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The Vehicle, Fall 2005

Kitty Apodaca

Mitch James

Dallas Schumacher

Rachael Jones

Tim Emmerling

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Kitty Apodaca, Mitch James, Dallas Schumacher, Rachael Jones, Tim Emmerling, Greg Lyons, Lindsay Green, Anthony Travis Shoot, Glen Davis, Ben Hart, Brandy Lee Barter, Angela Ventrella, and Giselle LaFluer

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Fall 2005



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Lion, linoleum 2005

By: *Angela Ventrella*



1/10h

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A. Ventrella

Upon Hearing the Poet...A Tribute

By: Kitty Apodaca

Jumbled thoughts regroup...recapture time...
Once upon a time in long ago Chicago,
Harnessing the poet's energy to memorialize
New beginnings on a crisp clean page.

Grievous recollections of
Unbelievable horror waste no time in
Zeroing in on new found freedom.
Leaving did not make the past go away.
Obeisant desire drives the man
Who seeks to tell a story...their story...
So no one will ever forget. Now his story...He
Knows he is the keeper of their memory and
Imprints the truth on a crisp clean page.

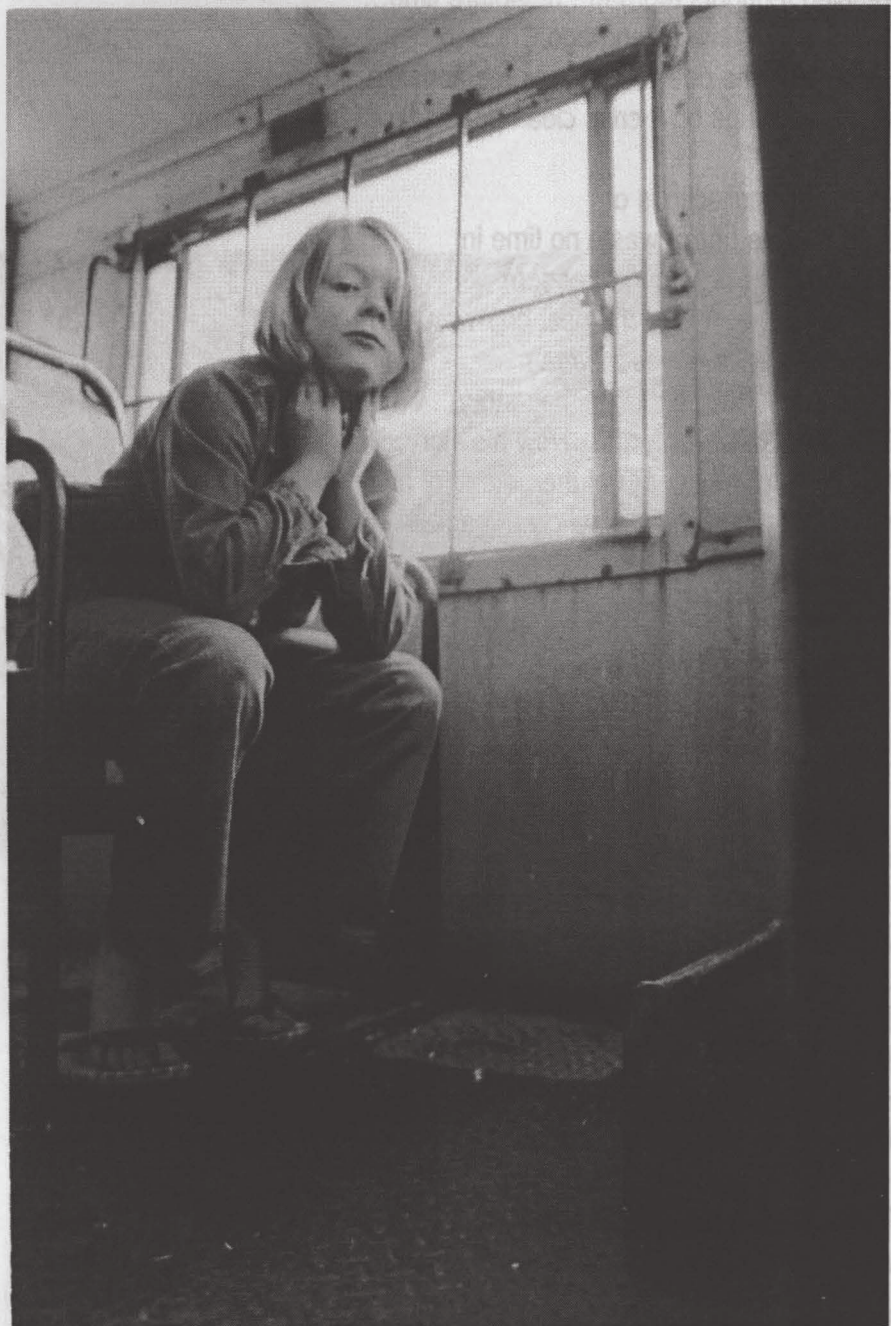
Whispers

By: Kitty Apodaca

Damp crumpled sheets, satin pillows askew,
Comforter piled high in lacy white heat;
Scented air resonates wild rendezvous...
Breath matches breath in rhythmic heartbeat.
Candles scorch shadows on unaware walls
Losing them in midnight's velvet embrace;
Entwined, they dance in dark shadowy halls,
Marking time with music that leaves no trace.
Hot summer wind tangles hot sweaty dreams
Then fans them to breathless reality
In the starlit darkness naked flesh gleams
Primal passion dissolves plurality.
Wild nights, wild nights of purloined luxury.
Wild nights, wild nights, beautiful perjury.

The Caboose

By: Brandy Lee Barter



(Untitled)

By: Mitch James

I wish to slide
Into a silver solstice,

Like a beige mini blind
Sliding through a sliver
Of silver moonlight.

I bend down
And kiss your head
To say good bye.

As I approach the door
I stop and look back,
But I know that I should go.

I step out into a sleeping black night,
Before the birds,
And shuffle home
Over an acorn covered sidewalk.

With hands in my pockets
I think of thumbing
That lace strap on your hip.

Remembering...

How light it was in my hand
Yet how heavy it hit the floor.

Remembering...

The sting
Before I remembered the nails that caused it.

The sting that made me bunch the leopard print
In clenched fists
Helping gravity pull it
Down...down.

