

WRITING @ UCONN

fiction
essays
poetry

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*the connecticut writing project
and
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P.O.H.

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Our objective continues to be the publication of the best student writing done at UConn. As always, we invite undergraduates to submit work for consideration. Regrettably we cannot print all the good writing we get. We wish we could. But we promise to give each submission a thoughtful review.

We hope that through the pleasure WRITING UCONN gives, all students will come to make good writing a real part of their lives.



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POEMS BY MONIQUE D. SHIRA

Suffering

I used to wear
My bikini
indoors
'til the neighbors
complained
'bout the windows,
and godknowswhat
might happen to
the children,
so I'd sit in
front of the tube
instead
with a half gallon of
chocolate chip
dreamin' bout being
the pink
cotton-candy queen
wiggling my toes in mens'
ties
reeking of expensive
aftershave
and combing
my hickeys
before Sunday mass.

I wanted to burn
my bra
in the A&P
parking lot
let those angry
eyes steam.
But they weren't
disgusted.
just quiet,
and now,
I sit
alone
with fat
forming under my arms
and chin,
watching my candy queen
sing the blues
on channel two.

the grateful dead november

from american highways
they blossomed from blue-grass
and bandanas between
the yellow lines
driven barefoot
through crunchy highway snow
children bearing children

it's a passion play in face paint
as a purple earth mama
with a tie-dye daisy chain
and a small child
swings a skirted thigh

dionysus appears centerstage
in frenzied paisley
and a serpent collar
he sings blue flame
and white light
and they all melt
like an M&M spectrum
on some summer road
not unlike the highway
they call home

Tuesday

I found you
one morning
walking on yellow soles
through the thick marketplace.
It was a Tuesday,
the sun bright
the path familiar.
You smiled away
like an arrogant cat
on all fours,
tail up
in spiked retreat.
I raised my hand,
but only to brush back
a lock of hair.

Thoughts on Astronomy

I don't want my name
Romeo said slipping silver from the screen
into the blue moonlight pressing down
on his torn heartstrings.
The reel was stopped so that
she could follow on soft mediterranean feet.
Together in a field of aluminum moon
they stumbled,
hands barely touching
thighs barely brushing
falling into an anonymous sleep
until they awakened
to grass stains
and morning trucks
to find themselves with
bruised lips
and no good lines left.

Poem Opium

My parents never kissed in elevators
and I always thought to tell them but
only after the moment could be seized.
They didn't think to look at Monet
as a kind of love for the eyes like
walking on the beach is for the soul,
always another check to be written,
someone somewhere dying for lack of credit
real credit, american synthetic credit.
So I filled my gaps with museums and Marx
and they filled theirs with more babies.

Theirs was not a messy stairway love
filled with inebriated echoes from the hall
but one of static t.v. and acceptance.
There was no red anger, no black/blue, no missing pieces,
it was all there, just that they couldn't understand
my acute need to suffer.
I stopped eating dinner with them to avoid
the red meat,
I stopped going to church with them to avoid
the wrath of an angry god,
I didn't need their god, I'd found mine
on the bumper of a truck on route 84
going away from their home.
It was the most beautiful mix of philosophy and art
I'd ever seen with my eyes not theirs.

They did not understand that my music was
sex and religion at the same time,
They did not understand my wallpaper was
a reflection of my inner conflict.
They did not understand my poetry.

But there are lessons on bumpers of trucks,
and there is morality in Monet and Marx,
and reading my lines is like going through my drawers,
except mother can't tidy them before I open them up
and that hurts because what would Mrs. Jones think
of a bumpersticker of Monet and Marx exposed in
the open just like that.

Monique Shira is a graduating senior. She wrote
these poems in English 246. Monique won first prize
in the 1987 Wallace Stevens Competition.

PAWS ACROSS AMERICA

Joseph John Unfried

Well, I might as well start with who I am: a sociology
major at a small northeastern university. A simple,
ordinary kind of guy, really--not the sort of person you'd
expect to come up with such a wild, earth-shattering idea.

It all started right after the end of my freshman year.
I had just left a frenzied world of near-constant partying
and returned to my parents' house. I was depressed and
bored, desperately looking for something to do. After I'd
been home about a week, I was standing in the driveway
figuring maybe it was time to unload all my shit out of the
car, when I witnessed a sight that changed my life: a
catfight was happening just a few feet away. I didn't know
either cat, but I thought that what they were doing was
pretty immature, so I decided to stop them.

After donning a catcher's mask, three pairs of thick
leather gloves, and an arctic parka, I bravely stepped
between the two felines and separated them; then I tried to
force them to kiss and make up. When that proved hopeless,
I figured the least they could do was shake paws.

Of course, I soon found out that since they have no
thumbs, cats are unable to shake paws. I solved this
problem for them by lashing their paws together with twine,
but it turned out that they didn't even want to shake paws.
But I was determined. I had spent fifteen minutes out here,
sweating my balls off in an arctic parka, and these two
ungrateful cats were going to damn well shake paws.

Suddenly, inspiration struck. Like a bolt from the blue,
it came: the idea for PAWS ACROSS AMERICA, the biggest
charity event since Prince's release of "I Am The World."

I would stretch a chain of animals, tied to one another
in a line by their paws, all the way across the country. I
would try to raise money for homeless animals. At the very
least, it would get me away from my parents for the summer.
With a little luck, I could become famous, get interviews,
appear on "Good Morning America," talk to Connie Chung,
maybe lay her after the show.

I moved fast. I took out an ad in the newspaper and
bought some time on a local TV station to get my message
across to people. "HELP RAISE MONEY FOR HOMELESS ANIMALS!

Donate \$50 along with your pet and a ball of twine to Paws Across America, care of this station. Maybe your pet will be seen on TV!"

In three days, the responses were pouring so fast I just couldn't handle them all myself. Luckily, I have a friend with a few dozen acres of fenced-in, empty land, so we threw all the animals in there for a while. After a week, we had thousands of animals on our hands, so my colleagues and I went into action.

I stole a helicopter and flew over the area, gassing the animals. As soon as they were all asleep, we loaded them into a fleet of rented trucks and took off for the California coast.

So there I was, tying a groggy Russian wolfhound to the end of a dock somewhere in Los Angeles, when some asshole from the FBI shows up out of nowhere and tells me to stop what I'm doing. I don't remember why, exactly, some bullshit about cruelty to animals! "Yes, but look!" returned the G-man, pointing to where my girlfriend was tying a struggling pair of Siamese cats to a snapping German shepherd. "It's obvious that the animals don't want to be there!"

I was enraged. "What the hell are you talking about?" I shouted. "What do you mean, they don't want to be there? Does it matter? They're there aren't they? Don't you know who the hell you're dealing with? We're PAWS ACROSS AMERICA! Look, let me give you a parallel. Everybody knows that the point of HANDS ACROSS AMERICA wasn't whether any of those people wanted to be there. It wasn't whether enough money was raised to make a dent in poverty, or even whether anybody really gave a shit. The point of it all was that everybody got out there and held hands."

Apparently, the man understood my logic. He left us as quickly as he had appeared, apologizing profusely. This left us free to get down to the task at hand. The real work of the project was about to begin.

And so it began. Day after day of inching across the southern edge of America, just out of sight of the Mexican border. As the days wore on, we worked, slept and got trashed in shifts. Soon we were all locked into a seemingly endless blur of hour upon thankless hour of tying animals together in a line, clubbing and drugging those who wouldn't cooperate.

