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The Vehicle, Spring 1996

Keith Owens

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The VEHICLE
spring 96

The **Vehicle** *spring 96*

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Milestones

This semester, the Vehicle experienced technical difficulties due to its enormous costs, but it's back again. The Vehicle is not an essential university publication to many people just as the arts do not seem to vitally concern many people. One poem, "Of Words and Widgets," seems to sum up the majority opinion: writing (and the other arts as well) do not contribute to society in any significant way. No, artists do not build cities or discover cures for diseases. But literature and the arts do allow for improvements in our world by creating new worlds in which to measure ours and by opening new possibilities.

Working on this publication has been an experience...pulling hair, strand by strand, out of our scalps after blowing a few deadlines; eavesdropping on conversations in the newsroom (interesting if frightening); and most importantly, holding our newly printed "baby." We are so glad that we had the opportunity to work on the Vehicle again this semester. Thanks to everyone who fought for, submitted to, and read the Vehicle.

Special thanks to Edie Stump, Krista Weidner, and Judy Pflaum (LeAnne's mommy) for helping distribute the Fall issue.

LeAnne
Pflaum

Danny
Holtzman

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POETRY

ANYONE?

Check. Check.
Is this thing on?

*plexiglass between them,
son stares, glaring hard
through, and only
mumbled curse greets
stuttered apologies*

Can you guys hear me?
Check the volume.

*sitting silent beneath
floorboards of front porch
Michael feels more
than sees the booming
bootsteps above*

Hello?
I don't think the mike's working.

*she sat, that day,
on an abandoned
park bench, watching
passers-by redirect their
gazes past her*

Testing. One, two.
Is it plugged in, even?

*a bicycle, rusted wire
rack first, rolls past,
nearly missing someone's
foot, no breath wasted
in regret or courtesy*

Hey—can anyone hear me?

-Keith Owens

Of Words and Widgets

I may as well be
Do-
ing the purposeful chores:
Electrician, bolt-fastener, carpenter, or mechanic.

Instead, I muse over
Arcane, insignificant fictions
(as you "do" now):
Lists, poems, theories.

Shame on
You! I feel
I have made
No contribution to the world;
I do not make widgets,
I do not make your automobile run or heat your home,
I do not sell what I do not make.

I'll never be able to afford that which I do not sell
Or I do not make.

I have only the skill to know that
my Sentence fits.

-J. Dylan McNeill

houseplants

houseplants, obstructed
from sunlight
twist, contort, maneuver
leaves and stems until
broad fleshy green presses
against frosted window
creating condensation
they can drink

-Peter W. Kates

Crete, a misery and puzzle, sinks
away; our flight is a miracle
against the image of two fools
sprinting with silly wings, jumping
and falling, bruised and hopeless.
Father had focused on the flight of gulls,
determined we would not need hollow bones—
while my eyes saw only dry, white petals
drifting inside a slick, blue bowl.
“Not a motion wasted,” dad would praise
the fowl for their efficiency
and for dropping feathers in the maze;
he cooked down the Minotaur’s hooves
and skeleton, mixing in the wax we
found in abandoned hives, conjured
up thick glue, and we flew over the walls,
joining the gulls in a sky dance.

Ocean spreads out under me, and I wonder
what makes Minos call himself king;
father is stiff, won’t even spin and wheel,
but still he lectures to me flying,
his own monotonous rhythm mimics rowing.
Helios gallops his steeds across the highest
point of the scorched arch.
How could I, a mortal, get too close?
Regardless, my name comes up through the wind,
and there is no doubting dad’s tone—
yet, for a moment, like a god, I reign
falling into a dive—I swoop past,
tickle his toes and continue down
to cool my back in the ocean spray;
angry, he sails over me, his arm
sweeps hard up around my ribs,
this is no sport—his free hand
examines my wings, calloused fingers

rough across my shoulders.
For awhile we glide under the guidance
of a single limb.

There was no more pleasure
in soaring to Sicily, father shouting
his vehement threats; I pity
his belief in flying as a means
and not as its own end.

