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The Vehicle, Fall 1996

Joe Howard

Amy Haynes

Sandra Beauchamp

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Recommended Citation

Howard, Joe; Haynes, Amy; Beauchamp, Sandra; Brown, Thomas T.; Grier, Shari; Logue, Jason S.; Manny, Kimberly; Chisausky, Eric; Cosenza, Carmella; Traxler, Andrea; Goodall, Shannon; Baumann, Kendall W.; Watson, Mandy; Koller, Abby; Kawa, Michael; and May, Michael, "The Vehicle, Fall 1996" (1996). *The Vehicle*. 67.

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Authors

Joe Howard, Amy Haynes, Sandra Beauchamp, Thomas T. Brown, Shari Grier, Jason S. Logue, Kimberly Manny, Eric Chisausky, Carmella Cosenza, Andrea Traxler, Shannon Goodall, Kendall W. Baumann, Mandy Watson, Abby Koller, Michael Kawa, and Michael May

Archives

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1996

Fall

The Vehicle

Fall 1996

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THE VEHICLE
V o l . 3 8 . N o . 1

Editors:

Melissa Anderson
Amanda Davis

Editorial Staff:

Carmella Cosenza
Andrea Traxler

Editorial Advisors:

Dana Ringuette
Lauren Smith

Publication Advisor:

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Printing Advisor:

Wilburn Hutson

Cover Art/Graphics

Peggie Kline

Reading Staff:

Carmella Cosenza
Heather Delabre
Elizabeth Devore
Angela Eggert
Shari Grier
Sarah Hill
Phyllis Karpus
Michael Kawa
Patrick Kelly
Mitchelle Lammers
Carrie Laurent
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Tina Salmons
Tamara Townsend
Vicky Walker
Craig Wilson

Extra Thanks to:

Queen Donna Cuisia

Produced by Sigma Tau Delta
Honorary English Organization
Eastern Illinois University

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While reexamining the contents of this *Vehicle*, we find that our selections reflect instances of human experience. As Virginia Woolf might say: "... it is or will become a revelation of some order, it is a token of some real thing behind appearances, and I make it real by putting it into words...all human beings are connected with this."

To our submitters, thank you for capturing these fragments of human experience. And to our readers, may this be one vehicle – one of many we hope – which transports you into another realm of creative thought.

Melissa Anderson & Amanda Davis



Darcy™

tune in time

Sing, goddess, of the rooftop children
Who, upon their starry height embraced
Far above the world of men.
Caught and lit the night
To let it burn.
Majestically Finite they were.
Like a sweet
Tune
In time
Now must fade

-Joe Howard

sestina for dying

I see myself, now, sitting
In my parents' living room reading,
Watching television, probably thinking
About the male torment in my life
This year. Each year it becomes harder.
But I always deal, move on, grow.

Will I live to be old and gray, to see my children grow?
Will I be found one hundred and one, breathless, sitting,
Plath or Bukowski on my lap, remembering when it was
harder
To love, not knowing how to forget, reading
Poetry at 1 am, wishing the hurt was gone from my life,
And how I would be happier if I could just stop thinking.

Will I die reminiscing, thinking
Of a lost love never given a chance to grow?
Or will I see visions of a man whose hand I wear for life?
How nice it would be to die sitting,
Peacefully alone, reading
My poetry one last time, having survived times when it was
harder.

When I die, I want the wind to blow harder,
Everyone to lie still that night thinking,
Realizing something is different, and fall asleep reading
Poetry, noticing how much people change, grow.
When I close my eyes to die, I want to see someone sitting,
Waiting for me to join them in another life.

I could be wasting my life away sitting.
Always, constantly uncontrollably thinking
Of how this miserable emotional exchange will help me
grow.
Screw growing, I would rather love you and watch you
reading.

I want to die hearing your voice reading.
Knowing how it touched my words, my life.
How you helped me grow.
And realize that sometimes when it is harder,
It is better, more involved, and that thinking
Is not so bad, when it involves you, poetry, and sitting.

Maybe you will die reading poetry remembering when it
was harder
To love, you, having lived life too quickly not thinking
Enough about trying to grow, and die alone, sitting.

—Amy Haynes

violets

Remember those dark blue violets
glaring up at you from a field
of thin white skin?
Bruises silently ignored
until I eased my small body
into a cool bath under
your steady gaze.
You saw only tumbles, scuffs,
a little girl's lost balance
on a bicycle. Suddenly senile
you murmured: "Shouldn't be
so clumsy. Not lady-like. Boys
don't kiss little clowns."