It was tough, but I've heard that hardship often brings people together, and I certainly made my share of friends on that fateful trip. I remember how in Nevada, I made the acquaintance of a tall, buxom brunette in lace bikini bottoms who wore a live rattlesnake for a top. She introduced herself as "The Snake Lady," and explained that she had dedicated her life to try and salvage the poor reputation that most reptiles have among us humans. She demanded that snakes be included in our project. I calmly replied that the project was already well underway, and I would need a lot of convincing to suddenly alter the rules at this late stage of the game.

After a long, heated discussion in a sleeping bag in the back of my trailer, this sweet young thing somehow did manage to make me give in and allow snakes in the chain of animals. Unfortunately, I had to reverse that particular decision soon after I made it. After all, this was supposed to be PAWS ACROSS AMERICA, and close examination of a snake's body reveals that they have none. (Snakes also had the nasty, rather unnerving habit of trying to eat the other animals.)

Later in Texas, we made the horrifying discovery that we would soon run out of animals. Frantic, I telephoned a Cuban contact in Miami and threatened to tell Immigration where he lived unless he started another chain of animals there, working west toward me. Then I set to work to find more animals for our side of the chain.

But we were in a rather barren section of Texas, almost devoid of wildlife. Donated pets from the locals couldn't even make a drop in the bucket, so we went armadillo hunting. These proved easy to catch, but their paws were so small that including them in the project would have been ridiculous. There was only one option left: capture and subdual of Texas jackrabbits on a grand scale.

These, of course, were fast little suckers. So I broke into a veterinary supply store and confiscated a few hundred tranquilizer darts and a gun to fire them. I got off a few practice shots at the cops who came to investigate after the alarm sounded, and then set out on a rabbit hunt.

Of course, the rabbits were a lot tougher to hit than the cops, and I had to chase them all day over the prairie under the blistering Texas sun. Now, the tranquilizer gun can be a very dangerous weapon if not used with precision, but looking back I must admit it was more anger than any lack of coordination on my part that caused me to kill several rabbits when I nailed them in the head instead of the ass.

We were nearing the end of our journey; we were scheduled to meet our Cuban friend in Gopher Junction, Alabama, to connect our two chains at noon on a Friday. But that Thursday afternoon, I received a hideous surprise in the form of a phone call from a reporter in Tallahassee.

"You in charge of this PAWS ACROSS AMERICA shindig?"

"Yeah. . . what's up?"

"Well, this Cuban guy of yours was starting to run short of animals too, so he brought this whole shitload of Asian baboons along and started stringin' them up. So some of us reporters come driving by, taking pictures of it all, when all of a sudden they go apeshit and attack the car! All of 'em that weren't tied up yet started jumping and pounding all over it, just like that scene out of the goddam Omen! One of 'em even puked on the hood. Anyway, the driver hit a telephone pole, and---"

"We'll give him anything he wants," I interrupted. We quickly settled out of court for six grand. A lot for a dented fender, I know, but there was no way in hell I was going to risk the success of this whole thing just for the sake of some violent baboons I didn't even know. Crap, I was lucky nobody got rabies.

We finally met our Cuban friend in Gopher Junction--right on time. It turned out that we had run out of animals again, but at the last moment one of the cats had kittens and we were able to peel off the afterbirth and stretch it out far enough.

Thankful to God for this stroke of luck, we called up Martha Quinn and got ready to make the video. We were #1 on the MTV Top 20 Video Countdown for over six weeks. It was a major editing job; for example, the footage of the black Yorkshire terrier that was tied up near someone's lawn and was accidentally decapitated with a weed whacker had to be cut, of course.

After expenses, there was still quite a bit of profit left over, which meant to be donated to the Bide-a-wee Home, or someplace like that. . . actually, it wasn't until the end of the project that I finally realized that I had never really figured exactly which animal-loving foundation I would give the money to. Of course, this was an important decision--not to be taken lightly; as a matter of fact, I still haven't decided which organization is the most worthy to receive the money. I may not decide for months, or even

years to come. In the meantime, though, I've been on a nice, long vacation in Acapulco, where I can have the rest and relaxation that is so essential to making sound, fair, logical decisions.

Honestly, I don't know what the ASPCA is so pissed off at me for! I love animals, that's why I went to all this trouble in the first place. And as for the discomfort of being tied up, paw to paw like that. well, it's been three months since the whole thing ended. I'm sure that by now most of them have managed to work themselves loose.

Joseph John Unfried is in his fourth semester. He wrote this story for himself.

POEMS BY JOSH LADDS

Streetpeople III

I have seen her many times,
staleated against the city.
This time it is different,
she is a broken-backed work horse
left outside
in the sleet and pain.
The city is victorious.

Her twisted strands of hair drip
rain. She sits there
spreadeagled
on the cement stoop of a kebab shop;
her head slumped between her
red wet shawl
clothes torn, dirty, gray,
like a thing having lingered
on the street too long:
cold-concrete gray.

She lifts her tired, blueveined hand
pointing;
the air becomes an easel
she scratches
an accusation to me,
never lifting her head
from the city sidewalk.
Her single finger tracing
a figure in the air, a puppet
without a string,
without a master,
dancing across an imaginary stage,
pointing listlessly, uselessly
at me; saying
You. You. You put me here.

The day before
I saw her with her man
married to the street.
Crazed,
rags stuffed into every pocket
to stay winter's cold.
They sat on the pisscovered concrete
her bandaged hand caressed
his bare, bony knee;
then she turned it upward, dirty
palm empty
as I walked by.

Pictures from the Underground

Two German women flow
in then out
of the cold, fickle train
softly caressing each other
speaking with intimate
guttural inflections;

Pure mercury,
never mixing with the rankness
of England's brackish water.

I see them grunting
in bed
their blond, thin hair
entwined,
clinging
to their sweaty foreheads
as they arch their necks
in furious embrace.

Modern London Seen by a God of Meditation

Harpocrates, Isis' taciturn son, stands
next to the long greeningbronze cannon.
Plugging his ears with fingers, he hunches
his head down
between his shoulders
grinning, wide eyed
Silent.
Waiting

With his feet in a refuge of countless
folds of leaves and mud, he smiles
at crumbled asphalt, twisted
fragments of steel
sculptures remaining;
Stepping out
of the bowels of cement,
cheeks flushed,
Harpocrates smiles

In the rainwet grass his essence is a
cool stream, rippling
dripping over stones, slowly
wearing them away;
fragile twigs become dams until
worn, then broken;

Harpocrates stands there, near Porchester Mews
and the streetlamp's cold yellow light

Silently he watches a leafless oak
its weathered bark camouflaged against
the torrents of the street with
black and gray Panzer skin;
enclosed in a cage of cracked pavement,
pleading, alone but for the silence
of Harpocrates watching it
drown, sucking for air,
branches becoming black coral in the night

When businessmen walk their leather soles
over ancient
basilicas, covered streams,
Harpocrates cries to
the beat of that cacophonous waltz
in a plastic world's dream

Written while with the London Program.
Josh Ladds placed third in the 1987 Wallace Stevens
Competition. He is a graduating senior.