-Jeff Vande Zande

the hot alarm clock sounds as the coffee's done.
reluctantly, the day's begun.
outside the clouds are tired of summer
and bombard the earth with fairy fluff.
Dad sips his coffee and curses this,
as he opens his wet newspaper.
The children gather around the radio
and await their liberation.

And the traffic is slow and painful
The water seeps into shoes.
The children glide along the gentle downhill stucco snow,
and twirl around drifts on spoons.
like swirling and stirring coffee cream.

Reminds Dad of the days
when the only constant in life
was that it was in someone else's hands;
How he traded his sled and childish ways
for a car and payment.

For a moment he's resentful
he can never go back.
but it is comforting to know
he's not entirely alone, stuck in traffic.

-Patrick F. Kelly

Commute

...nextto

arock

thatreads

-Spence Farm-

thatlooks

alotlike

aheadstone

asi

driveby

atseventy-five

milesperhour

betweendaylife

andnightlife

isaproud

americanflag

alwayswaving...

-Whitty Whitesell

During Graduate School

The day after the night
we thought you were pregnant
we bought a pumpkin, hoped
we'd forget my small stipend
and lose our fears in October
rituals.

I played solitaire while
you sliced into the gourd,
tore at its insides and stabbed
out a face, leaving a tortured
mess on the floor.

You spent an hour picking
out each seed, spreading the guts
across old newspapers until
the oven was preheated.

Later, the leaping shadow
of its jaundiced smile
and hollow eyes played
silently on the wall; even
while the lights were out,
I stayed seated and blindly
flipped cards, waiting for you
to speak.

-Jeff Vande Zande

It was like a teen angst poem,
that feeling I got every time she yelled,
—*Damn it Jason, hold the skin
back so I can tie the suture!*
The yellow cat lay in silence
like a T.S. Eliot sky,
I wanted to wake it up and tell it to run like hell
but I am my own drunk anesthesiologist.
The vet mopped up the blood
with patches of cotton cussing
underneath the warm, peaceful heaving
of the cat's belly.
Then she would sing
—*Oh the weather outside is frightful
but the fire is so delightful*
It was then, when I would turn
to look out the window and see snow falling
like white envelopes ripped up by angels
dancing in morphine,
that I would let the skin go
and her cursing would begin again. Then song,
and the cat just stared out the window
eyes wide open, asleep.

-Jason S. Logue

Bitter Writing

Grasped
(the idea),
Contained within fist, the pen
Expresses with eloquence:
Strength,
Hardness,
With restric-[NO
.....reserva]-tion.

-J. Dylan McNeill

Song to Unknown Soldiers

Shriveled dates
Withered oaks
Roses on icy bayonets

Strewn tombstones in a garden of khaki.

To the unsoldier
Somebody's son
Some mother's daughter.

From the Rocky Mountains
To the Midland Plains
Thorns in this scourged earth
 this smoldering ash.

Tombstones of our youth
Our soil saturated with the milk of our young
This nectar of our life.

Bayonets of tingods,
lining the Interstate
Dark roses blooming
 strewing this landscape.

Manicured for generations
reminding us,
the day before tomorrow
Is sacred.

-M. A. Olatoye Baiyewu

You came into my life
Soft, mysterious
Like a dream.

I rushed into your
Half-open arms
Welcoming your
Taken touch.

I loved the scent
Of your skin
Smelling of sweat
And cologne bought
By someone else.

I loved the sound
Of your voice
Trained, foggy, soothing
Even when it spoke
Unwanted words.

I loved your words,
Your visions
Your one-eyed
View on life
Not wide enough to see
How much I loved you.

Love, such a generic term
Label for something unexplainable
As unexplainable to me
As your love for her.

Undeniable over time
You are soft, mysterious
Like a dream.

-Amy Haynes

_____ Mother's Crossword Puzzles

Mother dear,
At times you just sit
Working your damn
Crossword puzzles, getting older.

Hair turning from
Dusty blonde
To misty gray, graceful.

Hands wrinkling, aching
Pain from twenty years
Hard labor.
Listening to all those
Old ladies' stories
And perm-dying
Their nonexistent hair.

Your laughter waning.
All the horror-pain
Of life
Has stripped your humor
Down
To its bare root.

I wish I could take it all away Mom...

