Letter From the Editor

First and foremost, I would like to thank the staff of Womanthought. We had a fabulous year, and it couldn’t have been done without you. I thank all of you for your strength and dedication. And to the talented artists published this year; it is because of you. Thank you for all the hard work and courage you put into your pieces.

I would also like to extend a very special thanks to Anne Pluto, our favorite saint, and Katie Kelley of the Office of Student Affairs for not only believing in this magazine, but supporting it as well. And to our typists, Judith Periale and Bryson Dean, for doing the less glamorous duties with speed and efficiency.

This issue of Womanthought is dedicated to Janet Senzer. Although she is no longer here at Lesley, our hopes and prayers are with her.

Jennifer K. Hill
Editor-in-Chief
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A Dying Nation&quot;</td>
<td>Stephanie Ruediger</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Homeless</td>
<td>Claudine Massena</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Birth</td>
<td>Rebecca Nye</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cold As A Stone&quot;</td>
<td>Somaly S. Meas</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Jennifer Gage</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Grand Finale&quot;</td>
<td>Daniel Skolnick</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretty Chilly</td>
<td>Carlos Suarez-Boulanger</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination in America</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Greta Buck</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Gather These Bones&quot;</td>
<td>Leslie S. Gibbons</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td>Sebastian Lockwood</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Life</td>
<td>Alexandra Farah</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Divorce</td>
<td>Andrea Goff-Tower</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;When Irish Eyes Are Crying&quot;</td>
<td>Jane Leschinsky</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Kristen Heller</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributor's Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Art**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Kristen Lagace</td>
<td>Front Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Rebecca Drey</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Universe Within&quot;</td>
<td>Jennifer L. Thompson</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Rebecca Drey</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Insane Asylum&quot;</td>
<td>Kate Huston</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Stephanie Krauss</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Tracy Wright</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Barbara Callahan</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Tracy Wright</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Naomi Congalton</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Homage to the 60's&quot;</td>
<td>Molly Morgan</td>
<td>Inside Back Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wisha&quot;</td>
<td>Molly Morgan</td>
<td>Inside Back Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Molly Morgan</td>
<td>Inside Back Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Molly Morgan</td>
<td>Back Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Allegory&quot;</td>
<td>Molly Morgan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spring 1992*
# Table of Contents

**Volume III, No. 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Violet Bassett</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Quiet Storm&quot;</td>
<td>Elisa Lucozzi</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm No Alice&quot;</td>
<td>Elizabeth Coates</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Waves of Ecstasy&quot;</td>
<td>Jennifer Eileen Peskin</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Pine Cone&quot;</td>
<td>Foster Rockwell</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;On My Way&quot;</td>
<td>Leigh Kalil Sasen</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeVelera’s Moon</td>
<td>Joan E. Dolamore</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ratios&quot;</td>
<td>Karen E. Tripp</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Mother&quot;</td>
<td>Bharati Samnani</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A Mother’s Love&quot;</td>
<td>Jennifer K. Hill</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Fifty (And It Glows To Show Ya)&quot;</td>
<td>Judy Campbell</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What Is Mine?&quot;</td>
<td>Tara Martin</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Does An Hourglass Tick When It Tells Time?&quot;</td>
<td>MBFXC</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Stoned Soldiers&quot;</td>
<td>Stacy Spumberg</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Stephanie Krauss</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Waltzing Bones&quot;</td>
<td>Edy Shapiro</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;January&quot;</td>
<td>K. Collins</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;September 9, 1986&quot;</td>
<td>Jennifer L. Thompson</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannesburg, 1987&quot;</td>
<td>Vivien Marcow</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Sigal Shapira</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>Jennifer Orvis</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;dreams&quot;</td>
<td>Caryn Mayo</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Echoes&quot;</td>
<td>Kristen Lynn Darnell</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why So Colorless?</td>
<td>Erin Connelly</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Song For My Father&quot;</td>
<td>Elise P. Letourneau</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Am Six&quot;</td>
<td>Holley Daschbach</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill and Michelle’s Dream</td>
<td>Anne Elezabeth Pluto</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Womanthought*
Untitled

Violet S. Bassett

You can open your eyes

to see what's ahead of you,

But you must open your heart

To know

How to reach it.
Quiet Storm

Elisa Lucozzi

Wind, she whispers to earth and fire, telling secrets of love and desire. A zephyr through our fields and flames, with gentle but powerful caresses she makes us move in a joyful waltz.

Earth, her soulful cries call to fire and wind. Her curves and contours inspire wind and fire to dance about her, caressing her, warming her, spinning her into the heavens.

Fire, her passionate flames ignite a spark in wind and earth to move closer to her and to each other. Hot burning tongues of flame lick and tease earth and wind to touch fire as they all play and join with each other.

All elements
in one sudden movement becoming one,
quiet storm.

October 4, 1991
Do you know?
I have no understanding, control,
Over my feelings,
For you:
Friendly jealous wanting hurting laughing
- The cards keep coming for this is no dream -.
Do you know?
Against my inner will
I remember the glowing times
And the pulls in Abyss

- I now stand on the edge,
Fear beating within me, for I
Stare into the blackness of the Abyss
That I almost fell headlong into
(my holes do not lead to any wonderland),
And I did not see it,
It was (as will always be) so seductive -.

And do you know?
That you
Could convince me out of
My decision,
If you learned just a bit
Of eloquence,
And insight,
Into my heart.
- Even the Mad Hatter can make too much sense with effort.
So will you guess?
That if you danced with me,
touched me,
kissed me,
All the while lying to me,
I might not be able to stop you.
This knowledge brings fear within me,
So I keep it secret,
Hide it inside my heart,
(a heart is too soft, transparent)
No, a steely sealed box within me,
For fear,
You may use this same knowledge,
- For when the cards were suffocating my heart
There would be no dream to wake from -.
Will you ever know?
I hope every moment
You, and all around
Will not see,
See through me,
For I wait in anticipation
Of when,
I forget the past,
To be replaced with
Friendship,
And look to the future
Before me,
But focus on
What is
Waiting by my side,
Even within my hand.
Waves of Ecstasy

Jennifer Eileen Peskin

Blue green caps appear above
Cresting
Sharp white bubbles
Down the side
Smooth grey, curls out and
Away

Standing
Rising
Falling
Arms and legs
Faces wrinkling to scream

Over and over
Up and down
Around and around
To the flat calm surface
Pine Cone

Foster Rockwell

Here I have fallen standing on my head with a hundred arms.

I remember under my parent’s parasol how I swayed, clutched, a silent green bell growing heavy until the day I fell.

I rest gently now feeling offspring in my fingertips knowing one day they will leave me naked rise and bend over me tall protecting and share with me their children.
On My Way

Leigh Kalil Sasen

Walking down this frozen path
Braving sweet tears of isolation
Following footsteps for many days
Losing sight of my destination

Oblivious to the cold white ice
I continue my trek and smile
Knowing my dreams will come with sun
I continue this path another mile

Some dusk this path will end
And I’ll look back on where I’ve been
Understanding why I’ve walked so far
This is now—that was then

Looking at photographs in retrospect
Clinging to memories attained through time
In my mind I’ll never stop searching
Until your footsteps are next to mine.
Laura woke up wet. Ever since Jake left, she’d taken to sleeping on his side of the bed, hoping that that would change things, that she’d wake up, curled against him, as if nothing had happened. It was raining and the window next to the bed was wide open. She could keep it open now that Jake wasn’t there to complain.

