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Spring 2001

The Vehicle, Spring 2001

Elizabeth Dedman

Kat Stevens

Kevin Manus

Mike Mauritzen

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"Embracing the Moment"

Spring 2001

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— To Dream Without Ceasing —

by Elizabeth Dedman

The rain fell steadily outside the window, sliding down the awning only to shatter into crystalline drops on the pavement. Even the hot lemon tea did nothing to relieve the chill running up and down her spine, but she diligently nursed it anyway. Some comfort was better than nothing.

The table was big— large enough to accommodate at least three other people, but she sat alone. Her handbag occupied one of the extra chairs, her coat the other. She asked for no company and was afforded none. She had removed her wristwatch and allowed it to occupy some of her space, propped up against a small glass dish that held packets of sugar and aspartame.

“Fake sugar,” she said in her mind. “As if there aren’t enough lies in the world.”

Her keys were also splayed out on the table, attached to a colorful key-chain. Hope flickered that this might cause a conversation to spontaneously erupt from the strangers around her; but, of course, no one paid it any mind. Instead, a comforting blanket of self-pity rose to envelop her senses, and she readily slipped into a thoughtful haze.

“Look at that poor girl,” she thought, distinctly in the third person. “She sits alone, on a rainy day, without even the courage to drown her sorrows in alcohol. Observe the tilt of her head, not quite awake, hardly asleep. She has no hopes. perhaps no future. Perhaps she will leave this place and, abandoning her car, plunge dramatically into the swollen river and sink right into the bottom. Maybe she’ll drop by the local drug store and buy loads of pills, the methodically eat each one, naming an event that would never happen again before every swallow. Or is she the type that will literally die? She could instead go home to an empty house and sit in darkness, never even thinking of turning on a light. Maybe she’ll throw off all of her clothing and sit despondently in the middle of her bed, as if posing for the actress that will play her in an upcoming TV movie.”

A short, bitter laugh escaped her then, and she belted back a mouthful of tea, pretending just for that instant that it was the most potent whiskey money could buy. She flagged down the waiter and demanded another cup. Swirling the fresh tea around, she unfocused her eyes, knowing that her face now carried an unbelievably ignorant expression.

“I’d like to say,” she thought slowly, “that I was mourning the loss of a man. That he left me yesterday, saying only, in his most heartbroken tone of voice, that we had grown apart. That this was the best for both of us. I’d love to record in my diary how I can’t live without him, how my life, that was once so full, is now empty. If it were only true— but I can lie to myself a little, too.”

For a moment, she imagined him, this phantom man. He’d have to hand-

To Dream Without Ceasing continued.....

some, and rich— she wouldn't allow any other type to just LEAVE her like this. He would have had to have written her love ballads, promised her the moon on a string, taken her to exotic places.

But there was no man. No, nor woman either. There was only...this.

"I wish it were as simple as that," she whispered, hoping once again that someone would hear, like in the movies, and take it upon themselves to be interested in her case. She even went so far as to compose a reply to the interloper: "Mind your own business— I can take care of myself."

A brief interlude, then a sad smile with closed eyes.

"That's the problem with pre-scripting your life— everyone gets their lines wrong and misses their cues," she said, softly enough that few heard her. Of those that heard, none cared.

In her mind, sad music began to play, the drama irresistible. She was a tragic heroine, overlooked by the world, not doing ANYTHING of importance, but one day... one day she would do something remarkable. She would stop a robbery, save a child from a burning building, prove them ALL wrong. She would even die doing it, her last words memorable and recorded in books and on monuments to her memory. It would rain like this on the day of her funeral, and the birds would fear to sing. Years after, a great tree would sprout from her grave, and her ghost would sing from its branches to scare those who dared to come near.

A nice picture.

A very nice picture.

Finishing her tea, she looked at the empty cup, noting the pattern that the stray leaves had left at the bottom of her cup.

"That means," she pointed to a particular pattern, "that I will meet a handsome prince, and he will carry me away on a white horse. But I won't like that, so I'll cheat on him with the black knight, because he was always much more dangerous. We will be discovered, in the throes of passion, and the prince will kill us both in the heat of the moment, and he will be justified. I will die with a blessing on my lips, and the crown on my head will fall in slow motion, striking the stone floor once... twice! And the prince will mourn, for her has lost the one love that would have been truest to him above all else, if only he had not sought to own it. The feminists will love that story, won't they? Maybe not."

