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PORTRAIT

LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE

FALL 1996-WINTER 1997



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FALL 1996

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

Cover photograph by Leah Peryea

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*Sweet Chicken, be careful on your journey,
for I hear they are barbecuing on the
other side.*

– Andrew Browne

**"A Feeble Attempt to Describe Feelings
Indescribable" or more simply, "Meaning on a
Poetic Pedestal"**

for L.

Lighting a smoke;
I stop to ponder the one
who has so impressed,
leading mere thoughts through
gestation, into feelings,
and pure emotion.

Her head bent forward to
pick something up
leaves eyes;
carefully shielded for nearly two decades
by Innocence herself,
without knowledge sometimes, and
yet on other occasions thoughtfully deployed;
eyes which penetrate in ways only
explained through cliché.
A cacophany of feeling
espoused in an instant.

The frailty of voice in
this moment,
these moments, which
have piled into weeks and months,
have left only questions that
are seemingly inexplicable.

Smoke drifts up
as hair cascades down
her back in ebullient fury;
emotion takes over and I am reduced:
In speech to a persona in
Eliot's verse;
In action to a Shaker in
religious ferment; and
In size and in wonder to a boy
awestruck and bewildered by the
amazing power both before and within.

A vision in a world
of prime-time reality,
she is too real to be real;
too human to be understood or explained away
in just thirty minutes.
She not only "walks in" ,
but is Beauty too sublime
for even Romantics to comprehend.
and I, with an all-encompassing frailty,
pushed on by a gurgling overconfidence
which pillars my strength, only
wish to understand, see, and
make tangible,
the intangible pureness,
of her mere presence.

Roy W. Bakos

dusseldorf

in this place or
i am at it rather it
is around me a
cellophane wrapper.

people here don't
know me
american or dan
rather.

devoid
of associations
wearing all new
face of the
vagabond
trying to bluff
familiarity.

sounds
happen all around
me cars wind
presumably
words. i

am from another
weorld, trying to
crack this one
or seep into it as
if i could wake
from a chilly
parkbench nap
speaking german.

ich mochte
trinkenwasser ich
spreche nicht
deutsch.

still.

walking through gouging
through
night
's alien ventricles
contours
of the
city, of the
self finding all
just askew of familiar.

into the strip feeling
german night
's fingers unwinding,
deshrouding
icy tentacles tunneling in
to the weorld,
naked.

past bars past
drunks past
clubs
where german techno
raging and deutsch is heard
and dizzies the senses,
ejaculating one thousand
beats per minute.

the pulse of Rhineland
night beats spherically
upon consciousness

my words my
self my
affirmation
blow meaninglessly
in the Dusseldorf
night a solitary
scrap of styro
foam captured in
clutched by december
wind sent
careening
oscillating outward
downward
jagged broken spirals til
splucht-
half submerged
in liquideous coma
atop
the surface of
the mighty oozing
Rhine.

Jonathan Hendrix

room

asleep
you could be anything
and are.

your life strewn about you,
opened dresser drawers,
piles of clutter like satellites.
clothing, books,
a shoe here and there.
your arms are curled around a pillow
the way your ambition curls
around hopes someday
becoming.

a story is being told
the percolating solitude
your slow respirations.

i know from these piles of clothing
that you have been busy lately.
i know from the opened dresser drawers
that you were in a hurry this morning.
there are some notes on the floor
you've been taking,
from a book you've been reading.
the corners are curling toward the ceiling
bc it's been so humid lately.
a breeze comes through the window.
you could be anything
and are
asleep.

Jonathan Hendrix



Photo by Leah Peryea

"yr deep"

"yr deep"
she said

"so are graves"
i replied

+ we both learned long
ago
even some of them are

empty

Kevin James Hurtack

Frontier Daze

Acute angles
standing slanted in a shanty
Somewhere in Cheyenne
two mangy cats
whistling scratchy howls to the wind
Scattered amidst a tallgrass field

the door is ajar
And I take one more holy drag off that cigarette
A tiny moment
enough room for a private ritual

The clouds slide over the prairie
at sixty-one hundred feet
And I contemplate the corner of the shack
wires hang from stout thick nails
like dark thorn crowns
devoid of purpose

I tuck myself into a pocket of silence
Doing a dead-man's float in pools of mediocrity

I find peace

Tana and Tiamat giggle
from the other side of an unlikely puddle
And I think I have almost caught on to
a tangent with a long tale

Through the looking glass
I play coy with the Jabberwocky
And dare not venture into the basement

I could belong here if I wanted to
But the silence of this patchwork prairie
speaks a language I do not understand

So I tuck myself inside Her wordless wish
and step out of the shanty.

