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# The Nighthawk Review

The literary magazine of the College of Eastern Utah

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**Spring 2008 Volume XVI**

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Nighthawk review.

**Forgetting**

Danny Velasquez

The man standing  
in front of the medicine  
cabinet has a blank look  
on his face, staring  
at me as if  
he's forgotten what  
he was doing.

Oh well,

now what was I  
supposed to get?

## Colors Of Me

Korie Kelley

Deep lustrous cherry red,  
sensual and sexy, rushing hormones,  
head over heels in love, a true romantic.

Brilliant florescent crimson,  
flashing through my eyes,  
anger and rage built up, just waiting to blow.

Forceful yellow,  
lively, energetic,  
ready for whatever comes my way.

Slowly blends into cool blue,  
chilled out and relaxed,  
trickling water, cleansed from tension.

## Children of the Night

Vanessa Hunt

It is a starless night.  
Clouds hang like heavy drapes.  
I crane my neck for signs of light.

The soft hoot of an owl maneuvers  
Its way through the city of needles.  
Pines stretch their arms  
To catch the intruder.

A raccoon races the sound  
As it scavenges for odds and ends,  
The bandit of the undergrowth.

An abandoned nest teeters  
On the edge of extinction.  
A dinosaur from months ago is  
About to return to Mother Earth.

**April**

Amy Devitt

April, sad changing child  
That steals all life to live her own  
Springing flowers to mix up your soul  
And taking legs that could have grown

Greening grass  
Involuntarily at the brook  
Grave behind a mighty tree

The role the ceremony flowers took

Oh, alone like the Lilly in the rocks  
April clouds darken hold you

You on the opposite side  
April rain tears leave as dew

April, losing changes  
River washing people away  
Death tales of farewell  
April breathes again today



**What If**

Leticia Mitchell

They said no

We stayed

Time Froze

The past shaped us

The Future never came

We flew through space in one instant

It brought us closer

It tore us apart

My love never fades

You want me

Forever we couldn't be

?

The answer is

Eternally

Never?

**Family Photograph**

Krystle Noyes

Cheese!

Happy Smiles.

The perfect photo and the perfect family.

Mom and dad hold hands.

Brother and sister look at each other lovingly.

Click!

*Ok everyone that's it*

Hands drop, smiles fade.

Out comes the war paint, the battle lines are drawn.

Brother pushes sister.

Mother and father shout.

The sister hides away, plastering the battle wounds.

She hides in black so she can escape, she can be herself.

The brother victorious, showing just a couple of scratches.

He parades his scars to feel like a man.

The mother loses her temper and strikes out.

She cannot hide under the strain anymore.

Then there's the father who is like a general.

He was once the tower that held us all.

**Shut Up**

Careshmeh Mele

My brother loves me so much  
he wants to kill me.

He wants to string his fingers around my  
rubber neck and squeeze until blood spills out.

Or maybe,  
just take the sleek knife and  
slip it between my right 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>  
ribs filling them up with all the words  
he hates to hear  
coming out of my mouth.

Or maybe,  
lift the hammer above my head  
and smash my skull in on the left  
causing my eye to droop  
and slide off my face. Instead  
he just smiles, head tilted, and listens to  
all the words he hates picturing  
my demise all the while.

**Force of Habit**

Danny Velasquez

It's been suggested  
that men are  
one-dimensional  
creatures of habit,  
who would stumble  
over the very thing  
they're looking for,  
if it's not in the place  
they think it should be.

I disagree.

Why just this afternoon  
I took a freshly boiled egg  
from the bowl  
my wife placed them in,  
on the counter  
next to the kitchen  
sink, peeled it dropping  
the shells into the throat  
of the disposal,  
washed it, dried it  
with a paper towel and  
walked across the kitchen  
to the tray where  
she keeps the spices.

The salt shaker  
was missing, so I set  
out searching for its savor.  
After turning the kitchen  
upside-down, I happened

to see where my wife  
had thoughtfully placed it,  
by the sink,  
next to the bowl of eggs.

As expected,  
I walked back  
toward the sink,  
picked up the shaker  
and salted my boiled egg—  
without tripping  
over anything.

