ROCINANTE
DON QUIXOTE’S HORSE

A knight without a horse is nothing but a man wearing a tin can. It is not proper for a knight to be carried by a horse without a name. A writer who is not read is only keeping a diary. A diary is nothing more than a book without a title.

In his quest to find true love, the disillusioned knight Don Quixote of the Mancha rode upon his horse called Rocinante. Rocinante is our vehicle to carry us to the realization of our own disillusionments. With this first issue we are heading out into the world to tilt at windmills in hopes of fulfilling dreams.
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Catbird Dance
Kathryn Colburn

Slim angled eyes,
mystery's vapid
spies.
Stealthy movement,
slumbering night,
predacious quest
visage fright.
Stalking tranquil through
the dark
nature's dance,
flitting lark.
The black veil
will not rise.
A feline's story
is demise.
Is terrestrial life
happenstance?
Must we do the catbird
dance?

Ah Ha
Sarah Martin

Thoughts
Thinking Ping-Pong
Words ideas flow
Together stretch apart
Clutter
Colors fill my brain
Swirls light
Bulbs
Spirals turn on, turn circles
As the stripes
Whirl
In chaos,
Excitement,
Sensation
A sigh of satisfaction.
"Lacey, it is time to get up, sweetheart," My mother announced. "Hurry up Lace we have to leave for work soon."

"I am getting up," I said in a sweet cheery voice hiding all honest emotions inside of me. With three years of practice, I had become a professional at putting on a fake smile.

***

Three years ago, during my junior year of high school, my mother and I moved from Wyoming to California. I loved Wyoming; it was my home. The two of us lived in a beautiful three bedroom log cabin. We had five acres of green land and two gorgeous golden brown horses. Each morning as I scampared out the back door to feed the horses I enjoyed watching the bright colors of the sunrise reflect off our calm smooth pound. My high school in Wyoming was small, where everybody knew everybody. It was great. I was in leadership and just as close to the teachers as I was to my peers. I had played on the varsity softball team all three years, and after every Wednesday practice my teammates and I would stop by Dairy Queen on our way to youth group. On Friday nights my friend Malissa and I would travel together to the football games to cheer for her boyfriend. Malissa was my best friend. Now more than ever I miss her dearly.

The life I had in Wyoming stayed in Wyoming. After the move to California I became miserable. I pretended I was fine. I did not want to be a burden to my mother. She moved because she thought it was best. I would tell her the school was great, and avoided the subject of friends because I did not have any. But I allowed her to believe I had more than I could handle. I
would lie in bed at night and cry while reminiscing about all the laughs Malissa and I had shared. No one would ever replace her. I may have moved to California physically, but I had not moved emotionally. The real me was still back home.

Four weeks before my high school graduation I had to confront my mother about my pregnancy. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done. When I think about it now my stomach churns and my palms dampen with cold sweat. I was so ashamed, I just wanted to make it go away. It was just one date and one time. I didn’t even know the guy, but he asked me to prom and I was willing to do anything to make a friend. This never would have happened to the Lacey back home. It made me more depressed to ponder on who I had become. Any appetite I had would be gone and the color would drain from my face. I cut off all contact with those back home, even Malissa. I wanted to talk to her, I really did but I was embarrassed.

I can remember the Saturday morning when I finally opened up and told my mother I was pregnant. I will never forget. I was standing at the stove in the kitchen stirring hot cereal. She sat at the dining room table sipping her tea as she glanced through the paper. The house was silent except for the soft classical music. My feet felt sticky against the freshly mopped floor, and my hair was wrapped up in a pink towel from my morning shower. A breeze from the kitchen window floated in with the sunlight as it brushed against the back of my neck. I knew I had to tell her. She was shocked, but only embraced me in her arms as I cried for hours. Through my sobs I remember repeating the phrase “I am so sorry” as I felt each and every stroke of her warm graceful hands on my back. Later my mother shared with me how terrible she felt for being unaware of my situation.

After my pregnancy I continued my job as a secretary. Not one day went by in which I did not think of my daughter and wonder where she was. When the house was silent I heard the soft faded linger of Malissa’s laugh. I missed her desperately, but could not bring myself to contact her. I knew she would ask how I was. I figured it was best if she did not know. Maybe someday I thought, some way, I would return to my Wyoming state of life, but I doubted it.

***

“Lace we are going to be late for work.”

“I will be out in a sec,” I hollered from the bathroom.

I walked into the kitchen admiring how professional my high heels sounded on the linoleum floor. I tossed a breakfast bar and the mail from the kitchen table into my purse and hurried out the door.

