COMMONTHOUGHT 2003
The Magazine of the Arts at Lesley University
Volume 14

Editorial Board

casey engels
Rachel Finkel
Jose Navarro-Robles
Aleda Richeson
Caitlin Shea
Marcia Wong
Mareourn Yai

Faculty Advisor

Anne Elezabeth Pluto, Ph. D.

Graphic Design

Mabel Sabogal

Cover Design

Prank Design
From the Editorial Board

Gentle Readers,

COMMONTHOUGHT 2003 is a combination of literary works from student and faculty writers of the Lesley Community. We were excited to receive many submissions this year, thanks to everyone who sent us their work. We were inspired and encouraged. The editing process was difficult and we wish we could have included more submissions.

Thanks to Mabel Sabogal for electronic layout and special thanks to Dr. Anne Pluto: the woman behind the magazine, without whom none of this would be possible.

Happy reading,

-The Editorial Board of COMMONTHOUGHT 2003
# Table of Contents

**Poetry**

1. There is a place called forbidden  
   Attiana Virella-Fuentes

2. Poetaster  
   Anonymous

3. Teaching Poetry in South Carolina  
   Mary Clare Powell

4. In A Time of Testing  
   Mary Clare Powell

15. Wood  
   Attiana Virella-Fuentes

16. Untitled  
   Laura "Deetle" Nelson

18. even the chaos is ordered these days  
   Amy Bohler

19. The Whole Truth  
   Caitlin Shea

20. Cassandra  
   Anne Elizabeth Pluto

21. Sun Go Away  
   Marcourn Yai

22. Yacumama  
   David Morimoto

23. Land of Eire  
   Erin Mahoney

24. Another Day  
   Megan Miller
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Moon Dictated Time</td>
<td>Rachel Finkel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Love as a Lifeboat</td>
<td>Michael Crigler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Had So Much to Tell You Tonight</td>
<td>Rachel Finkel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Forever and Always</td>
<td>Marcia Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tragedy’s Rose</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Rose Petal Beauty</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>gilded</td>
<td>Caitlin Shea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>the parting season</td>
<td>Casey Engels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fingerprints</td>
<td>Aleda Richeson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The Heir of Nothing in Particular, She Is</td>
<td>Amy Bohler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>How do you describe two tones of pigment without names?</td>
<td>Eron Rauch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Kinesis</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>A Gentle Hidden Soul</td>
<td>Aurora Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Riccardo Gemelli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fable</td>
<td>Aleda Richeson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A Tribute to My First Car</td>
<td>Leah Marie Anciello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>alison</td>
<td>Casey Engels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Addiction</td>
<td>Lauren Nadler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mrs. Drysdale’s Receipt</td>
<td>Shari Ajemian Craig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a place called forbidden.

East of sacred, west of Hell.

-Attiana Virella-Fuentes
poetaster

wish I were a thesaurus
I'd spout out words like nobody's business.
I'd use words to make sentences
about exultation or antipathy or anguish:
words no one appreciates or utilizes,
words like despondency, echelons, or shallot.

wish there were words for how I feel.
the only close words are like cerulean or ebony,
sanguine, verdant, azure, gray –
gray – like the color of my water
when a picture is done.
love the swish swish of my brush
makes over the paper,
love the paint in my fingernails,
sometimes love the feelings of pictures
instead of definite words,
love the way picture makes me feel,

love the words it is not able to make in me.
maybe it makes me
a different kind of poet,
ones who can't speak;

is silent,

like a thesaurus.

-Anonymous
Teaching Poetry in South Carolina

Half the circle is black women, half white, neatly divided down the middle. I want to ask why, but I already know the answer, so I put my seat between you like a hinge.

Afraid to open a huge chest and let our troubles out, I don’t mention it all weekend. Instead I bring you poetry, and mix you into working groups, like several paints, giving you task after task, hoping words will break us up.

Black voices, white voices, we read our poems telling of grandfathers’ strange ways with pigs, Jesus who will surely save our marriages, dogs we grew up with, and eating under pecan trees.

In my poem, I am seven and in the back seat of our black ’49 Dodge on Easter Sunday, and fresh from the resurrection, and still in our best and driving downtown to the Lincoln Memorial for a picnic and pictures.

He says: Look at them little pickininnies, all cleaned up for a change.
She says: Hush, Ken, not in front of the kids.
He says: Godammit, if they got money for clothes…
She says: Look, kids! They’re adorable, little pastel dress and socks against their black skin…
hear they grease their legs to make them shine… remember at church when we packed boxes of clothes for the poor…?

I sit inside the car, black people walk outside. He is driving, she is covering, I am learning, held like a taut rubberband between them. Someday I’ll know what to do.

-Mary Clare Powell
In a Time of Testing

I.

Teachers are trained then teachers are tested to see if they pass the teacher test. They get a job teaching students how to take standardized tests. They test in every grade every spring so someone can tell something. Test results are sent to the state government and released to the press soon. Stories appear and in the Sunday paper a large chart compares all schools in the state making serious proclamations about lack during in-service training. Teachers get tips to increase test scores with bonuses hinted at. If scores go up, principals are warned one is fired. Gradually, teachers perfect teaching kids how to take tests, and the scores go up and up. Pretty soon everyone in the state is very smart and you can prove it by looking at the test scores.

II.

Start with a phrase snatched from a dream,
   a conversation stolen from the next table,
   a memory of a wretched Aunt.
Let it carry you to its poem.

   Dig down, o teacher, into places
       where the excess of testing
          can't reach,
   dip down,
       into spirit, your very self,
          which is very good.
   Write about your mother's housedress
       and the sound of her voice
       as the lung cancer progressed.

III.

The principal asks to see her lesson plans every day. When he comes into the room the plan book must lie open on her desk so he can tell precisely where she is in the lesson. And if, as he walks back down the hall, her roomful of kids laughs as they make poems to remember multiplication tables,
he returns and wants to know whatever is so funny,  
_and keep it down in there!

Back in his office, he notes the noise, but not the joy.

IV.

Ranking,  
charting,  
and keeping order  
prevail,

but poetry sings a deep bass note,  
from an enormous ocean bottom  
where no sub can reach it’s so far down,  
below a hundred layers of cliché, the truth  
of sheer delight under the pecan tree  
every summer Sunday,  
grownups buzzing,  
children splashing about in dust,  
pork ribs on fire,  
gold pies like coins line the table,  
and a deep pot of greens.

O teacher, go down where poetry spawns and feeds,  
spawns and feeds,  
sing deeply  
of ecstasyterrorshameexaltation  
and of everyday truth  
sitting in your classroom.  
Sing, teacher, your solo, sing even a song of testing.

_Mary Clare Powell_
I wanted to feel alive, fast, something crazy and pulsing inside of me. I wanted to feel my age, nineteen because I'd seen a lot that made me feel so damn old. The night was red, red lipstick, red kimono and slicked back hair. April and almost spring the air smelled like mud, water and green. I met up with them at Aaron's house. Euriah and Aaron looked wild already, both beautiful in such different ways. They made me feel protected, even though every time we hung out we all got fucked up, even though we all fooled around sometimes. The cocaine was cut into perfect lines on a mirror, just like in the movies. I did a line, grabbed a beer and we got into Aaron's trashy, blue camaro. Crazy fast on the interstate, but I felt safe. I was riding on something invincible. Being in that car felt like flying in a spaceship. Stars danced in the sky just for me and the coke kept coming. We got to the club and did more. I cart wheeled through the parking lot, floated through the bar and held eyes with everyone there. Not shy anymore, not tired anymore. They told me I was an angel, magnetic and shining. I danced so hard; my body was a machine. Bones in perfect motion with my muscles and my muscles melting into skin. Electric.

