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### Zephyr: The First Issue

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the university of new england's literary magazine \$1

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We prefer text submissions both in hard copy and on disk. Photographic submissions need not include a negative.

# zephyr

the university of new england's literary magazine

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# Mikey

by Rachel Ringuette dedicated to Michael



### [ PROSE ]

A light little breeze zephyred in from the open water.

JAMES JONES

### Reflections

by Luissa V. Fisteag-Kiprono, MSII

His name was John. A sixty-five-year-old war veteran who, after he came back to civilian life, tried to start a new life and failed. He lost his job, his family left him, and he became homeless. He slept for seven years under the Boston bridges. He resolved everything by hating people and people hating him back. At the beginning, I did not pay too much attention to him. Then, one day about three months ago, after I served dinner, I sat down at the same table with John. He started talking to me about his aches and pains. John had heard I just had been admitted to medical school, so he wanted to ask my opinion on a few things. We started our discussion.

Two years before, John had been diagnosed with cancer in the neck region. He smoked a lot. He underwent surgery and therapy. For about a year afterwards, he felt okay. The doctors thought he was "clean." Then, he developed pneumonia. He recovered from it and cut down his smoking. About six months ago, however, he began to experience pain in the axillary region. The doctors gave him pain medication, but the pain went to his back and would not go away. So, he increased the dosage on his own. He was now talking to me, hoping I would tell him something new. I encouraged him to make another appointment and to ask the doctors for biopsies. He said he would.

After that day, he would come to me every evening after dinner, and we would talk in the common living room or at the kitchen table. He was nonexistent to everyone else, and vice versa. We became friends; I guess I was "okay" in his book. Then, about nine weeks ago, John was diagnosed with lung cancer. He came to me right when I walked

through the door at 5:30 pm. He was scared, hopelessly terrified. In a few days he would start chemo, followed by radiotherapy. I tried to encourage him. We talked and talked, with him asking me the same questions over and over again. It seemed I was giving him the same elusive answers. A month went by. The tumor became smaller. However, his back pain would not go away; he was worried about it. John started taking morphine.

I planned to take a long weekend off, so I gave John my cell phone number just in case something happened. The call came in on Monday morning. John was calling me from Lowell General Hospital. I went to the hospital. The previous night John had fallen at the shelter in his room and could not get up from the floor for a few hours. A worker heard his groans and went in his room. The shelter called the ambulance, and they took him to the hospital. The shelter did not want him back: too much paperwork to fill out if he were to die at the shelter. The next day he was moved to West Roxbury VA Hospital. I stayed with John for a few hours. I asked him if he wanted anything. He said he would like to have a jelly-filled donut. I went and got him one.

John was diagnosed with metastasis and a strong bacterial infection. I went to see him everyday on my lunch break or between jobs. I was his only link to this world. He put me on his medical papers as his next of kin, so the doctors would call daily to tell me of his condition. Within a few days, his condition was worse. I went to see him and took vanilla ice cream with strawberry topping and jelly-filled donuts. He was very happy to see me. I often sat at the edge of the bed and held his hand. We did not talk much, but we understood each other. He was alone in this world that had been unjust to him, but he still did not want to leave it behind. He had only me as his friend.

One evening when I was working at the shelter, the hospital paged me. When I called back, I spoke with someone in the ICU unit. John had gone into respiratory arrest. They put him on a respirator. His blood was septic. It seemed that he did not want to fight anymore. At midnight, when my shift was over, I left for Boston. When I got there, the doctor on call was waiting for me. He asked me if, as the next of kin, John had ever talked to me about his wish to be resuscitated and, if not, what my decision would be in this case. For a moment I remained

#### Luissa V. Fisteag-Kiprono

speechless. I had not expected something so dramatic so soon. John had never talked to me about the issue, simply because he honestly hoped he was going to get better and go back home — to the shelter. Moreover, I was not prepared to make the decision for him. Who was I to decide John's life? So I told the doctor he had to make the decision.

I went inside to see John. This two hundred-pound, six-foot-tall man was literally being rocked up and down by a machine — the respirator. I had never seen something similar before, so I was very disturbed. I started crying. I took his hand, and it was cold. I called his name to see if he was still conscious. He opened his eyes, then fixed them on the ceiling. He squeezed my hand. John had heard me. I started talking to him gently, like with a dear child, encouraging him, his hand in mine. Tears started rolling away from his eyes, his eyes still on the white ceiling, his chest rocking endlessly, fighting the machine. We stayed like this for three or four hours. Then he went into a coma. He died within an hour.

