


Spring 1995

# Commonthought Vol.6 (1995)

Commonthought Staff

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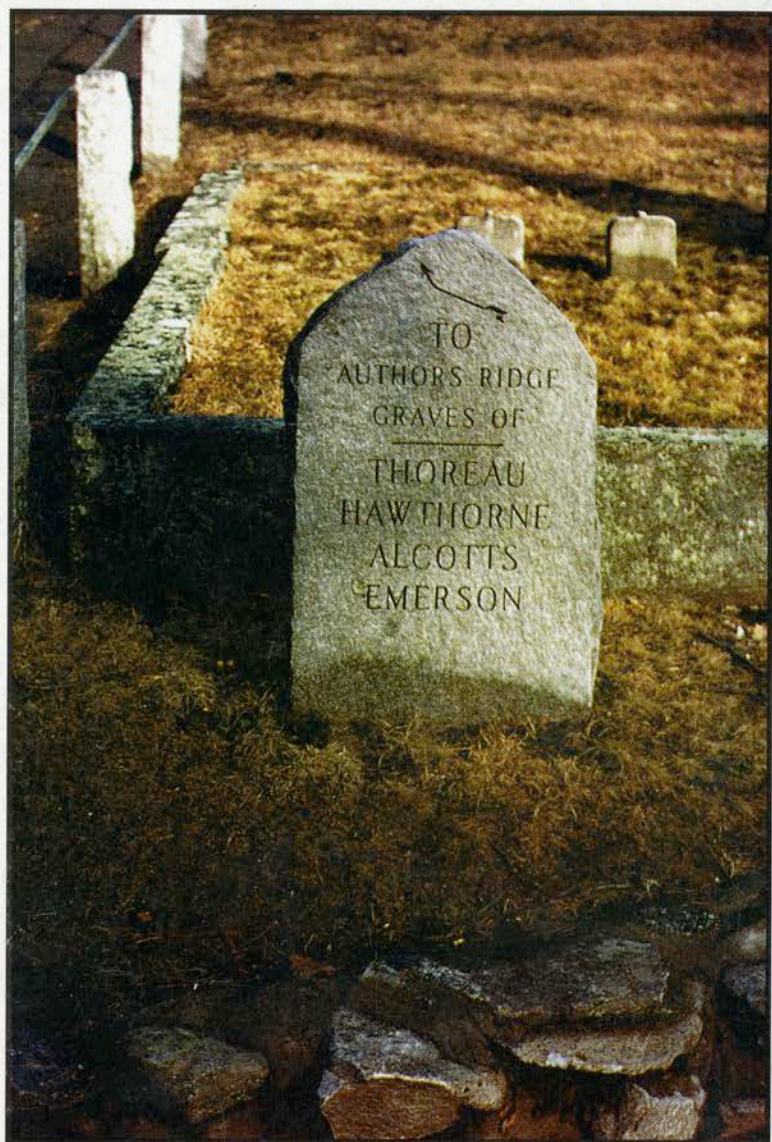
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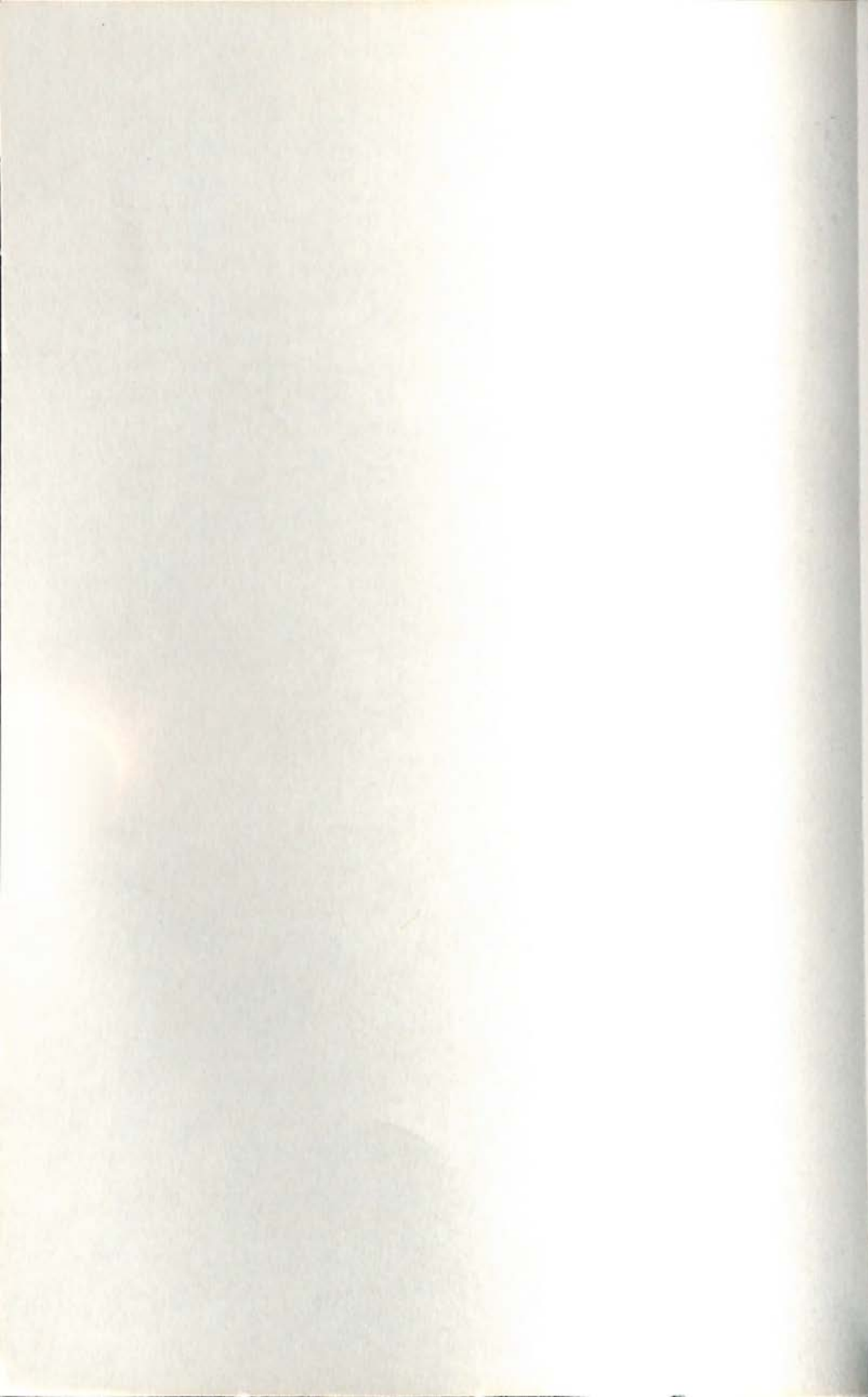
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*Commonthought*  
*Spring 1995*



# *Commonthought*

*Magazine of the Arts at Lesley College*

**Spring 1995**  
**Volume VI, No. 1**

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## A Letter to Our Readers...

When I came to Lesley College, eight years ago, there wasn't a literary magazine. With some seed money from the Office of Student Affairs, the help of a woman named Kesaya Noda a Xerox journal: *The Open Door* was born. We read submissions, made decisions, wrote acceptance and rejection letters, baked cakes and had a reading. We haven't stopped since. The magazine has gone through some personnel and name changes. We became *Womantthought* for a few issues, and then reinvented ourselves as *Commonthought*. Kesaya no longer works for Lesley College, and now the undergraduate school students can take a Creative Writing and Magazine Production course for credit, as we have a real budget.

This year's editorial board is comprised of members of that class. They chose not to have an editor-in-chief; that's why I'm writing to you. Perhaps I can unveil some of the mysteries behind the editorial decision making process and answer some questions. As the faculty advisor, I did not read any of the submissions. They were chosen by the students alone. We received many submissions this year. They were coded by the letters of the Greek alphabet and read blindly. The editorial board chose what they wanted in this year's magazine. After they finished with the literary submissions, they tackled the artwork. It was a thoughtful and difficult process. We have teamed up with the Office of Communications, and they have generously offered to do the layout.

*Commonthought* has grown up in the past eight years. It has been wonderful to be the faculty advisor, but nothing beats the joy I see and feel from the writers and artists themselves, when they see their own work in print.

Thanks to all of you, the administrators, the writers, the artists, and the readers.

Enjoy!

Anne Elezabeth Pluto, Ph.D.

Anne Elezabeth Pluto, Ph.D.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF

SCOTLAND

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES

THE SECOND

VOLUME

OF

THE

REIGN

OF

CHARLES

THE

FIRST

BY

JOHN

BURNET

OF

SCOTLAND

IN

SEVEN

VOLUMES

THE

SECOND

VOLUME



---

**S**ometimes I wish I were a book  
so that it could be easier to open and close me  
so that it would be easier to read me  
when I wanted you to  
so that magically I could absorb you...  
into me  
so that you could put me down for a while  
and come back knowing exactly where  
we left off  
so that I could remain at your bedside  
A book marked is a sign  
of promise.

—*Leslieanne Boria*

---

## Grammar and Usage

**A**s all the tenured faculty held degrees in advanced condescension, they wanted their substitute teachers to be “classically educated,” the Personnel Director told me, in order to “uphold the high standards” of the district.

Oh, please, I thought, I’m applying to be a *substitute*, for God’s sake. That’s like walking into a classroom with a bright red bull’s eye painted on your face. When the kids bend me over a desk to give me a group wedgie, does it really matter if I’ve studied Latin?

I didn’t ask this question; I did take the job.

One Tuesday about mid-year, I was playing the usual morning game of ping pong at the high school. First I went to the Main Office, then I went to the English Department Office, then I went to the Faculty Lounge where all of the teacher mailboxes are, then I went to the separate room for the special English Department mailboxes, all in search of the lesson plans and schedule I needed to follow for the day. “Lesson Plans”? I use the term loosely. These typically comprised instructions as helpful as “Give a lecture on the Byzantine Empire.”

I had known since my first day on the job that real substitute lesson plans should say something like: As you dodge the spitballs, try to pass out these worksheets. The bullhorn, flares, and Ritalin injection gun are in the bottom left drawer of the desk. Please note: There is no student in the class named Richard Hurtz. The kids add his name to the attendance list only to hear you call out, “Dick Hurtz? Who’s Dick Hurtz?”

Good luck. You’ll need it.

I found Mrs. Miller’s plans in her box. Her note asked me to “Lead a roundtable discussion of Dante’s *Inferno*, Canto III.” Yeah, right. More likely, we would create our own little inferno by setting that round table on fire. “By the way, I usually conduct the class in Italian.” Thanks for the tip. She ended the note with, “These are darling students. I do not expect that you’ll have any problems.” Oh, no. Any “darling” class meant real trouble.

---

I couldn't decipher her class schedule; it looked like she taught in three different rooms first period. Damn, I couldn't avoid asking for help. Getting help from a regular teacher when you're a substitute is no easy task. They would rather see you lope around all day with your legs crossed than divulge that secret faculty bathroom location.

I found a likely prospect pouring over a stack of composition papers. With red pen in hand, she was no doubt writing her comments in the form of sonnets or Haiku. Her Marilyn Quayle hairdo said to anyone who would listen: "I am a *serious* English teacher." The tone of her "Yes?" as she peered down her glasses at me confirmed my convictions. This was a woman who made love to her husband in iambic pentameter.

