and start walking out on the field but the thing takes off into the brush.

“I mean, I can’t get back there to kill it or say that I’m sorry.”

So what’d you do, I say softly, my lips close to the bottle.

“We tried to get back there but we couldn’t. I could see it so I tried to hit it with another arrow. I couldn’t hit it. It screamed for about twenty minutes.”

Damn. I’m looking under the table at my shoes and peeling my label. “It wasn’t dead, just tired of screaming.”

So what happened.

“What do you mean?” he says.

Well, isn’t there a point, I ask.

“Nah, just shit that happened.”

Oh, I say.

**william j. belz III**  
**so great**

Shattered  
bits pieces fragments  
once whole  
    once all belonging  
to a thing so great  
now a part of none  
    but fragmentation  
    itself  
i lift in both hands  
    offering to the sky  
and let fly on the wings  
    of the wind  
the breath of a  
    ghostly being  
carried to rest on the hillside  
these fragments  
i could tell you it fell  
    and broke  
but the truth . . .  
would fester  
    to hold my mind  
    lhostage  
wanting it to be  
    known  
that it was I—  
i smashed all that once  
    was “good”  
for *that*, it will never be  
To me.





Dan Falkner

**tracie zamiska**

**8.6.99**

the wind catches the edge of your skirt

climbing over curves and dips

sending you flying—floating through space

light finger tips across

up to open lips

sliding down inside, taking hold

inhabiting your emptiness

moving through your veins

like a magic key opening truth

calm attacks cravings

realizing it was only the wind, you close your eyes

## joy yang at the roots

Did you ever stop to think that  
the morning in question—  
Yes that morning,  
would be the morning that everything would  
change.  
The morning in which you  
would stop to  
think.  
Hey maybe I could be  
Different  
and every morning after that,  
you woke up  
wishing...

That you could be a different person

With blonde hair that sparkled  
like leaves of gold falling from the trees [in autumn]  
and catching the bright sunlight.  
Glittering like a bucket of falling stars.

And blue eyes like the sky [in spring]  
amongst a break of thick clouds  
bright and shining in the  
reflection of the puddled sidewalk.

Until you realized...  
that you didn't want to be associated with dumb, as you already were:  
"At the roots."

So it was better  
to want something  
different.  
You could be intelligent:  
    and smart ('cause that's what *they* wanted)  
and wear glasses (tortoise shell—'cause it was cool at the time)  
and write poems (what made you think...)  
So everyone would think that you were something  
(You weren't)

and you Tried,  
                    Tried,  
and                      Tried.

Until you realized...  
(Finally!)  
that you were  
OK  
with yourself—LOVE that ghetto booty girl  
and you were  
(almost)  
happy with yourself  
and your  
own being.

And on that morning...  
you woke up and realized that  
you didn't want to be  
Different.  
For once you just wanted  
to be.

You.

## joy yang blue

We passed through that place.  
Pure, selfish pleasure  
wrapped around us...

Twisted sheets on hot summer nights.  
His blue eyes half shut  
in that state of  
unencumbered bliss.

Stale smoke and clean laundry. Howard Stern on mute.  
Half opened blue eyes turned  
cold  
in summer heat.

I passed through that place.  
Pure, unadulterated fear  
wrapped around me...

## anya albers winter legs

chalky  
cracks of negligence cover the weak porcelain of my skin

smearred  
speckled and splotched with greenish mishaps and the dark blue  
beatings of determination

raw  
pumping power busts through squatting quads and my oxen ache with  
satisfaction

hair  
scattered widely, its shimmering brown radiance has matured since the  
razor retired

my power  
my defiance  
my self

my legs

shevaun donnelli  
brothers

The morning after Magdele died,  
Warren rose early and put the coffee pot on to boil.  
“Come on, Lester,” he hollered to  
the flannel mound in bed.  
“We got some time yet.”

The afternoon after Magdele died,  
Warren opened his lunchbox and  
unwrapped a hard salami sandwich.  
Lester shifted his rifle to the side and  
pushed his back against the tree.  
“It ain’t half over yet,” he said,  
watching the crows overhead.

They walked in tandem,  
shrugging off the autumn wind and  
walking silently, knowingly, together, home.

