

# Groundswell

Spring 2008

**UB's Magazine of Literature and the Arts**

**Featuring Fiction, Poetry, Non-Fiction,  
Art, and Photography**

***Groundswell*** is the annual publication of the University of Bridgeport English Department, intended solely as a repository for exhibiting UB students' best creative work. Submissions are accepted year-round at 165 Dana Hall, English Department, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT 06604.

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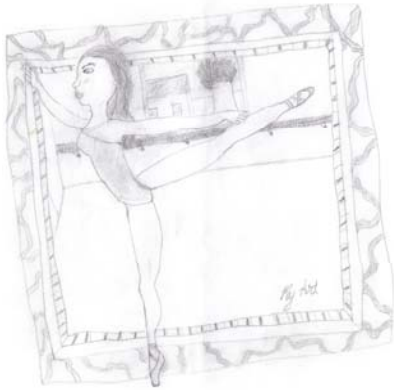
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**Jacket Credits**

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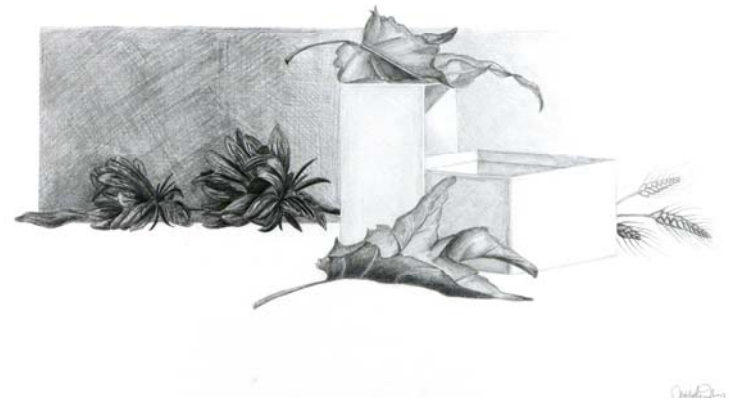
Letter From the Editor:

As another school year draws to a close, my students, especially graduating seniors, begin to ask the big questions. Why are we here? Where are we going? The French writer Emile Zola, author of such classics as *Germinal* and *The Belly of Paris*, had this to say: "If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, will answer you: I am here to live out loud."

If that is the case, then this year's *Groundswell* is full of shouts, wails, and laughs. UB's creative students have flooded our ears with the noise of their lives, with imaginary kingdoms and gritty reality, with heartbreaking beauty and robust humor. Last year's success brought a huge number of fine submissions. There were dozens of other poems, pictures, and stories I wish we could have included this year. So many of us simply want to talk to someone, to challenge the great silences, to live out loud.

The lives of our classmates and students are talking, and the noise has become a symphony. Time to listen.

- Eric D. Lehman, English Department



### **Serendipity**

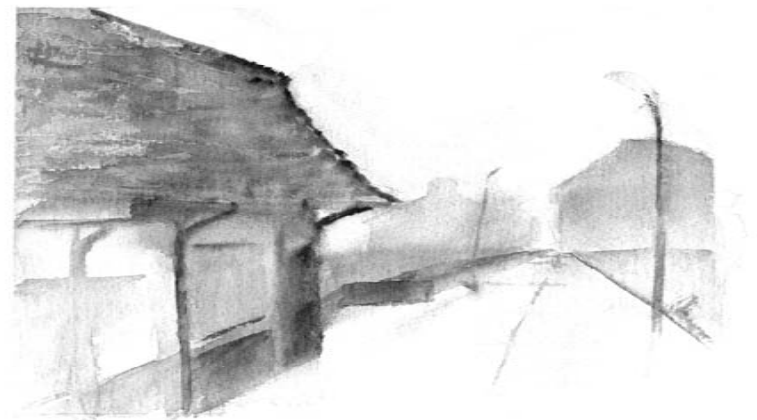
Mermaids dance on iridescent marbles  
as shooting stars dazzle the sky  
with twinges of Victorian envy.  
Golden gods walk across seas of hurricanes,  
delivering satchels of turquoise doves  
to the man who can not afford to eat.  
Children pursue goals of being kings or queens,  
and unicorns sail through clouds  
laced with sterling roses;  
streams caress the valley stones,  
flowing in tranquil waves,  
revealing the earth's deepest secrets  
in a paradox masked by a blind man.

- Danielle Barse

### **Stranger Stroll**

By Tara Minopoli

The mica in the asphalt glittered under a full moon.  
Houses lit by wealth. A young woman in black leggings  
and a hooded sweater walks slowly on the wrong side  
of the road. Her arms across her chest with a pocket full  
of numbers and no one to call. It's almost midnight.  
Where is she going? Confused cars turn onto a deserted  
suburban street. You don't belong here.





"Mystery in the Sky" by Maryanne Stafford



"Motorcycle Kiss" by Hernan Restrepo



### The Merry Marry Bell Rings

The bells of joy chime and ring  
in the town where couples unite,  
but of this marriage one must not sing  
for a change in plans was just not right.

A stolen bride that fell from the sky  
was taken to the altar against her will.  
The only thing she can do is cry,  
but her hero has a small chance, still.

