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Spring 2006

The Vehicle, Spring 2006

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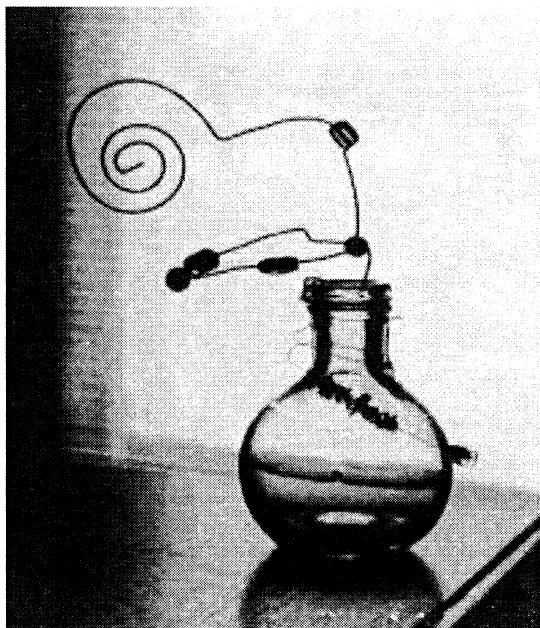
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THE VEHICLE



SPRING 2006

Inicio de Termino

by Jacob Foster

Baby's brown eyes giggle in innocence while
infant fingers toy with mommy's bracelets.

Untainted delight
paints her face as she waddles from room to room,
showing off her oversized accessories to all.

Then she begins to grow,
but the bracelets remain,
unchanged.

Slowly, bright joy has been replaced,
clear brown pools muddy,
despair's beginnings eddy within their depths.

She continues to grow,
and the bracelets remain,
unchanged.

Frantic, clouded eyes scan surroundings,
Frenzied tears begin to break upon cheeks.
Childish charms have become mommy's manacles.

She continues to grow,
and the bracelets remain,
unchanged.

But now they bite into the skin,
tear the flesh wide open
and her life seeps out of her veins
congeals around the bracelets
and with her last breath she cries
(and, oh, how she cries)
"Why, Daddy, Why?"

Devoted Friend
by Maurice Tracy

Words trickle
down my throat.
You pur them
steadily
(abominable
love, sinner,
God, woman
cure)
and tell me
they are water
droplets. You
are only trying
to save my soul.
(that
shiny soft
lie that
thick book
told)
I am lucky to have such
a caring person
as a friend.
Who else will
consider the right
amount of milk
to mix with the
powder to make
for a soft flavorless,
odorless
end?

Bad Hair Days
by Greg Corey

I got a bad haircut and
my sister has cancer;
She said it would grow
back eventually.
It got down to my shoul-
ders and she smiled;
I looked better without it
anyhow.
She wore it three days
and gave it back;
we both liked short hair
in the end.

Shelf Life

by Jody Shoot

I would be buying snack cakes,
or Poptarts,
or paper towels.

But here I am
in the middle of the aisle,
between cheese and salad dressing,
enchanted by wind chimes.

My two small children
chirp for powdered donuts
and chocolate syrup,
but wind chimes have my full attention.

I pick the best ones--
elevated,
at eye level,
they tinkle and ring conspicuously--
and so pretty
even under fluorescent light.

They would look nice
dangling from my little porch,
the way I imagine Spanish Moss
drips from tree tops
in places I've never been.

The soft rock playing thinly
through the speaker system overhead
grows suddenly louder,
and shatters the daydream
of another me.

I put the wind chimes back.

Anoint

by Maurice Tracy

Bless me with the oil
Rub the oil over my forehead
But please don't stop there
Anoint my chest
Anoint my feet
Bless these hands
Bless my mouth
Lotion my body with the oil
Don't forget the thighs
Or the eyes
Place a drop on my tongue
Pout it down my back
Let it grace my bottom
Pout it down my neck
Let it circle my nipples
Slide over my belly
Let it fill the well
Pour it down my throat
Fill me to the brim.

Understanding Black

by Amanda Bush

If a black crayon were a person,
Who would it choose to be?
Since the color has so long
Signified a minority
In a world where white
Is always so right.
In a world where black slacks
And has to sit in the back.