"Perhaps it's better if I just give up and go home."

Leaving an assortment of bills and coins on the table, she threw her coat over her shoulders. She pretended for a few moments to forget her handbag, in hopes that someone would come running up with it, fearful that she had really left it behind. No one did, so she performed the service herself.

And so she walked to the door— all five-foot-nine, two hundred and sixty-five pounds of her.

Mentally six feet, one-hundred and fifty.

Her hope and her doom— to dream without ceasing.

The Girl I Naively Fell in Love with First

by Kevin Manus

A woman losing her husband one day
before her shotgun wedding has less
emotion in her heart than she does on
Tuesday morning when nothing happens.
She lives her life a camel one straw
away from breaking her vertebrae in
a world that's constantly raining hay.
Strong words from anyone are needles
piercing her skin, and she has no luck
finding and deciphering all those needles
in a world constantly raining hay.

But...

Her eyes are bluer than her depression.
Her hair is browner than her boredom.
Her body twists and turns better
Than her emotions twist her.
So her locket is overflowing with
lovers wanting to ride her roller-coaster,
and spend hours shoveling her piles of hay
in search of those ever elusive needles
That never stop the hay clouds from raining
overhead, and a roller coaster that
never stops, riders have to jump off.

Absolution

by Mike Mauritzen

Red glow of electric sex for slae.
The scents of coco-butter and lust
lingering in my clothes.
Exposed flesh and holy ambition
intertwining in my mind.
Consecration of blood and flesh
offering me a new communion.
Unfocused eyes tracing patterns of angels;
searching for forgiveness.
My few remaining singles
deposited in the collection basket.
Indulgences paid up front.



By Lisa Sarm

Summertime Superheroes

by Chris Ptásmik

In the summertime, we'd run through creek
Beds, pretending we were heroes. We'd jump
Across stacks of railroad ties, until shirts stuck
To sweaty backs and the sun slipped below
The line of trees.

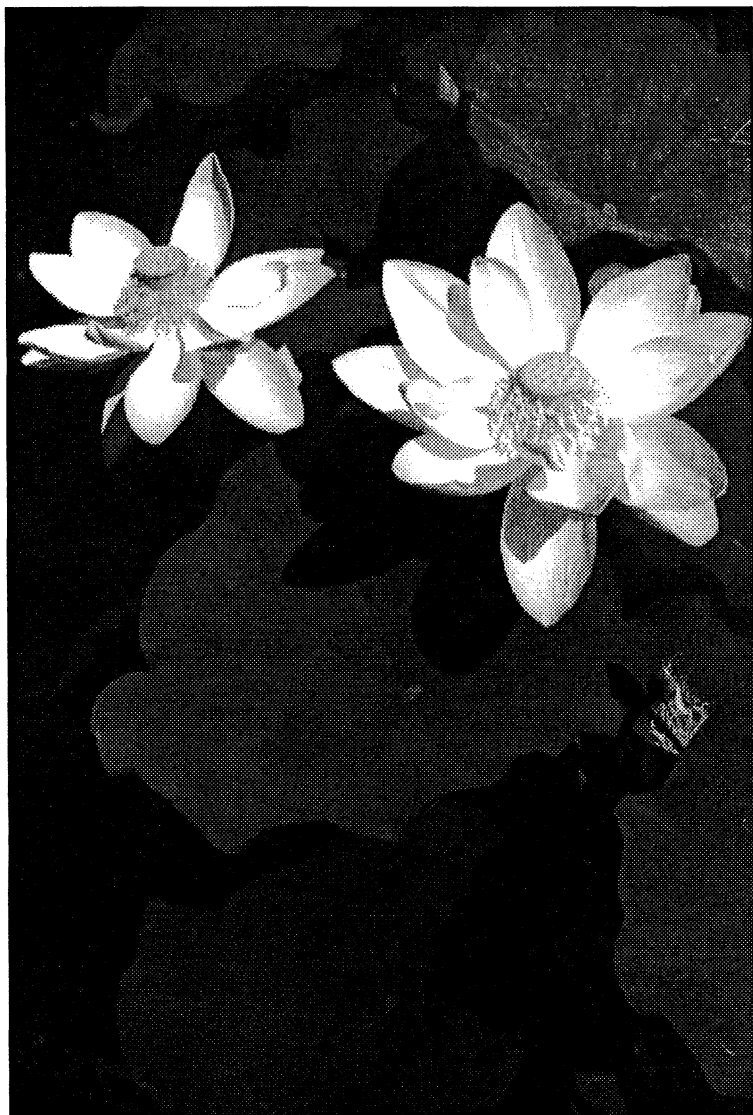
I didn't see you through high school.