A wondrous fight for her indeed;  
even the cake protested and fought;  
the groom finished the deed,  
which was much easier than he thought!

The groom and the bride never got married,  
but the story of the bride and the hero varied.

- Steven Franco

## Mickie's Day Out

by Casey Swann

Mickie's binocular-like eyes opened wide, trying to focus on the room before him. The carpet was thick and green and made of a fragile substance that kept breaking under his treads. His analysis revealed no known substance in his files that would behave this way. He adjusted his vacuum setting to "oriental rug" prematurely so as to not forget.

There didn't seem to be a ceiling to this room, or if there was, it was very tall; taller than any of his attachments could reach. He didn't see any walls either, which posed a problem since he was supposed to vacuum and buff the floors right into each corner. If there were no corners, what was he to do?

One large column stood in the middle of the room. The column was rough, but sturdy and his analysis revealed a much needed buffing to smooth it out. As he tilted his top unit backward, he saw the column didn't reach the ceiling, but branched out in several directions like a potted plant. Mickie labeled it "potted plant." He would not buff it then, for one did not buff potted plants.

"Mickie, no. Come sit."

He was lifted from the floor and carried precariously in the arms of the smallest human. She plopped him on a small plastic apparatus. Analysis revealed "chair." Mickie was not supposed to be on chairs, he was supposed to clean them. He reversed his treads and the chair tipped backwards, dumping him on the fragile carpet. His arms reflexively righted him,

and he drew out his scrub appendage with liquid cleaner. The chair was very dirty.



"Mickie!" The smallest human shouted. She was displeased. He looked at the over-turned chair, and with a push, sat it back up on its four legs. He looked at her again. She was still displeased.

"It's a tea party." She picked him up again, putting him back into the tiny pink plastic chair. She put a pink plastic cup and saucer in front of him. She wished him to clean these dishes. Cups and saucers go in the dishwasher. He picked them up. She sighed and took the dishes from him. She set them back to where she had placed them before him.

"We drink tea at tea parties." She said as she poured a liquid into the cup. She did not wish him to put away the dishes. He decided not to move the cup and saucer, since she did not wish it. He began to buff the table with his scrubbing appendage and liquid cleaner.

"No, Mickie. No cleaning now."

weigh the alternative with the decision at hand. On one side was the money that he would make from this deal, and on the other side was the possible consequences for the action and his dignity. Was it right to publish this book and become a known author of adult oriented material, or should he do what was morally right: refuse the deal and bring the editor a copy of his real book for an honest review; and hopefully get it published. It was out of his realm to think that he would actually have a plagiarized pornographic picture book as his first book publication, but it was also crazy for him to turn down the money offered for it.

When he stepped off the subway he was certain of his decision.



"Convergence" by Noel Lewis

somehow...oh I know! The cabbie! He had several packages just like mine in his car and I must have gotten his mixed up with mine! That's it! So that's what he was gonna show his buddies to keep them busy, and man his cousin is...uh...*some* photographer alright; but this still isn't my manuscript!"

Zack, impaired and smelling of whiskey, didn't share his thoughts. "You got this from a cabbie? Nice guy, isn't he? For given' you all this great stuff. Who has to know that it isn't yours? It's yours now."

"Are you crazy! I don't do this kind of thing! I wrote a book, I didn't take a book of nude photos! I can't steal someone else's work and publish it, that's plagiarism and I'll lose everything if I get caught doing something like that!"

"How can you get caught, man? Nothin' legal until its copyrighted, you in the clear! I would do it if I were you. This'll be a bestseller in the adult bookstore, I know it!"

"Are you too drunk to see that this is plagiarism? It's wrong, man you'd be crazy to do it! It's morally wrong and bad for my dignity. Yeah this would be *great* if I was the one who made it, but I'm not...I'm a freelance writer, not a photographer for Playboy magazine who likes to photoshoot on the weekends."

Zack still pressed on, and the argument continued. Zill argued with the disoriented man until he had enough, and told the man to not send in the manuscript until he called him back tomorrow with his decision. He had to admit, though, the price that the publish company offered for the "photobook" was tempting, and Zack even offered to write the photo captions for him.

Zill left with near certainty that he was not going to do it, but as he thought on the subway ride home, he began to

"No cleaning?" His mechanical voice held almost no inflection, but it was a question.

"No cleaning. Not here. Drink your tea."

Mickie looked at the cup before him with its tiny flower pattern. Analysis revealed it was full of water. This was not tea. He picked it up.

"Like this." She said as she brought the cup close to her face and made a strange static-like noise.

Mickie brought the cup to his eyes and tilted it. The water poured over his treads and the chair. He tried to make the static noise, too. She laughed. He took out his sponge appendage, but then remembered her words: No cleaning. He stared at the water on the chair. He put away the sponge.

"Good. Now have a cookie." She gestured to the plate of food in front of him. They were small circles with a gooey center.

Mickie did not eat food like the humans. Food was dirty, especially gooey food. Food was to be cleaned up.

She took a cookie, sensing his difficulty. She opened her face-hole and inserted the food, mashing her lower head part into her upper head part. Her lips curved upward meaning she was happy. Happy human was good.

"Mmmm. My favorite."