IMPERIAL ROME AS THEATER

by Louis Cohen

Tacitus' The Annals of Imperial Rome describes Rome's rapid transformation from freedom-loving republic to despotic empire. Just as a drama involves the development of characters, Tacitus' history is concerned with the unfolding of the character of Rome, as personified by its successive emperors. Indeed, Tacitus is like a dramatist in more ways than one. Firstly, he traces the psychological development of his characters, the emperors; he shows how they change over time, gradually exposing their true nature. The unravelling of Imperial Rome will coincide with this unravelling of the emperors. Secondly, Tacitus organizes his study like a work of theater. It can be read as a prologue followed by three great acts, each of which corresponds to a different stage in the uncovering of Rome's character. Thirdly, Tacitus likens Roman politics to the delusion of the theater. He illustrates how people are as willing to be duped by the empire's facade of republican liberties as they are by the illusions of a play. The incongruity between appearance and reality--typical of the theater--underlies Tacitus' ironic commentaries. Finally, Tacitus employs the metaphor of the theater to characterize what Rome finally becomes. The theater, where licentiousness reigns supreme, is the only appropriate symbol for a Rome ridden with corruption and gross sensuality.

Tacitus uses the reign of Augustus to serve as a prologue to the character of Imperial Rome. Augustus hides his usurpation of power by setting up the principate, which by its facade of republican institutions conceals the nature of the new Rome. The principate, despotism disguised as a republic, is gradually uncovered for what it is: the replacing of liberty with tyranny. Augustus' implicit tyranny becomes, under later emperors, explicit. Tacitus' "drama" then, is the unfolding of the tyranny of Rome with its attendant consequence - corruption in all its forms. This unveiling of Rome reaches its dreadful climax under the reign of Nero, which constitutes the last great act of The Annals. The horror of Nero exposes mirrors the true nature of Imperial Rome. Under Nero, Rome will become pure theater.

Nevertheless, at the outset of Nero's reign, in chapter 11, the emperor's vices are "still latent." Nero's two upstanding tutors, Burrus and Seneca, as well as some filial sentiment toward his mother, keep his urges in check. It is not long, however, before Nero's character begins to manifest itself. Fearful of the growing popularity of his stepbrother, Britannicus, he decides to have the youth poisoned. While Britannicus is killed before his very eyes at the banquet table, the emperor lies "back unconcernedly...and here was Nero murdering a relation." A tyranny makes it possible for one to murder one's relatives impassively, for it paralyzes human emotions. Even Octavia, Britannicus' sister, hides her "sorrow, affection, every feeling."

Meanwhile, Nero's ugly nature continues to reveal itself. By juxtaposing the illusion of the Republic--the election of the two new consuls--with Nero's increasingly "disgusting excesses," Tacitus emphasizes the theater-like divergence between appearance and reality. Disguised as slaves, Nero and his friends roam the streets of the capital by night, pilfering shops and assaulting wayfarers. With Nero setting the standard of civil disorder, "pseudo-Neros mobilized gangs and behaved similarly, with impunity." Rome by night is unhinged, resembling "a conquered city." Warfare erupts in the theater "between gangs favouring rival ballet-dancers." The theater is the center of all forbidden passions, and Rome is becoming more and more like the theater, and Nero, its lead actor. As Nero's true self is disclosed, so too is Imperial Rome's.

Having resolved to stop "trying to justify his criminal misdeeds," Nero ceases "delaying his long-meditated crime," the elimination of his mother, Agrippina, as a political force. Agrippina, desperate to retain power, appears before her son "decked out and ready for incest." Though the reader is not sure of what ensues, Tacitus hints at an incestuous relationship at the heart of Imperial Rome. In a tyranny that governs so absolutely, anything is possible. There is an unnaturalness about Nero and his mother, human nature having been perverted by despotism. Even matricide, the ultimate perversion, can now occur. With the emperor's murder of his mother, the full horror of Nero, and of Imperial Rome, is revealed. "'Strike here!' - pointing to her womb," Agrippina exclaims to her son's hired assassin. The freakish, unnatural prodigies that follow bespeak the monstrosity of the crime. Tyranny has indeed destroyed even the most elemental bonds of humanity.

Once the last restraint on Nero, his mother, is lifted, his nature is exposed completely. "Then he plunged into the wildest improprieties, which vestiges of respect for his mother had hitherto . . . at least impeded." Nero's two moderate advisors, Burrus and Seneca, are replaced by Tigellinus, a man whose "unending immoralities and evil reputation" fascinate Nero. The emperor becomes a chariot-racer and makes his public stage debut. Following Nero's lead, the Roman upper classes are quick to demean themselves in a like manner. "Promiscuity and degradation thrive . . . every form of immorality vied for attention." Nero is emboldened enough to bathe in the sacred waters of the Marcian Aqueduct and to enter the Temple of the Vesta, the last outpost of old Roman morals. In "The Burning of Rome" Nero becomes totally irrational. "Corrupted by every lust, natural and unnatural," Nero witnesses the burning of the capital from his private stage, singing of ancient calamities. Rome has in fact become a stage. With gangs terrorizing the city and throwing torches into the flames, with the emperor "marrying" a gang member in public, theater has become the rule. Everything formerly "veiled by night" is now done in public. As in the theater, all inhibitions are removed and unruly passions gain sway. Fittingly, the fire begins in the circus.

In Tacitus' dramatic account of Imperial Roman history, Nero clearly marks the climax in the unfolding of tyranny and corruption. With the full development of Nero's character, the essence of Imperial Rome has finally been bared. The new palace Nero builds after the fire is symbolic of this new Rome, in which nothing need be hidden any longer. The emperor's new palace represents the foundation of corruption and immorality upon which Rome now rests. Tied to Tacitus' view of Roman politics as theater is a sense of the absurd. Nero's actions call to mind the antics of a burlesque show: Nero the slave, Nero the singer, Nero the bride. If not for the horror of it all, Rome under Nero could be characterized as a grotesque farce. Yet the final, horrible revelation of Nero's and Imperial Rome's true nature is far crueller than a play, for Roman politics is not an illusion, but a deadly reality. The climax of Imperial Rome under Nero is a triumph of evil.

Louis Cohen wrote this paper in History 203. He is in his eighth semester.

POEMS BY PAMELA GAGNON

Birdwatcher

Blue is a clarion call
interrupted by
the elegance and glide of wings.
Descent becomes
an occasional
languorous
flap.

Eyes rejoicing in flight
soar up to greet, then
plummet.
It's only crows.

A pity the glossy
black made blacker by
light (blue sky, blue
gunmetal gleams) belongs
to the vain strut and hop
of a crow.

A shame the acute angles
and scimitar curves belong
to an eater of carrion.

Blonde and overbleached,
the parched fields provide
landing strip and living room.
Here they gossip and feed.
Raucous and graceful, they
mock the improbable blue.
Perfectly, they disappoint
binocular voyeurs.

The eyes had longed for hawks
to carry them aloft:
not scavengers, but
birds that kill.

Question

What did moths do before electric light?
Where did they beat and shake their wings
In patterned dance? Where did they go at night,
And where could they fly without human things?
Before the lantern and the torch, did they
Chase lightning bolts, haunt forest fires, and glide
Through phosphorescent swamps till day--
Light drove them frantic for a place to hide.
Perhaps they spiralled madly to the moon
Or launched themselves at stars, and then expired.
Why would they leave the parchment-shelled cocoon
If darkness was the only thing desired.
Before we came, the world knew how to yearn:
To reach, to touch, and--joyously--to burn.

This sonnet was written for English 221,
the other poem for herself. Pamela Gagnon is a senior.