During my lunch break I decided to walk to a nearby coffee shop. I sat with a cup of coffee and opened my purse to read the mail. I was scared to look. I knew it had been six months since I had handed the nurse my precious daughter, and was expecting a picture. I set my coffee mug down and shuffled through the envelopes. It was there. My hands began to lightly shake. I tore the envelope open. Inside was a beautiful picture of a six-month-old baby girl. She was more precious than I remembered. She was dressed in a lavender jump suite and held a bright yellow teddy bear. I quickly set the picture down and began looking through other mail to avoid the tears. I could not believe it. There was a letter addressed to me in Malissa’s
VISIT TO VENIZIO BY KATHRYN COLBURN
handwriting. The thought of her contacting me after these years only made me smile; I was eager to read how she was.

Dear Lacey,

It has been a long time but I still have not forgotten you and never will. I tried to stay in touch but after a while you would not return my calls or my e-mails. That is O.K. I understand you probably got busy and moved on with your new life and friends. Although if you do find time I would enjoy hearing from you.

I have been good. You will be thrilled to hear David and I got married. I know it might seem soon, but David got an incredible job offer in Montana through his dad’s company. We wed five months after high school graduation so we could move to Montana together. I love it here, and my grandparents helped us buy a small 3 bedroom house. After some fixing up it will be beautiful.

"Excuse me Ma’m......Ma’m?"
My reading was interrupted by a deep voice. I looked up to see a young man, about age 20 holding a piece of paper. “I believe this fell out of your envelope in your hurry to open.”

“Oh, thank you so much.”

I watched him nod his head and smile as he stepped back in line. I then glanced at what he had given me. It was a picture Malissa had included in her letter. Her hair was long and dark and framed her delicate smiling face to perfection. The tan muscular arm of her husband David rested gently around her shoulders. Malissa was cradling a baby girl. My eyes widened with surprise as I looked closer. I could feel my heart float up into my throat, as my skin tingled. I looked again. “It couldn’t be,” I whispered. I quickly readjusted my eyes to the letter, searching for an explanation.

Montana is a great place, maybe you could come visit someday. I would love to see you. I have more big news. We have a beautiful six-month-old baby. Three months before the wedding I found out I am barren. I was devastated and spent many nights crying myself to sleep. We came in contact with an agency and adopted Diana Lacey six months ago. I did not forget the deal we made in seventh grade, and I gave my first daughter the middle name Lacey after you. She has been such a blessing and...my eyes became blurry, and my insides trembled. Each beat of my heart was as heavy as a brick, struggling to escape my chest. It was true. I slowly picked up the picture from the adoption agency to read the information on the back:

First name: Diana
Middle initial: L
Location: Montana
(all other information was asked to be kept confidential by guardians.
Information about yourself will be given to legal guardians on the child’s eighteenth birthday)

I smiled a true smile for the first time in three years.

"Excuse me Ma’m," I looked up to see the young man again, but this time with a tray of food. “Do you mind if I sit here with you?”
Between Wake and Slumber
Blake Hooper

I'm stronger now than I was
back when badgers
fought with weasels,
and a frog, to impress his friends,
drove a car. He crashed.
But even I knew
it was too big for him.
Like those pages,
giant in my virgin hands,
full of burning color.
But now I'm stronger
and my hands can press the color
into cells of black
and white pages;
two ends that circumscribe
the wind that made
the willows sway.

UNTITLED BY UNKNOWN
Forgive Me
Megan Linter

I yelled at
a man in line
today
Please forgive me.
It wasn't personal.

I slapped
my sister
today.
Please forgive me.
I still love you.

I didn't talk
to God
today.
Please forgive me.
I was busy again.

Jesus said,
"Father, forgive them,
for they know not what they do."

Please forgive me.
I do know what I do.

Fog
Rich Keating

Calm, Still, Mysterious

the breath of nature lingers,
posing questions to be answered;
are you sick mother?
Should I be scared?
Nervous?
Worried?
Are you mad?
Don't hurt me mother.
Ease your mind.

Calm, Still, Mysterious.

the fog disappears as
other's eye opens--
the sun

Calm, Still, Mysterious
THE BOTTOM OF THE CUP

BY BEN JONES

"I just don't understand. I can sit here and tell you all about the scent of coffee saturating the air. I can describe all parts of the table we are sitting at or the group of teenagers sitting in the corner, or even—"

"The robust flavor of the French press," she interrupted with an ambiguous smile and her head tilted to one side. He flashed a smile, thinking she was finally understanding him.

He leaned back in his chair and raised his hands Praise-the-Lord style. "Exactly! I can say it but when I try to...well, it just doesn't happen!" She searched the room to be sure no one was looking. Her expression cut his excitement short, sending the unmistakable keep-your-voice-down message. His eyes darted into the bottom of his mug. There was nothing but the sludge of tiny coffee grounds always left over from French-pressed coffee. He pulled his eyes away from the sludge to find Shawna was still giving him that look. There were so many smiles and looks that he would much rather receive from her. He flashed a manufactured smile. "I just wish I could get it down on paper is all."