(Mother, boys adore little girls
with bruises hidden beneath tight
slinky clothes: a body crying out
for hard stinging love)

I hated you sometimes:
your rage God-awful real,
raw beatings with hangers, bald
bright slaps quick as boiling copper,
neck breaking grips coiling silent
flesh into my hair. Then, frequent
remorseful kisses so heavy,
breathing through my swollen
throat left me gasping for air.

Now I find myself fearing your death

which swings so close I feel its
weight and whisper humming at my neck,
even under the covers with a lover
gripping me tightly, fingers gouging
my neck and breasts, where bruises will
flower, speckling my skin, bruises rising,
pushing blood to surface, wanting to break
out, to bloom in blue roses,
tokens of some kind of angry love.

Mammoth woman, what is the skeleton
hidden beneath seas of midnight
refrigerator raids, triple martini lunches,
laxatives, bottled remedies, and other hungers
motherhood and marriage could never quench?

You tried so hard to be the mother
who left me at your feet, your own uterus
worthless at bearing any bud, a shadowy
hybrid of you and father, a child to grow
as flower bulb glue between
rotting wooden boards.

Splitting the dirt damp silence
like a gardener with hoe and hatchet,
I surface from this hate and your
marble-heavy fist at my back, I hold
and forgive you, forget these
dark, drooping dead violets
so that we might bloom, breathe
and live, and cast light on these
cold, well hidden skeletons.

-Sandra Beauchamp

melody's song

Small-boned, fourteen, buzzed,
I circle Prospect Avenue
looking for tricks. Put my old
man out of his funk and maybe
he won't torch me tonight—
Newport cherries hurt
the merchandise, but
girls like me—dim stars,
arrive in litters:
a dime a dozen.

I join girlfriends at a lamp
pole where we pace, swing
sequined bags, complain, our
laughter shrill, about Johns,
tight tippers, slow nights,
the hardcore fantasies.

We twist under tanktops and fishnets,
wary hunters without ammo, face
the black station wagon as the window
slides down and a bald head emerges,
slick and wet, shiny as a baby crow.

We offer sweet bounty
to the hungry, forgetting
those who have slipped between
our thighs and left
us alone, dirty, washing
off with stained hotel towels.

The old nuns warned us
about crossing our legs
too tightly, wearing bright
lipstick, smacking our gum,
swinging our hips. The brimstone
licked at our wanton heels.

I can still feel my uncle's palm
pressing my new breasts, his fingers
nudging at my panties as my mother
cackles nervously behind a tipped
gin and tonic, a cigarette smoldering
in a clay ashtray.

—I pull the door shut beside me,
lock the buckle across hip bones,
watch sweaty hands grip the gummy
wheel and steer me from the buzz
and hum of downtown into the gaping
mouth of countryside.

When the car lumbers
into a well-worn pathway
of some farmer's cornfield,
his fingers release the wheel
like a saint dropping God
and the moon clicks into my eyes.

I smell the promise of corn,
hear the cricker's high piping,
remember
the fear of home, the nuns rattling

and I understand he has been here before.

My eyes follow his dark shadow
and I step out into damp grass,
tripping over starlight
gazing into death, knowing
the city's lights will burn
without me.

—Sandra Beauchamp

_____ a spinning top contemplation

Silhouettes do pirouettes
to minuets.

 melodic and mournful
on spider webs of glistening gray
stretched across an eventful maze.

 never known.
confusion, forgotten long ago.

A cavernous grotto with mountainous walls
of colorless stone.

of mist, of mystic,
 rocky and hard

yet nothing at all

pulling you
 touting you.

 stopping you cold.
turning you 'round and 'round and 'round.
a magical darkness that has you bound,
 sealed in your spinning top.

Spinning top do you think a lot
of lost, lonely or forsaken?

Which way to go,
 which way to turn.

to emerge from this sullen delusion?
That you might take leave of this sojourn.

 these endless corridors
that have you twisting and turning
'round and 'round and 'round,
 relentless.

It is the soul within you
that has you bound.

 in the mist of evermore.
A wanton wind, both hot and cold.

dances across your heaving ocean,
crashed against your rocky bosom.

The sea and sea breezes
doing pirouettes to minuets,
always wisping
into a misty nothing.

Something,
then nothing
then something once more,
only to be swept up by nothing.
Water into air, air into water,
conceived solely for ending
and then again, being born.