We're no heroes now, but we always find a forest.
Instead of sticks for swords, we play with guitars
And sing into a new line of trees, until shirts
Stick to sweaty backs, and the sun falls from
View.

Longer nights are the only thing different.

Flower at Glencoe

by Kat Stevens



Addiction

by Adam Funk

Given the liberty
I'd jump
at the chance to wear
a patch on my arm
feeding constant doses
of you.

It would be this addict's dream.
Smokers have it easy
Never long from their beloved.
Satisfaction is a Bic flick away.
Pills, gum and patches too
to "Feed the Cravings."
They're never without.

But each time the smoke clears
and you've drifted
I ash away a little more
and come a step closer
to burning myself out.
The claws of the craving
tear through me.

Haunted by the incessant need
to put you to my lips
flare the cherry and
breathe you in.
I want so badly to suck you down
over numbed tongue
and let you permeate my body.

Holding you in until asphyxiation
begins to have its way
and I have to let you go again,
already craving
another taste.

A Cornfield in January

by Robert Pratte

black cross impales khaki landscape
burnt yellow beard pricks earthen skin



by Lisa Sarm

Melancholy

by Dona Margaret Burke



In Pictures

by Amanda McKay

"Schnell, schnell, schnell!"

Bodies twisted like a broken baby doll's,
bent too many times by a belligerent mother.
Shoes litter a stone floor, burned
dark charcoal from time and smoke.

Bloated bellies and hollow faces
stare back in black and white
uniforms, prisoners of hatred—
Fear consumes walking skeletons,
dominates their thoughts,
their being,
their existence.

The smell is overwhelming,
like leather and vomit,
burning in one flame,
but worse.

Black marble surrounds me,
encasing pictures that
scream in unforgettable voices.
Their memories bombard, swallow
my mind, reeling from their pain.

Around a corner, a tower of portraits.
My breath rushes as I confront them
looming over me, hands and mouths
bathed in sunlight, faces alive
before life became a crime.

Words to a Silent Film

by *Brianne Bolin*

Wandering
the backroads of Lowe
downshifting my eyes to dead growth
in the form of a misspent token
a dime-store engagement ring
sold to two quarters:
1990 and Virginia.

Losing
the road home
limping into some puckish jest
an imp colors my pupils cataract white
with the bleat of his laughter.
I became the blind photographer.

Finding
the road to Marcel
the house furnace fumes fixed
his painted room, not a sauna but a wildfire
while the grapes on the wall escape their uterus
to melt into a new wine
during the thirty-third kiss.

Stumbling later
half wasted on Jameson
into the scent of an Irish bar
I hear a steel gypsy playing her iron violin
driving drums steer her off the road
I feel the snap of the string
it curls back, severs her finger
with no shriek.

Manager

by Robert Pratte

braids of flesh
quiver curl
unflexing containers
catching their
hollow chamber maddened
stuck in weft
of elms
cowering in dust

The Well

by Janet Windeguth

There is a wishing well in the woods.
Sometimes late at night I visit,
stealing through the murky forest in my nightdress
careful not to wake my parents.

I keep to the path; specters catch me if I stray.
Mist ghosts along beside me, my companion on this night.
Words are not silent at night; the chirr-irr-irr of
twilight insects is my music.

Ahead is the well,
abandoned to its caved-in roof with
cobwebs in the corners and
leaves piled at the concrete base.
Green ivy clings to the wood
moss takes over the stone
(weathered time-broken stone) and the
mortar is falling out in chunks.

A rotting rope hangs from the handle,
where the crumbling bucket is still attached.
Peer over the edge— see the green-algae water
far at the bottom of the shaft?