Latin Teacher

by Elizabeth Schlegel

her words are tightly closed:
interpretation not recommended.
her thin arms
in the red woolen cardigan
bind tightly her waist.
her white lips
cut her white
patrician
face
beneath the coiled black hair.

does Ovid move her?
are her thighs cold marble
or warm in the hands
of some Latin lover?

and as the eleventh graders
hack and hammer
chisel and pound and
batter Dido's passion
into English,

she stands unread.

Written for Independent Study 298.
Elizabeth Schlegel is in her eighth semester.

A PART OF THE LIGHT

by Christopher Rosing

Joel bundled up well. It was a brutally cold afternoon and he did not look forward to the long walk home from school. He left his fifth-grade classroom, walked down the stairway and was carried out the front doorway by a throng of excited classmates caught up in the rapture of a Friday afternoon.

He quickly got away from the crowd and headed north on Silver Brook Lane, which was the shortest route home. He did not particularly like going home this way because he would have to walk by Mark Mockingly's house. Mark was a vicious little kid whose favorite pastime was electrocuting frogs. Joel did not relish the thought of having another run in with Mark. The last time, Mark and his friend Billy had taken Joel's book bag and dumped all his books into a stream.

Mark's house came into view up the street. With heart pounding and eyes furtively scanning the neighborhood, Joel steadily quickened his pace. Luckily no one was in sight as he passed the house. Just as he started feeling safe, he heard a war cry from behind the hedges on his right.

"There he is, get the stupid bugger!!!" Mark screamed to two of his buddies.

A surge of adrenaline shot through Joel's body. He ran with pure terror in his heart. He darted between his assailants and ran as fast as he could up the street with the bullies in hot pursuit. When his cap flew off he did not hesitate a second but kept his legs and arms in motion. Luckily his pursuers were happy enough to settle with capturing his cap. As Joel turned the corner he looked over his shoulder and saw Mark and his friends laughing while they set his wool cap on fire.

Joel did not slow down until he was in sight of his house.

"Why me? Why does everyone at school hate me? Ever since Mark and his buddies went after me no one likes me anymore. What a bunch of morons!" He felt a hollow feeling well up in his chest. When he reached his house he fell on

the front porch sobbing uncontrollably. He felt there was no hope at all. At that moment all he wanted was to die.

For a long time he sat on the porch. His house was perched on the top of a hill, and he had an unobstructed view of the horizon. To the west the cloud front had advanced and exposed a narrow band of sky. The sun was starting to go down and was turning this sliver of sky into a band of fire. The intense beauty of this cloud-fire-land sandwich was not lost on Joel.

As he sat gazing at the sky his emotions dissipated and he was left empty and emotionally spent. The spectacular display in the sky had a hypnotic effect on him. His awareness was magnetically drawn to the river of fire in the sky. Soon, he lost sense of being on the porch or on the earth at all. The fire was all around him. He felt a tremendous release of pent-up anger and frustration. Just as he began to feel the depth of the experience, his reverie was broken by the sound of his mother's car pulling into the driveway. Instantly he was pulled back into the harshness of the cold winter afternoon. "Oh Joel, I'm so glad you're home. Let's go inside. I've got something important to tell you." Mrs. Harris walked up the stairs, unlocked the door and went in with Joel in tow.

"Put your jacket away and come down to the kitchen and I'll make you some hot chocolate." As Joel went up the stairs he noticed his mother's suitcase by the bottom of the stairs. He went up to his room and threw his jacket in the closet and went into the bathroom to wipe his eyes.

"Hurry up, Joel, I don't have much time."

"I'll be down in a minute, Mom. I have to go to the bathroom."

When he got downstairs his mother handed him a steaming mug of hot cocoa. "Sit down, Joel. I have some bad news to tell you. Grampa is in the hospital, he had stroke today. I want you to be prepared for the worst. The doctors said he would probably not make it." Joel felt his stomach fill with molten lead. Gramps was the only person that Joel felt comfortable enough with to talk about his problems in school. The long walks they had taken together were what had held Joel together. Joel felt his life come crashing down around him.

I'm flying out to Oregon tonight. I've got a flight out of Kennedy. I want you to stay here and watch the house. I called your father and he will come and take care of you."

"But Mom, I want to go with you. I love Grampa a lot and I really want to see him."

"I'm sorry Joel, but it's too late. I've already bought the ticket and I have to leave now. Besides, I'll probably be out there for at least a week, maybe more, and you have to go to school. Your father will be over about 8:00 tonight. Now, come and give me a hug. I have to go."

Joel walked over and gave his mother a half-hearted hug. "Give Gramps my love, O.K.?" Joel said as he wiped the tears from his eyes.

"That's a good boy. I'll try and get back as soon as possible. In the meantime, keep your chin up and do well on your exams next week. I love you and remember to do what your father says." She picked up her suitcase and walked out the front door.

Stunned, Joel sat on the sofa in the living room. Everything was happening so fast. His head was spinning from the shock. Was Gramps going to die? He had seemed so full of life this past summer when Joel had gone out to see him.

It had been the best experience of Joel's life. Gramps lived in a beautiful little town called Dancing Brook. It was nestled away in a tranquil valley in the midst of a redwood forest in central Oregon. Life was slow and easy there. No one rushed, people took things as they came and never took life too seriously. What a great change it was from the shopping malls and parking lots of Stamford.

Joel's Grandfather had taught English at Stamford H.S. for over thirty years. He had been much loved by the students for his unconventional style of teaching. His favorite course was creative writing. He told Joel that he liked to think of himself as a gardener and children's minds as his garden.

Each year his students would put on the school's Festival of The Mind. This was a big, open celebration of creativity. Each year's festival theme was decided on by the students. They did plays, poetry readings, puppet shows, animations. The older kids even did films. Gramps allowed the kid's imaginations to bloom by giving them the freedom to work on what interested them the most, something that many teachers wouldn't do.

When Gramma died three years ago, Gramps retired and went touring all over the United States, and he finally settled down in Dancing Brook. He loved that area more than any other place he had been. "Sacred" was the word he used in describing the country there.

The thought of life without his grandfather terrified Joel. Moving into the living room he plunked himself down and turned the TV on. Joel watched without seeing, lost in comforting memories of his Gramps.

The clean smell of the air and earth is what struck him first. It was the last day of his vacation and they had decided to go for a walk to the river. Joel had a strong feeling of warmth and security walking beside his grandfather. The leaves on the tremendous trees fractured the sunlight and made it come alive. Joel felt as if they were walking through a living energy field. They wound their way down the side of the valley. Soon they were passing through a very pleasant meadow. Ahead Gramps pointed out a family of rabbits munching on some clover under an old oak tree. Before long they reached the river.

Gramps sat down with his back against a tree and Joel sat down next to him. "I love this place, Gramps. How did you ever find it?"

"That's a very good question, Joel. Sometimes I think that this land found me. After your Grandmother died I went through a deep, black depression." Gramps paused and shook his head. "I didn't feel I could continue life without her. So I started traveling, not to get somewhere but to get away from myself. Along the way I felt something pulling me to this part of the country. Perhaps it was my guardian angel that led me here. Do you think so? I don't know how or why, but I am eternally grateful for finding this place. It has had the most remarkable effect on me. I've. . ."

Brrrrriinnnggg.....Brrrrriinnnggg..... The phone ringing exploded the image of Gramps like a pin-prick to a balloon. Startled, Joel reflexively snatched the phone up.

"Hello!" Joel blurted.

"Hi, Joel, this is Dad. Terrible about your grandfather. What a shame. But you know he was getting up in years and you can't expect him to hang around forever."