Mickie put out a grasping attachment and pinched a cookie. It broke into several pieces with his first attempt. He tried another, adjusting the strength of his grip down 40%. The food did not break. He took it. He looked at the smallest

human. She was waiting. He slammed the food against his upper unit, but since he had no mouth, the cookie shattered and the pieces went everywhere.

Mickie panicked. He had broken something and they would be mad. He tottered off his chair again and began to vacuum the carpet where the crumbs had fallen despite the smallest human's request that he not clean. Appeasing the smallest human was of lesser priority than appeasing the larger humans since they were the ones to purchase him.

The smallest human grabbed his vacuum appendage and looked him in the oculars.

"We don't clean the outside."

Mickie was puzzled. "We don't clean the outside?"

"No, silly. This place we do not clean." She gestured to the large potted plants, the green, strange carpet and the crumbs.

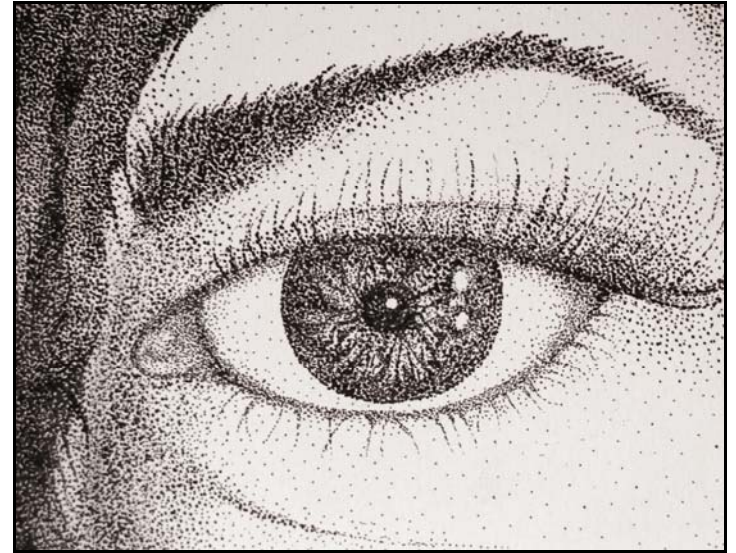
Mickie's tiny circuits temporarily overloaded. An entire room where cleaning was not what was done? And the room had no walls, so it could go on forever. A place forever big that did not need cleaning?

"Jamie! Why did you bring the MCK-3 outside?" One of the larger humans came out of the house and reprimanded the smallest one.

"Mom, he was invited to the party.

"Well, sweetie, he doesn't go to parties. He's a robot and you've probably confused him. I'm taking him inside. Please don't take him out again."

each had a catchy title such as "Erotic Elizabeth" or "Nubile Nebussa." "This isn't my manuscript!" he shouted. "How did this happen? No this isn't it!"



Zack stared at him. "It's not?" his face was blank for a second, then it brightened. "Then you should be glad you brought this one instead of the other one. This is great, and you are truly the best photographer I have ever seen, why else would all those woman come to you? This is *the perfect* picturebook."

Zill dropped the papers on the table and attempted to come to an understanding with Zack, who bent down to reorganize the photos. "I mean, this isn't the manuscript I came here with! I must have gotten it mixed up

Zill, very excited and happy with the editor's response, hurried to get dressed, and rushed to meet his editor to discuss a book deal with one of his publishers. When Zill arrived the door was thrust open before he had the chance to knock, and the editor assured him inside. The grumpy face he had seen before was now filled with glee, but Zill could still detect the smell of alcohol that he had noticed the day before. The man was obviously still mentally impaired.

"I haven't seen anything that has the potential to...burp...sell so well in years."

Zack led him to the kitchen table and retrieved the envelope. He opened it and pulled out the thick stack of sheets inside; he selected four papers from the top and laid them out on the table. Zill looked down at them and his mouth fell open; four photos of beautiful, and nude, women stared back at him.

"Since I'm also your agent, I gotcha a deal with Hanky Panky Publishing Corp, they're really excited about this and I already have a copy for them ready to go. We think your title: American Femmes, is perfect; now all we need is a cover photo so I can send it to 'em; which one here should we go with?"

Zill stared at the photos, dumbfounded.

"...seriously, when you said your book was about American women I expected another piece of written garbage that I would end up taking out with the trash be forced to give ya the bad news and take your money, but this surprised me indeed—yes indeedy. I was very impressed. Now *this* is something I would buy."

"What—" Zill snatched the papers from him and scanned them. All were pictures of women in their nude forms, and

The larger human grabbed him up and carried him inside where he was put down on the very familiar rug in the very familiar living room.

"Mickie, please tidy up that mess." The larger human pointed. Breakfast dishes covered the coffee table and crumbs had fallen on the carpet.

Mickie swiveled over to the mess and began to clean, but as he did he couldn't help but think about the room that went on forever and needed no cleaning. It was a place unknown to him and a strange concept, but any unoccupied circuits, and there were many at times, dwelled on the mysterious room that went on forever and what a little robot like him would do should he ever get back there again.



## Unscathed

The words you spoke spilled into a stream,  
 in your narrow eyes and dark heart flowed a river.  
 Finally I saw you with clarity and disbelief,  
 how could such a smart girl not notice sooner?