All this and more...

Remembering when our bodies hit the bed
Like soaked sponges,
With so much air between us,

My ears screaming
God beating my chest,
Knowing that iced pink lemonade
On a desert day would not be this sweet.

Remembering...

How you slept like a fetus
While I died under the weight.

A Friend On Fourth Street

By: Mitch James

Rough and jagged, you've rotted yourself into the dead around you.
You've withstood blasphemous winds,
Corpulent with the sinful sonorous murmurs of passers by.

Drunkenly they've stumbled by and lashed out!
In a lazy inarticulate lingo
That's been carried by whimsical December winds
And into your musical arms.

Where you've kept them away from the ones they might hurt.

If every stretching branch were a sin you've heard or seen,
Then you've experienced enough to harbor the world's lies.
Is that why you reach so high?
To hold our sins under God's nose to say—
Look, my old friend, they are sorry.

To stand below your boughs
And watch your many offspring make glitter of the sun
As they frolic with the wind—
I nearly fall.

I use you to brace myself,
Your scent of life finds a home in my olfactory,
And I know that on any given day I would fall in love,
This would be the smell.

The smell a Crisp Snap would make if it could.

My hands feel how brittle your flesh is,
Yet it's so rough, jagged, and cold
From your own shadow.

Is this your punishment
For all the sins you've seen and felt?
For all the sins you hold to the heavens to say—
My old friend, they are sorry,
Give them another chance, and me another branch and jagged flesh.

As I feel you, I know you wish to never go,
You've balanced too many teetering sunsets in your arms,
But you know you should have gone long ago
Like your friends that now nourish your roots.

The Clouds Above

By: Brandy Lee Barter



*Better Off Dead but
Never Been Better*

By: Dallas Schumacher

You can lose the Will to Live but not the
stubborn habit of living; even so,
those mornings when the bottom drops out
I have to think hard—the rusty cogwheels
turning between my ears—to think up
One Reason to climb up from my warm bed,
an Excuse to keep breathing one more day.
Today I turned my back on the razor,
the loaded gun, the plastic bag, the fistful
of pills because—

Because I have a job,
because I promised to take my girlfriend
to a movie, or wash my car, because
the alarm clock rattles me awake, my
clockwork limbs making the motions of Life,
or something like it, on those mornings when
a paper-cut is an excuse to kill yourself
but a cigarette, a bill to be paid,
a poem to write is a reason to live.