A bolt of hot anger flashed through Joel's body. "What are you saying?? He's not dead yet, is he? You're talking like he's dead!!"

"Calm down Joel, I didn't mean to upset you but I'm trying to be realistic. I never realized you were so attached to the old man."

"There's a lot of things you never realized about me."

"I'm sorry Joel. The reason I called was to tell you that I'm not going to be over until late tonight. I probably won't get there until after midnight. Can you cook a frozen dinner tonight?"

"Yeah, sure, no problem."

"Great. Take it easy, I'll see you later, bye."

"OK, bye." Joel slammed the phone down so hard it slid off the table and crashed to the floor.

"I hate him, God I hate him so much." Joel buried his face into the sofa and cried for along time.

Scruffy the cat came prancing into the room, jumped up on the sofa and started licking Joel's face. Come on buddy boy get up and feed me. Joel rolled over and Scruffy started licking him on the mouth.

"Phewy, stop it, you dumb cat." Joel picked up the cat and rubbed him behind the ears as he carried him to the kitchen.

"Oh boy, Scruffy, I've got some scrumptious Super-Supper for you." Joel hated the smell of the stuff, so he breathed through his mouth as he spooned the food into a dish. Scruffy purred contentedly and rubbed against his leg.

"Well, it's nice to see someone appreciates me."

Joel went back into the living room and started flicking through the TV stations. Twenty years of entertainment value flashed before his eyes. Gilligan's Island, The Monkees, The Brady Bunch, The Dukes of Hazard, The A Team; nothing held his interest for more than five minutes. Scruffy appeared and jumped up on his lap. How nice it was to have a warm, furry, fuzzball to cuddle up with at times like this.

"Hey, Scruffy, old boy, what do you say we go curl up in a warm bed?" The cat let out a loud meow. "Ah I'm glad you agree. Lets go."

When they got into his room Joel tossed the cat on the bed and stripped off his clothes. He turned the light off and climbed between the sheets. He piled the pillows around his head. He never felt comfortable with less than three pillows around him. Scruffy curled up next to him and was purring softly.

Joel fell into a deep, dreamless sleep. About two in the morning the sound of his father closing the bathroom door woke him up. "Oh great! Now I probably won't be able to get back to sleep and I'll feel miserable tomorrow." Joel thought.

He lay back in bed and started counting sheep. "One hundred, ninety-nine, ninety-eight, ninety-seven..." When he was down to sixty-three sheep he had stopped counting and was drifting into that pleasant state of awareness between waking and sleeping. He lost all sensation of his body. As he lay there he began to sense that there was someone in the room with him. He did not feel scared at all. On the contrary he felt a deep sense of security and also a bit of curiosity. He opened his eyes and felt a tremendous surge of warmth flow through his body. At the foot of his bed was his grandfather looking better than he had in years.

"I love you very much, Joel. I've come to take you on a journey." His grandfather did not communicate with words but seemed to place the ideas directly into Joel's mind.

"Close your eyes. You'll feel a little strange for a few seconds, but it will pass and then you will be able to come with me." He moved to the side of the bed and put his right hand on Joel's forehead and his left hand over Joel's heart. Joel felt energy flow through his chest and out through his forehead. It was a tingling electrical sensation that stimulated every nerve in his body. Next Gramps moved both hands over Joel's body, starting at his head and going down to his feet and back to his head again. As he did this, Joel felt a vibration move from his head to his toes and back to his head. Soon his whole body began to oscillate.

Joel felt Gramps' hands slip under his body and pick him up off the bed. "Now, that wasn't that bad, was it?"

Joel didn't respond, he was too enthralled by the incredible feeling of freedom he was experiencing. He felt truly alive for the first time in his life. Not realizing what was happening, he floated up and touched the ceiling with his head. Perplexed, he looked down and saw his body still under the covers in his bed. A wave of fear washed

over him. He felt as if he had been submerged in water that was very cold and very deep. The paralyzing fear of the unknown gripped him.

Quickly Gramps glided up to him. Glowing brightly, Gramps seemed to expand and envelope Joel. Instantly Joel felt very warm, secure and peaceful. He felt his fear dissolve as his grandfather's love flowed through his entire being. Gramps slowly let go of Joel. Joel looked at his grandfather, who was glowing a brilliant bluish white, and thought how beautiful he appeared.

(Why, thank you Joel, you don't look so bad yourself.)

(That's incredible, You could actually hear me think. What's happened to me? I don't understand any of this.)

(You have just separated from your body, that's all, pretty common stuff, actually.)

(Separated from my body??)

(Yes, Joel, this is your true self.)

(But what if I can't get back in, what if I get lost and can't find it again?)

(Don't worry, take a look behind you.) Joel turned around and saw a thin, flexible, silver cord connected to his forehead on his body. He ran his hand over his back and felt it where it was attached to his "true self" between his shoulder blades. He took a closer look at himself. His "true self" looked very much like his old body with the exception that he was a pure white and glowed brightly.

(Wow! This is really neat, Gramps. How can I stop moving? I seem to keep drifting into the ceiling.)

(It's very simple. Just think of where you want to go and you will find yourself starting to go at direction. Go on and practice a little.)

Joel got the hang of it and was soon soaring back and forth across the room. He got a little wild and flew through the bedroom door. Experimenting, he slowly moved through the door so that half of him was in the bedroom and half of him was in the hallway.

(Wow! This is really neat, Gramps.)

(Joel, you can also go to any person, anywhere, by firmly fixing in your mind an image of the essence of the person. Want to give it a try?)

(Sure. This should be a lot of fun.)

(OK, You're going to do all the work and I'm going to tag along. What d'ya say we check up on your mom and see how she's doing?)

(Sounds great. Now what do I have to do?)

Think about your mother, her true self, and think of yourself with her. That's all there is to it. Don't worry about me, I'll be right beside you the whole time.)

Joel focused his concentration on his mother. After he had a clear picture of her in his mind, he thought about being with her wherever she was at that moment. The room dissolved in a swirling darkness and Joel felt himself rushing at great speed toward his mother. Suddenly he broke through into a room flooded with harsh, white lights. He was near the ceiling, looking down. He saw his mom talking to a nurse. His sight and hearing were incredibly sharp and he could see and hear everything that was happening.

"Sit down, Mrs. Harris. I'm afraid I have some bad news. Your father died. He suffered a major stroke. There was nothing we could do." His mom collapsed sobbing into a chair.

(Oh my God, Gramps! You're not dead are you? Gramps, Gramps where are you??) Joel turned to his left and with a deep sigh of relief saw his grandfather just as he had been before.

(Joel, it's true, I am dead. That is why I came to you and we are here right now. But now my dear Joel, it is time for the last and best part of your voyage. It is going to be the most wonderful experience you will ever have.)

(Where am I going? What's it going to be like? Will you come with me?)

(No, Joel, you must go alone. I'll be here when you return. Now, don't you worry. Trust yourself and everything will be fine. Are you ready now?)

(I guess so. Yes, I'm ready.)

(OK, now relax and you'll be there before you know it.)

His surroundings melted away and Joel was no longer with his grandfather. Totally enveloped by velvety blackness he sensed that he was in a tunnel, but he could not determine how close the walls were to him. He started accelerating through the tunnel. He kept moving faster and faster until he thought he had reached the speed of light. A pinpoint of light appeared at what seemed an incredible distance ahead of him. As the light grew larger he realized it was the end of the tunnel and that he was soon to be ejected into the light.