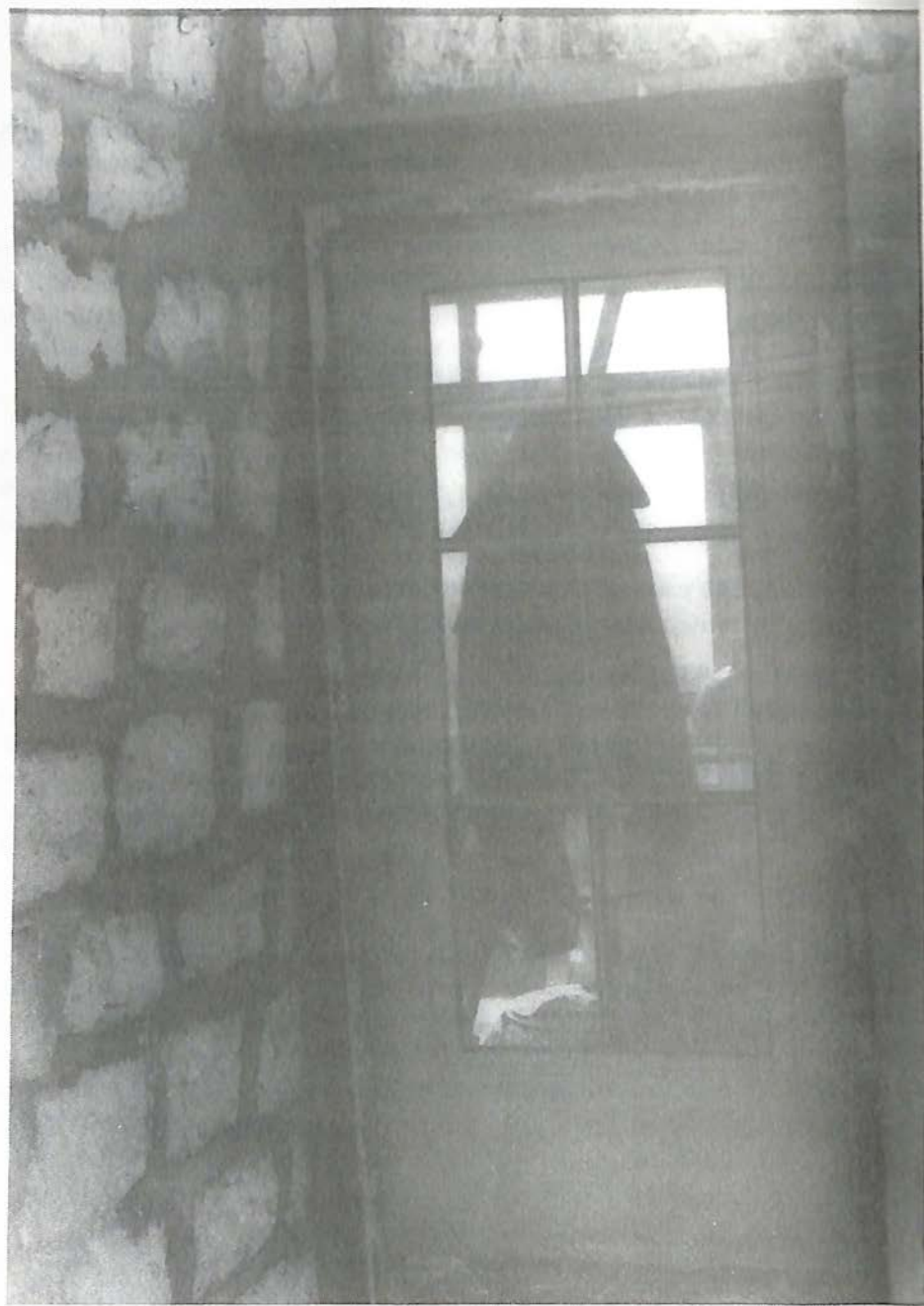
"I'm the sub for Mrs. Miller," I explained. "There are three rooms listed on her schedule for first period. Do you happen to know which room she teaches in?"

"I hope," and she paused, "that you will be teaching in a classroom where you will not end your sentences with prepositions."

"Oh, excuse me, " I apologized. " Do you happen to know which room she teaches in, bitch?"

Well, at least I always wished I had said it.

—Donna Rempt





---

## *Angels Wanna Wear*

**W**hen I was small, I liked small dresses with small flower prints. They were short dresses, and had short puffy sleeves and criss-cross stitching on the bodice. I inherited most of those dresses from my older cousins, which is probably why I liked them. The cousins, I mean.

When I was small, my mother would take me to the Stride Rite store to get back-to-school shoes. When you went in the front door something beeped to let the salesman know you were there and that you wanted new shoes. There was a back door going out through the dark stacks of boxed shoes into the rear parking lot. From the parking lot, you could go in the back door of the pet shop several doors down. The pet shop had mostly birds and fish. But if you went back into Stride Rite from the back door, nothing beeped. So I always went in the front door so that the door beeped, and a salesman would come and measure my feet because I wanted new shoes.

Buster Brown and his dog, Tige, were all over the place at Stride Rite. Following me all over the store with those big eyes they had. "There's Buster Brown, he lives in a shoe. There's his dog, Tige, he lives in there, too." Buster Brown and Tige lived in swell shoes; I could see them right there in the heels of the shoes I wanted. Brown shoes with straps that budded, and a flower pattern made out of single dots stamped into the tops. And even though I was afraid of dogs, I wanted to move into those brown shoes with Buster Brown and Tige. I believed that every morning, Buster Brown would kneel in front of me and measure my feet, pressing the sliding levers gently but firmly against me, holding my ankle lightly. And every morning, Buster Brown would look up at me and smile and say, "I'm just your size." And Buster Brown would slip those beautiful brown shoes onto my feet and buckle them for me.

But I had to wear special shoes to correct my right foot which turned in. Red shoes. Blood red and clunky. Even the laces were red. The salesman would gently slip off my scuffed pair of too-small corrective shoes and carefully measure my feet. My mother would tell him to bring another pair of those red shoes. And I, barely able to breathe, would clutch the display model of the brown shoe with the strap that buckled, and gaze at a cardboard cut-out of Buster Brown and Tige that twirled slowly, slowly over me, suspended from the ceiling by an invisible thread.

When I got bigger I still liked dresses with small flower prints. They reminded me of my older cousins who got married and had kids. That's why I liked them. The dresses, I mean.



---

When I got bigger my mother took me to college. When I got to college, I went to a gymnasium where someone took my picture and put it on a card with a number to show people that I was a student and wanted to take courses. The gymnasium had a back door going out through the throngs of registering students to the running track. From the track, you could go to the woods and walk. The woods had mostly trees and birds. But if you went back into the gymnasium from the back door, you lost your place in line. So I always went in the front door and gave someone my card to show that I was a student and wanted to take courses.

First semester sophomore year, I saw Buster Brown in the registration line. He was right behind me, looking at me with those big eyes. "Where's Tige?" I asked him. Buster Brown pushed his long straight hair behind his ears and said, "Tige ran away and was hit by a car." But Tige was still with Buster Brown; I could see him right there in Buster Brown's eyes. Brown eyes with big lashes and swirls of spun gold inside. And even though I was afraid of dogs, I wanted to move into those brown eyes with Tige. I knelt in front of Buster Brown and pressed myself firmly but gently against him. I looked up at Buster Brown and smiled and said, "You're just my size." Two weeks later, against my mother's wishes, I moved into the shoe.

I still had to wear special shoes because my right foot still turned in. I had heavy black shoes with thick rubber soles and tarnished silver dips like the dips on my old rubber boots. Every night after classes Buster Brown would gently slip off my heavy black shoes and kiss my feet. And I, scarcely able to breathe, would clutch his light brown hair and gaze at Buster Brown as he twirled slowly, slowly over me, as if suspended from the ceiling by an invisible thread.

One day I came home and found Buster Brown fitting a doe-eyed Dalmatian with fire engine red three-inch stiletto heel pumps. They're just your size," Buster Brown was saying. I beamed Buster Brown with one of my heavy black boots with the tarnished silver dips. The Dalmatian ran from the shoe, yelping.

It wasn't dogs I needed to fear after all.

Tomorrow, I defend my dissertation. I'm going to wear my light yellow dress with the tiny pink and blue and green flowers. I think it will hide my bare feet. After that, I think me and Doc Marten, my black Lab, will go visit my cousins.

— *Melinda Green*

---

## *Chinese Crucifixion*

**E**ating Chinese food with chopsticks pricks my finger.

The blood pours freely during the feast

but the mongers do not spare a sip for me.

I have always done without the nutrients of the relationship, feeding on  
the energy of sweat, not the blood of life.

Our bodies are one mass glued together by the salty food.

He calls out to Everywoman as if Anyother could produce that thrust  
into this garden.

Was it Adam or Eve that swallowed the poisoned apple?

(At least, I can take Pepto for the indigestion)

Cover me, cover us, cover them with dirt, not plastic - I am  
politically correct.

Rising, falling, I can learn to breath in this cave but must I be the  
victim of our innocent recreation?

The splinter of wood cannot be removed, it is embedded in the sin of  
life, the sin of man.

This woman is sorry.

— *Stephanie Bouchard*

---

## Voice

**W**hen my soul connects with my mind  
An absence of noise fills my world  
And music is what I find  
When my soul connects with my mind  
The rhythms are soothing and kind  
And finally a note is hurled  
When my soul connects with my mind  
An absence of noise fills my world.

— *Neysa Lameiras*

**A**bove the sea of white mist  
the earth slowly swallowed the sun  
giving birth to the new moon  
and a heaven on fire  
I stand breathless before  
its beauty

— *Janice Long*

---

## *Come, Fly This Way!*

**D**ominic was a curious and restless boy. Ever since he was free to leave home on his own, he burned out his sneakers, running everywhere looking at amazing things. When he discovered a horseshoe crab skeleton in a tidal pool he could not believe it. He wandered around with it on his head, and dreamed of ancient seas and wondered why other creatures had given up being arthropods. He pictured himself laying around in a streamlined shell sucking tidbits out of sand. Being a human, so soft and squishy, was asking for trouble. The neighborhood kids flattened him every chance they got. Dominic wore a bike helmet and a cardboard vest most of the time and took alternate routes to school. He developed a nervous twitch in his left eye from trying to look over his shoulder and off to the side at the same time.

He often visited his grandmother, Ruby Murdoch. There was safe haven in her overgrown garden. It was stuffed with ferns and sprawling grape vines dotted blue with morning glories.

The house was a lopsided Victorian with the last real barn in the neighborhood. Inside the barn there was a black hooded carriage full of old horse collars covered with bells. A ring of wicker chairs with their seats popped surrounded the carriage, waiting to go on an outing.

The year that Dominic became ten, a fever of growth took over the garden. Sunflowers tossed their giant inquisitive heads into every corner and covered the tomatoes and eggplants with thick yellow pollen. The cosmos grew ten feet tall and purple flowers flew like bats into the street. Neighbors gossiped about this riotous display and wished that Ruby would show some restraint.

Dragonflies liked it there and sat on the cosmos, their red bodies held erect, cooling themselves. It seemed to Dominic, crouching down to watch, that they balanced on their huge eyeballs. He wondered how they knew such a special way to get cool. Their black eye spheres reminded him of something he had read in an old book in the barn: "The earth is shaped like an eye and is a large breathing animal. The planets are tender spherical animals, warm-blooded and floating like basking seals in space."

Ruby had encouraged flocks of monarchs to visit by planting milkweed in the sunniest spots. They came at noon and sipped the nectar from the tight green flowers that didn't look like anything, but must have been extraordinary because so many eggs hatched on them.



---

The great spangled frittery was Ruby's great passion. She planted tons of violets to please it. Once it came and blazed like Venus, barely sniffed the wild purple clumps and then vanished directly into the sun. Dominic and Ruby had scorching, blue balloon shapes in front of their eyes from staring after it.

At night, Dominic looked out the window and saw lights glittering all through the garden. Those must be snake eyes, he thought. There were red snakes spotted with silver diamonds. Snakes dangled from the branches of the peach tree, darting their tongues at each other. Their shining eyes flickered like candle flames, inviting him to come down and listen to their stories. They slithered everywhere during the day, undetected, and at night, when the raccoons stopped prowling, they gathered and reported on everything. Dominic thought of all the things they could do without legs.

He dug out the old book from under his quilt and read, "Hundred of years ago, in Byzantium, Alexios wrote that the blessed would come back to life in the form of spheres and roll into heaven."

He imagined himself as the giant eye of a dragonfly that was dancing atop air currents, sometimes descending to whiz around the heads of his neighborhood tormentors, haunting them with images of tiny space invaders. They were absorbed into the eye and carried away into a red sunset. After this he slept peacefully.

The next morning, he found Ruby picking peaches from a dwarf tree that was bowed to the ground with its load of fruit. A black dragonfly sat on the crown of her worn straw hat. He raised his arm to the brim of the hat, hoping that the dragonfly would settle there, but it was content where it was. He helped Ruby pick peaches and found another dragonfly struggling in a spider's web. He carefully eased it into hand and carried it to the milkweeds. It did not move. He cradled it for a long time as monarchs came and went. It raised its transparent wings and Dominic could see their fine honeycomb design. The wings folded down; the dragonfly did not have the strength to fly. Dominic had never remained so still before. He told it the story of his life and sang to it. It absorbed everything. When the sun ascended to the top of the copper beech the dragonfly rose and hovered over Dominic's palm as if it were reading his fortune. He felt that it knew everything that would happen in his whole life. It even knew when he would die. He felt comforted. The dragonfly lifted itself up into the clear air and darted towards the sun.

— *Beatrice Howard*



---

## *Natural Home (truly untitled)*

**A** place where the sun sleeps in the waters and  
the moon dances with the stars.

Music surrounds the island like a mother with  
open arms. Caressing and cuddling.

Her words are like lyrics of a song, causing the  
ocean's waves to gather in numbers.

All there just to sit on her warm, sandy lap.

To hear her words when she sings,  
moves the palm trees and the waters to swaning.

—*Natasha Taylor*

## *We Three*

**W**e three brown haired girls, all with little feet, big eyes and  
Knobby knees...

Sometimes we made huge castles in the sand

Or maybe we were mermaids with golden hair

Swimming in wild seas of faraway lands...

When mother put us in the same dresses we were mistaken for triplets

Walking hand in hand...

We loved to cook, but never with recipes and of course we  
never made messes!