Ease the pain in your hands,
Smooth them out a little.
Shave all those old ladies' heads
Shiny,
Tell them to shut up.

Dye your hair back
To the blondish dust
Youth
It once was.

Although gray
Does suit you.

Give your laughter back.
Ball up all those memories
Horrible,
Eat them myself.
Let them burn up
In my strong stomach youth.
Burp them out later
For us
To laugh at.

Most importantly...
Burn up all those damn crossword
Puzzles.
Gasoline freedom flame
Those bastards.
I'd dance Irish
Glee jigs
Around their sputtering death.
The creators of boxing words-
Beautiful, free
Would burn along with them.

Mom, you know
Those mind numbing creations
Age you ten years
With each one you finish?

Each three down
And seventeen across
You get right
Throws you another inch
Towards a grave,
One more foot to oblivion,
Utter eternity
To driving me mad.

-Matthew J. Nelson

PROSE

Cold Shower

He always took long showers.

It does seem a little strange to think about it now, but everyone, you know, has peculiar habits (I have several myself). Some people have to check the oven twice before leaving the house to make sure it's turned off. Some people are always late, no matter where they might be going. Some people lie about their childhood for reasons even they don't understand. Anyway, if you think about it, I guess, it's not the *what* that's important so much as the *why*.

I think about entering the steamy bathroom afterwards, knowing all the hot water was gone before I'd even gotten into the shower, steeling myself against the sharp rush of cold water I knew was coming. But I endured it. I endured all of those icy A.M. showers because I knew that he needed me to. He needed the warmth. He needed it to get back something the day robbed him of, something I could never figure out how to get from water anyway.

He exhausted himself living day to day. He put so much into everything he did. It was as if, for him, there was so much riding on everything, each action, each element of daily routine, every simple gesture. I'll admit now to being a little in awe of it all. He was driven by things I'm not sure I could explain to you, things that probably are there somewhere in all of us, only I wouldn't know how to show you them, even in myself. I guess maybe it was easier for me to romanticize these things in him...we all do this, I think, to insulate ourselves from things we can't quite grasp. There's a certain splendid charm to things that remain forever before our fingertips, wouldn't you say?

This is not to say that there was some ritual of distance between us. We loved each other very much, if somewhat clumsily. I'm simply saying that there are certain demarcations, certain mutually accepted areas of privacy within daily life into which even the most intimate of relationships does not intrude. His morning shower was one of these areas. And he always emerged from this private space every morning precisely at 7:00 A.M., the guy I love, my husband.

Sitting here now, I've been wondering what exactly he did in there every morning in the steam and the water, what ran through his mind. But

I can't really know for sure. Perhaps it was a kind of purification ritual, a renewal in a miasma of fire and water. Perhaps he simply needed to go through the day in his head to get everything straight before he set out for the world, to get the morning fog out of his head. He never was a morning person like I am.

Anyway, it was like it was a kind of meditation for him; when he thought I wasn't watching, he would turn on the water full blast and listen to the mantra-buzz of water as it crackled against the bottom of the tub, then sit there for a few minutes—thinking, I guess—breathing in the steam. He looked like this statue I saw a picture of in a book when I was in college. That's how I imagine it.

"Repose," that's the word I want to connect it with. That big, gentle man, sitting in there every morning in his warm, little kingdom of steam.

Maybe he spent that time with his mind gone blank. Maybe he was wishing that everything had turned out differently, a different job, a different city. Maybe he was thinking about an old girlfriend, a high school sweetheart, someone he never told me about. Maybe he was worried about what might be going wrong, there were so many things that *could* go wrong—there were a billion moving parts in our life together: what if the car dies? what if the furnace doesn't make it through another winter? we can't afford to have the television repaired again. He worried too much and too hard about these things.

"But Cassandra," he used to say to me, "what if...?"

Anyway, like I said, I got used to taking cold showers. It became a kind of test for me, a measure of loyalty. I did it to prove to him, to prove to myself, that I wasn't the kind of person who couldn't tough out someone else's idiosyncrasies—I didn't want to turn into my mother, for Christ's sake ("that selfish bastard," she used to mutter under her breath). And after a while, you know, it became a kind of pleasure for me, being jarred awake by a cold spray every morning. It acquired a kind of symbolic resonance for me, like a childhood scar you're proud of. I wanted to show him that I was strong, could be strong, as strong as he needed me to be.