(Untitled)

By: Rachael Jones

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Marooned

By: Tim Emmerling

My father's Levis were an ugly, maroon mess, bleached with crimson in streaks and small ovals. The pockets were still warm, keeping the blood inside fluid. I touched it while rummaging, carrying him on my fingers and mixing him with my tears.

His wallet was wet too, a sticky wet. It was always so heavy, carried his entire life in there. It hit the floor with a thud.

My fingers dug down further to find the barbs of glass waiting for their touch. The tiny spikes reached into my flesh like they did his, just missing the unwrapped bone. The hole leaked with each pump, but I didn't care.

I turned the jeans upside down then and watched as handfuls of stained glass filled the floor before me. Rays of light from above danced across each one, blasting their brilliance back as thin white streaks. My eyes evaded and found the clock instead; the hands were stiff, showing no signs of life.

That's when I saw it all.

There he was, driving the tanned sedan on his way home, the smile he passed down to me highlighting his excitement. This was his day: cake, candles, presents; the whole gamut. His radio played classic rock.

Then something wrapped the sky in a garbage bag and it got really dark, the kind of dark birthed by an oncoming storm. I saw a different car now, driving along the opposite side of the road, staggering traffic at its slow speed. It was a woman driver, the skin on her face wrinkled, holding onto her bones for dear life, shaking with every bump in the road. Her eyes were devoid of color, devoid of life, the sockets closing slowly, fighting to stay open.

I was much higher now, viewing both cars at once, both continuing in the same direction, her car beginning to sway. My dad's car moved to the inside lane as her swaying grew worse, looking like a hunk of metal swinging on a pendulum. Cars were flashing their brights and beeping their horns, trying desperately to wake her up, but she wasn't asleep.

Just as the two were about to pass, she slipped into oncoming and the two vehicles came together in a metallic embrace, the headlights shattering first, sparking like fireworks. He never had a chance to remove his grin, the steering wheel did that for him when it opened his skull and shattered his knee. It all happened so fast.

His radio was silenced and everything went mute.

I saw my mom's face then, picking up the phone, hearing the awkward voice at the other end, cracking into pieces. My little brother just stood there, not knowing whether to comfort her, not knowing what was happening at all. I just stood there too.

"Your father has been in an accident," she said, sobbing and losing her balance.

"He's been rushed to the emergency room."

I'm standing here in the hospital right now, holding his bloody jeans, searching for way out of this nightmare, wondering what's happening. He's probably hooked up to a million different machines, beeping units, glowing lines; all lit up like a Christmas tree. I can't help wondering what life would be like without him.

The thought squeezes my eyes, wringing them, streaming more water down my face. People are watching me, thinking I'm insane. I make them feel glad about the reason they're sitting in this awful place.

My contacts are all fogged up and wet, sliding out of place, blurring my vision. I can still see the clock though. The hands are stiff.

A Human Reaction

By: Greg Lyons

The grenade blew up in his face.

I saw his jaw shatter
into chunks

and

pieces,

exploding outward,
spalting

ing

on
to me.

I saw his tongue move without his jaw,

without any support

as it flapped and wiggled
like a fish

out of water.

I think he was trying to say something.