The evening after Magdele died,  
they fed logs to the Franklin stove and  
left the porch light burning.  
Warren lit his pipe and squatted  
in front of the flames. Lester ate fried eggs  
sitting in the orange armchair.

The night after Magdele died,  
Earl turned his red Chevy truck  
down the dirt road just past the  
rusted pike. His hands were thick  
with work and rheumatism and  
he listened to the silence of darkness.  
He wanted to read the inscription  
on his wedding band, but the ring  
wouldn’t pass over his knobby knuckles.

He hadn’t been to the cabin in years.  
Not since Maria Magdele left him.  
Not since she was too young to walk.  
Not since Magdele sat at the kitchen table

staring at memorial catalogues and tiny white dresses  
and ran her fingers through spilled coffee.  
But the road was familiar.  
The porch light burned.

Warren looked up as the door latch lifted.  
“Magdele died,” Earl said.  
“We know.”  
And the brothers watched the fire burn.

*W*

shannon rohring  
hammy downs

This city has been lived in  
like the hammy down  
boots of my childhood,  
or the worn corduroys,  
hanging from my angular hips,  
flattened smooth bottoms,  
thinner than before, and  
a Strawberry Shortcake shirt  
from the girl next door,  
my babysitter.  
Listen to this city's  
know-it-all wisdom:  
dirty jokes, how to dab lipstick,  
apply eyeshadow—dark, thick,  
French kiss boys with pimples  
who wear Nikes and slouch.  
Worship this city  
with youthful adoration  
and tell her thank you,  
she's all you've known.  
The shows she likes are the ones to like,  
her stores the ones to shop,  
the magazines on her nightstand,  
sophisticated.  
Take her music for yours.  
Her nail polish is chipping,  
but don't hold that against her,  
watch her, take notes.  
You will become her someday,  
she will become a part of you.  
"The two shall become one,"  
your pasts the present, then future.  
When you grow up,  
Becoming woman,  
look becoming, come, and become.  
Inherit responsibility.  
Have kids.  
Raise them well.  
Give them this city, your hand-me-down.

cowboys and indians

The sandbox was the Wild Wild West  
when we were little—you littler.  
The fence was the Rocky Mountains.  
You were John Wayne and I was Calamity Jane.  
Miles to go, we had miles to go  
and run into nothing but the great wide  
open of our souls.  
Then you traded your chaps,  
got a big ol' headdress for Christmas.  
Dad's teepee came out of the attic:  
"wah/wah/ahh/ahh/ahh/ahb,"  
your clumsy hand hittin' your lips,  
Indian fashion; you wanted to run naked  
in nothin' but a rawhide vest.  
You painted your freckled face with lipstick.  
Roun' and roun' we galloped the days away.  
I remember once a bear attacked  
and you saved the little uns.  
But little uns grow up to be big-guns.  
John Wayne's ridiculous then.  
Calamity Jane is a tomboy.  
And Indians, well they're Native Americans.  
Don't you know,  
you should know that by now?

for my brother

## matt lukens

# remember this

I want to give you this silver dollar, but I want you to know just why it's so special to me. You can't spend a silver dollar with a story like this behind it.

When I was your age, maybe even younger, I had a crush on a little gypsy girl. She was the bee's knees. Her dark skin and hair and eyes just set my heart on fire.

Her name was Salma. I walked past her house every day on my way home from school. She would be working in her little garden, growing all sorts of things. Sometimes she would sit on the curb with a bundle of yarn, knitting away.

My mother and I were the only ones living on Gypsy Row who weren't gypsies. As a result, the gypsies didn't really talk to us. Salma and I would try, sometimes, to talk to each other, but her mother would always come out and send her away inside.

One sunny, warm, spring day, Salma slipped me a note: *I want to give you a gift at the next full moon. Meet me on the bridge that night.* That was the first time I ever fell in love.

I held on to that note, and took it everywhere I went. I still have it back home and I could show it to you, if you want. I showed it to my mother and father. My friends at school didn't know any of the gypsy children, but I showed them anyway. I told everyone how beautiful Salma was, and how she would certainly have the most perfect gift ready for me when the moon was next full.

For the next three weeks I fell asleep every night thinking about what she could possibly have for me. I thought of cakes and pies that she might bake. I thought about a puppy, because the gypsies had so many dogs and I had always wanted one. I thought about cowboy hats, tambourines, new marbles, and baseball cards.

