

manuscripts



2006-2007




Manuscripts

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The moral of the story is, is we're
here on Earth to fart around....
And, what the computer people don't
realize, or they don't care, is we're
dancing animals. You know, we love
to move around. And, we're not
supposed to dance at all anymore.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

1922-2007

Letter from the Editors

It is rare for an undergraduate literary publication to be able to judge itself by what did not get into its pages. It means that the magazine has succeeded totally in its aim: to publish the very best, the very widest in variety and scope of the creative writing being done on campus.

Manuscripts is not there yet. We feature a very slim selection of work this year—only 15% of the work we received—and it is what a staff of eight people has judged to be the best of the best. But it is limited. It is limited by department—the concentration of writing interest among English majors. It is limited by publicity—the difficulty of spreading word among a student body of over 4,000. Most of all, it is limited by timidity—by the fear of rejection and the fear of sharing things that, in the past, have been so personal.

This year's magazine is personal. Though you won't find the topics named explicitly in the text, this year's poetry and prose is about communication, about relationships, about grief, about what makes our skin crawl. We managed to pick up a few non-English major perspectives and several new names along the way. But the most important trait held in common by these authors was a determination to share something personal, to explain something meaningful or confusing to them. Some overcame major obstacles in order to do so. All showed an earnest desire to share with us what was worth sharing, even if it meant revising so we could understand.

To those who refuse to let rejection disenchant them about writing, we offer this, which our 2006-2007 contributors taught us: What is personal is worth writing, and what is worth writing is worth revising. Revise again. Submit again. We—readers before we are editors—look forward, always, to hearing what it is that you have to say.

Respectfully,
Tracy Bowling
Karen Witting

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***Cover: Conservation** by Alix Clinkingbeard

Left in the Attic

Elizabeth Huggins

My *should have said*s sit in the attic;
leave me alones pile
in the corner by the window;
a trunk full of *i love you*s
hide behind the door;
whys hang from the rafters
and cover the wall.

To be honest
I haven't slept in years.

Thursday Night

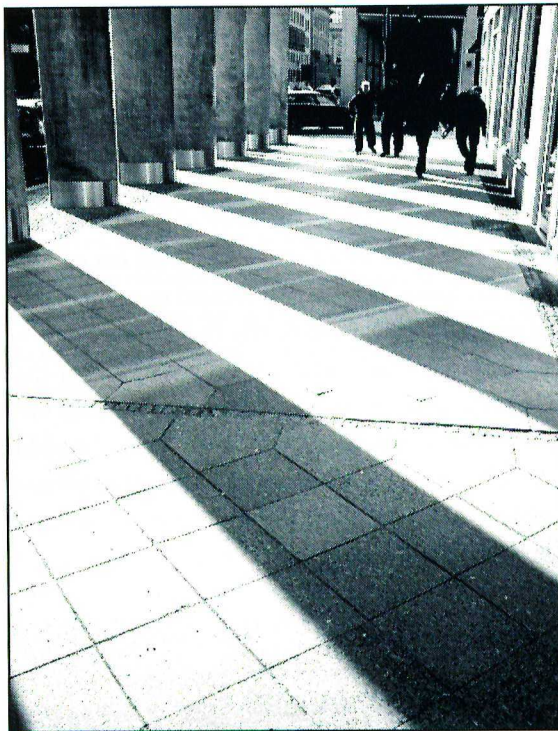
Samantha Atkins

applications, aggravations, celebrations ceased—
math assignment, star alignment, all my time spent leased—
pop rock, cell block, tick-tock, lights—
folk blues, worn shoes, hate-mock fights—
eight. fate. late. straight. date. mate. pout—
leap. heap. creep. cheap. deep sleep... out.

Things You Will Never See

Kaley Deneen

I could draw silhouettes and sonnets onto your bed sheets,
and I know you still wouldn't think of me in the morning.
You can ache to be porcelain projected into this perfection I won't attain
and I'll be dry & crude clay.
Every night after we touch you'll forget about me in the shower.
And even though the stains might line your bathtub,
you always ignore them
like the prose etched into your linens.
They spell out secrets you've been trying to wash away for years.
They're white like the eggshells we walked on to get here,
while everything else is covered in the dirt we've deceived for so long.