She rolled over and looked at the clock. Seven. She could go back to sleep for an hour, or get up and do some reading for school. Laura grimaced when she thought of the choice; sleep, or continue reading about the nose bleeding rites among the Sambia. Hell of a choice, she thought, as she snuggled down into the pillow on her side of the bed. The dry side. Then, of course, she heard Jake saying, “That’s the trouble with you, Laura; always put off until tomorrow what you don’t want to do today!” She’d been hearing Jake for the last two days, ever since he slammed out of the house, shouting that he was going to the Cape for some peace and quiet. Memories of Jake, in fact, had taken on a life of their own. I hope, Laura thought as she struggled out of bed, that his precious peace and quiet was as disturbed with thoughts of me!

As Laura made her way over to the clock to reset the alarm, Nancy wound her legs, mewing softly. Laura looked down in to the cat’s grey and white face. “You’re Jake’s,” she whispered, “let him feed you.” But Jake had left for solitude, for quiet, and his hungry cat was now Laura’s to feed and stroke.

When Laura had moved in with Jake, he was quite adamant on the subject of Nancy. It was him and the cat, a package deal. Laura didn’t care; she loved Jake and even liked the cat, although she had always thought Nancy a strange name. Jake said it was for Nancy Drew — not the book, the television show. And not so much for the character, more for the actress who played her, some dark woman who had fueled many a fantasy for the adolescent Jake. Laura had wondered about the connection; after all, Nancy was grey and white, not dark. “It’s the eyes,” Jake had said, “the eyes, they draw you in, just like Nancy Drew. Like yours,” he had said, as he kissed her, and kissed, and...

This is getting me nowhere, Laura thought with a shake, as she walked into the kitchen to feed Nancy. I shouldn’t be thinking of Jake or his kisses, just tuna, tuna and milk and bowls for both. And a shower. And work.

Then Laura went back to the bedroom and got back into bed. I have time, she thought; I don’t really have to get up until eight. Just then, Jake’s voice once again whispered in her head, “that’s you, Laura, five more minutes.” She opened her eyes and looked over at the clock. Seven fifteen. Laura turned from the clock and looked towards the window. As she did, her eye caught the photograph next the the clock of her and Jake taken the previous summer on the Cape. It had been a rainy and overcast week. They were sitting on the deck in the rain, under the
umbrella, drinking gin and tonics, heads
together, laughing. Jake had set the timer of
the camera and running back, had slid on the
boards. He was soaking and laughing and so
was she. It had been a wonderful week. They
had stayed in every night and ...

Laura sat up in bed and reached for the
article on the Sambia. Nose-bleeding rites are
just the thing, she thought, to take my mind
off Jake. Besides, he’s the one who slammed
out of here. I shouldn’t even be thinking of
him. I should banish him, exile him. Yes, the
Sambia. New Guinea...Africa.

Jake had been to Africa. He had told
her all about it the first time they met, at
Eryn’s graduation party. He had just come
back from Kenya and was nut-brown. That’s
what had caught her eye first, his blond hair
against the dark skin. He was dressed all in
white and looked like a snotty English colo­
nial. But than he laughed and she had walked
across the room, drawn like a bee to his
honeyed smile. They had talked that night
until 4:30 a.m., until her eyes stung from
wanting sleep. Yet, after he left, she couldn’t
sleep. Instead, she wandered around her
apartment, touching the things he had touched.
They had moved in together six months later.
That was five years ago.

Five years and three months, Laura
thought, still staring at page one of her article.
And we’ve never had a fight like this last one.
Never. Jake had never left before, she had
never screamed at him to leave. It all started
with the proposal. Why did he have to ask
me, Laura thought, frowning. We were doing
just fine. And why did I have to say yes? If I
hadn’t said yes, we never would have booked
the hall, or ordered the flowers, or booked the
band, or told his mother.

Spring 1992

Jake’s mother believed in doing the
right thing, in wearing the right clothes, in
eating the right food. Unfortunately, Mrs.
McFee’s version of what was right didn’t
always jibe with Laura’s. After she and Jake
had moved in together, Laura and Mrs. McFee
had silently agreed to a truce, but the truce
came to a blinding halt the day Jake called
to tell his mother about the wedding. Laura had
not known a peaceful day since. Mrs. McFee,
or “Mother,” as she had instructed Laura to
call her, had an idea for everything. And since
Laura’s own mother lived 2,000 miles away,
Mrs. McFee (Laura couldn’t bring herself to
call her Mother McFee) had told Laura she
would help with “every little detail, dear.”

Mrs. McFee’s version of helping was to subtly
question all of Laura’s decisions. At first it
was the hall...“Well, dear, if you think you’ll
have enough people to fill a room this large.
You know how empty these big rooms can
seem when they’re only half filled.” Then it
was the flowers. “Why, carrying irises is
so...so different. Most people would expect
something white and a bit more delicate, but I
know, Laura, how you like to surprise.”

Laura knew she should have said
something to Jake earlier. Each time Mrs.
McFee called, Laura knew she should just
march in and talk to Jake. And Jake would
have listened, Laura thought, as she climbed
into the shower. He would have done some­
thing. After all, he really did understand
about his mother. She remembered the night
she first met Mrs. McFee. In the car on the
way over, Jake talked about his mother,
explaining why he called her the Irish Piranha.
He had turned to Laura, laughing, and said
“All the McFee boys call her that because she
cuts up our girlfriends and eats them for
supper. It’s an Irish mother thing.” She had
laughed back, Laura remembered, reaching
for the shampoo, laughed and said, “oh, she can’t be that bad.” But then, when they went to Mrs. McFee’s house, Jake had turned to her, suddenly serious. He had taken her hand in his and said that it didn’t matter whether or not his mother loved her. He loved her, that was enough.

Yes, Laura thought as she rinsed out her hair, Jake would have understood. But you didn’t tell him, did you Laura, she said to herself as she stood under the shower, you just kept silent and seethed. Until last Saturday morning, she sighed as she got out of the shower. The morning hadn’t started well at all; both she and Jake were bone tired from wedding plans and parties and work. The argument began because there was no coffee and Laura was sure she had told Jake to pick some up the day before. It was just a short step from there to Jake’s mother, and suddenly, she couldn’t stop herself. Within five minutes, she had taken all her resentment at Mrs. McFee, molded it into a bright red ball of anger, and flung it right in Jake’s face. Fifteen minutes later, he had stomped out.

Laura sighed again as she towelied herself off. They had never fought that fiercely before, or that bitterly. I suppose I shouldn’t have said his mother was nowhere near as sweet as a piranha, Laura mused walking into the hall. And I definitely shouldn’t have said she was more like a boa constrictor, squeezing the life out of our wedding. Jake really hadn’t liked that one, Laura thought as she stood in front of the closet. And I didn’t really mean it, Laura whispered, pushing aside some clothes, looking for her black skirt. I was just tired and...

And there was Jake’s backpack hanging on the back wall of the closet. Staring at it, Laura remembered the first time they had gone camping. The first of many times, she thought with a sad smile. She was quite good at it now, but the first time everything scared her. The owls, the dark, the wind. Jake had begun to point out and name the stars to distract her. She had thought then how smart and wonderful he was. She’d only found out last year that he had made up all the star’s names. For four years, she had thought the North Star was really called DeValera’s Moon. Just like the man, she frowned, staring into the closet, to name the North Star after an Irish Prime Minister. And then suddenly, she was crying, sobbing really, standing there looking at Jake’s backpack and remembering how it felt to lie in his arms while he named the stars.