When I would come home from school I would make sure that my shirt was tucked in and my hair was parted each time I passed Salma working in her garden. I smiled my biggest smile, but dared not speak to her. Everything felt perfect, and the last thing I wanted was to mess that up before the next full moon.

I watched each night as the moon first shrunk, little by little, and then grew again, little by little. I bet you don't realize how slow that happens, but if you watch the moon every night for three weeks the way I did, you'll appreciate the moon a whole lot more.

I planned my escape from my house: Out my bedroom window, along the house until the willow tree, straight through the budding branches, and

down the hill toward the stream. I would follow the stream all the way down to the bridge before climbing out, back onto the street.

I tried on my clothes in the dark, just to see what would make me look best for Salma. I decided on greasing my hair, just enough to make it shine in the moonlight. I'll tell you, greasing your hair is a lot messier than you think.

Finally, the day came. As I thought about it, I realized that I should have a gift for her too. I thought about my baseball cards, but I knew that she wouldn't appreciate them as much as I did. I thought about my marbles, but I wasn't sure if gypsies were allowed to play with them. I searched through my toy box, but I knew that Salma wouldn't like dump trucks and toy soldiers.

Finally, at the bottom of the toy box, I found a silver dollar that my dad had given me on a bet. He bet me that his team was going to beat my team. Well, my team won, and Dad paid me a brand new shiny silver dollar. I tucked it in my pocket and waited until my parents fell asleep.

It was very early. To kill the time, I skipped stones in the stream, and searched under the moonlight for salamanders and crawfish. When my shoes got wet, I went back up on the bridge and took them off. I was dangling my feet over the edge when I saw her approach.

She looked beautiful, in a long, white, flowing gown. Her dark eyes shined through the space between us and I smiled. She smiled back.

Under her arms she carried a folded over brown paper sack. I knew that inside of that sack was the gift that I had been waiting so long for. I reached inside my pocket and turned the silver dollar over and over and over in my hand, anxious and nervous and worried and happy all at the same time.

She came up to me slowly and smiled as she handed me the bag. I took it carefully and got down on my knees to open it up. She just stood there, watching me. I think she was smiling, but I really can't be sure.

The bag felt heavy. I was glad that it was. Maybe she had baked me a big cake, weighed down by the icing.

Slowly, I opened the bag. We were in between the street lamps, and the shadows hid whatever was inside. I reached in with both hands, wrapping my fingers around something cool, smooth, and round.

I went home that night and left the bag on the kitchen table. I gave my mom the tomatoes, and kept my silver dollar.

So that's the story behind it. I kept this silver dollar with me for almost seventy years, just to remind me about love, and how you can't expect anything. And if you ever do expect something, you're not going to get it. Remember that.



**brian zagst**  
**i'm a banker**

Jamming is not my style. It's not my game. It's not what I do.  
What I do is different. I'm into banking.  
I don't clean floors, or flip burgers, or design supermarkets.  
I don't style hair, or play the flute, or drive a bus.  
I don't shoot communists. I'm a banker.

If it was my job to babysit, I'd tell you,  
just as I'd tell you if my job was to fold laundry.  
I bank. I don't lift boxes. I've never run guns for the mafia,  
or urinated on a police dog, because I'm a banker,  
and that's not what a banker does.  
A banker does stuff that isn't making bread,  
or pouring steel into a giant drum with my bare hands  
so that they become hideously scarred.  
I handle money. Not ice cream.

If someone were to shout, "Is there a doctor in the house?"  
I would stand up and say, "I don't know, but I'm a banker!"  
You wouldn't find me taming lions, or putting up drywall,  
or writing the great American novel.  
I wouldn't be caught dead wearing the hat of a fireman,  
or a pastry chef, or an organ grinder.

And if you ask me why I'm not any of these things;  
not a chef or a cop or a fireman or a teamster  
or the president or a musician, but just a lowly banker,  
I would have to say "I don't know."

Not everything has a reason I suppose. Some things just are.



Dena Bowman



Jerod Sikorskyj

## ace campbell ennui

having no responsibility  
evokes a certain numbness  
even the games of the mind  
serve little to please  
I sloth  
and the day melts into nothingness

*Mo*



**michael nosek**  
**forty drops**

Ever get the feeling you're dried out?