Berlin

Ben Melchior

Pale Fish

Andrea York

Everything I write begins and ends with my sister. She is always there, just behind the words, a dark shadow pacing behind the slim black bars I have imposed upon the page. I can feel her mournful green eyes on me as I write this, and by dragging my pen across this page I am also dragging it across those scars on her wrists and once again letting her dark blood escape.

This is my sister's story to tell, not mine. The story of how I write begins with the story of why I could not write, and that involves a betrayal that I am not sure I am ready to commit. Writing belongs to my sister; her journals formed spiraling piles on her messy adolescent floor, begging me to read them and finally find her cure. Her words mesmerized me; when I discovered notes that she had carelessly left on our flower-tiled bathroom floor, I would rip them open and devour every word like a scientist analyzing her genetic code to find the defect. I knew that if I only understood what was wrong, I could fix it. And then, one day, instead of chatty notes about the cute boy who sat next to her in class, I found suicide notes. I cannot explain why I did not read these. After trying so hard to discover her true self in banal writings on notebook paper, I could not open these tidy squares and see the truth.

The first poem I ever wrote was, in essence, a note back to her. That day I drove around our town sobbing so hard that I was choking for air and pulled into every church parking lot, hoping someone would somehow find me and save me. I do not even know where that poem came from; it was like my tears, and it suddenly welled up inside me and poured out onto the back of a receipt for gasoline:

Dear Sister,

*As I flush your suicide notes down the toilet
they appear like pale translucent fish,
flirtily chasing each other around their circular abode
before escaping to the sea.*

*I hate myself for seeing the beauty in this moment
as you never could have.*

That day, I chose my fate. I did not talk to a pastor then, or ever, about my sister's secret. I did not tell my friends, because I was afraid they would act strangely around her and make her feel even more isolated. I assumed my mother could be counted on, but when I earnestly detailed a list of strategies for 'suicide-proofing' the house with her, she replied that, "If she wants to kill herself, she can just go right ahead." While I fought for my sister's life, my mouth would stay shut.

Exorcism

*I want to break your heart and leave it bleeding
howling
writhing on the floor*

*I want you to hear the desperate scabbling on the other side of the wall
as you lie terrified in your bed
knowing that your child sister is trying to hang herself
in her closet on the other side.*

*I want you to hear this for nights
weeks
years*

*until your bloodshot eyes never close
until the sounds become the wild scrabbling beat of your own heart
and you can't discern what side of the wall you are on
and which of you is dying.*

*I want to write about this until my fingers bleed.
I want to go about with scraps of paper stuck to the congealed platelets on my fingertips
I want you to take these memories from me
so that I can finally sleep.*

For over two years my sister was the black hole at the center of my universe, her thick dark gravity pulling me in a frenzied revolution around her. I could not even estimate how many times I hid knives from her, stole pills from her room, or casually strolled through the basement to make sure she was not hanging herself from the beams in the storage room. I became an expert at making up excuses to come into the bathroom when she had been in the tub too long.

It turns out that her saving grace was, of course, not in me but within herself. She discovered that, after all of that journal writing, she had become an extremely talented writer. One day she told me, with pride radiating off of her like sunlight off of the snow, that a poem she had written was going to be published in a teen magazine. I felt like the balloon that had been expanding and expanding in my chest had finally popped and allowed my lungs to fill with air, my heart to beat again. My sister finally had a new secret.

Before I left for college, my sister took me aside and told me something that started that balloon expanding in my chest again. She said that the only reason she had never really killed herself was because of me. I avoided thinking that I would be leaving her alone with only my mother to guard her.

Once at college, I took a class on creative writing because it sounded easier than the other option, which I can't recall now. Our first task was to write a poem, which I had never had to do for class before. I procrastinated, trying to think of what to possibly write about, and once again I felt it welling up inside of me against my own will:

Lullabye

*Your baby daughter
felt so alone
that she took the razor to her wrists
But it's not your fault
You were always a good mother.*

*When she tried again
with vodka and pills
I begged you to remove them from the house
But why should you have to stop drinking
just because she has problems?
It's not your fault
You were always a good mother.*

*When I watched the flashing lights
take her away
and you hugged me and cried
in front of your friends
It wasn't your fault I didn't hug back
You were always a good mother.*

When it came time to read my poem aloud in class, I did so with an unsteady voice. During discussion of my poem, a classmate argued that the speaker could not possibly be a sister because they seemed to do so little to help, and at that point I ran out of the room and hid in the bathroom until class was over. When I returned to collect my books, my teacher asked me if I wanted to talk about it and I brushed him off.