"What would you do even if you could? Seriously, Kyle, every day hundreds of people try to do it and fail." The words escaped her effortlessly. He looked at the table across the way. A man was reading the new edition of the Portland Mercury. Kyle began to wonder where the man came from, who he was, and how he ended up at Stumptown on this particular Friday afternoon. Shawna turned her chair sideways to the table and studied the various photographs for sale around the room. Her nose crunched up when she looked at the remnants of her coffee. She always loved the flavor of French-pressed coffee but could never stomach the last sip. For the next few minutes they sat in silence. Kyle was creating stories in his mind for all the people in the coffeehouse. His eyes brightened and a smile crept across his face. Shawna looked disdainfully at her coffee once more then broke the silence.

"I love the pictures they have here. The black and white of the man riding his bicycle on the waterfront would look great in the front room."

Kyle nodded in agreement, still writing the story of the young mother in the corner. "Yeah, that is a nice shot."

"Would you be a doll and refill my coffee?"

His shoulders sagged and his smile faded as he slid his chair back. "Two sugars and nonfat, right?"

"Same as always. And, Kyle, don't forget to clean the stuff out this time."

He flashed his uneasy smile, took her mug and shuffled to the counter. Out of sight from Shawna, Kyle gulped down the last of her coffee and cleaned the cup with a napkin. She liked her milk and sugar in the cup before the coffee is poured. Kyle never knew why, but he started with the nonfat and sugar all the same. He put the mug under the carafe and pressed the pump. A mixture of dark coffee and grounds spurted out, leaving a marbled concoction of nonfat, sugar, coffee, and grime.

"Excuse me," he called to the barista, "we've got an empty here."
"Thanks, a fresh pot will be right up in just a sec." An honest smile came from across the counter.

"No problem. Take your time." Kyle returned the smile. He and his smile cleaned out Shawna's cup and poured the nonfat and added two sugars. A yellow paper on the message board caught his eye. It read:

ROOMMATE WANTED
- Immediate Move In
- No Deposit
- No Smokers
- No Tweakers
- No Dogs
- $200 per Month + Utilities and Lawn Service
- Ask For Dave 555.6789

***

"Can we stop by that new vintage clothing store down the street?" Shawna asked Kyle as she reached for her coffee. "Carol said they have some of the cutest things there."

"Sure. If you want."

"Oh, thank you. You're wonderful."

He offered his unnatural smile. He sat and glanced at the man reading the Portland Mercury; his smile grew less awkward. Shawna turned to see what he was looking at. She looked back at him with attempted compassion in her eyes and placed a hand on Kyle's shoulder.

"Oh, Kyle, not everyone is meant to be a writer. Take care of the mugs, dear, we should go."

Kyle grabbed the pair of coffee mugs. One had nothing in it but sludge and the other was untouched, still filled with French-press, nonfat, and two sugars. He placed them into the dish tub on the counter and noticed the yellow flyer again. "Ask for Dave," he said under his breath, "555.6789."

"What did you say?"

"Nothing, just making a mental note of something I need to do today."
His Waters
Joneen Pomeroy

I walk far down the beach,
Sand tugging from between my toes.
(Deep calls to deep)

Waves slam on the shore,
Lurching forward and pulling backward.
(Deep calls to deep)

The water rushes over my feet; grabbing,
persuading -
My feet wade me into the shallows.
(Deep calls to deep)

My body can no longer resist and I plunge,
The sweet coolness rushing over me.
(In the roar of your waterfalls)

I return to the air,
The waves charging around me.
(In the roar of your waterfalls)

Their charges resound in my ears,
Their sounds as shells amplified.
(In the roar of your waterfalls)

The waves rear their heads,
Plunging my body into the waters.
(All your waves and breakers have swept over me)

The waves rear their heads,
Plunging me into the waters.
(All your waves and breakers have swept over me)

The waves rear their heads,
And I surrender myself to His waters.
(All your waves and breakers have swept over me)

Deep calls to deep
In the roar of your waterfalls
All your waves and breakers have swept over me.

Sunrays
Joneen Pomeroy

Sun of the souls redeemed, with your far-reaching rays:
You are the maker of their days and seasons,
The watcher and keeper of all their hours.
You give joy to their demeanor,
Warmth to their spirits,
And light to their ways -
Reach your rays far

Into the depths
Of my own
Soul.
Where I Am

Ben Jones

I see a dock, a place of grace.
A chance to slow my current pace,
I'll try my feet on solid ground.
I'll walk the street and look around.

Strange new sights 'till then unseen
Battle to replace the dream
That for so long has been my course.
Both may be good, but one is worse.

I know the place where I belong.
I live to hear the river song,
To stroll upon the liquid street
Where there are countless souls to greet
And strange new sights remain unseen.
I must move on to live my dream.