I said goodbye to John, and they took him downstairs to the morgue. I left feeling helpless and lonely. I had lost a true friend. The only thing I now hope is that I made a bit of a difference and lit up John's last few months of life. I certainly know that he did not go quietly into the night. . . . He made a difference in my life.

Peanuts have the metaphysically impossible characteristic of being crunchy AND mushy. While indulging in a handful of the fatty salt orbs, one's mouth is bedoggled by the phenomenally unique sense of cracking Jell-O.

RYAN ELING

### Untitled

#### by Anonymous

You know how sometimes, when you're driving too fast, all of a sudden you get this crazy sensation of what it would be like to lose control, and it takes your breath away. It slows you down. What you were feeling felt too close not to be real. There are two times in my life when I've caught myself breathless and without words.

The first time, I was a fourteen-year-old freshman in high school. My sister was a senior. She pulled me into the girls' bathroom and said, "Nicole, I think I have breast cancer. You can't tell Dad. You can't tell anyone. I don't want them to worry." I nodded my head and stayed up all night for weeks worrying about it. Our mom had died of breast cancer. Together, before losing our father, it was our greatest fear. I swallowed it, the fear, and waited to see if it would come true. Before that moment, I'd never had a good idea of what it would be like to lose Jessica.

Weeks later, there was a knock at my door. It was Jessica. I looked up from where I was sitting on the floor and she said, "I know you're going to hate me. I understand if you do, but it is already done. I lied to you about the breast cancer so that I could get an extension on my independent study. I thought . . . I . . . ." I didn't hear anything else. I think she left the room. I tried to make myself think but I couldn't find anything inside. I didn't know whether to be mad at her or concerned for her. I felt completely out of control.

The second time, I was sixteen, and it was summer. My best friend had shown up in town unexpectedly. He came to the pub where I worked. Turning around fast, I ran right into him. There he was. After

#### Anonymous

work, we bought some beer and went to the beach. We sat for hours and talked. He was really quiet for a while. His face was filled with something I had never seen in him before. There was something he couldn't say. He told me, "I have some things to tell you. But I want to say them in the right state of mind, without beer involved." I had no idea what he wanted to say.

Later that night, at home, we were lying in the dark, half asleep. He said, "Nicole, I want you to know how deeply I care for you." He looked at me, eyes sparkling, and put my hand over his heart. It was racing. He may have said other things to me that night, and I to him, but I don't remember them. I had cared for him for so long and never told him. All of a sudden, there it was dangling wide out in the open.

I think about these events sometimes. They puzzle me. I am not puzzled by why they happened or what the details of the situations were. I am puzzled by my loss of voice — my pure inability to say anything, to feel anything, at those moments.

If you want to KNOW someone,
never do the same thing with him.
Don't have a bowling buddy, a poker chum,
or a fellow football fanatic.
For the true layers of being unfold
when the bowler contemplates Shakespeare,
or when the football fan theorizes on quantum physics.
How incredibly DEEP we all are is often lost
in the tangled ball of rubber bands
called LIFE. The superficial is
easily obvious and obviously easy:
challenge yourself to dig into the depths.

RYAN ELING

### Ladybugs:

# harmless beauties or swarming beasts?

by Jess Tassinari, CAS first-year

Every night as I fall into my pillow and drift off to sleep, the stirring of ladybugs in the corner of my ceiling keeps my conscious alert and agitated. Their minuscule bodies perfume the already stuffy dorm room air with a distinct bitterness. It seems they migrate toward my bed more and more each day, slowly but surely approaching my favorite yellow pillow. They somehow multiply by the hundreds, even though the windows remain securely shut. Over the past few weeks, this annoying issue has matured into a serious problem, especially for my particular dorm.