**From Mother to Daughter**

Josh Taylor

She is  
My blood and flesh  
Created in my womb  
As her mother she shall listen  
To me

He is  
A well aged man  
Who knows well what I want  
A couple of bucks to pay rent  
And more

Easy  
I'll get my way  
I'll send her over there  
To perform as necessary  
For me

next to the kitchen  
sink, peeled it dropping  
the shells into the throat  
of the disposal,  
washed it, dried it  
with a paper towel and  
walked across the kitchen  
to the tray where  
she keeps the spices.

The salt shaker  
was missing, so I set  
out searching for its favor.  
After turning the kitchen  
upside-down, I happened

to see where my wife  
had thoughtfully placed it  
by the sink.  
next to the bowl of eggs  
As expected  
I walked back  
toward the sink  
picked up the shaker  
and raised my boiled egg  
without tripping  
over anything.

## Night Games

Vanessa Hunt

Children play Kick-the-Can in the moonlight.

A lab rests its head on the concrete.

Crickets create a soundtrack for the night.

Flickering street lights illuminate the lawns.

A lab rests its head on the concrete.

The smell of garbage day lingers in the air.

Flickering street lights illuminate the lawns.

A mailbox serves as the dividing line.

The smell of garbage day lingers in the air.

A Sprite can bounces off the asphalt.

A mailbox serves as the dividing line.

The winners shout out "Olly olly oxenfree!"

A Sprite can bounces off the asphalt.

Crickets create a soundtrack for the night.

The winners shout out "Olly olly oxenfree!"

Children play Kick-the-Can in the moonlight.

Mi Tai's flower garden

needs no hummingbird feeder here.

## Queen Albino Died Today

Amy Devitt

Queen albino died today  
And what I had been afraid of stared at me with awkward  
eyes  
7 days and never once did I pop the lid off  
Shake the flakes into the white beauty's mouth  
I was always thinking of myself thinking of all the things I do  
wrong  
And everything I could do better but never will  
The phone never rings and I lay again on Friday night  
Inside a room where tears cease to fall and hearts grow  
harder

And harder  
I took the brittle body inside my glove and gently pressed it in  
a small white box  
I wish you could know at the end I will care  
And someday my emotions and my insecurities will leave me  
Somewhere else besides the water  
And if the ground is not frozen we will lay against each other  
Without soup without two years of unwritten thoughts  
Alone where you first touched my face  
In the cold two days before my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday



**Captivated**

Danny Velasquez

There is no American Beauty, no Princess Diana,  
no Love, Honor, Cherish, not even a Peace.

Just gangly hollyhocks blossoming  
in purples, fuchsias, yellows, and white,  
reaching upwards of seven-foot-high  
beside the fragrant apricot and apple tree backdrop,  
and the nearby sagebrush, juniper,  
rock and tawny cactus-strewn hillside.

Sweet peas, poppies, four o' clocks and bluebells  
brush against your knees, waist, and thighs  
while rows of pale spent iris  
point, to the creeping red sedum  
flanking the chicks-and-hens and anthills.

The trumpeter wraps tendrils and vines  
around the lean-to's gnarled  
splintery grey posts and beam.  
Its sugary flared orange bells  
call proudly to the whirring melodies  
of the ruby-throated-rufous, migrating  
under the high-desert new Mexico sun.

Mi Tia's flower garden  
needs no hummingbird feeder here.

**Liberation**

Krystle Noyes

The flash of steel; so sharp, so fast

But it cuts so very deep.

You fall to the ground, trying to gasp.

As you see your own blood running,

And the pain won't let you breath.

What do you think of, daddy?

Do you curse me? Wish me to hell's heat?

Yes, I love you and I always will.

But still, I want to see you die.

I need to have this desire fulfilled,

I want to enjoy your last breath.

I see the look in your dying eyes,

Stunned – how could I blame you?

Away, away your life flies.

Moments before death you'll see the truth.

You will see that you hurt me.

You stole my innocence.

Does that make you feel like a man?

To kill a part of your daughter?

You see the things left undone,

Never being a part of my dreams.

You see the vanity of your life.

Life isn't always about you!

And that is the moment that I hunt,

In your despair, in your fear I dive.

Death has come and claimed your soul.

The blood in your veins is bitter.

I close your eyes, those empty hollows.

And for a while I hold your body.