Even though it was months before I saw the truth,  
 I am proud of myself because I only took.  
 And although we tumbled, and scattered through the rain,  
 I hold more now than the day I learnt your name.

- Monique Ross

problem...but if you can get me there by two, that would be great...I have a deadline." He looked at his watch: 1:25, deadline was coming quick.

The taxi arrived at the office at 2:05. The driver brought the car to an abrupt stop, and the envelopes scattered and fell to the floor. Zill, in a nervous rush, grabbed the envelope he had been sitting on and angrily tossed the money to the cabbie. He leaped out, hurried to his editor's apartment and knocked on the door. There was a rattling sound, and a cough, and then a slurred voice: "yeah! Who is it?"

"It's Zill, sorry I'm late. I have my manuscript for you to review."

A man in his sixties, Zack Danials, his editor, hair ruffled and his eyes droopy; opened the door and used it to steady himself. He took the envelope looked up at Zill, and immediately moved to close the door.

"Wait..." Zill started but the door slammed in his face.

"We'll talk about it and the money later. Come back tomorrow."

Zill felt as if his entire efforts and his book idea had been thrown away; wasted on this man he met at a coffee shop in Brooklyn.

"But—"

"—Tomorrow!"

"Okay..." Zill made his way home.

Despite the disappointment that day, the next day Zill awoke to a big surprise: the editor called him, and his voice was filled with excitement. "I absolutely *love* your book. Very enlightening, I knew you were writing about aham... American women, but nothing like this! You have to get over here right away!"

Blogger.com articles and the administrator of his MySpace page. In short, he was all but what he wanted to be, but satisfied because he thought he was.

Today was special, today was the day to truly shine, today was the day he would be on his way to be recognized by everyone, today was *the* day; he was going to give his new book, his *first* book, to the editor for review. Zill hailed a taxi and headed for his editor's apartment. During the ride he checked his manuscripts to be sure that everything was in order and perfect for review, because the last thing anyone who wrote a book would want to do is have something



missing or out of place when his editor reads it. Every thing was fine, he decided, so he closed the envelope and put it to the side. At that moment he noticed several other envelopes that were stacked beside him.

"Hey, what is this in the back seat? Did someone leave that here?"

The cabbie stuck his head out of the window and shouted to the traffic: "come on! I've got a job to do here! Get moving!" He jerked his head back to look at Zill. "Sorry about this, man, I can't control the traffic, you know. Oh, that? That's mine. My cousin's a photographer and I promised a couple buddies at the office that I'd hand some of his stuff out, ya know, to keep them busy when the work gets slow? Hope you don't mind that being in the way."

Zill had more important things to worry about, "no

## Four Skinny Trees

By Rosemary Landano

The big green and brown leaves sail down from the ice blue sky and caress my shoulders as they lay. I look up to the jungle. I can hear roars of tigers, calls from gorillas, and squawks of exotic birds. I can feel the warm sun trying to sneak a peek at me through the trees. They see a small girl trapped in a forest of terrifying thoughts. Yet the sun sees a smile on my face; under those trees I truly feel at home. The breeze blows mist from the wet branches and cuddles my soft apple cider skin. The sun warms the cool water droplets that lay. There's one little hole through the thick mossy appendages, and through it I can see the clouds passing shadows over me. The billows make shapes of the joyful things I wish were going on at home. It's me and my big brother on a tire swing. It's my mom while I'm in the cart, and we're shopping. It's my dad sleeping soberly through the night. It doesn't show the yelling and worry that went on. It doesn't show the tears of my mother or my brother's pain. Under the trees I am at peace. Under the trees I am safe. Under the trees I am at home.

## Shadows

By Jeff Becker

John sits in his home; in a few hours, he will do what he does every night, fight for his life. It's a nice house, quaint, not too big, not too small, the lawn is manicured and lush. The detached garage is painted a nice beige, with white shutters matching the house. Nestled in a wooded part of his suburban town, John's house is fairly secluded, his neighbors just out of eye shot.

It's around 7:30 PM and John sits in his living room preparing a small caliber rifle. On the rectangular teak coffee table in front of the leather sofa where our hero is sitting, are components to his modified rifle. Intensely watching the 42 inch flat screen John assembles his weapon and prepares for what's ahead. Distracted by the daily news, John clumsily drops his night amplification scope on the hardwood floor and damages the cross hair alignment. "Damn, how the hell will I be able to hit them now!" he said, as he grabs the lens cap that rolled all the way across the floor to the sliding glass door. John looks up and out the glass of the door, examining that night's battle field. His backyard is about an acre in size with three large maple trees evenly spaced diagonally across the distance. The perimeter is a thicket of deciduous forest with every type of shrub and tree known to thrive in a New England environment. Looking at the prolific mid summer foliage, John wonders which way they are going to emerge tonight. "Those damn things always come from a different direction every night".