Still crying, Laura pulled out her black skirt and walked into the bedroom. I must stop, she thought, I’ve done nothing but cry since he left. I can’t go to work like this, I just can’t. Laura sat on the bed, the skirt crunched up in her lap. Nancy softly padded into the room and jumped up beside her. Laura alternately wiped her tears and stroked the cat. She sighed again and thought about work. Then she thought about Jake on the Cape, in the rain. She wondered if he had slipped again on the deck. She looked at the clock. Eight twenty. I could be at the Cape by 10:30 if I leave now, she calculated. It might even be still raining. And I could tell Jake about his mother until the stars come out and then we could think up new names for them.

Laura jumped up from the bed, pulling on her skirt with one hand and reaching for the phone with the other. After leaving a message for her boss at work, she ran around the apartment, putting out more food for Nancy and grabbing what she’d need for the night.
She stuffed nightgown, toothbrush, and keys into her bag, turned out the lights and locked the door. She ran to the elevator, pushed the button, and paced back and forth, impatient for it to come, impatient to be on her way. I'll pick up some coffee, she thought with a smile, as a peace offering. And some flowers.

Just then, the elevator doors opened and there stood Jake, dripping wet, balancing a can of coffee in one hand and a bunch of irises in the other.

Ratios

Karen E. Tripp

Nuclear madness versus a tangled relationship:
Share the load, but don't break any backs,
And carry only what you really need.

We all feel the darkness
And smell the anger.

We even hear the toast burn.

But despite sisterhood and friendship,
The meaning of life is ultimately private.

Spring 1992
Mother

**Bharati Samnani**

Her concerned gaze follows me
Helpless and alone, she heads for home
But my life is my own now
New friends, and education, new goals
A new chapter is written

In times of betrayal, frustration, and stress
I needed and missed her powerfully secure presence
The value of a true friend
But I am free and my life is my own now
A new chapter is written

How the passage of time has changed us
But one thing remains ever steady...ever immense
Our overflowing love along with her comforting hug
I love you dear Mother...sweet Mother
Another chapter has been written.
A Mother's Love

Jennifer K. Hill

I tried.
I failed.
I cried.

You yelled.
You insulted.
You punished.

I loved you so much.
I cried out for help.
But you couldn't hear.

I turned to suicide.
You finally listened.
We both recovered.
Now we try.
we fail.
we cry.

Together.

Spring 1992
I’m Fifty (And it Glows To Show Ya)

Judy Campbell

I’m Fifty ... and it shows.
I wore a lacy nightgown to bed -
And fell asleep.
My bones do not unwind as fast
My belly has a downward cast
My laugh lines are now permanently etched
And framed in silver fair.
Unwelcome whiskers often sprout
Where once a downy fuzz peeked out,
And the bags beneath my eyes are hidden
Effectively with binocular vision.

I could go braless as in days of yore,
But you wouldn’t notice any more
And hot flashes will keep you warm
Intermittently in a winter’s storm.

My children are all grown up ... or so they think
And I’m still standing at the kitchen sink.
Trying hard to comprehend,
How it all is going to end.
Why spring still fills my soul with glee,
And why I weep so easily.
Why life’s still hand
And crises still come and come and come,
And I still see the face of my new born son,
Why women friends are gathering,
And why love is still a special thing,
   but...
My love is less specific now,
It's broader, more encompassing,
It's love for all who read or hear this thing —
And even those who don't.
It's love for the God in man — and me,
It's all of what I am and hope to be.
That peace which comes from unity
And harmony
Is mine
For now.

So... as my age spots multiply
In ratio with my chins,
I think that my decline shall be
Uplifting... in the least.

I'll suck in my gut passing mirrors
And restrain my upper arms in a high wind,
I'll make love by candle light
And never get on top (your face falls forward!)
I'll take calcium and sherry
in measured doses.
And sadly watch my cat of 20 years companionship
Age quickly now —
And I'll look forward to this afternoon
And tomorrow given the opportunity,
And laugh and cry more easily.

I'll be gentle with the faults of others,
And more so with my own.
I'll get on with the business of living and loving
and giving away,
What is so graciously given to me,
The gifts of life and love.
I'm fifty — and it glows.
What Is Mine?

Tara Martin

What is mine? Our house, our belongings, our life as we know it, just gone.
Our sense of security, that special place where we belong.

Every nook and every cranny that I gave so much time and care,
My pride and my joy, now it’s desolate and bare.

What is mine? My carefully stenciled roses and strawberries too,
My beautiful bedroom with its porch and waterfront view.

I can’t help but think of Taylor-Anne’s ship out back that was really just a boulder,
Her very own bedroom and playroom, and my broken heart when I told her.

What is mine? The faith it gave me to see I could do more than just “make do.”
That house represented my independence and strength, now I bid it adieu.

What is mine? The hatred and heartache we feel with no one to blame.
It’s here now it’s gone! God, is this some cruel game?

Now time marches on, and I realize so must we,
We’ll dust ourselves off and go forward Taylor-Anne and me.

So, what is mine? What is mine is Taylor-Anne’s love and the things that make me up inside.
The kind of things that can’t be taken away or destroyed, by not even the tide!

November 8, 1991
Does an Hourglass Tick When it Tells Time?

MBFXC

The Daddy always kisses the Mommy after work,
Kiss me! You fool!
Did it start then? In the forest? The jungle of love, on my elbows crawling back, darting serpently, inching my way to the impenetrable wall?

But now graceful figure eights entangle to shrilling shutters crescendoing leading the pitter pattering, my head thrown back in laughter remembering Dad’s square, it’s different now, this steamy night in your arms.
Waltzing finally with a man with a face, Lawrence Welk’s Que Sera Sera, flopping in those favored footed pj’s. Again and again. Replaced? The fairy tale desire. Saved by the Prince. Climb the tower. While below your horse complains, “...sick of pulling this damn carriage...”

Just get it over with. Take the picture before the sand runs out!

June 1991
Stoned Soldiers

Stacy Spumberg

Slipping between shadows
Our eyes meet

Silence. . . .
The calm before the storm

Sweat trickles down my back
Blood freezes in my veins

I've been told
You are my enemy
But I know
We are Sons of Adam

Goodbye my Brother

I pull the trigger
And turn to Stone.

March 26, 1991
He slithered across the grass
Emerald Green.
Beneath him, the ground seemed to move on its own
Stopping suddenly,
fear beginning to erect.
Enemy?
Swallowing with him its blueness,
the sky devoured him.
Deserted
Alone
Innocent
He remembered his mother’s words
“We’re all under the same sky.”
Waltzing Bones

Edy Shapiro

The yellow-eyed Wolf grinned sky is made of blood and black fur
the wind pulls the
dust sheets away
where two naked skeletons
are tangled
in the cage of
last night
made of skin and mouths
made of cobweb sinew
paste joints creaking out tired symphonies
tired symphonies of strange music
mandolin and lyre strong with tongues
coated with dust
grey, dust-coated they dance
twining themselves -
anxious hands
confused muscles
eyes
and teeth
tied together with the ageless curiosity
the sought, found
uncomprehended
melting of flesh and body -
Melding spirit
Soul
Mixture of sweat and nails -
limbs
the copper taste of lust
just like blood
just like rust
the flaking corrosion
that never quite eats away
the heart.
January

K. Collins

We are not lovers in the traditional sense.

When we skip down the street holding hands
The neighborhood Latinos say crude things and spit
Because we are white and we are women
And we love each other.

At Gina’s Sweets we load up on Tootsie Rolls and Mary Janes.
Outside, against the sun-warned wall we sit
And think and chew,
Focusing on some tread-flattened gum on the sidewalk.

She shoves her last Tootsie Roll at me.
“Please eat it. I can’t. I’ll be your best friend.”
Me and my Eve dance home
Singing “We Shall Overcome” in glorious harmony
City sweaty, loving ourselves.