We three brown haired girls, all with little feet, big eyes and

Knobby knees...

Never you never me always *we*.

—*Lucy Ranney*

---

## *I Remember You*

**R**emember all the the things  
we said we were going to do?  
See the world, sing in bands  
and break every boy's heart in two!

Remember how we broke up with our boyfriends  
on exactly the same night?  
We sat on the floor crying for hours  
and bit off the head of the gingerbread man  
with one clean bite!

Remember all of those mansions  
we saw along the beach?  
We choose the ones we would own one day  
built side by side  
we'd never be out of reach

Remember how you dreamed  
of becoming a movie star?  
I can't believe how everything changed  
that horrible day  
when fate steered your car.

The day you died,  
I didn't know what to do.  
I was in shock, I refused to believe it  
and then I became so angry with you.

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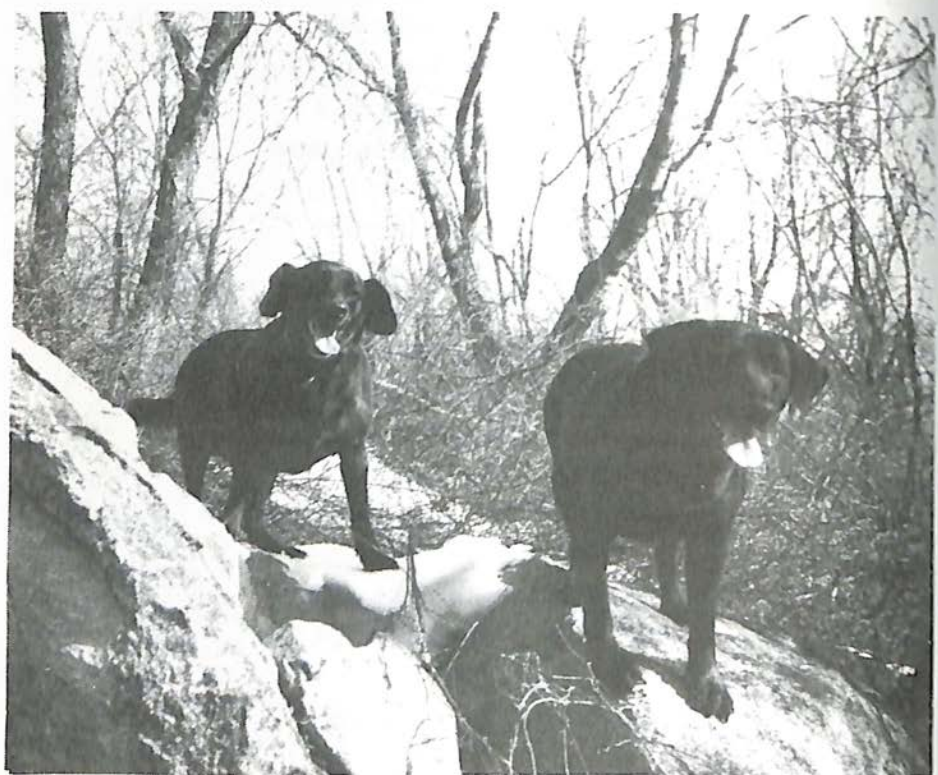
You went away so suddenly  
and left me all alone  
By myself to fulfill our dreams  
after you swore you'd never leave me on my own.

Some time has gone by now,  
just over a year has passed.  
All of the anger is gone,  
allowing precious memories to last.

You once dreamed so richly  
of fortune and fame.  
You wanted to be immortal  
ironically enough a star you became.

Defying even the blackest night  
your brilliant light shines through.  
I promise we'll be together laughing once again  
for when I die I will find you.

— *Tina Lepera*



---

## *Borscht Belt Boogie, or, Beet Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar*

On or about July of last year, reports began to filter back from a small, dissolute band of friends in New York, about a land far to the North called the Catskills, where the sun shone always at maximum tanning efficiency and rye bagels hung ripe from every seedless bough.

It wasn't long before this trusting soul was convinced that the waters at *Brown's*-a resort in these mythical mountains-were more restorative than those found at Lourdes and moreover, that luminaries of every artistic stripe gathered nightly to engage in profound colloquy. I would eventually discover that these 'waters' tasted suspiciously like they were drawn from the river Manishevitz and that conversations were less likely to be about James Joyce than Joyce Brothers.

My arrival at *Brown's*, after a hair-raising five hour drive from Boston-was not reassuring. I'd hoped that this stately pleasure dome, this Semitic Versailles, would be my Eden for the next three days. As I walked into the lobby, however, instead of the tranquillity I expected, I heard conversations being carried on with a vigor that evoked the atmosphere in a active commodities market. Only a bunch of New Yorkers could make vacationing into a survival-of-the fittest proposition: I had to hustle to get a table for the rest of my group in the Dining Room, nail down decent chaise lounges at poolside and skirmish over a table in the nightclub to watch the evening's entertainment.

After my Herculean efforts, I was waiting in the lobby for the arrival of my friends, when I suddenly felt a gust of wind rippling the back of my shirt and turned around only to spot my genteel compatriots descending like jackals on the Dining Room. Apparently, they knew something I didn't.

Top priority at *Brown's*, it soon became apparent, was eating. Meals came in endless spirals, like hypnotism wheels, elephants enchainé or the benzine ring. And what food! Each meal was barely enough to keep three people alive: rolls, pickles, borscht and melon to start. Always melon. Then sirloin and flanken, chicken, veal and swordfish. For dessert, ice cream, figs and dates, cookies and little cakes which one of our group dubbed "falaitas" ("For-laters"), because they were easily stuffed into handbags and pockets should one feel the least bit peckish between engorgements.

The one ray of light in those dark hours-or so I believed-was the cocktail waitress who shot me a come-hither look that burned a hole right through my morning kipper. Upon closer inspection, however, I could see that she was making eyes at every man in the house, including one septuagenarian with liver spots the size of scatter rugs.



---

After the evening meal (once actually preceded by an evening buffet), we waddled down to the Jerry Lewis Pavilion for the evening's entertainment. Mr. Lewis, it appears, got his start at *Brown's* and Coatiques to maintain cordial relations. Enormous profiles of Jerry flank the nightclub stage, not to mention gracing every piece of literature put out by the hotel, including the menus and the daily schedule of line-dancing classes next to the pool.

Our group shared a table at the nightclub with a middle aged couple from Miami, both of whom wore "chai's" the size of prune danishes around their neck. We were able to establish a small bond when they told us that their son was involved in some kind of Christian cult and one of our party was able to give them the name of a good de-programmer.

Entertainment at Jerry's pavilion turned out to be a surrealistic affair, that forced the audience to make daunting psychic leaps in order to follow the action. From a husband and wife vocal duo performing highlights from "Fiddler on the Roof, we had to go directly to a pernicious, insult-spewing, drum-playing comedian, then to Blackie the harmonica artist, who served up the obligatory "Fiddler" medley, followed by excerpts from "The Marriage of Figaro," "Bye Bye Blackbird," and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic.

By this point, the rate of alcohol consumption at our table had escalated fiercely. Virgin Marys were bloodied and Shirley Temples replaced with Manhattans. The closing act only pushed us more deeply into disorientation:

She was dressed in skin-tight crimson, a flotilla of sequins engulfing her padded décolletage. Her name is lost to gin-spillage on my notes, but to me she will forever be known as the Israeli Charo. Rare indeed is the talent that can take a coherent set of lyrics and turn them into a series of non-sequiturs, while at the same time embellishing the songs with gestures which, while meant to be sexually provocative, were more like those of a mime simulating the passage of a dinghy through rough water while lip-synching-Mantovani's greatest hits.

We usually capped off the evening's entertainment with a visit either to the coffee shop for a midnight bowl of bran flakes, or a trip to the *Brown Derby* for disco and female impersonators till the wee hours.

Following the next morning's breakfast, we would go directly to the pool, in order to commence the day's stern tanning regimen. One of our party considers herself a world-class tanning expert and supervised the distribution and application

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of sunscreens. A less experienced tanner was assigned "turn-over" monitoring chores and, I must say, the greasing and rotating of bodies for even, thorough tanning was conducted with the efficiency of a well run open-pit boar roast.

Just one of our number — the only gentile, incidentally — was actually interested in going into the pool. We Jews, who have penetrated into the upper echelon of nearly every civilized activity, are more at home in the desert than the water (Is Mark Spitz *really* Jewish?) And while a story will occasionally surface of a Jewish person buying a boat of some kind, chances are it will be sunk into cement pilings, renamed *Captain Izzie's* and opened up as a floating deli.

In point of fact, we prefer our water in the form of steam: i.e., the shvitz. The potential for democratic bonding we find irresistible-mogul or humble writer, we're all equal in our pursuit of a good plumber, a good penuchle game and a painless proctologist.

For the next three days, we struggled to balance the effects of sun, gluttony and mind-numbing entertainment. Finally, our conversation reduced to arguments about what temperature a knish should properly be served at, we knew our departure had come none too soon. Filling the brown envelopes that Brown's makes available for tips, we scattered our largesse throughout the resort. Lest we get served underheated knishes on our next trip, we were especially generous with the Dining Room staff.

At our last lunch, we stuffed our pockets with 'falaitas' for the drive home and collected on the grand terrace for good-byes. Locked in tearful embrace and reeking of schmaltz, we took a blood oath that we would adhere to a rigorous training schedule in preparation for our next trip to the Catskills: absolutely no "Fiddler," no "Telethon" and certainly, no borscht.

— S.G. Provizer

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## *Imperative Escape*

**I**m sick of the clutter, I'm petrified of the crowds, I cannot tolerate any more noise. And I'm tired of dealing with people. I run...to nature...to peace...to separation...to solitude. My body leads me to a place, not at the end of the world, but right next door, the blatantly obvious. It is my attitude that alters my experiences.

Escaping the disconcerting noises of the city I can only hear the sound of the winds circling around the trees and through the grass. Staring to the sky I see the canopy of leaves that comforts me as any roof over my head sets my mind at rest. Carefully deliberated leaves create a kaleidoscope image • sky and leaves and wind and trees mixing until they are one. I lie there, my body flat against the soil, basking in the spirit of the wind, contemplating the creation and evolution of the trees, leaving behind the swarming nuisances of a claustrophobic life. On my back, I see nothing besides the immediate future, the next breath of fresh air, the next gust of wind, the next caw of a crow.

It is interesting that by staring up, my only sight is green, earthy, and I am completely immersed in thoughts of simple existence. Just shifting my head startles me- an abrupt change: enter automobiles, noisy shoes, loud chatters of too many people. So I continue to gaze upwards shivering with peace when the wind saunters through the yard. I have learned the powers of keeping my head still. I understand now why people see very different things when looking in the same direction.

— *Holly Ireland*

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## *Blah*

**T**here are many days when my mind says the above  
How about you?  
We're all kids after all.  
Aren't we allowed to say blah?  
because sometimes that makes more sense  
Than saying,  
I'm getting married next month  
or I'm getting a job working for the government  
or I feel old and not funny any more  
or....what ever else you can squeeze out of your lemon.  
I feel like an educated lemon  
but more like a prune  
that's waiting to be squeezed  
for a fundamental use  
but I don't want to be juiced!

— *Lisa Blanchard*



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## What I Want

I hate going to my first grade class. I never get to do what I want. All I like to do when I get there is play with the blocks and build battleships with Warren and David. I need all the blocks to build it because it is so big, and I need to make sure it doesn't fall down, but the other kids are always taking them away so they can build their own stupid things. They don't even build anything good! Anytime I say that I need to have all the blocks, the other kids get mad. Then Mrs. Fisher or that new teacher, Jessica makes me share. Then I can't build my battleship and I get really mad! They don't even care. They just make me go to circle.

Circle time is so boring. I hate just sitting there for so long talking about the weather. It is so dumb! Whenever I try and say anything Mrs. Fisher tells me I have to raise my hand to speak. I usually just want to tell her something quick. Sometimes when no one is doing things the way we're supposed to, I get mad! Whenever I try and tell the teacher or another kid that they're doing it wrong, they tell me to "use a soft voice." I don't want to use a soft voice. **They are doing it all wrong.** Like last week when Mrs. Fisher wasn't there, and Miss Conway was doing circle instead, she did the clouds part of weather before how warm it is outside. How stupid! Everyone knows it's the other way around. But nobody cared, so I tried to tell Miss Conway but she and Jessica told me to be quiet. They said it doesn't matter that people do things differently, but I think it does.

Usually after circle we do some work on spelling or writing at our desks. My desk is right next to David's. Warren used to sit next to me but he moved because his mom said I was making Warren do bad things. That still makes me really upset. Anyway, I sometimes like the work, except I do not like to do it in pencil. Mrs. Fisher says I have to, and even gave us some special pencils, but I hate them. I just want to break it in half, and then I'll get to use my magic marker instead, just like I want to.