## Mixed Up

By James Durham

It was noon when Zill Moralitaser awoke and rolled from the bed onto the floor. After checking his watch, he burst from the sheets as a tiger would from the tall grass, and rushed into the bathroom to shower and shave. He clambered in to his khakis, his freshly ironed shirt, his overcoat, and struggled with his tie. He brushed his teeth and re-laced his new dress shoes at the same time, and spent ten minutes scrubbing the toothpaste from his khakis. After gargling and combing his hair—careful not to get anything on his tie, he slapped on some aftershave and rushed into the kitchen for a bottled frappuccino and a nutria-bar; then rushed out of his apartment.

Zill considered himself the average New Yorker: on the run, frustrated, grumpy, addicted to caffeine, and too busy to enjoy the better aspect of life. He was tall, lean, in his mid-thirties, and what many women considered a handsome man; and was also what he took pride in calling himself: unmarried. He was the type of man who wore contacts instead of glasses to enhance his popularity with the ladies, wore colorful ties to draw the eyes of his coworkers, and lived in an apartment in Queens that he couldn't afford to "establish his status." He strived for perfection, timeliness, and organization. He worked for the *New York Herald* and was a freelancer on the side, which meant that he had a NY Herald sticker on his delivery van and wrote articles for small circulation magazines. He was the feature writer for his





### Butterfly

By Breanna

Collins

She flew lightly floating  
from flower to flower.  
Fluttering her wings as  
she landed softly on the  
petal. The wind blew the  
flower slightly to the

side, making it sway and causing her to find another one to rest on. This was her first day outside for only one day earlier she had been wrapped up, only hoping and dreaming to sprout her very own wings and fly. This was her day, the first day of freedom and she was going to take advantage of it. Nothing would ever encage her again. She was free.

It is now around 8:45PM and a fresh ham sandwich is sitting on the granite countertop, along with potato salad, and a big stein filled with delicious dark beer. Our home owner needs a full meal if he is to prevail tonight; he consumes the sandwich and downs a few beers.



Cigarette in mouth, shells in hand, John turns out all the lights in his two story house, and walks out the sliding glass doors of his living room. It is now around 10:00 PM and John flips on his night scope, scanning the thick woods for anything anomalous. In the eye piece, the terrain is bathed in an artificial green glow, making black shadows a hard thing to distinguish to his dismay. Suddenly, a small distorted shape seeps out of the forest and bolts behind the farthest

maple tree. John tenses up, his finger on the trigger, ready to let loose the first shot.

Not fooled by this “distraction” he swings the rifle around and peers at the small ivy covered arch that leads to the garage. He sees small shadows moving slowly in and out of surrounding plant life. Cross hairs trained on one of the shadows, a shot rings out, not with a loud bang, but with a quick snap. The silenced rifle stealthily unleashes its deadly projectile, but with no avail, the shadow does not go down, in fact it begins to creep forward along with its numerous counterparts.

“&%\*# my scopes off!” He mutters to himself, a few turns of the adjustment knob later and John dials in the scope and goes to work. Hundreds of shots later, and around 6:10 AM the onslaught ends and John crumbles down on the concrete steps that lead from his sliding glass doors. Bleeding from multiple bite wounds and exhausted from battling the unknown black creatures, he is able to finally catch his breath. Looking over the battle field, hundreds of empty shells litter the dewy lawn like cigarette butts in a heavy smoker’s ash tray. No carcasses litter the yard; this always frustrated John, never any proof, and this is why he never bothers to tell anybody, or entertain. He is stuck in this never ending cycle of keeping himself and his neighborhood safe.

### **Appaloosa Savior**

The calamity from the heavens  
 cascades onto my chilled skin,  
 as I plod a mile up the damp pavement,  
 boots scraping across the gritted stone:  
 the only sound that transpires for miles.  
 I can feel the heavy day nagging at me  
 as feet trudge towards my destination,  
 and the stench of wet hay envelops me  
 as they enter the dusky barn.  
 She stands strong behind her barrier,  
 eyeing my figure as I walk towards her,  
 breathing gently in my face;  
 my crooked hand reaches for her satin nose  
 and worries seem to slip  
 as I grip her neck, burying my face  
 in her dusty coat, her brown eyes content.  
 She stood strong - the force behind me,  
 a four-legged beast, now gone.

- Danielle Barse

### The Castle

The castle is dark and dank,  
and wind rips through the barren halls,  
gnawing at my flesh,  
chilling me deep in my bones.

The desolate halls weren't always like this;  
Once they were bright and warm.  
Once there was a king and queen.  
Now there is only me—the lonely jester.

The queen was taken long ago,  
trapping the king inside his mind,  
and here I have stayed locked away,  
hiding from the world.

Though I remain veiled and shadowed,  
does not mean the world won't find me.  
I can be hurt, I can be broken,  
but I will not allow that to be seen.