My siste, soulmate, Other,
We are twenty-two forever.
What a day.

Today I sit in a cardboard box on cold linoleum
Releasing sobs I protected us from at our Goodbye.
“We’ll be together forever when we marry!” she assured me.
Yes, of course, we will.
It is worse to be the one left
To face the hollow apartment
As dark as a nightmare and all the color gone.
The scarf-smothered mannequin, the bongos, the braided rug
That covers the cheap wall panel.
All her classics I always talked about reading.

Our cord has been cut.
She, in a needier place, helping refugees without an address.
Me, left to carry on,
The grounded, home and hearth portion of our spirit.
Now it is me who must support, comfort, hug and
Love me.
Am I now in danger of slipping into Mainstream?
Will I resort to desiring a lover of the standard sort?
I am alone and weakened in this empty nest.

On the snow-soaked step
The purple-pink edge of the sky soothes my swollen senses.
The gang on the corner shouts, where is my lesbian lover?
Unaccustomed to my brazen solitude,
They do not pursue it.
We have a pact.

Sitting so still to feel the earth turn
I reach for courage in the direction she’s gone
So when she is under this piece of sky
She will pause, listening,
And our spirit will be whole and strong.
Hills rolling up and out of the earth in a punctured place.
I glean the landscape.
Wheat still standing,
heavy headed,
waiting for the windrow.
Or cut
fully laying
as a woman’s long hair;
curved
tucked under,
waiting to be stroked.
Aspen’s brown crackled leaves
from early cold -
to those pockets of sungold
where the warm air finds a refuge.
Greening autumn,
I say to you, don’t go.
Everything glitters
only more so now
Women, posturing,
their chatter
like birds.

A man wants
a woman
as a prize.
He will build a stand for her.
She will pose
perfectly
She will speak
when spoken to
She
will
definitely
not talk back.

Like a traveller
between worlds
I pass
between them
like a shadow.

A drunken black man
stumbles forward
like
a ghost
we smoke
a lot of D.P. is a small
flat in Yeoville.

I can’t understand you
I say
cheerfully
to the man
who thought
we
might have been lovers.

I
am at the edge of the known Universe.
Where
the creatures
could eat you
or kill you
or make love
to you

And no one would blink.
Sometimes you know you have to let it happen.
Sometimes it has to be.
Sometimes it feels so bad you have to let it go and crawl
and walk all over you sometimes
it can really burn a hole through you even if you didn’t light the match that burned.
Sometimes you have to collect your moments like a beggar after the market day has ended and you bend to pick up the potatoes rolling on the ground yet you know
Tears falling, creating puddles before my eyes.  
The hatred and love are mixed,  
Confusing and scaring me equally.  
The words spoken hurt,  
But not only me.  
For as I am hurt, so am I hurting.  
And it is their scars that will take as long as mine to heal.  
I am not the only one affected,  
Nor am I the only cause.  
We are all responsible.  
Responsible for the wounds  
And the salty tears that fall upon them.  
Responsible for destroying the buildings,  
Castles of emotions created by love.  
Responsible for the ruins.  
The bricks must be made of caring,  
Understanding, and most of all, love.  
Then maybe out of the ruins,  
there will be roses.
the door opens
when the lights go out.
images invade
the darkness to tell
and retell stories.
when the lights
come back on
the images slip away
between the cracks of our
imagination,
and if we’re lucky
enough they leave us
in anticipation
of what’s to come
the next time we
close our eyes to sleep
Echoes

Kristen Lynn Darnell

The screams,
pain, agony, terror,
Why? Why me?
They echo through
the house.

Where were they?
Friends?
NO!!
Only silence.
Nobody there.
Nobody helping.

HELP ME!
Louder, Higher,
Nobody.
I am alone.

Echoes of my screams
subside
only to sobs.

1991
Why So Colorless?

Erin Connelly

Black is the color that in our world has been surrounded with negativity. Why is it a negative word? Why are people treated harshly because of their color? Is it ever going to change...am I going to change it? Me, being the color with no name.

White is the color surrounded with positive energy. It is the color of hope and freedom in many people's eyes. To me, it is the color of surrender, not freedom. It is the color of the sheet before it is drenched with blood. It is the color that we are, and after the blood is shed and has dried, the color of white changes; it turns brown and that is the color we will be.

Brown is the color of the skin, as nothing is the color of the skin. It is not black or white. It is not good or evil. The attitudes and beliefs must be changed. Brown is good and nothing is nothing.

There is something out there that will eventually take us away. This something to me is powerful, loving, equal, and will take me when it is ready. And yes, this something is dark and large and will give us the power and energy to bring all together. It will let us rise above, and come together, as one; so that one day, we will all be the color of the sheet, when all of the bloodshed has ceased.

Is it going to take blood, and tears, and loneliness? Are my fears of never seeing our world changed when I am alive going to come true? My tears are the color of nothing. Are they someday going to be red?

Colors are only colors. Why can’t we understand that? Brown is brown, red is red, and yellow is only yellow. The color nothing is given to us so that the dark colors can consume nothing easily and thoroughly. We, as I, are the ones with no color. Nobody is ever going to be able to paint me any color but the color of nothing.

Someday, when the grass is still green, and the sky is still grey, we won’t be the color of nothing. We will not be considered a color, which is the color that I call life.

Spring 1992
Song For My Father

Elise P. Letourneau

Dear Daddy...
What are you going to do with yourself?
And how are you going to live with yourself?
When your bottle is empty
And you come down
From your power trip
And I'm spinning around
Wondering why
You said you loved me...
Dear Daddy...

Dear Daddy...
What are you going to do with yourself?
And how are you going to live with yourself?
When your house is empty
And you come home
From your business trip
And you're all alone
Wondering why...
Was she pretty?
Dear Daddy...

I remember bedtime songs,
The nighttime rounds.
You'd check so monsters under the bed
Don't drag me down
Into the rug.
But I knew his name,
He wasn't gone,
And I still sleep with the closet light on-
Scared to close my eyes again...
Dear Daddy...
You know
That being daddy’s girl was not so easy.
I know
You’re hurting too, but it just really bleeds me
That you won’t talk
You’re still holding back
Can’t shed the scarlet secrets
Still let the fears attack
I know you’ve got them too...
Dear Daddy...

I remember bedtime songs,
The nighttime rounds.
You’d check so monsters under the bed
Don’t drag me down
Into the rug.
But I knew his name,
He wasn’t gone,
And I still sleep with the closet light on-
Scared you’ll call me a liar again...
Dear Daddy...

Dear Daddy...
What am I to do with myself?
And how am I to live with myself?
When to love you
Means to nullify me
And live a lie?
Play charades?
Fuck you Daddy!
You can call me crazy
And tell everyone I make it up.
Damn you Daddy!
Don’t ever tell me
That you love me...

P.S.—I’m telling...
I Am Six

Holley Daschbach

At first I hesitated to submit this poem because it is about incest, in the first person, and I am not an incest survivor. I want to make it clear that I am not trying to speak for any woman who is an incest survivor. Rather, this poem is my response to working with a six year old girl who had been sexually abused. I am trying to imagine how I might feel if I were this six year old girl, knowing full well I can never know how it would really be.

I am six
and I am in first grade.
I am tall
and
I can run fast.
I am six.

I am six
and he put his fingers
inside
of me
and I don’t know
why
because I
am
only
six.