When I don't like to do my work it is only because I want to draw something. I really like to draw. I think I'm pretty good at it too. Usually I like to draw dragons or Power Rangers. Someone is always telling me to "stop drawing and concentrate on your work, Max." I wish they would all stop saying that so I could finish what I am doing.

After that comes sharing time back in circle again. I have to sit there for so long while everyone shows the things they brought in. Most people bring in such dumb things. I don't even care about seeing them. I just want to play with Warren and David. They are my best friends. Marci is okay too, sometimes. I don't mind so



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much when my friends bring in stuff to share because their stuff is cool. Plus, they always call on me when it's question time. See, after we show our things to everyone, we get to answer three questions from the other kids. Usually no one calls on me, even when I do raise my hand. That makes me really mad.

Next we go to either art or music or gym. I don't usually like to stop what I'm doing and "line up and be quiet." Plus, nobody ever does what they are supposed to do. Half the time, the door holders don't even get behind me when I'm the line leader. They are so stupid. It makes me want to punch them. Why aren't they doing it right? Don't they know anything?

When we get back to the classroom we have snack. Sometimes I have a good snack, but when I don't I usually just throw it away. One day I really hated my snack and I told Miss Conway. She asked me if I wanted to have the pudding that the stupid nurse gives me my medicine in. Yuck! What a dumb idea anyway. I hate that stuff.

After snack comes my favorite part of the day, recess. I love going outside to play kickball. What I hate is when no one will let me be captain and pick my teams. I have to be on Warren and David's team. All the other kids stink so bad. Then they don't even follow all the rules, of course. Whenever I get mad and tell them to play right, someone like Geoffrey always gets upset and leaves the game. He is such a baby. Then my teacher, Jessica, comes running over to tell me not to play rough. How stupid. Kickball is rough. She doesn't know anything. Besides, she never goes to tell the other kids to play nice. Only me. I hate that. But my Mom and Dad and Mrs. Fisher say that I have to listen to her too! They say she is there to help me when I get mad. They don't want me to hurt anybody anymore, especially not like when I hit Mrs. Fisher with the yardstick. I don't mean to do anything bad, but sometimes when no one is listening to me, I don't know what to do.

I hate to go inside from recess. One day Miss Conway called "five minutes till we go in." Then, like one second later we had to go. I did not even get my last ups. By the time I told Jessica about it, all the other kids had lined up and I couldn't anyway. That made me really want to punch someone. I wanted my ups! By the time I usually get to line all the other kids are waiting for me. Then I feel really dumb because the teacher is making a big deal about me getting into line.

She usually whines, "we're waiting for you, Max." Sometimes kids from the other classes call me names and stuff, but when I push them so they will stop, I get in trouble.

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When we get inside I have to sit at the horseshoe table while the other kids get to go and read. One time I was so mad about that, I took the pencil that was on the table and drew all over it. Then I threw some books on the floor. Mrs. Fisher and Jessica got really mad and made me clean up everything. After I finished, they told me to get a book and do quiet reading like the rest of the class. By that time I did not feel like reading anymore. When I told Jessica, she tried to make me talk about what happened. She always does that. Sometimes I just want to forget it ever happened.

Right after Jessica started coming into my classroom I started taking medicine every day. My Mom and Dad say it is to help me make it through the day, but I don't see why. I can take care of myself. Except lately I feel so tired all the time, even when it's not time to go to sleep. Sometimes I am even tired on Saturdays when I play soccer. Soccer is my favorite thing to do in the whole world and I hate to be tired during it. It makes me so mad.

Just this week I had to start going up to the nurse at lunch time to get more medicine. I can't believe I have to take the stupid stuff two times a day. I hate going up there when the rest of the class gets ready for lunch. Even though I like the flavor pudding they put the pill in, I can still taste it. It is so gross, and it makes me so full that when I go back down to lunch, I don't want to eat anything. Today I did not want to go, but when I told that to Jessica and Miss Conway, they did not even listen. I was so upset that I cried and hid behind the blocks and everything. But they still made me go. I hate them sometimes.

I think that I would like first grade more if everyone would just leave me alone and let me do what I want. Sometimes I just want to do different things than everyone else. Plus, maybe if the other kids would follow all the rules and do what they are supposed to, then I would not get so mad. I want to make it easier for everyone but it is really hard!

— *Jennifer L. Chartor*

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**I** am woman

My composed appearance is deceiving  
as the sea is on a calm, clear day.

The truth is I am sad, angry  
as the sea when wind is strong, waves high.

THEY abandoned me at the sea in a small boat.

I would not conform, I was left alone.

A virgin until the rape.

I was told that consummation was my decision  
not HIS.

Daddy asked to penetrate, I told HIM no!

HE persisted and I returned to my boat, alone.

BROTHERS graduate, not I.

THEY keep me in that boat so that THEY can control the tide.

Pain swept through the arteries of my heart, leaving scars,  
memories, despair, hopeless at the sea, alone.

Drugs eased the pain and helped me escape, be free.

I thought I was free, THEY told me so.

Another lie, I suppose to gain more control.

I cannot walk on the street alone or work at will  
you see, I bear the responsibilities of children  
and remain 'seen and not heard.'

THEY like me high as the waves during a storm  
to keep me under control, not able to create a reversal storm.

I stopped getting high and jumped from the boat.

A great light appeared and for one moment I believed in myself.

I am a woman.

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My life is not up to THEM.  
The pain persisted yet the light gave strength,  
I persisted and was able to control the sea.  
I walked on the water as Jesus did.  
Smelling salt, feeling glass, I continued my walk.  
When I fell, I got up and made it to the sea's edge.  
The warm sand from the gazing sun healed my wounds,  
but the pain still remained, the scars still there  
I persisted. I am a woman.  
Guilt, shame, victimization, and fear  
there for the taking when I feel too good.  
Hanging on to the familiar, often feels safe  
after venturing from the deep sea onto life's shore.  
Short moments of peace, self acceptance I adhere  
for the pain is still strong, HE is still there.  
I hear but no longer listen to HIM, old voices, lies,  
telling me, 'you won't make it.'  
I return in a peaceful and firm voice, 'I will make it, persist.'  
I am a WOMAN.  
— *Andrea Tower*



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## *The Red Maple*

**T**he Red Maple droops then twists in the wind.  
I know I would confide in the privacy of its boughs  
If the bark could absorb my secrets.  
I listen to the brushing of the leaves;  
A whisper only I can hear responds to the aching of my heart.  
A part of me sags with the heavy branches of the Red Maple.

The wind blows my hair into kisses around my neck.  
I felt your lips there once before  
And close my eyes to feel them now.  
My heart beats into the drizzling night,  
As the rhythm of the drops caresses my cheeks  
and patters on the leaves of the kind Red Maple.  
— *Christine E. Nowicki*

**R**ivers run  
and stallions bleed  
the turmoil of the range

cactus burns  
and hot sands reel  
its lizards of the shade

how happy were the days  
of basking in love  
where troubles set  
set like the ageless sun

— *msg*

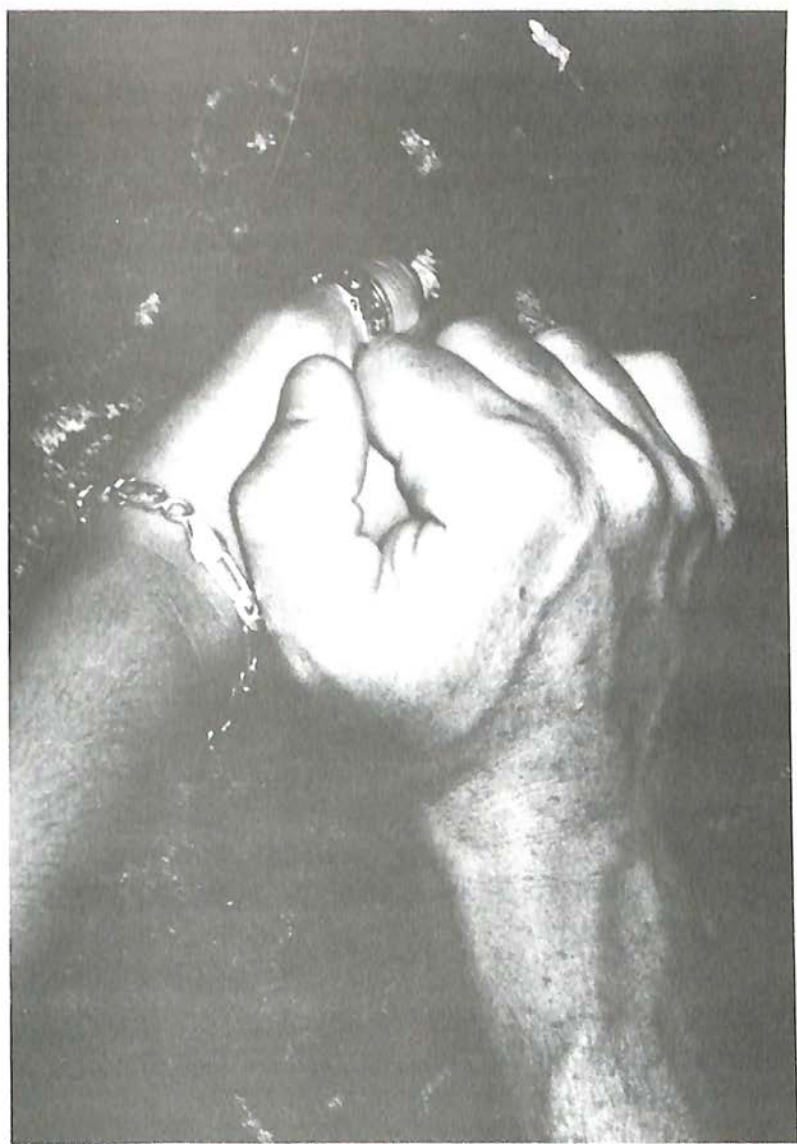


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## *The Soft Citrus Sun*

**T**he light from the sky today, the soft citrus sun.  
I was frozen, for a fraction, of a feeling, in a painting.  
I wiggled my painted toe deep into my shoe, and wrestled with  
the notion of open toed sandals.  
The light from the sky today, soft citrus sun.  
It pierced my hair, let me pretend I have perfect skin.  
Today my fish was belly up, I threw up, flushed him down.  
I had it captured for a quarter, my pink plastic ring from the  
candy machine.  
I welcomed the sun with my Indian dance,  
hair hanging down,  
open mouth, knowing,  
wrists flicking madly.  
The soft citrus sun shone on me today.

— *Jessica Midwood*



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## *Who are you*

**W**ho are you

I ask myself as I wipe the fleshy clots of blood  
from your chin and  
quivering lips.

Your lips  
that have known  
kisses  
and pronounced eloquent words  
are trying to say something  
but it is lost.

Your eyes  
the color of Mediterranean waters  
that your daughter tells me have seen Africa  
are wide open  
with the unconcealed fear of one  
who is falling into nothingness.  
If you were not choking  
you would scream.

I pull your exhausted body close  
to me and whisper  
to you  
"It's almost over Sally."  
Your shaking crawls inside  
my body as I hold you,  
not such a stranger now.

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When your fingers,  
    which have probably picked wild flowers  
    transformed ivory keys into melody  
    braided your daughters hair before bedtime  
    sculpted clay into form  
    touched the cheekbones of someone you deeply loved  
finally loosen their grip on my shirt  
    and your chest rises and falls for the last time  
    and your lungs empty out onto my neck  
    and the tiny ventricles of your heart offer one last surge of blood  
    and your bladder loosens  
    and your last thought goes unanswered  
    or simply slips away...

I lay your body back down on the bed  
and open the window  
    thinking  
    that all that is you has just become history  
    hoping  
    that it wasn't too painful  
    wondering  
    who will be with me  
    when I die...

— *Erik Rosengren*

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## Time Capsule

**I**t has been exactly twelve days since my husband died. He drowned. A simple, non-violent way to die, you might imagine. Certainly much less violent than death by a shooting or stabbing, things we used to read about in the *Globe* and watch on the ten o'clock news. We would learn about these violent deaths and 'tsk' to each other and talk about moving to the suburbs. We never did. We knew we were safe. As long as we had each other, we knew we would always be safe. Michael and I had a very nice life together. We were just as happy as other couples we knew. All our friends were just like us: Newly married, twenty something, ambitious. We often sent E-mail to each other during the day and met after work for drinks. The men talked about sports and the women did too. Michael and I were always the first to leave. Feeling tipsy from beer, we would say our goodbyes and walk home to our tiny one-bed on Marlborough to make love and watch the ten o'clock news.

Some of our friends asked us to go in with them for a summer rental in Edgartown. It was pricey and the ferry commute would be a bother, but we decided to splurge. Michael and I each had three weeks of vacation saved up at work and decided to spend most of our time at the cottage mid weeks, when we would have the place to ourselves. We went to visit his brother on Long Island for the 4th of July, skipping the three-day bash our housemates had planned. Instead, we looked forward to a few days of solitude the following week.