Nancy Lavis

To Taste?

Night After Orgasm
Swimming in Silence again
watching the junk food bags ripple
in the synthetic fan-induced wind
Through knot-like metaphor
this is how I taste this moment

Blondie will be forever perky
I think as I take a drag off
The Sunday funnies
and hum Politician

Swallowing my spoon
ice cream turns to soup
And I am thinking of you
Stealing just a shred of paper
to scribble

tying this moment into tangibility
Stealing nostalgia
listening
and watching her
Fill out crossword puzzles
My god this is surreal
Thank You For Letting Me Come Here
To Taste—

Nancy Lavis

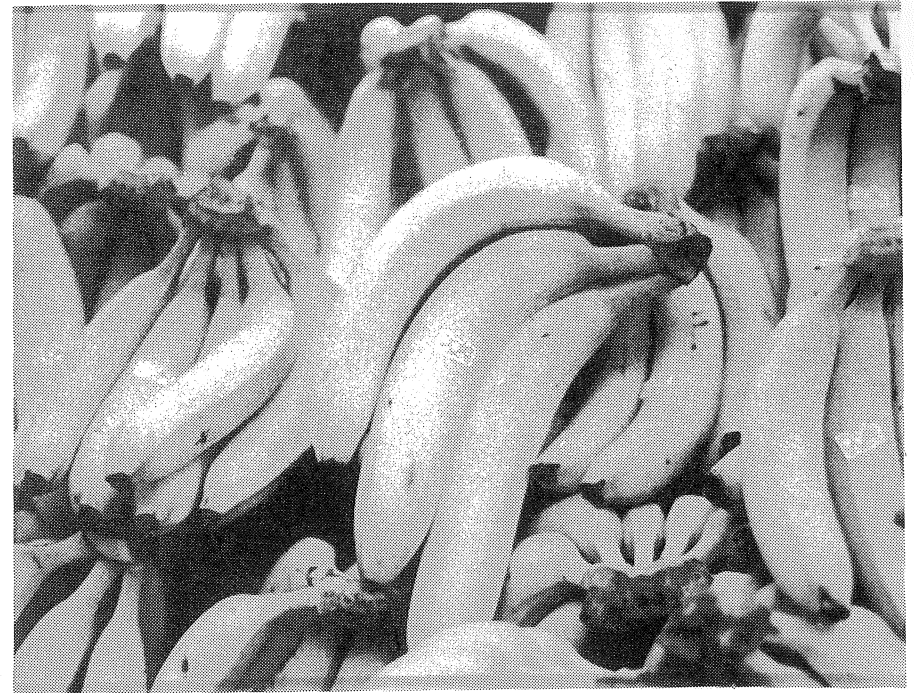


Photo by Leah Peryea

Cantaloupe

seedy, sweet and

slippery

your mouth is wise in its

drunken slumber

and I wait for the carnival to

begin inside your head

Barbara A. Lynch

Opaque

I don't smile at all

- No - I do.

sometimes.

but its flighty and surface

& gone

& when I realise I stretched my mouth that way
and what it usually means

Sadness licks my throat

with a rough tongue

pushing

nasturtium grief upwards.

Kim Mann

This moth

Cool air haunts my eyelashes
old tears sit on the
periphery of my
vision
like fluff balls on a sweater

And it seems I must have
swallowed at least
a dozen big green
apples today

help me Nate
All the lights are
starshaped again.

Kim Mann

On existence.

Take a mess of words, coagulate them
catch a thick glimpse of love
to see where pattern belongs

Inane chatter
fetch matter twice
a new plastic bag caught in that tree

click on an icon
or sink.
fish hooks catch my skin

me - apart now: in what way of knowing
a pact to pretend
precarious
my emphasis slides

I like to be bare

Kim Mann

“as i glide slowly over a cobblestone alleyway”

as i glide slowly over a cobblestone alleyway, i approach
streetlights
with “save-your-soul” sidewalk preachers and loose-jawed
pickpockets.
each with a hidden motive.
i pass a quiet cemetery with graffitied tombstones and dried
flowers.
looking away with dangling shoulders, i spot a neon sign,
“OPEN 24 HOURS”.
set my foot forward and enter with candied eyes.
a place with high-heeled supermodels and a one-eyed
poolshark.
creeping conversation at the end of the bar,
i ask for a drink to calm me,
and the bartender gently hands me a pair of plastic scissors.
“run away young man” he says with a whisper.
i stagger drunk past intertwined lovers and melting junkies
into an avenue of sorrow.
a motorcycle speeds by and a tin-coated hitchhiker
raises his thumb.