Sixteen hundred drips every drop a soldier  
jump back to that time  
when it stopped and you spent an eternity  
flying  
over tasseled handlebars  
crunching out that front tooth on the pavement  
there was a pop (at least you remember one)  
like lollipop, lollipop, flowering explosions  
behind your eyelids and bobbing heads  
like white onions  
there was so much blood  
you thought for sure you were dying

Forty drops every drop distillation  
remember when He punched you  
like a cartoon glove on those pinching metal tongs  
in the breastbone  
a clogging hollowness  
when knuckles met sternum  
your mouth worked itself quietly dry for air  
and marrow like a blob of grease  
along the edge of bubble-less dishwater  
pumped embolism waves in your ticker

A solitary drop a god of liquid  
skip to when you used to beat it eight times a day  
when this was the greatest thing in the world  
a clench and then unexpectedly  
hot sticky white  
creeping along the crest of your hip onto your belly  
no matter how much you washed or drank  
you were alone, lonely  
you were suddenly dirty for such things

If the old fable is true  
your vessels should pump powder  
you should die dry

**john leberman**  
**i don't care about the  
other fish**

What are you thinking  
(Lilies envy those curves)  
Up    Down

Moving at light speed  
(That hair is magnetic—I'm helpless)  
Back    Forth

Look out the window  
(Those eyes—infinity can be beautiful)  
Right    Left

What are you waiting for  
(A whiff of citrus, maybe lavender—insanity can be  
beautiful)  
Life    Death

What are you thinking  
(What am I waiting for?)  
Now—Never—Forever?  
No?    Yes?

erica rocco  
september

Things hang differently here  
against these white cliffs in September  
against these salty beaches that smell of forgotten stories.  
In these nameless faces,  
empty shoes,  
fingertips that leave blood traces,  
there is the fading of everything into lusty shades of perverted yellows  
and greens the color of grease.  
Somewhere amidst this love in the grass  
there is an aching for meaning  
and for hope,  
for a necessary madness and machines that make sense  
that will end suffering.  
It is a feeling short-lived,  
something that smells like wet pavement in heat  
and sounds like a moaning evening.  
It's a citrus seduction that tingles like oranges on tongues—  
We are here.  
We are here,  
in the shadows, in the night, in certain mornings  
like hollow shells breathing shared air.  
Train tracks leading to hell,  
echoing with lost forgiveness.  
These days have lasted forever and rocked themselves into  
this tragic sea of  
despair—  
there is what is left—  
and what is forgotten.  
The swarm builds its hive and heads for home.  
We are here  
in the cradle of humanity,  
rotting—  
rocking—  
listening for a creak,  
or a splinter of light to sever itself in halves.  
We have no form, yet reach for each other in this endless  
night of perpetual fear.

idiosyncratic love songs  
and other tunes to  
hum to yourself while  
waiting in train stations

Love occupies strange places,  
empty corners,  
and lonely stairwells—  
that certain place where planes touch down on hollowed-out runways  
and ooze with the same thickness of that  
voice that echoes on Monday mornings  
through the rattle of a train station's fury.

It is the sweatiness of things  
that makes them porous and  
always fixes them indefinitely with incongruity.

Purple bruises left on necks,  
teeth and tongues  
that snatch  
that break  
that snarl when provoked—  
One man's blurred confusion is another man's clarity—  
One man's charred passion is another man's naked dream.

And in this place where hope chokes on its own suffocating breath,  
the distance between us grows more every day,  
solid and strong,  
like healthy lungs in winter's burning heat.

janet mcnally

## body

Brittle-sugar bones  
arrange themselves for you,  
waiting and linking tendons.  
Eyes circled with smoke,  
glittered cheekbones—

war paint, I tell her—

caramel-milk skin  
and tiny squares of teeth  
begging to leave marks.

This is not really the way  
I thought it would be,  
the lucid choreography of lust.  
I stretch, I twist,  
I close my eyes.

I am person for myself  
but woman for you.

## days spent here

Sunday morning, and you're trying  
to tempt me with Modern Lovers records,  
listening with the curtains drawn,  
and then Otis Redding.  
A hand on my hip is an apology,  
your fingers find their way into my hair.  
Life seems so fragile lately, my bones  
are glass and my thoughts  
scattered sugar. You tell me everything  
will break if you handle it roughly,  
but that's the way I want to be handled.