The moment came and he became part of the light. It had the most beautiful colors fused in it that Joel had ever imagined. It was golden white, brighter than the sun, though it did not hurt his eyes. Mixed in it were every color ever known to man and a few that Joel had never seen before. The colors sparkled and moved like discharges of electricity. He felt incredible peace and love and an overwhelming feeling that he had been here before and would be here again. This is where he was meant to be.

Joel became aware of other people here. He realized that he knew everyone here and that they knew him. He was lost in the pure joy of reunion. He was a part of them and they were a part of him. Everything was just one whole. Nothing and no one existed separately. He realized that this is the way it really was on earth as well. Time had no meaning.

Joel suddenly felt that his visit was over. He was terribly saddened over this, but he knew that his grandfather would always be there when he needed him. He was moving back through the tunnel again. Before he knew it he was back beside his grandfather.

(Do you understand now?)

(Yes, I do, Grampa.)

(I'm afraid this visit is quickly coming to an end. When you get back to your physical body, you will remember some of this, but not all. When the time is right you will remember what you need to know.)

(Will I be able to visit you again?)

(Yes. The light is now a part of you. You will find many wonderful things are going to happen to you. In the future you will become adept at traveling out of your body

and will have many interesting adventures. Any time you need help, think of me and I will come to you. Now it is time for you to leave.)

Joel gave his grandfather a great, big hug. As he let go he felt his reality changing again.

He opened his eyes. He was back in his bed at home in Connecticut!--There were his roll-top desk, the telescope he'd gotten for Christmas and right there next to him, his beloved friend, Scruffy, stretched, yawned and started licking himself. Joel looked over at his alarm clock and saw that it was only three o'clock, so he rolled over and fell into the pleasant abyss of contented sleep.

The next morning he woke up at nine. He washed and dressed, squinting at the bright sunshine. Then he went downstairs and poured out a bowl of cereal.

He knew there wasn't much for him to do now but listen for his father's voice and wait for the telephone to ring.

Christopher Rosing wrote this is in Psychology 293. He is in his sixth semester.

POEMS BY LYNNE M. VAIL

Renting Arcady

Slight vessel smiling
your Indian grin--
a good shove got you going
I shoved you fiercely

Naked, I knifed you
into the wrinkled blue skin
of Long Pond,
leaning defiantly into the wind,
that harbinger of lost paradise

Overtaking,
under the iron glove of reckless speed,
overtaking eroded shores and glacial heaps
I winced when the blisters came

You, little catalyst, carrying me
over wounding recollections of ancestry--
more than one dead Indian
more than one dead voyageur
more than one capsized canoe

October Rain

Caught for long moments in the endless intertwinings
of lost friends
of bitter gin

The deep chill
the falling leaves
we walk through darkness
into rain's common memory

the sweet rain
the warm waves
tumble down over our heads
we affirm ourselves

In the name of life--
for the love of a spirit
we cannot call to us--
the one named only
in the moving shadow of leaves
on your wall
late at night

Zen-driving in the rain

Night stood on your porch with me
while the sky swiftly fell
sticking to my shoulders
like cool leeches
and I felt cool
doing what I always said I'd do

Headlights shot
through the trees and I saw
my white self
for a second or so,
in the time it takes to rev
and shift

Night sat in the living-room with me
and I said,
"You know, if I could repaint my car,
I'd lacquer it even darker than you.
I'd live in it.
Sleep in it.
Use it as camouflage.
Because headlights point forward.
Not back."

Light called me into the bed
and I wrapped my white self
in dark sheets
rubbing off the touches
of tingling wet sky

Beyond the Greenhouse

They bundled us in thick Irish sweaters,
opening the doors,
releasing us with balmy humidity

We ran, calling out across fields
calling out our old names
the names they gave us
as we grew in the warmth and light

And our names,
echoing against the greenhouse panes
across years, through time and into sleep,
our sleep, covering as snow buries grass
buries dead falls and summers

Oh, children born of summer, taught to wear wool
treading the periphery of hard existence
tunnelling under snow

Underground, under the vestiges of death-seasons
flowers grow strong for their own sake,
refusing to bend under the shears of time

Lynn Vail wrote these poems as part of
Honors project for English 210.
She is finishing her eighth semester.

Moonshadow

by Wilkey Wong

SHE liked to be called
Moonshadow
And so she was.
I met her in Dava West
A shop full of linens
Silver and clay
Full of the pungency
of life
Bamboo and feathers
Textures of a soul

She was telling the woman of
A sunbeam she
Glimpsed falling
Through a rift in the clouds
So clearly her
Voice a whispering
Flutter of a snowy
Owl swooping
Her hands two
Darting sparrows sculpting
the air
Diving through a clover
Honey waterfall
Splashing opal
Shoulders

Wilkey Wong is a graduating senior.
He wrote this poem for himself.

Spider Music

Nicole Chaison

He holds his wooden mistress
horizontally,
he tunes her silver earrings.
Listen.
He strums
her stomach strings
a blonde tarantula
strolls
across her neck.

She frets, but
swoons
to his spider music.

Guccione

King of Bulls
King of semen.
Behind the lens
his shutter shudders.

Click:
breasts and other flesh
lipstick
lips and linen
satin and breasts
lace and lips

This pose.
That pose.
Smile pretty, breasts.
Lovely.
Page after page

and it sells! (lit
by the neon lipstick
of an unknown mouth).

Nicole Chaison wrote these poems in English 246.
She is in her sixth semester.

Under the Sun:
Reality in THE FAERIE QUEENE
and in HERO AND LEANDER

Pamela Gagnon

It hardly seems possible that the same sun which shines in "Faerie Lond" also warms Abydos and Sestos. Yet the sun is prominent in both Spenser's Faerie Queene and Marlowe's Hero and Leander. In each work, the sun reveals and exemplifies truth, but truth in these poems is as different as the qualities of light and heat.

Spenser's tale unfolds in a rather peculiar world. Faerie land itself--with its population of elvish knights, magicians, dragons, sprites, ladies in distress, and assorted monsters--comes straight from medieval lore. Ruling this magical conglomeration is a sturdy English monarch, while above and below Gloriana's court dwell an array of watchful Roman deities. What seems like a haphazard mix of powers is unified by a single overriding force. This dominant principle is Christianity. Elizabeth/Gloriana is the head of the English Church. The elvish Knight has a "bloudie Crosse" blazoned across his armor. Una is accompanied by a white lamb, the Agnus Dei of early Christianity. Even the classical deities are based on Christian models. "Highest Jove" is called upon as God would be, and Hades takes on the semblance of Hell when Archimago rouses "blacke Plutoes griesly Dame." This network of Christian imagery serves to unify the poem and to indicate its highest reality.

Redcrosse and Una are the chief representatives of virtue in Book I of The Faerie Queene. They are constant in their pursuit of a higher goal or quest. Una is the next best thing to the goal itself. She is the means to the ideal as the true Church is to Heaven. Hence Una is incapable of acting in a manner that is contrary to her virtuous nature. Redcrosse's main fault is his inability to recognize Una's nature once his passions are stirred. Though he doesn't lose sight of higher ideals--truth, honor, chastity, and so on--he mislays his chief means to salvation. Yet even when magic and his own dirty mind delude him, the knight remains true to the cross on his chest. He neither jumps on Fidessa's lying bones, nor is he charmed by Lucifera's court. Though temporarily blinded by sense, Redcrosse's faith sustains him, and his behaviour remains honorable. It is this constancy which distinguishes him as it does Una. Rain or shine, day or night, virtue is unchanging.