If a black crayon were an objective,
What would be it's point?
At the end of a sentence
Where a period points
To a small black dot
Surrounded by all white paper
Where it concludes what is said
And all that is read.

If a black crayon were a pit,
To where would it head?
Since white is the excellence
That covers heaven's bed

Would it lead to hell?
Like the minister said
Or into the unknown
Where only good is sewn.

If a black crayon were a symbol,
What would it mean?
A black nights sky
To hide the suns beautiful bright beams?
Everything misunderstood,
Denied and rejected
In a world where white's clean slate
Is commonly accepted.

If the world were a black crayon,
What would people do?
Could the old past be erased?
So the future can start clean and new?
Could silence be golden?
Would the majority still rule?
Could we all be alike and integrate
If love be the tool?

If I were a color,
I would be black.
What I live, who I am
Has always been that.
If a black crayon were a person,
Who would it choose to be?
Well black is beautiful
And it has already chosen me.

My Uncle's House

by Carissa Hayden

On a plot surrounded by fields
Dean grew a healthy garden.
A Bronco sat in the yard
But the house was the most intriguing

I sneaked upstairs to look outside
(A view from my cousin's bedroom window)
The property was pretty but
I'd rather snoop in her room.

Puzzle pieces strewn across the floor,
A pack of Salems on the windowsill,
A cat smuggled in from outside,
Bed sheets thrown back in front and pulled tight at foot.

Living room had a big chair
(Leather I think). It was soft,
But the material was torn.
Another refugee from the garbage.

The bathroom was disgusting:
Mineral stains in the toilet.
One of the faucet handles was broken
And the water was rusty and brown.

My uncle lived there in the 80's
I loved the three-hour drive
Up to Tremont with my folks
In our 1971 tan Ford F-250.

That big old farmhouse
That some guy supposedly hung himself in-
The one they tore down
To widen Route 121.

Try, And Save Your Breath

by Greg Corey

Dream under a star-studded ceiling
And pray for changes only you can make.
Ask God why, but never seek out the answers for yourself;
Things will be different in the morning.
Wear your morality like a blanket and the chills will subside.
Look, there thy go...
If you ever feel alone,
Just turn on the TV.

Solid Advice

by Anthony Shoot

Spray-painted on a brick wall:
Kiss her--
it may be
your last chance.

Calligraphy / The Metamorphosis / Buttercup Dragonfly

by Greg Harrell

I am your poem.
carved with master strokes
on a canvas,
scribbled on the back of a receipt
or a bathroom stall.
Your biography through
bittersweet teardrops
pastoral sights
and verbal exhilaration.
I play with your optic nerve,
like a marionette dancing over a stage.
I'm every line on your page
and every line in your palm.

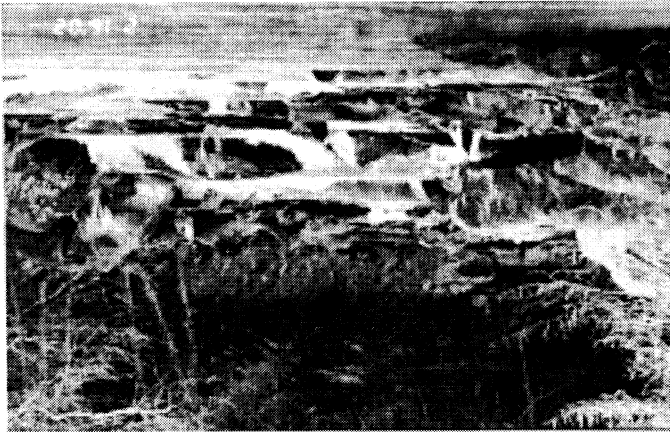
Court rain
with blushing ink
until I sink
in bitter oceans.
Paper phoenix
spitting grievance
into the eye of your dynasty.
Sweet portraiture of self-destruction,
like glass suspended in flight
the artist teeters over the desk

lost in a sea
of tapestry, ink and self-delusion

pull her in for a kiss,
cut my lips on her wings
they dissolve the universe
in a heartbeat
and she flies away.