We drove home and tried to sleep but the light kept getting brighter.

The next day, nasal passages swollen, head throbbing and with a very stiff body I got up. It was hell.

That taste says it all, pure poison. Stinging, sliding down the back of my throat for the rest of the day, the residue of way too much cocaine.

-Aleda Richeson
A Tribute to My First Car

My family has owned more than one car since I was born in 1983, but there was one car that my mother and father couldn’t bear to get rid of, the 1982 Chevrolet Caprice Classic Station Wagon. My parents bought this car one year before I was born. I guess they found my father’s corvette to be an unsuitable automobile for a family of three. One thing’s for sure, when I came home from the hospital just after I was born, I would have much rather come home in a corvette than in a brown station wagon. But that’s besides the point; the station wagon became some sort of symbol for my family, seeing that we were the only family in Andover, Massachusetts that owned one.

The inside of the station wagon was very roomy. I will never forget the bench seats in the front and back, with a fold out bench seat in the way back. I use to love sitting in the way back when I had the opportunity. I also loved to sit in the front seat, especially when my Mom was driving. I would pretend I was driving the car too and all of the other cars on the road were heading to the same destination we were, and I would talk to them on my pretend walky-talky. I was a very imaginative child growing up. I had the most fun in the family station wagon driving to Maine. We would go camping hours and hours away from home. It was exciting for me because my Mom would pack the car so full that my younger brother, Michael, and I would have to literally squeeze ourselves into our seats. I will always associate the family station wagon with long road trips to Maine and New Hampshire.

But I have to admit, when I was in my last years of elementary school going into middle school, I started to develop negative feelings towards the family station wagon. I was embarrassed by it! It was humongous! I nicknamed it the tank! I tried to justify to my friends why owning a station wagon was cool; it was easy for me to spot my Mom in a parking lot when she’d pick
me up from school, or camp, and it was huge, it could fit many peo-
ple. But I could only draw one conclusion from my negative
feelings towards the tank; when I got my drivers’ license, the family
station wagon was going to be mine.

All I could picture was pulling into my high school parking
lot and being the only student with an old, rusty, car the size of a
whale! I was afraid to drive it. I had no idea how someone could
drive a car that was humongous. I will always remember the first
time my Dad took me to an empty parking lot to drive the station
wagon. I was surprised by how easy it handled. It wasn’t as bad as
I thought it would be, until my Dad took me onto a side street. Of
course, the street had to be the narrowest street in all of Andover!
According to my Dad, he saw his life flash before his eyes! After
driving the station wagon, I began to accept it as my own. It was
going to be my mode of transportation, and it was the only thing
available to me at the time, since I was the first to get my license out
of all of my friends.

My parents were very weary about me taking the car out
once I was able to drive on my own. It took a lot of convincing for
my parents to let me take the car out on my own for the first time. I
wanted to go to my friend’s house, which was not too far from my
house. I stayed for a while until I realized how late it was and had
to head home. I got into the car, my friend waiting at the curb waved
bye to me as I started up the car.

I put the car into reverse and SMASH! I smashed the whole
back side of the family station wagon. I was mortified! I didn’t even
want to get out and look at the damage I had caused, or what I hit!
The whole way home I just kept telling myself that maybe the
damage isn’t that bad. But something in my mind kept repeating
that my parents were going to kill me.

I was crying hysterically as I pulled into the driveway.
Unexpectedly, my Dad was in the drive way. I don’t remember what
he was doing specifically, but the look on his face when he saw the
car made my heart sink into my stomach. I cried to the both of them,
hoping they would be understanding. I mean, I was a new driver, but something told me that they weren’t so much upset about me smashing a car. It was the particular car that was smashed that made them upset. I told the both of them that I had hit a telephone poll, but the bark stuck inside the back door meant that I must have hit a tree. “All eighteen and a half years I owned this car, nothing ever happened to it,” my Dad said. I’d have to say that that was one of the worst days of my life. One of my Dad’s goals was to keep the station wagon running until it was twenty years old. “When a car turns twenty, it’s considered an antique,” Dad would always say, and I killed it at eighteen and a half!

The station wagon was parked on the side of the driveway for a long time. My parents didn’t have the heart to get rid of it right away. They wanted to give it the proper burial, so to say. I mean, this car was not just any ordinary car. This car took us places. We have had some of the best times in that car. Of course, my bedroom window faced the driveway where the car was parked for months, and I had to see the smashed side of it every morning when I pulled the shades up. Constantly being reminded of the mistake I made instilled a fear in me, the fear of driving a car. I even offered to cut up my license because of how upset I was. I got over it quickly though. Since that incident, I am proud to say that I have never been in another accident. One thing for sure, I learned my lesson.

Even though I wasn’t too fond of the station wagon, I was very sad the day it left the yard. I will always remember watching my Dad pull the car out of the driveway. I listened to the sound of the car’s engine as he drove it up the street and out of the neighborhood. To this day I often wonder where the old family station wagon has ended up? My Dad gave it to a kid at work who likes to fix cars up into hot rods. My Dad always talked about making the station wagon into a hot rod; I don’t know if he was serious or not, but I know that he had hopes of this kid making his dream come true.

-Leah Marie Anciello
she used to steal her father's cigarettes. marlboro reds bought by the carton and kept in the upper left cabinet, above the kitchen sink. blonde haired, blue eyed baby girl sucking on that cancer stick like the eighty-year-old townies outside of the main street newspaper shop. i remember finding her there on the stairs that led up to the deck. she always waited outside for me. i guess the cigarette would be her company. she tossed the pack over the rail after taking the last smoke and lit it with an indy 500 lighter. i was so innocent to her world. i later found out exactly how much her father smacked her mother around and told the kids to go fuck themselves. twelve years old and she had seen such a different version of the world. maybe that was why her eyes scared me sometimes. like she really wasn't there. like you could drop a brick on her foot from a mile up and she might, if she felt like it, sigh.

everytime i saw her after that there was a cigarette close by. we would walk to the end of the road. past the new lego houses that they were flattening out the fields for. past the long driveways and doghouses with the real shingles on top. even as far as the pond where we used to ice-skate.

one night i put my feet up against the fire barrel and burned my socks up. well, sort of burned. they really just started to melt and curl, doing things that socks should not do while still on feet. the soles of my feet were stinging and rosy for the next week, as if i had been mauled by a warm jellyfish. i tried to cover up the fact that i felt so dumb by pretending that i meant to do it. i meant to make everyone squeal with wild laughter. the barrel was just hotter than i figured.
when we got to the end of the road on these walks, we would just stare and stare. out over the trees and the overgrown fields. she would finish off a smoke and smudge it into the pavement with her flip-flops or jellies signaling the beginning of the walk back home.

we came back from one of those walks to find her twin sister out on the swingset with some guy a few years older than us. i thought that they were tossing around some hand made jewelry or something. from far away the little bright blue and pink thing looked similar to something that came out of a crafty brownies meeting. it reminded me of some misshapen piece of pottery that a little kid passes up to a parent. the parent smiles and make too big of a statement about how beautiful IT is. this IT with is swirling design and lumpiness was almost sad and funny. it landed with a heavy plop in my open palm. so smooth in some parts that i wanted to just hold it there and keep touching that little indentation with my pinkie. unfortunately, it didn't smell like anything I wanted to keep. this pungent, burnt odor hovered over the opening of this object. the soot got on my fingertips and didn't seem to budge for the next 3 years. i knew the kid spinning around on the baby swing and looking up at the sky. we never did say hello. he lived up the street with his older brother and grandmother, and had just gotten left back in the eighth grade. he plucked the pipe out of my little hands and fumbled with a crusty sandwich bag full of old leaves. he looked like he was going to drool all over whatever he was doing, and kept having to stop to tuck a chunk of greasy black hair behind his ear. he was nice enough though, so i stayed with them.