Michael drowned the second day we were there.

As I dig in my mother's flower garden, I can feel the hot sun beating on my back. I'm digging because I don't think I can lay in bed and cry any more today. Right now I feel as if I might be okay. My father doesn't agree with me. He's scared that I might try to kill myself, like the time I threatened to when I was sixteen and he took the car away. He went back to work today, for the first time in almost two weeks. I think he's run out of things to say to me. My mother, having been up with me all night, is napping. My sister, home from college for the summer, is off with her boyfriend somewhere. His name is Michael. Pain shoots through me. Remembering his name and how I used to whisper it to gently wake him, I'm suddenly not okay. Relatives stop by, as they have been doing all week, and I refuse to go indoors to greet them. They leave me to myself. I'm digging up weeds in my mother's flower garden and that's all I can deal with right now.

I'm still on vacation. I had three weeks saved up, remember, and so far I've only used up two. I hadn't planned on using all my time up at once, but hey, as my sister



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sometimes used to say, shit happens. I spoke to my boss a few days after this shit happened, and very calmly told him I did not know when he could expect me back at work. 'Entirely understandable,' he said, 'under the circumstances.' And then he told me to Be Well. I hung up on him.

I dig. The fresh dirt I uncover with my garden shovel reminds me of Michael's grave. I threw a red rose on his casket right before they began to scoop dirt, exactly like this dirt, on top of it. Michael used to bring me red roses from Winston's once a week. An extravagance, but worth it, he once told me. I tell myself that I will try not to think too much. My garden shovel scrapes against something and I remember a shovel scraping against a coffin in the ground. I get up, go inside, lay down and cry.

After the funeral, Michael's parents seemed dazed. Michael was their only child. They had had a daughter who died a few months before Michael was born. She drowned. In a neighbor's pool. When she was three years old. Michael was especially precious to them, therefore, and although I knew it to be ridiculous, I imagined they might secretly blame me for Michael's death, the way they most certainly blamed that long-ago neighbor who mistakenly left the gate to his backyard pool open.

Although Michael's parents asked me to stay with them for awhile, I thought I saw a look in his mother's haunted eyes, a look that said 'go away, you have killed our son.' So, while my family drove the whole way, I immediately caught a flight back to Buffalo, to my girlhood home, where I had lived my whole life before leaving for BU at 18. On the plane ride home I got drunk and upset and then I got unconscious. No one wanted to sit near me, and I had several rows at the back of the plane all to myself. A stewardess had to shake me awake once we landed. I hadn't been home at all since our wedding and it was here that I sank into the deepest depression I had ever known.

Later I go back to dig some more. My mother has awakened from her nap and offers me lunch, which I refuse. She sighs and starts to speak, just as I flee outdoors to the garden. We both know that as I dig, I am killing flowers as well as weeds. If my mother does care, she hasn't said so.

I dig. Once again, my shovel scrapes against something and I hold my breath for a moment until the sudden dizziness passes. I see the reason for the scraping: A jar, buried deep in the dirt. I pull it free and examine it. The jar had perhaps once held mayonnaise, but there is no label on it now. The writing on the jar's lid, due to rust, is unintelligible. Although the jar is crusted with dirt, I can see that there is

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something inside. Paper. With writing on it. I get up to rinse it with the garden hose my mother has left coiled up on the ground, looking like a smooth green snake basking in the sun.

Later in the day, when the sun is not so hot, a friend from way back, high school, calls me. Michelle never left Buffalo except to attend college in Ohio. After her four-year stint away from home she returned and married a boy I met for the first time at her wedding. Michael and I had just begun going out and I brought him as my date. Michelle asks to meet me for dinner at a place we used to go, long ago, and I surprise myself by saying yes. On the way to meet her I stop at the store for cigarettes, which I haven't smoked since I was 19. The young clerk and I exchange money for Marlboros. Inhaling for the first time in nine years, I cough, choke and feel woozy. Then I get into my father's car and drive off to meet Michelle.

She looked quite concerned as I ordered a drink and puffed away on my smokes. She offered condolences from her parents; I had forgotten how fond of them I had been back in high school. After exchanging a few syllables with her I sort of retreated into my own world on one side of that plastic checked tablecloth. I wasn't much of a dinner partner, I'll admit that much. I was not really interested in Michelle's husband's new boss and what an ass he was. After picking at a few of my fries, I left. Sitting in the car, I thought about how Michael sometimes looked at me from across the dinner table, smiling, and said my name. I remembered the time we made love on the table in our tiny kitchen, spilling pasta and smashing a wine glass on the floor. I put my head down on the steering wheel. I stayed there like that quite awhile.

The jar has been sitting on the back porch, untouched, since I rinsed it off this afternoon. Now it is dark. I pick the jar up and examine it closely. The lid twists off with some difficulty. Sprawled out on the still sun-warmed blacktop of my parent's driveway, I feel like a child, playing jacks perhaps. My white shorts are probably getting filthy, but like a child, I do not care.

The light above the back door illuminated the small pile of lost treasures spilled out before me. A hair ribbon. A rope bracelet. A Star Wars Princess Leia trading card. A small vial containing shells and sand. A page torn from a Nancy Drew mystery. A ceramic figurine of a cat. A two dollar bill. And letters. Nothing at all valuable is lying here on the driveway. This pile would perhaps be valuable only to a young girl still innocent and full of dreams.

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I buried the time capsule the summer of my eleventh year. That was when I wore my long hair in braids with ribbons and pretended I was Heidi. I longed to walk barefoot on a beach, any beach, and feed the seagulls. I watched meaningless PG movies and listened to Top-40 songs on my JC Penney clock radio. Back then I could eat potato chips for lunch and feel good about it. I had fully expected that my descendants would someday come across this jar filled with letters and trinkets and be able to peek into my life. They may well have, had I not dug so deeply into my mother's flower garden.

As the darkness seeps even further into my neighborhood, I find the porch light too dim to read by. I rise and clutch the jar, which I have filled with items once again, to my breasts. In the house, I climb two flights of steps to my old bedroom, where I sit on my old bed and turn on the very same lamp I turned on when I was eleven years old and wished to read in bed.

The letters tell me about myself, things I had dismissed and forgotten. How important this information used to be! Each letter had been written with love and care, meant to be saved for posterity. I wrote about my friends, boys I liked, and songs I knew all the lyrics to. Back then I must have thought my life would stay the same forever. Seventh grade was the whole world to me.

Once again, I cry. This time it's not for Michael or the life we could have had together. I am mourning the loss of the child I used to be. In one hand I hold a tear-streaked piece of notebook paper filled with the big, loopy cursive letters I used to write with. I have not spoken to some of the girls I name as my best friends in a dozen years. In one letter I proclaim my love for a boy named Chuck, adding 'I don't think he likes me, though.' He didn't. I remember the mocking and taunting by other boys when the news of my undying affection slipped out from a sworn-to-secrecy girlfriend's lips. How can young boys be so cruel? I remember the pain I felt over that boy and how I wept over him. The tears I shed back then were just as real and important as the ones I cry for Michael right now.

It is very late and the house is quiet. I come to a sudden conclusion and rise from my small bed. Pulling on my old sneakers, I creep outside. It is cool. Crouched over the hole I dug in my mother's flower garden, I hold the time capsule between my knees. I then twist off my engagement and wedding rings; they are quite loose. I haven't been eating much. I drop the rings into the jar and rebury it. I rise and feel my legs almost give out. Jerkily, I return inside and go to bed. It is very late.

— Jennifer Wutz



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*The Beauty Myth: Sex  
Alone*

**S**itting  
Only the two of us  
Friends as always  
Sitting

Watching  
A movie that we love  
The snow outside  
Watching

Suddenly  
He engulfed me  
Totally smothering me  
Suddenly

Instantly  
It was all over  
He was gone  
Instantly

Alone  
I was there  
Crying for help  
Alone

— *Molly Pelley*

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## *Me*

*I am a young, ordinary, Chinese woman with an extraordinary life. In the last two issues of Commonthought, I wrote about my Major Depression and suicide attempts. I wrote this poem for myself two weeks after my second anniversary.*

**I** was once a lonely, insecure girl trying hard to please everyone.

Everyone, except me.

I sacrificed my needs for my family.

My family, except me.

I learned to play the roles of a daughter, sister, parent, teacher, and friend perfectly.

The roles, except me.

I excel academically for my parents to repay the sacrifices they made for us.

My parents, except me.

I attempted suicide to end the unbearable, emotional suffering, and no one in my family could fully understand my destructive act.

No one, except me.

I got myself into this fucking mess, and no one can help me.

No one, except me.

I met a guidance angel at the psychiatric unit, and she told and showed me that I am special.

Special, that's me.

I picked up the pieces of my shattered life, put them back together and became a new person.

New person, that's me.



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I am a precious miracle to my psychiatrist because my suicide attempts left me with sixty stitches on my left wrist, half of my blood supply gone, and my system overdosed with Tylenol. Yet, I am still living today with no internal injuries.

Miracle, that's me.

I went back to school, graduated with honor, and became a teacher.

Teacher, that's me.

I am a much confident, outspoken, and happier person today.

Yes, that's me.

I love and believe in King-Kwan.

King-Kwan, that's me.

**I don't want to be anybody.**

***Anybody, except me.***

— *King Kwan Cheng*

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## *Charades*

**W**ho am I?

Can you piece the puzzle together  
With the hurried but graceful steps  
Of my ballet  
Reading the clues of my emotion  
The smile, the laughter, and dreamy eyes  
A painted countenance  
Can you find the answer there?

Come now, try to guess  
Before the act ends  
Before the curtain falls  
Before the costumes and scenery change

Look at me  
See my face  
Are these eyes the keyholes of my soul?  
Allowing you to peek at my heart  
Or do they merely glow from the stage lights  
That blind you and hide  
My stare that watches  
What you pretend to be

— *Jessie Olson*



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## *A Blessing on these Rites of Passage*

**I** call upon you,  
Mother Sister Goddess Self  
attend my birth  
and give me breath  
that I might shriek and flail at this imponderable state  
called life  
...and bless you for it

I call upon you,  
Mother Sister Goddess Self  
To bless my blood at its first showing  
the affirmation of my woman self  
prophetic  
scarlet  
issuing from sacred space  
  
...now, ...call me woman  
and hear my fear,  
...and bless this day

I call upon you  
Mother Sister Lover Self  
attend my first orgasmic cry  
and bless me  
...with the gift of loving  
as you bless this day.

---

I call upon you ...Mother  
For now I am Mother,  
...hear my birth cries  
as I give life  
attend my agony of creation  
...rejoice with me  
...and bless this day

I call upon you...  
to wait with me,  
My Sister Goddess Mother Self.  
The blood has stopped;  
my body fights the change  
and welcomes it  
the cycle nears renewal  
I stand with you, and bless this day

I call upon you Mother Sister Goddess Self  
to bless this day  
...and welcome me.

— *Judith Campbell*



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## *Oh daddy dear*

*d*on't look at me that way  
Did your little girl let you down again?  
What's wrong,  
have I not done enough to pay my dues?  
Whoever said this charade was going to last?  
I'm the one in charge now -  
You listen  
There will be no one in my bed tonight,  
to pretend to sleep,  
to let you work your ways.  
How could you think this would go on?  
Did you think I was that stupid?  
Here's where I get off your ride  
and invent my own.

— *Cassandra Rochon*

## *I Am*

*I* am playing hide and go seek with my ghost  
Kissing feet on top of an ice cream cone disease  
I have the ice cream cone disease licking manipulation and  
riding it off as insecurity on his part  
I have the ice cream cone disease waffles and cream alike  
Kissing and licking the flesh of my wounds and pain  
Kissing and licking  
Even through the stained glass windows of the convent...  
I have the ice cream cone disease  
Licking off the like that is left these fragile bones.  
I am a dancing clown trying to camouflage my very existence.  
Kissing and licking the last pieces of my flesh till I am  
I am.

— *Inbal Kedem*

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## *Unsafe*

**Y**ou're a bitch

You make yourself  
sound foolish

You degrade your own  
subject.

Ruin.

Wreck.

Crush.

You destroy its beauty.

You create chaos and misunderstanding.

Stop pushing your opinions.

You are closed. How will I be open.

Tell me the true facts. Teach me  
that I can make decisions.

You are as desirable as vomit.

The more you speak  
the more my understanding deteriorates.

All I see is you  
sitting there moving your arms and head  
spewing your sick language.

Thanx.

— *Liz Elliott*

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## *Pretender*

*f*all back into your  
coffin  
lined with mockery  
words a thousand times swallowed  
believing that content  
and empty are not one  
and the same

The maggots can't find  
you there  
Dead they mistake you  
for the living

— *Rebecca Squiers*





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## *Creating Family*

**W**e got married on October 22, 1994. It was just your ordinary, modern wedding. We paid for everything ourselves. The setting was a country inn up in the White Mountains. The minister obliged us by not saying 'God' in any way, shape, or form. Just an average wedding ... except that we are two women.