Maybe I should have done something powerful to make him see me this way, but I hoped that my mere being this way, my strength in itself, would be enough, that it was something he could come to perceive, and something he would appreciate, on his own. He *didn't* see, though. He just never saw.

But all of that doesn't really matter now. This morning I slept late. I woke up and the shower was running, as it always was. I went downstairs

to the kitchen. When I'd made coffee, I went back upstairs and knocked on the bathroom door. It was past 7:30. I heard the water still running, and felt the steam seeping out from underneath the door on my toes. I knocked again. No answer. I knocked a third time; still no answer.

I opened the door—the steam wrapping around me—and there he was, naked sitting on the lid of the toilet seat with his legs tucked up tight to his body and his face pressed against his knees.

Something was wrong. I called his name, but he didn't respond. I even tried shaking him. Nothing brought him back.

The ambulance arrived sometime later. I'm not really sure how long. It seemed like hours. He was just there, frozen, naked and smooth, white-skinned like he'd been fresh-cut from Italian marble. It was too late, there was nothing I could do anymore...nothing I could do. Nothing except turn the water off. It had gone cold from being left on so long.

They've taken him away now.

Maybe I shouldn't have let him be alone that morning; I should have sensed this coming. There must have been signs. I should have known when to intervene. Maybe it was his way of calling out for help. Maybe he just wanted me to notice him, notice that he was suffering along just like everyone else. Maybe he needed my help. Maybe he just needed to know that he wasn't alone in there, that we all felt what he was feeling. Maybe what he was doing in there was holding on for his very life, holding on by the tips of his fingers. Maybe he was fighting in there, fighting off things that were driving him away, little by little, day by day, fighting the only way he knew how.

I don't know where he is right now, where he went between the time his alarm clock went off and the time I found him like that. I don't know what's left for him now...I don't know what's left of me. It's like everything has been stripped away, like something has chipped away all the things you're comfortable with, and one day you wake up and find yourself reduced to some statuesque essential, and that is all that is left, and maybe that's enough for you and maybe it's not.

Maybe all we have is strength...nothing but dumb, righteous, sedulous strength.

-Matt Parks

Your Title Here

It's late tonight—later even than I usually am. At least it isn't raining this morning—not a bad time for a long walk home. The sun will be up in what—two hours now? Christ—I gotta get some sleep sometime. It's been twelve plus seven is nineteen hours since that two hour nap earlier. Wow. The shakes are setting in—the body's about all cashed out. I should have eaten something before I dropped. To be honest, I should have not dropped at this godawful hour. I hope Gib came through with some good stuff this time. Which reminds me—I have to put these hits in the freezer when I get home.

I love the way carrying thirty felonies in my wallet feels. That's a hell of a lot of prison time for a couple square inches of paper. Gotta make some money on this—can't eat it all this time. I really ought to just sell it all. I really ought to go to class too, come to think of it. It's been since spring break? Fuck me. I need to get some shit done.

Where the hell am I? Tenth and Harrison? What the hell am I doing here? I should be walking totally the other direction. Goddamn it. Pay some fucking attention, Mitch. The other way, then. I guess the sun should come up on the other side, then. Where the fuck is Madison? Where am I? Twelfth. I wonder how much of this I'm saying out loud. Should really watch that. But then again, even if maybe I do see somebody, they'll just think I'm out of my mind on crazy drugs. Good guess.

Car coming? Not on the right. Watch the schmoie on the left—poor sap. Going to work in his cheap suit driving his eighty-something Oldsmobile he bought when he first thought that his job was taking him somewhere and he could afford it. Guess not. Run in circles, bro. That's what I do too. Or maybe he's just a burnt out freak like me but older, going home from some sort of suit-and-tie shindig. Fuck if I know. Two more blocks.

Hey—a dime. Kick ass. If I walk around long enough I'll have enough money for another pack of smokes. I'll want them a lot in five or six hours—I've only got two-thirds of a pack. Come to think of it, that sounds really good. I love my Zippo. I dig the power of carrying a sturdy little brass box that makes fire. Man's first power.

