

THE

BAYOU

REVIEW

FALL 2009

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON—DOWNTOWN

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THE BAYOU REVIEW

Editor

Kelli Robertson

Layout & Design

Kelli Robertson

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Robin Davidson

The Bayou Review is a Literary and Visual Arts journal that is published biannually. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor. Submit electronic entries to bayoureview@gator.uhd.edu. Include your name, phone number and genre for each submission. Visual Art should meet the minimum 600x600px 300dpi requirement.

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WAS STAYING WITH ME, ALDING HEART, HIS EYES AND COURTESY FROM MINE. MAY I
LATER APPEAL TO BE WITHIN PRAYERS SO HOPELESS AND SO AGONIZED AS IN I
OURSELF MY THS, FOR NEVER MAY YOU LIKE ME, DREAD TO BE THE INSTRUMENT
ME TO WHAT YOU WHOLLY LOVE. JANE AUSTEN SHIPS AT A DISTANCE HAVE MAN'S W
ON BOARD. FOR SOME THEY COME IN WITH THE TIDE, FOR OTHERS THEY SAIL FOR
ON THE HORIZON, NEVER OUT OF SIGHT, NEVER LANDING UNTIL THE WATCHER TU
IS EYES AWAY IN RESIGNATION, HIS DREAMS MOCKED BY TIME. THAT IS THE LIFE
LEN. NOW, WOMEN FORGET ALL THOSE THINGS THEY DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER,
REMEMBER EVERYTHING THEY DON'T WANT TO FORGET, THE DREAM IS THE TRU
THEN THEY ACT AND DO THINGS ACCORDINGLY. ZORA NEALE HURSTON MY GREAT TH
S TO LAUGH AS MUCH AS I CRY, TO GET MY WORK DONE AND TRY TO LOVE SOMEBO
ND HAVE THE COURAGE TO ACCEPT THE LOVE IN RETURN. MAYA ANGELOU I WAS ST
UL, FULL OF A BABY'S VENOM. THE WOMEN IN THE HOUSE KNEW IT AND SO DID
CHILDREN. FOR YEARS EACH PUT UP WITH THE SPITE IN HIS OWN WAY, BUT BY 1873 SE
ND HER DAUGHTER DENVER WERE ITS ONLY VICTIMS. TONI MORRISON SHE WAS ST
ER, WITH A FRAILNESS THAT INDICATED LACK OF WHOLESOME AND PLENTIFUL NO
SHMENT. A PATHETIC, UNEASY LOOK WAS IN HER GRAY EYES, AND EVEN FAINT
TAMPED HER FEATURES, WHICH WERE FINE AND DELICATE. IN LIEU OF A HAT, A BAR
TEIL COVERED HER LIGHT BROWN AND ABUNDANT HAIR. SHE WORE A COARSE WO
OTTON 'JOSIE,' AND A BLUE CALICO SKIRT THAT ONLY HALF CONCEALED HER TAIL
HOLES. KATE CHOPIN I AM GETTING ANGRY ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING DESPER
O JUMP OUT OF THE WINDOW WOULD BE A DESIRABLE EXERCISE, BUT THE BARS
OO STRONG EVEN TO TRY. BESIDES I WOULDN'T DO IT. OF COURSE NOT. I KNOW W
NOUGH THAT A STEP LIKE THAT IS IMPROPER AND MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED. I W
IKE TO LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW'S EVEN— THERE ARE SO MANY OF THOSE OLD
WOMEN, AND THEY CREEP SO FAST. I WONDER IF THEY ALL COME OUT OF THAT W
APER AS I DID? CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN FOR THESE GRANDMOTHERS AND MO
RS OF OURS WERE NOT "SAINTS," BUT ARTISTS; DRIVEN TO A NUMB AND PLEA
ADNESS BY THE SPRINGS OF CREATIVITY IN THEM FOR WHICH THERE WAS NO
EASE... BUT THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY. FOR ALL THE YOUNG WOMEN
UR MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS, OURSELVES—HAVE NOT PERISHED IN THE WIL
LESS. AND IF WE ASK OURSELVES WHY, AND SEARCH FOR AND FIND THE ANSWER
THE KNOW' BEYOND ALL EFFORTS TO ERASE IT FROM OUR MINDS, JUST EXAMINE
ND OF WHAT WE BLACK AMERICAN WOMEN ARE. ALICE WALKER I WAS A BOY
O WATCH HER, MOVING ABOUT, THAT OLD LADY, CROSSING THE BROADWAY
HE WINDOW. COULD SHE SEE HER? IT WAS FASCINATING, WITH PEOPLE WHO W
ND SHOUTING IN THE DRAWING-ROOM, TO WATCH THAT OLD WOMAN DOING
GING TO BED. SHE PULLED THE BLIND NOW, THE CLOCK BEGAN STRIKING THE
AN THAT KILLED HIMSELF BUT SHE DID NOT PITY HIM, WITH THE CRYING
OF ONE, TWO, THREE. SHE DID NOT PITY HIM WITH ALL THIS CRYING. THE
LD LADY HAD PUT OUT HER TIGHT. THE WALL HERSELF WAS DARK AND
JUST AS SHE REPEATED, AND THE WHOLE SCENE TOGETHER REARDED
BEST. SHE MUST KNOW WHAT THAT BLUE CAT WAS DOING AND SHE MUST
ONCE MORE. SHE MUST KNOW WHAT THAT BLUE CAT WAS DOING AND SHE MUST
ONCE MORE. SHE MUST KNOW WHAT THAT BLUE CAT WAS DOING AND SHE MUST

...STORMY, SCALDING, HEART-RUNG TEARS AS POURED FROM MINE. MAY YOU
...APPEAL TO HEAVEN IN PRAYERS SO HOPELESS AND SO AGONIZED AS IN THE
...MY LIPS, FOR NEVER MAY YOU, LIKE ME, DREAD TO BE THE INSTRUMENT
...WHAT YOU WHOLLY LOVE. JANE AUSTEN SHIPS AT A DISTANCE HAVE MAN'S WILL
...HEARD. FOR SOME THEY COME IN WITH THE TIDE. FOR OTHERS THEY SAIL FOREVER
...THE HORIZON, NEVER OUT OF SIGHT, NEVER LANDING UNTIL THE WATCHER TURNS
...AWAY IN RESIGNATION, HIS DREAMS MOCKED BY TIME. THAT IS THE LIFE
...NOW. WOMEN FORGET ALL THOSE THINGS THEY DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER, AND
...EVERYTHING THEY DON'T WANT TO FORGET. THE DREAM IS THE TRUTH
...THEY ACT AND DO THINGS ACCORDINGLY. ZORA NEALE HURSTON MY GREAT HOPE
...LAUGH AS MUCH AS I CRY; TO GET MY WORK DONE AND TRY TO LOVE SOMEONE
...I HAVE THE COURAGE TO ACCEPT THE LOVE IN RETURN. MAYA ANGELOU I WAS SPEAKING
...FULL OF A BABY'S VENOM. THE WOMEN IN THE HOUSE KNEW IT AND SO DID THE
...CHILDREN. FOR YEARS EACH PUT UP WITH THE SPITE IN HIS OWN WAY, BUT BY 1873 SETTLING
...HER DAUGHTER DENVER WERE ITS ONLY VICTIMS. TONI MORRISON SHE WAS SLIM
...WITH A FRAILNESS THAT INDICATED LACK OF WHOLESOME AND PLENTIFUL NOURISHMENT
...A PATHETIC, UNEASY LOOK WAS IN HER GRAY EYES, AND EVEN FAINT
...HIGHLIGHTED HER FEATURES, WHICH WERE FINE AND DELICATE. IN LIEU OF A HAT, A BARE
...COVERED HER LIGHT BROWN AND ABUNDANT HAIR. SHE WORE A COARSE WHITE
...TUNIC "JOSIE," AND A BLUE CALICO SKIRT THAT ONLY HALF CONCEALED HER TATTERED
...SLEEVES. KATE CHOPIN I AM GETTING ANGRY ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING DESPERATE
...JUMP ON THE WAGON NOW AND BE BURNED FOR THE BARS AND
...STRONG. EVEN I TRY. I SWEAR I WOULD NOT DO IT. OF COURSE NOT. I KNOW WE
...THOUGH THAT I AM LIKE THAT IMPROPER AND MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED. I DON'T
...TO LOOK ON THE WOODS EVEN—THERE ARE SO MANY OF THOSE CREEPING
...MEN, AND I KEEP SO CLOSE I WONDER IF THEY EVER COME OUT OF THAT WALKER
...HER AS I DO. CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S GILMARTON THESE GRANDMOTHERS AND MOTHERS
...OF OURS WERE NOT "SINNERS" BUT ARTISTS, DRIVEN BY A NUMB AND BLEEDING
...DNESS IN THE SPRING. CREATIVITY IN THEM FOR WHAT THERE WAS NO
...SE. BUT THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY. FOR ALL THE FORGOTTEN WOMEN
...MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS, OURSELVES—HAVE NOT PERISHED IN THE WILDERNESS
...AND IF WE ASK OURSELVES WHY AND SEARCH FOR AND FIND THE ANSWER, WE
...KNOW BEYOND ALL EFFORTS TO ERASE IT FROM OUR MINDS. JUST EXACTLY WHO
...OF WHAT WE BLACK AMERICAN WOMEN ARE. ALICE WALKER IT WAS AS I WATCHED
...WATCH HER, MOVING ABOUT THAT OLD LADY CROSSING THE ROOM. COULD SHE
...WINDOW. COULD SHE SEE HER? IT WAS FASCINATING, WITH PEOPLE STILL
...SHOOTING IN THE DRAWING ROOM. TO WATCH THAT OLD WIDOW
...SIT TOBACCO. SHE PULLED THE BLINDS NOW THE CLOCK HUNG
...HAD PUT HIMSELF UP. SHE DID NOT TRY HIM. WITH THE
...WOMEN. SHE DID NOT TRY HIM. WITH THE
...WOMEN. SHE DID NOT TRY HIM. WITH THE

POETRY

The Jesus of Saint Louis Cathedral—*Michel Valentin*

(After Pushkin)

--And yet this great wink of eternity,
Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,
Samite sheeted and processioned where
Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,
Laughing the wrapt inflections of our
Love.1

(To the Late Mrs. Gay Cafée)

Through Louisiana's darkened city rolled
August's last breath of fetid summer heat.

Old Man River, his imperious waters splashing

Against the crest of either dike,

Tossed around in his ungainly ramparts

(A patient in sickbay thrashing);

Still dark it was and early morning.

Fueled by Gulf waters' warmth

A belated hurricane pressed

Her furious spate onward,

(Since Katrina was her name,)

Under the steady watch of the
High-Tech *panoptikum* gaze

(Satellite eye for a tropical eye.)

A fiery Russian Empress' name was it,

No less than that! And sure it was!

On August 29, it was written thatn shall over the Lethe break

And drown Memory Lane's levies.

And this was no *rosy-fingered dawn*,

Since it crept up like ominous thunder

(Announced but with such fury unexpected)

Out of Hurricane Avenue,

Where the flying-fishes play,

South of the Bermuda Triangle, far away.

She crossed the Gulf and smacked right into

New Orleans casements and sweltering squares.

Around Saint Louis Cathedral, with its arms-raised-Jesus,

In moist and anxious anticipation,

A half-deserted city

Had been waiting so sad, so strange,

Holding her mint-julep breath--

Uncanny prelude to an orgiastic collapse.