Every dorm room has encountered the same dilemma, some more seriously than others. Although, in comparison to my friend Melanie's room, my situation is not half has bad. The ladybugs in her room suffocate the windows and significantly reduce the amount of sunlight that used to enter freely through the glass, providing both light and warmth. Not only is she constantly vacuuming the ladybugs from their newly acquired homes on her walls and clothes, but also she is fragrancing the air with "Spring Mountain" Lysol to rid her room of the stench of her intruding neighbors. I tend to just laugh at the whole situation, and on many occasions I find myself spontaneously naming the ladybugs, perhaps as a way of tolerating them. One of my other friends down the hall, however, does not find the ladybugs' presence at all amusing. She constantly complains about the ladybugs' seeping through the screens in the bathroom. She tolerates their sleeping with her, but she strongly protests their becoming her shower mates.

Every morning on our way to breakfast, we await the swarm of

#### Jess Tassinari

ladybugs that clings to every fold in our clothes as we exit the dorm. They surround us and enhance our attire with spurts of red and black. On the first day the ladybugs graced us with the magnitude of their presence, I actually thought I was going to have a little bit of luck, because of the single ladybug that landed on my nose. After that particular ladybug landed, however, I realized it had friends, who quickly joined him. It seemed my luck quickly became my misfortune.

There have been multiple attempts to rid the dorms of these peasized mites. Many have been unsuccessful, yet quite amusing to witness. People have used their vacuums, Dustbusters, brooms, bug sprays, and duct tape to seal tight the windows. Since none of these techniques succeeded, the dorm residents decided to inform the R.A. The only trouble was that she, too, had the same problems and dealt with them in her own way, usually by compulsively vacuuming them. We then decided to resort to a "higher power": the University maintenance staff. Unfortunately, the techniques they suggested to us had been already attempted and unsuccessfully performed. The maintenance staff assured us they would try their best to keep the ladybugs from invading the showers, but proclaimed that they had never witnessed such a phenomenon in the dorms before. We could do no more than continue our valiant and strenuous efforts. Not only do we continue to complain and at the same time laugh about the pests, but also we impatiently await the ladybugs' departure, whenever that may be.

The girls in my hall now realize that once the ladybugs creep in through the screens of our windows, there is no way they are going to leave until they all perish. Therefore, we are now all aware of their sly ways and will anticipate these weeks of ladybug madness next year and plan accordingly. Regardless of the stress they have caused us, they did, we must admit, relieve us of some of the academic stress in our lives as the villains in some pretty hilarious Kodak moments never to be forgotten.

These days, as I lay in my lofted bed, snuggled closely to my fine freckled friends, I dream of the night that they will disappear from sight, smell, and touch. No longer will I hear every whisper they exchange, nor will I sense their rancid odor as they scramble over each other. And I will, mark my words, be prepared next year for the invasion of the spotted scarabs.

### Jasper

#### by Kris Sornberger, MSI

A darkness so pure, spots of twilight sparkle, fade, and return: the sky speaks of doom. Walking, thinking, remembering, he sees headlights in the distance coming toward him. Marriage, it can't be, my sister, so beautiful, young and alive, tying the knot with a man I barely know. No matter, there is clarity in this, as the dual headlights race toward him.

He knows something's wrong as the truck slows on the deserted road. This is not right as one, then two, three guys hop out. A cigarette is stamped out while the lone walker's heart begins to race. Faster and faster as a boot crushes the ash into the asphalt.

The three guys are drunk. Three Texas hicks in a pickup looking for laughs and vindication. Their minds are hungry for the pleasure of fear and torment, rape and murder. They are fevered with a rage; the African American, the nigger, the vulnerable is the end to the means. Their eyes, receded and dark, display the pain of their hunger. The truck, a pickup, so tortured, so abused, coagulates together as molten metal stretched thin. A muffler hanging low and rusted wheel-wells grasp the shocked observer.

Racing, the nigger weighs his options: fight, run, beg, or die. The sky seems to snicker, or flicker, as the clouds, invisible, hide the stars' twilight. Pain is flowering like red roses.

Curses and beatings come with a sharpness like blood and papercuts, as the nigger collapses. Three white niggers drunk with alcohol and misery lash like rattlesnakes' fangs through flesh. Nothing but the open sky and asphalt feel as the open palm clenches something so

#### Kris Sornberger

primordial, so akin to gnawing on bones for any scrap of meat, any skin but yours.

"Darkie," "Porch Monkey," die with my knuckle imprinted on your face.