There is a room I know
with a small window
that looks out
onto the water,
where I can watch the wind and the water
dance their eternal rites of life and death
forever dying to live again.
I stand alone, distant in my rustic tower,
tasting the odor of misty nothing,
once perhaps something,
and now,
now merely the fragrance of memory
floating through this open window to cover my face.
I feel the soft caress of caustic spider webs,
glistening gray on a field of darkness,
ominous,
hard yet empty.
Ghostly silhouettes of lost and forgotten fears
doing pirouettes
to minuets
through years of dreams and tears.

My mind is a spinning top
 on a dusty attic floor.
in a dimly lit room on a northern shore.
with the wind and the water
 crashing against a weathered door.
a place,
 a room I know.
where I can watch life by a tossing sea.
Life, with all it's winning and losing,
 living and dying,
pushing me, pulling me,
turning me 'round and 'round and 'round.
 Dancing with me,
 playing with me,
whirling and twirling me,
hurting and yearning
 for all lost
lonely and forsaken,
 everything I once had,
and have not now.
Living seemingly
 simply to die here
in this blackened maze,
 glistening gray
caressing nothing,
hard yet empty, dark and shimmering,
 damnation searching for salvation.
wondering, wandering,
 which way to go,
to end this erosive contemplation.

-Thomas T. Brown

lady of the night

Scarlet blood
descends her thigh
trickling upon Pure
white bed sheets.

the Pain within
caused from Forced
flesh into flesh
Ripping seams of Innocence.

Bound to lust
she cries realizing
the Epiphany
of her actions.

the Stage of Seduction
now a room
in the Cheapest motel with
Vacancy blinking Bright.

-Shari Grier

the difference between a hand and a killing jar

My son six, dizzied by dusk's fragrance,
grabs the air,
hands snapping at the lightening
bugs, their bodies flare green,
on and off without a sound.
It reminds me of missiles in Vietnam
buzzing my head. The screams of Vietnamese children
dying, scared me more than the constant
threat of my death. Bullets
jatted open their eyes.

Eyes blinking, hidden
in the silhouette of his body against the sky
my son walks towards me,
a lightening bug pulses in his hand.
I look at his treasure and remember
a machine gunner telling me he used to cut
the light off and make necklaces
from the glowing bug-half. I hope
my son will never do the same.
Instead he pops the bug into his mouth
like a pill, and gulps it down.
He glows with life.
I want to decorate myself with him but the bugsick frown
tells me to hold him
in my war bled hands.

—Jason S. Logue



"The Bat I Killed"

You walk in, face flushed and breathless.
Smelling like fresh air and fine-earth frost.

I can remember, back through our idle conversation,
to the time when you first said my name
(It was like a French kiss from a past-life lover,
and I stepped closer to you to inhale the breath
that those lips said my name on).

You are so unlike the other long-haired poets,
who suck on my ear lobes and try to rhyme my name.

Those... Those flippant critics I can figure
(faux angst sits uneasy on an Eagle Scout).

Those...yes.
But you are far more twisted.
Or maybe you are just better at the ruse.

Maybe you coerced that tiny eyelash to hang on your
cheek,
so that I am forced, puppet-like,
to brush it away.

And perhaps you dragged that autumn-earth smell in with
you,
so that I must wait for you to (again)
say my name.

—Kimberly Manny

She wrote while he threw his tantrums.

He'd go on about being late,
or not wanting to go out,
and she would bend low over a notebook,
scratching down poems while his voice clouded the air
and made it difficult to breathe.

She left them lying around,
sometimes on the dining room table,
or the ottoman by the window,
always with his name at the top of the page.

Eventually they were collected with yesterday's paper,
some sale flyers, and the remnants of other pages,
and thrown away.

But this night, he raged on about her
pathetic romantic notions,
and she flipped on the light over the desk,
and carefully chose a pen.

"And don't write me poems anymore!"
he yelled in between deep, hot breaths.

She turned and laughed.

"Fool," she said. "I never wrote them for you."

—Kimberly Manny

fountain in the rain

The Magnolia tree
with rain-cupped
pink-wisped ivory buds
blooms for a mere lightening moment
before its petals fall to the ground
and form a soft white burial blanket
to collect the teardrops
of a fleeting spring nightfall.

—Eric Chisausky

_____ war, the old fashioned way

Red was the color of Natives, Britons, and Commies.
Our blood is a mix of Chandi and neo-nazis.
Bomb Hussein because Kuwait he bombed.
We must kill him in his own home—like Agamemnon.