He said it wouldn’t hurt
but he lied
because it did.
It felt bad
each time.
It felt bad
except once
it felt good
and that
felt bad too.
I am six
that was when I was four.
Now I am in first grade
and I can read and
do plus and minus.
Mrs. Cappell says I am
as smart
as a cricket.

Sometimes I feel dirty
so Mom says take a bath.
Sometimes it doesn’t help
and I can’t figure out...
maybe we need a new kind of soap.

I am six
and Mom says I
have-a-lot-of-anger.
I get so angry
I could yell and crack
the sky
so God would hear me.
even though,
I’m only six.
"Bill and Michelle's Dream" is a chapter from Fear Is Never Boring, her novel in progress.

Michelle curled up next to her husband; she listened to Roger talk, something about Bobby DuBois' custody suit and playing Basketball with Michael Ilardi and Sam Davis. She closed her eyes; the ceiling fan whirred above them, the sound soothing and fast. The safety of her home engulfed Michelle; she heard Roger say “goodnight.” His lips kissed her face, his hands gently pushing her hair off her neck. The light clicked off and he gathered her to him, but she was lost, sleep taking her down Magazine Street.

It was Fall, and Bill Hawkins' hand was resting on the shoulder of her black jacket. She looked up at the sky, pointing to the Crescent moon, so yellow in the midnight sky. They walked the length of Magazine Street to his loft and once inside, sat by the windows, watching the city night, the dark river, and the lemon yellow moon. She knelt on the bed to catch the night that rolled past them, taking big grey clouds as it went along.

And the room moved too, slowly they turned with it, facing the other wall of windows, and when the moonlight reached them, illuminating their faces, he reached down to kiss her, richly on the mouth.

The bed was unmade and she lay on it, him next to her; the dark silence bringing them closer, and he moved on top of her, each kiss richer and deeper than the one that came before.

“I hadn’t thought about you in a very long time, yet it is always easy to bring you back.” She pulled his face towards her and they kissed, sweetly, their mouths opening, tongues flickering on teeth. This was surely a dream. Michelle was aware that her hair was shorter, that she was wearing one of Bobby DuBois’ jackets - the jackets that hung in the front hallway of the big red house on Conti Street.

Still it was William Hawkins above her; she knew his face, his dark sad eyes, and touched his cheekbones, his beauty marks, his long nose, his dark hair, and he pulled her up to take off her jacket, and open the first two buttons of her white blouse. And after he had pulled the blouse over her head, her fingers rushed to unbutton his white shirt, yanking it from his jeans, putting her hands on his smooth skin.

“Where have you been?” She asked.

“In Mandeville, watching my children grow up, watching the world, imagining what life could have been like with you.” He touched her hair. “You look young; the way you did the first day we met.”

“Do you remember?” She curled up in his lap, like a small child.

“Yes. Mitch McCain told me there was a beautiful Cajun girl from Jeanerette, who used to be a nun, who taught French History at St. Cecilia’s, who was a voodooienne.”

“You only wanted to take my photograph because he said I was beautiful,” she smiled and put her arms around his neck. “You like beautiful women.”

William Hawkins laughed and touched her breasts. “No, I liked you for more than your beauty. When I heard you speak, this city got so big, that it had no walls.”

Womanthought
"You don't like walls." Her right hand swept an arc into the dark space.

"Neither do you."

"Oh, but I did. I loved the convent walls; I loved the safety of the university," she whispered, touching his dark hair. "I like marriage."

He drew her towards him, so that she faced him, her legs over his. He kissed her face, and she returned his kisses, gently, sweetly, because in this dark dream he was real and needed her to be gentle and kind. "If you look the way you did seven years ago, then you're not pregnant."

"No, and I am not married either."

"But I am." He held her away.

"You were then too," she whispered.

"Yes." He shook his head, attempting to smile. Michelle moved from his lap and lay on the unmade bed, sheets tangling in her feet.

"You're a rich man now, aren't you?" She asked, putting a pillow under her head, her body felt heavy.

"So's your husband." Bill Hawkins turned to look at her.

"Not really. He takes many pro bono cases. I own half of that building. We're not rich. We don't own a house and land in Mandeville."

"You wouldn't want to."

"No, but I like going there, sometimes."

"Stop talking, dreams don't last very long and you walked into mine." He threw his shirt down on the floor and lay next to her.

Michelle breathed him in, closing her eyes, and the dream multiplied. When she opened them, he lay on top of her, their clothes strewn around them. He entered her.

"I feel like I am dead," he whispered into her black hair. "I'm dead and I'm with you, what better way to die." And they moved together, their eyes wet, the seven years of silence swirling like a tornado, carrying things around the room: his photographs fleeing the table, their dark jackets flying, the arms flapping like large bats, meeting with the pile of starched white shirts.

"Look," she turned his face.

"You've let all the demons loose," he laughed and pushed faster, harder, deeper.

"There are no demons, only ghosts," she said, raising her body to meet his thrusts.

"And you know that. You know that," she recited, over and over again until it was complete; her pleasure met with his and stretched the entire length of her body. They collapsed, the shirts falling on the bed, the black jackets tangling on a chair, the photographs dropping around them. She seized one and held it up to the crescent moonlight. "Look," she urged him.

Together they squinted in the sliver of yellow light "Why, it's me and you," he turned and smiled at her. She kissed his damp face. "And we're in the cemetery, your favorite place." They looked more closely. In the picture Michelle was laughing as Bill picked up the orange flowers at her feet. "I never saw this one. Who took it?"

"Mitch McCain." She answered.

"So he did. Not bad. He had a thing for you."

"Did he know about us?" Michelle asked.

"I don't think so. It doesn't matter." Michelle lay back on the bed. Bill threw the photograph down to the wood floor and moved close to her, circling her waist with his arms. "You feel the same. I dreamt many sweet dreams about you. About this, and I remembered all the dark evenings when you came here and we talked and talked and talked. You kept me awake."

"Are you really here?" She sat up, instantly dressed and touched his face.
"Yes, I am really here, as real as dreams get."

"And how real is that?" She laughed. "You tell me; you’re the voodooienne. They used to come to you for answers. I only came with questions." He sat next to her, buttoning the white shirt that had reappeared.

"I know that there is no time, here, now, and that was why I started with you, seven, no, is it eight years now? You made time go away. And when I met you, I wanted to be alive, again. I wanted to have a body and not feel like a ghost." She smiled, bringing her knees up to her chest.

"When did you know you were special, that you could see things?" He asked, putting his arms around her, drawing her close to his heart. She listened; it could have been a clock.

"When I was a child, I saw ghosts, patterns of colored light that floated into the bedroom, red and green, blue and white. And the light danced before my eyes; I gathered it in, swallowed it whole."

"Who were they?" He touched her dark hair.

"I don’t know, the ancestors, the grandmothers, the voodoo queens? I don’t know. It didn’t matter, all that mattered was that they came to me. I looked forward to it. They made me dream."

"And it’s always the dead who talk to you?" His hands reached around her, and stroked her small breasts through the white cotton shirt.

"They appear to me, now as figures, as themselves, sad and tired, and wanting rest. But I love them, love their fragile souls, adore them for their questioning, for their knowledge. I want to understand."

"And to help, you always want to help. It was your heart I wanted first. I wanted to know how you could feel so much."

"I never asked for this; it happened. This is who I am." And she turned to him, her breath fast, his hands undressing her again, slowly, luxuriously, and they took their time, because each knew that the dream would continue, soft and caressingly, hard and with a quick dose of pain, the pleasure multiplied; she could feel the orgasm beginning in the roots of her hair, and pulled his body close to hers until his ghost was imprinted on her skin, a slow burn to the climax, and when they came, she began to cry, turning her face to hide in her long hair, and he said her name over and over again.