When we began our journey towards this day, we decided that because our union did not fall under so called "heterosexual privilege", we did not have to conform to those ideas inherent in the "traditional" wedding. We were PSYCHED! Having witnessed many weddings in which wars were begun over guest lists, we were relieved. We did not "have" to invite our fourth cousins on our mothers' sides whom we hadn't seen in twenty years. We didn't have to lose control of the way we wanted the wedding to be. There were no parents of the bride making decisions such as tacky silk flower centerpieces as opposed to real ones.

Although there were periods of pure bliss in this knowledge, for example, we never did have the "f—k you, ring-throwing fight" that a friend warned us about, there were some things related to "straight" weddings we missed ... the extra support mostly. The (false) expectation that someone would be able to step in and make decisions when all of our brain cells were burned out. Someone to remember the details like telling the deejays there would be no playing "Celebration" or other such atrocities at the party. Someone just to hold our hands and tell us that our anxiety was okay. That we were okay. In most straight ceremonies, it is expected that "family" will be behind you. A wedding is a public celebration of the union of two people by their families of origin. It was not this way for us.

The whole issue of being public and "out there" was/is, in and of itself, a very difficult one. We had already "come out" to our families of origin, but once we announced our plan to get "married," certain family members went screaming back into the closet. "It isn't legal, so why do it?" The gay community isn't even sure about our unions; the biggest gay newspaper in Boston prints obituaries but not "wedding" announcements. It is somehow inconceivable that we, as two women, would want, and need, blessings from those in our lives, unconnected to any financial or legal status. Thus began the process of re-defining, and creating, family who would be with us in this venture.

As we discussed a guest list, we came to realize that family is not necessarily defined as those related by blood alone. We have come to define it as those who are supportive, nurturing, and challenging to us. They, by definition, are not only supportive of us as a couple, but as individuals too. All of us are invested in the growth of our community, our family, as a tightly networked, multi-racial, many-

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talented group of supportive and nurturing "kin." This may seem to be a very basic and obvious definition of family, but, for us, it was not. We both come from families in which one was expected to accept individuals into the family because of heritage or "blood," although that is differently defined by many people. There was no questioning and/or rejecting of that "fact" of 'blood.' It did not matter to the designated family-makers if those individuals were not loving, supportive, or healthy - it was just "family."

Our final guest list was comprised of those we love and who love us. This love is mutual and unconditional. Some were old friends and others who are relatively new to our circle. They reflect our many sides and moods. We work too hard on this relationship to have negativity at our rituals. They all came together for one purpose: to give support and blessings to this union. It was intimate and meaningful; everyone cried. There were a few who couldn't be there and many others still who we chose not to invite. In short, only those who give to us and wish us well were invited. We did what weddings are supposed to do: create a family more meaningful than either of the ones we were born into. We had some biological family members at the wedding, one sister apiece and a cousin. They were extraordinary. They did supportive hand-holding, dress-zipping, and last-minute decision-making things on behalf of those of us who are "matrimonially challenged." As a result of all this support, we found that all those issues which tend to crop up, you know, like your partner's flaws which are magnified and strung with bright lights, were not so outrageous.

In our ceremony we found ways to say something about being an interracial couple, about the meaning of what to wear (we wore white for tradition and deep, burgundy red for passion). In our planning we even discussed on which hand to wear our rings; we opted to look married to the general public, that is, rings on the left hand. Most importantly, we worried about THE KISS! Public displays of affection are not generally an acceptable mode in this relationship due to fears of homophobia. We were so anxious about this that the minister had to remind us to kiss at the end of the ceremony!

So, we got married on October 22, 1994. The food was great, the cake beautiful, the music so-so (there's always something), the brides gorgeous and the company fabulous. We created a space to support who we are and to allow connections to grow between the parts of our lives which enable us to be more whole. It was on this night that we not only married each other, but we also married a community, and created a family!

— *Katherine A. Barone and Teresa M. Warren*

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## *After Drought*

*for Patricia Rose*

**I** hear the water calling  
as I wash my child's hands  
as I shower or wash greasy plates

I hear the water calling  
as I slog through sodden leaves  
on a drizzly Monday morning

The water is dark and delicious  
it is woman-wet  
and fathomless

The water is thick as blood  
I feel its caress  
lapping, lapping, lapping

I hear the water calling  
and I want to answer  
not to swim  
not to drown

but to let myself sink  
down from the sun-warmed surface  
through the bone cold depths  
into the dreaming mud

— *Cheryl Smith Benton*



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## *Sink Psychology*

**A**s I slowly survey the kitchen I ask myself, "Why doesn't it ever seem to end?" Tonight, not only did I exceed my two pot per meal preparation limit by one pot (if a meal requires more than two pots, I don't cook it), but I deviated from my "engraved in granite" rule of cleaning up the kitchen immediately after dinner. Warily, I begin to fill the dishpan with hot water and take out a plate splattered with the remnants of dinner which Vanessa claimed "will make my tummy hurt!" The aroma in the air confirms spaghetti as the main feature of the evening. Red rivulets encrusted on the side of an aluminum pot and twisted strands of cold pasta welded together inside a glass serving dish offer additional evidence of tonight's meal. Reluctantly, I take a deep breath and forge a plan of attack:

- Step 1. Clear off the table.
- Step 2. Put away the leftovers.
- Step 3. Determine if the dishes in dishwasher are clean and whether or not it would be easier to empty the dishwasher or wash the dishes.
- Step 4. Wash the dishes.
- Step 5. Wipe off the counters and stove.
- Step 6. Sweep the floor.
- Step 7. Prepare to repeat steps 1-6, twenty-four hours later...

For me, cleaning the kitchen is one of those tasks that seems much worse when I am contemplating it than when I am actually in the process of doing it. When I surrender myself to this never-ending chore and place myself in front of the sink, my hands immediately get to work and the opportunity for exploring my thoughts becomes as rich as the suds in the dishpan.

Standing in front of the sink, I am able to think about the events of the day and weigh the importance of what has been done, what I am doing at the present and what still needs to be done.

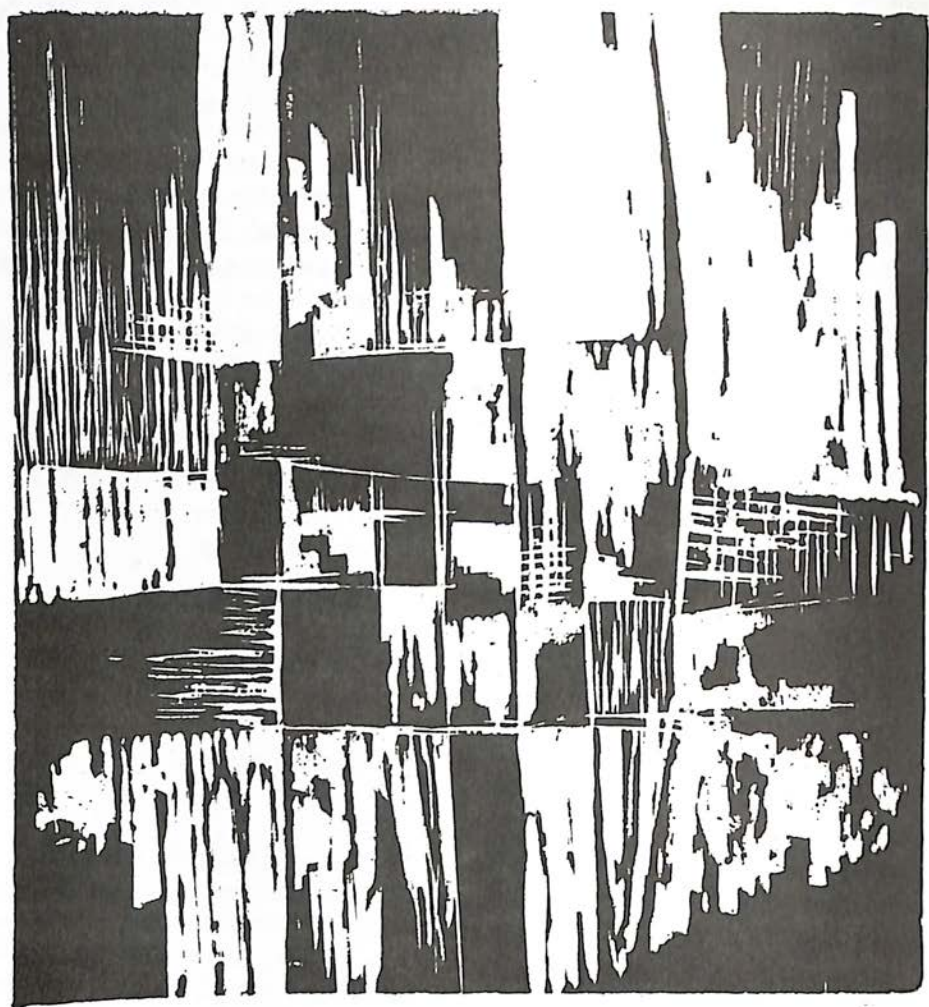


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While walking the few steps from the sink to the stove and back, I can rejoice over the fact that I handled the situation with Gregory in a positive and enriching way-this time. As my fingers fish around for elusive utensils in the dishpan, my mind ponders the decisions that I need to make concerning school next year. My time at the sink, like the surrounding walls decorated with art and memos, is filled with the remembrances and commentaries of my life-triumphs, regrets, happiness, woes and... plans, plans, plans.

The area in front of the kitchen sink is the only place in the entire house where I do not have to fight for space. When I am standing at the sink, family members often try to wrestle for my attention but they never attempt to wrestle for my place. As I pour out the dirty dishwater and watch it disappear down the drain it signals the completion of this dreaded task. Yet, seldom do I feel completely drained-physically, perhaps, but mentally, no. Cleaning the kitchen provides me with the opportunity to reflect on and organize some of the clutter that has accumulated in my mind. Even though the chore that places me in front of the sink never seems appealing, the rewards I reap are not only clean dishes, but a chance to get some mental exercise—my daily dose of therapy.

— *Kris Harris*



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## *Fury*

*f*ury like i'm a clear pond  
so easily rippled  
clearly muddied  
clearly poisoned  
my anger  
my hatred  
at people's idiocy  
at people's stinking perfume  
at their smell  
at hairstyles  
at fucking makeup  
at chicks  
who live for men  
and at men  
who live for chicks  
and at the world  
for not fitting me  
and at god  
for giving me the longing  
for giving me the hope  
the brain  
the strength  
to hate  
for the transience of things  
yes i'm sad  
at myself  
for loving, loving so fucking much.

— *Kate Mulrooney*

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## Wonder Woman

**S**taring out my window, to a dark scene of rain;  
singing along with someone else's sorrow and pain.  
That is the only way I can release my own.  
The tears that I finally allow myself to shed, feel as if  
they are coming from a place that has not been touched  
in a long time.  
A place that I have kept locked and hidden,  
even from myself.

I wonder what she is feeling, does she miss my touch  
as much as I miss hers?  
Does she miss my smile as much as I miss hers?  
Does she miss my friendship as much as I miss hers?  
The passion has turned to pain in a matter of an instant.  
Trying not to let it over come my every thought,  
step, and breath.  
Where did the flame of love go?  
My rage comes from pain, emptiness,  
disbelief, and sadness.

— *Kim Keenan*

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## *The Eagle Inside*

**W**hy do I give in so easily?  
Why do I forgive a part of me away to people who don't deserve me?  
But am I the source of my own punishment, displeasure?!

I bend for people who won't bend for me  
As someone's tear falls I am there to catch it.  
And I let my tears make waterfalls of helplessness, that overflows to the edge.  
While I sit in my own abyss of self-pity thoughts of death then life race  
    through my lost mind

My mind is a race of thoughts that never wants to end  
Death, pain, nails tearing apart my soul  
It is the wretched eagle inside me, that is waiting to come alive  
When it does then I am in my own state of mind  
When everyone around me is only an illusion in the sparkle of my eye  
Then as I reach for a rose on the eagle's back I fall into an awakesness  
Thinking I am awake I sit up, then realizing that I am on the eagle's back,  
    off to someone's other lost mind

— *Sara Brody*



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*The Gods no longer shine upon my path.*

**A**long the cold black-sand beach  
The crabs run playfully while  
The stars hide so I cannot count them.  
The darkness blinds me,  
Forever deserted in this infinite blackness.  
As I try to escape, I trip,  
For the stones have eyes now.  
Their new found power overwhelms my feeble stride  
“It’s pay back time” they seem to say,  
Fighting for their friends who were lost to the undying tide.

Along this forsaken journey I fall once more,  
The long cutting grass whispering my final plight  
The wailing wind hovering over my dying hope while  
The roaring of the waves grow louder and more dangerous.  
'Tis colder yet  
Your footprints are no longer perceptible  
As my feet turn to ice in the dawning sea

Dupes arise with their putrid song  
Gripping my inner being,  
Struggling to survive  
The clawing of each evil word.  
The darkness encompasses my soul  
Where the light is but a dim shade of blue.  
Where memories of you are captured yet  
The reality of it all— rejected.