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OUR LOVE IS ENDLESS

**To The Parent Whose Child Is Still Here**

Eileen Green

You know my pain  
Not many do  
The Pain of waiting  
And not knowing  
Night after night  
Questions fogging our brains  
Will we wear black  
Will this be my pain  
For the rest of my life  
Little did we know

Not wearing black  
Does not relieve the ragged heart  
Or the grieving spirit  
We see daily constant struggles  
Pain we cannot physically feel  
That tortures us all the same  
A pain beyond what was known  
Stretching that threshold  
To hold  
What we would not have  
We have survived  
They have survived

But in our private thoughts  
We wonder  
Can this really be called a life  
This existence they lead

Our love is strong  
Unbreakable bond

But our souls sink  
Weighed down with sorrow and guilt  
In the back of our minds  
The nagging thought  
The question  
The words we dare not utter  
How would life be  
If we had worn black

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**Argyle Sweater**

Eileen Green

Your eyes narrow moving up and down my appearance

You stop at the orange blot just above my breast

Your vision lingers

A slight sneer forming on your face

How could you have guessed

My day consisting of dirty clothes, homework,

Dishes covered in green fuzz

Mouths like those of baby birds crying for nourishment

Deadlines needing to be met

Scurrying to prepare the unappreciated feast

Shouts of "Don't do that to your sister!

Go to the corner!" issuing from my mouth

Running to finish my work

Only to be told by you I'm too late

Perhaps if this were your day you would not hold me in such  
disdain

For my stain.

## Personal Narrative

Crystal Lindt

The worry swelled in the pit of my stomach; I sat on the toilet seat trying not to look at the test sitting on the sink top. I held my head in my hands, waiting; it was the longest and most momentous three minutes of my life. I took a deep breath, and peered with one eye through my spread out fingers. Two lines, two lines! Did I read the directions right? Before I could validate my reaction I dug frantically in the garbage can looking for the already twice read instructions for the pregnancy test. Two lines: positive. My breath was running faster than I could keep up with; I thrust my body into the wall, my back slowly sliding down until I hit the floor with overwhelming emotion. It was a pivotal time in my life where I realized that the life I once knew was over and what the future held I had absolutely no conception.

Nothing could have held back the uncontrollable flow of tears that poured out onto the bathroom rug, but in the midst of turmoil a smile spread across my dampened cheeks, the result of already knowing and maternal instinct I suppose. I eased myself up from the floor, pried open the bathroom door, and poked my head out. I needed to hear words of comfort: "everything was going to be okay", "this is a blessing"; I hadn't quite convinced myself. He sat oblivious to the news, hunched over a plate of Chinese take-out; I stood behind him waiting for his attention. I wanted to say "Honey, surprise, we're pregnant!" at least that's what I thought should have been said. Instead I stood there choked with mixed emotions, speechless, crying, and oddly grinning.

\* \* \*

I had to escape from my home town in Utah, leave behind the life I had made for myself, my only hope was that the grass would be greener in Boise. I was leaving heartache and destruction; I never expected to meet him. We were both

fleeing, our backs turned to the consequences of our mistakes. He hid it well. From the moment I laid eyes on him, bundled-up in a blanket, sleeping on the edge of the sofa, I knew there would be something.

We fell into lust quickly. In comparison to my own, I admired him for his stability and the way he lived his life. He was younger than me by two years; he was still in school and worked part time; I was starting over. He was my savior. I had the time of my life with him in those few short months in Idaho: sneaking into the Lava Hot Springs after hours, cruising down Vista Avenue in Boise, and making the first attempts of starting a new phase of life together. Starting a family was far from our minds; I didn't think of him as father material then, and I still don't. He promised to always love me; he promised to stay by my side.

\* \* \*

Thump, thump, thump. The machine monitored the heart beat of my unborn child as the nurse, who was just as anxious as me, rolled the cold jelly over the peak of my stomach hoping to reveal the sex. My hand rested in his; tears streaming from his eyes, his grip got tighter, but his tears were unlike mine. "I'm scared; I'm not ready," he would always remind me. The nurse printed out alien like pictures of the child I would soon be giving birth to; the son I would raise as a single mother.