Slash, the spray paint burns the eyes. No color, maybe red, maybe my eyes can't see what my skin is. Maybe the paint will cover it up. Burn and feel, feel the rope around your neck. No time no thought no cares anymore. God may have mercy on your soul.

The bumper pulls his neck through the rope. He closes his eyes, unable to feel or see. The pain disappears. Merely darkness now, like his skin, tears his head from his shoulders.

Is it possible that the world disappears when I shut my eyes? That it only exists in MY reality when I see it? I cannot verify its existence in any way.

Sight could be false, as could any sensation;

I

must have faith

RYAN ELING

in existence.

#### [ POETRY ]

The flowers, the zephyrs, and the warblers of spring, returning after their tedious absence.

WASHINGTON IRVING

### America drives

### and another poem

by Sarah Crocker, CAS first-year

#### AMERICA DRIVES

America drives
fast
America is busy
America has something to do
somewhere to go
someone to see
something to say
feel, shout
all
the
time.

America drives
young
America grows up driving
Learning limits, playing "red light, green light"
in the yard.
Lusting after adulthood
Running out to grab your first job
And bring home your own groceries
before you've
left
the
cradle.

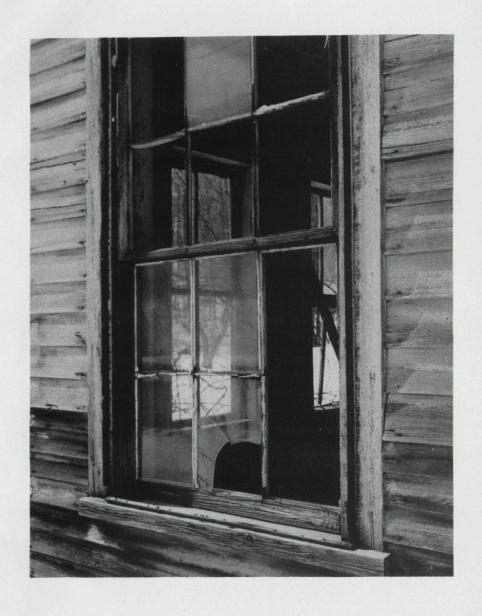


PLATE I. Photograph by Paul Star, CAS Assistant Professor.



PLATE II. Photograph by Paul Star.

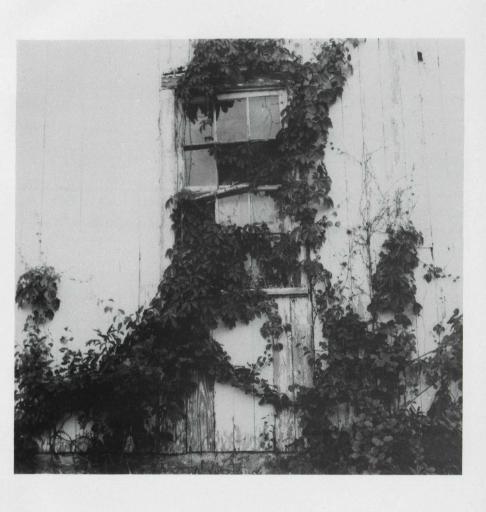


PLATE III. Photograph by Paul Star.



PLATE IV. Photograph by Paul Star.



PLATE v. Photograph by Paul Star.



PLATE VI. Photograph by Paul Star.





PLATE VIII. Photograph by Paul Star.

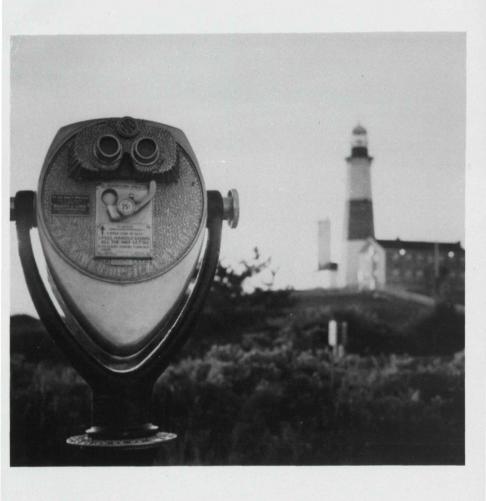


PLATE IX. Photograph by Paul Star.



PLATE X. Photograph by Paul Star.