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To you I cry.  
You who have abandoned me,  
Your fire was so bright that  
It's warmth touched the depths of my stained spirit.  
To you I cry,  
For such a small spark, with  
The purity that devoured my weakness  
While encouraging my hopes.

That spark is all I need,  
To cleanse this spirit,  
To thrush those stones from my path and  
Prevent those dupes from contaminating my soul.

To you I cry,  
That my journey be reenlightened  
So you may once again,  
Walk with me.  
Please,  
Walk with me.

— *Amanda Osborne*

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*R*emember when

Saturday afternoons lasted a lifetime?

building castles in the sandbox,

or riding bikes till the street lights came on.

The smell of the grill brought you home as you awaited dad's  
barbecue chicken, corn on the cob or mom's apple pie.

Backyard games of tug of war and hide & seek lasted until  
you were out of breath or you couldn't find your older brother  
who always hid in the same spot behind the shed in between the  
tool bench and lawnmower.

Remember when bedtime stories and a bowl of popcorn were all it took to make  
you happy

or road trips in the station wagon to Nana's lasted until all the songs were sung and  
the whole alphabet was found on hundreds of license plates

Monday morning was a lifetime away as you dressed for church and thought about  
soccer practice and left overs for dinner during the homily

If you were good, Dad would stop for donuts on the way home.

Now Monday is here and its time to think about tomorrow and the next day, and the  
day after that.

Because before you know it you'll blink your eyes and it will be over and you'll be  
writing papers, rushing to work, returning phone calls paying your bills, lighting  
another smoke, filling the gas tank

running from here to there

longing to press the snooze button

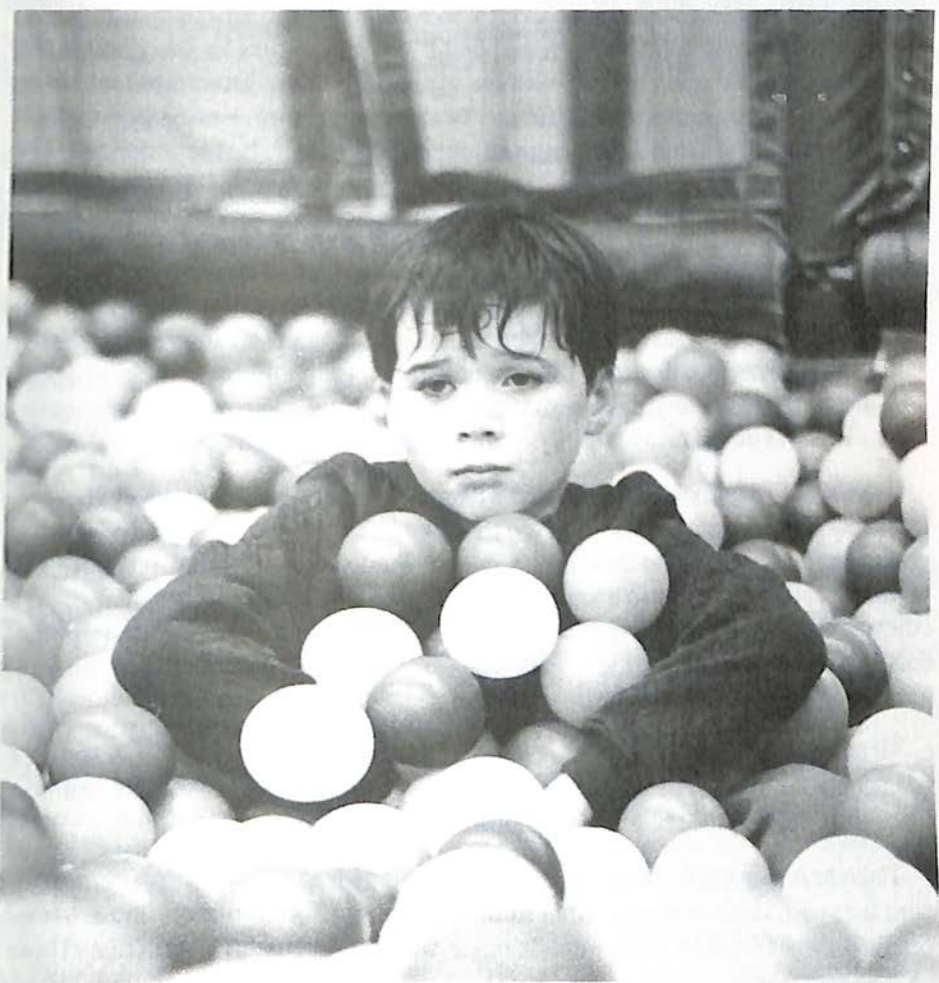
wishing you could smell the barbecue chicken on the grill, hoping for more games  
of hide & seek,

but endless Saturday afternoons are  
nowhere

in

sight.

— *Karen Peters*



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## *Chicken Bones, Snake Tails, and Lace Crochet*

**M**y Granny Paul had the innate, uncanny ability of knowing exactly what was going on at all times; Clara Lee Paul and I would be rocking, shelling peas on the porch at her house in Plant City, Florida...when Granny (with a capital "G") would stop as sudden and still as a bobcat in the wood, mosquitoes hovering quietly, watching..."Stay on the porch!" she would hiss as she grabbed a garden hoe from the porch rafters. Then she would leap to the ground below. Leap, mind you. You have to understand, Granny Paul was a taciturn, heavy-footed, earth-bound woman in the shape of a small, squat refrigerator, but several things could fire her up. One was snakes.

Let me explain something about snakes in Florida; they are abundant. And nasty when they come above ground looking for water during dry spells. Granny could hear or smell them, I don't know which, even before their searching, beady eyes and little, flicky tongues crested the soil. Hoe in hand, it was as if Granny knew the snake personally, "How de-do devil!" An intricate looping and backtracking dance with the snake always revealed the true predator; Granny Paul was a serious snake killer. This was one of many gifts my Granny Paul tried to pass down to me.

I descend from a long line of women with forceful personalities and the last capability of laying a mean "evil eye" on those that crossed them. The three generations have referred to these matriarchs as "Paul woman;" usually spoken with reverence and with more than a touch of warning implied. There were many, many other matriarchs before Granny Paul that went by other surnames, but the implication was clear in the phrasing; the "Paul women" had boundaries that were not to be overstepped.

Granny lived in Plant City, Florida, my birthplace. Or more accurately stated, I was born in the town where Granny lived. Granny Paul lived in Plant City for almost fifty years in the same wooden house.

Three huge oak tress, knurled and twisted with age and scarred from storms and hurricanes past, stood watching out in front of the house. She told me those trees were small when she first came from Dothan, Alabama to live in Plant City. Those oak trees had stories they could tell. Late at night, when the wind whistled, I would lay in Granny's bed (she always let me sleep with her) and hear them creak and moan in some ancient druid-song. The tin roof amplified the wind and rain, such that you felt the elements were inside the house. There was magic at Granny's house.



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Granny's house was wooden, with a wide porch on two sides. One side had tables filled with plants in clay pots. These were her "cuttings;" small sprouts snipped and planted, now busy, hungry plants. Various "settin' chairs" sat nearby to watch the sky and smell the yard while chores like shelling and sewing were done. Usually I just rocked and rambled on and on...Granny said "uh-huh" a lot.

I can't believe any two human beings' personalities on the outside could be more different than Granny's and mine. I'm not that different now than I was when I was a child; I'll try and animate a dried, split-pea if I think there's a possibility it can move. But, Granny Paul and I were kindred spirits on the inside.

I think she was amazed that anybody would find value in stories about "the olden days." Her life had been long and very hard. She was the eldest female child in her family; child-rearing and taking care of a household comes early for the eldest Southern female child. She was married by fourteen and raised six of her own children through the Depression, there was not much time to wonder if she was really meant for something else on this earth.

But I have always wanted to know about what it was like "back then," and who were my great-grandparents? Did she know my great-great-great-grandparents?.....

When we reached a high level of exasperation, we went into Granny's yard. She had exotic plants; they had no names recognized in any botanical book, because she just made them up. "That bulb with the spiky end dies down by winter." She gave me a "bulb with the spiky end" to take back home with me.

I could go on and on about Granny's yard...shrubs bore mystery "wild plums" that were made into a sour-sweet plum jelly every year. Not to mention the grapevines and fruit trees, the pods and palms, the bushes and fronds, the many blossoms in a head-spinning array of rainbow colors. Magic grew in Granny Paul's garden.

In the days of coal-run locomotive engines there had been a thriving ice-plant to service the trains that ran over the twelve railroad tracks near her house. By the time I was around, the only ice you could get there was the residue left on your cold Pepsi from the walk-in freezer where the man at the plant kept his sodas.

He was an old, thin man, surely he'd been there from the ice-plant days. I don't remember his name, but he wore an old train uniform even in the hazy summertime. In addition to Pepsi's and Nehi's, the old ice-plant man had moonpies, salted peanuts, and peanut-butter cheese crackers. Granny and I made arduous treks under parked

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train cars, avoiding the moving ones, over the twelve tracks to get me a Pepsi and a moonpie (Granny was partial to salted peanuts and a Tab). She said, "Now, don't you tell your mama we were a-doin this!" Like my mama wouldn't spy the white moonpie glaze on my mouth.

My mama could spot moonpie lips from two hundred paces. She knew that meant one thing...I had barely escaped death. When mama got mad, her wavy hair would stand straight out in a black halo. Her face, however, did not look like an angel when she started telling us, "I have every reason to be mad!" Mama said, "When I was little, my brothers ( my uncles Buddy, Gene, and Earl) and I would jump from train to train, while they were still moving! And your (she gave me sole right to Granny in situations like this) grandmother would whip us good! Now, she takes my baby (I was her sole property always) under dangerous, killer wheels without any regard to my feelings!"

Or something like that. I think she was a little miffed Granny could turn on her like that, not whipping my butt (Granny never spanked my heinny), worse yet, escorting me across the tracks. I think Granny allowed herself to be, just a little bit, a child around me. Now, that is a scary thought; Granny was the most sober woman I have ever met.

Granny raised her own chickens and so did her neighbor, Mrs. Corbett. Granny's yard ran the entire length of their land - separated by some Hibiscus-type shrubbery and the chicken wire of their huge coop. Mrs. Corbett and her daughter Ethyl had houses side by side with their yard out front, then the coop. Now, Mrs. Corbett was very important to Granny Paul. She was quite a bit older than Granny, more than a friend, she was kind of a mama substitute for Granny. So, Granny would do her best to help old Mrs. Corbett out if she needed help with anything.

I believe my mama was gone from the house visiting relatives this time, and Granny announced we were going over to Ethyl and Mrs. Corbett's yard. I thought this was great. I liked Ethyl, she was tall, rounded, and smelled of scented talcum powder. Mrs. Corbett was little and old, quiet and kind...well, old. Like I said, they raised chickens.

I was around four years old when I witnessed the "chicken-killing." Maybe Granny was the neighborhood chicken-killer and this was a community service she offered, I just don't know. But it was clear that quite a few chickens were going to the big chicken coop in the sky. Like I said, Granny would do her very best to help old Mrs. Corbett.

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Granny Paul looked very empowered in her position at the waist-high wooden block with a sharp ax in hand. She seemed LARGE, and very, very tall to me. But, I wasn't frightened, not one bit.

Even now, when I think about that scene, my body goes rigid, and my eyes grow round and unblinking.

I was a very curious little girl, with long dark hair way down my back. It must have been the fall, or winter (in Florida, one is much like the other), because I had long pants on my chubby little legs. And I wanted to see everything, up close, and in as much detail as possible. But, Ethyl said to stand back, not to get too close to Granny while she was working, or unspoken dangers would prevail.

"I swear I won't get too close!" said I.

All in one fluid motion, the designated chicken was snatched from the coop, swung around in an arc, and beheaded. Granny could defy gravity with a grace her solid body and her tiny shovel-like feet denied.

The atmosphere was intoxicating, very strange - no one where I lived in Jacksonville, Florida, did anything like this. The air was rich in smells and opulent in colors. Completely silent, even the crickets knew they better keep their legs shut...

Whoosh! Whack! Undead "dead" chickens flapped and ran pell-mell around the yard until they keeled over - and stopped.

"I won't get too close," said I.

I never got the impression that Mrs. Corbett and Ethyl didn't have the stomach to kill their own Sunday dinner chickens, but that maybe the chickens Granny dispatched were tastier than when someone else sent them to chickie heaven.

Most children might be traumatized by this grizzly vision of Granny, not me. Besides, there was no blood lust on Granny's stoic face; it was a necessary chore to be done.

It didn't seem like I was too close.

I guess I got too close.

The next moment was a complete shock - I remember silently screaming, but, I'll bet you could hear me for miles in Plant City.