I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to talk about it. But it's all I can think about. The problem with talking about it is that someone has to listen. Every time I have to read one of my poems or turn in a personal paper it feels like I am cutting off her fingers and distributing them to the class. What you hear or read may affect you for a moment, but then you will go eat a sandwich or balance your checkbook and I will be left here, clutching my wilting white sheaf of papers, loathing myself for what I have just done.

Late at night I still write poems after flying out of my bed from sleep, because I can still hear her on the other side of my wall. At first, I was trying to write it all down as a form of exorcism; I thought that putting it on a page would be equivalent to erasing it from my brain. When you are in the midst of something so soul-corroding, it seems that your life would be good again if you could just dig out that part of your brain that contains the memories. However, the day that I realized I was actually starting to become numb to the past sent me into a new kind of panic. It was like I was standing in front of that terrified girl of 16 who had been chewing her lips until they bled, and telling her, "Don't worry, I will forget you." I am so afraid of the day that someone sarcastically complains that they just want to die and it doesn't make me flinch. So now I write as if I am in the middle of a burning room and have to memorize every smoke-filled corner before the whole place collapses on me. I do not know what I will do when I have run out of corners.

I know that I will never be able to really publish anything that I write, because to do that would be to kill her myself. She is the writer. I will never take that from her. Even to write this, knowing that only a few people will read it, feels like a betrayal.

Everything I write begins and ends with my sister. She is the only person I write about and the only one I will never be able to show it to. I should burn this paper and watch the smoke carry her secret back into the air, breathe it deeply, trap it in my body once again. I should douse myself in gasoline and join it, but I cannot. I am not strong enough to do what I should, to keep it inside, and so, instead, I write.



I-290

Jonathan Irons

Daddy's Whiskey

Chris Smith

Daddy, I drank all your whiskey—
But be glad, I mixed it with water
Like you always said—Didn't
Grandpa teach you that?
I thought so.

I was just reading like you always
Wanted me to. So I mixed some
Whiskey with water from our kitchen's
Tap in that glass you bought for
Such occasions—

There I was in the chair you always
Sit in; sometimes nap in, the way
I will always remember: reading
And whiskey.

Sleep tight Old-Man, you are
Not so far away because here
I am: whiskey almost gone,
Book almost shut,
Sinking fondly into you.

Walls Can Talk

Sarah Murrell

I watch you sleep in the lazy midmorning.
A golden tide engulfs cotton shores
while the sun whisks the white off the snowy sill
and drizzles it over exposed shoulders, and they drink it in.
Curious feet poke out of the sheets to garner the daylight,
while your lungs sip the air in a sluggish ebb and flow.
At the edge, yellow tendrils reach for the floor with their idle ends
and the lashes cast willowy shadows over your cheeks,
on which lingers a last glittering suggestion
of what is to be forgotten by the mind,
and remembered by the face, by the feet, by the bolder blood
hours after the crimes of zestful youth have been committed.
And when at last they come to sweep you away,
when they muster at your bedside to gather up your light
and pour your brash ebullience into that indifferent box
when they unfurl your many flags for all to stain and shred,
they shall talk aloud to no one and me,
but I shall not speak a word.

Body 39

Mike Meginnis

This body is called a woman.

It pisses standing up. It has a little pink funnel.

It has upper arms like soft pink watermelons and stretch-marks like purple-red watermelon stripes. It has short salt and pepper hair, and this body has the beginnings of a proud set of jowls.

It has toes like the petals of a small white flower. It has toenails like flecks of coconut flesh. It has fingers like Vienna sausages. It has nipples like strawberry cross-sections. It has eyes the color of lime and lemon zest. It has a spare tire.

Due to a slight chemical imbalance, its tears are unusually sweet. Another body called a woman once threatened to bottle them. It threatened to stop crying if the other tried.