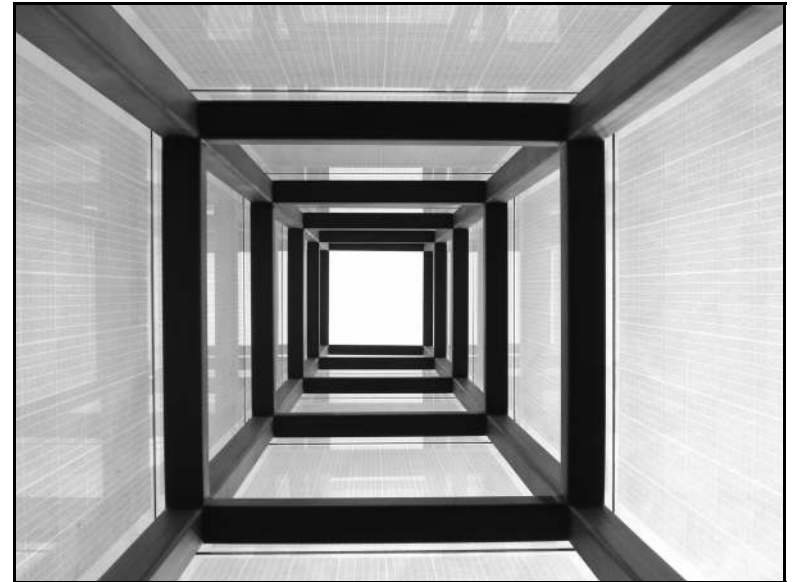
Everyday I will put on my cocky smile  
As I don my funny hat.  
I tell my sarcastic jokes  
And everyday the castle grows colder.

- Angela Barbier

### Destruction

The Franklin Theatre is gone,  
gutted and boarded up. Pain  
is all that is left of the place  
once ringing with laughter. Pain  
of knowing it will never be restored  
to glory. That magical place  
became escape, a friend, a home.  
Nothing will ever be the same.

- Angela Barbier



"Hope" by Rosemary Landano

**Transparent**

By Lorraine Galow

I feel used, almost like everyone just looks right through me. It is as if they are looking through me to find



something better, something that is on the other side. They should not take me for granted for if it weren't for me there would be no light to light their way nor would there be a source to bring cool relief in these hot, stuffy, jail-like rooms. Without my help they

would see no outside world; I provide an outlet to their trapped thoughts. I show them what they cannot see from inside and can only experience from the outside. I may be no great hero but without me, things would be much different.

Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007

*Where should I start? Milly surprised us all by throwing us all into a big bag and putting us all into a garbage bin. Can you believe this? Besides withstanding being suffocated by a very uncomfortable feeling bag, I'm going to be dirty for a while. With Leyla's encouragement and positive point of view on the subject, we decided that we can make our way to somewhere, even if it is back to Marshalls. We have to start somewhere, right? In the meantime, I'm going to have to leave you behind. I don't have anywhere to put you, but I'll miss you my little notepad friend and don't worry one day when I find home again I'll continue writing. See you when I clean myself enough to be bought again.*



*mom was right all along, JC Penny was probably the best choice for all of us. I can't be dumped and can't allow Jackie to be neither. There has to be something we can do!*

Nov 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*Leyla came up with a great plan. Since realizing that work is no longer a priority for Milly, we concluded that we have to escape. We have to make our way out of this place where casual kinds are no longer wanted.*

Nov 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*I know it's been only two days, but I couldn't contain myself. Milly took me out today but not to her job, guess where? She took me out to a party where she left me laid on the floor, which might I mention was very uncomfortable considering a not so friendly Victoria Secret cotton someone was on me the entire night! I got home very wrinkly and back into the basket, not so much fun. The only good part is that I know now that we are being replaced because she has found an alien lover. If you ask me, he must be a very bad man to allow her to do this to her precious items of clothing.*

Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007

*Today is the big escape. We, being all the shoes, Jackie, Ralph and Leyla, have teamed up to get dirty, get thrown into the basket and from there make our way to freedom!*

## Get Up

Black, blue and red  
You should be used to it by now  
You try to hide from his hard love  
More than his hard hand  
Your soul screams  
To your deaf ears

Laid out on the couch  
You upset him with your silence after

Your  
day of hard work  
He was too tired from tossing empty, capless,  
Bottles in the garbage

He used his hard hands against his words and  
They brought you down

Floor, you laid there last night

Too tired to fight  
Too in love to leave  
BurGunDy sheet under you  
Redblue lights

Sounding for you  
Door busted  
All yourfault

You laid on the floor last night  
Too worn out  
Red, black and blue  
You laid there

- ShaMaar A. Blount

## Swig

By Jenette Lebel

The little boy in tan corduroys and a navy and green striped polo knelt on the shag carpet next to his father's liquor cabinet in the yellowy afternoon light. He cautiously opened the wooden door with a carved glass inset, his hands trembling with anticipation. He had been planning this for quite some time and today he had his opportunity. His father was at the office and his mother was at her garden club meeting at Mrs. Tate's house so the little boy had the place to himself.

He removed a heavy bottle of clear liquid, having to use both of his small nine year old hands in order to prevent it from slipping to the floor. That one was far too clunky for his purposes. His eyes scanned the contents of the cabinet and spied a smaller, rectangular bottle towards the back which he immediately grabbed. The filtered rays of light coming in through the window illuminated the glass bottle, giving it a pleasant glow.