the first inhale was sharp.

little razors pricked the back of my throat. then came the deep burning in my lungs. like i had willingly opened my mouth to a kettle full of boiling water. my diaphragm sucked into itself violently while i tried not to cough. i somehow managed to keep it
all in check though. my fresh, pink lungs lost a protective layer that afternoon. i could feel it ripped out from inside. peeling down like filodough. yet, i stayed. they said it would be fun. they said it would feel good. like i was dreaming and floating in a swimming pool on my back all at once. so, i waited.

i think i had a dream that night about officer dan and the d.a.r.e posters at school. somewhere in me, i knew that i didn't, t really like it. but for some reason i wanted to try. and i kept trying.

i had changed.

along with my virgin insides went the constant ache to live in her world. my life was boring compared with this mess of a crowd. my intrigue with alison was enough to make me do a lot of things without actually thinking too much about them. this ran parallel to the way things would come to happen during the next few years of our friendship. following her around like a shadow had only come to turn me into just that.

-casey engels
Addiction

Addiction is to give oneself up to a habit. Although I fear that somewhere between the strange noises at night and storytelling the next day that definition was lost. It got drowned in Jack Daniels with a touch of water to numb the sting, of course, and three half moon shaped ice cubes. I never saw it coming, really. Blindsided by a nice white boy from Massachusetts, I felt tricked.

One night I awoke to his familiar noises. Rubbing my eyes, I swore them off, forced my body to sleep through the commotion. After all, how many mornings had I gone to work exhausted? I had lost count. This time he wasn't going to get to me. I would sleep and be refreshed the next morning as if nothing had happened.

As nine a.m. flashed on my alarm clock, my body felt weary. I climbed out of bed and in a daze walked to the shower. Something seemed to be missing. I couldn't figure out what was wrong. My shampoo was there, conditioner, soap, check – check – check; I climbed into the shower, turned the water on and quickly noticed the shower curtain was missing. Still half-asleep I walked around. If I were a shower curtain, where would I be?

Searching eventually I found it - curled up around him like a blanket. He was so drunk the night before that he had passed out on the couch wrapped himself in the synthetic material and slept inebriated.

That was one of the first signs that I was living with an addict. I had taken a year in my life to do volunteer work, not to live with a 19 year-old alcoholic. I seemed to have forgotten this through all the drama.

All five of us had randomly found each other and decided to rent an
apartment together. Will was tall, skinny, black haired and a pseudo intellectual. He drank everyday. Handles of Jack Daniels appeared frequently in our garbage. Will worked with children; he was a teacher’s aid at an elementary school. Sometimes before work he would have a drink. His teammates would later tell me that they could smell it on him. If they could - what about the kids? All of this didn’t matter to him. He was only concerned with the alcohol. He needed the memories of his childhood drunk away. The hardships of a day or his life seemed easier with the liquid in hand. Drink in hand, he was armed for the next shitty thing to happen to him.I didn’t understand, although I didn’t need to.

What is addiction? Webster does not do the word justice. Webster had not felt the sleepless nights, the tiredness, and the endless questions. Giving oneself up to a habit just skims the surface, falling short of the true definition. Engulfing oneself in a substance in order to forget, this is addiction. One does not drink alone, nightly for fun or for the stories to tell the next day. Will drinks to forget. He drinks to ease the pain and drown out the real person.

Alcohol does not make Will more enjoyable, a better dancer or lover. Rather, it makes him a weak little boy who turns to a drink for love. When he is met back with an empty feeling, he consumes more. He does this in hope it will someday answer him back; he waits, sitting alone, with the yellowish-orange concoction, armed to go into the world. One day he will fall, wake up in an alley, hurt or beaten and begin to question himself. Perhaps the questions will come when the drink doesn’t ease anything anymore. Until that day, he will be a small boy searching for someone to care for him. He will find solace in few things. He is lost, dizzily trying to find his way back home, with only a glass to aid his journey.

-Lauren Nadler
Wood

Scared of myself, being myself.  
The myself I was three years ago, the myself I was yesterday.  
Attempting to reconstruct my reality, that which was. Meaning past tense.  
No longer able to see the future, it has changed.  
Meaning it no longer exists.  
Like the yearning and regret you feel when you leave the amusement park  
before you’ve ridden on the best roller coaster, only ten times worse.  
The realization that you are so incredibly petrified of the uncertainty that  
is your future, you actually go so far as to make a game out of not plan-ning.  
What I am trying to say is that it sucks breaking up.

-Attiana Virella-Fuentes
It rips through my spine
like a counterbalanced weight bent on malevolence.
It is unexplainable. It is unreal like walking head first
into a brick wall and stumbling back into the ocean
you came from
I mean it is that real
you are jumping around shaking your finger at my nonsense words
and calling me a cold heartless bastard
as I hand you flowers and we walk away
into a sunset
that's when I awake and see everything clear for the first time
maybe the last time
I want to sit down under a shady tree and collect
my thoughts as my hair begins to grow and I watch the meter
run my quarters into the ground and the world is spinning and then
I remember what happened my sophomore year of college,
well, not really I have forgotten it all
it doesn’t matter
the world sits on a pendulum that refuses to swing
my breath smells like cinnamon as I plunge my head
through the ocean and wave hello to all the passing ships
what you have witnessed is a linear line
that has been stretched to its breaking point
and then snapped like the twig it was
but maybe this doesn’t make sense and that’s okay
I sat in a bathroom stall until I puked out all those evil thoughts
my head took on that day and then I ran away
then sat in the sun watching ducks mate
Why the heck are they painting my school for the 100th time
I flew past my shadow and there you were staring me down for
the coward I am
nothing will ever be harmonious and nothing will ever be a dream
I stumble down the street and there it is there it all is
everything I've always wanted and you are not in sight
I don’t even bother to notice that you are hidden in my shadow
it begins to rain a very cold rain and
diluted blood drips down dirty drains on Dead End Drive and waits
to be home and waits to be free from the evil that is no one.
it is all of us we are evil and when I lost what was never mine I wanted it
I can never get it back because she has it.
She is one of them.

-Laura "Deetle" Nelson
even the chaos is ordered these days

jesus Christ is my logic and maybe hers too
watching her from
my third row vantage point
I wonder how she sits still long enough to reach
enlightenment, during lectures she paces
limps really
hobbles in between mad scrawlings of white
chalk on the grey board. a thousand boston winters
have almost smoothed off midwestern edges
but her prairie childhood still peeks through in
certain words. r's still have a place
in her throat and philosophy comes easy to
her but not us. we, raised with common feminism
and so much progress, wrestle with nothing
have inherited no struggle, I remember no moment
of a brother dead in war, my mind – newly freed
from bullshit restraints – reeling. even our war – and we
do claim it – rages on silently
tucked away neatly reduced to filler
for nightly news. up here on the third floor of
the old sears-roebuck, wide windows overlooking tree
lined streets, she stutters and offers us everything
if only we can wrap our bored fingers around the
slipperiness lao-tze and plato. up here, I know buddha is
one of
us, gazing across the plane of things
blinking in so much ambivalence
hoping that his inheritance
contains a condition of heartache.