The language of this escapes me.  
This is how only we live.

## say anything

Silence stretches  
like cats here,  
a cool feline extension, with  
time pooled and dripping midnight  
under the windowsill.  
I'd settle for a few chords  
if you don't have the words.  
We don't have to talk.  
It's only the uncertainty that drives  
me crazy, wrapped in separate  
blankets and staring at the wall.  
I learn the pagan slope of your hips,  
this insomniac sleep,  
our unconscious paradox.  
One admonition:  
Do not mistake this  
for love.  
It is different to yearn like that.

dave hoffman

## when the murder roosts

Wings of black bring the aging day to rest  
among the perches of dead men's fingertips.  
The shadowed fence protects the dead men's lot.  
The barking caw keeps the silence dead,  
and when they rise from sleep in unison  
they bring a night's murder to a breaking day.

Wings of black in flight  
take the aging day to bed  
atop the dead-like branches,  
among the night-shadowed fences.  
The dead men's lot is protected  
and their barking caw sings their ode.  
When in morning, they rise and sing again  
to the day is brought a 'nited murder.

*Mo*

dean bourque

## i am napalm

I am napalm  
starting with just a spark  
but burning  
hot and long  
with no way  
of putting me out

*Mo*

## jerod sikorskyj morning launch

Atlantis  
t-minus eight minutes and forty-eight seconds.  
That's all, that's

Radio crackle, dream  
Dazzle

I wanna be a space man Mom  
I wanna leave these bonds of  
earthen-aged force.

Six minutes, thirty-four seconds...It's happening

Arm retracting  
Slowly...steadily

"t-minus five minutes and counting"  
crackle is surround  
streaming fog

"t-minus four minutes"

NASA...States...sideways to  
space.  
engines cocked  
testing, position...  
holding

...three minutes

nose cap of external fuel tank  
coming off...

less than two minutes...one minute thirty seconds

tension  
constant thump  
data data data  
streaming  
'cross blazing screens  
goes

star-trekking dreams.

Twenty-five seconds, fifteen, ten, and...  
silence of twin hissing snakes.  
Liftoff.  
Gone to the station in the sky.



damon young

go. . .

... it's me  
the modern-day matrix dismemberer  
my words matriculate  
pages peculate when my pen detonates  
hydrogen bombs  
BOOM!!!!  
watch pages shiver and shake  
when I  
deliver metaphoric earthquakes  
euphoric  
wisecracks  
backs break when under backpacks packed with  
cracked Kevlar notebooks  
filled with titanium pages and plutonium  
lines  
lines designed  
at the speed of lifelight  
light hides within  
my pen. Each i's dot, a black hole compressing quarks.  
Each t's cross, a vacuum  
extorting sound waves (GIMME YOUR FUCKIN' EARS!!!!)  
and hear these  
furious sentences  
wince when my prepositional phrases protrude phallically  
cringe when I balance between  
subject and verb  
sparring with predicates and  
dating adverbs (slowly, but surely)  
Me, the  
speech perfecting  
paragraph directing  
past-tense resurrecting  
modifier making exclamations assimilate and periods tango  
Watch me draft verses  
and send them to basic,  
turning stanzas to soldiers  
terrorizing manila folders

and invading monitors.  
I make words electric slide and moonwalk,  
forty-yard dash and backstroke,  
poking at your ribs  
before the slow TKO.  
Blue-blooded rhymes flow through my valves  
with irregular rhythm  
jism on each key (yeah, I know I'm nasty)  
Listen to my fears,  
my passion,  
my pride.  
Read my heart break  
hear my ears glare at impaired intelligence (my pet peeve)  
hear my voice grieve  
hear my voice leave the paper in a vapor at tapered speed with no  
writing  
blocks to impede leading to... nothing really. Just getting punchdrunk  
with  
the rhymes, silly.  
Listen to me flow  
Listen to me grow  
I make words go.

sandy dedo  
lady ice, interrupted

almost, i  
—walked into you today  
dropped into a sudden stream of  
frigid confusion  
i was  
    swept  
        away and  
mistakenly—  
said hello.

plunged into this chance nonmeeting  
i thought about all the things  
we are  
    not.

i should have remembered to be  
bitter  
    but—  
my soul skipped           a little  
                                    and  
my nerves tripped         a little  
                                    and  
i closed my eyes while walking  
allowing my thoughts to echo with your  
forbidden name.