The boy's palms were clammy with eagerness so he had to wipe them on his pants before being able to twist the cap off. Cautiously lifting the bottle to his lips, the boy then tilted it upwards, sending a cascade of burning liquid down his throat. Gasping, he set the container down. His innards felt like an inferno. He flopped back

*unlikable. Don't go thinking,  
I'm jealous because I'm not,  
I'm just....I just...don't like  
silk!*

Aug 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*Another silk dress! To  
make matters worse, I  
haven't been taken out in this  
entire month. It's  
disappointing because I was  
beginning to fancy a young attractive tailored suit that  
had a wonderful way with words. Let me compose myself,  
returning to the subject, even little sis, Jackie hasn't been  
out and this is considering we're the ones used the most  
since Milly prefers us over the rest. Our sophisticated  
casual look is a vital necessity to her daily life. Even one of  
my good pals, Ralph, Milly's favorite black slacks, hasn't  
seen any day light in weeks. Something very serious is  
going on, VERY serious!*



Oct 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*We're being replaced! Not by more professional  
looking types, but by dresses and skirts! On top of that, I  
haven't been taken out at all and Jackie misses mom so  
much she is thinking of ripping her buttons off. I told her  
she can't be suicidal because I love her and don't want to  
lose her, her life is important to me. Although, I tell her  
these things I'm beginning to feel the same way, I think*

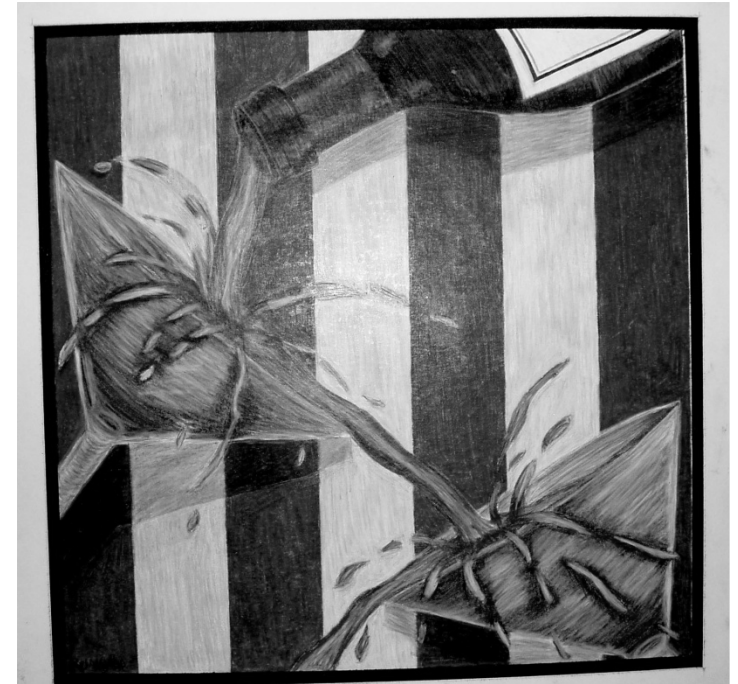
*overnight that's brutal. I understand that Milly didn't have time to clean us today but why do I have to sleep here? Everyone else was showered and I have to spend the entire night accompanied by dirty stupid uncomfortable sheets and socks. I hate socks, besides the fact that they are completely out of my class; they're all fabric and no style. How can you have no style? Not to mention that they are boring and really non-important what-so-ever! By the way, I won't be writing for a little bit after tomorrow. I'll be all wrinkly, you know how that goes. Not to mention, Milly's a procrastinator!*

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*Yeah, I'm back now! It's been busy, I've been going to work with Milly a lot more lately and have been pretty tired. Before I go, I have good news! Jackie's living with me now seems like Milly went and bought her today! She's sleeping besides me, which is unfortunate for me because she can't seem to keep her sleeves on her space of the closet.*

Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007,

*Well, new folks are moving in, folks that are not welcomed at all. To begin with there's this stupid dress. Yes, I know how you feel, I feel the same way. I have no idea why Milly would even consider buying a dress. They are everything mom told me they are, flirtatious and unintelligent. Her name is Jessi, she's silk and very*



onto the orange carpet, arms crossed over his stomach in sickness. Yet after a few moments the boy felt considerably better. He sat up, deciding that he wanted another taste.

He was unaware that this simple choice was his first step towards becoming a father who preferred the bar to his children's baseball games and a husband who preferred beating his wife over caring for her. The boy sitting in his parents' living room in corduroys didn't know these things, so he lifted the bottle and took another swig.

### The Empty Red Rose

A dark scorn on a lover's heart;  
the white blood of hate rejoices  
in an unspoken reality.

My frayed heart filled with sickness,  
my tattered bones can't carry  
this empty burden. A single  
red rose waits. It lies beautifully  
in a sea of empty memory;  
no one there to admire its beauty.

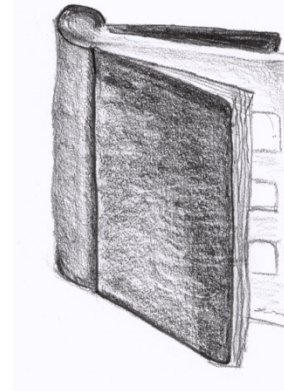
A dark scorn on a lover's heart,  
a lost love rejoiced by hate...  
this is my reality.