At eight o'clock that morning,

Destiny knocked

At the French windowpanes of the

Vieux Carré, with moaning driven

By dismal, demented winds,

Bringing the forgotten past back,

1927, 1965 and 1969,

The Great Flood, Betsy, and Camille...

The Bitch from nowhere
Raped the *Belle du Sud*,
From here to Kingdom come,
Twisting her lacy legacy in agony,
The wooden remnants of
Her Storyville's brothels,
Where jazz was born,
When America went to war.
The signs of antebellum gentry,
Twice gone with the wind,
Parleyed their *raison d'être*
With a wrath out of Africa,
In vain...
"Off with your head!" Katrina screamed
And away the tri centennial oak-trees went,
The beveled crowns of palms...
Look away! Look away!
For now Mississippi, his flow arrested
By the relentless sea-winds' force,
Reared up in fury, backward-crested:
All the low bayous drowned.
Tame that lawless stream?
Impossible, Mark Twain, laconic, wrote.

The storm more fiercely yet up-soaring,
Neptune and all the lesser gods

Goddesses, and godless gods, all
Engorged, with swell and roaring,
As from a cauldron's swirl released,
Abruptly like a frenzied beast
Leaped on the city, trying to shake loose
Cargo ships, oilers and tankers
From Old Man's supine, glossy spine.
Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne
Through engorged waterways
Leaped the old sea walls,
And the newer, small floodwalls
Turning New Orleans' freeways into spillways.
By unbinding Kali,
Katrina chastised Prometheus,
And a sea-sick Neptune
Vomited all over the parapets.
On Tuesday August 30 floodwaters
Swallowed New Orleans's three quarters.
Across Algiers Point, from Saint Bernard, to Chalmette and
The Eastern Parishes,
A whole legacy,
French, Spanish, Creole,
Cajun, Indian,
Octoroon, Quarteroon, Mulatto...
Went down the drain!
By turbid acidity whitewashed.

Everything maroon got marooned,
At the waters' onrush
All scattered, every place was swept
Into an instant void.
Swift waters crept
Into the deeply hollowed tenements,
Canals rose gushing to the casements.
People took to their attics,
Clawing through roofing tiles,
Struggling for their breath.
Beset! Besieged!
Hundreds died an ignominious death, trapped like rats,
Deadlocked, sandwiched between
Sheetrock and beams,
By surging eddies.
The pitiless surf water charged
Through window frames like robbers, loosened barges,
Perched ships on churches like *stultifera navis*,
Moored shrimpers on suburban villas,
Containers scattered like poker chips...
Backyard alleys became gasoline alleys.
People canoed on Canal Street or paddled down
Oak-mossy, dormant avenues
In refrigerators turned lifeboats,
Towing children in Styrofoam coolers.
In Gulfport, a floating casino took to the street

Spilling its dollar booty down the drift.
Cesspools emptied into madness
And madness ceased to be contained.
Crushed window panes, wrenched condos,
Stylar pavilions and stilted stucco,
Down go the bounty of a city.
New Orleans became the Venice of the poor!
Waters sliced into Slidell at 20 miles per hour.
Even David Duke prayed to the Klan's Grand Wizard
For the Great White Man's God's help!

(We'll see what will become of that one.)

Street-hawkers' trays, their covers drenched,
Smashed cabins, roofing, rafters reeling,
The stock-in-trade of thrifty dealing,
The wretched gain of misery pale...
Whole bridges loosened by the gale,
Coffins unearthed, in horrid welter
Floating down the streets
In stricken, appalling gloom.
People trapped by rising muck
Dying of over-exhausted heat.
All saw God's wrath and bid their doom.
In a city by horny and greedy bible thumpers
And Tele evangelists condemned,
And by all abandoned...
Carnival is not of God!
Sturm und Drang...

That fateful night, that frightful night,
New Orleans, derelict drunken boat,
Indifferent to its crew of landlubbers
Wanted to weigh anchor,
And heave ho against the wind
Float away, *Sail away...*
A crazy dream by all accounts;
A suicidal move by Golly!
A desperate act by all instances...
Since, on that Godless night,
New Orleans was windward,
And the Furies blew too hard on the coast.
Or, perhaps, La Nouvelle-Orléans
Wanted to disappear under the flow
And join the countless list
Of listing cities that tilted under the weight,
Of their pleasures, of their worldly intercourse;
Of cities gone under the waves, Mayan cities,
Ville d'Ys, Dwarka, Atlantis, Poompuhur,
Yonaguni, Port Royal...
Of whole towns that disappeared
Under the seas,
Countless eons ago,
Before our prime,
At an epoch when antediluvian times
Were but a dim souvenir
In the world's foggy memory...

Dixie Land is badly hurt,
Will the South rise again?
Will Jean Lafitte ever snatch up
Old Boney from White Albion's maw
In Saint Helen island?
Will Negro bands still
Stir white malaise up,

Jazz up

Black anger at
The God Damned White Man's World?

Old Man River, finally, laconically abdicated,
And Katrina her wanton frenzy spent,
After having touched down in
The Pearl River Delta,
At last carried her elements
To the Homeland,
Turning into a paltry tropical storm.

Alas! The worse is yet to come!
All founders, food and shelter!
Of course only the Poor are left
To their lusterless fate

(That's unusual!)

By the fat cats and the politicians abandoned.
Where now to turn?
That fateful year!

But here and there existential *angst*
Gave way to true heroism...
People, families, individuals pulled together
In the great American way, as during the Depression.
Local volunteers rescued families stranded
On rooftops, day after day.
By the end of the tenth day,
The Coast Guard had
Saved more than 23,000 people
All over the, by God and Uncle Sam,
Forgotten South.

Soon,
Crowds took over.
Power to the people!
Live on night TV,
The *lumpen* crawled out of the
Woodworks,
Straight out of a B flick
Or a Gothic movie,
Of the mortally wounded city.
Armies of the poor, the destitute,
Gangs of New Orleans,
All intermixed and
By Louisiana dismissed, and
The whole country forgotten,
Stood up to be counted.
Armies of the night

Zombies straight out of their coffins,
Mort-vivants, living rotting flesh,
Night-ghouls, living skeletons,
All the night-folklore of New-Orleans
By the hurricane's tumult still elated,
And by Katrina's sheer size and strength
Energized and zapped,
Carried on further

The plunder of the storm

Called out of darkness.

(Turn over Lestat, Mistress Anne hasn't seen nothing yet.)

Thus a *gangsta*

Came a-bursting with a vicious band,
Hand-guns in hand, hats on and gloves off,
Into supermarkets, wrecking, slashing,
Destroying, robbing—shrieks and gnashing,
Rapes too, like on T.V.

(I'll give you *Sex in the City!*)

Of teeth, alarms, oaths, outrage, roar—
Then, heavily with booty weighed,
Fearing pursuers, enervated...
Shot randomly at what was left of
The impossible community,
And pissed on civil peace,
In the heat of the night,
On the community at loose ends
At the end of the night.

The tides of poor, sick and hungry folks
Opened up stores and turned Superettes
Into kitchenettes and soapy operetta.

(Better than reality TV.)

Thieves homeward pouring
In the heat of the dead night,
Without stars, without shine,
Strew the wayside with plunder,
Adding to the flood's flotsam
The refuse of ransacking.
Flocks of crows...

While

Details of petit-bourgeois, like cockatoos roosted
On rooftops, guns in hand,
Cocked at the ready
Were practicing their
Second amendment rights,
Protecting their long-fought for illusions
From poverty and despair.

Meanwhile our famed sovereign
Still sitting in his Texas Ranch,
In front of a Satellite T.V.

(Watching Fox News, doubtlessly...)

Much later, finally,
On The Empire's throne, sadly

Did he appear, upon his electronic balcony
Thinking that for leaders there is no pitting
Their power against Lordly designs,
He ventured to say still later, meekly,

“I don't think anybody

Anticipated the breach of the levees.”

Then, later on, asked impishly

“What didn't go right?”

Unable to acknowledge,

And failing to explain

The man-made disaster

Which for so long had

Been waiting to happen,

And why so hard it struck

By poverty stricken, New Orleans,

Without adequate and vital protection

Left by the (ungodly) Right.

Adding insult to injury,

The Queen Mother, stoically

Declared later, chuckling,

That since Superdome's refugees

“Were underprivileged anyway:”

Things are *“working very well for them.”*

Tout va très bien Madame la Marquise, Tout va très bien,

Tout va très bien...

The Emperor's counselors were slow on the uptake.

He finally flew over the downcast and downtrodden
Drenched South,
His mien
All grief, while he sat and contemplated,
For all to see over the Empire Tube,
The fell disaster's desolate scene.
By the Media, followed, he peered
Into the squares to lakes dilated,
Debauched, like riverbeds inflated,
What had been streets,
And held a Press Conference in a Coast
Guard copters' hangar with the troops,
Baden Powell *aka* Florence Nightingale.
He declared the Gulf States a federal emergency,
Stating

*"It's as if the entire Gulf Coast were obliterated
By the worst kind of weapon you can imagine."*

Sadly, the Emperor had finally found
His W.M.D. for sure.
State of siege in a thrice besieged city.
Black Hawk militia, National Guards,
Homeland Security squads,
Patrolled the French Quarter.
The federal turned feral.
Orange jumpsuits on the Broad overpass
Corralled for the whole world
To see...

On days on end, under the sweltering
Sun, with no water or food...
Flawed systems, flooded jails,
Floating highways,
Forgotten people...

The Superdome still stood,
Leaking, Hot, Infernal, Stinky and Dangerous,
Like a lone, white cliff the waters riding.
In promiscuous proximity,
The plebes were riding the second hurricane,
An uncivic flood of dismissed dismay and stupidity.
But prodded by an ever-present spectacle
Televised globally,
For the whole God damned world to see,
The Lone Star Hero finally spoke out
For all Americans to hear and see.
And where they could,
By roadways near and distant gliding,
Upon their stormy paths propelled,
The Empire's Generals went speeding
To save the people, who, unheeding
With fear, were drowning where they dwelled;
With rack and ruin satiated,
Trying to flee towards liberty.

Lo and behold! From Superdome to Astrodome,
The crowd of the poor was relocated.
Then, was seen with what a strength and majesty
The soldiers of FEMA fought the ungrateful battle.

Epilogue

Tears, Idle tears
Tears from the depth
Of some divine despair...
O God! Please give the good Old
South respite and pride,
Testimony and some good, goddamned T levees
To New Orleans...

Since the Emperor has no clothes, and
For fear the South hand
The prized city
Back to the
God-damned French,
Before New Orleans is rebuilt into
A jazzy,
Southern Comfort Disney Land,
A New Orleans for a New World Order.²

¹ Hart Crane. Voyages.

² Imitated from Alexander Pushkin. The Bronze Horseman in Alexander Pushkin: Collected Narrative and Lyrical Poetry. Transl. Walter Arndt. Ardis Publishers, New York: 2002. 430-432; with also, thematic borrowings from Rudyard Kipling's Mandalay, Tennyson's The Revenge—1880, Arthur Rimbaud's Le Bateau Ivre (*The Drunken Boat*.) Song lines from *Dixie* and *Tout Va Très Bien*.