The Stray
by Brandy Lee Barter



Rapids
by Kristy Van Amerongen

Swinging Fire
by Maurice Tracy

A nigger I am
A faggot always I will be
A threat to you
whites wanna hang
blacks wanna burn me
I suggest you do it
hand in hand stands the blacks and the hooded men
I am danger to all you see
your blond little joys bend
down on their knees
sing praises to God
for my black rod
they will beg
to stay in my bed
and once you see
blond hair around black fingers
you will hang me
and as I swing
I will see
brothers, sisters and kerosene
never will they claim me
but some want to be with me
and to my body that swings so violently
the light skinned boy adds light as he brushes me
burning the flesh that made his hand wander
late in the night to places deep under
covers, sheets, silk and cotton
touching himself till she has been forgotten
and all that remains is this flesh
seared in his mind
sashaying down main street
pink feather boa trailing behind.

**Epitaph for a Man With No Name
1860-1892**

by Dallas Schumacher

My assassins approached: triggermen with
heavy guns and hollow eyes, harbingers
of Death from the Western Lands ---- their footsteps
behind me ---- a breath of wilted flowers,
a snarl like nails driven into pinewood ----
I died with my boots on.

What survives me?

All I meant to do died with me: all I
failed to do, or forgot to say ---- All that
I built will fall, each Soul I loved will die.
No trace remains: this is the Second Death.
A granite-chiseled dash between my first
and final years ---- a brief dash from cradle
to grave ---- all my life reduced to the terse
summation of a punctuation mark
set in cold stone ---- I am not even dust ----

Such are my remains.

The hammering rains
wash my tombstone blank as a newborn mind,
chewing stone as the hungry worms chew me,
eating the years, the dash, my mortal name ----
Please remember these words, my sole remains.

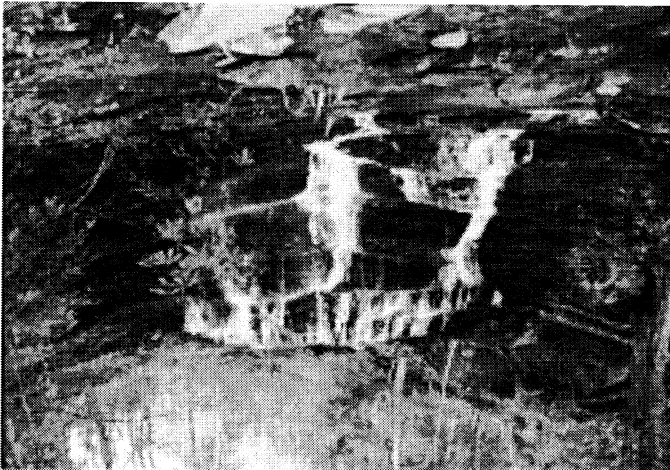
Untitled 71

by Ben Hart

Suffering camp manager phillis
Compound fracture crumple skirted
Can't finish finnegans wake
Formulating Tennyson byzantine
Falls asleep
Benders and books
Can't reach her alarm clock
Can't find her keys
can't crash into a tree
somedays she suffers in other ways
not today, not today
foamy burps paperweights and
cringing when the phone rings.

Untitled

by Kristy Van Amerongen



Random Maunderings of a Ford Hall Insomniac

by Jacob Foster

TWITCH

Swimming eyes can't seem to focus,
The fifth Mountain Dew tastes like cold dust.
Switch to coffee and take a walk--
Old Main's so peaceful after dark;
A once-strong fortress in its prime
Reduced, as all things are, in time;
Reduced to a haunt of mathematicians,
Those spectacled wizards of long division.

TWITCH

Back to the hall, back to the books,
This test cannot be as hard as it looks.
(Only one week before the Turkey,
Just one...more...week...of old...beef...jer...key...