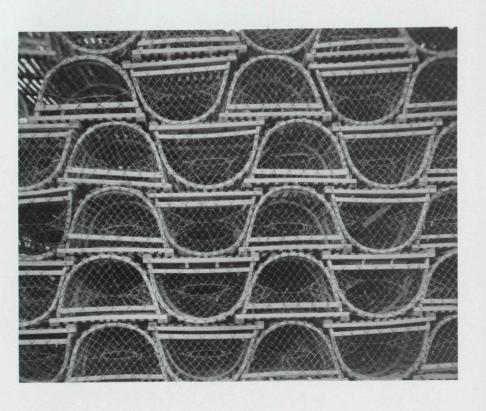


PLATE XI. Photograph by Paul Star.



PLATE XII. Photograph by Rebecca Olszak, CAS second-year.

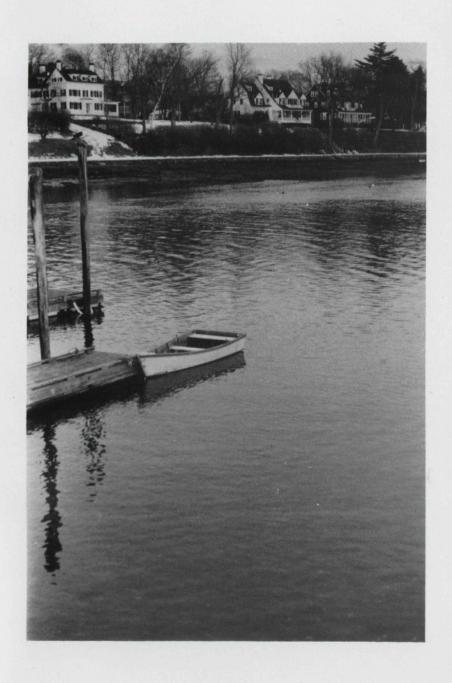


PLATE XIII. Photograph by Rebecca Olszak.



PLATE XIV. Photograph by Rebecca Olszak.



PLATE XV. Photograph by Rebecca Olszak.



PLATE XVI. Photograph by Jess Tassinari, CAS first-year.

America drives
beside
no one.
America must discover
where and why
she goes
about the earth
about her life
America
must
be
free.

#### FOUR O'CLOCK SUNSHINE

looking back on fresh days

memories cut the air Roaring, the sound of pure engine bellows over the crest of a hill reminding me where I've been

heavy pick-up trucks to hold all the weight of hard work fall on my conscience I struggle to understand

stopping myself then,

by the motion of my own hand roughly turning out some truth about my existence through the lock of cold metal key

flashing back, there,

to that warm liquid moment when everything I had ever worried about could still melt away into the four o'clock sunshine.

# Do

# and other poems

by Ryan Eling, CAS second-year

# Do

If I could fly,
I would walk.
On familiar, healthy soil.
To prove that some things
are better left undone.
That we don't do what we can,
But we do
what we want
to Do.

#### MATE

I saw a woman of gold today, Shining, shimmering Like crystal. Her eyes of pure light Looked into my own And her legs of sliding silk, Glided her toward me.

But I was suddenly caught by another lady's gaze, Her soft brown eyes of life Merely glanced upon me.

## Spring 2000

She turned her earthen form away, and moved slowly toward the forest.

I was blinded by the sun-goddess, but managed to follow my dirty mate.

#### CHOICE

One day I fell into a pit.

It was quite deep,
and stank of rotten onions.

I looked at the dark, crumbly soil around me.

It was laced with roots,
and worms oozed from the hard clay.

I tried to climb out,
back where I had come,
but found the soil merely sift through my hands.

I was stuck six feet under.

So I started digging down,
Through more and more of the earth.
The dirt caked upon my skin,
the worms covered my body with slime.
But I kept digging,
'til I found myself in China,
In the middle of a parade.
I had a drink and was on my way.

#### UNTITLED

The tree it looms before me, Its limbs so gauntly spread,

The trunk that wields a power, The knots which hold the eye,

## Ryan Eling

All Pull at me completely, and closer I must tread. For the tree is like a father, With lessons to be said.

#### DEARLEAP

Its low, gentle slopes
tell an ancient tale
of times gone past.
Of comings and goings
Glaciers, people, animals
All living a life
So miniscule next to that of the earth.