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Chickens, like humans, sometimes experience a "release" at death...my next memory was in Ethyl's bathroom tub upstairs in her house with her washing my long, long hair and her saying, "Honey, I don't think we can save you!"

We heard a car come up in Granny's yard. Oh-oh.. mama was home. Even Granny was a little careful around my mama when the subject was me. Like I said, you don't cross a Paul woman.

I hope I haven't given anyone reading this the wrong impression of my sweet Granny Paul. She could crochet a pretty lace, embroider a detailed table scarf, and made some real nice quilts. Examples of her handiwork were everywhere in her house.

Granny tried to teach me how to crochet and embroider. I loved to watch her, but I simply hated any type of thread and needle activity. I would fumble and knot some atrocity, get loose threads in my hair, and end up with at least one red puncture wound. Fiery iodine in hand, Granny would look at me with a shocked, stern gaze, as if to say, "How can this be my little grandbaby!"

To this day, I would rather clean the oven before trying to thread a needle. If a button falls off a blouse, I hear funeral bells ringing for my shirt.

I still have some lace doilies and pillowcase trim made by my Granny.

My Granny Paul died a few years ago. I believe she decided it was her time to meet her savior.

Granny had some circulation, heart, and nerve problems that put her in the hospital near the holidays; and while she was in there, someone or ones, broke into an old lady's house near Granny's house and crushed her head. The old lady was in a coma, not expected to live when Granny got out of the hospital.

These old-lady bashers had broken into Granny's house, too, and took some relatively useless items. If I recall, they took Granddaddy's gun that was always mounted over the couch in the living room. That was the gun that Granddaddy "accidentally" shot himself with, while cleaning a loaded gun on the porch steps. The examiners in the case ruled it as an accidental death, and Granny kept the gun in a place that was probably more functional than honorary...on the hook over the couch. Maybe it was always kept there before Granddaddy died.

My mama and I were at the house when Granddaddy died in 1955. I was two months old, laying on Granny's bed. Even in this horrendous situation, Granny

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yelled to my mama, just a baby herself, "Don't come out here!" to stay away, she would take care of it. Paul women...

I'm sure Granny Paul was determined not to let some punks take over her territory, and planned to return home when she got out of the hospital. However, Uncle Buddy decided it was best, safer, for Granny to come live at his house in Lakeland, Florida. What followed was some tacky money and familial issues around her going to Buddy's. My sweet, ornery Granny's heart was broken. She was too old and too tired to fight with her own children.

So, Granny Paul just left Plant City. She went to live with my "sweet" Aunt Louise in Gainesville, Florida for her remaining time.

My cousin Theresa and I went to see Granny that March; we both knew it was the last time.

Granny knew too. During that March visit, Granny gave me the Olan-Mills baby picture of me at three months old she had always kept out in the living room at her house. She offered me some of her old (huge) dresses, but I've never been partial to polyester, so I took a blue poke-a-dot tie-belt that smelled like her.

I cannot imagine how hard it was for Granny to leave her house of nearly fifty years. She raised her six children there, found beauty and peace in her yard, washed her husband's blood up with her own hands. "Home" becomes a complex concept with a history like that.

I know when the house was sold, I was personally offended that anyone in our family could sell Granny's house. But, it was necessary, so, it was done.

I wonder if the flowers that were left in the yard still remember her...I know that one of the big oak trees died about the time she died, and had to be cut down. I wonder if that was the tree she sang to when she shelled the field peas.

Do those new people that live in Granny's house feel Granddaddy's presence there like I always did? Did his spirit leave when the gun was stolen? Or when Granny left?

Is my Granny Paul in heaven rocking, laughing at the devil with her crochet in hand, singing Amazing Grace real low while she listens to a Baptist preacher beg for money on the radio?

Uh-huh.

*Taylor Watts*



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**S**ouls in this world  
A contrast to conventionality  
Live through the misery  
That points them down towards destruction

Spirits on the surface  
Of my mind, staying still  
Wanton selves, I see no change  
Yet my craving stays alive and well

So in this body that I call my own  
I am feeble, yet not wary  
And with time, the world moves on  
Going by, I watch without ease

Souls of this earth  
And I am of one, a stone in the ground  
My inner body is my outer world  
Competing for nature's time

So now I am left  
Wandering the woods I have proclaimed  
My soul and my spirit  
Are untouched and unbroken

— *Pamela Steinkamp*

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## CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES

**Katherine A. Barone** is a psychologist /teacher who specializes in Trauma and in helping therapists and other helpers take care of themselves.

**Lisa Blanchard** is a Sophomore majoring in Human Services.

**Leslianne Boria** is a Senior majoring in Day Care Leadership. She plans to make her mark in the field of Child Advocacy.

**Stephanie Bouchard** is a second year student at Lesley and is majoring in Social Science. Writing has always been a way of exploring her multi-faceted personality. It is her pleasure to share her piece with *Commonthought* readers.

**Sarah Brody** is a Freshman Human Services major from Texas.

**Judith Campbell** is an Associate Professor of Art in the Undergraduate College at Lesley. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in Religious Studies and preparing for Unitarian Universalist Community Ministry. She is the author of two books on painting: *Basic Watercolor Painting* and *Watercolor Painting on the Trail*.

**Maria Casson** is a student in the Adult Bachelor's Degree Program.

**Jennifer Charter** is a student in the Adult Bachelor's Degree Program majoring in Human Development.

**King-Kwan K. Cheng** is a recent graduate and an alumni of Lesley College. She is currently working as a preschool teacher for children ages 3-5. She loves the challenge and reward of working with young children. This is her first poem.

**Naomi Just - Congalton** has taught "anything to do with Art" at Lesley for 14 years. An artist most comfortable working with large abstract pastels, she is currently renewing a relationship with paint: large, acrylic, colorful...and abstract.

**Liz Elliot** is a Sophomore Human Services major.

**Michael Galvin (msg)** works in the Registrar's Office and believes that the Highway is a garden, the traffic its seeds, flowering insurance forms.

**Melinda W. Green** is currently balancing adjunct faculty, program advisor, and graduate student responsibilities. She graduates from Lesley's Computers in Education M.Ed. program this spring. Her work has appeared in *Womanthought*, *Commonthought*, *Two-Ton Santa*, and *cultural debris*.

**Kris Harris** is a Senior Education major.

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**Beatrice Howard** is a Senior in the Adult Bachelor's Degree Program, majoring in Art and Writing.

**Holly Ireland** is a Senior majoring in Education.

**Christine Kavanagh** is a Sophomore majoring in Special Education.

**Inbal Kedem** is a Sophomore Human Services major, who is presently taking a semester off.

**Kim Keenan** is a Sophomore majoring in Human Services and the Vice President of G.S.B.A.

**Neysa Lameiras** was a member of the Creative Writing and Magazine Production class. She is presently living in New Hampshire.

**Tina Lepara** is a Junior majoring in Human Services.

**Janice Long** is a Sophomore majoring in Human Services, specializing in Arts Therapy.

**Jessica Midwood** is a Freshman majoring in Human Services.

**Kate Mulrooney** is a second year transfer student at Lesley majoring in Human Services. She is involved both in drama and writing.

**Christine E. Nowicki** is a Junior majoring in Early Childhood Education and Humanities.

**Jessie Olson** is a Sophomore pursuing a Humanities major; both writing and acting are her favorite things to do.

**Amanda Osborne** is a Freshman Education major. She comes from Montserrat and sings in the Unity Choir.

**Karen Peters** is a Sophomore Human Services major.

**Molly Pelley** is a Freshman majoring in Education. She is also a professional clown.

**Einat Perkal** is a first semester student in the Adult Bachelor's Degree Program.

**Anne Elezabeth Pluto** is an Associate Professor of English and Theatre in the Undergraduate College at Lesley. She has been the Faculty Advisor of *Commonthought* since 1986, and is the Artistic Director of the Oxford Street Players.

The peripatetic **Mr. S. G. Provizer** (IRO Class of '95) is pleased to proffer this parody for the perusal of the profligate masses.

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**Lucy Ranney** was a member of the Creative Writing and Magazine Production course. At present, she is living in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Donna Rempt** is a Graduate Student in the School of Education.

**Cassandra Rochon (AKA Girl Elvis)** is a Junior majoring in the Humanities.

**Erik Rosengren** is the Administrative Assistant for Affirmative Action, and is a student in the Adult Bachelor's Degree Program.

**Cheryl Smith Benton** works in the Independent Study Degree Program and lives in Boston with her husband and year old daughter, Elizabeth.

**Rebecca Squiers** is a Freshman majoring in Human Services.

**Pamela Steinkamp** is a freshman majoring in Education.

**Natasha Taylor** is a Freshman Education major; she sings in the Unity Choir and is a member of Bridges.

**Andrea B. Tower** is an Undergraduate School alumni, and is presently an Assistant Teacher for the First Year Education Core Class.

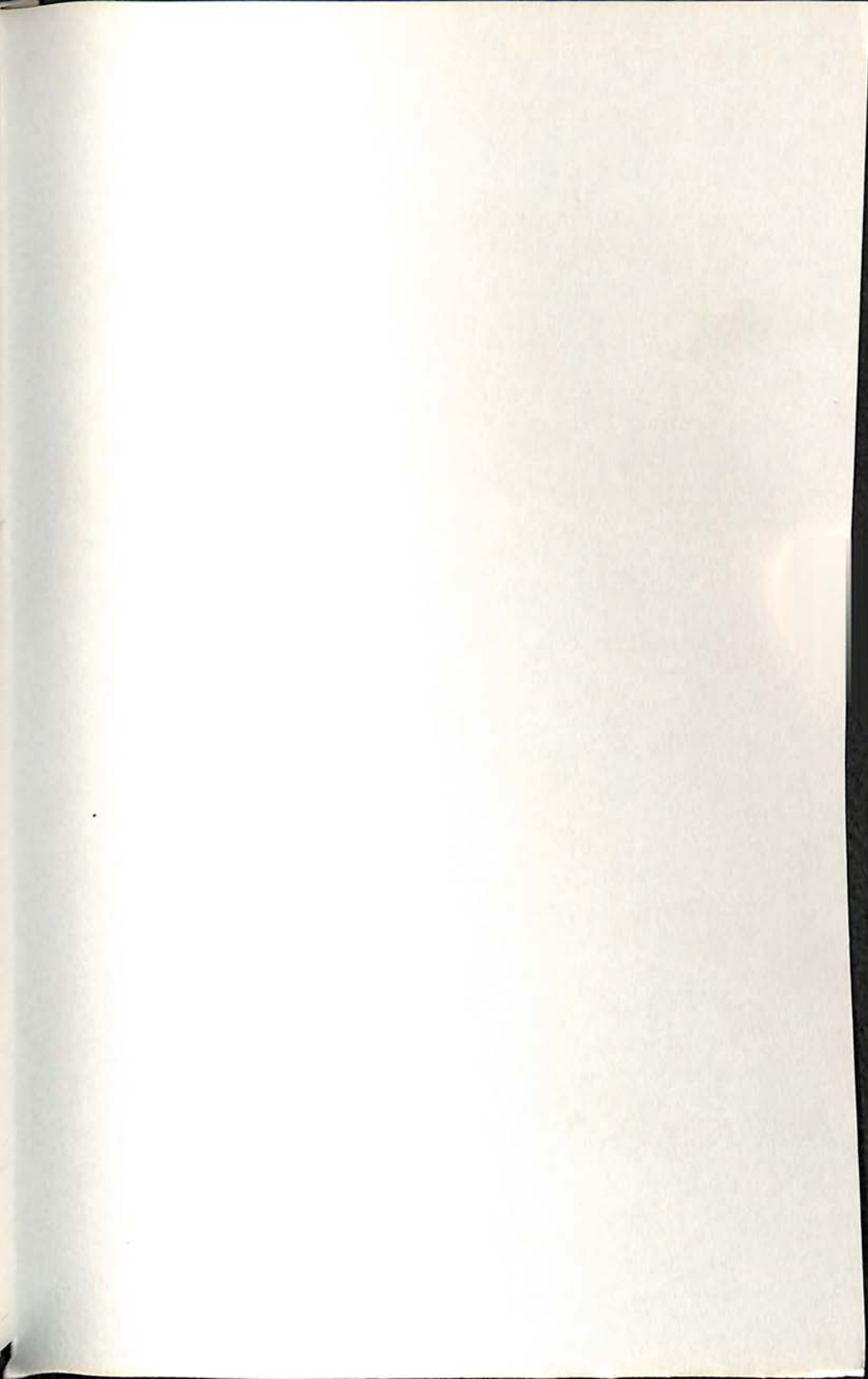
**Teresa M. Warren** is a licensed clinical Social Worker/Trainer and works with people of all racial, cultural and economic backgrounds.

**Taylor Watts** is an Undergraduate School alumni, and is presently in the Expressive Therapies Graduate Program.

**Jennifer Wutz** is a Graduate Student in the School of Management.







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