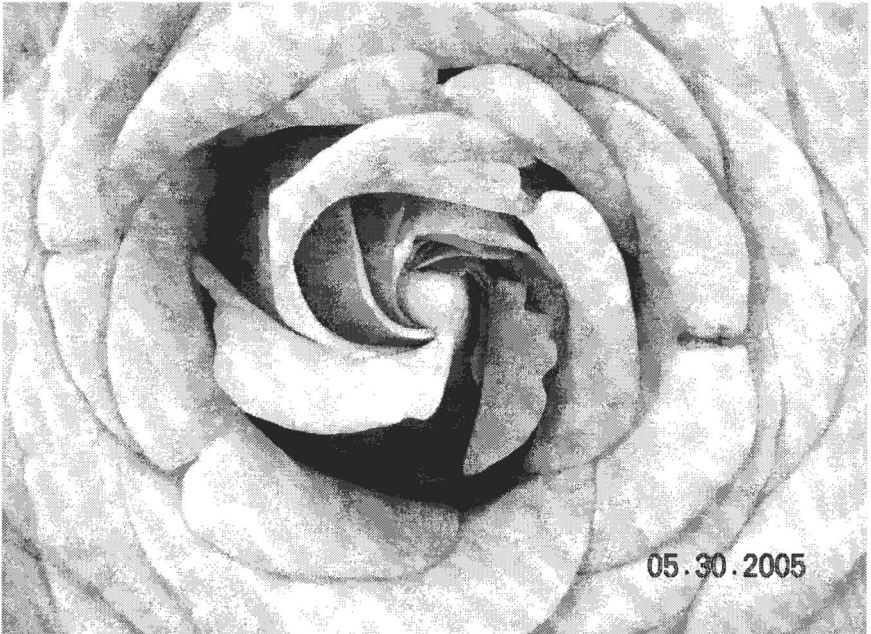
(Untitled)

By: Rachael Jones

Forbidden fruit falls from the tree I have been watching.
I sit in the grass
my fingers tiptoeing
around the seemingly soft peach
afraid it will burst into flames
and a spark will
leap to my cascading auburn waves
leaving me changed
in a way I had not anticipated
when I was only watching.

Rose

By: Giselle LaFluer



Mary Shelley: Speaking Briefly of a Dream

By: Lindsay Green

"We will each write a ghost story."

That's what you said. That was your-what?-your challenge to us.

Don't contradict me, please. It was a challenge. To me especially.

I took it that way. And Percy-but God, everything's a challenge to Percy.
Myself included.

He's asleep, I think. What time is it? Listen to me, I-

It came to me in a dream. I feel I can tell you this. But-please-only you
for now.

Tell me... Have you read your Milton?

There is a line-of his. I woke in the night with its echo in my ears-in my
mind.

And the most horrible image in my eyes.

Am I still-? No. Not shaking. But the image...but no, not shaking, my
dear.

We Wollestonecraft women...I'm sorry. Some gallows humor just
occurred to me.

What's that? The Milton? Ah. Yes.

"Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me Man, did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?"

From my clay... Forgive me, Lord Byron. Do not yet lose patience. I will
tell all.

It came to me. In a dream. But of course it would. My dreams, my...
Castles. In the air. They have always been

more fantastic and... I don't know... agreeable? than my scribblings. *My
work*, as Percy tauts it.

I don't know.

You and your Swiss summering. You men and your- but that's it, isn't it?
I'm not making sense. But I am.

It came to me-you see-in-

I saw a horrid thing. A man, but not a man. More than- but also less.

Standing there. Looming and dark. The

grit of the grave under thick nails, in coarse hair. The smell of death. And
birth.

But- not birth. Invention.

Manufacture.

Do you recall your conversation with Percy this past night? Perhaps you don't. Perhaps- such... grandiosity of thought passes as so much air to one who-

I wonder. What you said of Darwin. Of the theories you had- Did you believe it?

To-animate-something that is-

To *Re*-animate-

I saw it, you see. In my dream. Standing. Hulking as a great pregnant thundercloud must over those tiny souls who have prayed for rain and yet have no idea what-

I saw another man. Cowering. Prostrate. Horrified of that which he had wrought.

This man is Man. Is Men. Do you see? And his-his-

His Ambition. His reach that has finally met and then exceeded his-

Do you see?

Do you remember your Coleridge?

To Reanimate. Which is not to give life to. Which is not to revive, but to reuse. To recycle.

I know what it is to envy the miracle of birth, my dear. I have seen it and felt it and lost it, which is more...

Woman does not feel the need to envy God, you know. Woman *is* God. That is what man hates. That is what man strives against.

That is the root.

We are the earth. And the flower. And the rain that feeds.

I will compose myself before telling this formally. I will structure my epiphany into something resembling creativity and—and—talent—and—

But for now. For these moments, my friend, it must be only we two. And I must tell you that I have hit upon something.

And it terrifies me.

And that, my dear, is the point.