There are far more bad guys than good guys in Faerie land. Though each may be a facet of the same evil, each appears in a different guise. The first adventure of Redcrosse and Una occurs when their search for shelter leads them to "the wand'ring wood" and "Errours den". Errour shuns the sun, for light plainly reveals her rottenness. Though the monster hides in a dark cave, her true nature is seen in the light given off by Redcrosse's armor. In short, the truth is revealed by the light of faith. During the ensuing battle, Una cheers on her champion even as she warned him about Errour in the first place. Una tells Redcrosse the only way that he can conquer the monster is to:

"Add faith unto your force, and be not faint:
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee."

But Errour is a devious foe, and shifts to the form of Hypocrisy to waylay virtue again. Archimago does not literally hide from the sun, but he assumes the pleasing form of an elderly hermit by day. Yet even as a holy man, Archimago betrays himself with his references to "Saintes and Popes" and his "Ave-Mary after and before." These are the trappings of Spenser's pet Errour, Roman Catholicism. In the midnight hour, evil fully reveals itself, and, though Redcrosse cannot be tricked into unholy acts himself, the power of his own sensual temptation obscures the true image of Una. Redcrosse abandons Una in a frenzy of disgust and runs right into the arms of Fidessa.

Fidessa flaunts multiple clues to her true nature. She wears the miter and trappings of Popery, and, like the children of Errour, she blithely disowns her slain champion. It is as though Redcrosse lost his sight when he lost Una. The armour of his personal faith may keep him pure, but it alone cannot lead him to true salvation. Fidessa leads him to Lucifera's court where evil makes a continual but ever-shifting assault on the senses. Redcrosse may be impervious to these temptations, but can he withstand the treachery of his false lady? Under cover of darkness, Fidessa, too, exposes her true nature. Ironically, her unholy liason with Sans joy is as the "faire Sunne" to her, and she tells her pagan knight, "Under your beames I will me safely shroud." Thus evil twists day into night, and safety into a shroud. What good are senses in such a landscape?

In Faerie land, only Christianity of the Anglican persuasion is constant and dependable. That which appeals to the senses is in a continual state of flux. Like sensuality, evil in this world is equated with deceit and

changeability; only good is constant, solid, and real. The senses then become the quickest route to Errour. Christian reality is revealed by the light of faith, much as Errour is exposed by Redcrosse's "glistening" armor. Reality is also illuminated by the sunlight of reason. Reason is a gift of nature like the sun. Daylight reveals the inevitable flaws in Errour's disguise, but fallible human perception may fail to observe these flaws, particularly if it is blurred by passion and sensuality. The sun that shines on Faerie Land is parallel to the light of reason, and is a force for the revelation of truth.

However, by following that sun eastward toward Marlowe's mythological world, one may discover quite another function for Apollo's chariot.

Six lines into "Hero and Leander", Apollo makes a brief appearance as a suitor of "Hero the fair." He offers her "as a dower his burning throne." However, Hero is not tempted by the hot seat until Leander comes into sight. Before Leander is introduced, Marlowe has already established the context of his tale. This is a classical world untainted by alien lore or unborn religion. Unity is not a problem in this poem, for although Marlowe isn't particularly reverent toward classical dieties, he doesn't tamper with his material by inserting sturdy English anachronisms either. The focus of this poem is narrow and concentrated. Location, era, and theology work together to produce a desired effect. Even the seeming digression concerning Cupid's feud with the Destinies is tied to the rest of the poem by its theme. That guiding theme is the human and, according to Marlowe, super-human need for physical love. This is a far cry from Spenser's multi-layered, yet overwhelmingly Christian world.

Desire in Abydos and Sestos is not limited to mortals. "Venus' glass" reveals that most of the gods' activities are centered around the pursuit and enjoyment of sex.

There you might see the gods in sundry shapes,
Committing heady riots, incests, rapes. . . .

Unlike their alter egos in Spenser's Faerie land, the gods in Marlowe's world do not hold themselves aloof from human affairs. In fact, these gods are subject to the same frailties as humans. Hero and Leander are "strooken" by mutual desire. By the same token, Neptune is overpowered by his lust for Leander. Love drives all before it; unlike the Christian ideal, it doesn't sit around waiting to be sought.

While a foray into Faerie Land produces all kinds of nastiness, one would be hard put to find any villains in Marlowe's poem. Because even the most aggressive lover is driven by passion, it is impossible to condemn anyone within the context of the poem. Indeed the only thing considered valueless in this poem is virginity. Even glorious reason becomes subservient to sense as Leander constructs elegant arguments to convince Hero that "Things that are not had at all are never lost." Leander's arguments are so convincing that the reader cannot help but think Hero's passion is as virtuous as Una's incurable chastity. Desire is straightforward stuff. The senses cannot lead anyone into error, because the senses are all there are. Indeed, since Marlowe doesn't promote any "higher" standard of values, the sole justification for this poem is the sensual pleasure it gives. Not only the erotic descriptions, but the exquisite language and equally exquisite humor are the chief sources of pleasure in Hero and Leander

It would be easy to dismiss Hero and Leander as an exercise in fun and games, since this poem isn't weighted down with eternal verities like "The Faerie Queene." Although Marlowe's primary theme is love, which he supports with poetic beauty and ironic humor, all of these elements celebrate the impulse toward life. No lover can think only of the babies he or she is making during an act of love, but the end result of love-making is still procreation. What is more life-affirming than this? Even Neptune, who can't be excused by a desire to reproduce, stays his murdering hand for love of Leander. This, too, is an affirmation of life. However, the most powerful giver of life throughout the poem is the sun. Apollo's early overture to Hero is recalled in "the pleasing heat" that causes her first embrace with Leander to "scorch and glow". Once the lovers are parted, Leander longs for Hero. Her beauty,

Like as the sun in a diameter
Fires and inflames objects removed far,
and heateth kindly. . .

However, since they are separated, beauty "Burns where it cherished, murders where it loved." In the poem's final triumphant passage, Hero's blush is compared to the dawn, and it is Hero's rosy loveliness that summons Hesperus "as harbinger of light," and defeats "ugly Night."

The differences between Spenser's use of the sun and Marlowe's use of it provide a microcosm of the difference between the reality of The Faerie Queene and that of Hero and Leander. Everything about "The Faerie Queene" is the

product of intellect and idealism; hence Spenser's sun shines with the cool and revealing light of reason. By the same token, Hero and Leander is a celebration of physical love, and Marlowe's sun glows with heat as well as light in a frank appeal to sense and emotion. Yet Spenser's work delights more than the intellect with its poetry, just as Marlowe's work demonstrates intellectual brilliance behind its joyous sensuality. Though we would probably not wish to adopt either poet's philosophy as the sole guiding principle of our lives, still we must rejoice in having both poems to delight all our faculties.

Pamela Gagnon wrote this paper for English 221.

A REVERIE REFRACTED

Monica Lee Messina

My blue Pilot fine point perched aslant
Between thumb and idle index
Rests upon the middle - asleep
Inch-fractions, bare millimeters
above nude paper, the bland expanse
Unblemished boredom. It expects
The stain. It thirsts for an ink-bleed.

But my thoughts congeal at the tip.
Unquenched and unfriendly this leaf
Of wood-pulp plain blasts reflected
Lamp rays to pierce my glass smooth stares.
I squint and see my withheld wit
Substituted by new relief:
Beams through near-clear pen refracted.