Wings

Lorajean Smith

I've been given a pair
To stretch and tear.
Growth unexpectedly took over
And has ripped me.
Yet only a new pair are emerging
To spread and try
Form is taking shape

But I clumsily flutter about
Finding my feet.
A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF A ROCK STAR

BY BLAKE HOOPER

"I shouldn't drive angry, not when it's raining this hard," Calvin thought. The world outside his car appeared painted in grayscale, obscured by the ever-present rain curtain. Even the people, as they slowly trudged through the downpour to their vehicles, fit well with the somber attitude of the landscape. Calvin did his best to avoid staring at them as he carefully snaked his car along the winding cemetery road. "I shouldn't drive angry." He gave the car a burst of gas as he pulled out of the cemetery onto the main road.

The pace of his windshield wipers created a counter-rhythm to the steady drumming of the rain. Every sound and texture that touched him seemed to feed his frustration, so he reached down and stiffly stabbed on his defrost, cranking it as high as it would go. He let the sound of the warm air settle him, and he watched as the cold silver that had fogged his windshield slowly receded to the edges until it was gone entirely. Maybe now he could drive with some clarity.

"I can't believe it," he said. "Even in your death, you still manage to convince them." Calvin's mind returned to the funeral, to the crowd of black-shrouded bodies, faceless and uniform in their head-bowing. The rain had washed away the outlines of each person until they melded into one solid mass, a dark emptiness encircling the coffin before them. Jason was gone, and everything lacked color at that moment. Yet Calvin had felt that he was the only one who knew that the world's dissipation this afternoon was not just from the rain, for he could feel the collective grief of the people, and he had watched as they removed their own vibrancy and let it—forced it—to be buried with Jason. So many people, so similar in their solemnity.

Calvin just shook his head as he had at the funeral, and he let the defrost carry him home.

He went to bed early that evening, finding no reason nor desire to hold off sleep. He and Jason had been friends since childhood, so it was hard not to think of him. It had been Calvin and Jason who, as kids, made the "anatomically correct" snowman in the middle of the street. It had been Jason who convinced Calvin to learn guitar with him. It had been Jason who always needed help from Calvin with their homework. They had been together in the innocence of childhood, the inquisitiveness of boyhood, and the arrogance of youth. It was only recently with their teenage years behind them, and their adulthood beginning, that they had begun to sever. Especially in the last two years, with the growing popularity of Jason's band—its MTV appearances and radio-friendly songs—their friendship had emaciated to little more than an acquaintance-ship that was rarely acknowledged by either of them.

"I guess you just outgrow people," Calvin mumbled to himself as he teetered between wake and slumber.
Almost immediately, Calvin heard a familiar voice respond from the corner of the room. "I knew it! I always knew you thought it was my fault; that you thought you had moved on to enlightenment but I had 'refused to see the truth,' or something ridiculous like that."

Calvin jerked up onto one arm and looked in the direction of the voice, muscles tensed and ready to jump out of bed. He breathed a sigh of quasi-relief, however, when he realized who it was. Jason lounged comfortably, arrogantly, on the beanbag chair he always used to sit on, hands folded together and leaning on one arm. He looked as suave as he did in his publicity photos; torn jeans, tattoos poking out from under his t-shirt, dyed black hair cropped tightly forward. He gave the illusion of cool indifference, but Calvin knew how much time Jason spent on his appearance. The navy light of the night sky cracked through the shades, framing Jason in lines of blue and black.

“What? You’re not surprised to see me?” asked Jason in mock disappointment.

“No, not really.” Calvin sat up stiffly, impatiently.

For a long moment it was quiet.

“What do you want?” Calvin finally asked. He was fully awake now.

“Why, Cal, that really hurts. Can’t I just come to visit my friend? Do I have to want something?”

Calvin just stared at Jason from the top of his eyes and asked again. “What do you want?”

Jason returned the stare, but with a smug grin. “I was listening to your thoughts this afternoon.”

“What?

“Your thoughts—I was listening to them. At my funeral and in your car. All your frustration and disgust. So condescending in your self-imposed martyrdom. Lord, Cal, you’d think you were the one that died.”

“What the hell are you talking about!? You think you can just come in here and wake me up to mock me, and I’ll just sit here and—”

“Mock you? Mock you!? Jason shot up from the beanbag chair and pointed his finger at Calvin. “You are so full of it, Cal. You always have been. You stood out there today and played God, condemning everyone for their grief, painting yourself as the only one who can truly suffer.”

“That’s because theirs is a false grief. A false grief for a false conception of a dead man.”

“Why, Cal, whatever could you mean?” Jason had turned the mocking tone back on.

“I mean ‘Jason Fairview, singer/guitar player extraordinaire, whose creative blend of musical styles has led to the popularity of a new type of hard rock’” Calvin knew Jason had baited him into saying that, but he was already too irritated to care.

“So you don’t think that’s me?” Another loaded question.

“No! No, I don’t think that’s you at all. You didn’t ‘revolutionize’ rock, you democratized it, you thinned it out to appeal to the lowest common denominator. Far candy for the masses, an anesthetization of our creative imaginations.”

“Cal.”