-Amy Bohler
The Whole Truth:

I love the way you never listened when I spoke to you
I spoke for hours
Tearing myself into smaller pieces
Making my refusal more gentle for you
A polite razor at your neck telling you no
I will not sleep in your bed
Or be held by your eyes
But your deaf hands
Became my obstruction

The officer with the grim reaper tattoo
Asked me if I was angry at you
And I said no at the time
But I am now... Bob

In court you smiled
I wanted to tear that smile away from you
Stripping you of that security
You took from me
Like I had requested it
Some favor
Could you please assault me tonight
Please I am begging
Take away my trust in men
Remember that I wanted to trust you
Right until your hand went down my shirt
Making me silent

I hope your fingers ached when they pressed them into the pad
To fingerprint you
I hope you finally listen to what the ink said in my absence
I will never be silent again

-Caitlin Shea
Cassandra

Chorus of the Argive Elders "Oh woman, you are strong."
Cassandra "Only the unhappy ever hear such praise."
Agamemnon, Aeschylus

Not Cassandra
I cannot see
my own death
fed by the god
in long doses of poisoned love
gone astray.
She would not
give him children
broke her promise, steadfast
beautiful, possessed
he punished her.
Lord of life and light
Loxis Apollo,
you cursed her,
the girl confused, burned
blood knowledge swam
between her womb and heart.

You took her soul,
a perfect circle of stars
and broke the constellation.
The lights, they go out
one by one.

-Anne Elizabeth Pluto
Sun Go Away

I conceive a world of bleakness
the sun is not warm or bright
for it is coalescent and blinding at its near sight
it follows me around like a curse for miles
I feel vexed by its presence but others welcome it with a smile

when I step outside I feel its hot spell over me
my warm-blooded body begins to heat up steadily
I feel the discomfort I feel the angst
I need to retreat it's my only escape

I stay hidden away from it for much of its advent
waiting for its departure so I can once again content
the cooling of darkness is what I weigh
the sun should be forgotten until doomsday

-Marcourn Yai
Yacumama

Water,
from the tall white mountains,
from the silvered blue sky
it comes – seeking,
seeping over the sticky
red and yellow clays
to carve the green
with serpentine grace,
and pour thick and black
into the forest.

It creeps and glides
among the fallen leaves,
closing spaces
between trees,
and opening light
and shadow
to reflect the tangled
mystery of this place.

Into vines,
into veins
it is pulled and sucked,
flooding tissue
with the silty soup of earth,
and filling gaps in my soul
with nothing
but the here and now –
ephemeral pools
of eternal sun.

In the image of Creation
it heaps the living
upon the living
in self embrace –
branching into many
fusing into one.

-David Morimoto
Land of Eire

Dingle

Standing tall in the heart of Dingle is the sacred burial ground where tombstones are inscribed with a language no archaeologist can decipher. The Gallarus Oratory standing next to it, built in 802 A.D., you walk inside the stone structure and stand in awe of the people who built this place of prayer.

The pubs scream out the antics of Nationalism rising with each goal the Irish score for their country. A pub's walls record the history of people, in frames, meticulously placed around the bar.

And the weeping willows sway in melancholy among the Japanese gardens in Kildare.

The Bonsai tree that stands tall above the main reception, above the Plassey House. And the calming sound of the Shannon River rising above the banks, providing music for the birds to sing well into the night.

-Erin Mahoney
Another Day

Feeling exhilarated I exhale
Breath shadowed against a ripe moon
Jeweled stars shine bright
Illuminated by purple skies
Gentle breezes blow their sweet breath
Cooling my skin
Leaves rustling softly sing
Lulling me to sleep
Butterfly wings rock me in my slumber
Upon a nest of hope
My dream vibrant colors
Seeping into one another
Staining the canvas of my heart
I feel free
I vie to open up my wings and soar
Fly high above this world of suffering and pain
Find a way to heal this heart
What sweet slumber this is
Dawn arises and consciousness stirs
I walk a dozen paths
Following a trail only my heart can decipher
Leading to nowhere
But ending up somewhere
My heart breaks with a smile
Another day has begun.

-Megan Miller
Moon Dictated Time

We lived in a house that was
much like this house only paler
where light and wind could push through
And we were left illuminated
and Jessica you were a ghost,
you'd seen it all go down, you know how we stumble
you smiled with eyes cast down much
as you do now.
(Too much to say moon in my eyes)
she said that last part sounded pretty good
that's what she said in the dream she
said I can't go out anymore
that's what she said on the phone
moon in my eyes photogrey childlike
spiderbite too many reverberations
knocking me senseless I need
translucent walls I need to spread the
love I need a ghost hand in mine
I need moon dictated time.

-Rachel Finkel
Love as a Lifeboat

riding on this waking tide
expecting to drown
exceeding expectations
squashing indecision
floating like an angel in a helicopter
just in case a wing breaks
but even then we've got tape.
the somber breeze of a bird
wings flapping
sending your kiss to my lips
wearing your heart around my neck,
like it was my talent.

-Michael Crigler
Had So Much to Tell You Tonight

Had so much to tell you tonight
But my mouth was full of shallow breathing.
   staying alive
You were a spaceman and I was
   Outer space,
I was a thing of the earth and you were the
   Goblin King,
You gave me what I deserved,
Like a Father,
Like lightening on a desert mountaintop
   (bang)

I smiled and I walked home, and in the dark
The leaves fell all around me.

-Rachel Finkel
Forever and Always

forever and always
that's what we say
I know it will be
we can promise each other that
we have the right
it's what we want
we've known each other "forever"
saying we'll "always" be together
that's the true meaning
our one wish to have come true
we never have to wonder
if it's meant to be or not
if our love is real or fake
if we mean what we say
why we stay together
what we mean to each other
love, comfort, security, dependence, happiness
forever and always
that's what we say

-Marcia Wong
Tragedy’s Rose

As you laid your dreams of California to rest
Shadows fell on buildings of art’s ambiguity
In-between the silvers and blacks
Caught behind your december eyes
Sometimes I weigh my name in your voice.

Rose Petal Beauty

Swayed stars and hearts
romanced fairytales of betrayal
Envy drawn with blood,
We watched the world collapse in its crimson delight
The Rain’s cynicism created symphonies of lust
Waves broke and left traces of gold
My rose petal beauty stole the twilight mist
Heavy-eyed poets, stunned, wrote the words
I never said.

-Aonymous
gilded

leave the door open
let every careless eye
see how lost I am
in your skin
golden with the falling sun’s
last prayer
even darkness
can’t steal
the light I carry with me
now that
my map is stained
with your kisses

-Caitlin Shea
the parting season

three drags of that cigarette
and you are off
on to your fresh new soil
(it smacks of pretending)
on to your strange new dance
(always stepping on my toes)

three.

where the planning and the
freezing and the fires feed you
with a sense of security.
(the blanket was too thin)
you left me wide open

two.

exposed to the elements
(licking chapped lips never helps)
i didn't even notice
that we were talking
to ourselves.

one.