Kennedy, Castro, an Animal Farm...
How many people did Hiroshima harm?
Korean children—prayed for the end.
Small pox to the Indians, in the trade we send.

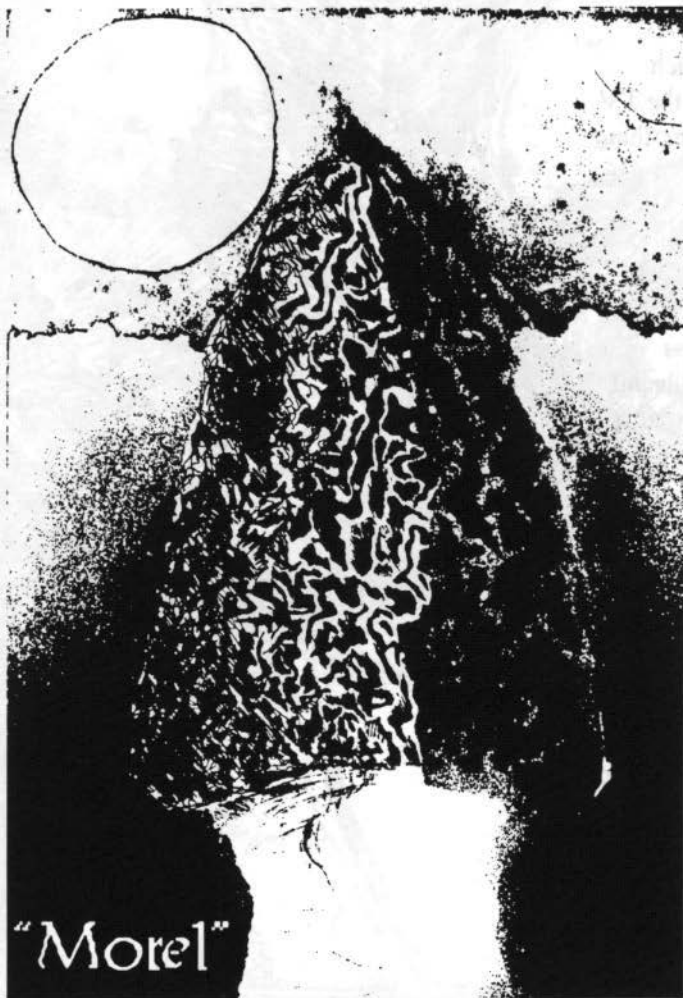
LBJ, and his lies, lies, lies...
All Achilles could do was cry.
Black Orpheus rips the sun from the sky screaming.
"I love the smell of napalm in the night."

—Carmella Cosenza

alone

Thoughts swallow my sleepiness
laying awake in the darkness
wondering how I've become this
creature of worry doubtfulness
Scratching, forcing truthfulness
gnawing, chewing on thoughts of sex
ripping, tearing at one's flesh
salivating, sweating, a watery mess
grunting and moaning while I undress
roaring, screeching, I will possess
mounting, pushing, till he is less
Awake, sleep swallows my loneliness.

-Carmella Cosenza



When I am depressed.

I lay
on the couch
in front of the TV
Watching nothing
I sleep
restlessly
in darkness
Dreaming nothing
I think
of emptiness
and unfulfillment
Knowing nothing
Good.

Like.

When I think of cancer.

I look
at my fingers
stained with nicotine
Sickened that I do it
I touch
softly
the lump on my leg
Amazed that it's there
I breathe
deep and full
savoring the breath
Knowing I can do it
Still.



Untitled

from across the courtyard

I'm not supposed to be looking.
But I see you
sitting alone,
Just outside your apartment.

Your arms are wrapped
Loosely around your knees.
A near empty bottle dangles from one hand.
Your head hangs down.

It is as if
Your soul had grown tired
Of your body
And so discarded it
Just outside your door like this
In a heap.

I don't stoop to think
You are waiting for me,
Even thinking of me.
It has gone far beyond that now.
I can fathom visions of demons
Dancing before you.
I can suppose you think some
Of death.
Perhaps more than I could stand to know.

I'm not supposed to be looking.
But I have to see you.
Even vacant and

Dreaming of numbness
More complete than you've managed
To achieve with your bottles and
Your hazy clouds of smoke.

I am looking.
For even now, seeing you.
I need to run to your side
To cradle your head in my lap
As I did from the beginning
Wrap your curls around my finger
Catch your tears in my skirt.
But neither of us
Is willing to pretend anymore.
That I can hold you up
Without breaking.