\* \* \*

I laid sleepless the night before my delivery. I hadn't seen or heard from him for weeks; he had become a stranger to my bed, but I allowed him to stay with me. I didn't want to be alone. I missed him. I wanted him there for the birth of his son; I wanted to save him from the regret that he might have years down the road. In a moment of disgust and pity, I stared at him across the gap between us; he was broken from



his homeless travels, I realized that I was not looking at the man who I fell in love with, if a man at all.

\* \* \*

I was due at the hospital by 8 A.M. for the induction of labor. Throughout the duration of my pregnancy I had grown accustomed to the fact that I was entering into parenthood, but I could not suppress my fear of the actual birth. "Are your bags packed and ready to go?" My mother drove us to the hospital. Shortly after being admitted into the hospital, I waddled to the nursery where I was met by a nurse eager to prepare for my child's big debut. I was poked and prodded for blood samples and given an I.V. to pump fluids through me; I began to dread the come and go of hospital staff.

"Breathe, hold my hand!" The pain that shot through my lower back ejected me off the bed. I appreciate my mother's hand, but the pain was overwhelming; my fears were justified in those brief, but recurring moments of contractions. I was screaming for mercy; the miracle drug that modern birthing doesn't have to go without. The doctor, informative and sympathetic, wheeled in a cart with supplies for the epidural; one more prick of a needle and I wouldn't mind the rest. I sat up and let my legs dangle freely off the side of the bed. I lowered my head and hunched my shoulders. "It's not that bad, trust me," My mother took hold of my hands; she told me to relax and close my eyes. The doctor lifted the back of my gown and prepped the injection site in the small of my back.

Her hands slid from my grasp; I unclenched my eyelids just in time to witness my mother's unconscious body fall into the arms of the nurse. The nurse patted her colorless cheeks until she awoke, stumbling to regain her balance. "Are you okay, Mom?" I didn't understand her reasoning at the time; she couldn't handle to see her "babies" go through pain. My sister, terrified to watch my delivery, had already delivered two children, one boy and one girl. During the birth of my

nephew, my mother went down at about the same time the baby's head did.

\* \* \*

I moved him far from his family for my own selfishness, and the welfare of the baby. I needed my mother to be there, to teach me how to raise a child. I was scared. I didn't know then that I would become something else for him to run from, or after his son was born he would pick up and leave for Idaho. "It's for the better." "I need to get my head straight." He justified to me after leaving.

\* \* \*

My family didn't approve of the way he treated me, the many chances I gave him, or the way he stepped down from his responsibility. The air was thick in the delivery room; the daggers pierced through anyone caught in the cross fire. He was stretched out in the chair next to my hospital bed, curled up, sleeping, trying to go unnoticed to anyone who cared that he bothered to show up.

\* \* \*

Twelve hours of numbed labor, and the time had finally come. The delivery doctor showed up just in time; I hadn't seen much of him up until that point. It was the quickest and most momentous 26 minutes of my life. I cradled my son, 7lbs 10 oz, in my arms for the first time, looking down on him, so beautiful, so precious; I had fallen in love for the first time in my life.

## Daddy Dearest

Lisa Jones

Growing up I experienced the bewilderment of having a father with dual personalities. In public he was always perceived as a man with an outgoing, fun loving personality. He was someone the community could always count on. He was also known as the practical joker among fellow co-workers. However, as soon as the doors to the house shut; closing us off from the outside world, the demon that hid beneath the old worn out cowboy hat and boots came out to terrorize our family. We feared him like a monster in a horror film. He resembled the devil to me, with his charcoal black hair and permanently red, sunburned face. He showed no emotion except rage and annoyance when we were around. He said few words; his cold hard glares said it all. None of us wanted to be the one who would get his fiery temper stoked up, because you would pay for it.

Working two jobs, he was not home often. Mercifully, it was a relief for us. We were able to have peace and tranquility, because the monster wasn't home. We would fall asleep before he got home, dreaming of a life without the fear and the violence.

I remember a time when I was only 5 years old, sitting inside the house waiting for my mother to get me ready for school. My parents were standing outside discussing how my older brother's car needed to be taken down town to get an inspection sticker. I watched, my body glued to the iced up kitchen window. For some unknown reason, my father didn't like it when my mother said she would take the car down. Hand raised above his head, he connected with full force to the soft flesh of my mother's cheek, spinning her around. She was sent tumbling to the crisp white snow beneath her feet. The silence broke. I screamed and burst into uncontrollable

sobs. He had hurt the only person who showed us love, my mother.