i draw our time together

i loved you once  
now i have only a rough  
                    outline  
and the            details  
are  
    missing

i cannot remember  
you    washing    your hands  
faded                the exhale of soap bubbles  
in the mouth  
of the drain

realization of my sex

in this dream i  
am  
handing an                    apple  
to a                            man

i hold our fate  
between my  
                                  teeth

i arch  
          i spread  
                          i stain

delicious—

believing  
                          how sweet it is  
                          how sweet it is  
                          how sweet it is

janet doyle

## askew

That picture of us never seems  
to sit quite straight upon  
the far wall,  
perhaps I have never gotten straight all  
the hooks and lines within  
my own frame so to correct  
those in yours.  
Constantly you teeter upon the  
edge of forever—one quick  
motion and I will find you  
bare and broken under my feet.  
Often I attempt a futile effort  
to right it, that beloved memory—  
when—just back comfortably  
in my bed I notice your left shift,  
right-hand dip.  
Frustration cannot begin to explain  
me and the eternal effort to  
correct this fatal flaw.  
Perhaps the problem lies in the eye  
    hook  
or elbow  
    bracket  
or any other part of me and  
not with the glass  
at all.  
Maybe my vision is off, unfocused,  
askew and the  
angle of my memory lies only  
with me,  
not you.

## i am 1 a.m.

1 a.m.  
I am  
Isn't it amazing the difference  
periods make  
living  
dead  
I am at 1 a.m. and  
again am not.

---

1 dot  
spot of  
ink  
blood  
creating  
nothing  
to be me  
at 1 a.m.  
when I am.

## pete koch critical points

When our mistakes come full circle  
and punch us in the mouth,  
bite us on the ear, the ankle,  
what are the chances you will KO?  
What are the chances you will wake up,

And find the professors professing  
based on false supposition and stereotype?  
Even if you do, will you know how to get from  
X to Y, based on the sum of their solutions,  
and your absolute minimum work?

Mathematicians sit in crunched, white rooms,  
calculate when the next terrorist will  
fly AA Flight 11 into the Bermuda Triangle of his mind,  
reach his endpoint and  
create another 92 statistics.

Square people are torn from their  
square roots,  
pulled from their symmetrical suburbs,  
ripped from their congruent subdivisions,  
where they moved to escape "obtuse city people."

Sub-divisions  
subtract from our cities  
and divide our people  
who delicately balance on an axis of symmetry.

Is it implicit that we  
differentiate between  
our truths and our hypocrisies?  
My beliefs run perpendicular  
to my actions, soon to intersect in a mushroom cloud.

Experts predict there is  
a good probability that we  
will all run parallel  
from this stationary point,  
people, rather than imaginary numbers.

But I, I find myself on  
wordy tangents,  
spitting numerical poetry,  
sorting through multiple internal theorems,  
looking for the proof.



paul stukowski

## saturday noon

in response to sartré

He decided to stop living for a while.

“Things drip like...” like... Stories. Tales. Songs. Dreams.

He got up. Maybe living was something to do for a while.

He walked a few steps, went one way, then, without knowing, went another, walked on, and something happened and something else, and he came back and picked up a pen. The clock said a few hours had passed, but he couldn't say that. He didn't have the word for it.

He opened a book to look for a word (maybe he misplaced it?) and all he found was “sickness.” (“sickness”? how? why? over what?) And all the other words were, empty? (sickness is empty, sick at itself) This was new? No. atoms striking each other but not really 'cause they never come near each other only “feel” each other and invisible “lines” which other “lines” cannot cross so what's the point in making them more than what they really are if that's nothing then they're nothing was all they had to say everyone would understand.

He picked up a word and put it on a pen and watched it dance (scribble) itself on a paper (scribbled itself on a paper over on a paper over and paper over and over over and over and on).

He put down the pen (the dream, the nightmare, the “sickness”) and picked up a book (rook cook look). And he started reading—maybe someone else's life would inspire him to have one of his own.

...

...

(And it kept singing in his head)

...