TWITCH

Saliva makes my words all muddy,
Now what the fuck am I gonna study?
Pages stuck as fast as glue,
Seems there's one thing left to do--
Stumble up the stairs to bed,
Fall...asleep...before...my head...
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Untitled

by Kristy Van Amerongen



Fat Bangs

by Lakisha Allen

when I was unborn my mother banged into a corner
left a huge bump on my face
that became my forehead
every morning I hid my menacing head
but it would fight it's way through
yellow monster peaking past black veil
spent many days with hands clamped
over my head
eyes down

I Want

by Maurice Tracy

I want your flesh against mine
To feel the fire burning in you
Surging through you
Scorching the insides of my ass
I want your face on top of mine
Your nose kissing my nose
Your lips engulfed in mine
Your tongue tickling my cheeks
I want to kiss each part of you
Differentiate between the tenderness of your nipples
And the firmness of your chest
The roughness of your index finger
And the smoothness of your cock
I want to taste you
The heat of your ass
The saltiness of your balls
The sweatiness of your pits
I want to drink you dry

Discovery

By Carissa Hayden

It's a good walk from County Road 600 East
Around the curve
Through some trees
Past the fields.
"we're not lost. See those houses?"
Meet up with a dog
Run past Elliot Cemetery.
I've never run this fast before-
I didn't know it was harmless.
Nothing but gravel for what seems like an hour
Kicking up dust as we walk.
Rickety wooden bridge over a dried up creek
We say 'crick' around here.
Up a steep hill
Fields become woods.
"we buried my old dog up there? I found it the other day."
Falling down old ruin.
I came all the way over here for this?
I'll probably get nails in my shoes.
At least it meant something to her.
I gotta get home for supper.

POVERTY SPONGE

by Chris Robinson

From the old

Rusty plumbing

Water is leaking

The puddle

Getting deep

Rotting the floor

Beneath my

Bathroom sink

Seedless Grapes

by Anthony Shoot

An orange beanbag in the basement,
Benny Hill chasing bikini-clad women in fast motion,
eating oysters on saltines,
the smell of pipe tobacco, but only in the winter,
black dominoes with neon dots,
wind through trees hissing like the ocean, or
T.V. static,
outgassing plastics--that new car smell,
the sour pop of a seedless grape,
the smell of my father's workshop--
wood, and nails, a vice,
yellow shotgun shells with golden tips
a Christmas tree with blinking lights.

These things cling to me.
They tangle and swirl, and
probably don't add up to anything.

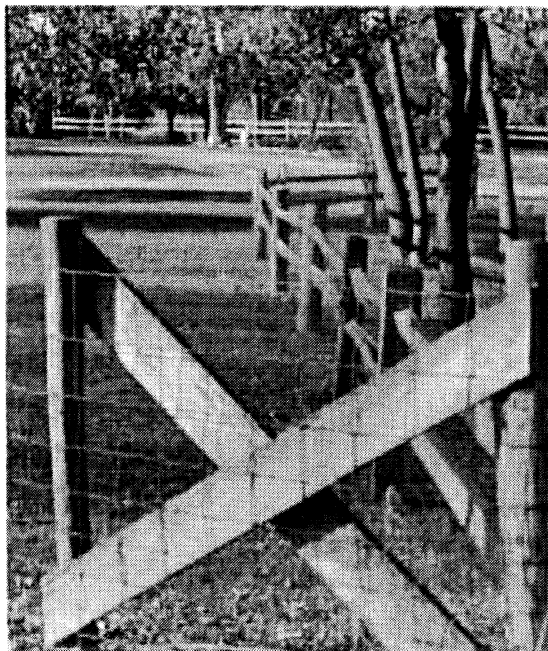


A Quiet Road

by Brandy Lee Barter

Untitled 34
by Ben Hart

There was a man who got shot in the face with a rubber band. His name was Simeon Thomas and he was a type A anal retentive audio visual learner. Hatred swooned up into his tired lobes and his initial reaction was to Stand up with such gusto as to knock over the hard wooden chair that now Rest beneath him by the power of his hyper extending knees. He was a loner And this did nothing for his self esteem. Determining who shot the rubber Band in this sea of laughing high school faces would be an excercise in futility. Blushing, he quickly gave up on his thought s of alpha male Violent domination. He always did give up. Tiny reservoirs of water Gushed up in the tear ducts of his eyes and he began violently to Avoid the speculation of his peers. Simeon Thomas was afraid. At bare Minimum his day was over and it was only 8:47 am.



X Marks the Spot
by Brandy Lee
Barter

Discovery

by Carissa Hayden

It's a good walk from County Road 600 East
Around the curve
Through some trees
Past the fields.