"I know Michelle, I have missed you too, deeply, deeply missed you."

Michelle woke up; Roger’s hands were on her thighs. She moved away from him, burying her face into the white pillow, hoping he wouldn’t hear her cry.
Once upon a time it was blacks versus whites,
Fighting for something they called equal rights.
A battle for rights was fought by women, too,
Fighting to have equality in all that they do.
But what about the children of these minorities?
Who’s going to fight to meet their needs?
They are disadvantaged from the very beginning,
It’s a fight for life that no one is winning.
No smooth transition from child to man
Young boys growing up with guns in their hands.
Wanting to belong, joining the gangs
Raging warfare in the streets from Roxbury to L.A.
Brother against brother, one life for another
Not seeming to care that they’re killing each other.
Survival of the fittest, by any means
Armed with 9 millimeter killing machines
making a lot of money selling the crack
Going to jail and not coming back.
Young boys charged as adults for their crimes,
Fourteen to life is a mighty long time.
Young girls in the streets smoking the rock
Selling their souls up and down the block.
Teenage mothers running around wild,
Giving dope and cocaine to their unborn child
Crack babies dying, from cradle to grave
Born too sick for the doctors to save.
An eye for an eye, and tooth for tooth
Paying back debts by selling their youth.

Will someone please tell me what the hell we should do?
Does anyone care what the children must go through?
Some say the children are our future, at this rate there won’t be one.

Dedicated to David Pitts, 1974-1990, a dear friend who died
as a result of street violence.

Womanthought
The Homeless

Claudine Massena

When I see homeless people on the street, I feel bad and often wonder how they got there in the first place. I often wonder what I could possibly say to make their lives better. If I have some change I give it to them. When I don’t have any change, I end up feeling guilty, especially when I feel those sad eyes looking disappointedly at me.

I feel now that I can find unused things in my home, like clothes, leftover food, furniture, or anything else that will be of use to them. I can then donate them to homeless shelters from time to time. I can also encourage people in my neighborhood to do the same.

Politically, I can make sure I vote for issues concerning the homeless and the candidate that will represent them. Then if I someday walk down the street again and still don’t have any change, I will know that at least I did something.
The Birth

Rebecca Nye

As I closed the cover of Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism, by Suzanne Pharr, I finally understood. The fine tuning on the screen of my life brought froth a sharp, clear, focused picture where previously a snowy blur had vertically rolled repeatedly across the screen. Now, I understand why, at the age of 26, I am slowly reassessing and revising the person it has taken 26 years to develop into, and in many aspects, I am seeing myself clearly for the first time.

It has only been six months since my rebirth, which occurred at the moment I, at long last, dared to utter these words to a close friend, "I think I am a lesbian."

I could not believe the ease of the delivery; the contractions were remarkable painless, nothing more than a few friendly butterflies tickling the lining of my stomach. After 14 years of carrying this secret deep within myself, it was not expelled from within and out for careful examination. The fear of being a lesbian had rolled across the screen of my life repeatedly, leaving me continuously out of focus. It is a fear I kept buried, and tried not to think about, as if not thinking about it would make it untrue, make it go away. Yet, throughout all the years of masquerading, this secret had planted itself firmly into a fertile womb which nursed, nourished and sustained it, even before its presence was detected, and even throughout numerous abortion attempts.

The secret survived and was brought forth into the world on a sunny June afternoon, delivered into the awaiting grasp of a supportive, encouraging coach and friend. Now, six months later, still in the infancy stage of my new identity, I continue to cry out for constant nurturance as I grow. There are times when I yearn to return to the safety of the womb; here my secret had remained anchored, out of sight, for so many years. However, most often, I find myself trying to run, before I've learned to crawl, I want to chew, when I still must suckle, and my weak voice struggles to sing while I babble nonsensically.

Why is it, I wondered, that I find myself in many ways a child once again? Why didn't my initial childhood prepare me for the life I was brought forth to fulfill? Why was my identity as a lesbian delayed for so long? Why was this not something I could understand four, ten or fourteen years ago when I worried that I might be a lesbian? Suzanne Pharr’s examination of homophobia in our society helped me to understand why my birth as a lesbian required intensive care before delivery.

The chapter, “The Common Elements of Oppression” identified two concepts which I truly understand within the context of my experience. INVISIBILITY. As a child, teenager and young adult, the invisibility of lesbians in my life led me to believe that I was sincerely abnormal. Surely, I had never seen any successful lesbians at school, in the community, on TV or at the movies. I had never read any books testifying to the happy

Womanthought
(or unhappy) lives of lesbians. Songs on the radio certainly did not celebrate lesbian love. Yes, I knew that somewhere there were lesbians; I had heard talk. But, because they were hidden, I guessed it must be pretty dreadful to be a lesbian. I now know that if I had grown up with visible, positive, lesbian role models, I would have been quicker to accept the lesbian in myself. If I had not believed that lesbians were sick or unwanted women, I would not have been ashamed, embarrassed and afraid. If I had seen some of the successful, beautiful, caring and nurturing women that I now know to be lesbians, I would have evolved much more gracefully into that identity.

It took an active search on my part to break through the shield of invisibility. I had to seek lesbian voices in order to hold up my stained glass perceptions to see if streaks of light shone through. How would I know if I was a lesbian if I had no firm grasp of what that meant? When I made the decision to explore, I first had to find people, books, music, and events which would introduce me to lesbianism. I played it safe by travelling out of town to a women’s bookstore. It took all of the inner strength I could muster to enter the store, and even more courage to gradually inch towards the Gay and Lesbian section. I followed my feet as they dragged me towards the books I had travelled nearly two hours to find. After glancing over my shoulder, I carefully pulled the first book from the shelf, bracing myself in case some “Lesbian Alarm” was activated, dropping a flashing, neon L and pink and purple triangle-shaped confetti from the ceiling. Sweat trickled from my forehead as, with forced nonchalance, I paid for the books and ran back to the safety of my car.

As you can see, it was not easy to break through the forced invisibility of hidden lives. Not only was it difficult to find voices, images and literature of these lives, but the search itself was threatening, keeping me from feeling safe in my search for this information. I am not bombarding myself with books, music and other validation that, yes, there are lots of others like me, and I am not alone. It was only when I found lesbians I could admire that I felt safe enough to examine myself. But even now, invisibility is a source of frustration. It takes such effort to find lesbians with whom to share and confide. Invisibility leads to isolation.

ISOLATION. Because, in many cases, lesbians and other oppressed groups must remain invisible in order to carry on successfully and safely in society, the invisibility keeps us isolated from one another. Because it is threatening to speak out; threatening in the sense that I would be putting myself at risk of losing friends, losing my status among my peers, or losing the respect of others; I am forced to remain isolated from other lesbians. However, throughout my life, I have not only been isolated from other lesbians. What is tragic is that I isolated the lesbian within myself, choosing to remain silent, even to myself. I isolated myself from my own feelings and perceptions, denying my own experiences, growing up learning not to trust myself. It is difficult enough to break through the isolation to reach out and find other lesbians. It is even more difficult, requiring greater courage, to break the isola-
tion from within, allowing the true self to surface. By isolating all of the powerful feelings, emotions and values, I allowed the most treasured and special part of myself, my ability to live, to be held down, a powerless voice. I myself was both the oppressor and the oppressed. I had internalized and sub­jected myself to oppression. I am sorry to say that my life to this point was held in this self-oppressed state.