“‘I am Eye’ said Eye As it kept on walking by ‘By that sinking eye  
Aye I am still Eye’

“And I kept on thinking As it kept on sinking Words it kept on linking  
‘‘I am Eye’’ said I’ said Eye

“‘I am Eye’ said Eye said Eye ‘‘I am Eye’’ said I’ ‘By that shadow  
passing nigh I am Eye’ said Eye

“‘No more words left to buy No more voices leaving by Nothing left  
to say but “Bye” And “I am Eye” ’ said Eye”

...

The pen went down and he walked away.



Adam Zyglis



Matt Zogby

## eboney dixon i am from

I am from hard work,  
from cooking and cleaning.  
I am from back roads  
down deep dark in Mississippi.  
I am from two parents,  
but only one who took the time to raise me.

I am from fried chicken,  
along with rice and beans.  
I am from "sista girls,"  
and "ohhhhh chills,"  
from quiete la boca  
y sientense.

I am from praise the Lord  
with a collection plate.  
No verses I can remember  
but more gossip that I can say myself.

I am from Luther Vandross and the Huxtables,  
no cable but plenty of books.  
From the cotton my grandmother picked  
to the shots my mother injects  
to the boat my grandfather took  
to the metal my father puts together.

On my walls is a board of pictures  
full of old memories,  
lots of old faces and great times  
that have since faded away over the years.  
I am from THOSE moments,  
happened so quick  
before I had the chance  
to understand what they meant.

**paola giacobbe**  
**a counting nightmare**

Time is ticking and he is in the lead.  
The Republicans are making progress,  
Number progress, the real progress so they promise.  
I just observe, observe in bewilderment.  
Where is he? Someone shouts,  
Nervous they say. Nervous...  
Nervous should be the word.  
Imagine being someone you're  
not. That's nervous, no that's SCARY.  
He's not nervous, he's scared.

There he is, his pants are too long,  
so is his name.  
But the short, shrimpy stature...  
Polish family name wins, they say.  
It sells pity so it wins.

Beads of sweat, almost invisible to eyes  
choosing not to see. I notice  
50 Districts, still in the lead.

His fair lady is about to crumble.  
Her thin, wispy hair dulls  
any glory of winning.  
It reaches a height she never dreams of...  
nor her husband.  
This height must sell, I thought.  
Shoulder blades poke the red  
polyester smock.  
The shoes pinch any comfort left in her body.  
Tears are welling in her dead eyes.  
90 Districts.

I can hear her pleas. Pleas to lose.  
Winning only transforms her into what she is not.  
Binding to her pinky-ringed  
Republican.  
I want to help, but  
100 Districts.

I can't.  
He wins. It's over... the numbers but not the counting.  
All eyes who invoke dependence  
on his weak, crumbling back.  
"Carry me, feed me, relieve me, protect me!"

"Sorry," he thinks with a smirk.  
I'm only here for the numbers,  
not my counting on him.  
Not on all of us counting on him.  
Not for all the unaccountable rapes,  
murders and violence.  
All he counts are the bills exploding  
Exploding from his faux Armani pockets.

**expresiones**

Nervioso screams through his juttery toothpick  
Frustration sinks into his angry chewing  
A mask embellishes his inner tension as the cracked smile settles in  
Just as friend lights up and chatters away  
But the leg keeps bobbing  
Up and down, up and down  
As if his life was being tugged down under luke-warm bathwater.  
Yanked up for hiccupping breath  
And back in the murky liquid.  
His life remains my mystery.

Our lives become one simple motion.  
Up and down... the motion of survival.  
Our gasps of air bubble into one as we submerge  
Into our pleasure-dome.  
Way beneath the grimy surface  
Further down where our dreams spill, mesh and fill  
Such fantasies only require a full drown.  
An end

But, if only a taste...  
a stretching reach and quick pull back.  
Upward... Upward with fists clenched with our life insurances.  
Our dreams to guide  
the Ups and downs  
of my Everyday yours too.