It works retail – it nods politely. Tonight it sleeps alone. Tomorrow maybe not.

Its parents are dead.

It visits a black church for the music and the sideways glances. It is costumed in spotless black jeans and a white flannel shirt. This body votes Republican in national elections. This body has a single crooked tooth.

This body smoked a cigar once. The bitter taste returns, sometimes, in the night, while the lonely flesh sleeps sound and snores.

Body 50

This body is called a baby.

It is soft and brown like sugar.

It is round and kicking, it is smiling laughing pissing, it is from another country, it is diapered luxuriantly. It is powdered, pampered, lifted. It has a fragrant scalp.

Body 69

This body is called a cripple.

This body has no hands. This body has no eyelashes. This body is carried nightly to bed by its wife's body.

This body needs a special opponent in board games – one willing to move all the pieces.



Amsterdam
Ben Melchior

The True Artist of Fairfax County

Diane Hardin

Accents away
On the east coast of the country
He makes music
In a small dorm room he shares with a gay Mexican gangster
Named Juan
Who smells like the attic of a Middle Eastern grandmother.
It's here that my artist works on tones, pitch, flow
Digital sounds weaving together
Fluctuations making love to my ears
Across computer speakers
And I know him
Though I've only seen him, hugged him once in Provo, Utah
In the parking lot of broken down brown brick college apartments
When we stared at the mountainside to find the hidden B-Y-U
And he pointed out the pizza under my pointer's fingernail
And I told him I hated people touching my neck.
Now we talk online a few hours a day
And sometimes leave each other voicemails—he'll hang up if I answer—
He hates phones.
We always speak, of course, of music—
We watched Bright Eyes' "Easy/Lucky/Free"
On You Tube and practiced writing backwards for hours like Conor Oberst
Before realizing the camera's trick.
We discuss the loves of his life who all have had water names—
Claire Fischer, Rachel Sealig, Yvan Karp, and Kate Welly

And my boyfriend,
Who he insists looks like Adam Savage with sunglasses,
Sending me the Mythbusters' link to the picture the instant I mention him and
Correcting me to stubbornly call him Andy though that's not his name.
He calls me "Diary" or types out my Guster song.
He shares his joy on handwritten notes on folded papers that come
Priority Mail
With little pictures and lyrics written and doodled
Each title and artist of the CD contained in the package
And listed on the paper has its reason for being there
He knows me and he knows music.
I play the CD with black marked drawings
Again and again
And again
Because music is lyrics is poetry is mine
He gives and creates not to make money
But to share
This beauty and I sing along because he chose each piece for me to love
And he wants me to care.
Something chose us
To learn from each other—
I don't question this, but embrace
The true artist of Fairfax County.

Rumor

Julie Nossem

I hear this man butchers girls and eats them. He follows you to a gymnasium at night in his old dogcatchers' van and he waits under your car with his knife. When you return to your car, he slashes your Achilles, so you can't get away. Then he gags you before you can scream and ties your arms behind your back with plastic wrap. Then he chucks you into the back of his van where it's cold and smells like cat piss. The puddles of blood on the metal floor seep into your sweat pants, then panties. And you just cry because if you scream, he rattles on the cage behind you and you tense up and your ankles paralyze you with pain. No one can hear you anyway.

He brings you to his home. "Your new home," he says. He carries you downstairs draped over his shoulder like he's saving you from a fire, like he's some kind of hero. He ties you to a chair in his decaying basement where he proceeds to stitch your ankles and speaks sweetly using words you remember from your first real boyfriend:

“What’s the matter, Sweetheart?”