Once white lumen on ivory sheet
Reveals now a spectral ribbon:
Threads of red, orange, yellow, green,
Blue, indigo and violet.
If pen's six-edged tube in discrete
Degrees rolls, color streams flow on...
Echo through one: the white re-seen.

The phenomenon inspires me --
Man as the individual
Is a spectral thread separate.
But rolled-woven amongst others
He slides in the beam of SPECIES
Now emerge thoughts transcendental:
Faith; the Spiritual; Man's Fate?

Patterns of prismatic pigment
Indicate rhythm quality --
The flux and reflux of our world.
Nothing occurs that won't recur.
Although changes cannot relent,
And we are doomed to vanity,
Fates exchange as species unfurl.

Thus Boethius found comfort
In the pendulum-roll of Fortune:
The unity of circles flexed
With the variety of change...
Ancient philosophic support
Of spiral-spectral sensation:
The eternal DNA helix.

Monica Messina wrote this poem in English 210.
She is finishing her eighth semester.

WRITING OUT THE PAIN

Jennifer Heuchert

In a play by LeRoi Jones there is a line that claims "if Bessie Smith had killed a few white people she wouldn't have needed that music" (Dutchman, p.35). If she had not had the ability to sing, her way of releasing personal pain, perhaps she would have killed someone. Or perhaps she would have written like Alice Walker.

Walker relates her pain (and joy) in her writing with an uncompromising honesty. She tells of a period in her life when writing saved her.

Write I did, night and day, something and it was not even a choice, as having a baby was a choice, but a necessity. When I didn't write I thought of making bombs and throwing them. Of shooting racists. Of doing away...with myself. Writing saved me from the sin and inconvenience of violence--as it saves most writers who live in "interesting" oppressive times and are not afflicted by personal immunity.

("One Child of One's Own", p. 369).

Walker also attempts to take on the enormous task of writing for those before her who were not given this freedom: "the agony of the lives of women who might have been Poets, Novelists, Essayists, and Short-Story Writers...who died with their real gifts stifled within them" ("In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens", p. 234).

Walker's sincerity comes through in her account of one of the most painful experiences a woman can have--the giving up of a child. In her essay "From an Interview" she relates her own experience of having an abortion (while in college) and the thoughts of suicide that accompanied it. She decided against suicide when the phone number of an abortionist was given to her ("Interview", p.247).

The abortion saved her. She says:

"I have gone into this memory because I think it might be important for other women to share. I don't enjoy contemplating it; I wish it had never happened. But if it had not, I firmly believe I would never have survived at all."

("Interview", p. 249)

Walker incorporates this incident into her fictional writing, most obviously in her short story, "The Abortion."

In this story Walker creates the life of Imani, a woman in a marriage that bores her although she believes her husband to be "the best human being she had ever met" (You Can't Keep A Good Woman Down, p.65). Imani becomes pregnant and she and her husband, Clarence, decide that she should abort. It is made obvious that the decision is much easier for him; they already have a child and his career is just beginning to take off. He is not capable of understanding his wife's conflicting emotions. She does not want another child: "If you've had one, you've had the experience and that's enough" (Ibid., p. 65). What she desires is more of an emotional effort from her husband: "She wanted him to want the baby so much he would try to save its life" (Ibid., p. 65).

This effort she does not receive. Clarence is patient and loving towards her but he will never be able to understand her need to have his participation in this act. He leaves her to get the abortion on her own; he is busy helping the mayor draft the new city charter. Walker is letting the reader know that it is a rare man who would leave such an opportunity to advance his career and go instead with his wife and give his presence and acknowledgement of her pain. Imani does make an effort to convey to Clarence what an abortion entails, but "there is no way to explain abortion to a man. She thought castration might be an apt analogy, but most men, perhaps all, would insist this could not possibly be true (Ibid., p. 70). Is it true that men believe that nothing could be that bad?

This is not Imani's first abortion. She had one in college, resembling closely Walker's own experience. Imani remembers it as being an uplifting turning point in her life, for it made her realize just how much her own life means to her. She was left with "a comprehension of existence that never left her: that life. . .was not a

facade. There was nothing behind it which used 'Life' as a manifestation. Life was itself. Period. At that time, and afterwards, and even now, this seemed a marvelous thing to know" (Ibid., p. 68).

Walker broadens abortion as a practice that applies to society, especially white society, in the next scene. Imani, on the day after her choice, attends, with her husband and her child, a fifth-year memorial service for a girl who was shot down by racists after her graduation service. This girl, Holly Monroe, was "shot down, aborted on the eve of becoming herself" (Ibid., p. 73) by people who were upholding the tradition of their ancestors by continuing the practice of aborting the land and its people. These people of the land were such as Bessie Smith and countless others like her (race not always a factor), who, because of this social abortion, had had to find a way to redirect the pain that had come from this loss. A way of coping with this comes from not forgetting, and paying respect to, these people, epitomized in the memorial service.

It is at this service that another turning point comes in Imani's life. She discovers that her husband and the mayor are discussing politics during the memorial. She confronts them with their loudness and they move outside, disregarding the service. Imani could accept the fact that her husband could not fully comprehend her own abortion, but not to pay tribute to the unborn child, to Holly Monroe and all she symbolizes, was unforgivable. For Imani, this act had ended her marriage. Clarence, again, did not understand what he had done wrong. His actions reinforce the idea that a man can never truly understand an abortion. The story ends with Imani in the process of leaving, the conflict still unresolved in Clarence's mind.

Walker conveys the thought that by not allowing ourselves to forget the past abortions, both personal and social, it may be possible to stop the present ones. Imani's chance of going through that again was eliminated when she told her husband to get a vasectomy or not to touch her. Following Walker's cue, it is possible to draw an analogy to society. Find the source of the seed that creates the need for social abortion and destroy it.

Of course this is easier to say than to implement. It would not be, to say the least, easy to attack the source in people who cause social abortions. Walker describes these people through her title character in her novel Meridian:

They seemed very stupid the way they attempted

to beat down everybody in their path and then know nothing about it. She saw them sometimes as hordes of elephants, crushing everything underfoot, stolid and heavy, and yet--unlike the elephant--forgetting (Meridian, p.112).

This seems to be a major theme in Walker's writing--not to forget. Do not forget Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Zora Neale Hurston. Do not forget those who came before you. In her poem "Remember?", she combines the past and present into one woman working for the future, a woman who cannot and will not be forgotten

I am the woman: Dark,
repaired, healed
Listening to you.

I would give
to the human race
only hope.

I am the woman
offering two flowers
whose roots
are twin

Justice and Hope

Let us begin.

(Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful, p.2).

Jennifer Heuchert wrote this essay for English 276. She is in her sixth semester.

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A Night at the Movies

by Michael Carr

Eating yet another kernel
stung my lips;
the price of gobbling
more than my share
while waiting for a seat.
But when I turned
to offer some
you were gone,
leaving me licking salt-burned lips
alone in a crowded aisle,
a single static sock
with nothing to cling to.
So I stumbled after you,
sneakers screech off sticky floor,
soda splashing seats.
"Sorry...pardon...'scuse me."
(Is that the back of your head?)
And I juggle paper cups
as I trip down staggered rows.
(No, it's not your head.)

Was it pausing over popcorn
that made me fall behind?

Or did I dally too long
to keep in stride with you?

Still searching heads for yours,
and still alone,
I wonder.
Have you saved a seat for me?

Michael Carr is a Graduate Student.

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