-casey engels
Fingerprints

I am looking for your fingerprints
Walking along the wall
Crawling on the floor
Picking myself apart

It happened so quickly
And then you were gone
Something happened
Something bad
I haven't been able to sit in my own skin
I feel like junky
I feel like a whore

I need to be quiet
It's important that I don't disturb you
It's important to smile and nod
Smile
nod

-Aleda Richeson
The Heir of Nothing in Particular, She Is

the daughter of every thing on earth
less plastic than the white hot manufactured rage.
I am the subtle burning of built up conviction the product of years

I am but the breath in her lungs, she who I have called not-loved
cowering beneath the still hovering rebellion, the shoddy promises of a thousand left-over-lovers stuck there between breasts I had crafted

her nature brazen in its jagged impulsiveness-
I have known before knowledge was knowlable and her song – of despair, frustration, apathy and the occasional joy- I have heard before hearing was heard. and she knows

in her slow moving and ignorant way the voices heard in the dark distant are sacred – the whisperings of angel wings – and she knows who

I am

-Amy Bohler-
Mrs. Esther Drysdale, widowed these past four years, stared out the kitchen window at her orchard, fervently moving her rolling pin back and forth across the dough. Outside, the rain and wind fought each other to tear the last leaves from the apple trees. It was getting cold in the house on this October day, but Esther did not notice, such were her steadfast labors at the innocent pies. Back and forth the pin went, changing rough lumps of dough into beautiful ragged circles just a quarter-inch thick.

"Apples are standing by, and the mincemeat’s cured," she thought. "Now which should I bring to Nancy Hobbs' harvest dinner, as if I didn’t know?" she demanded loudly. The cat by the stove raised her head groggily, blinked, and settled back into her nap. "One blink—mincemeat!" Esther proclaimed. She was not of a supernatural bent, but felt that she and her ancient tabby Ruth—named after that steadfast Biblical heroine—had a relationship that transcended kingdoms and had proved mutually beneficial.

The apple pieces lay gleaming in a bowl, spiced and sugared to Esther’s rigid specifications. There were two kinds of apples in the mix, one that would get soft and juicy in the baking, and one that would hold its shape, giving a little snap to each bite. A sprinkling of currants had been tossed with the mixture, one not-so-secret ingredient that set her apple pies apart from the other ladies of that neighborhood. In the other bowl, Esther’s secret mincemeat receipt had been worked nearly to perfection: beef, suet, all manner of dried fruit and peel and spice, and a dose of that secret ingredient Esther called her “pep.”

Esther folded the dough circle over, and with an efficient flick set it into the pie tin. She smoothed it out into a circle again and began trimming the edges, singing as she worked the knife around the rim. “There is power, power, everlasting power, in the blood (in
the blood) of the lamb!” Well, mincemeat wasn’t lamb, but there was everlasting power in her mincemeat, too. She had been told so time and again, and at the age of seventy she was ready to put down her defenses and believe it. What good would it do to deny it?

Esther straightened up and stood back to look at her crust. She was a tall, gaunt woman, and rolling crusts at the low table always made her back ache. She patted her hands on her apron, ready for the next step. As she was checking the fire to see that it was proper to her pies, a knock came at the door. “Well, now, Ruth, who could that be comin’ here today?” she declared loudly. Ruth did not appear to be at all interested, pricking up her ears for a moment but not moving otherwise. Esther looked around the kitchen. “Oh, lands sakes!” She quickly grabbed something from the kitchen table and slid it between the flaps of the calico skirt that ran around the kitchen sink. She straightened up, smoothed her apron, and was just about to bid the guest enter, when the door flew open, letting in rain, wind, leaves, and a wet, bedraggled Harriet Berry.

“Certainly, Harriet, come in,” said Esther, with a bit more tartness than she had meant to show. “Come right ahead in.”

“Well, I thought I heard you say something when I knocked,” said Harriet defensively. “Didn’t you say to come in?” Harriet frowned, a short, thin figure draped in a massive cloak that seemed in danger of dragging her down.

“I don’t know as I did, but you’re in, so stop dripping all over the doormat and come stand by the fire.”

Harriet took off her cloak and hung it on a hook, over Roscoe Drysdale’s old navy blue sweater. He’d called it his “cider sweater,” the one he’d wear in the chilly fall when the apples were ready for pressing. Though Roscoe had died four years before, Esther hadn’t yet had the heart to touch his things; his boots still stood below the sweater, just as he’d left them the morning he’d taken them off for the last time. Esther sidled over to Harriet’s cloak and moved it one peg over, covering her own dry coat. Let it get damp--she wasn’t liable to go out in this rain, anyway.
"Esther, you know you ought to jes' put Roscoe's things away. H'ain't we been telling you that for better'n three years now? Lookin' at that old sweater and them boots can't but give you the melancholy. Won't you put'em away?"

"Puttin' your drippy things on top of it is not going to make me move 'em, I can state that right now, Harriet Berry. More likely it'll make me bronze 'em and make a statue out of 'em for the front yard." Truth was, lately she felt tired when she looked at the sweater and boots. One of these days she really would get rid of them—once Harriet and the rest stopped asking, of course.

Harriet sniffed derisively, as much as to say she'd believe that when she saw it. "Well, that's some rain out there. You been out yet today?"

"There'd have to be something mighty important to get me out on a morning like this. What brings you out?" she asked Harriet pointedly. She looked worriedly at her pie crust, which was ready for filling but in danger of drying out if she didn't get back to it soon.

Harriet, who had been eying the pie fixings with a surreptitious but extremely analytical eye, said, "You must be bringin' pies to Nancy's on Satiddy. Why else would you be makin' so many pies?"

It had been a practice of the neighborhood's widowed ladies (of which there were currently fourteen) to take turns hosting a harvest dinner each year, ostensibly to give thanks for another year's bounty but really so those lonely widows could treat themselves to a lavish, lengthy meal with a group of companions. They had another, similar gathering in the spring, the intent of which was to help each other "finish up" some of the vast amounts of preserved, pickled, and canned goods they had put up in the fall. The harvest meal was the best of the two for food, coming as it did after the fullness of summer, the spring the best for talk, coming as it did after a long, oftentimes lonely winter.

You might imagine they would try such a gathering more than twice a year, but the occasions generated so much excitement,
anxiety, and concentration that to do it more than that would be to rapidly age many of these good women far beyond their already well-established years. First there was the pleasant anticipation of the event, which could last for the half-year, if a person had a mind to. Questions abounded: would the hostess, they could wonder, turn out anything new in the way of furnishings, drapery, china, or carpets? Was the hooked rug that Mrs. Tripp mentioned casually on a cold day in February going to appear on her floor for the inspection and regard of her handy sisters? Did the fact that Mrs. Chester said she “may take up the pianoforte” mean that she would regale them with a sonatina when next they met? Would the “nasty neat” Mrs. Elderwood finally leave a spot of dust somewhere for someone to delightfully detect? (All of the women were good housekeepers, but Elsie Elderwood did beat all, and was heartily resented for her perfection.)

Then, closer to the event, culinary assignments were given; tradition held that the hostess was to provide tea (only tea, nothing stronger!) and the guests brought the rest. The hostess usually parcelled out assignments one by one as she “ran into” her circle of friends. Because of this slow trickle, much speculation was raised as to who had to bring what. Sometimes, a hostess would contrarily parcel out a casserole to a well-known baker of carrying cakes, or a pie to the reigning soup queen. This occasioned a flurry of sputtering from the thwarted specialists, who wondered if they were being given a challenge or were being set up for a fall. The best hostesses were those who played to their friends’ strengths, or to their abundances—why assign one a peach pandowdy when it was well known in the neighborhood that the woman was afloat in late-season blueberries? (This year’s hostess, Nancy Hobbs, had been exceedingly generous, giving everyone a category but nothing more specific than “pie,” or “fruit salad” or “something containing cold fish.” She was well regarded for this expansiveness, though some felt perhaps it was just laziness, or fear of reprisal.)