“And you know as well as I do that anything ‘new’ you brought to rock was nothing more than your shameless exploitation of underground cultures. You took the music that people built their communities around and used it for your own advantage, feigning to be
creative even though you were nothing more than a thief, a corrupted Prometheus. You took something that was once valuable and dispersed it amongst those whom you knew would only ravage and consume it.

"Cal, maybe you should try to calm—"

"It was a lie, Jason. You died as the prophet of a lie, and all your followers came out today to give homage to a false god."

"Whoa! Listen to you go!" Jason laughed and walked to the other corner of the room. "You’ve gone and worked yourself up into a frenzy."

Calvin was sitting up straight now, and his finger was pointing stiffly at Jason. "Don’t patronize me, Jason."

"Why not?" Jason asked as he leaned forward, eyes big. "After all, I am a ‘god,’ am I not?" He stretched his arms out and looked around at the darkness that filled Calvin’s room, pretending it was his domain. "That is what you said, isn’t it? Or did I hear you wrong, because that does seem a little farfetched."

Jason stopped the mocking and stared right at Calvin. "Did you just say I’m a god?"

"A false god —"

"You’re so full of it, Cal."

"— and they’re all your followers. The way they congregate just to see you, the way they imitate each other to the point where they can no longer think for themselves. But they think that they do, they think they’re unique, when in actuality they’re all the same, following your every move."

"My every move...?"

"They offer up their money, the fruits of their labor, just so they can purchase a CD and possess a piece of your holy word. They light their cigarettes around each other as pseudo-prayer candles, hoping that they will one day be like you. You command them to dance, and they willingly adhere—mindless self-sacrifice they enjoy giving to you in return for the musical blessing you lay upon them. You give them meaning, Jason, and they worship you for it."

Jason stepped up to the foot of the bed and his finger stiffly pointed at Calvin. "How dare you," he growled. "I make music, music that people like. You just can’t stand the fact that music can be popular, that my music can be popular. You’re so insecure about yourself that you have to over-spiritualize everything. That way you can prove your own righteousness. It’s only music, Cal. I give people music."

There was a level of truth in what Jason said, but Calvin didn’t know what it was. He only knew his chest hurt. But he kept staring at Jason, their eyes intensely locked together.

"I give them music," Jason repeated as the stiffness fell out of his shoulders and he walked back to recline on the beanbag chair. He looked up at Calvin, the
intensity that had briefly surfaced now vanished. He waited.

"You don’t give them music," said Calvin, "you give them an identity."
"What?"
"You heard me."
"You can’t possibly be serious."
Jason was standing back up and leaning forward in amazement. Calvin just crossed his arms.
"C’mon Cal! What do you think music is? Isn’t it an expression of identity? I mean... look at the uses of music as found throughout history. Various cultures define themselves with music; they establish their identity and affirm that identity with music. It’s the same with religions: music is a way for people to demonstrate how their faith is intrinsically a part of their identity."
"But—"
"Don’t condemn me for being a continuation of human nature as history has shown it to be. Of course my music provides an identity. It has to because music connotes identity. All I’ve done is taken that historical truth to a new, powerful level."
Calvin sat there, not looking at anything but instead letting his eyes go back and forth as he thought over what Jason said.
"You’re right, Jason. You do take it to a new level: a corrupted level."
"Oh, for God’s sake..."
"You just said yourself that music has been used throughout history by various cultures and religious groups as a means for establishing and affirming identity. But that’s a communal identity, where everyone plays an equal role and there is a sense of mutual dependency, as the various personhoods contribute to the greater meta-existence. The identity you create is the opposite of this because it is a competitive one. It’s an identity that a person can easily adopt and then proceed to set up against the identity of someone else. The identity you create is a sort of desperate self-validation to the most detestable degree, ultimately used to gain a sense of superiority. You may think your music creates identity, but in actuality it destroys what it means to have an identity."
"Oh, really? How’s that?"
"Because you destroy what it means to need other people."
"Are we still talking about music?"
Jason curled his fingers to his forehead then shot them out to point at the darkened ceiling. "You might want to take a breather before—"
"Of course I’m talking about music! That’s the problem. You’re too arrogant to attempt to understand or even want to understand the implications. I’m talking about the positive interaction of people’s souls when they begin to embrace their interdependency as human beings. That’s music."
"You don’t think the audience is as much a part of my music as I am? You don’t think that when they sing along at the top of their lungs that they become a part of the music?"
Calvin just slightly shook his head, keeping his eyes locked on Jason.
"Why not?"
"Because you don’t want them to. Because you’re so proud of what you’ve created that, deep down inside, you can’t bear the thought that someone else can lay equal claim to it."
"You make no sense."
Jason turned his back on Cal and walked to the corner of the room, but he didn’t sit back on the chair. Instead he crossed his arms and leaned against the wall, staring at the spot where the moonlight was shining through the shades.
Calvin looked at him, then looked at
"You make no sense." Jason turned his back on Cal and walked to the corner of the room, but he didn’t sit back on the chair. Instead he crossed his arms and leaned against the wall, staring at the spot where the moonlight was shining through the shades.