One more block. Good morning, Mr. Piggie. That's right, Fuzzy—just drive on by. I'm walking straight down the sidewalk. Never mind

that the sidewalk looks like it's covered in a foot of snow late in warm April. Drive on by. "Riding high in April, shot down in May." Damn straight.

Home! Jesus but it's been a long walk. At least this time those little desert creatures from Star Wars—Jawas—at least this time Jawas aren't jumping out at me from behind all the bushes. That was a crazy sort of way to end last trip. Fuck. Now I'm all paranoid. Jawas live in the desert on Tatooine or something, Mitch. Not in old neighborhoods in little shit towns. There are no Jawas behind any bushes. But there may be trolls.

Door's not locked. Damn but I hate it when I forget to lock the door. One of these days somebody'll walk in here and steal all my shit. Probably get my stash, too. That would teach me to lock my door. Jesus, what a mess. We apparently had quite a time last night. Night—what the fuck does that mean? What time is it, anyway? Six-fifteen. I'm really all sped up now from the tabs. Expect to be up for the next nine hours or so. Crazy shit—I'll crash really hard this time. Twenty-eight hours awake this time. Tomorrow is gone already—I'll sleep straight through. I guess I'll just have to miss my Tuesday classes again this week. Oh damn. I've already been out of class for a couple weeks anyway.

Fuck—I left my Lit books out on the table. Stale beer is everywhere. Guess I must like these textbooks enough to keep them. More money I threw away on stupid shit. Okay—prep for the next few hours. Won't want to move much for a while. A big glass of water. No clean glasses. That one looks relatively shit-free, and smells okay. Good enough.

Clear off this damn couch. Who the fuck left a half-used box of condoms on my couch? Christ. I hope nothing too crazy happened after I passed out. Looks like somebody left me another coat. I have no idea who this one belongs to. Where the fuck is the stereo remote? Under the cushions? Yeah. That's cool. What discs do I want in? To hell with it—I'll just listen to whatever's in there. Where's my backpack? Bedroom.

Under my coat? Nope. Closet? Yeah. Umm...sketch book, notebook, handful of different colored pens. Where's my fountain pen? In the shirt I wore the other day. I need to do laundry. There it is. Wow—these jeans are just crawling with neat patterns. Almost wish somebody else was here.

What'd I put in the CD player? Let's see—disc one, play, volume 16

or so. The Sex Pistols? Why the fuck did I put that in? Oh—I didn't. Disc two. Ahh. The Stones. That works well. It's too bright in here. Open the curtains up to watch the sun come up and get rid of this fluorescent bullshit. Damn but I swear a fucking lot sometimes.

Time check. Only six-thirty. But who the fuck cares? Jesus—I hate this fucking watch bullshit. Life is too crazy up to try to bother with keeping it divided into hours and minutes and shit. Get rid of this fucking watch—ahh shit. Landed right in that pot of noodles. What a mess. From now on I reject time. Days are divided into wakes and sleeps and that's all. And this wake has been a long one. Can't wait to get to the next sleep.

The body's telling me it's cold. I must be really tired. Way too overdressed for the weather already. Hey—I should try to eat something. Haven't eaten except a couple pretzels and some vitamins since I got up yester—since I got up this wake. Which was something like nineteen and a half hours ago. Or something. Can't do the math anymore—fuck if I know.

The clouds in front of the sun are really red this morning. Kinda gold around the edges. Kick ass. Faces in there—morphing (is that a real word?) back and forth from smiles to howls and cackles. I never understood that synesthesia shit all the health books said about acid. I've never seen music or felt anything I should have been smelling or anything. The clouds just change around back and forth a lot.

Funny how great it is to just watch a dirty pair of jeans after three (or was it four?) hits. Just crawling with cool ass green and yellow and pink and blue designs—kinda Navajo sort of Southwest patterns. Just crawling around on the jeans, sometimes dancing to the Stones. Kick mother-fucking ass. Where's that water?