Still nearer the event were the separate tortures that each
guest underwent as she tried to decide what to wear. No one in that
circle was more than just well-set; the purchase of a new dress or hat
was thought about long and hard. All the husbands had lately or
long ago disappeared from the scene, leaving their wives with much
the same, every one: a house with a barn or some small outbuilding,
the few acres that had yielded to each his particular crop (potatoes,
apples, garden vegetables, corn; Oliver Walker had had his fishing
boat), and whatever furniture and worldly goods he and his good
wife had been able to purchase or make for the house during his
lifetime.

What the ladies lived on now, for purposes of the purchase
of new clothing, provisions, offerings at church, or an occasional visit
to the doctor, was different for each. One made sheets with fancy
French embroidery (specializing in white thread on white cotton,
which had gained her some notoriety), one sewed wedding gowns
and gentlemen’s gloves. One lived off the sale of four acres of land
that was rumored to be the most rock-free soil ever known in that
part of New Hampshire. (It had fetched a surprising amount, bought
by a refugee from Manchester who was desperate to try his hand at
raising asparagus. His theory was that the finer the soil, the
straighter the stalks.) One had small sums of money sent to her
regularly from a wealthy brother in Boston, who felt guilty about
rarely visiting the unexciting town of his youth.

One, a Mrs. Kettle, had recently sold a cameo she had been
given by a long-lost suitor in the days of her youth. Though the
brooch was uncommonly handsome, it had been slightly damaged
when her husband had found it and, in a fit of jealous fury (which he
had never shown before or after) buried it deep behind the barn; she
had later dug fiercely and found it, wrapping it carefully and
reburying it under a favorite lilac bush, where she retrieved it upon
her husband’s death and promptly brought it to Portsmouth for
appraisal and sale. She did not get as much for it as a result of the
shovel’s nick, but by the time her stubborn husband had died she
was approaching 72 anyway and did not expect she would need
money for much longer. She didn’t argue with the pawnbroker when
the price was offered, but just nodded her head decisively, put the
pile of coins into her purse and snapped it shut, and said, “Well, now,
that’s that, i’n’t it,” and turned and left. If she had regrets about the
lost lover, they had been long since buried beneath the rocky New
England soil.

Esther Drysdale made her living, meager enough, by making
a skin cream that she bottled and brought to Portsmouth and
Manchester two times a year. She used beeswax, mineral oil, and
lanolin, mixed with several other ingredients, and cooked them
together to make a smooth, waxy cream that she scented with oils of
rose, rosemary, and lavender. She kept several to give as Christmas
presents, kept one for herself—lavender—and delivered the rest to be
sold to city ladies, many of whom relied on it to keep them young-
looking. The cream was indeed miraculous, providing the ladies
with sweet scents to bring to their pillows each night as well as
glowing skin and smooth elbows.

Harriet Berry, who had known about her husband’s bad
heart and so had begun saving pennies almost the day they were
married against the certainty that she would be left alone one day,
mostly offered her services singing at funerals and weddings. Not
many people wanted her thin, wavery soprano any more, but the
occasional mourning family called her in desperation. She always
offered the same hymn, singing the words of Charles Wesley, “And
am I born to die? To lay this body down! And must my trembling
spirit fly Into a world unknown?” If she was asked to perform at a
wedding, she would offer “Wondrous Love.” If the bride had a
favorite she wished sung, Harriet would ask the bride if she were
sure “Wondrous Love” wasn’t what she meant, and if the bride saw
fit to hold out for her choice, Harriet expressed regret but said she
just remembered the wedding date was the same weekend of the
Berry family reunion.

As a result of the dearth of extra coins, none of the ladies
expected too much new in each other’s dress, but could look forward
to noticing small changes. The addition of a lace collar, a pheasant feather, a set of pearl buttons did not escape the ladies' eyes; each tried to do something detectable in this regard. Esther, this year, had a lovely new handkerchief she planned to tuck into her sleeve, and perhaps pull it out if someone said something so amusing as to bring a tear to her eye.

When it came to within a week of the dinner, the only respectable thing left to worry about was what receipt each lady would use for her assignment. Would the apple crisp be scented with lemon and orange this year, just a hint? Did the roast of beef need a glaze, and, if so, would it consist of vinegar and rosemary, perhaps some Concord grape jelly? Nothing could be cooked or baked as it ordinarily was; everything had to have an unusual touch. The aim in this was twofold. One was to make as many of the ladies as possible, upon taking the first bite of your offering, effect that much sought-after expression of sheer, unrepressed, almost sinful delight—the eyes closing slowly, the head tipped back, a low hum of pleasure barely heard. The second was to make someone have to ask you what your secret was. This only happened on the rarest of occasions, and only when the pleasure of the tasting had far outstripped the taster's pride. It always happened in secret, for then the ingredient could be claimed as one's own at a later date, under different circumstances.

It was understood that the lady lucky enough to be asked her secret was at liberty to simply say she was sorry, but she couldn't possibly tell. It was well understood, too, that the creator may or may not choose to divulge the true secret ingredient, so being told something was not necessarily being told the right thing, and everyone was on the alert for a surrogate ingredient, either to give out or to ferret out once it was given to them. It was the intrepid friend who approached a fellow cook with an inquiry about a receipt.

"Of course I'm bringin' pies, Harriet," Esther said, taking her friend's walking stick and depositing it next to her cloak. "Nancy
said I can choose what kind, and I’m just now decidin’ on my mince. You know, folks do like my mince. I don’t really know why, but they sure do.” She shot a glance at the skirt around the sink, and saw that the two halves overlapped in the middle, snug as could be.

Harriet’s eyes followed Esther’s, but she saw nothing suspicious. “I see you’re working on ‘em now. Mmm, I do love a mince pie. I’d make ‘em myself, but...”

“What did Nancy give you to bring?” Esther asked hurriedly. She thought she knew, for Harriet had a certain measure of fame among the widows for her lobster chowder, and had a nephew who worked at the Hampton docks.

“She asked me for my lobsty chowdah, jes’ like usual. I’m askin’ Peter to bring me up ten three-pounders on Tuesday. He has sot of a tough time in this kinda weather, though. Hope it breaks soon.” Harriet moved closer to the bowl with the mincemeat, which Esther noticed immediately.

“Harriet, stay away from that bowl. I’ve been asked what my secret ingredient is, and I ain’t ever told anybody, and I ain’t about to let you go trying to figure it out now.” She grabbed a tea towel and threw it over the bowl.

“I am not interested in any secret mincemeat ingredient, Esther. I’ve come to ask you what you think of my new shawl, whether you think it’ll suit for the harvest dinner. It looks an uncommon lot like your shawl.” She pulled out a weathered blue paisley cotton bag with wooden handles. From it she took a fringed black and red shawl and shook it out heartily. Esther stood silently, wondering why she was being asked her opinion, on this rainy day, when her pies needed seeing to.

“What d’you think, Estie?”

“It’s a fine shawl, Harriet. What are those, cherries?”

“Beautiful red cherries--and look at that ivy border! Isn’t it just the most wonderful lookin’ shawl you ever did see? It puts me in mind of your ginger flower one—I thought I might look at the two together, as a sort of comparison. I know you always wear your
Roscoe ginger shawl to the gatherin’, and I wouldn’t want to look alike, or show you up in any ways.”

Oh, you wouldn’t, would you? thought Esther. “My ginger flower shawl don’t look anythin’ like your cherry one, not at all.” Roscoe had given her the shawl years ago, bought off a sailing ship on one of his yearly trips to Boston for the books he loved to take him through the winter. She had worn it every harvest dinner for the last four years. Maybe Harriet was trying to do her a good turn.