Thoughts of Her Unbandaged Reflection—*Luis Vasquez*

I witness a crowded cosmos

Titillating dirt and gas and stars

I grab the old light in my hand

I shudder. It's cold.

Titillating dirt and gas and stars

Hide the opaque planets, comets and moons

I shudder. It's cold.

My ship, my armor cracks open.

Hide the opaque planets, comets and moons

I break off in freedom

My ship, my armor cracks open

Sensing deep the perfect presence.

I break off in freedom

jubilant at my awakening.

Sensing deep the perfect presence

I witness a crowded cosmos.

Car Key—*John Gorman*

It rains into the sea,

And still the sea is salt

--A. E. Housman

If September 11, 2008 ever comes back
I'll run the car downtown to Multi-Level Parking
I won't leave it in the driveway
If September 6, 2008 ever comes back
I won't predict Hurricane Ike
will break up over Cuba
I'll turn myself into a sinuous
ridge of high pressure and *play* Ike
like a shuttlecock—buffet him back out (for once)
that narrow, tricky, all-water-no-islands entrance
down by Cancun
weave him through the Caribbean, then
Knock him north

Knock him north

Waaaaaaay north

(Yea me!)

Ike will rain himself out
into the chill Atlantic

Housman, that sad, brave man,
will look down from Atheist Heaven
--“Well, a *little* better,” he’ll mutter

And Galveston, its boats in the water
where they belong, its fishing piers bustling
streets dry, sidewalks steaming
will stroll, come twilight, under its woven
canopy of oaks leaves not knowing
how precious has been its accumulation
of clutter and habits, a tic, the odd smile
a structure of standing grudges
Not knowing the radiant luck of a simple day.

Alamo Dusk —*Lillian Thomas*

Flash-fire of the final rays
Flames upon the walls
As if the battle rages again.
Intense light deep-shadows
The seams between boulder and boulder
And the pits in these irregular rocks -
Until the burning source recedes,
Leaving the wall ancient again:
Softer, flatter,
Bluing in the dusk.

A pale moon, transparent as a shroud,
Rises above it,
Bleaching the battlement to bone
Under its luminous light.

Fence Making—*G. Mark Jodon*

We hand-tie the barbs
of anger on the steel

strands around our homes
twisting them tightly

with pointer and thumb
until our fingers bleed.

We strangely admire our handiwork
unable to understand or explain

our loneliness.

Night Sea Journey—*G. Mark Jodon*

When the Maker of Reservations reserves a night
sea journey in your name, you keep the appointment,
knowing the experience will be at your own expense.

How good to know not all storms are meant for you.
Sometimes the reservation bears the reluctant one's name
and your only job is to throw Jonah overboard.

Remember Noah? He welcomed the rain but he knew
it was coming. Even the animals knew!
How do you think he got them all on the ark?

Oh friend, how easy to walk on water when the crying sea
is the child you love. You can run a hundred miles
over the waves before realizing you've stepped out of the boat.

And who among you ever prayed for rain longing only for the water?
Lightning and thunder are not likely to give up their children
so easily. Sometimes the answer to your prayer is just the ability

to stand with muddy feet after the storm; and if you asked
for drink and were given stones, then tap the rock
on which you stand for water is closer than you know.

Witness to Ike on Galveston Island—*Lillian Thomas*

The rain in a hurricane
Is not rain, but an ancient glacier
From a bygone ice age crumbling,
Shattered into a billion pieces,
Melted by this raw energy
That is locked in every drop
And hurled with the roar of thunder.

Rain in a hurricane does not fall
Nor does it slant;
It cuts like shards of glass,
Tastes of salt,
So gritty with debris
It leaves me bleeding.

The storm surge of a hurricane
Is not a wave,
But a wall of water
That trumpeting winds call down.
It is a flood
Shaped like a circling maelstrom sea
Boiling over the brim.

The wind in a hurricane
Is not a wind
But the rage of Titans,
The scream that drives sailors insane.

The eye of a hurricane
Is not the Eye of God,
For it would be weeping,
No this eye is blind
With the fury of void and chaos -
Tohu v'vohu - the forces of creation
God wrestled into shape.

But remember when the tempest passes
And you return to your shredded home alive,
God rested on the 7th day and made it holy.

Save the Muse—*Dory Maguire*

Ancient Ancient sound
crying out of youthful fingertips
Running around scales and simple songs
doing their best
Giving their all.

Their fingers stumble
youth do not tread with dexterity
Fingertips have not yet gained
a fresh and confident agility
but also have not been filled
with limitations and preconceptions.

But if they hold on
if the children carry on
Soon they will be
the keepers of the song
It can't be called, or forced
Talent comes when it's due.

The Lost Village—*Nakia Laushaul*

The village is being pillaged.

We laugh from sanctified perches.

Holy art thou?

Generations march idly by

Lost.

Robbed in hindsight.

The village is now empty.

An Afternoon with Cy Twombly in Houston, Texas—*Laura Pena*

I'm sitting in the silent gallery
staring at the canvas, struggling to read scrawled words
the artist covered up with layers of paint allowing only
a few to emerge from the depths; *the birth of melancholy*.

In the quiet room I'm inhaling fumes
still emanating from floating mushroom caps
of red, yellow, pink, purple and blue.
The vivid splotches dominate my eyes.

I am in love with this 52-foot long triptych painting.
(Say Good-bye, Catullus, to the Shores of Asia Minor)
I repeat the ghostly words, etching them into my brain,
I'm dissolving into colored-whorls imagining this painting belongs only to me.

It's here for me to contemplate whenever I want.
Ragged boats floating with purpose to their
inevitable end at the edge of canvas, myth, life.
I'm moving close until I merge into white sail-cloth.

My head bursting like the mushroom caps,
my hair the tendrils of paint dripping down the dirty white canvas,
stretch marks on my body becoming
dark pencil lines telling the story of *Orpheus*.

How he risked going into the underworld to retrieve the woman he loved.
How he lost faith in the end and turned his head
just in time to see Eurydice disappear down the long
dark tunnel towards death once more.

I hang in the gallery watching and waiting
for the one who will peel away the layers
of paint from me to reveal my ghostly words.
My myth.

Pygmy Owl—*Laura Pena*

Small

Deadly

Hunter

Looking for food

Each night/day

I wonder

What does the pygmy owl

Do in its off hours

When not hunting

Or eating?

Perhaps he sits high

Up in his tree

Looking down at us

Wondering how we hunt

Our food

With no claws

Or a sharp beak

To tear away flesh

No wings to swoop down

And pluck out of the water

A tasty fish

We look at each other
Imagining what it must be like
To fly
To walk
Eat meat in a branch
With forks and knives on a table

To live high up
In an open tree
To live high up
In a glass and concrete box
Looking down
Waiting for our next meal

A Day at the Carnival—*Marco Graniel*

As a day of superstition and concern,
friday was nonetheless a day of highs and lows,
yesses and no's.
A few symptoms of such a day like a misplaced
Seattle sky and a fated Los Angeles traffic jam seemed carefully placed
In adding to, ironically, a feeling of displacement.
With the enthusiasm of Thai's comment: "I know we're gonna suck,"
came a reassurance of the inevitable.
For as long as I have functioned around a double consciousness
I've attempted to locate and surround a feeling of connection with what I pro-
duce;
and for as much as I've grown, or so think I have,
I've slowly seen myself get tricked by this other me.
The one who thinks and acts in another language.
Who blesses and dances.
Left and right, frantic!
I too have followed the beat of this other drum(mer)
but the bittersweet feeling of Friday allowed me to reintroduce myself.
While being a spectacle on a pedestal
I felt the legs buckle from underneath.
I felt the wood creak and snap as I held on to that
which made our worth.
I, he screams "Nobody could tell the difference,"
as we mock pretended in the allotted time.
Listen closely and hear dissonance.
The doubtful drummer continues half-heartedly
because in his own mind the wall is not up yet.
A wall that one day will become a fortress to trap his desire and forbid the en-
trance of acceptance.
The others are building theirs.
A bent string here.
A misplaced note there.
The reliance on a minor chord that still falls half a note too short.
A, B not even C could help us now.
All while being shaped by the noise.
That noise which is the byproduct of the lack of skill, the lack of ingenuity and
a special million dollar head. However unlikely this dissonance helped,
but only some.
Because it shifts the effect from undesirable to indecipherable.
As much as I want it to be.
The increase of delay, the decrease in bpm's,
all a facade for the sultans of cringe.
With their insides out and no outsides in they've all lost.
I am lost.
Now the Pendulum comes and oh! how it comes
while I wait for the enduring end.

DF—*Marco Graniel*

You arrive in the land you claim to be from and see the glass
Try to see through it
But there's no time for that.
Outside is what you can make of it for the next ten minutes
Maybe there is a cab driver that'll take you to the heart of the town
Through the veins and the smallest capillaries, bleeding to that one corner where you connected to the organism that may have once been yours.
Or
Maybe you'll take the subway and romanticize the feeling of being alone
(Last time you were here so was I)
Cherishing your solace abroad and forgetting/remembering who you are
I visualize the night grabbing you, taking your wallet
And you'd still idealize it because it was taken by your city
For your people
What is outside can never be determined though you slowly define it to fit what you see
The reflection you find so coincidental is really years of your construction.

Coffee with Buddha —*Sylvia Sullivan Villarreal*

Daylight flows around you like the cloth
that drapes from one shoulder and settles
under plump brown belly whose roundness
begs a rub. Arms pump skyward, fingers splayed
in full release of all that passes. Carved smile
so immense as to provoke its mirror image.

Light-years from icons of early memory
when painted figures frozen in blood and sorrow
bolted into shadowy knaves, gazed down
on kneeling supplicants turned in upon themselves
hunched over their pews like creatures
straddling passing logs in rising waters.

Images dissolve with the steam from my mug.
I smile with you, Buddha, about the place coffee
holds in my daily rituals. So we sit – silence
broken only by the calls of a mockingbird.
No agenda save to see that flash of fuchsia
on the bougainvillea, now opening into blossom.

Backyard Symphony with Canine—*Sylvia Sullivan Villarreal*

The new fence is higher, slats hammered
flush, no knotholes to offer a flash of muzzle
or paws scrabbling furiously in the dirt
toward scent and human voice.

Full throated woofs - so jarring in darkness
dragging us from sleep, replaced by ascending yelps
at any approach, mad footwork behind the barrier
dancing out your longing for contact.

I sit sun drunk on this cusp of spring day
witnessing a fruit tree, choreographed by wind
- bounty of energetic orange faces nodding
in my direction. Music from garden speakers

lays a feast on afternoon's table. Chopin's piano
concerto swells past other sounds, dims then quells
staccato of barking. As the notes sail aloft
over this fine stretch of fragrant wood

I imagine your alert stance; snout upturned,
head cocked, sleek body aquiver with attention.
Throughout, your tail pivots and sways –
conducted by an unseen baton.

Life in Four Scenes—*Sylvia Sullivan Villarreal*

1.

Her front window is clean that Friday morning.
Earlier, vinegar, newsprint and elbow grease
converged - old news absorbing old dirt
including the faint blob of impact left
by an off course mockingbird, flying
full tilt into the invisible barrier.

2.

Sirens outside. A phalanx of police cars disgorge
cops holding guns, stealthily blanketing lawns like crabs
scuttling over hot sand. A sharpshooter half kneels
in her driveway, eyes locked onto the scope of his rifle.
From the side yard, shouts and the thud of boots
meeting fence boards to create a passageway.