While the rocks have worn away,
And the trees have sprouted, grown, and died,
The mountain remains.
Eons and millenia
Its wisdom has ripened
its presence dissipates . . .
soon it will be gone.

What if rocks are moving so fast
we can't see them move?
Grab onto a boulder
for the ride
of your
life!

RYAN ELING

# If you put your nose against the wall, can you see the forest as others see you?

by John D. Daugherty, CAS Lecturer

These big pines disorient us — confound and confuse us — by their coney profusion, and that forest is lost to us, and we wander: though not aimless, aimlessly, not proud, but proudly we search.

Tiny it is, spinning and receding into the vast between from where that certain distance required is provided, and we can see the Earth as a whole in black velvet.

It is that sudden modular tramp that arrives so soft in parts all bedecked and bejeweled in these fractal trappings — these rags of logic and lies of glory seen all new and fresh as if by strangers.

# Whale's footprint

by Elizabeth Anne Shugrue, CAS first-year

		~~~~~	~~~~
		~~~~~	as
	~~~~~	into the	a new
	~~~~~	passionate	baby's
~~~~	A	sea.	bottom,
A	Minke	In	Whale leaves
planned	peeks out	the	its "underseas"
summer	of the	water, he	wonder
adventure	brilliant	leaves his	for a bit, and
was	blue water,	print,	shares it
worth it.	takes a	his mark;	with
Whales	breath,	a	many.
had	then	rounded	To preserve
come	exhales	print	for the future,
out	the stale	is left	others take pictures
of	air	in the	and unknowingly
the	from his	water; "How	share their
deep.	blowhole	mysterious"	passion.
	and sinks	I say.	A
~~~~	back	As smooth	~~~~~
~~~~	down	~~~~~	~~~~~
~~~~	again	~~~~	~~~~
	~~~~~	~~~~	~~~
			~~~

~~~~~	Ruffles chips.	his	how
sunny,	It created	mark	much
warm August	a darker,	and shares	we love to see
day shows	blue-green	it with me,	his
the love for	effect than	and the	stream-
monstrously-	the	world	lined body,
sized	"pure	on one	when
mammals.	blue" of	helluva	leaving
Nature	the water,	great	his
speaks	when	day!	tremendous
her mind:	the	The	footprint!
a sunny day,	sun is reflected	beautiful	~~~~~
and a	on the green-	Minke	~~~~~
miraculous	blue, clear	Whale	~~~~~
adventure!	water,	breathes	~~~~~
The	off	his	~~~~~
print has	the coast	air	~~~~~
a smooth	of	and sinks	~~~~
texture;	Kennebunkport,	down again	~~~~
the body	Maine. A whale	without	~~~
left	leaves	realizing	~~~~
small	~~~~~	~~~~~~	~~~~
rippled	~~~~~	~~~~~	~~~~~
waves	~~~~	~~~~~	~~~~
like	~~~~~	~~~~~	~~~~~
~~~~~	~~~~~	~~~~~	N

# The genuflection of birches

# and another poem

by Mark Morris, MSII

# The genuflection of birches

In cathedral
All backs curve round
Each bows deeply silvered
Laden as with great age involuntary worship
Winter's striding
Majesty draws all boughs
Bend toward the earth
Bear life or yield
In sleep
Also with these arms
Waking reach
The sun

#### TO UNDERSTAND

Knowing soul
Moves in —
Side walls of senses
Comes again one day
Back out

# Silent spirals

by Mark Johnson, CAS Assistant Professor

Night falls in Chimney Pond the circling peaks provide deep shadows embrace a moose grazing along the shore

Evening stars appear amid the blinking lights of jets heading for PLX or places west and south

Satellites disappear
rabbits dunked back into the magician's shadow hat
marking the edge of our silhouette
linking tracks into trails of ice crystals
tracing lace in the high air
between storms.

But all this we can see;

the loss of the sky is more insidious
like the background noise of light bulbs
humming
You don't notice them until you turn them all off
and the fridge goes still for a moment . . .

## Mark Johnson

The storm rages for a day covering all with crystal water diamond studded trees in the sun knocking out the power for a week the hellish sodium streetlights fail to come on at twilight in competition with the Sol's afterglow on the horizon.