“Awww, Estie. Alls I need is a peek.” Harriet’s face only made the day gloomier, as she stood in the middle of the kitchen with her shawl dragging on the floor.

“I’ll go get it, then, for goodness sake—now stop pouting, Harriet Berry! One peek, and then I’ve got to get back to my pies.” She’d have to go up to the bedroom, take the blankets off the trunk, and rout around until she found it, wrapped in the same tissue paper he’d given it to her with, disintegrating now some forty years later. Up the stairs, one by one, the knees not working anywhere near as good as they used to. “I’ll be right back.”

Back in the kitchen, Harriet stood for a minute watching the cat. Ruth still lay with her eyes shut, though now, in the sudden silence, she opened them a slit and regarded Harriet.

“You shut your eyes now, cat, and jes’ forget I’m here. I’m only doin’ what’s necessary to my still livin’ on this earth, still goin’ to them torturesome Berry family reunions year after year.” She moved toward the mincemeat, flipped the towel over, and raised her hand to the bowl. She heard Esther’s steps on the stairs, counting slowly along with the tread: five, six.... She had time. She looked into the bowl, to see what she could see, and took note of some of the contents—raisins, currants, suet. She dipped a finger into the bowl, and lifted a helping of the fragrant mincemeat to her lips. So much easier to taste the individual ingredients raw, before they got baked together and melded into one exquisite taste. And exquisite was what it was, she’d have to admit. She felt like she fairly glowed after a piece of Estie’s mince pie.

-42-
She moved the meat around in her mouth, allowing it to reach all the taste buds necessary for the task. Beef, yes—minced nicely. The suet, she could taste, as well as the currants and raisins; those were all easy. Cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, cloves, mace: mostly what you’d suspect. What was that—lemon peel? Well, then! Somewhat unexpected, but did that qualify as a secret ingredient? And sugar, of course...with a hint of raspberry. What was that other taste? She knew, she just knew what it was, but couldn’t quite... Suddenly, she heard steps overhead, meaning that Esther had found the shawl and was about to descend.

Harriet needed to swallow soon, but was desperate to parse out the mystery taste. She closed her eyes to block out distraction, and then opened them slowly; they lit on the bowl of apples. Apples! That’s what it was. No...something else, was it? Something yeasty? It must be the apples—maybe they had started to ferment slightly, maybe by some secret process. Esther Drysdale put fermented apples into her mincemeat pie! She almost laughed with delight—she, Harriet Berry (through underhanded means, to be sure, but she would ask the Lord for forgiveness on Sunday, sure the Lord would understand) finally had tracked down the secret ingredient of Esther’s mincemeat pies. Now she’d have something to bring to those Berry family reunions— the ones where her lobster chowder was just another dish, one more undistinguished thing to eat among so many delights. Never had a Berry woman made so much as a mention of her chowder—though it was always eaten, she noticed.

As Esther’s feet hit ground level, Harriet flipped the towel back over the bowl and quickly dried her finger on her still-damp skirt. It left a pale brown smudge, but she tucked the spot into a fold and moved quietly toward the sink again. Ruth got up and walked over to her, brushing her fur against her skirt and revealing the besmirched area. She grabbed onto her dress and gave Ruth a sharp little kick, which landed the poor, faithful cat up against the sink’s calico skirt. The two skirt sections divided for a minute as the cat skidded into it, and Harriet caught sight of a brown bottle sitting just
inside the skirt. She was about to bend down to peer in, when Esther came into the room

"Ruth, what are you doing skulking around over there? You're going to get poor Harriet's skirt all hair!" Esther quickly crossed the room, picked up the cat, and firmly snapped the two sides of the sink skirt shut. It was so quick and decisive a movement that it might have gone unnoticed if Harriet hadn't been so interested in the brown bottle within.

"That's where I keep my molasses, and that cat is always tryin' to lick the sides of the bottle where it drips. I swear I ought to put it up on a shelf somewhere, but I do use it so often, and it is so sticky, I tend to keep it right near the sink, where I can wash it off.

"But don't that pick up ants?" Harriet was appalled by her friend's explanation, but it did quickly satisfy her curiosity, and would give her a little nugget to talk about when next she saw Nancy, or Mrs. Leavitt.

"I don't get ants, Harriet Berry!" This wasn't exactly the truth, but she would be tarred and feathered before she'd admit to anything different. "Now let's take a look at that shawl."

Harriet tried to show a healthy interest in Esther's shawl, which she had seen many of times before and had no real need to see again. "Now there, that's what I thought," she said. "They's two different sots of reds, between these cherries and them ginger flowers. And my English ivy along the edges here don't look a bit like your what d'you call them leaves."


"Well, then. Nowhere nears the same. Good! We can both wear our red and black shawls, and not seem as though we planned to look the same, like two schoolgirls! All right, then, I'll be off so you can get back to makin' those famous mincemeat pies of yours." She folded the cherry shawl and stuffed it back into the bag with the wooden handles.

Esther sighed as Harriet took her cloak off the peg and put it
on. "I'll be seeing you at Nancy's on Saturday, then. I'm lookin' forward to some of that lobster chowder of yours," she said charitably.

"If Pete brings them lobsters, that is. If not, I'll be up Taylor River without a paddle!" Last-minute menu changes were frowned upon except in the direst of cases; once it was announced that a person was bringing a dish, that dish was anticipated, and only the most astonishing of substitutes would suffice.

"And of course we'll all be lookin' forward to your pies, with that secret ingredient of yours. I know you'll never tell what it is, so I ain't even goin' to ask--I said the last time I asked that I'd never do so again, and I won't." Harriet took up her walking stick and stood hopefully by the door for a moment.

"No, I don't suppose I ever will tell what my extra touch is," Esther mused. "It was passed on to me by my mother, and to her by mother before her, and the only one that knows it is my daughter Rachel, over there to Portland. Now you mind yourself in this rain, Harriet."

Harriet waved her good-bye, and left, the rain and wind into which she stepped still fearsome. She must have been some worried about that shawl, Esther thought, to come out in such rain--Noah weather, Roscoe used to call it. Esther smiled at her friend's vanity, and shivered. She looked at Roscoe's sweater, and gingerly took it off the hook. Well, he ain't comin' back, no matter what, and I ought to get on with things, it's true. She stood for a moment in contemplation, her tall figure straight and unmoving. Then, in a smooth gesture, she flung the sweater around her shoulders and pulled it on. You always did keep me warm, Roscoe, she thought. Smiling, she rolled up the sleeves and turned to her pies.

She went over to the mincemeat bowl and took off the towel. What she saw within amazed her: a long, deep trench in the middle of the mincemeat, about the width of a scrawny finger! She shook her head to clear it--what had happened? Then, it hit her: why, that Harriet Berry no more wanted to compare shawls than she wanted to
dance a jig in the middle of Sunday service! She had come over to try to figure out the receipt. She had asked countless times, and Esther knew that the Berry family reunions, with their scores of excellent cooks and bakers, were a constant source of worry for poor Harriet (though Esther happened to know that the Berrys all secretly wanted Harriet’s chowder receipt, which as far as Esther could tell included more butter and cream than a cow could produce in a week).

Well, her mincemeat secret was still safe, and no mistake—she had come back into the kitchen just in time. Esther took a wooden spoon and stirred the mincemeat, erasing forever the physical evidence of Harriet’s skulduggery. She went to the sink, bent down, and drew the brown bottle out from underneath, where it had been safely hidden from sight. She moved to the mincemeat bowl, took the cork out of the bottle of fifty-year-old cognac—another of Roscoe’s gifts from Boston, bless his heart—and poured a healthy dose into the mixture. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath of the aroma, stirring one final time before taking the bowl to the waiting pie crusts.