- Antonio R. Gonzalez

*funky tall boot with colorful designs on her. She's a real comedian; as a matter of fact she's the life of the closet!*

*Leyla hangs right next to me. Though I dislike her type because of the v shape of her neck and her shade of material (cashmere), she's quite friendly and humorous. The rest of the folks next to Leyla and I are the mundane type, regular bargain styles that are best not mentioned.*

*Although I like it here so far, I feel alone because I left my mom and sis. I know they're happy for me, but it is still saddening to know they can't be with me.*



*March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007*

*Today was my first day out! Milly-that's my human friend's name, took me with her to work. Nikki also accompanied us. I must say, Milly looked quite sophisticated. My white complexion and collar made her look the part at her job. It also didn't hurt that she chose to wear Nikki; we make one good team together!*

*March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007*

*I'm not in the mood to write, but since everyone's asleep and the laughing parade has ended I guess I can spill over my emotions on to these pages. You won't imagine where I'm staying tonight. I am stuck sleeping in a stupid basket! Yes, I know I have to be clean, but*



## White Collar Diaries

By Jennifer Marine

Dec 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006

*Here's another holiday full of expectations and no guarantees. Mom tells me to have hope, but it's pointless because the more I wish to have a real home, the more impossible it becomes. Mom gets a bit disappointed when I bring it up because she has purposely ruin her fabric to stay with us all, but she understands that it's something I want to experience desperately.*

*"Why do you want to leave so badly?" Jackie, my youngest sister, always asks me, but what she doesn't understand is that living here is not where I want to be forever. Yes, I understand that we have gone beyond Marshalls, but I want a real home with an alien friend to wear me and in a defined place where I have friends of all brands and styles. I don't want to be folded here neatly on the second floor of JC Penny my entire life.*

Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007

*Well, guess what? I did it! My sleeves are extended now and I am hung amongst a variety of different fabrics. Beneath me are funny looking friends that never seem to shut up. Clay is a black sneaker that loves to talk about exercise. Perla is flat and shy, but enjoys talking about different books she has read. There's also Kiki, she's a*



## Hunger Pains

By Tara Minopoli

Karl can barely bring himself to look at his once svelte wife. He used to whisper "You taste like the macaroons my aunt made." Now Petal makes them by the dozen and devours them before Karl returns home from work. She sits at home all day applying lip gloss and lighting candles, praying for the day he will kiss her again. Karl misses the taste of coconut. His mistress cannot understand why he sobs during dessert. She kisses his eyelids.

## Fairy Tale

投下你凉凉的身影  
留下淡淡的啤酒花的香味  
我隐约闻到了我的那个童话  
环环相扣  
点点衍生

你清唱  
我说：那是恋歌么？  
你只是站在我面前  
遮住了一片阳光  
我看不清你的脸庞  
只觉得有笑意  
浅浅地留在唇边  
天堂  
是疾苦还是幸福  
在你一念之间  
我不小心窥见了天堂  
初秋的凉风  
吹落了枝头的羽毛  
散落在我的肩头  
揉碎了我的心事  
我发现  
有细碎的影子  
藏在心间呼吸着

你轻笑着  
我去听不懂你笑声中的光明  
只觉的跟前闪烁过  
一丝属于你眼眸的蓝  
我看不懂  
那种蓝色的思绪  
这样的思绪像荷兰的风车  
转变的很快吧

你回头的刹那  
天堂被遗忘  
我

Standing in your shadow  
reminds me of the fairy tale I  
wrote when I was little,  
when time is full of hopes  
and wishes.  
I hear you sing;  
I ask you if it is a song of our love.  
You just stand in front of me  
not saying anything.  
I cannot see the sun  
or your face  
but I can feel the sweetness  
coming from your smile.  
Leaves fall off  
in clear autumn wind  
softly, like feathers  
landing on my shoulders  
mixed with your gentle breath  
next to me  
Deeply hidden in my heart,  
you laugh lightly;  
Oh, that mysterious sound  
you make  
which I could never understand.  
Only from your clear blue eyes  
I know your mind is thousands of  
miles away.  
Your mind is always running  
like the Dutch Windmill  
which I could never follow.

不属于  
恋爱的世界  
只感觉到脸庞  
隐隐的灼痛  
明与暗  
希望和绝望之间  
我属于黑色  
好与坏  
理想和妄想之间  
我便是惘然  
你走远了  
我无能为力  
只能随着  
心间的呼吸沉沦  
我无法懊恼  
无法不甘心地切齿  
至始至终  
我只是你  
熟悉却无法同悉的小孩子

故事散场  
生活冷漠的继续  
时钟停摆  
时间无情的流逝  
你  
去拾你啤酒花的梦  
我去守我蓝色的想象  
合实双手  
我见到你  
将一支啤酒骨到我面前  
一半  
洒在瓶外  
一半  
留在我心间

You turn away, waving to me.  
My face is burning--  
I do not belong to your world,  
I am standing between  
the brightness and darkness,  
living in  
the imagination.  
There is nothing I can do  
but stand still and wave  
back to you,  
my body empty,  
not yet my soul.  
Fairy tale ends,  
life coldly continuous,  
clock breaks down ,  
time unfeelingly flies.  
You,  
you should go to wherever  
your mind is at.  
I,  
I will stand here with my eyes  
closed:  
not all illusions are false.

- Written and Translated  
by Suiyu Chen