It is hard to see, the murky water
reflects instead of reveals.
But underneath the water
a new coin will rust.

A Meal at the Personal Growth Cafe

by Ashley Kiefer

Thank you for coming today

Our specials are:

Souls two for the price of one

Enjoy some Emotional Healing now only \$19.95

Or how about some individualism only \$9.95 and you get your

choice of

personal talent:

Choice from:

Painting

Sculpting

Writing

Or

Free Thinking

Purchase additional talents for only \$1.95 apiece

So what will it be?

Castlegate Evening at Aberdeen

by Kat Stevens



What We Are

by Kevin Manus

When I become Six feet shorter
than everyone else, I hope the
picture they paint of me goes
inside a small blue leather book
with golden embroidery and
only two pages, page one my
portrait, and page two this poem.
Then place it on a shelf in a
library, because that's what we
are, one book among many
others, no matter the story.

— Ode to My Ginsoaked Olives —

by *Brianne Bolin*

*The bartendress barks
"Lime? Olives?"
I can do without the lime
but relish olives.

2 in my martini glass lie
like displaced eyes.

Some toy pirate had pierced their
skins with his pink plastic sword
after capturing them unmasked
while basking in the Mediterranean.
Underneath green envy
for those who remained free
they blushed their shame
in red pimento.

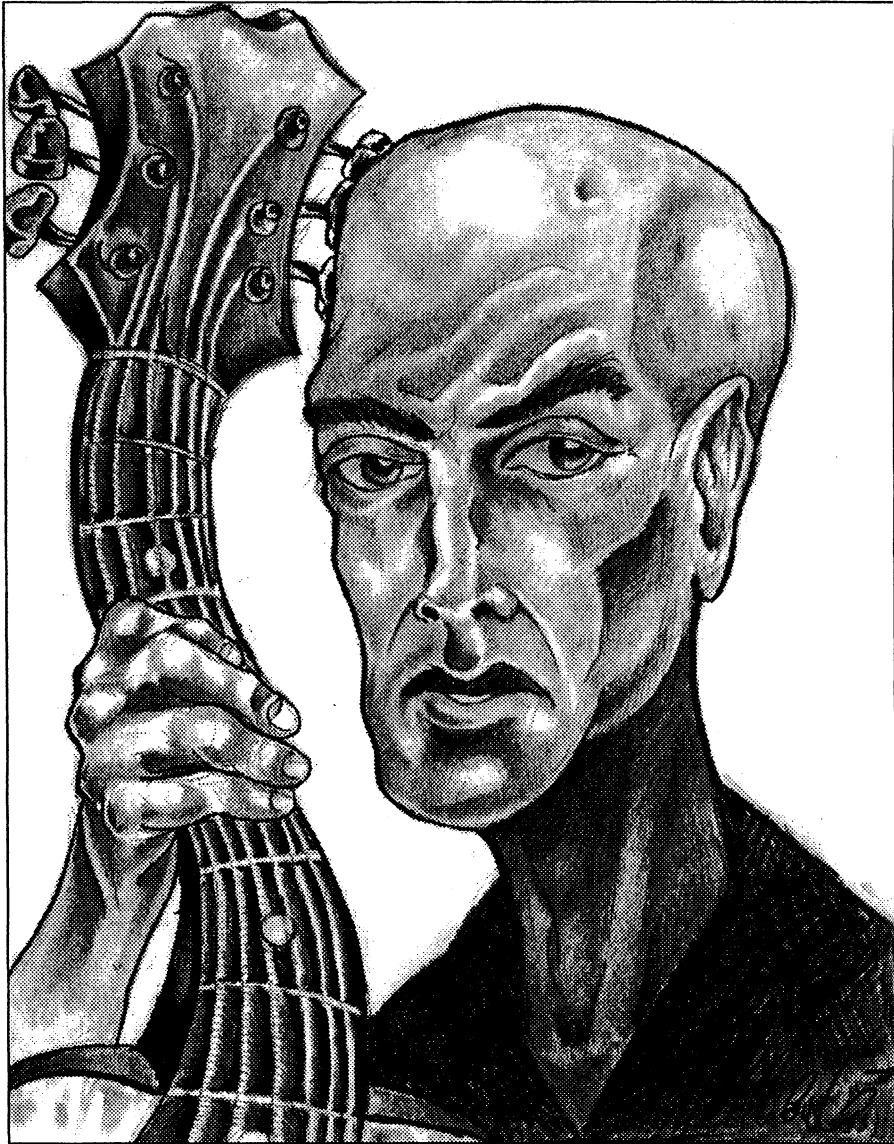
Muted by glass walls
they were shipped across the ocean
to be auctioned off as slaves
to the American food industry