You could always find my father sitting up to the kitchen table, with a cigarette smoldering in one hand, a cup of coffee in the other. What little time he was home was spent in this chair, his chair. He would sit and gaze out the window, jolting his head back and forth with an uncontrollable tick, a habit started when he was younger to annoy his father.

I was in fifth grade when my mother started working. It made him furious. When she came home later than was acceptable, she would get beaten, face bruised, barely recognizable with the disfigurement of her swelling nose. Her eyes cut and unable to open because her glasses had been smashed off her face at the hand of an insane man.

Because of the bedrooms being doorless and open to the rest of the house, we would often be woken up in the middle of the night by the sounds of things breaking, smacking of flesh upon flesh, as my mother was taught another lesson. I'd look out the doorway in time to see my mom tossed against the wall. Crying in my pillow, he heard me. He'd bark, "Shut up before I give you something to cry about!" I would spend the rest of the night in a sleepless haze, praying for God to send us an angel to wake us from the everlasting, dark, miserable nightmare we were living in.

I would always ask, "Why does this happen?" I'd always get the same answer, "It's the only way he knows how to show that he loves us."

About the time I was 14-years-old, the doctors explained to him, after suffering many heart attacks, he would need a triple bypass surgery if he wanted to live much longer. I felt no sympathy for him. I felt hope, hope that my years of praying for something to take him away had finally paid off.

I watched my father lay in that hospital bed in the Intensive Care Unit. He no longer looked so evil to me, lying there gray, no color to his face; he was cold too, as if he had

been lying on a bed of ice. He looked like death had finally come knocking; I was suddenly overcome with guilt. He was going to answer for his actions and have to pay the price for the terrorizing.

Did a dark, mysterious stranger visit him that night in the hospital bed? I will never know. The only thing I do know is that he changed after his experience in the hospital. I never witnessed anymore brutal beatings of my mother. He gained a calmer, more serene tone to his voice. He began to prove to the family there was a human inside of him. His face began to express a warm, caring emotion. I no longer felt the dread of coming home to a stormy, chaotic, out of control house. I finally knew what safety and security in home felt like.

In March 1990, my sister Anita and I received a phone call from my dad asking us to come to Morgan to visit with him and my mother. They wanted to see Anita's new baby. We thought that was a little peculiar, because of his racial views about the blacks. The baby being biracial, he had wanted nothing to do with the baby.

The next day, we made the 30-minute drive up Weber Canyon to our parents' house. The baby was sound asleep when we arrived. We laid her in my parents' room and proceeded to visit with my mom. We went to check on the baby, discovering my father looming over the baby, gazing down upon her, caressing her curly black hair. As he noticed us, he said, "I heard her start to fuss." Little did he know we had seen the whole thing; the baby had been sleeping soundly the entire time. He had made peace with his newest granddaughter.

Before we left, I asked him, "Dad can I take a picture of you before we go?" To my surprise, he said, "No, you can the next time you see me. I'll be in my good clothes next time."

A week later on March 15, 1990, we received a phone call saying, "Your dad has been in an accident. They're transporting him to the hospital." The phone rang again, the

only thing I heard was "He's gone!" I went into shock, body paralyzed, ears ringing so loud it drowned out everything else around me. My eyes went blurry, everything unfocused.

We made it to the emergency room, somehow. We were taken to the rest of the family. One by one we were escorted to the room with my dad so we could say our last goodbyes. I was too distraught by what was taking place. There he was on the table, lying there so peacefully. I have never experienced so many emotions at one time. I felt grateful for having been able to get to know him after his rebirth in that hospital bed six years prior. I was depressed because our time was cut short. For taking him away from me, I was infuriated with the Lord. However, I felt hope that one day I would see him again so I would be able to tell him "I love You".

Many years have passed since that dreadful, heartbreaking day. I am no longer angry with him for all the misery he put us through. There is only room in my heart for love, for all the hard work he did to make sure his eight children were fed and clothed. I have extreme admiration for him; for the strength it took to change the way he did. I have never felt so close to my dad as I have since he left this earth. He is and always will be with me in my heart.