Peter Tarr

“somedays i ride trains to winnipeg”

somedays i ride trains to winnipeg;
sleeping in cabooses
with rusted nails,
dragging my feet in ancient pebbles,
puffing cigarettes
with a smoky fire-eyed hero;
who is filled with stories,
both truth and fiction.
wiping his beaded face
with rag-swollen hands;
thrift shop boots
and a pin-striped flannel-
a genius and prophet
blended by experience.
pointed to vanilla-sketched clouds
in lavender darkness,
claiming there is someone
watching over us.

Peter Tarr

The Boy

The

boy,
standing outside the
closed bedroom door,

runs his

hand under his nose and says,
"Mommy,

should I

boil hot dogs to-
day?

for

me and the
baby?

like you

always tell me to?

when

Daddy's not at
breakfast?

Peter J. Wiesen



Photo by Leah Peryea

Frank O'Hara Wondered

Frank O'Hara wondered if
any one of the
8,000,000 people in
New York City was
thinking about him.

I
read that and felt
glad that I had
someone who would
think about me,
someone I could
count on to
move to Timbuk-
tu or
Sydney or
France if I
asked;
someone to stick
marshmallows up her
nose and
sing the theme to
WKRP in Cincinnati if I
asked,

but
that's not what matters;
what
matters is that
I'd do the same for her and
that's why
I'm not
lonely like
Frank.

Peter J. Wiesen

america lives on the side streets

america
lives on the side streets
where
tricycles are overturned
where
landlords laugh, get fat, buy and sell and die,
where even
real estate agents fear to tread,
where
boarded-up school buildings remind everyone,
where
corner stores have all you need in a twelve by twelve room, iron
gates, and a man who knows your name,
where there
are, in-
deed, corner stores.

Turn off Elmwood,
down Byrd,
cross Grant, and see people
live;
live with parents and grandparents;
live with children and grandchildren;
live with aunts and uncles and friends;
live with guns echoing the way guns seem to echo;
some
live with dope
some
live with hope
that they'll
die one wrung
higher than their parents and their
children will do the
same.

Peter J. Wiesen

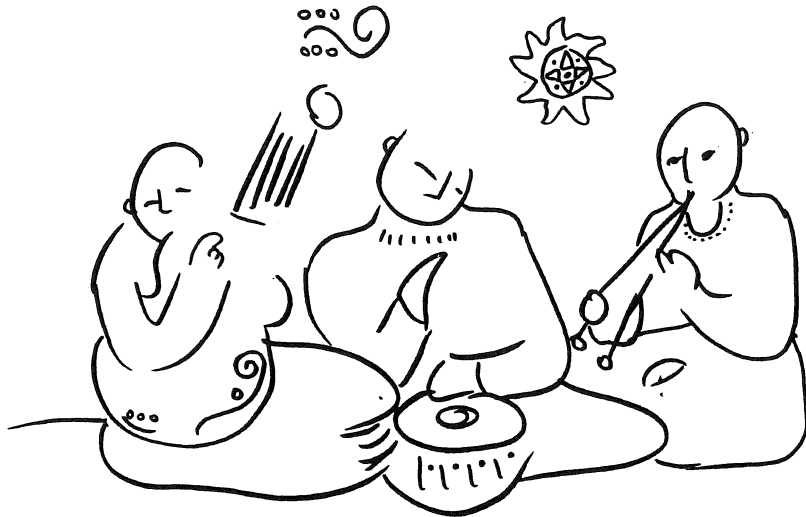
"her favorite meal"

her favorite meal is a bottle of beer
and a bowl of cashews.
Sometimes with one eyebrow raised
and legs spread apart.
Other times-
crumpled on the floor
like a tissue
with her bag of tears.

The girl down the hall
with the red lips and swivelin' hips
will not meet on the other side
with Georgia O'Keeffe and I.

He gave me that box of tissues once
and since it has become one of my most prized possessions
Tonight I am not gonna go on about
what they did wrong.
I just want to watch her eat those nuts
and suck on that beer
I recognize who she is
and I think she is beautiful -
even with her bag of tears.

Cerah Yackly



"musicians"

Stuart

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Fall 1996 Staff: Peter J. Wiesen, Editor; Nancy Lavis, Assistant Editor; Barbara A. Lynch, Secretary; Josh Bauer, Treasurer; Roy W. Bakos, Co-editor in absentia; Erica O'Neil, Jay Zbaczyniak, Bob Stern, Jodi Ripperger, Shannon Davis, Mike Caso, and Jennifer Eighney, staff members.

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