3.

Outside her view, the neighbor's son, long tortured
by mental illness. He sits where his car has impacted
the brick front of his home. Surrounded. Flight
no longer an option. Helicopters buzz overhead
she does not hear the report of the single bullet
he fires into his confused and weary brain.

4.

Yellow tape winds around the house, officers
all business now, weapons traded for clipboards.
Across sits the father of the newly dead, unmoving
elbows on knees, chin in hands. From the police
to gathering knots of people, a familiar directive
“Let’s move it along, nothing to see here.”

The Lake House—*Becky Van Meter*

we dipped our toes
into the Friday evening sun
sitting at the end of the pier
admiring the glow
from the industrial zone
and the orange hue it gives
to the water catching light

puppies raced
from room to room
through open doors
and open windows
candlelight
and lamplight
casting shadows
of wagging tails
and empty bottles

peering into rooms
admiring the history
of claw-foot bathtubs
and high ceilings
the hardwood floors
gritty and welcoming
to bare feet and bug spray

we played games
by candlelight
drank warm beer
and ate salty chips
listening to the wind
carry random tides
from miles away
to crash before our feet

the sun rose the next morning
in golden rays through clouds
seagulls and pelicans
sang with the breeze
through the wind chimes
the dew still marking
each blade of grass

as I left that morning
my car spraying up dirt
and gravel into the air
my skin glowed deeply
my lungs opened
and my smile led the way
back home

Crickets—*Becky Van Meter*

the crickets are out tonight
with their golden spring bodies
they flicker between
the concrete tiles
outlined in tar
made liquid in the streetlight
bubbling through the surface
escaping the heat of soil
burnt and sandy from drought

the crickets, concrete, and tar
shimmer like gemstones
wet from the evening sun
exhaling relief

Kafka: A Letter From Germany—*Paul Murphy*

What's on the other side of the mirror, Franz Kafka?

There's an alleyway, you hold your girl.

I'm standing at Potsdamer Platz and I'm wondering

What's on the other side of the mirror, Franz Kafka?

Is Franz Kafka here? Will he have sex later with Otto or Fritz?

Are you now starving Franz Kafka?

But take my advice: run again, then gone

Franz Kafka has come to lower the tone.

Engines of Compassion—*Paul Murphy*

O hear the engines of compassion!
How they were miraculously camouflaged
By a whirring net of barks, grunts, machinations.
How the downward looking devils who once were
Seraphim, Cherubim: every white-faced wandering shadow.

Hear now the engines of compassion!
The shadow but not the complexion
The corruption but not the night:
Has been here too, among the shadow dwellers
Other rumours of a massacre, or the mere sighs of a lover.

O hear now the engines of compassion!
Your apostasy will echo thus, be flung back in your face:
Now the night time is a beckoning glance
lover to lover or each to a dance
or to time, the very minute, or to silence

Or the past somehow now redeemed
O hear now the engines of compassion!

Returned Services—*Lincoln O'Neill*

Obsolete felt hats rested next to a corps' worth
of seven-ounce bitters on the Formica, surrounded
by walls with courage photographed and framed,

then one of those captured faces, now craggy
and routinely lost heaven-stared in crowds,
lifted the shakiest hand in the world and wafted

a faint breeze with the hazard of its swish
to pass a birthday card stuffed with a cheque
that was too much, but all quietly broke-down

with the lucidity of a rare account of the War,
the savage, his buddies, a precision,
in the final heat fanned by the last of his sun.

Harriet—Lincoln O'Neill

Died of heart failure at Australia Zoo 23.06.2006

At the Beckett adaptation we absorbed the encoreless
human puppets - arms raised, evolving
facial movements, heads falling, the strings,

then the one-shot musket hero balancing
on over-sized stilts approaching
a ladder to nowhere, surrounded

by music there's no control over. Upstairs
in another theatre, two Grandmasters
had completed three great moves

knowing neither can win, across from the exhibit
of the Galapagos tortoise that had seen off
Darwin and the twentieth century.

The Human Remains—*Lincoln O'Neill*

Like the Eastern Bloc philosopher
Who crawled under Soviet barbwire
Into West Germany, then via

Thatcher's Britain and a DC10
Landing at the base of the Earth
To tutor the Problem of Evil.

Now found walking the Lord
Of the Rings' Southern Alps after finding
A heaven through the backdoor.

The Virtuals —*Lincoln O'Neill*

As words on a restored great library – Alexandria's,
skipping a hair clear over concrete notion
to sneer the flailing grip of those lost

wandering through – the casual brain trade.
A spinning wheel seen to be believed,
a damaged kaleidoscope of empty.

Electing a quiet night in, with double spirits
and a satellite dish, under severe pressure
to smother sound with a delicate silence.

Yeti —*Lincoln O'Neill*

On the slopes of snow clasped hills, there's stalling,
a flake-laden coat, language from a purple hand,
fractured lettering, more picture than word,

markings unable to be read out along human lines,
elusive as that known only by a footprint,
then an echo taken to be a word – it's lost,

the hand moves again with the sun,
lifting the dusting on that wilderness.

Said and Unsaid—*Tendai R. Mwanaka*

We remember the uprootings
the tear trails, blood trails
blood stained ribs bleeding
short breaths-
of the dying.
This war nature
has not breathed
flowers into our hearts
but fiery flowering Judases
with a decaying halo.
De we always have to use
a loaded gun
to settle our differences?
What has been the price of the victory
if not sands in our hearts?
And if we try to sweep the sands
out of our dead hearts.
The dead of our deadened hearts
spits out goblets of blackened sand-blood.
Though freedom is a joyous thing
now it has a hollow ring.
The images within it
both said and unsaid that-
We can't abide a path
of least resistance anymore.

We have to walk directly into the unblinking
muzzle flash of a gun again.

The bullets zinging and zinging
through our bodies.

Through whatever little dreams
now left in us.

Dreaming—*Tendai R. Mwanaka*

Then I hear those bloody green bombers
pursuing me.

In the deep valley of my mind.

And my mind

scrimmaging through centuries-old
runs along, with my body.

Three steps into a motionless interior
before I am captured.

They beat me throughout this night
as they circle me

in a centuries-old spear dance.

Until the day-dreamer's blue hour
brought me here to this moment.

Cowards—*Tendai R. Mwanaka*

The brave ones did not leave
and they stole the show
waving to all from atop.

But we the cowards
knew it's safer
from the outside.

But when we begin to whine
of an ache, the ache-
a vibrato in the abysm
of this nothingness.

Wishing for home
we are breaking into small
drops of rains that
might be tears.

The brave ones have
merry-go-rounds
laughing at us the symbols of fear
cowards, cowards, cowards!

3311 HAIKU—Professor Catherine Howard's English 3311, 7:00 am,
Spring 2009

I

College has me drained.
Good thing I'm out of here soon.
Freedom comes this May!

My computer screen
is giving me a headache . . .
Time for vacation!

I can't stop eating;
doughnuts fill an empty void
in stomach and soul.

so so many words
remember them, I cannot
spring-break, hurry up!

II

a dripping faucet
leaks lazily into the
basin of my life.

rubber for my sole

put a dent in my wallet
black, blue, red, gray, green

lacing fine black wool
now combing through a course maze
the mirror smiles back

Quilted by green
Inside yellow like the sun
ears caught in your teeth.

disconnected phone
useless it is
but value it still has

III

tear running down
catch it before it tells
you try to conceal it.
black night surrounds me
sunshine so faint and distant
pain becomes my breath.

IV

A Winter Ride

Frost covers my eyes
Chains around my four feet wrapped
Inside toasty warm

Honeymoon

windows hang with dew
speckles of peace shine on him
today, now, we're whole

Anniversary

Fifteen years of wedded bliss
reduced to a
sixteen minute phone call.

Shopping

Early morning rides
Hectic throughout the day
Silence from the lot.

Tax Return

I received the mail
hurriedly I opened it
Uncle Sam loves me!

V

she got the new job

I put forth so much effort
overlooked again

I step on the scale.
It mocks and ridicules me.
Can this be correct?

with only one eye
the pirate is so angry
Arg! is what he says

VI

journey to the world
laces tainted by rainfall
time for something new

stand behind a lens
the busy streets of the town
paper color life

Professor Catherine Howard's English 3311, 7:00 am, Spring 2009

Viviana Barreiro, Donica Bennett-Batres, Donnica Chavis,

Gabryelle Henry, Paula Lawson, Marcel Martinez, Ashley Miller,

Victoria Morillon, Geneva Nixon, Jennifer Sylvester

PROSE

baby you save me — *Kevin Bicol*

"F@#K!!!" I shouted. I left my wallet at the apartment in Houston and forgot to charge my phone -- am I 19 or 91? I made the realization as my gas tank hovered empty, and the orange indicator had been on for a while. I was angry at my carelessness, but kept calm enough to seek a solution. I pulled into the Buc-ee's Travel Stop in Luling, Texas. The city... err town... uhh little community(?) was the only thing in sight along the interstate.

The first thing I thought was to use a phone to call my parents who were only 60 miles away. It would be the mature, responsible, adult-like answer, but I was only a couple of bucks short of a calm trip home. If I called my parents, it would only worry and force them to bail me out of such an idiotic mistake. I'd probably lose the headway I made in gaining their trust back.

So... I kept brainstorming. I saw a fellow 'strandee', an older Hispanic woman, who had taken my ingenious idea of begging others for money. Many refused to look this poor woman in the eyes, as I sympathized with her. She approached my car and knocked on my window, with a look of hardship and exhaustion in her eyes.

"Mijo," she said gingerly. "Do you have some spare change so I can feed my family?"

I looked in my console and realized I gave the last of my change to a homeless person back in Houston. The pain in her voice made me cringe, as I wasn't able to give her anything. Though I was stranded, I knew my situation wasn't even remotely comparable to this lady and her family.

"I'm sorry," I replied. "I don't even have money to buy gas to go home."

"That's okay, mijo. I hope you find a way to go home and may God Bless you." she said with a grin.

I turned up the volume on my radio, which was on Y100, a country radio station. It was midway through the chorus of 'Baby, You Save Me', when I looked back at Shaniqua, my guitar. A light bulb appeared

over my head. I quickly scribbled a sign on some notebook paper that read: STRANDED STUDENT. I used a shoelace from Gero's pair in the back seat to hang the sign from my guitar.

As "What Hurts the Most" and "You'll Think of Me" played, I finally gathered the courage to get out of my car, and I arranged a play list subconsciously. Caucasian country folk stared at this Filipino 'cao-boi' and his acoustic, as I made my way to the front of the store assertively. I sat down on the floor and put my back against the wall nearest to the gas station's door.

I tuned my guitar and warmed up with little riffs. The stare of onlookers made me slightly nervous. -- I've always been able to play in front of friends and family, but never in front of complete strangers! I started playing the melody to "Baby You Save Me" as a couple approached me.

"Is that Kenny Chesney?" the woman asked.

I nodded and mumbled, "Yes ma'am".

"Can you sing, too?" she replied. Almost simultaneously, the headlights of an F-150 shined directly on Shaniqua and me.

"There, you have a spot light now." her husband said as he chuckled.

I grinned, cleared my throat, and replied, "I'll try my best."

Tourists and travelers passed by with donations for our makeshift trio. We sang our hearts out, though off-key and unrehearsed. It was the best impromptu jam session in the middle of nowhere!