**Bobby J.**

Ivan White

I lived on a ranch close to Hearst Castle,  
far up San Simeon Creek.  
Going to school took over an hour by bus,  
two times a day.  
Bobby J. was the only other teenager  
who lived up that canyon.  
Naturally, Bobby and I were friends  
(actually, we had no choice).  
The problem was that Bobby could  
sometimes be a real flake.  
He usually invited me to his ranch  
when his parents were gone.  
I remember one time when Bobby  
invited me on a Saturday.  
That meant I didn't have to shovel  
out the chicken house.  
I should have been warned by the episode  
with the ranch pickup.  
Also, there was the time Bobby started  
the bus spitting contest.  
One time we missed the bus and spent night  
in the metal box-like city jail.  
Bobby was indeed a flake,  
but he was the only game in town for me.  
I walked the four miles to the ranch  
and found him in the barn.  
He was excited about a small cask  
and a padlocked wooden box.  
The cask was black powder  
and the wooden box contained dynamite.  
The black powder burned brightly  
but the dynamite had magic appeal.

Bobby had the padlock key, but alas,  
there were no blasting caps.

He was disappointed,  
but he did give me a stick of dynamite.

As I walked home I thought of ways  
to explode the dynamite.

The next day I showed the dynamite  
to my younger brothers.

The dynamite was stubborn, we burned it,  
hit it with rocks and a hammer.

We finally gave up and I took it home  
and put it in my clothes drawer.

Eight months went by and spring cleaning  
arrived at the ranch.

I was surprised when dad came out  
of our bedroom with the dynamite.

He actually looked pale and there was  
an unpleasant look in his eyes.

The stick looked all discolored and greasy  
as he asked where I got it.

I tried not to look at the dynamite stick  
as I confessed my sins.

He told me to walk down to the canyon  
and throw the stick into a thicket.

If I dropped it, he warned me,  
it could blow up and me with it..

I carefully carried the stick to the canyon  
and threw it as far as I could.

(I've always wondered if some animal  
took a bite and blew itself up.)

Later, dad told me that old dynamite  
could be unstable and very dangerous.

He also reminded me that I was the oldest  
and responsible for my brothers.

Later that year he blew up a boulder



with dynamite and it was scary.

The next year our dad, the gypsy, moved on  
and I never saw Bobby again.

Years later I took my family to Hearst Castle  
and Bobby's mother was there.

She said Bobby had married a butcher's daughter  
and now owned the butcher shop.

I just couldn't go to see that imaginative mind  
in a butcher's apron.

It was far better to remember Bobby fondling  
that stick of dynamite, with that  
wild gleam in his eyes!

## Rules of Love- A Satire

Kiera Richens Luke

The other day, while I was walking to class, minding my P's and Q's, except that I do not know what the P or the Q stands for so I guess I do not really know if I was minding them or not. In other words, I was behaving myself. I looked up from the beautiful, white tiled floor just in time to see two people, a boy and a girl, stop abruptly in front of me in the middle of the hallway. I thought maybe one of them had dropped something and I looked around to see what it might be. After a quick glance I looked back up towards the boy and girl. They were locked together at the lips; I think they were trying to have a contest to see who could get their tongue down the other individual's throat for the longest period of time. As they continued to passionately kiss, I looked around at the other students traveling to class and found it miraculous that this couple could be so oblivious. How did they do it, I wondered? They appeared to be experts at this pastime because nothing seemed to faze them as the students continued to hurry past them to get to class, jostling the couple every so often. They did not skip a beat, and it appeared that they were not breathing. I was starting to worry about them when they finally broke apart, but only for a moment, then they went back to playing tonsil hockey. Watching them was amazing, an art form itself, and I would have stayed longer, in hopes to pick up on some good techniques, but I was going to be late for English.

As I was sitting in class I found my mind begin to wander back to that scene I had just witnessed in the hallway. I replayed it over and over again, relishing the rhythm that they were so in tune to, until I had an epiphany! What if this art form, this public display of affection (PDA), could be taught as a class in our school! I could just imagine how beneficial that could be to all of us.