Calvin looked at him, then looked at his legs, still buried under his bed sheets.

"What do you want, Jason?" This time, Calvin wanted to know.

Jason just kept his eyes on that spot on the wall as though he were looking through it for the words to say. "I want to believe you, Cal."

The honesty in those words pressed Calvin uncomfortably into his mattress.

"I want to believe you, but I just can’t."

"Why not?"

Jason kept his posture, but turned his head to look right at Calvin, for the first time having the look of a dead man.

"Because you didn’t cry at my funeral. Because, even though you talk about beautiful ideas like mutual dependency and communal identities and the interaction of souls, you still suffer from the same ugliness of pride that I did and that everyone else does. Because even though I was wrong, I still was. Somewhere along the way, your passion hid this from your eyes. I read your thoughts today, Cal, and there wasn’t a one that didn’t kill me all over again."

Jason drifted soundlessly out of the bedroom, the silhouette of his body becoming more and more a part of the house, until everything was blanketed in frightful slumber. Sitting up and breathing sweaty breaths, Calvin was the only exception to the air of death left in the room.

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**IMMORTALITY**
*By Ben Jones*

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**The Storm**
*Kristen Stone*

Looking out the window at gray
Clouds that form a painted sky
The rain that sheets the glassy coated grass
Reminds me of the painter
Time is Cruel
Joia Cherrington

Time is cruel
that makes little boys
grow into men
who have to go away
to war
and fight

Time is cruel
that makes little girls
grow into women
who have to stay at home
and wonder
if their men are
coming back

Time is cruel
that once offered
laughter and sunlight
now offers
Guns

and Fear
Time is cruel
that stains the past
with naïve-innocence
and assaults
the future

with blood-red
grief
Time is cruel
that welcomes
in its arms
child-like

make-believe
then rips that
blanket away
Time is cruel
that takes that blanket
soaked with blood
and waves it in the air
like a flag

CATHEDRAL WINDOWS
BY DEBBIE SANDERS

THE VISION
Debbie Sanders

Metal clashing against metal,
Glass shattering and glistening in the
sun.

Throbbing, rushing, gushing...
flowing...warm, wet.

Deep crimson on porcelain façade.
Magenta flushed ivory.

Throbbing, beating, pounding...
echoing fast, hard, strong.
Pulsating slowly...
slowing...to silence.

Now in view,
Glowing brightly...shimmering gold
Learning to Pray
Sam Livingston

I am at the volcanic summit above Portland, Oregon
I stare for a long time at the somber downtown skyline
Building stand in silence looking back at me
Skyscrapers wince at sounds of far off airplanes
I picture fire and smoke crouching over Portland buildings
They totter and collapse in screaming flames
Sending all the images, the words flash-burning through my brain

Kamikaze passenger planes plunging thru skyscrapers ...
Steel towers with people crumbling into dusty smoke and ashes...
The worst act of terrorism in history...
'Thousands of lives suddenly ended today"...
People jumping off the 110 story towers...
Panicked crowds racing away from smoke plumes filling Manhattan streets...
A Catholic priest dies giving last rites to the dead in NY city streets...
Hundreds of brave men and women buried alive while working to rescue innocent lives...
Last words from wives aboard doomed airplanes telling husbands, 'I love you...
Sons in office buildings giving mothers a final goodbye before death...
A packed chapel prayer service at my campus as classmates huddled in prayer..
Palestinians dancing in the streets as Iraqis joyfully sing 'Down with America...'
A wise-looking Tom Brokaw tells us, 'That for those who questioned whether events...
In the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere have any effect on us here in the United States...
'Today was your answer'....
President Bush saying,
'We will hunt down those responsible for these cowardly acts

Is this a war, a bad movie, a nightmare to forget?
Our classes may continue but is our schedule for life unchanged?
Shell-shocked firefighters learned new sums today...
Take away a mentor, Take away a buddy,
Take away a brother, Take away a sister,
Without warning you learn new sums today.
My speech prof misses class to give his blood.
My philosophy prof tells us in class,
Today we realize that the everydayness of life is false,
Do we live in that insight?...
Everywhere the same shocked look,
The same questions reflected in every face,
Echoed in every thought,
Tightens to a sharpness,
A squeezing,
A center of sheer pain
Where is our relief?
Lord, teach us to pray
Have the prayers begun
If we share another's pain,
As if bound with them?
Learn to hear these prayers,
For no prayers move God's heart more,
Than the sounds of orphan children crying today.
PEACE
BY DEBBIE SANDERS

As I sat in our dark kitchen in the early morning, I felt the warmth of my coffee as I wrapped my hands around the mug. I could only allow myself a few minutes of luxury before I had to get ready for work. I relish these quiet moments even more than ever before. Since the upheaval of our lives, I haven't had much time to think. Sometimes I don't want to; it is too painful.