"we're not lost. See those houses?"

Meet up with a dog

Run past Elliot Cemetery.

I've never run this fast before-

I didn't know it was harmless.

Nothing but gravel for what seems like an hour

Kicking up dust as we walk.

Rickety wooden bridge over a dried up creek

We say 'crick' around here.

Up a steep hill

Fields become woods.

"we buried my old dog up there? I found it the other day."

Falling down old ruin.

I came all the way over here for this?

I'll probably get nails in my shoes.

At least it meant something to her.

I gotta get home for supper.

drunk again
by Anthony Shoot

driving
with the windows down
I feel the world
flame and swell
inside me
with the smell of night and grass.

the wind could rip the ribs
from my chest,
and I'd keep singing.

I know my heart
won't beat forever,
but right now--
it feels like it might.

Square

by Maurice Tracy

Every bone in my body
has been snapped and cracked.
Tissue and cartilage has been
squished and squashed.
My skin has been flattened
till it seems like layers of phyllo dough.
My tongue has been rolled
and placed back by my tonsils.
The blood has been drained
and placed into buckets.
Bags are filled with my fat.
My body has been folded
hand over foot over stomach
and still you curse me.
Me head just will not
fit.

Let Me Just Say This

by Jody Shoot

I'm Mr. Nice Guy.
I come from a good family,
respectable, even for this town.
I'm all Brut aftershave and Stetson cologne.

Good time fella,
always quick with a joke,
and I don't blink at throwing
money at people I hardly know.
I've fooled just about everyone
who's crossed my path.

So, it wasn't the first time I sat naked,
sprawled across her chest
all rage and revenge,
and watched my DNA trickle from
her cheek to her hairline as
she shut her eyes tight and cried.

Like that night at the campground.
She struggled, but I took her anyway.

And as the sound of a ripped cotton nightgown
burrowed its way into the cruel memories
of three little children pretending to sleep,
I put her in her place.

And not one of those kids made a peep
in that tiny camper that bucked and bounced.

Now, let me just say this:
I swear to Christ I forgot they were there.

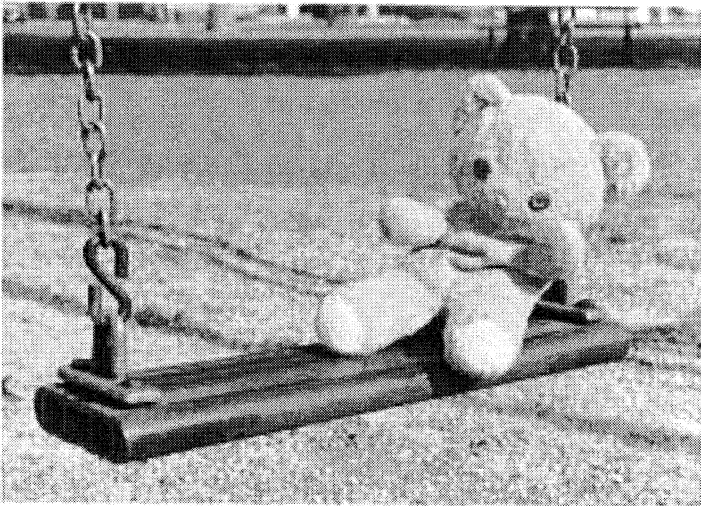
passing a small cemetery after a storm

by Anthony Shoot

white flowers
scattered on
the highway
dance and fall
as cars rush
blindly by.

An Old Friend

by Brandy Lee Barter



Career Day

by Mitch James

Her lips were pursed like an asshole,
Pressed tight like a star:
Corpulent with confidence.
Her skirt was pinstripped and
Hiked high and tight.
She rolled her ass from side to side
Swinging strong
With career day swagger.
Her heels clicked down the hall
Like dripping marbles.
With self-aggrandizement she looked at me----
Through me.
I looked down at my dirty jeans,
'Feeling I ought to bow
Very low to her.*'

*From Willa Cather's "Coming. Aphrodite!"

THE VEHICLE

SPRING 2006

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Cover Photo: **Beaded Vase** by Brandy Lee Barter

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