Ahh...nothing like having liquid refreshment at just the right moments. It defines episodes. Drinking water in this state gives you a chance to say Wow—those were some pretty cool visuals, let's take a break and start up again. Speaking of which, where's my sketch pad?

Pens are great. I love laying down ink on paper. Tripping is about the only way I can draw shit—just outline whatever visuals there are and go back over them when more come. Color and lines. I need that green pen. Oh! Kick ass. Wow but this is intense. This sheet of paper will be everything for a while. My entire world is eight by eleven inches big, and sometimes a new pen comes in. Where's that black marker? Reach into the cushions, maybe.

Hands are pretty weird. It's strange to think of how well I can control something as fucked up and weird as this thing at the end of my arm. Life's pretty fucked up in general, really. Nothing bad—we just don't ever really think about how amazing everything is. Some people find religion and realize God is so amazing—look at everything He made. And then they find that moment of religious insight and they realize how fucked-up crazy it is that we exist. For me, I don't realize it until I'm on ludicrous amounts of hallucinogenic drugs. And holy shit am I babbling to myself. I hope I remember some of this when I come down. Cold water. Mmmm.

Christ! The Ramones. Not the mode I'm in. Disc three. Excellent. *What a Long Strange Trip It's Been*. Amen. The Dead know what they're talking about. This album always makes me happy. Don't know why, I guess—there's plenty of sad songs and all.

Oh shit! Phone call. I'm not ready for this. Hope it's John or Chris or somebody.

"Hello?"

"Hi. Is Mitchell Garret there?"

"I'm Mitch." Who the hell is this?

"This is Dr. Ryan. Have you dropped my eight o'clock American Romanticism class? We haven't seen you in a while."

Oh fuck. "Oh—yeah. I've been meaning to call you. I've had some personal problems lately—pretty depressed. I'm sorry I've been missing your class." Whatever. "I'm seeing a counselor about it." I went to one once—not completely a lie—oh wow does this wallpaper do some crazy shit. I swear chipmunks are running all over my walls.

"Will I see you tomorrow?"

"Yeah. Of course."

"Well, see me after class to see what we can work out for make up work. I hope you feel better."

He hopes I feel better. Whatever. If he believes depression is a legitimate excuse for missing class nobody would ever show up. Kick ass—stripes on my shirt are bending around and almost tying themselves together. That's cool as hell.

"Hello?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. I got distracted. Yeah—I'll see you later. Thanks for calling." Get the fuck away from that phone. Crazy shit. What time is it? Threw away my watch earlier. CD player says eleven-o-eight. Eleven-o-eight? wasn't it six-thirty last time I looked? Christ. There

went my peak. Where are my cigarettes? I definitely deserve one after that stress. Oh yum. Water, too. Oh double yum.

“Living on reds, vitamin C and cocaine. All her good friends can say is ‘Aint it a shame.’” Kick ass. What a great song. Go Jerry. Shit. My cigarette’s gone. I hope I enjoyed it. I’ll be dipped if I remember.

Fuck—wasn’t there something back there I wanted to remember? I thought about something that was really cool. Sometime before Dr. Ryan called. HOLY SHIT! I talked to Dr. Ryan! Did I do okay? Fuck! I told him I’d meet him after class tomorrow. What the hell was I thinking? I can’t crash for at least another—I hate this math. Dropped at six, plus at least eight is fourteen minus twelve is two o’clock. Can I make an eight o’clock class? Sleep for three, four, five, six, seven—that makes five hours plus twelve is seventeen hours of sleep if I crash at three this afternoon. Where the fuck is my watch? In the noodles. Goddamn but those stink. I wonder how behind I am in that class?

Syllabus should be on the table with the textbooks. Which one of these beer-soaked folders is American Realism? I mean American Romanticism. There it is. I last read that Cooper novel. That was before break. Oh fuck me. I’m behind three entire novels. And they’ve already started Poe. Fuck. I need to swear less. Where’s my calendar? Book bag.

This bedroom is still a mess. Where the fuck was my bag? In the closet. Okay. Calendar. Last day to drop classes with a WP or a WF—April 27, a Saturday. GODDAMN IT! That was three fucking days ago. What other shit do I have to make up in my other classes?