I cannot even dream
Of comforting you now.
And I'm not supposed to be looking.
But it helps me to see
Just how far you are
From me.
Crumpled, vacant, and alone
Waiting for your soul to reclaim you.

—Shannon Goodall

communion

wine and jazz
and words floating
 on wisps of smoke
 which rise from the red tips
 of your cigarettes
as you each inhale.
 drawing in your drug
 as I draw in the words
 and sip my wine.
 rising high
 up to mingle with the curls
 of gray-white smoke
 warm like the wine-heat
from my skin.
 floating about my head
 like the jazz
 making my temples beat
 to the rhythm of the words
rhythm which I swallow with the wine
 warm and cool and transforming
 like the smoke winding around the room.
 with the words, the jazz, and the wine
 – Shannon Goodall

please come home

Why did you ever want to feel absorbed
into the hungry mouth of hypnosis, to taste
the bitter crumbings of a plate of lush
with your toes tempted two inches from the dive
into the deep black tar of wanting
that insatiable appetite called need

The freon chill, that serpent of need
slithering through the coils of your spine, absorbed
in the steel wrestling arms of wanting
pushing that fuming bottle to taste
your lips, black melted licorice oozing in its dive
to greet you, the hole that speaks for the lush

A label that hides from your eyes, a lush
is a hard pill to swallow, even for those who need
to persuade their toes to let go and dive
deep into the liver's Criseyde, absorbed
with the ills of a shattered romance, a taste
of the fleeting, flirty attentions of unfaithful wanting

The sour-sweet candy of broken hearts, that wanting
turning its supple shoulder and glancing down upon the lush
whose tongue licks those lips hoping for the dust of that
perfume to taste
the sweet memory of that turn, the adrenaline burn of need
hoping the tongue can bring forth a flash of hope,
absorbed,
to grasp the walls, and stop this spital dive

This snow falls melting upon your blind desires, the dive
has filled your openings, smothering you in wanting
the womb of acid to eat through to the big empty, to be
absorbed.
no longer just another sweating last night's gin, no longer a
lush,
but the fermentation of years and a divine connection to
the need.
the lord of the lush, the burning masochist, Dionysus' gift to
taste.

Please, don't take another sip of that fallen god's taste
of illusion, swim to the shallow end, I'll pull you out of the
glue that lied, a dive (needs to go on previous line)
that never forgives its splash, I also have a need
to see you own yourself for once and not the wanting
I'm tired of seeing that frowning mask of the lush
the corpse you left your family, just to hold the fruits liquor
absorbed.

Why don't you taste, the world you left for the wanting
fill the hole which stayed after the dive, the empty lush
which stands shivering with its own need, this whole family
you can absorb.

—Kendall W. Baumann



"Untitled"

29081

indefinite sacrifice

Smooth Liquid Foam
streamed from the silver lined faucet
climbing in casually

into the depths
bathing in dimness
transparency

curtains shading
sharp stinging razor blades
ending everything in a swipe

holding the naive wrists
under gray shadows of
unforgiving speckled tile

blue veins pulsing underneath
opaque beauty of the skin
of youth

the slice of it
red curling like flames
encircling my thighs

sitting back in the dampness
picking up the soap
cleansing begins

—Amanda Watson

recovery room

Orange strands of light filter in, long and wistful.
They penetrate the stagnate cloud of loss that hangs –
heavy.
Loss is spoken here.
Spoken in the short biting contractions
muted in my knotted vocal cords, pressing through the
tranquilizers.
There are others.
paper dolls faces painted with grief
shrouding themselves in colorful afghans
while bits of illusion slip through the holes.
I try to stand but -
there is his face through the thick plastic pane
pale and worried.
Where are my shoes to walk away?

–Abby Koller

questioning faith

Faith versus reason
using your mind –
religious treason

Have faith, do not ask,
preserving ignorance,
is that the task?

We exist-this we know
is there biblical truth-
or do we make it so?

–Michael Kawa



Merula

The Vehicle
BIOGRAPHIES
Fall 1996

cherubs, Alexandra and Catherine, my goddess of a mother for always being a giving tree, and Amanda for putting up with all of my antagonism. Thanks also to Ruth Hoberman for the *Vehicle* consultation.

Sandra Beauchamp—is a graduate student finishing her creative thesis. She drives a smokin', oil drippin', ground shakin', gas cap missin', VW rabbit... (Vary Wascally)— and plans to motor that baby to New Orleans, cookin' jambalaya on the radiator, writing pain-poetry on the dashboard till she locates still water.