Sour Grapes

By: Dallas Schumacker

I was young enough
for training wheels
and *Sesame Street*
when I felt there was
something missing,
pieces of my forgotten
on the factory floor,
something lost which
most other kids never missed—
laughing, running, screaming, *together*,
they never asked questions
that angered the teacher,
they laughed at jokes I didn't get
and played games the made no sense to me.

I was That Kid,
pushed aside to a
lonely park bench
with just a box of crackers,
a puzzled face, and a
habit of looking at my shoes
those rare moments when
someone spoke to me.

The kids have all grown up
to chase careers, parties,
beer and pussy and new cars—
whereas I'm still sitting here,
those pieces of me still missing.
I've traded my crackers for cigarettes,
my bench for a typewriter and a window,
my puzzled face for a quiet laugh,
a lot of good stories,

a closet full of manuscripts,
and years of misadventures
with other defective lonely children.

You can't miss what you never had,
or wish for what you can't imagine—

So keep your sour grapes, folks,
but let me play with your broken toys.
Give me your druggies, your drop-outs,
your wallflowers and late-bloomers,
the boy picked last for kickball,
the girl never asked to dance—
send me your lost children
and leave us to our bench.

Red Bouquet

Giselle LaFluer



Country Road

By: Brandy Lee Barter

he told me stories-
mingoose
versus coon,
bin game hunter

how do I grieve
for someone
who's dead
but calls

VT nO
larks fire shells
planes drop bombs
but we don't see



tells me on the phone
that he can't help me
with money-
and in the same breath
says he's getting
a credit card
so he can buy a
melon green sport coat
and a twelve gauge
shotgun.

What You Don't See Won't Hurt You

By: A. Travis Shoot

On TV
tanks fire shells
planes drop bombs
but we don't see
where they land.

We don't see
dark -skinned men
cradle limp
little girls
clothes and bodies
ripped
faces spilt-
screaming
red-brown
jigsaw pieces.

grief

By: A. Travis Shoot

he told me stories-
mongoose
versus cobra,
big game hunter
versus cape buffalo

played
20 questions
on long drives,
played the piano
with my hands-
even played
video games with me
though he lost
every time.

now
he takes too many pills,
slurs his speech,
tells me on the phone
that he can't help me
with money-
and in the same breath
says he's getting
a credit card
so he can buy a
melon green sport coat
and a twelve gauge
shotgun.

how do I grieve
for someone
who's dead,
but calls
to remind me
that he's not yet
buried?

Elephant Flower

By: *Giselle LaFluer*



Monday Morning in Apartment 37

By: Greg Lyons

I saw her fly away.

She was walking naked
through the living room,
soft against the carpet's thread,
soft, like the word heaven.

Her copper skin faded
in the light, as her
long black hair reached out
behind her as a gentle wind

blew in through the open
Sliding glass door.
Her hair reached back in strands
eventually converging,

resting quietly on her head.
She walked through
that sliding glass door
and leaned over the patio's fence,

her breasts stood there,
clinging to her chest.
She climbed that rail
as her hair flung in chaos

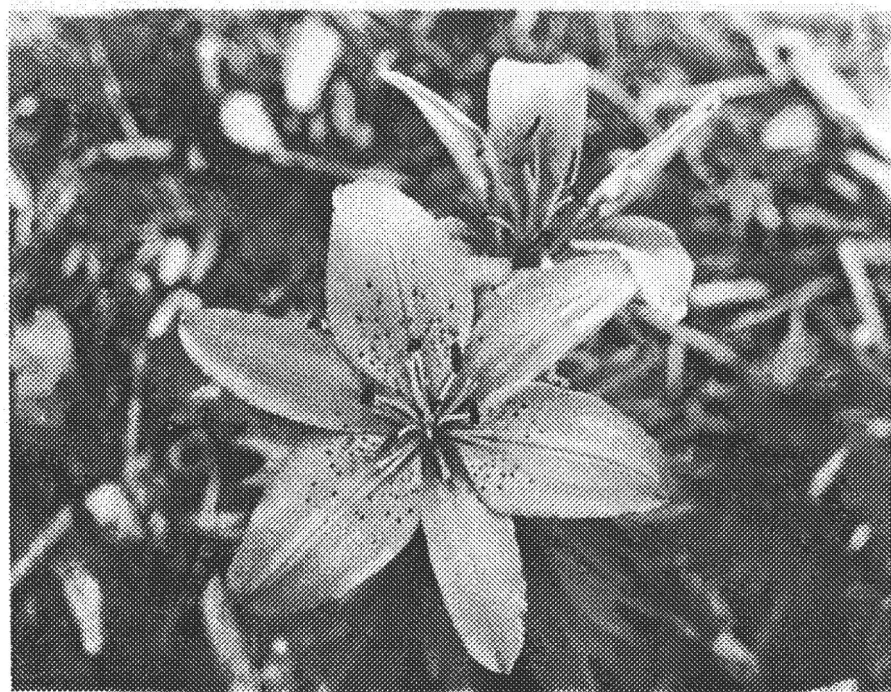
from the winds below and
in front. They no longer converged
into one indiscernible creation,
but into parts, flinging wildly as if
they were hurt. She stood on that ledge