More beer-soaked folders. Two papers in Victorian Lit. Missed two unit tests in Life Science, those are only...fifteen percent of my final grade apiece. Shit. What else? Philosophy—The Good Life. What a dumb-ass name for a class. Missed a paper—ten percent of the final grade. Whatever. And a test—another ten percent. And she was giving those fucking pop quizzes once a week. Missed four of those. Fuck. I’m running out of expletives. Where’s that water?

Ugh—too warm. Wonder if there’s any ice in the freezer. Oh! Let’s get this acid out of my wallet and into the freezer. Let’s see—in-between the credit card (Fuck! Haven’t paid that bill yet.) and the picture of my kid brother. Ahh—there it is. What time is it? Eleven-forty. A little less than twenty hours till I need to be at that class. I’ve been up for something like twenty-five hours now. Don’t feel too bad, really,

except for some coming down stomach pains. Hey...

Where the hell is my bong? Behind the couch? Nope. Check in the kitchen—ahh. Next to the dirty dishes. Great fucking camouflage. Do I have any weed left? Check the pockets for a bag. Cool as shit. Probably two or three bowls left. Pack one. Lighter? Hmm. Fuck. I'll have to use matches again. Put a little water in there. I love pulling bongos when I'm crashing. Each hit just eases that much more pressure.

Yeah—the neck's not wanting to stay on my shoulders anymore. I must be tired—and kinda high, I guess. I need another cigarette; where'd I put them? All the way at the end of the couch. Too far away. Forget it. There's an awful lot of gravity in this room. All over the fucking place. I want a cigarette. It sucks to move.

Okay—school. It's about twelve now. I need to sleep sometime, go to class at eight tomorrow, that gives me twenty hours. Hey—if I dropped again now, I'd still have eleven hours to sleep before it's time to hit class. Eleven hours of sleep after being awake for twenty-five and nine is thirty-four hours. I could swing that. If I sell for six bucks a hit instead of five I could eat four more and still make money.

And I bet people will be out jamming and playing Frisbee in the quad. That'd be fun—pack the hitter box and get a couple people high. Yeah—I can eat a couple more hits before I have to deal with all that school garbage. Cool. Where are my scissors? I could handle a little sun and some good live music performed for it's own sake. Yeah—I'll even take my bongos. Two hits—damn this stuff is bitter. Yeah—I'll crash at about eight this evening and catch plenty of sleep before class.

I'll even get up a couple hours early and read the Poe stories we're supposed to have done by tomorrow—no I won't. That's bullshit. I'll trip on the quad, go back home and sleep for at least twenty-four hours, and then probably trip again. Goddamn. I'm such a mother-fucking junkie. Where are those bongos?

-Keith Owens

BIOGRAPHIES

M. A. Olatoye Baiyewu is a political science graduate student. He loves to make plainness beautiful and wishes to make more subjects understandable to a majority of the people.

Amy Haynes is a sophomore music education major and English minor who states, "I find that pain is the source of a lot of my poetry. Somehow it unveils many powerful, bittersweet feelings and emotions that are hidden beneath happiness."

Peter W. Kates enjoys living in Charleston very much, but he wishes his neighbors would keep their dogs chained up.

Patrick F. Kelly writes: "I emanate from the literary capital of Illinois, Lockport. I grew up near the mighty waters of the beautiful I&M Canal, and carry a vial of canal water at all times. Jenny Lucas, Michael Bonowicz, and Mr. Bedore are friendly people. I am sole possessor of the largest collection of cheese stickers in North America. I invite you over for tea."

Jason S. Logue is a post-Bachelor student working on teaching certification. His goal in life is to somehow make his poetry as rich and chocolaty as a Klondike Bar and to die with a pen in one hand, notebook in the other and the creative unconscious of man burning in his soul.

J. Dylan McNeill was published because he "bribed" one of the editors (and no, Carmella, it was NOT money).

Matthew J. Nelson: "To all my friends" (Charles Bukowski, *Barfly* 1987)

Keith Owens wants everyone to know that his story isn't necessarily autobiographical.

Matt Parks available upon request.

Whitty Whitesell is a graduate student who forgot to write a bio for us.