"No matter where my reckless soul takes me... Baby Youuu Saved Me!" we sang.

The gathered few applauded. I thanked them for their gracious donations, as some even offered to give me a lift. Their generosity was gladly surprising due to the current state of the economy. They showed me Texans are still Texans, a friend in need will always receive a helping hand. The economy will not change who they really are.

I was amazed to see my lucky beanie holding \$21.25. All I needed was 6 or 7 bucks for gas, so I gave the rest to the older woman. She was still rummaging around gas pumps, trying to find help.

I walked to her, gave her my hand full of money, and said, "I want you to have this."

"Thank you, mijo. May God bless you." She answered with a sigh of relief and a big smile.

Mommy's New Body—*Sarah Plum*

There was not a doubt in my mind that the shorts and summer tank tops would stay in the closet that year and get put into full use. I was no longer pregnant and I was ready to be a hot momma for the summer! However, that was not the case...at all!!! Looking back, I suppose that I should have expected that nothing would fit; after all I had just given birth to a ten pound baby. For forty-one weeks and two days I took complete and total advantage of the fact that I was “eating for two.” There were several occasions where in one afternoon I would devour a whole bag of powder-sugared donuts, and then call and ask my husband to stop and pick me up an Oreo Sonic blast on his way home from work. There were even times when I would swing through the drive-thru for a “snack.” One time in fact, I remember spending ten dollars on the ninety-nine cent menu at Wendy's, which is ten items of food ordered and they were all for me. Seriously, who does that? In my naïve mind I just assumed that after I had the baby I would bring her home and I would leave the fifty-two pounds of baby weight behind at the hospital. Boy was I wrong!

Although I am mainly to blame for massive weight gain, no one was force feeding me. But I do not hold myself solely responsible. There are others that I hold accountable for my bigger post-baby body! While I was pregnant, people were constantly doting on me. They would tell

me things like: "pregnancy suites you" or "you are glowing" or "you are just all belly." What liars! Perhaps they were just under the illusion that I was "all belly" because it [my belly] was so damn large that everything else on my body seemed relatively small. And with all of the doting and complements I was receiving you can understand why I thought that I looked great and thought that my body was handling the 3,000 calories a day diet perfectly fine. The responsibility for my large bottom goes beyond me and the aforementioned liars. I also hold my doctor partially accountable. She should have been a little more upfront with me about the things that happen to my body. Throughout all of the visits she talked about things that were going to happen while I was pregnant but never had any comments on my weight gain other than I was "right on track." I was on the right track to what? Becoming a contestant on the Biggest Loser? If she had cared about me she would have set me down and told me that I needed to put the fork down or tell me that it is not normal to gain that much weight. It also would have been nice had she prepared me for the aftermath of pregnancy on my body: the fact that I would have stretch marks that would never go away or that my body would probably never go back to normal or the fact that after you have baby it is even harder to get in shape because... you have a baby! A newborn does not allow you the extra time to go to Pilates! Having this information beforehand might have made me think twice about that Oreo blast!

Along with looking different, my body also now does things that it has never done before. My favorite is what I call "the after-shock." "The after-shock" happens when I make a fast move, such as hopping out of my car or running up the stairs. After I stop moving, I still feel the rumble of my thighs smashing together like waves. It usually takes the trunk-area another second or two before the rumbling comes to a complete halt. Where nicely sculpted thighs once were, cellulite has taken over. It is as if a sculptor has gone mad and has frantically chiseled dings into the backs of my legs. All summer I wore sweatpants with the hopes of camouflaging my new legs. (Plus, I refuse to buy new clothes with the hopes that my pre-pregnancy jeans would slide on at any moment.) My sister-in-law had the nerve to ask why I was wearing sweatpants in June, like I was crazy. I just looked at her, snarled and said, "Don't talk to me again until you have a baby." She, weighing in at one hundred pounds in her mini-shorts, how dare she!

I wish my new body stopped at just the bottom half, but that is really where it starts. From there we move up the mid-section. A new mommy favorite, no doubt! I expected, as I had seen on television, that within a few of weeks I would have my flat, defined stomach back, I mean Angelina Jolie's did. I believed that somehow my stomach would just snap back to the way it was; that the loose skin would just disappear...once again I was way off. It did not take too long before I

found myself in the lingerie department; I passed up the lace panty table which was my pre-baby favorite place to shop. I also passed the bras and the barely there, flirty pajamas and headed straight for girdles. As I was thumbing through the rack, I noticed an elderly woman on the other side; she was holding up the same girdle and commented on how supportive it looked. At that moment I thought that I was going to have a break-down in the middle of Macy's. But I sucked it up and figured if granny felt it was going to be supportive then I would give it a shot too. I purchased it, and the entire time I was thinking of all of the flat stomachs on the movie star mommies and came to the conclusion that: Hollywood is filled with lies and deception because the only defined lines that were on my drooping, post-baby stomach were stretch marks.

We finally top off at the upper-section of my body, the breasts and arms. This is the part of my new body that caught me most by surprise. I expected that my breasts were going to get nice and full, not huge and uncomfortable, and the thought of gaining weight in my arms never occurred to me before. I was unable to squeeze together the buttons on any of my tops over my enormous boobs and my bras might as well of just been nipple covers! So I was now wearing a bra size that I did not even know existed. I probably was not aware of this bra size because I had never shopped in the same bra section as my grandmother! On the outside of these uncomfortably large lumps were two

flabby limbs which are commonly referred to as arms. The biceps I once had dropped from the top of my arms and now hung at the bottom like a jello mold. The sleeves of my tops were now gripped so tightly around my arms that I thought I might actually lose circulation in my arms and they would just fall off at any moment. So with the fear my arms falling off and not being able to hold my new baby girl, I drowned myself in my husband's oversized t-shirts. This was not exactly the fashion statement I wanted to make as a new mom.

Coming to terms with my new body has not been easy. While spending the weekend in San Antonio with my husband, I reached my breaking point one hot afternoon while walking on the river walk. It was about 102 degrees outside and I was in my girdle and long pants. I was miserable. This was not what I wanted. This was the first weekend my husband and I had alone since the baby was born and I was going to die of heat exhaustion because I was so self-conscious about my body. Why should I care so much, he still thinks I look good and no one else's opinion of me should matter, right? I went into the bathroom at the Five and Dime, pulled off my girdle and threw it in the trash. I then went shopping for clothes that fit. Nothing on my body was like it was before; it jiggled more, hung lower, and was covered with stretch marks; and I finally accepted that. I figured that it took me forty-one weeks to gain all of that weight and to expect that it would just fall off in a couple of months was unrealistic. After finding clothes

that flattered my new body, my self-esteem was instantly boosted and I ended up having a fabulous weekend with my husband. I realized that I was my own worst critic and was worried about things that most people probably did not even notice, and who cares if they did? Besides, I had developed a new attitude about women with the perfect, tight bodies and that is: they probably do not have kids.

Choices — *Monique James*

“Open the fuckin’ door”. Four knocks echo so hard against the door that they shatter my heart. “Bang, bang, bang, boom”! “Where the fuck are you bitch”? Tears are streaming down my face. I’m asking God why is this happening to me.

How would you define life? More importantly why would you define life? When you feel that your life is moments away from ending you begin to question how you lived your life. To do that, you have to know what life is. I didn’t have much time to reach this conclusion, but I stand by it none the less. Life is defined by the series of choices we make. The better the choice: the better the life. At this moment I realized that I had led a horrible life. My choices landed me here, shivering in a dark closet.

I can pinpoint the exact moment I made the first bad choice. I was sixteen years old and we locked eyes in the middle of the mall courtyard. Admittedly, I could tell by the way he talked and the way he dressed, that he wasn’t my type. But, something about his deep brown eyes drew me in. After only three weeks of dating, I was hooked. I was addicted to him- in every sense of the word. I only wanted him; I would do anything to be with him. I would do anything for him. I literally experienced withdrawals when I was away from him. No matter what, I was cold and shaking until I was able to get another fix of him. Once I realized that I was addicted to him, I should have ran and never looked

back. But, we choose to stay.

Seven months into the relationship things were going south. He made me feel like I was worthless. He called me every horrible name he could think of. He told me I was never going to be anything. He ridiculed me for dreaming of having more in my life. I was living on government assisted housing, and I was tired of living that way. When I tried to go to vocational school he tried to make me drop out because he thought I was "getting too good for myself". When I decided not to quit, he started hitting me. First it was just a hard push onto the bed. Then it was a slap in the face. Finally, he began to tear into my flesh. Each time the healing took longer, not only because he was getting more aggressive, but because the blows were going so deep that they reached my soul. A pain like that takes awhile to heal. In many ways, I am not an idiot- I know I should leave. But, I love him- I'm addicted to him. But, more importantly, we were are about to have a baby. So, we choose to stay.

Baby girl number two has come into our lives, and now we are preparing for our first boy. Most people would be excited about having a baby, but I'm not. The food stamps that we have can barely feed this household. Too many times have we gone without water, toothpaste, deodorant, and toilet paper. I decided to take a stand. I told him that he had to get a job or he was out. Over and over again I pretended to break up with him when his temporary job didn't work out. But, true to form,

within a week I was taking him back. He would promise that things would change, and each time they did. Only it was for the worse. Our lives finally were catapulted into a new domain of low. He started selling drugs. I knew it was wrong. I knew it would lead to trouble. But, what else could I do. He was my man- the father of my three children. So, we decide to stay.

One day he comes home in a panic. He is screaming at me about how I have fucked up his life. He slaps me and I fall to the floor. He begins to pace around the room. He's almost in tears as he explains to me that the man that he sells drugs for is after him. He won't tell me why, but I can guess. Every day he would come home high. Since we had no money, he obviously was stealing from the stash he was supposed to be selling. I can see a tear roll down his cheek when he finally tells me that the dealer is going to "get" us. I begin to yell at him. "How could you do this to us"? He's in no mood for my outburst so he calls me a "stupid bitch" and punches me in the stomach. I run into the bedroom and lock the door. I grab my little angels and we hide in the closet. I can hear him scream, and then I hear a crash at the front door. Then it's quiet. I hear some knocks at my door.

I could reveal who the person is outside the door, but that's irrelevant. I'm at the darkest, scariest, lowest moment of my life and it's all my fault. This whole situation mutated from a series of bad choices. Now my children and I are huddled in the closet. My heart is racing so

fast that I can barely breathe. I have only one choice left to make. I choose to quietly hide in the closet to wait for the person inside my home to make the next choice.

A Tale from our Wandering in the Woods—

Brittany Bassett

Two

Despite the increasing darkness, we sought a need to continue our journey. Fingers entwined, feet crackling the dry leaves and twigs beneath us; we challenge the purple sky and its thermonuclear fusion. We finally sit; cross-legged, side by side. I see faces in the flames of the persimmon fire we sparked. I welcome them, knowing of its inevitable warmth. Not forever will the moon shine upon us, but shine upon us it does. Naked, in the sense of protection, we made our way through the rugged, hunting for a feast. Left our comfort for a chance encounter with a beast?

One

A ghastly creature towered above us. The dry leaves and twigs crackled once more as we bolted, fingers entwined. Seizing us upon a minutes sprint, the creature intended to kill. So it did. A gory murder I'm ashamed to have witnessed. My dear friend, a sacrifice for my own, now worthless breathing. It is at ease with a full stomach, so I make my way. I no longer notice the crackling, and my fingers are numb from the cold. Where to now?