My daily activities have helped to relieve my pain or at least keep it buried just beneath the surface. With robotic moves, absent of emotion, I serve and interact with my customers at the restaurant. This has become my therapy. My customers are mostly regulars. I know their names and they know mine. We gab and carry on like old friends or neighbors. The fact is most of us are neighbors in this small community. Many are farmers who come in to have a hearty breakfast before their day begins. Sometimes they beat me to the restaurant and start the coffee before I arrive at five. Some have become the beloved relatives I have never known. They accept me and love me for who I am, shortcomings and all. They even forgive me when I forget to bring the jam or ketchup they have asked for three times. They won't ask another time, but will remind me the next day as I laugh and tell them I will never forget again.

Forgetting has become my constant companion in my personal life, but I try not to let it invade my profession. My husband and I have become experts at forgetting – or at least not speaking about what we remember or constantly think about. If I allowed myself to dwell on that dreadful day, my world would crumble away or I would; I'm not sure which. It has been three years since it happened...I can't allow myself to think of it. So, I keep busy and try to carry on a normal life and pretend to forget. I'm just not sure how long I can go on like this before something gives.

As I pull into the parking lot, I glimpse my husband Brody's truck. The butterflies begin and my heart is about to jump out of my chest; my breath is fast and shallow. My hands are clammy and cold and my mouth is so dry I can hardly swallow. My shaking right hand takes the keys out of the ignition, drops them, then retrieves them and puts them in my purse. I tell myself I can do this. I know that I need to. My life cannot continue as it has. It isn't fair to my husband, her memory, or myself. We all deserve peace.

The session begins politely and congenially enough, but soon heats up. My husband's voice rises as he bangs his hands on the desk. The blood rushes to his face and those annoying veins in his neck throb and bulge. I remain silent until my husband tries to blame me.

He screams, "If you hadn't let her spend the night at Sarah's, she would be with us today!"

"Don't you think I already feel responsible for it and blame myself everyday? I don't need you to tell me and add to the guilt I already feel!"

Pastor Steve calmly interrupts, "We aren't going to resolve anything by playing the blame game. You both need to accept what has happened without blaming anyone for it and work on forgiving each other. My job is to help both of you move on from this horrible situation and try to put it in the past. You can then begin living your lives again."
It's going to take some time, but I believe you can do it. I am here to help you every step of the way, and so is God. In fact, God is the one I want you to lean on more than me; He is the one who will be able to help you the most. Make Jesus your best friend and walk right along side him every minute of each day. He can eventually take away your pain, your guilt, and your anger and give you peace. And remember, this isn't just for you, it's for your daughter as well.

While I was brushing my teeth and washing my face that evening, I began to reflect on the events of the day. Pastor Steve's words made a lot of sense. No one had spoken a word upon arriving home. Perhaps Brody was also thinking in a more positive way; perhaps he was praying. I had to believe now that God would work through both of us, so we could get past this obstacle and get on with our lives. I began to pray earnestly with an open heart.

The next morning, as I was standing in the kitchen cupping my hands around my coffee mug, I thought I heard Brody walking toward the kitchen. He never got up this early. Suddenly I felt his arms around me.

He said, "I'm so sorry!"

I looked at the tears streaming down his flushed face. His body was shaking as the sobbing became uncontrollable. He had a hard time catching his breath, as his words came out clumsily.

"I want to work on forgiving you and everything else I have blamed for Amanda's death. Will you forgive me?"

I nodded my head, as the welled-up tears started to run down my face. We held each other tight as our sobbing began to subside into an atmosphere of peace and calm.
Melody
Ried Woodlee

Listen,
Hush
Parade of footsteps rush.
Tapping rhythm
Where from?
Vaporized ocean.
Precipitated commotion
Natures melody
Steadily
Falling like casualties
Forgotten souls
Lost upon seashores
Wash sand away
Rock and Sway
Swim a little
Settle
Join with the earth
Sort of a rebirth
Crazy pattern
Circle, cycle
Hand so methodical
Thread life through a needle
Stitch past to the present
Stomping steps imprint the pavement
Blazing trail for the future.

Albion-SF
Peggy Hughes-Baratto

cracked crystal vases cradling
dust wilted flowers
dried red roses-
dangle black upside-down

faces read like verse
speaking silent pulses;
graves, labor, ghostly loves,
new religions,
epitaphs for failed
territories,
"Where the Hell did Reality Go?"

music and spoken word
heave against each other
wave after wave-
gifting the dark with rhythm.

Words damned to tales
Of old battles
Lies told, hearts sold, tears disowned.
wounds scar lives away.

the only light
comes from neon-
and purple candles
on Cupid’s head.
The sharp glow cuts
through shadows
causing forgotten injuries
to open and bleed.