It is apparent to me how invisibility and isolation serve as functions of oppression. As I grow comfortable with who I am and begin to break through the isolation to reveal myself to those friends closest to me, they are often replying that they too are lesbians. At first I was shocked. I couldn’t believe that even my best friend from high school was harboring the very same secret. All of these years we could have been a source of validation and support for one another. We could have shared our fears and feelings. The threat of being “different” would have been greatly reduces. But what a threat to society’s norm group. If all children felt comfortable in exploring their diversity with their friends, think of the power that would arise from within our schools. What a threat to the current, white, male, heterosexual values which dominate all institutions in our society, from schools to media.

I have always prided myself in valuing all people, yet because of oppression I was unable to value myself. The threat and power of oppression kept me from EVER muttering a word of my lesbian identity to anyone, even myself. This silence demonstrates power. Yet, a baby’s scream has finally pierced the silence, following her rebirth. This time, the child is ready for the challenge of the life ahead of her.

Even after having made the decision to write and submit this piece, I have been wrestling with the decision of whether to sign my name to it, or to remain anonymous. Signing my name and thereby identifying myself as a lesbian would allow me to break the shield of invisibility. Yet I continue to struggle with the feelings of fear associated with becoming visible.
Cold As A Stone

Somaly S. Meas

If I were as cold as a stone,
I would be motionless...
solid and unfeeling.

I would recall no memories
and built no sorrow.

Apathy would be within reach
and no regrets would have been made.

If I were as cold as a stone,
I would be contemptuous...
Lifeless and uninteresting.

My heart would not ache
at every engram of the past;

Thoughts of you will flow freely,
without restraint.
And...
My teardrops would not
stutter in silence.

Oh! this heartache of mine...
Crying in despair,
Reiterating memories of the past.

Crying for the remembrance;
Crying for you.
The one I loved.

For S.P.
I hope this will set your heart at ease.
The ghost passes me vaguely and I stare at his shadow; recognition occurs and I am looking deep into the soul of the creature. He lunges at me, for I have seen inside him and I know too much. He is scared and so am I. I briskly walk into the liquor store. A drunk is making love to his poison while a dueno is standing over him holding money. Lost in the aisles, I search for an exit but cannot find one. Doors and windows surround me and the vividness of this vast room fills me. I no longer wish for an exit. I want to stay and join the drunk on the floor making sweet, passionate love to a good friend. I can count on her. She takes me where I need to go.

She takes me away from danger and pain and confusion and anger. She takes me away from the ghosts. She takes me away from myself. She is my savior. She is eternally there, embedded in me forever. I am thankful I have her. Thankful for her, this figure I hold with superior curves and fine features and a swift mind of her own, possessing me with every breath. Life without her would be death and I'm not ready to die. She will help me live and accomplish great things in time. Together we will conquer the world. She tells me to be patient, so I am. I wait and continue making love to her, while the shadows slowly fall upon me.
The Grand Finale

Daniel Skolnick

deeep within my cell
I dig for the truth
Minutes go by like hours
Seconds even worse

I cried
The rain fell on the streets
Like rice at a wedding

I ate the apple
and swallowed a worm
She locked up my throat
and threw away the key

The rats can’t get in
The screams can’t get out.

Red
Blood red

The shed blew up and the cattle ran free
What is this pain inside of me?
Buried deep beneath the waves of
Sorrow, pity, empathy

Peel back the paint to expose the rot
Then cuddle the pain until the bleeding stops
Sifting through it all to find the key
Unlock the door and my prisoner is free!
Pretty Chilly

Carlos Suarez-Boulanger

Sit morbi fomes tibi cura.
They consider the root and occasion, the
embers, and coales, and fuell of the disease,
and seeke to purge or correct that.

John Donne

I was born with a metabolic deficiency. My body temperature was very high, to the point of compromising life functions. Something having to do with proteins denaturing and the melting status of fats; I don’t know. I think my metabolism was okay, but I couldn’t control my body temperature to adapt to the environment. Normally people sweat and look for a cold drink if it is too hot, or shiver and look for a sweater if it is too cold. They have a name for that: a creature capable of controlling his body temperature is called homeothermic. Cows and dogs and birds are homeothermic. I am poikilothermic, like a lizard or snake, I guess. Except my BMR is very high.

It didn’t happen right away. I was born normal but my temperature started to go up while I was still in the hospital. Of course I don’t remember any of that; my parents told me the whole story. They say that the doctors didn’t know what to do with me. At first they gave me an alcohol rub so that by evaporation the alcohol would take away some of the heat from my body and cool me down. That worked for awhile but my temperature went up again. Then they put me in cool water and that was fine except after awhile I started to get all wrinkled up like a big baby prune. Finally they put me in a small room with the air-conditioning going full blast. My father claims that I was left in a walk-in refrigerator along with meats for the kitchen. My mother says that is not true but my father insists. He says; “Why, don’t you remember that it was pretty chilly in there?”

My father is quite a character; doesn’t take many things seriously. He is not a goofball, but he just seems very kicked back. They brought me home from the hospital, and since it was winter they just kept me in an unheated room and I was fine. They say they kept the house really cold for awhile, walked around with big bulky sweaters and drank lots of tea and hot cocoa. During the summer the air-conditioning was always going full blast. When my father took me out for walks he used to fill my stroller with crushed ice, wrap me up in a light plastic jumper and then put me on top with a plastic pillow. My mother claims that he used to keep my bottle buried in the ice as well so that the milk wouldn’t go bad, along with a couple of cold beers for himself.

He liked to play practical jokes on people. Sometimes he would take a little piece of ice when nobody was watching and throw it down someone’s collar. Nobody could figure out where it came from. At other times, when the ice was melting and leaking a bit out of the stroller, he would stand around looking distracted or nonchalant and say, “Oh, don’t
worry, kids piss a lot, you know; that’s what babies do, piss and shit, shit and piss.” Then he’d go to a store, buy more ice, and pour it in the stroller with me, without explaining to the poor distressed salesperson why he was doing it. “Oh, he likes it that way,” he used to say. At other times he would offer an explanation, “It’s easy to carry these heavy bags of ice this way.” I don’t know how he managed to live so long.

My pet alligator chases bees around the room. If he catches one, my father lights one of the little antennae with a match and tries to smoke it. He’ll do just about anything to get a buzz.

My mother is pretty cool, and probably the only one who can deal effectively with my father. She acts very protective towards him, as if something could happen to him. Things could happen to him, but mostly of his own doing. He is always looking for trouble. Not really looking for trouble, but trouble finds him anyway. The old man is pretty handy, though. I guess he’s had lots of practice. He makes a point of knowing laws well, but also insists that one should try to break the law at least once a day. It’s a way of shaking complacency and routine, he says; when I was a kid we used to go around removing the tags from mattresses and pillows, or cross streets in the middle and not at intersections. He used to tell me that we should only obey the law as free individuals and not out of fear, that you are free only when you realize your options.

On the other hand, my mother is very level-headed. She is a practical person and wants everything in order. She is very methodical about things so she doesn’t have to deal too much with the chancy events of life. In a way she is also less capable of handling entropy.

My mother is like Sunyata, that ancient Hindu game: order in the midst of chaos. Perhaps that’s why she likes my father; they are very Yin and Yang and sort of complement each other. I don’t know; maybe she just likes a challenge now and then.

That’s the other thing about my parents. They seem to be into everything. They are not really into fads, more like they seem consumed by an infinite curiosity. Mostly it comes in the form of spending an inordinate amount of time looking for books and magazines, buying them, borrowing them, exchanging them, discussing them, arguing about them. They can be of any topic, although mostly they have to do with arts, music, philosophy and politics. They go to many concerts and art galleries. “We are just ‘culture vultures’”, says my father. He’s into jazz and weird music. He goes from Charlie Parker to Arabic music, his latest discovery. Now he wants to learn to hear quarter tones. Mom is more into folk and soft rock, mellow stuff. Not bad.