Zero

Exhaustion overcomes me. This never-ending quest to find the land I was, in the beginning, trying to escape. Sweat and tears gushed from my face. There was no sense of fear, only determination. My legs ached. These shoes blistered my feet, so I freed my toes and continued. From afar, I see lights, oh so many lights. I hear noise, so much noise. It's a disappointing sight of freedom, but it's the only thing in sight, without looking behind. Perhaps, I should have?

Fin

Meaningful Meanderings in the Stream of Stein—

Lisa Day

I had my listener read the pages from 90-97, first to himself and then aloud; then I read it twice to my listener. I did this because, being familiar with the text, my read was more fluid and I believe the transformative power is experienced in listening. At least, that's how it was for me. I mention it now only because the discourse that followed was geared toward understanding the piece as "enlightening." Whether my idea worked or the piece, itself, worked its "magic," I'm uncertain, but my listener hit on the idea of transformation immediately.

I asked my listener, quite simply, how he felt after his encounter with Stein. He said, rather cheekily, that he would have to undertake Stein after he heard the sound of one hand clapping. Though annoyed at first, it occurred to me that he was comparing the piece to a koan. And in so saying, he helped me realize that, perhaps, we do not read Stein and *understand* as much as we *intuit*. In an attempt to understand "intuition," particularly in that it might reflect back on the relation between human nature and human mind, I asked the listener if he thought intuition might be more valuable than knowledge. He thought it might be, but that it is certainly not as valued as knowledge. He then remarked that if we could understand why, we might be able to understand the relation of human nature, which knows what it does not, and human mind which does not know what it knows.

I told the listener I was tempted to believe him, without further analysis, just because I liked the sound of that. And would that not be a perfect example of human nature - to believe that a succinct turn of phrase is true because it sounds good? This immediately led into discussion of the fact that Stein's work is not succinct, nor does it always sound good (though we both admitted in places that the childlike playing with words was hypnotic). After admitting that he enjoyed patterns and order, he asked, "If we are willing to know what sounds good, then are we unwilling to know what does not?" Remembering my first encounter with Stein, and others' comments after their first encounter, I answered "Probably. But I can't prove it."

"Would anything read in a chaotic form - say, every 10th page of Moby Dick and then when that is done, go back and read every 3rd page - have the same effect on the reader as Stein? If so, what would that mean for the way we absorb order?" My listener did not know, but believed that it would be *just* confusing - not confusing *and* worthwhile. I wanted to know what made Stein worthwhile for him.

The listener said he would not say it was worthwhile except for a tingling feeling he felt, like he was exploring an old stream in a new boat. "So, you don't think her work was original?" I asked. He smiled and then said that Zen had the corner market on human nature's relation to human mind. I then asked if he would see her writings as a

type of spiritual manual for the modern world, or if he could see Stein, herself, as a spiritual guru. The listener said no, explaining that she still had an agenda. I pointed out that every religion I know of, including Zen Buddhists have an agenda, but he maintained there was a difference.

“The difference,” he said, “is that appreciation of Stein’s work depends upon the reader already being disillusioned with life. She could not convert a content man.” I was left with but two thoughts: Who *is* content? And, in the end, we could all benefit from a float down the meandering works of Stein’s stream of consciousness.

The Apartment —*Vera J. Thomas*

The apartment, twelve years occupied by the Down family and one floor above the Martinezes, was, as usual, shaded by the long, white, plastic fingers of the vertical blinds which hung somberly still in front of the patio window of the living room. Occasionally, streaks of white light from the sun's rays penetrated through the slits between the blinds and pocketed short illuminations of light against the bottom halves of the living room walls. These small pockets of light were the best features the apartment offered to its tenants.

This particular Friday morning, though, presented the occupants of the apartment with more light than they had been accustomed to having. Today was special. It was The Big Day, an expression one of the brothers of the apartment named it the last time the family had decided to renew the lease six months ago. It was the day the daughter, Na'Zyia, had been waiting for since she and her family moved into the dismal space. She had been mentally prepared for some time now and was faithful to the ultimate success of The Big Day.

Standing in the center of the living room, Na'Zyia surveyed the empty boxes around her. They were too small and contained too many holes for all of the valuable things they would soon hold, but it was all she could acquire from the Fiesta across the street. The manager graciously directed her to take all of the banana and papaya boxes she and her family needed. He was always a friendly and chatty manager. The only white

one the store employed. His hair, although missing at the middle of his head, stayed slick and greasy around the sides. His black name badge displayed the word "Chuck" in bold white letters. Chuck had on a few occasions flirted with Na'Zyia. He always had some friendly expression to share with her and often hurried to bag her groceries when the time presented itself, but, at the time, Na'Zyia was only interested in the boxes.

"No time for regrets now," she declared quietly. She continued to count the stacks of boxes scattered around the apartment. There were eighty-one in total and they stood stacked in their designated places: four columns of five banana boxes supported the back of the sofa, three columns of five banana boxes stood behind the loveseat and protruded out into the pathway to the front door and to her mother's bedroom, four columns of five banana boxes invaded the kitchen space, two columns of five rows of assorted boxes that Na'Zyia acquired from various coworkers were stacked in each of the two bedrooms, and two columns of three miscellaneous boxes occupied the perimeters of the living room walls.

"There's not enough time. Tomorrow will be here soon and we're already behind."

Na'Zyia spoke to herself in this manner often. Sometimes she hoped this coaching would bring her some miraculous response, but the apartment remained silent. She had become accustomed to the silence in the past four months. Still, after so many years in the apartment she had not become used to its shadowy walls and ominous air. She had always confined herself to the living room, where she ate her meals, watched tele-

vision, and slept on the floor. She thought she and her family deserved better than what the apartment had offered them over the years.

All of the furniture in the apartment had begun to resemble the air it occupied. The couch had decayed so much that it was no longer possible for her to tell which stains were new and which were old. She couldn't remember if the carpet had always been a rusty shade of brown or if the color had simply worn over the years. She knew one thing for certain though: she was tired of looking at it all.

As Na'Zyia grew uneasy thinking of the inadequacies of the banana boxes and her family's lack of commitment to The Big Day, she started toward the bedroom in which her personal possessions rested but in which she had never physically slept. It had belonged to Abel and Spree for the first two years of their residence there and had gradually been surrendered completely to Abel, who was the older of the two brothers. Na'Zyia had no problem with this arrangement. After all, she had been away at college for five of the twelve years her family had resided at the apartment. This arrangement between her brothers had occurred during her absence and remained as such upon her return home.

She looked about the bedroom for what she hoped would be the last time. It was cluttered with her brother's stuff. He was a collector of things. Abel loved posters and pictures of dead people. He liked ninja weapons and movies and CD's and lots of games. There was no escaping the fact that nothing belonged to her and yet she had inherited it all in one day. As Na'Zyia reflected on these things, the phone rang from the living room.

"Hello," Na'Zyia answered softly.

"Hello, may I speak with Mrs. Na-zeye-ea Down? This call is to confirm the movers." The nasal voice of the lady on the other end of the phone shouted in a southern voice. She had pronounced Na'Zyia's name incorrectly, but Na'Zyia was used to this now.

"Yes, this is Miss Down. Yes, that is the correct address. No, I have boxes already. Thank you for calling. Goodbye."

Na'Zyia resumed her position amongst the things in the bedroom. She stared at them from the doorway of the room and wondered where Abel was and if Spree were with him. It's just like them to abandon domestic work and leave their sister to do it all. She laughed at this thought and grew saddened by it too. She was only one person. How could she do it alone? She just wanted it all boxed by magic without her having to touch any of the things in it.

The phone rang from the living room again.

"Now what?!" Na'Zyia complained to herself. She answered the call on its third ring and spoke to the lady on the other end in an agitated manner. This woman was not southern, yet her voice had a very slow and genteel sound to it. She spoke softly to Na'Zyia and introduced herself as a nurse from the hospital her father often frequented.

"I'm calling to inform you that your father has been admitted in the hospital cardiac ward," the nursed said.

"No, no, no. He just went to the doctor for a routine checkup this morning. Nothing serious like that," Na'Zyia interrupted.

“Yes, I understand Miss Down, but the doctor felt it necessary to keep him. His condition is poor. Dialysis isn’t enough for him now. You can come to the third floor to see your father and to speak with the doctor in room 3C. I’m so sorry.” The nurse ended the call.

“No, he’s just sickly and stubborn and difficult that’s all.” Na’Zyia shouted into the phone, but the nurse was no longer there. Na’Zyia returned the phone to its base and sat wearily on the floor amongst the empty boxes. “We just weren’t meant to get out of here.” Na’Zyia said in defeat. She lifted herself from the floor and plopped down angrily on the couch.

She leaned back into the pillows on the sofa and closed her eyes to help her see the past more vividly. She recalled a similar heartbreak four months earlier when the hospital had phoned to inform her mother that Mr. Down had suffered a heart attack while waiting for a bus at the station downtown. They had been in the process of moving then too and her mother had decided that it would be unwise to go through with it at that time. They could move later, her mother advised, once her father had recovered from his afflictions, but he never properly did. The Big Day would be postponed just as it had been twice before.

This Big Day was different though: Na’Zyia had acquired several boxes, confirmed the movers, submitted a thirty-day notice to the front office, and pre-arranged for the electricity, telephone service, and mail to be changed to the new home. Her mother hadn’t even done half of these things with their first three attempts. The only thing left to do was to

stuff the empty boxes with their belongings.

“I won’t go,” she sobbed, “He will not ruin me too.” She raised herself from the couch, leaving the pillows strewn about and faltering over one another. She wiped her tears clean from her cheeks.

She recalled her mother’s last words to her before leaving the apartment to visit her father in the hospital four months ago. “There’s always time to move child. What’s your hurry? A few more months won’t kill anyone.”

Her brothers had not wanted to accompany their mother to visit their father then, but her mother’s use of guilt to persuade them forced the boys in the car with her. Abel and Spree always had unkind words for their father. They often mimicked the ways of their mother. They dressed like her: a collar shirt, often red, jeans, and a pair of sneakers. They had her sense of humor: a dry, playful wit. They followed in her footsteps: if she went to the store, they followed; if she voted for a trip to Austin, they voted with her; when she went to church, they sat next to her in the pew.

Na’Zyia, on the other hand, was more experienced than her brothers Abel, who had not yet reached twenty-four, and Spree, who had just turned twenty-one five months ago. She was not so easily convinced by her mother’s guilt and, instead, remained at the apartment committed to the success of The Big Day. She wanted to prove to her mother that moving on was possible if she stayed faithful to the idea. Na’Zyia, deciding not to give into despair, delivered herself back into Abel’s room where she began to fill the empty boxes.

As soon as Na'Zyia finished packing all of her clothes, even those she could no longer fit, she taped them shut and was proud of her progress. She had already filled three of the ten empty boxes sitting in her brother's room. She began to unpeel Abel's posters from the walls; the dead wall she left untouched. She liked looking at the pictures displayed there: Jesus above Selena and Tupac, Martin Luther King, Jr. under Selena and next to St. Mary, and Princess Diana, James Dean, Lisa "Left Eye" Lopez, and Princess Grace created a square. There were at least twenty-five pictures on the dead wall. Na'Zyia did not recognize all of the faces. A stream of tears rolled down her face. They fell fast and furiously onto her brother's favorite pair of red and black tennis shoes. She wiped them clean with her t-shirt and knelt down in front of them on her knees. She could no longer make out the shape of the shoes through the haze of her tears, but continued to massage them with the t-shirt she wore.