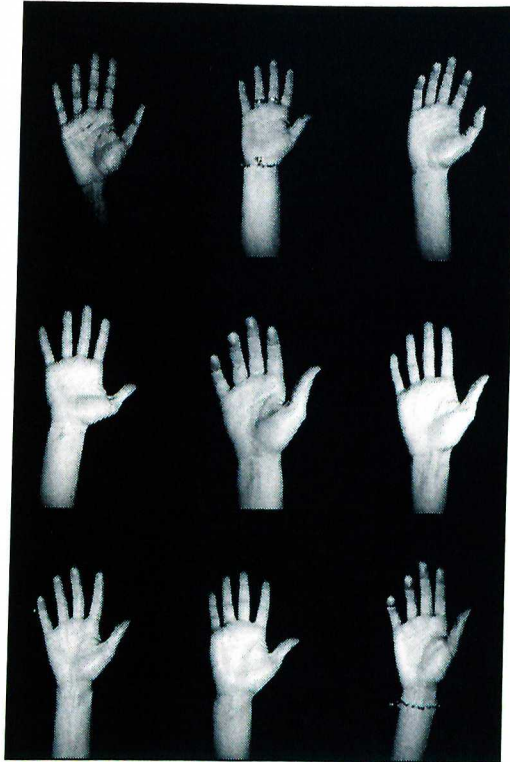
You’re still gagged.

“Stay still. This will only hurt a little, My Love.” He says these things like your doctor or your father would say them.

When he’s finished stitching, he unties you (keeping you gagged) and gives you clothes to change into. He watches you while you struggle to stand and peel the bloody clothes off your body to slip into the little tutu he’s given you.

He rapes you nightly and makes you eat dog food; once he sees you slitting your wrists, he lets you go.

So it’s not true. He doesn’t butcher you and eat you.



9 Hands

Anna Wolak

Small Genocide

Mike Meginnis

I used to think we were all savages until Shinji told me about old Japan. He says that in the samurai days people would always walk on the left side of the road, so that their leading sword hand was on the inside.

“Maybe the weirdest part of that whole thing is that right-handed men don't really gain from it,” said Shinji, a lefty. “If everybody walked on the right side, they'd still be on equal footing – and, if anything, you'd get more warning when the other guy wanted to get you, 'cause he'd have to move from his place.”

“So really,” I said, completing his thought, “all it served to do is disadvantage left-handed men.”

“Sometimes I wonder if that was the idea all along,” he said, and he tickled my thigh. We gentle Americans drive on the right. So at least we've got that.

Teleheartache

Sarah Murrell

I slept until the sun went down
and crawled from the bed to the floor.
I put on my frazzled, cow-licked crown,
Assured my waking of a settled score.

Addled, I walked and walked until
the grass had turned to blacktop cuts.
My naked feet profaned my will
which had lead them, mindless, thus.

Blood-shod steps I left on the trunk
of a tree I've never climbed
I waited until the height had sunk
the feelings I'd released, mistimed.

I swung out towards the streets, the cars
and dug, barehanded, into my chest.
The scene was pedestrian yet bizarre
But still my bleeding, beating best.

No one stopped, no one sighed
just worked their horns till hoarse.
I swaddled my pride in sheets of night
and thought it par for course.



Almost Forgotten
Meagan Hinze

In Medias Res

Brian Ford

In medias res. That's the phrase they use to describe a story that starts off in the middle. More accurately, it starts off during a really exciting part. Something really interesting is happening, and you get dropped right in the middle. It's a neat device. Some movies just deserve better than the typical introduction.

If a story were written about my life, I would want it to begin *in medias res*.

There's just one problem. My life is never that interesting.

It would be a lie to say that my life is devoid of action. My story is told by the clicking of keys. Every annoying ring of a phone that strains off the hook, begging to be snatched up, has its own tale. There is a story somewhere amidst a tableau of stapled copies and paper jams, but everyone is too busy to hear it between the hours of nine A.M. and five P.M., and no one save the foolish spends any other hours here.

My job is meaningless number-shuffling and the adjudication of totally arbitrary digits that somehow add up to the sum of a human being's worth. Somewhere, another person with a task even more repetitive and unnecessary than my own evaluates what I have done and produces equally little valuable output. Yet another person examines his progress and mine as a whole and attempts to extrapolate the total. People and numbers are alike in how easily they can be manipulated with a pen and paper. Strike one name on a list and suddenly someone comes up a few numbers short. Those numbers are the gas bill. They add up to groceries and car payments. They equal a college education for my children. This is my life. I am a slave to numbers. If I could build a time machine, I would go back and find the very first mathematician.

I would slit his throat and cry out in triumph.

I also drive a boring car. It's the best a man of my numbers can manage, unless he's willing to make a few sacrifices. His soul, perhaps. I bet someone, somewhere, can assign numbers to that, too. But enough about numbers; we are talking about my car.