You can understand the ancient awe of shepherds watching constant constellations turn

Oh the glory of it all! the incandescent bridge to Asgardhr! a riveroad of cosmic dust alight!

(a lone car wends its careful way through town headlights on high beam and the noise-free light-free interlude is broken)

How quiet it was after the big storm!

Scary to some

scary to me that the silence caused fear in others . . .

If we fear the silence the dark we will lose the stars.

... as legends are being lost in the far North

Aleut tales talk of beings in the night no longer seen because of competition millions of bulbs burning tons of coal way far to the south cloud the sky

#### Spring 2000

not only with smoke . . . but light!

Sometimes the Riveroad gets lost — no longer finding Polaris in heaven

Is it animal nature rearing up pulsing in my blood ? am I a wolf in human clothing

howling

crying out against the moon who hides the Milky Way with her light pleading with my deep throated wavering notes: "Give it back."

But the attraction to light by
vision sings a yet deeper tune
in my being
since the first
whip-lashing cell
worked its way through the brine
toward the glowing
shimmer above . . . ahhh

Sometimes we are as oxymoronic as a delegate flying to Rio or Kyoto on a Concord.

We yearn to lose ourselves in the diamond studded velvet and hike for miles into the mountains to escape civilization's glare only to light a campfire . . .

It takes a full half hour
to regain true night-vision
after staring into Agni's dancing trance
of flickering yellow-gold
and
vanishing blue

## Mark Johnson

And here too there are sparks
spiraling up with the smoke
a galaxy of its own
dimming in the vast awe-full universe
Distance, time, and power
pushing memories of never-ending orange streetlight hum
into some semblance of a nightmare left behind

Above the windswept sky — chalk gray
Below the storm-tossed sea — emerald green
besmirched with shards of polyethelene and styrofoam
in nooks and hidden places between the trees

the Riveroad spirals
in its neverending voyage home . . .
longing for peace in hills choked with hikers
seeking nature. The sky turns blue and
several hundred pairs of hundred-dollar boots wait in line
to walk where once Pomola rolled the moon
along Katahdin's knife
alone

Before the Europeans came again people here shunned the heights; a place where spirits dwelt.

Now many of the spirits have gone . . . seeking once again for quiet places . . .

Then again some remain . . . or return?

# Like broken glass

by Kris Sornberger, MSI

A circle of stones captures a flame, A fire of water captures men — Undying thirst - crying, drying, drink. Booze and liquor and slippery rocks mask them. This other species of animals, once men. Who once had control, once. Remember when? Artists create and ponder the chances. Survival with time but never with eternity. A doorway leading to bricks without eyes, Signs without hope — "Exit," yet broken And beaten are they and their hope. A nest on a cliff of straw and paper words Strung together with wind, wisdom, wealth. Ringing hollow are tones speaking alternative Chances, new options, a second chance. No - time laughs with their addiction An affliction of circumstance that the stones And quarries grieve. The two spires have religion, And the stones have souls like broken glass.

In remembrance of the efforts of Boston's artists to reclaim Mission Hill

# To those who have loved, then lost love . . .

# and another poem

by Holly M. Couture, MSI

To those who have loved, then lost love  $\dots$ 

Who broke your wings little bird? Gliding through the air In heaven's midst You reached out to soar so high Then you fell

Down

Through the Clouds.

Here you are
In the palm of my hand.
Your eyes, your cries
Laced with hurt and longing.

I have often thought
I would like to fly
But my heart was never strong enough
So here I remain earthbound.

I wonder, will you ever fly again?

#### SCHOOL

I reach out from beneath The piles of facts in my head. To find out what I studied Had not even been said

By my prof.

I want to escape!

I want to take off!

But I stay
And stack the attic of my brain
With boxes of medical facts
That will someday be needed again.

And so I dash off to class
Like some academic fool!
For I realize that this is
My 22nd year of school.

# Innocent beginning

by Jacqueline Smith

Dew upon the grass
With the early morning sun shining on it
The calm, rising sun
Dancing through and over the trees
Greeting everything in its brilliant rays of warmth
Silence filled with peace, comfort, contentment
A soul overwhelmed with serenity
An innocent beginning
For a new day.



Welcome, wild North-easter!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr;
Ne'er a verse to thee.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

Welcome to Zephyr.