Kendall W. Baumann—My name is Kendall W. Baumann. I am a senior English major hoping to find a job with a B.A. that will pay enough to survive. I never thought that I would get a sestina published in the *Vehicle*, considering the popularity of the form. Thanks for reading my submissions.

Eric L. Chisausky—“I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy.”—J.D. Salinger

Carmella Cosenza—My inspiration for all my poetry is the 'brusha-brusha-brush' scene in *Grease*. I dedicate my poetry to my sister, Katen, and also to my Uncle John who passed away before I came to Eastern. I would like to thank Dr. Richard Sylvia for being the first person at Eastern to see

potential in me, Dr. Martone and Dr. Loudon for just being great people, and, most of all, my boyfriend—John Dylan McNeill—for all his support. I must also say that my inspiration for my War poem came from a lecture on Western Civ. by Grant Sterling. I am now leaving for planet heimlich-spinchter. I hope they have Strawberry Quick there.

Amanda Davis—I'm a nocturnal, moon-see-kin', Perry-lovin' Aries who attempts to live by the philosophy "A mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions." I'd like to thank Melissa for the "vent" sessions that get me through the busyness of life, Kelly Pearce for being DJ. Cool, my parents for letting me form my own identity, and all the professors at Eastern who have challenged and therefore clarified my intentions. Last but not least, thanks to the six wonderful souls I live with for putting up with my type-A personality and for reminding me when it's time to slow down.

Shari Crier—I would like to thank all of my friends who said I had potential. I would also like to apologize to Amanda and Melissa for screaming in the phone when they told me my poem got into the *Vehicle*. Lastly, I'd like to say look to the obvious for inspiration, you'll be amazed at what you find.

Joe Howard—Joe Howard would like to thank Billy Holiday Willie Nelson Max Roach Bob Dylan Mark Twain Cannonball Adderley Buddy Holley Miles Davis Elvis Hank Williams John Coltrane Jimi Hendrix Allen Ginsberg Charles Mingus Kip King Jerry Garcia his mom and dad Thelonious Monk Jim Morrison Backbone Branford

my life. I still see so clearly my timid thoughts back then, before I realized that God could take my pain and renew me. My thanks to my parents, family and friends, Sha, Jenny R., Erin, Grandfather Pierce, George and Ira Gershwin (romantic inspiration), Margaret Atwood and most importantly God who blessed me with a gift.

Additional corrected biographies:

Joe Howard— Joe Howard would like to thank Billie Holiday Willie Nelson Max Roach Bob Dylan Mark Twain Cannonball Adderley Buddy Holly Miles Davis Elvis Hank Williams John Coltrane Jimi Hendrix Allen Ginsberg Charles Mingus Kip King Jerry Garcia his mom and dad Thelonious Monk Jim Morrison Backbone Branford Marsalis B.B. King Frank Zappa and his great great great grandfather.

Amy Haynes—“I am really not as depressed and morbid as I sound.”

Michael Kawa—Shit...I guess the lamb worked...Maybe next year I'll use a chicken. At this time, I want to propose that we get rid of bald eagle and make the fruit bat our national airborne creature—fruit bats are cool! I also want to dedicate my poetry to my Dad and send all my love and thanks to my family members and friend who were really in times of need—especially my sister Lora.

Kimberly Manny—Kimberly Manny would just like to say “Thanks Mom!”

Michael May—I am an undergraduate philosophy major and a transfer student
(over)



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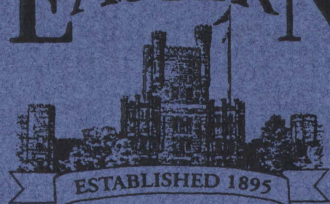
from Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois. I believe the best way to interpret my artwork is to think of my images not as statements or assertions, but rather as rhetorical or unanswerable questions. Questions are far more intriguing than answers because the significance of knowledge depends upon the unknown. If the unknown is not meaningful, then creative expression would be futile.

Andrea Traxler—This is the last poem that will ever be published by Andrea Traxler.

Amanda (Mandy) Watson—I was twelve years old when I thought about how romantic and daring it would be to end my life. I still see so clearly my timid thoughts back then, before I realized that God could take my pain and renew me. My thanks to my parents, family and friends, Sha, Jenny R., Erin, Grandfather Pierce, George and Ira Gershwin (romantic inspiration), Margaret Atwood and most importantly God who blessed me with a gift.

The Vehicle staff sincerely apologizes for leaving out these biographies. We hope we have not inconvenienced the poets or readers. We regret the error.

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