My car is a 1996 Toyota Corolla. It's kind of greenish. Or maybe it's kind of bluish. It is a color that might best be described as teal, but again, it might not. No one can decide what color it is, but for some reason, it is the same color that all 1996 Toyota Corollas have been painted. All of the ones I've seen, anyway. I guess some Japanese businessman decided that if he was going to market a car to boring Americans that it made no difference what color it was. He was probably right. Maybe in some factory in Tokyo they know what color it is. Maybe they don't have a word for it in English.

Someday, I will buy a motorcycle.

Whenever I drive my car, I leave the window down. I don't care if it's eighty degrees or eight. I like the fresh air. Sometimes, I drive with one hand and put the other arm outside the window. I rest my hand against the car door that is the color which cannot be classified and turn up the radio. I listen to NPR. For a brief moment in time, I am not a prisoner. I am not a slave to mathematics, and even my car cannot fully confine me. I am happy.

Then I get home.

I own a modest house. It is painted a very ordinary shade of tan. The shutters are blue, like everyone else's shutters in my neighborhood. There are only three different models of homes in my development. The builder apparently decided to save money by painting them all the same color, too.

I considered purchasing a can of paint one day and painting my shutters, but it went rather poorly. I took a trip to the home decorator supply store. It was a weekend. I stood in front of a color chart, trying to decide which hue might best suit me. It was such an important decision, a landmark if you will. A man's shutters should match his personality, if you ask me. If his shutters and his personality clash, a man can never be complete. Maybe someday I'll publish a book of sayings, and that one will be in there. I will title that segment of the book "Advice about Shutters."

Anyway, I studied my options for a bit. Scratching my head in uncertainty, I spotted a young man in a red vest out of the corner of my eye. An employee! Perhaps he could make a recommendation. I motioned to him and we chatted for a moment. He nodded, understanding my dilemma in choosing from the myriad options presented before me. He seemed to know exactly what to do, and trusting his judgment, I waited while he went off to get a can of paint in the appropriate color. When he returned, I saw only the color of the paint can lid which I knew matched the color of the paint inside. He was carrying it under his arm, lid facing forward. I felt a sudden pounding in my chest. Surely, this was some cosmic joke, some party trick of karma. I shook my head nervously and quietly made a beeline for the exit.

The paint was the color of my car.

So I have not since been to any home decorator supply stores. They know more about me than I do. I am rebelling against their desire to paint everything I own such an enigmatic color. In this way, I feel as though I have some control over my life. I will not be played by fate, especially when it comes to my shutters.

When I came home without any paint, I had to explain myself to my wife. She would never understand the truth. I decided not to tell her. I simply informed her that I had changed my mind. Besides, all of our neighbors will paint their shutters, too, and then we'll be back where we started. She had accepted this, or so I believe, and there would be no further discussion. She will carry the secret of her credulity for eternity.

This is how it is. I come home in the evening and my wife greets me. Sometimes she has prepared dinner, other times not. It makes very little difference. My wife cannot cook. She believes she is excellent, a regular gourmet, as it were, but I know the truth. I will never tell her otherwise, and neither will anyone else. It is not worth troubling her about her inability to prepare an edible meal.

She is terrible in bed, too. She just lies there. We have been married for seven years, and never in seven years has she so much as moved beyond her initial position, back to the bed, face towards me. Perhaps she is secretly Catholic. That's how it was on our wedding night, and that's how it will be tonight. I will kiss her and whisper lies into her ear. She will believe them, like she always does. The lies are much easier than the truth, and she is less troubled.

Today, I am in the attic. My wife is not home. She has gone out with our neighbors, quite possibly to the mall, or maybe to an outlet store. She and I had discussed her intended purchase of a new handbag. The attic is somewhat cold. There are holes in the insulation. One more thing the builders got wrong. At least I know what color it is.

I am sitting on a stool. I found the stool underneath a pile of old, discarded linens. It was a pile of drapes and sheets and coats that no one has worn or used in years. The attic is a good place to be forgotten. Everything that no longer has value finds its way up here sooner

or later, and it is only remembered when someone wants to find an old photo album or plans to have a rummage sale. I used to like rummage sales.