**matt lukens**  
**my place**

Clarence sings, "Nightswimming," his fingers dancing on the keys, "deserves a quiet night."  
"I hate swimming in the dark," says young Archibald from his stool.  
"Oh be quiet and let him sing," says Victoria from the balcony.  
"If only to swim with the fishes!" yells young Archibald.  
Clarence stops playing. "Fish are like guests," he says from the piano.  
"After a while, they both stink," says Victoria from the balcony.  
They go on like this every night while I clean up.  
"That may be," answers Archibald, "But neither a fish, nor any house guest of mine, will ever be a whore like you."  
"And no houseguest of mine, or any fish in the sea, will ever be able to drink more than you, Archibald Eustice Cornwallace, Esquire," says Victoria.  
Clarence begins to play Bacharach as Archibald puts his head on the bar. Victoria picks up her skirt and heads down the stairs to join us. I just wipe the dust off of the bottles behind the bar.  
"Alzheimer's cannot exist!" shouts Archibald, suddenly upright.  
Clarence stops on the wrong chord to ask why not.  
"Anyone who has it surely cannot spell it, let alone remember what its symptoms are in the first place."  
It's almost five. I'm fit to leave. As soon as I mop the floor, I'm gone.  
"Hey Clarence," says Victoria from the stool next to Archibald. "How about that Porgy and Bess song for me?"  
"Sure thing babe," he says, and begins playing *Summertime* as Victoria hums along. Finally, it's getting quiet in here.  
"America: The only world power to fight fire with Napalm!"  
Archibald's sentence barely bothers the musician and the lady. They are used to him now.  
Archibald dumps the last of a bottle of scotch into his glass, drinks it down, and yells, "This shit hole is the most filthy, despicable debacle in this whole rotten, stinking town!" Then he vomits on the bar and the floor.  
Once he settles down, I punch him in the face, knocking him to the floor and putting him out cold. "Clarence, can you take him out for me?"  
"Sure thing boss. You want his keys?"  
"Nah. Just put 'em in his coat pocket. The inside one. He'll never find them there," I say.  
Clarence drags him through the door as I mop up the vomit. Victoria puts on her coat. Clarence comes in, goes to the back to get his things, and leaves to drive Victoria home.  
I open again in nine hours.

**paul stukowski**  
**firewater**

A word of fancy and shimmering cloth,  
A hand still shaking from whim and wroth,  
Stars falling down and seas fallen up,  
A pace away from emptied cup.

*MS*

## the editors hidden track

slip knot, sonic youth  
flaming lips cure extreme anthrax  
get up kids!  
police!  
aha!  
parliament saves the day at the drive-in  
chicago refused the cars  
butthole surfers wham beach boys  
the beatles hammer the crickets  
all saints coalesce the, the, the who?  
guess who:  
the jesus and mary chain  
eagles blur counting crows  
billy ocean—nada surf  
. . . superdrag  
rage against the machine culture club  
old dirty bastard breeders

*W*

## contributor's notes

I believe I have a personal relationship with Virginia Woolf. I'd like to thank water, without whom lemonade would not be possible. Canada—so safe that we were sure the girls weren't kidnapped. Sub-par waitresses are excused by curling. "You are putting your drinks on a parking meter," he said as she put her drinks on a parking meter. Thank you to Ugly Kid Joe, you guys are amazing to party with. Craziest of all, I love the City of Lights. I'm working on it...I have 37 mins. It's coming. Special thanks to Charles Baxter for being so quiet in the trunk for all those miles. You look very formal. Your dinner is bigger than you. I will label them "definitely qualified" or "not qualified," or I'll rate them out of 5 perhaps. We're lost, and we've got this map to a place where we aren't. Thank you to my nervous breakdown for breaking up the tedium of the editing session. I like... writing out notecards to friends. Thanks to the English Club for the gracious use of the scotch tape and markers. This is my life, this is the drama. Extra-special "change your shoes" thanks to Mr. Rogers. Turns out that our 2002 issue is the 50th anniversary. Don't know where I'm going or even what I'm doing half the time. Any suggestions... I want to be Nancy Drew. These guys are cool; and by cool, I mean totally sweet. Please send over your stories and poems, Janet's not letting me have water or food, and I really need to pee. I hope that Michigan is as good in reality as it looks on paper. If someone asks me why they got a B+, I tell them it's because they did very good work. We're still lost, we could be back on the map, only Matt has eaten it. Saturdays are impossible for me thanks though. Perhaps that cool boy will lead us to a den of cool boys. Do I get special consideration for my short story? No. (I'm not really well versed in the geography of the library.)



Adam Zyglis

"Fiction is about telling lies, but you must be scathingly honest in telling those lies. Poetry is about truth telling, but you need the lie—the artifice of the form—to tell those truths."

—M. Nourbese Philip