After a while, Na'Zyia rose to her feet and left the room in search of her car keys. She snatched them from the book shelf in the living room and headed towards the front door. She walked passed her mother's room and paused when she felt the chill of the air escape from underneath the door. She reached for the rusted gold knob, which appeared to shrink smaller and smaller away from her hand as she approached it. She felt the door expand, as if inhaling and then exhaling a deep breath of air. She pushed the door open and felt her stomach knot and churn slowly inside of her. A noise from the bedroom closet immediately alarmed her.

“I’m going to leave this place,” Na’Zyia shouted to the occupant of the closet, “and I’m not going to let anything or anyone stop me this time,” she declared. She crossed the room to the closet door and folded her arms tightly. She searched the closet wall with her hands for the light switch and, upon discovering it, flicked it on with one finger, but no one was there. She breathed heavily from the excitement of the moment and her coffee skin showed signs of the chills upon her arms.

A faded, unframed picture fell from the stacks of papers on the dresser at her feet. Na’Zyia did not believe she had bumped into it, but perhaps she had absent-mindedly. There were three smiling Down faces in the photograph; all of them holding unwrapped gifts from five Christmases past. Na’Zyia picked up the photo from the floor and passed her fingers gently across the faces in it: Abel, holding his gift in one hand and posing bunny ears behind his brother’s head with the other, Spree, grinning innocently into the camera and leaning into his brother’s shoulder, and Mrs. Down, half smiling and sitting erect next to her boys. Na’Zyia felt her nostrils flair and her eyes burn with tears. She loved them just as they were in that picture and in the apartment.

The phone rang from the living room. Na’Zyia rushed to answer it, closing the door to her mother’s room behind her. She cupped the picture in her hand and pressed it firmly against her heart.

“Hello.” She answered out of breath, still shivering from the cold room.

“Miss Down?” a gentle voice inquired.

“Yes, this is she. How can I help you?”

“I’m sorry to call you like this, but I’m the nurse who spoke to you earlier this morning.”

“Yes, I remember,” Na’Zyia responded, agitated by the woman’s slow speech.

“I’m sorry to inform you of your father’s passing. His heart gave out half an hour ago and there was nothing the doctors could do to save him. I’m so sorry.”

Na’Zyia replaced the phone in its base and turned towards her brother’s room. She walked slowly to the dead wall and studied its occupants. She placed the photo of her mother and brothers, which had remained pressed to her heart, amongst the other members on the wall. She taped its four corners in the middle of the square of other photographs. She turned to survey the room. The small pockets of light from outside were already fading around the corners of the room. She placed her hand on the stack of empty boxes left standing and wondered what The Big Day would be like for her. She remembered the phone calls she would have to make, but for now there was sufficient time to enjoy the company of the apartment; its soiled white walls, dark rooms, empty boxes, and dead faces.

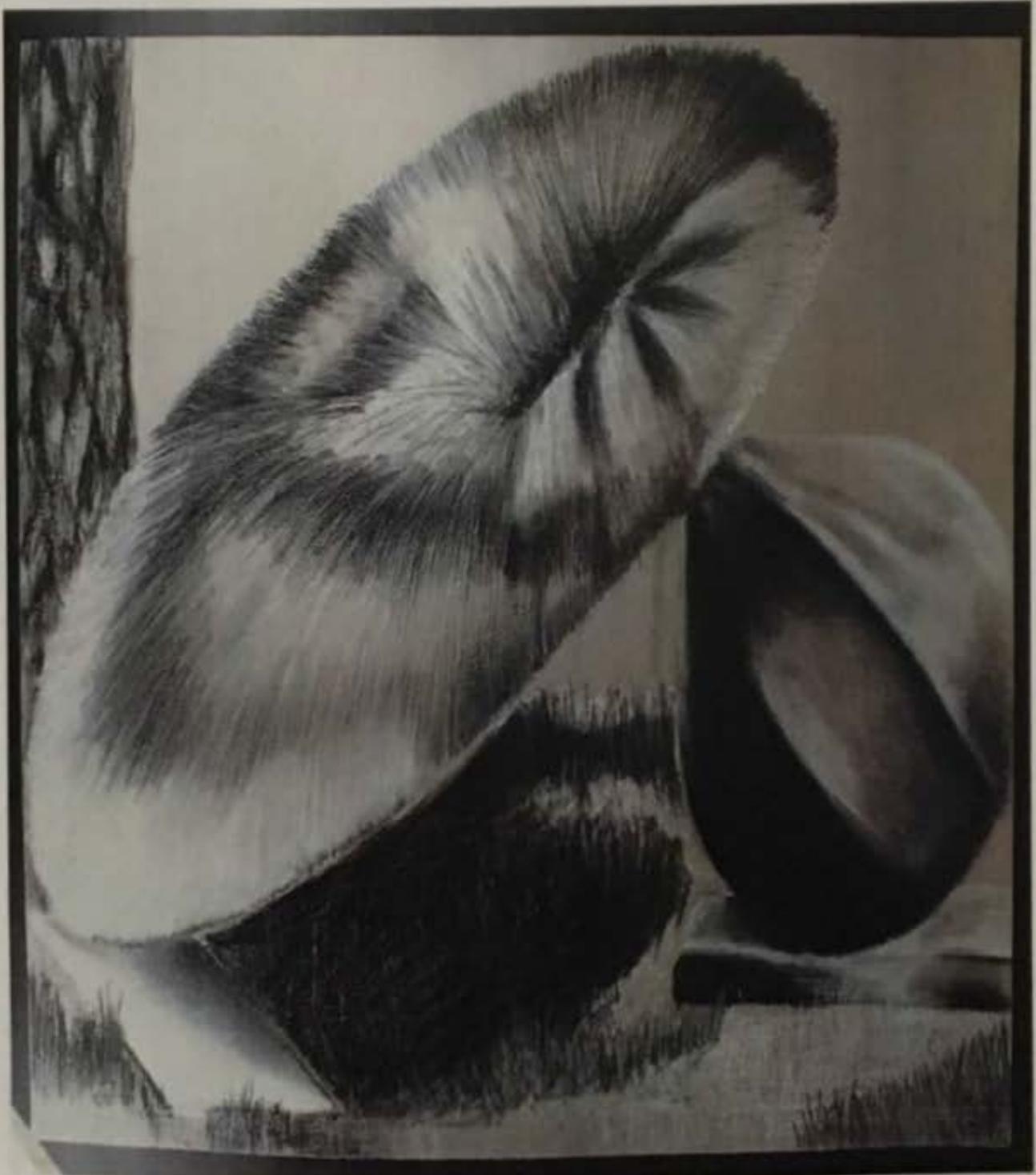
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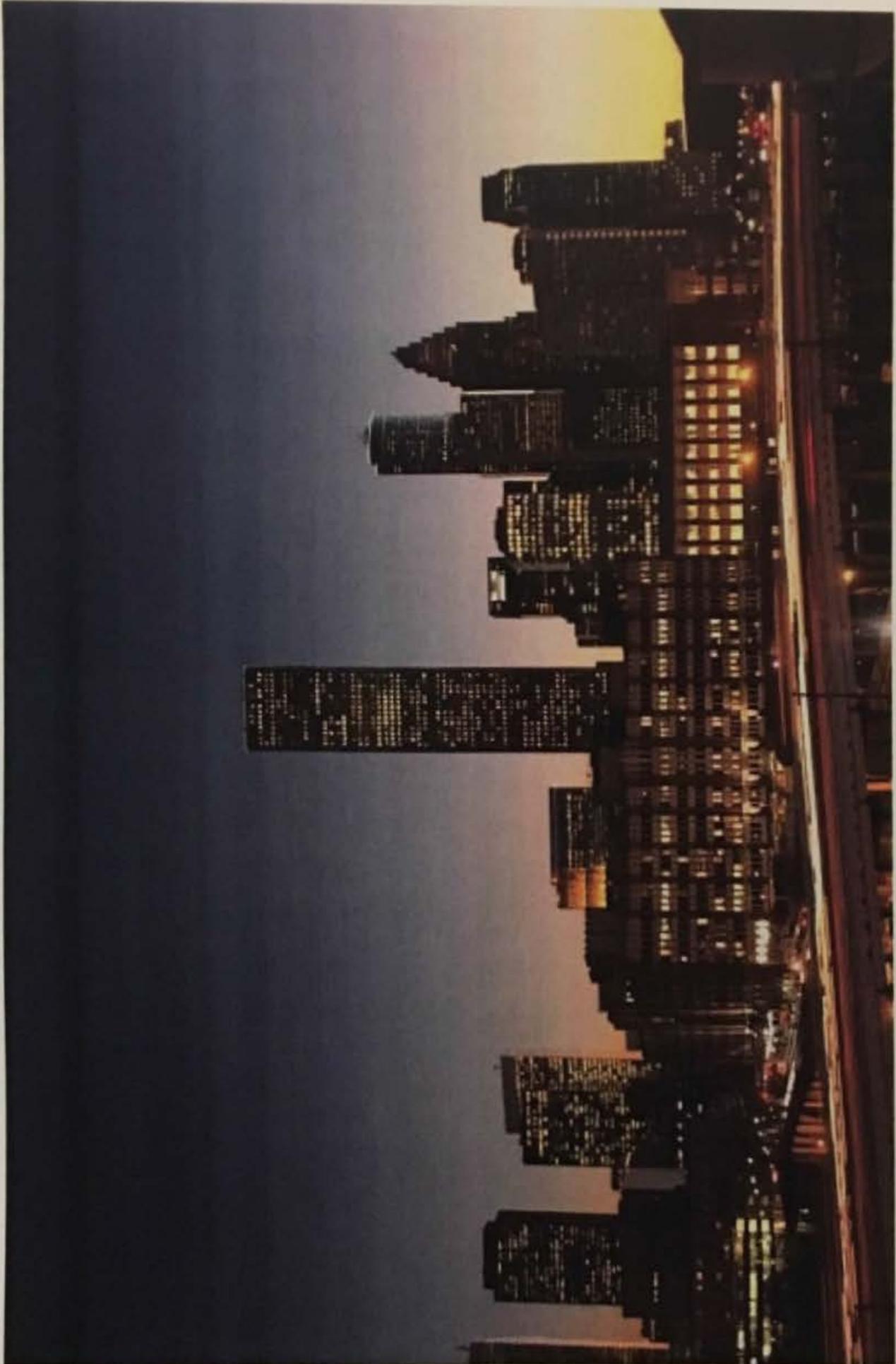
Untitled—*Helen Tsang*