I have a bottle of champagne. It is sitting in ice, in one of those neat little buckets on a tripod of sorts that they bring to you in fancy restaurants. There are patterns of grapes embossed on the tripod, but they have gotten rusty with time. The tripod is very old, but the champagne is not. Wine is unusual in the sense that its value often increases with age, and I can only afford very new wine. I have not used the wineglasses in my home in some time, but today, I have one in my hand, and it is filled. I have already consumed quite a bit of it, and even if it is new, the champagne tastes delicious. The bubbles rise to the top of the glass, and I stare at them, mesmerized. They must dislike the glass, I think. They are trying to escape.

I also have a shotgun. I bought it at a rummage sale. It cost me twenty dollars. The owners were in a hurry to get rid of it, I think, because they were new grandparents and did not want guns in the house. They wanted it to be safe for their new grandchildren. My wife wanted to have it in case we were ever being robbed, but somehow it wound up in the attic, alone and forgotten. Like me.

The ammunition for the shotgun was purchased at a sporting goods store.

The barrel of the shotgun is very long. It is resting against my neck. I stare at the bottle of champagne for a moment before looking at my glass. It is mostly full, which is good, because I am about to make a toast. Somehow it seems appropriate. That is where my story really begins, I suppose. And I think about it for a minute. What should I toast?

So I decide, right then, that I always loved movies that started with an exciting scene, right in the middle of the action. It was perfect.

“To *in medias res*,” I said, closing my eyes and raising my glass. I bring it to my lips and savor champagne.

I could have begun here, in retrospect. Maybe it would be exciting. It could even be *in medias res*. But it would have been a very short story.

I pull the trigger.



Fairy Lights
Meagan Hinze

Vows

Josh Kaminski

I vow to point out our kitchen window,
Bringing to your attention the crossing
Of a family of deer,
While simultaneously, silently
Sliding a hand up your thigh,
To rest softly on your ass.

I vow to ask you one day
While we are folding laundry,
Our liver-spotted hands
Giving us arthritic hell,
The light of the television
Glinting off our silvery hair,
When it was that you knew
I would be your husband.

I vow to name all your fun parts,
And talk about them like
Particularly naughty old friends,
The neighbors will think
We're gossiping our socks off,
But only you will be able
To translate my illicit monologue.

I vow to watch you
Grow at the hips and belly,
To pinch away the insecurities
As they come,
I vow to create
These awkward contrasts,
If you vow to let me.

When you fall asleep,
I vow to cover you,
To move a downy blanket
Over your cold feet,
And perhaps, if you are
Wearing those loose pajamas,
I will take a quick look
At Daisy and Deidre,
Before myself dozing off to dream.

What's the Palm Tree For?

Chris Smith

I

It's for that boulder of a sea turtle quietly making his way back—
Or So The Story Goes—

Further we walked along the shore past the dunes and palmettos
until the giant sea turtle blocked our path for the moon.

We all nodded gestures of forgiveness
and the rock made his way back to the ocean,
While the glittering tide billowed over our minds
Crashing shallowly on *our* Leatherbacks.
“A night like this you’ll never remember until the day you die,”
echoed off the waves just before the ocean swallowed him in whole.

If I Died

II

That rock would swim back to that same beach
Forty-one years later, and lay my bones in the sand.
Thereupon I would hatch and make my own way
Into the insolid, find a pay phone, look you up, and ask—
“Remember the beetling dunes, the palmettos rustling
In the balmy breeze, our trip to the moon?”
“I thought you were dead my friend,” you’d say.

“No, I’m the Boulder. I found my way back to the ocean.”



Bath
Ben Melchior

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2006-2007

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Faculty Advisor

Susan Neville

Tracy Bowling is a senior English/Creative Writing major. Her plans include being around people who like books and then going to graduate school for her writing. She enjoys this kind of thing more than is healthy and hopes someday to teach creative writing in a university.

Karen Witting is a junior English major and theatre minor, as well as a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority and an assistant in the Butler Theatre costume shop. She hopes someday to live a life of behind-the-scenes glamour as a costume designer and to write novels in her spare time.

Meagan Hinze is a sophomore Chemistry and German double major. She reluctantly realizes that someday after Butler and graduate school she will have to get a real job. Until then, she enjoys reading, listening to music, and cooking in her spare time.