with her soft feet against the splintered wood.
Her breasts parted as she reached out on both sides.
Wings, white wings, grew from her open arms
as they stretched larger than herself.

They looked like clouds parting the sun.

Flower. photograph

By: Angela Ventrella



Relics

By: Glen Davis

The heavy smell of grease filled the kitchen. An old man watched intently waiting for the right time to turn the burgers. His wife rarely bought hamburger and when she did, it was ground turkey or chicken. As he turned the burgers over, he sneered at the George Forman grill. His wife had bought it a few months ago, and she couldn't get enough of it. He breathed in the aroma of burning meat as he smashed the grease out of the hamburgers. His eyes never left the pan as he reached for the cheese. It had been months since he had an honest to God cheeseburger, and he would have been perfectly happy if it took the rest of the day to cook them. He gently lifted the cheeseburgers from the pan and set them on the bread already set out for them. The mustard had already been applied, and the pickles were nearby.

He sat down to eat his cheeseburgers, and thought about his wife. He loved her; there was no denying that, but he almost never kissed her. It bothered him now, but at the time it just didn't feel right. Kissing is something teenagers do. He always gave her a peck on the cheek or the forehead, but it was never one of those curl your toes kind of kisses. He had kissed other women like that, but it just wasn't the same with her. A tear surfaced under his eye. He could hear her telling him that red meat would kill him someday. She always did that; she would try to guilt him into being healthy, by telling him that she wanted to live to old age with him. He could see now why it kept coming up. He never considered living without her, there was no reason to. She had been athletic all her life and ate healthy food. She looked years younger than him even though they were the same age, but now here he was. Alone and thinking about her.

He longed to hear her complain about his eating habits. They used to fight about the strangest things. They once had a three day argument about coffee. He won that one, or at least he thought so. Yesterday he took the garbage out, and saw the decaffeinated coffee can hidden beneath the newspapers. He immediately went to the cabinet and got out the coffee can, turned it around and read the label. The can was two years old. He cussed under his breath at her just before taking a sip of his decaffeinated coffee. He had made a fresh pot this morning.

He knew no one would be over in time to share it, but he made a whole pot just the same. He pulled an extra pickle out of the jar next to him and tossed it into his mouth. Dill pickle, none of that sweet pickle crap his wife bought. Sliced too, his wife seemed to think that if you bought whole pickles you could just slice them up and use them on sandwiches.

Suddenly remembering the pan, he got up to clean it. His wife was stickler about dirty dishes. He caught himself looking for the dog food to dump the grease into, but the dog had died earlier in the year. It really hurt his wife, he considered buying her a new one, but it was more like a child to her than a pet. He decided not to wash the pan and just threw it into the trash instead.

He walked across the house to unlock the front door. He had almost forgotten to do that. As he admired the molding around the door-frame, he began talking to himself. "Cant buy molding like that, all they got now is pine you couldn't stain it if you wanted to. Not like this stuff here, that's oak, I pulled it out of the Baum building when they were tearing it down. Dumb ass construction crew was driving their trucks over it." No one was around to hear him but he had gotten used to telling people about it, and kind of wished someone were here now so that he could tell them how he saved it from the dump. It had taken him an hour to find enough unbroken trim to put around his front door, but he found it, and cut it to exacting standards. You couldn't fit a piece of wax paper between the miters in that molding, it took him a month to finish it.