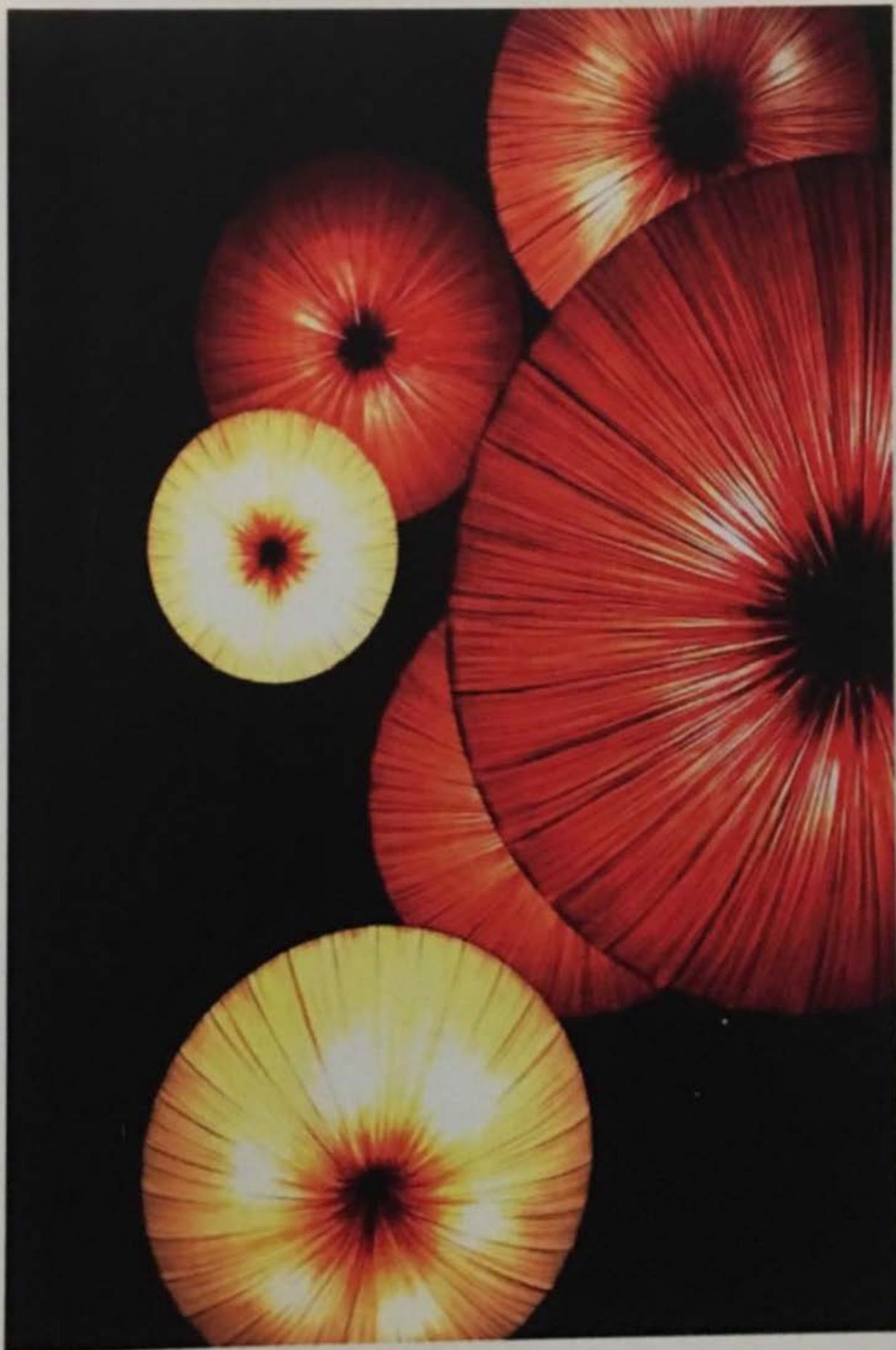
















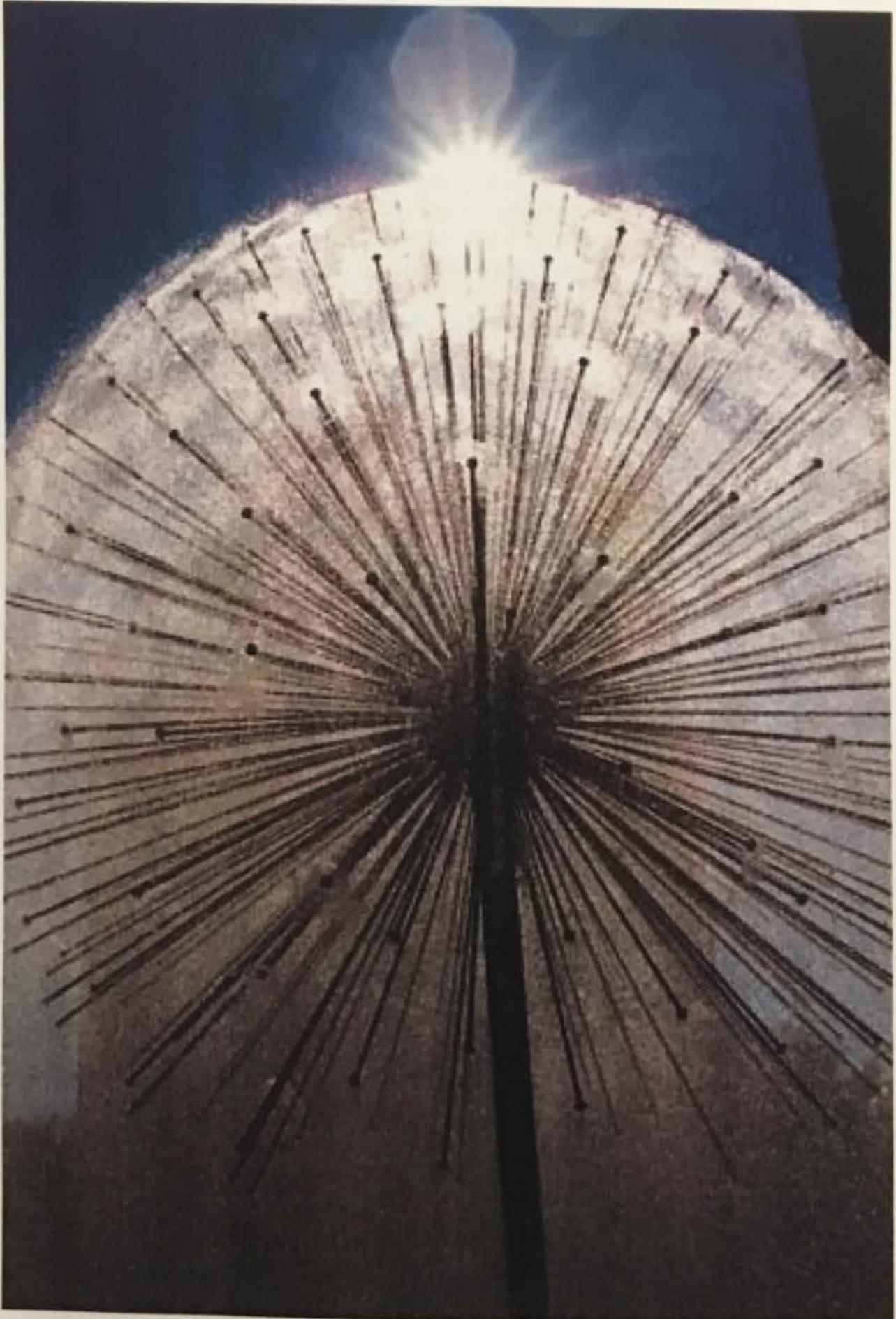












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NEVER APPEAL TO HEAVEN IN PRAYERS SO HOPELESS AND SO AGONIZED AS IN TH
OUR LEFT MY LIPS; FOR NEVER MAY YOU, LIKE ME, DREAD TO BE THE INSTRUMENT
TIL TO WHAT YOU WHOLLY LOVE. JANE AUSTEN SHIPS AT A DISTANCE HAVE MAN'S W
N BOARD FOR SOME THEY COME IN WITH THE TIDE, FOR OTHERS THEY SAIL FOR
N THE HORIZON, NEVER OUT OF SIGHT, NEVER LANDING UNTIL THE WATCHER T
S EYES AWAY IN RESIGNATION, HIS DREAMS MOCKED BY TIME. THAT IS THE LIFE
EN NOW, WOMEN FORGET ALL THOSE THINGS THEY DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER, A
MEMBER EVERYTHING THEY DON'T WANT TO FORGET. THE DREAM IS THE TRU
IEN THEY ACT AND DO THINGS ACCORDINGLY. ZORA NEALE HURSTON MY GREAT
TO LAUGH AS MUCH AS I CRY, TO GET MY WORK DONE AND TRY TO LOVE SOMEBO
ND HAVE THE COURAGE TO ACCEPT THE LOVE IN RETURN. MAYA ANGELOU I WAS SP
TIL FULL OF A BABY'S VENOM. THE WOMEN IN THE HOUSE KNEW IT AND SO DID
CHILDREN. FOR YEARS EACH PUT UP WITH THE SPITE IN HIS OWN WAY, BUT BY 1873 SE
ND HER DAUGHTER DENVER WERE ITS ONLY VICTIMS. TONI MORRISON SHE WAS SI
R, WITH A FRAILNESS THAT INDICATED LACK OF WHOLESOME AND PLENTIFUL NO
TIMENT. A PATHETIC, UNEASY LOOK WAS IN HER GRAY EYES, AND EVEN FAINT
AMPED HER FEATURES, WHICH WERE FINE AND DELICATE. IN LIEU OF A HAT, A BAR
IL COVERED HER LIGHT BROWN AND ABUNDANT HAIR. SHE WORE A COARSE WHI
TTON 'JOSIE,' AND A BLUE CALICO SKIRT THAT ONLY HALF CONCEALED HER TATTE
DOES. KATE CHOPIN I AM GETTING ANGRY ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING DESPER
D JUMP OUT OF THE WINDOW WOULD BE A DESIRABLE EXERCISE, BUT THE BARS
O STRONG EVEN TO TRY. BESIDES I WOULDN'T DO IT. OF COURSE NOT. I KNOW W
OUGH THAT A STEP LIKE THAT IS IMPROPER AND MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED. I DO
KE TO LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOWS EVEN— THERE ARE SO MANY OF THOSE CREEP
OMEN, AND THEY CREEP SO FAST. I WONDER IF THEY ALL COME OUT OF THAT W
PER AS I DID? CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN FOR THESE GRANDMOTHERS AND MO
S OF OURS WERE NOT "SAINTS," BUT ARTISTS, DRIVEN TO A NUMB AND BLEED
ADNESS BY THE SPRINGS OF CREATIVITY IN THEM FOR WHICH THERE WAS NO
ASE. BUT THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY, FOR ALL THE YOUNG WOM
R MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS, OURSELVES—HAVE NOT PERISHED IN THE WIL
SS, AND IF WE ASK OURSELVES WHY, AND SEARCH FOR AND FIND THE ANSWER,
IT IS NOW BEYOND ALL EFFORTS TO ERASE IT FROM OUR MINDS, JUST EXACTLY W
OF WHAT WE BLACK AMERICAN WOMEN ARE. ALICE WALKER IT WAS FASCINAT
D WATCHER MOVING ABOUT, THAT OLD LADY, CROSSING THE ROOM, COMING
WINDOW, COULD SHE SEE HER, IT WAS FASCINATING, WITH PEOPLE STILL LAUGH
ESPECIALLY IN THE DRAWING ROOM, TO WATCH THAT OLD WOMAN, WHITE OF
INTELLIGENCE, SHE PULLED THE CURTAIN, AND THE CLOCK BEGAN STRIKING— THE Y
HUNDREDTH DAY, THAT I HAD HAD TO LIVE WITH THEM, TO A STRIKING
SOUND, AND I HAD TO LIVE WITH THEM, TO A STRIKING