Far from home,
drowning knee-deep in gin,
perhaps they dream of the salty seas
but here they get no release
save that of ageless egoist knowledge—

I am desirable enough to be eaten.

The Six String Player

by Ryan Guimond



Maxine

by Jay Edwards

Follow me
 Ascending
Crude stairs
 Of ancient
Ruins
 You'll lead
Down a
 Spiral Staircase
And our
 Hands will
Be together
 We'll both
Find an
 Aluminum ladder
To climb
 A mountain
We'll sit
 On a
Mountain's
 Peak
Waiting for
 The entire
Range
 To turn
On its side
 Then we'll
Send a
 Slinky
On its way.

Barefoot

by Krista Bodin

Walking barefoot over glass,
Lovely glass,
Vibrant glass.
Shapes in all colors.
Such beauty is no accident,
These dazzling shards of glass.

Tenderly I walk over a mystifying sheen of blues,
greens, reds and oranges that is below me.
A shimmering effect of shattered rainbows
scattered across the ground.
The warmth of the fire lit with a glow that dances,
causing the glass to glisten with life.
With each gentle step, I walk over the mysterious play of colors
that is below me.

I can feel the exquisite slivers piercing through me.
Tearing bits from my skin, shredding my muscles.
As I walk, almost part of this exotic arrangement
I become.
Painful... the lonely longing expression of colors...
so I become.
Willingly I give my blood,
the crimson drops add to the luster of this
symphony of light.

July

by Adam Funk

At eight years old,
doorbells were alarm clocks,
jump-starting summer days:

Harsh gravel
on bare calloused feet.
The blacktop's sizzle
in a skillet's stead.
Bleeding blades
of fresh cut lawn
and dirty fingers
feeding Kool-Aid stained lips.
Dingy white,
the once fresh cotton
and oozing knees from pavement's wrath.

Then sun conceded to streetlight,
the game ended with our mother's cries.

Hope

by Dona Margaret Burke



Untitled

by Levy Woollen-Danner

I've heard the sun sneak across
Big water and wake up the littlest waves.
You hear it like you hear yourself waking
To little sounds that surprise you.
It's the swish of an opening eyelid
And the creak of a bone too used to
Laying down.

— The One and Only Picture — I Have of You

by Kevin Manus

When I was younger I would study your picture for hours. It was dusk and the sky was pumpkin orange on a mid summer-night. I imagine it smelled like maple trees and family cookouts. I was one, and stuck

on the ground somewhere between falling down and getting up. Next to me was a pair of heeled sandals that the hippies wore. They looked like they were made of twenty corks molded together. The heels of the feet

that inhabited these shoes were rose red with gravel white cracks running horizontally. Above them were two thin ankles and then two calf muscles that looked like they would break through summer-tanned skin. They

were the shape of upside-down raindrops that only form when a woman in heeled shoes bends over. Above them were two soft crevices on the swell of each knee that looked colored in by charcoal. The only other part

of her visible is a small lock of blond hair at the top of the picture that just barely gives another clue to your identity. That is what I know of you. I've heard that men marry their mother,

maybe that would explain my infatuation with a woman's legs.

The Death of a Fat Man

by *Brianne Bolin*

I.
Careening cartwheeling
the Stuck up noses
of the Girls who
sold me the goods
drenched in green Neon
like skins off grave robbers' exploits
and Standoffish
with no thought of me Save for
what my wallet holds

I Can't Stand It Any Longer

Be back in my Home soon
shut myself in
Close the blinds
replace Moon with 60 watt light

No more crawling
toward Quivering lips
One they'd never let
Me Kiss

II.
Miletoy Bluff, peripatetic, returns home, hides behind the blinds from that fat yellow moon who lighted his way up the blackened icy steps no better than a single match in wind, from the perverse leer of domestic brews advertised in neon glare, from the strobellighted sirens in the colors of his country, red white and blue. Stale stench of ancient cigarettes enters his flared nostrils, he heaves a grandiose cough and lights another. He returns from gathering provisions. The bleak winter is approaching full gallop says the ache in his bad leg. He sets down his rations on the tiled counter:
blow torch
shovel
canned goods
a mother.