“There, Ruthie, that ought to do it.” The faithful cat lifted her head, blinked once, and went back to sleep.

-Shari Ajemian Craig
How do you describe two tones of pigment without names?

care and light is given to
a grandma's old cowboy-adorned
three-quarter size guitar
(in renaissance-revival clothes
stacked three folds too high).

turn the page and the bottom falls free
to be caressed by the thread trailing
along like an earthworm on playground
blacktop – writhing in a tiny dying puddle
beside the parking space stripes

the characters try to care, but the door
doesn't; won't; shouldn't; should
not open and wish for a chair
to rest in pale sun with a glass
of French red on the porch

a squeak shudders, but it's just a
gust – a change of pressure -
name the page and it will still
not be an Opening as was thought
in the coat of arms' paint

it may be just a chip, but the lovely
cold burns and brands the egg-shell
sheets, leaving fingers too stiff to work
doorknobs or pluck the brass skeleton key
from a pocket or a grand piano

cobweb forests and cracked-paint
canyons cut a path through recently traveled
page in step with a brass bands' fumbling
echo off the city's sparkling kinfolk
domes awaiting another toast to the wasteland.

-Eron Rauch
Kinesis

-for marck

it is amazing to me how much i resist change these days.
today, for instance, refusing to change my altitude from
lying to standing, or to change into clean clothes.

i devote a hundred minutes or so a week just trying to
make things stay the way they are –
saving pencil lead so not too much of the bic is different

i have always waited for the sun to change the morning
room from dark to light – wouldn’t dream of changing
the light switch from down to up.

there are other ways, too, like listening to joni’s “cactus
tree” on repeat, wishing the song would keep playing
as long as i wanted it to, without a space left

in between each repetition for the machine to adjust
itself, so that a kinetic person who might drop by or
hear her banshee voice over the telephone might

ask “how long is this goddamned song, anyway?”
to which i would reply, all too content in my echoing
bliss, “actually, forever.”

why, just the other morning i spent on the
hill with billy’s * “piano lessons,” reading the same 6
stanzas again and again until it was night again.

even yesterday 80% of my three-hour desk shift was
dedicated to mark’s* “cemetery road.” not the whole
poem, mind you, mostly the tenth stanza where he

explains “i know the dead continue.” it gives me
hope for you baby – which is not technically the same
as change – not entirely so.
*Billy Collins – Poet Laureate of America, 2001 – 2002  
*Mark Doty – author of six books of poetry and listed in the Academy of American Poets

-Anonymous
A Gentle Hidden Soul

Kind words and open praise
Fall short of reaching your ears
In a world that has been dimmed
By pain and torn by confusion
You exude kindness and sincerity
In a way that is not likely seen.
As a receiver of your sweetness
I wonder if somehow there is a way
To light a spark in the dusk
Even for just a moment
Long enough to tell you
That you are beautiful in your humanity,
And you are uniquely
Irreplaceable in the selfless kindness
That you bestow upon others.
If no words but these reach you,
Then I will be content within
The knowledge that this blinding
Truth has finally reached your
gentle hidden soul.

-Aurora Joseph
What young men do with their eyes,
The Stars do for the heavens,
They give inspiration
into an infinite map of creativity,
Nursed by the love of beauty,
And the fire that burns deep
Although this love is yielding,
it is forever seen in the cosmos.

-Riccardo Gemelli
Contributors

Leah Marie Anciello is a first year student in Lesley College. She came to Lesley to pursue a degree in Management, but is applying for transfer to concentrate on a more specified area of interest. This is the first time that she has ever had anything published, and she is very pleased to be included in Commonthought.

A. E. Bohler studies English, Middle School Ed, and life. She has recently fallen in love with the novel in verse as a genre relevant to the present times and views it her task to spread the word.

Shari Ajemian Craig is the co-author of ten musical comedies and a book of song parodies. She has been a performer, a social science researcher, and a volunteer in schools and civic organizations. She will receive her undergraduate degree from Lesley University in the spring of 2003.

casey engels is currently trying to find comfortable tights, read something unrelated to school, and truly follow through with a goal or two. after having transferred to lesley a year and a half ago, she will finally be set free in may of 2003. technically, she is an arts major with an IPM in arts therapy (or something like that). what she is really interested in is getting her own act together with art and writing, and somehow attempting to bridge the enormous gaps between the multiple worlds of the arts. she is grateful to have fallen into the realm of annie pluto, and would like to thank aleda, rachel, jose, marcia, caitlin, and mareourn for a wonderful job - they were the ones who truly put the fire under her little, sometimes lazy, afraid-of-committing-words-to-the-page butt.

Rachel Finkel is a sophomore in the Women’s College.

Riccardo Gemelli is a senior at the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University.

Aurora Joseph is a senior is the Woman’s College who is looking forward to having more time to devote to creative writing after graduation.
Erin Mahoney is a senior in the Women's College.

Megan Miller is graduating this May with a degree in Special Education and Environmental Science. She wants to be a positive influence in children's lives as they build the foundation for their futures.

David Mortimoro is a naturalist and ecologist who studies conservation biology, habitat fragmentation and its effect on bird populations. He is doing research in southeastern Brazil in the Atlantic Forest. He taught at Regis College for 14 years and is presently the Director of Natural Science and Mathematics in the School of Undergraduate Studies.

Lauren Nadler is a sophomore majoring in Human Services with minors in Sociology and Women's Studies, who also plays soccer.

Laura "Deetle" Nelson likes to procrastinate a lot. In fact she submitted pretty late, but figured she needed to write something worth publishing because her current stuff seemed to derivative and followed an old advice. In Deetle's time here she has realized that New Englander's are totally crazy, but loves them anyway. She likes to draw bunnies; no one will understand why. Hey, does anyone want some Tabasco sauce?

Anne Elizabeth Pluto wishes she could have nine lives to explore all the things she loves.

Mary Claire Powell is Associate Professor in Creative Arts in Learning at Lesley University. She is the author of several books, including two books of poetry, Things Owls Ate, and Academic Scat, poems about Lesley University.

Eron Rauch was a visiting student at the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University in the fall of 2002.

Aleida Richeson is a senior in the Woman's College, graduating in December 2003. She loves Anne Pluto, lambs, the color pink & having a nice cup of tea with her honey-honey.
Mabel Sabogal is a graduate student in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program at Lesley University. She is interested in social development through mass media, and produces her own documentaries and experimental videos.

Caitlin Shea is a student at the Women's College. She hopes that you enjoy her work or at least it makes you cry.

Attiana G. Virella-Fuentes, age 22, born in Puerto Rico and moved to Lowell, Massachusetts at the age of three. "I do not consider myself a poet, more of an observer and recorder of human nature."

Marcia Wong is a sophomore at Lesley University. She is majoring in English in hopes of being a fiction author someday. She enjoys spending time with her friends. When she has a chance, she also likes to write stories and poetry.

Mareourn Yai
Raised in Rhode Island
Cambodian/American
3 Siblings
Plays violin
Loves Sports
Animals
Twin
Humorous
Attends Lesley College
Management Major/Junior
Colophon

COMMOTIONUGHT 2003 was designed and produced by Mabel Sabogal using QuarkXPress© 5.0. The fonts used include Calligrapher, Tribune, Georgia, Tabitha, Lucida Handwriting, Helvetica, Palatia and Goudy. This magazine was printed by Gnomon Copy, and published, under the direction of Anne Elizabeth Pluto, by the Humanities Division of Lesley College at Lesley University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.