As I thought about it, we could set aside a classroom, fill it with couches, and make it a tender and affectionate place of study. I thought that we might also wire some speakers into the room and play soft, relaxing music when class was in session. We would hire an instructor to help those students who enroll in the class learn the correct way to kiss. We could perform studies to find out which methods work the best and seem to be the most enjoyable. I thought that we might even organize a committee to develop new methods to test. By doing this, we could train students the correct way to make out in the hallway between classes so that it may become as easy as walking. I wonder if we could manage developing a way to walk in lip-lock at the same time, but, of course, we would need President Thomas' approval to hold the class.

As my thoughts drifted back to the lecture we were having in class, I could not conceal my excitement about this new plan that had formed in my head. I thought of how many people would love my idea. Promoting PDA would make our lives better, allowing us all to feel a little more loved, especially in this repugnant college atmosphere, which is just what the world needs, right?

## The Bookstore

Careشمه Mele

The blood drops slipped down the leather couch where her head had stopped after the final blow last night. This was a good fight. There were violent words throttled back and forth until his massive hands wrapped around her throat in an attempt to squelch the steady flow of insult. It's never fair when brute force is used in a battle of wits. Of course he is bigger, stronger, but what of his mind? Could he not continue with new artillery? No. His levels were limited. She always knew when the inevitable blast would be directed where her ammunition was plentiful. How had they come to this? Her mind reflected back to their first encounter. Her shock of black hair cropped around blue eyes with freckles spattered across the bridge of her nose. He had just entered the bookstore escaping the pelting rain. The scent of warm drifted through the rows of books resting on the overstuffed chairs cozy in the corners. She glanced up from her light read on political theorems evaluating his stature then re-immersed herself. He was unaware of her presence. Lumbering over to the Good Housekeeping section, he plunked down, exhausted. Eventually he began to appraise the surroundings. Flicking through every item in view he stopped as she came into focus. "Curious" was first in his mind. There was a strange propulsion pulling him to her. Maybe it was her indifference? He stood and weaved his way over to the counter where her weight rested. "Do you have Moby Dick?" he asked. Her eyes raised above the edge of the book to answer his inquiry. "Third row over, second shelf down." She motioned with her head. "Hmm, there could be a brain." The thought tickled her senses. Extracting the book he rejoined her surprisingly. "This your store?" Laying the book aside she turned to face him fully. "Yes, as a matter of fact it is." Even at 5'6" she looked miniature to his hulking build. "Do you

read much?" She asked curious to know whether this was happen chance or intentional. "Actually I do. I know most people assume my talents must be in the field of rock excavation or prison guard duty, but my true passion lies in literature." It was happening again. She found herself sparking at the possibility of intellectual conversation. They continued until the inevitable date was planned. It all seemed to be reeling through her memory. They had long walks, succulent dinners, and tenderness, but when the talking began it was intoxicating, eventually wiping out all other activities. There wasn't a section of the world they hadn't dissected. Still something had been smoldering in the last months and more and more talk turned to brawling (just as she anticipated). The views once shared began to crumble and were replaced with complete loathing. She brushed it off as a complete misunderstanding, maybe even an unintentional blow that was meant for the wall or something other than her. They had been discussing some heated topic after all and her acid tongue had provoked him. It wasn't until another month went by that she was sure that she was the intended target. This time she had lost consciousness, a state that she would endure for many more months after conversations spun out of control. She couldn't understand why she let it keep happening almost felt a need to get in just enough to produce the desired rage. Her thirst for debate was almost life threatening. Of course there was always a plan. She would keep pushing until the level of madness was achieved and then she would strike. She always liked this point in the game when the control streamed through her consciousness. Last night was the significant event leading to her decision of finality. His end was in sight. The heightened arousal was evident in her blushed cheeks and shining eyes. She would start out with some remark about the necessity to use newborn subjects in genetic engineering, or maybe the extermination of the mentally challenged. It would be