And then someone will leave
Thinking,
“That was my last Jack and Coke.”
THE ADVENTURE
OF ALISON
THE ANT
BY LORAJEAN SMITH

While ants were walking, tripping, slipping and even tickling their way to work on the Hill, Alison was caught up in the strange shape a couple of ant legs away. Carefully crossing the path of ants on their way to work, Alison made it to the shoes of a pair of day hikers. Alison, the ever-curious ant, was able to climb up the side of boots, and was having a lot of fun in the shoelaces when she was jolted onto her back. All of a sudden Alison was bouncing up and down on top of the shoe. She looked to the side and saw the line of workers disappearing, becoming smaller and smaller. Alison started to panic, but looked where the shoe was pointing. Up the trail Alison saw new green plants that were so much bigger than she had ever seen before, and smelled delicious. Her stomach was beginning to growl when the giant shoes stopped bouncing and came to rest in an open sunny spot. While the big person with the shoes was trying to sit down, Alison made sure to stay out of the way. After some rustling noise, a few drops of sweet smelling food fell onto the shoe. Alison couldn’t believe her luck. After a couple of bites her stomach stopped the grumbling and was very satisfied. Unfortunately the shoe started bouncing and Alison was afraid she was about to lose her lunch. Just when she was about to roll off the shoe, she started recognizing the small green shrubs. She could see all the workers coming back from the Hill, and couldn’t believe what a fun day she’d had. Jumping into a soft fern, she tumbled gently to the ground. Alison was so excited to tell her family of all the different green plants, and how gigantic they were, and the sweet taste of food from big boots.

Wanderer
Amy Hill

Like a shroud, Fog covers the Land
so thick, so cold, so white.
Your hands are now your sight
as you wander the cold dark land
New Life: To My yet Unborn Son
or Daughter
Tom Stovall

As the spring petals of flowers,  
spring forth with new life  
in all their vast array of colors.  
I look forward to the fine mist  
And refreshing spray of March rain.

Feeling it tickle on my tongue  
and down my arms to my feet.  
The oranges, yellows, and browns of fallen leaves  
Capture my tired Eye; I think of

New life  
Challenges

A young sparrow mother flies  
Into the trees to a nest where  
Young noisily squawking babies  
Lift their naked peach heads and raisin  
Black eyes to the food their mother brings.

Soon I will be a father and a,  
New life  
Soon will touch mine  
With its little raised hand  
Fingers touching mine;

Smiling face  
Beautiful innocent  
Eyes  
Will look to me  
To be fed.

Rocked or cradled  
Bathed in waters of Fall;  
October will be the month  
I will sing a sweet lullaby  
Nursed by Nature’s dreams

Yearning for the next season this  
New life.

Existence  
Christina Powell

Sunrise, gone  
Sunset coming  
Before it appears  
Let me know.
A NOT SO BOLD STATEMENT

BY SARAH MARTIN

The exciting opportunity to be published got me thinking about what profound statement I should bestow upon the world. I wanted to write about something for which I am truly passionate. This was the moment to give two bits on my theories of the essence of humanity. I have an opinion on everything from how the world should be run to the shape of spirituality.

At the beginning of this journey in finding a topic I was already struggling to decide on an all-encompassing theory that would illustrate my thoughts the finest. There were just so many ideas and so little time to choose. The time issue was merely the result of my self-imposed prison of procrastination. It was coming down to the deadline and I had to make a choice.

In starting to vocalize my ideas it was obvious that I leaned towards an extremist view on everything. That is okay with me; in fact, I completely appreciate it. But did I really want to have my interperate views in print for anyone to read? The finality that printing brought scared me. I can imagine that there are several philosophers who wish they could take back some of the things that they have written.

This summer I realized that people don't take lightly what others say. They naturally read into every word, dissecting it, and then putting it into their idea of who that person is. This summer my brother was on a God Bless America kick. I am pretty sure he hasn't gotten over it, but that is beside the point. He would listen to his CD of patriotic songs all day and march around the house in fatigues (he's seven). One evening I half-jokingly told my dad that it was impossible that I was related to this kid. I could be happy spending my whole life in a small socialist commune where everyone donated his or her talent to the good of the society. That night my dad asked my mom if I was getting into the New Age thing. I am sure he is still praying for my lost soul.

At that moment, after listening to "God Bless the USA" for the twentieth time, that is how I felt. But I didn't mean to commit to denouncing my United States citizenship. The point is, whatever I write could stick with me infinitely. Even though I am passionate about my beliefs, I am aware that with maturity my opinions may change, or continue as they are. The point is, I don't know. Published print is not always forgiving when it comes to changing one's mind. Therefore I am opting not to make an eloquent argument on any of my theories. It would take too much effort later to try to recant them if I come to disagree. It seems more reasonable to keep them away from the public who may not understand the process of growing that these theories represent.

Maybe someday when I am old and have experienced much of what life has to offer, I will write a book, putting all my thoughts in print for others to read. For now, realizing my ignorance, I am publishing my right to plead the fifth on all of my extremist views.