Christina Lear is a freshman English major debating which minors to pursue. She enjoys doing way more than she has time for and has a hard-core addiction to caffeine. This summer, Christina will be living out of a bus and traveling across the country for her second season of drum corps.

Luisa Lewis is a senior English/Creative Writing major. She loves fall color tours, the feeling of raw chicken and ball point pens writing on her skin. In the future she plans to change the world and also become a Master of blowing glass.

Matt McDaniel is a senior English Education major hailing from somewhere over the rainbow, also known as Culver, IN. A fan of everything from Shakespeare to Stephen King, he's enjoyed working on Manuscripts this year and hopes to continue professing his love of literature to the masses.

Mike Meginnis is a junior creative writing major. His writing has been published in *The Sycamore Review* and *Cranky*. He blogs at mikemeginnis.com. He realizes, once daily, he should've been a musician.

Kelsey Truman is a freshman English major, Gender Studies minor. This is her first time helping to edit a literary magazine. Today, she wrote a staff bio. She is waiting for you to do something constructive, too. Get on it!

Updates

This year, *Manuscripts* wants to start the tradition of updating our readers on the contributors to the previous issue. Often, being selected for an undergraduate publication can be a useful stepping stone to other creative pursuits. Here's what some of last year's contributors have been up to:

2006-2007 contributors **Mary Bremer**, **Ashley Caveda**, and **Calli Grimes** were awarded first prizes from the Indiana Collegiate Press Association (ICPA) in their respective divisions: Free Verse, Rhymed Poetry, and Short Story.

Andrew Wright and **Karen Witting** were awarded ICPA awards for Best Photographic Illustration and Best Hand-Drawn Illustration.

Junior **Mike Meginnis** was published in two literary magazines: *The Sycamore Review* and *Cranky*.

Letters from Contributors

Manuscripts,

I am a volunteer for the Peace Corps in Togo working for the education and promotion of girls and women. My life here is full of creating, writing, and learning.

with joy
sunny widmann

Dear Manuscripts,

In the last year I have been published several times in a local newspaper from my home, the Oak Park Oak Leaves, in an open submission section. I was also hired as assistant editor of photography at the Butler Collegian where I am very much enjoying working. I am currently brainstorming over my honors thesis in which I plan to combine photography and archaeology together to better understand our perceptions of cultural material.

Jon Irons

Dear Manuscripts,

I have been making a lot of collages lately. I recently submitted 3 to the Swope Art Museum in Terre Haute for the 63rd Annual Wabash Valley Juried Exhibition. I will be notified on May 5th if any were accepted.

Andrew Wright

Hey hey Manuscripts!

I'm currently living in Galway, Ireland. I've just finished applying to a couple of post grad courses for writing. One in San Francisco and the rest in London. Either city would be lovely and expensive. I haven't been published or recognised or the like, but it's whatev, I've got time. I spend my time hanging out with the Polish and laughing at Americans, in a loving sort of way. I've just recently found my iPod and that has made the happiest little clam you've ever seen. I don't drink a lot of water, because, turns out, Galway water can make you sick! I've found that drinking enough beer will have the same effect and that it tastes better. Don't worry...it's all fodder for the poems.

Mary Bremer

Manuscripts

Call for Submissions

Manuscripts will begin accepting submissions for the 2007-2008 issue on August 22, 2007. We invite you to submit your best fiction, poetry, short prose, or creative nonfiction as well as your artwork and photography.

All submissions must be e-mailed as Microsoft Word documents or JPEG files to the new Manuscripts submission address: butler.manuscripts@gmail.com. Make sure to send your creative pieces as anonymous, individually titled attachments. To ensure quality printing, all photos should be high-resolution—at least 400 px/in. Please include your contact information in the body of your submission e-mail.

For further information on submission, visit our online guidelines at www.butler.edu/manuscripts/guidelines.htm. If you have any specific questions, feel free to contact us at manuscripts@butler.edu or by phone at 317.940.6344. We would be happy to hear from you.

As always, we look forward to reading your work.

Respectfully,
The Manuscripts Staff

Manuscripts

Butler University Indianapolis, IN
2006-2007