irresistible bait. She played it out in her head. He'd refuse to speak at first, maybe try to change the subject. Lately he seemed to be rebuffing her advances on any subject to avoid the fight. This was always the sign. She had to act tonight or the chance would never surface again and her need was growing. This one had been easy in the beginning but started to wane toward the end. If that didn't entice him she might have to use the intimacy he craved to ignite the quarrel. She'd grab his thigh and push up against him. Then when he was aroused enough she would slip in the bait. It was a sure thing. He arrived late, clearly agitated. That was a plus, less work for her. She immediately began caressing his forehead smoothing away the crease. "Sip this, it will help you relax." She handed him the steaming cup of tea. Then she spoke those words that bit his conscience making it harder to relax, harder to control the passionate anger welling within him. "They're half human anyway, retards. They pollute our society and tax our system. We need to exterminate." That did it. He threw her from him smashing her head against the side of the armchair. She struggled to her feet battling the darkness closing in from every side. She needed to be alert for this. "You're poison, and I can't do this...any...more." He stumbled back. "Are you OK?" She spoke with mock concern. His vision was blurring. He didn't know himself anymore. This woman had surfaced the animal in him that he never would have accepted as part of his nature. Yes, he was large and capable of snapping a neck, but he had never even thrown a punch in his life let alone hit a woman. This creature seemed to know how to drive him to the edge of insanity and his identification of self was twisted now. How had she done it? He couldn't remember and now his fight or flight was in complete alarm mode. It was only then that he noticed the plastic covering the couch and floor. His head was spinning as he staggered fully aware of the danger. *She's poison. I have to leave*, he thought but he couldn't lift those

massive legs. She helped him lie down careful to ensure that no blood would escape the plastic. Then when his breathing had all but stopped she proceeded. After all the cuts were made and packaged she sat back breathing in triumph. This would satisfy the urgency for a couple of months, maybe. He had been a particular delight due to his fine character and firm societal standard. It had been delicious to unhinge him and watch the mental collapse as he transformed from human to beast. She knew what the end result would be but it always felt like the first time.

Spring was here again and the rain began to patter...

## Wishing I Was Dead or The Day My Wife Left

Scott Frederick

I was sitting on a chair yesterday leaning against the wall at a weird angle, and my arm went to sleep. It was very slow and kind of warm. My arm just slipped into unconsciousness. It went beyond numb, to a subtle warm pain-free sensation similar to a dose of codeine. I found myself wishing it would continue to creep throughout my entire body, and then to my brain and my consciousness. I wondered if that's what it feels like when one gets a lethal injection. A spreading of warmth and then everything slows down, the input gets filtered out, and then the thoughts, the feelings, the emotions, just kind of melt away into a warm bliss...and then nothing. No pain, no internal chatter, no emotional suffering. Like sinking into a warm bath and falling asleep.

And then it struck me that I had just wished I was dead. And I really did wish I were dead. Just for a moment I was listening to the siren song of no pain, no responsibility, no worry, no one fucking with me, trying to squeeze me out of my money, my attention, my work, or my love.

I considered the constant game that is modern life and what's worthwhile to live for. With all the politicking, learning the finer points of not pissing anyone off, and taking ass kissing to an art form. They should have a class at the University: Ass Kissing 101. Check that, they should have a Masters program for it. You could enroll in it and skip classes because you could use your life experience to get most of the credits out of the way. "Ya, I moved up in my company, not because I was good at my job, but because my nose was so far up my boss's ass it was stained brown and I had to get it bleached so it would match the rest of my face." Or: "Ya, I worked ten years for a company and I avoided making even one decision that amounted to a hill of beans."



And then I remembered that life is pain, and that without pain one could not experience pleasure. Life is risky, and there is so much danger. I don't mean just physical danger, I mean emotional danger. The risk of another's scorn, being shunned, being made fun of, being gossiped about, and loving someone with all your heart and they don't reciprocate. They don't care. It hurts.

And then I remembered that I am a good person and that a few people's lives are better because of me. I remembered I like people. I love to watch them in airports, and wonder what their life must be like. I love to hug them. I love kids. I love to see kids learn something new, or taste something new. I love the raw way in which they express their likes and dislikes. It's honest, and endearing. I wish us big kids would remember what it's like to just say whatever it is we really feel and let the chips fall where they may. I wish we were big enough people we could and would accept our differences. I wish we were fascinated by our differences as we are of our similarities. I have found when I open up enough to explore something different I usually end up liking it, or at least respecting it. I end up broader, or deeper...hopefully closer to understanding what it is that makes us human. I also hope I'm closer to understanding the way the universe naturally works.

So when my alarm goes off this morning, I will get up, put on some coffee, and try to laugh at myself...at least for one more day.