As he sat back down, he looked around to make sure he hadn't forgotten to do anything else. He ran through his list. He had written it down, his memory was never worth a damn, but as he got older it seemed to get worse. He was always finding himself looking at something and wondering what he was supposed to be doing. Right there first thing on the list was un-lock the front door. He had seen enough T.V. to know that when you die they kick in the door to get you out of your house. He had begun unlocking the front door every morning when he woke up months ago. They weren't going to kick in his door molding. They could just open the door and walk in.

He read his list, as his cheeseburgers got cold. He had to squint because his eyes had gotten bad. The doctor said that he could have had them fixed, but he didn't see the point in it. He could still read his writing, although he had started to make his letters larger than normal so

that he would be able to read it back again later. As he read through the list he looked through the house to make sure that he had done everything on it. He had after all forgotten the door this morning, and that was one of the most important things on the list. As he read to himself, he checked each item off the list.

“Door...Letter...Coffee...” He went through the whole list, and finally was certain that he had done everything, everything except the music but that was an after thought and hadn’t made the list. He got up and looked at his cd collection. “Can’t have no compact discs today. They make the music sound dead, CD digital quality; hear everything clear as a bell. Music isn’t supposed to be clear. That’s why they make it on big ass instruments that vibrate and twang, and give feedback, and rattle. That’s music dammit, all of it...Just because the artist didn’t put the rattles into the sheet music don’t mean he didn’t put them in the music.”

He had already started towards the closet as he talked to himself, and was now pulling open the door like a child opening a Christmas present. He drug out an old record player. His wife had wanted to get rid of it long ago, but he insisted on keeping it. He won that one for sure and here was the proof. His wife had long ago bought copies of his records on compact disc, and she had actually forgotten about the record players being in the closet. It would have been thrown out, had she remembered it was there, and the biggest part of him knew it was luck that saved his beloved record collection. He pulled the record player out of the closet, and began to reach for the records when he saw the one he wanted.

“Heh, what luck, right on top. It’s you an me mister Waters.”

Muddy Waters, Hard Again had been his favorite record, it skipped badly from overuse, and he had listened to the CD for the last few years, but not today he had to have the real thing. It wouldn’t skip today, he knew it wouldn’t.

As he gingerly set the record on the turntable, he gave it a spin, and set the needle on the outer edge. The switch had broken years ago, and the turntable never stopped turning you had to unplug the whole thing to change records without scratching them. He reached down and plugged it in, and slowly walked back to his chair where he had left his cheeseburgers. They were cold by now but he didn’t mind. They would

taste just fine.

He looked at his list again and decided that everything was in order. He could finally eat. He got comfortable, and waited for Muddy Waters to get into "Mannish Boy" before he resumed eating. He was surprised at how good it tasted. He couldn't taste the poison at all, and the record never skipped once.

Yellow Daisies

By: Giselle LaFluer



untitled 35

By: Ben Hart

Speak of love and I shall kill you

Speak of death and we shall dance

Eye to torrid eye we tango

Round round yonder birch and reeds

On our doubling backs we crumble

Our bodies interlocked

Laughs now laughing at the moon

But locked like hem

Love steps on reason's foot

And once again too soon

It caught us 'fore we fell asleep

Laughing at the moon

Biographies

Kitty Apodaca – no information provided

Brandy Lee Barter – senior English major from Sullivan, IL

Glen Davis – English major

Tim Emmerling – senior Journalism major from Downers Grove, IL

Lindsay Green – English major with teacher's certification who plans to teach high school English and drama. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is her favorite book and has greatly influenced her reading and writing.

Ben Hart – Senior English major, Philosophy minor. Major influences: Ben Grimes, eccentric people, good music, The Country Cup Restaurant, Jesus Christ, and what Kierkegaard calls "Fygt og Boeven." Not necessarily in that order.

Mitch James – English major, Creative writing minor

Rachael Jones – senior English major

Giselle LaFluer – writer, photographer

Greg Lyons – "Life is like driving a car at night. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way."

Dallas Schumacher – English major

A. Travis Shoot – senior English major with plans to pursue a graduate degree at EIU

Angela Ventrella – Art Major

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