The Death of a Fat Man continued.....

Checks his messages...

None.

Peers into his freezer at two fifths of gin, cuts limes.

III.

Converse, who would

Want to in this

Digital Age

here cheap electric

thrills replace

Human Contact

but even Before, who would

want to

with Me

Mother didn't want Me

no Father to speak of

She had eyes Bore down into my soul

Before it Died

strung me right up

to the tops of the ceiling

it did, I floated with such Guilt

for Nothing

No rights I had, no rights she had

telling me what was

Moral or Virtuous

no one knows the Difference anyway

that uncouth Whore

she didn't want me

Ego kills what the Heart is hurt by

IV.

Miletoy Bluff, paranoid, slices his thumb with limeknife in surprise. A darkred ca
seeps from the cut and covers his thumb in plasmic cocoon. Circling on the faucet
he drowns his thumb in smooth waterfall, stretches to open the freezer with his
clean hand, doubles over with coughuous cough, reaches the gin, stables it on the
counter, opens it, lifts the bottle to his windswept lips, and
drinks

shuts off the faucet

sucks blood off his finger and

The Death of a Fat Man continued.....

drinks

without lime and straight from the bottle.
Shotgun.

V.
If the Winter would only
Eat the City Alive
and we couldn't
Live off the Fat of the Land
Steal from our own Skins
None of us would last long
especially those girls
Skinny Bones
brittle to break
and only I'd survive

to swallow this howling Wind
pushing through my windows
aiding these hollow Coughs
rattling from my lungs

to witness Dread Pestilence
abounding in Every Corner of the city
no more Petty voices on the night trains
or subway sighs and

the Bacteria of water fountains
will be disinfected with the cold
and no longer Sickening

I Can't Stand It Much Longer

VI.
Miletoy Bluff, non-pious, heaves more gin into his rotgut belly, stumbles to the sofa, sinks in its folds but can't recreate the pleasure of the womb except for drunken spinning, an underwater dream. Swigging more gin, a gag emerges from the depths of his bowels, his blood.
Look into his eyes, red-lined and ready to burst.
Imagine his eroded soul, worn bare by eons of slow waves.
Crawl into that misled mind, dead gray matter.

The Death of a Fat Man continued.....

Never found a job with his useless degree.
Schooling never did nobody no good.
Remember that, Miletoy, when yr meeting yr maker.

VII.

Bet you think You've
been Somewhere
Bet you think You
know My story
but I have no more Wishes
none worth speaking of
none Infesting my mind
with false hopes
of Connection

But the faces of those Girls
sickly under chemical light
Surely the same Creature did not make us both
but if it did
the Molds were not broken
they Exploded
my head is so heavy
a Cement Face
Nothing seeps into my Brain thataways
Got to keep it Safe
Far from the passage of Strangers
from the Eyesights of Them Girls
I feel their Disgust
their Reeling
Lord knows they dont understand what Im feeling
Spiraling toward the Void, they Dont Know
Lord Knows They Dont Know

Done

by Lisa Sarm



Biographies

Krista Bodin- I am a CDS major with an English minor.

Brianne Bolin- is.

Oona-Margaret Burke- I am a senior marketing communications major. I have never done anything in my Life, yet. I waste my time dreaming the undreamable.

Elizabeth Dedman- I'm almost 21 with a great interest in literature, so it's fitting that I'm an English major. I was born in Charleston but lived in Champaign most of my life. Returning at last, I am seeking teacher certification in the land of my birth.

Jay Edwards- English major, poet, artist.

Adam Funk- I write about girls a lot since they're my favorite things. I'm a slacker-ass art major and Pop-Tarts rule.

Ryan Guimond is a senior graphic design major.

Ashley Kiefer is a junior art history major and creative writing minor from southern Illinois.

Kevin Manus is a senior speech communication major graduating in May.

Biographies

Mike Mauritzen is a senior English and philosophy major. He hopes to move to the west coast and make something of himself someday. Ideally he would be an English professor, a rock star, and a poet all bundled into one. He's really not as strange as you think.

Amanda McKay is a senior English major. She plans on attending Eastern's graduate program in English next year.

Robert Pratte- I am a graduate student studying English. By day, I work as a software developer for a telecommunications company. In theory, this leaves evenings free to pursue subjects more interesting- such as poetry.

Chris Ptasnik is a junior English major.

Lisa Sarm is a junior English major who, in her spare time, eats cheese and takes pictures.

Kat Stephens is a 5th year AIS and business education major. I spent a year studying abroad and would love to spend the rest of my life traveling. Landscape/travel photography would be my ultimate dream career.

Janet Windeguth- This is my second time in the Vehicle, and I'm just as excited. Being published is one of the best feelings, if you ask me.

Levy Woolen-Danner is a senior studio art major.

Editor's Note

To all authors, artists, and readers,

I would like to thank all of you for creating the art and the audience to make another *Vehicle* a great success. Thirty-six pages of type and images may not seem so impressive, but as a forum for the best of students' artistic and literary efforts, the *Vehicle* is a small but vital part of our campus. No matter if a poem is never published or a piece of art is never sold, no endeavor is more important than the process of creation.

Assembling and presenting all of these works has been a lot of hard work, but it is still a great privilege to me. A number of people are involved in every step of the process, but I have no one more important to acknowledge than the artists who has lent us the best of their hearts and minds. Thank you.

Best wishes,
Tara Coburn
Vehicle editor

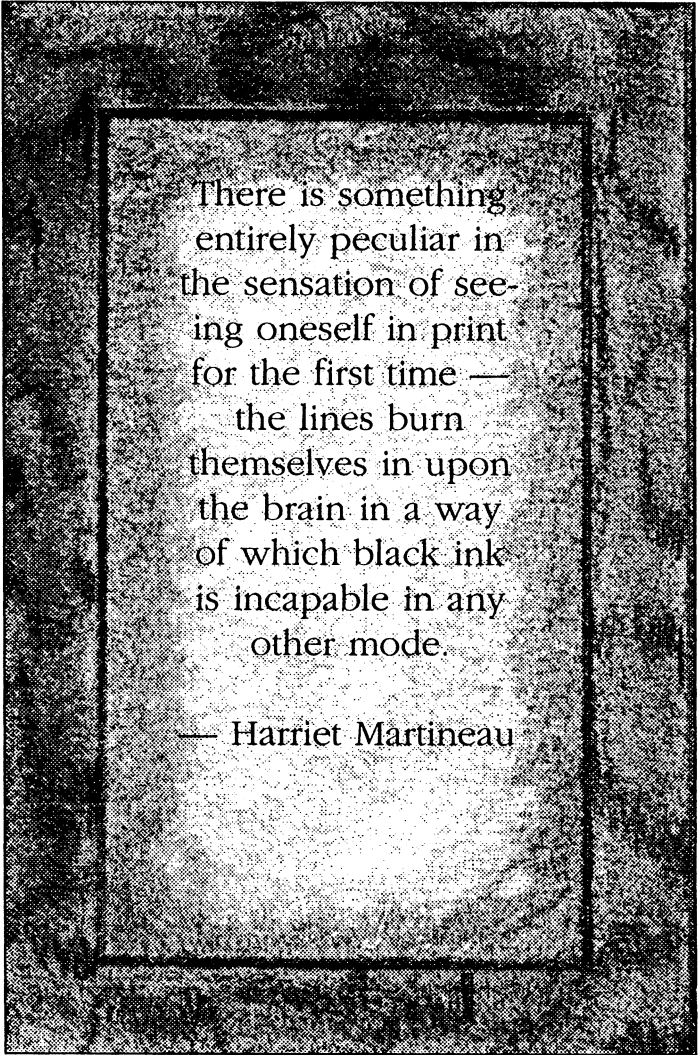
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There is something
entirely peculiar in
the sensation of see-
ing oneself in print
for the first time —
the lines burn
themselves in upon
the brain in a way
of which black ink
is incapable in any
other mode.

— Harriet Martineau