Isn’t it amazing the number of squirrels that come around begging for morsels of whatever you are eating? You sit on the grass and they start to come around, their noses up in the air and their hands up pretending to be praying or saluting Japanese style. They have shifty nervous eyes and are ready to run up a tree if you make a fast, jerky or threatening motion. I pull a bit of my peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich, which I know they really love.
(don’t you believe they love the way the peanut butter sticks to their gums?) and absent-mindedly I place it next to me on the grassy patch where I am sitting. They come around and eat it all up, the gluttons. Have you ever seen a squirrel on a diet? And yet they don’t seem to get really fat, but maybe we just don’t see the fat ones, maybe they are inside a tree trunk eating potato chips and watching reruns on TV.

When squirrels are distracted by eating or snatching crumbs from each other and filling their mouth pouches, my father says that you can actually remove their fuzzy tails. Most people think that their tail is part of their body, and it is, but it is fastened to their backsides with a small screw, so if you’re delicate of touch and a bit devious you can twist their tails counterclockwise when they are distracted. (Counterclockwise; what a great word, eh? It means moving in a direction opposite to the hands of a watch. Imagine all the points it could make playing Scrabble.) Just turn the tail slowly and it will come off; the squirrels don’t really notice it. At least not right away, but when they walk away they feel lighter than before and start to smell a rat, which of course is another rodent. Of course you don’t keep the tails; you don’t want to make a goofy Davy Crockett hat, do you? Just hide them for awhile, you know, as a practical joke. The squirrels get pissed, though. Rodents can’t take a joke.

When I was a little kid, I couldn’t go out and play much in the summer. The only sport I was allowed to do was swimming. I am not that good in sports but I like to run around, and I love to swim. During the winter months, though, I could go out all the time. I didn’t have to wear all those heavy jackets and bulky sweaters. I could run around in the snow, take my shoes off; it was really cool, and you know that winter here is longer than summer, so it’s not so bad. I could always go swimming outdoors in the winter but I was not supposed to overdo it. My father would sometimes take me to the ocean during the winter, and if I promised not to tell Mom he’d let me go in the water, especially if there were other people around. He told me to say the the water was very warm and that even a little kid like me could swim in it. A few people actually tried it. They turned blue right away and probably cursed us out to themselves all the while shivering like mad, their teeth chattering. My father would always say, “Pretty chilly, eh?” and laugh to himself.

A few years later when I was a bit older, he told this story: It was a very cold nippy day and there was this big Texan guy standing next to a little Mexican dude somewhere in some public urinal. The Texan says to the little guy, “Pretty chilly, eh?” and the Mexican looks the Texan up and down and says, “Yours is not so bad, senor.”
The foundation of most discrimination is fear. Fear of the unknown, of differences. With the African-American movement after the Civil War, whites feared that African Americans would take their jobs, steal their economic and social security, and gain influential political power.

In the late 1930's and early 40's the Japanese were put in holding camps, lost their homes and their economic security because the Americans were afraid of the Japanese. They feared that somehow, Japanese Americans would betray them during World War II.

In the early 1950's many people lost their jobs and their social standing because it was claimed that they were Communists. There was a cold war going on, and the Communist countries on the Eastern frontier were gaining power. Fearful of the internal security of the United States, President Truman and the Republican party which ran the Eightieth Assembly attacked any “unorthodox” thinking in the United States. Individuals from the government to the school systems were accused of Communist belief and lost their jobs.

Immigrants suffered discrimination in the 1700's and again in the 1950's because Americans were afraid of losing the established American culture. Immigrants were turned away; a quota was issued permitting only a certain number of immigrants to the U.S. per year. In the 1950's the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act said that aliens who were considered subversive would be deported, even if they had become naturalized citizens of the United States. These Acts also said that screening would be done of all immigrants before they arrived, and allowed their immigration to be rejected.

Before the Women's Suffrage Amendment was passed, women were not allowed to vote because men believed women would destroy the elections by voting for the wrong person. Men feared that women did not know their politics. Women were not allowed to work because men feared the job competition, and I believe men feared that women might prove to be better than some of them.

In the earliest times white men discriminated against Native Americans because they were afraid of them; that and the fact that they wanted the native American land for their own purposes.

In the South, before the Civil War, the citizens discriminated against Republicans because they feared losing their control over the African-Americans, and I think they feared not having the luxury of slaves doing their work.

In present day, society on the average discriminates against people of color because they are still afraid of job competition and political competition. The rich often discriminate against the poor because they are afraid that the poor will take their wealth, and that they will lose some of the luxuries they are so accustomed to. Society discriminates against homosexuals because they fear that the
American culture will lose sight of the image of the family, and I think that many fear for their own sexuality; they fear their own insecurities. Pro-Life discriminates against Pro-Choice because the supporters of that group are afraid that women won’t all believe that life is precious and that birth is a miracle, and I think they are afraid of the change in the American value system. There is discrimination against the poor because society is afraid of the anger they have for their condition, and because they are afraid of the role they will have to play in the restructuring of economics. People discriminate against the mentally and intellectually disadvantaged because they are afraid of them; they are afraid of what they do not understand.

Everyone is afraid; afraid of losing what they have, losing their value system; they fear change and risk. They fear losing their status, their reputation and their self-worth. People believe that worth can be judged by society’s opinion of them. They fear what they do not understand or have not experienced. Discrimination in all of its forms exist as much today as it did 300 years ago. When will it end?

Discrimination will end when people learn to deal with their fears; when people stop judging and start talking; when people ask instead of decide, and when people all take responsibility for the state of the nation. Discrimination will end when people decide they have had enough. Discrimination will end when people realize that change is not only inevitable but it is necessary for the growth and progress of our nation. It will end when people believe that they do not all have to agree in relation to ideals and values and that if they do not agree they can compromise or “turn the other cheek”. When they decide there is too much hatred, when the breeding of hatred ends and the idea of liking begins; instead of looking upon Affirmative Action as a threat, looking upon it as a blessing and know that these organizations would not have to exist if there were equal opportunities for all. Discrimination will end when all people choose more carefully the battles they take part in and fight things that jeopardize all Americans, not just themselves. Discrimination cannot end until all people of age, race, and religion join together in the fight for equal rights and a fair opportunity for all.
Grandpa's last bedscape:
white-sheeted mountain kneetops;
wintry face
breathing tiny,
letting death set in

like a river slowing into ice:
no more rushing,
no riverbend.

Grandma, in fits of fury,
served him tea in beveled thimble glasses:

Instant tea,
just so,
milk added,
deftly handed.

But crowded silence,
symphonic war.
I Gather These Bones

Leslie S. Gibbons

I phase into my darkness
as a pulse of light
blinking closed

I weave into matter
and it is beautiful
this robe of nighttime and burial
My bones and roots and shadows
are intimate
with the wet smell of fossils
beneath us

I dig into the dark
and fertile soil
searching for my body
I gather these bones
shaping them gently
beneath my fresh skin
molding myself around them
healing the pieces together

I make a sculpture
with these glowing white shapes
of light

My time has come
to offer
from the quiet of the Earth’s womb
a new life
Chapter 13

Sebastian Lockwood

The Oak & The Olive is a travel fiction that takes Simon and Liliana on a journey through Italy in search of Liliana’s father and film. Liliana is making a film about the murder of Napoleon on St. Helena. She is fascinated by the plot that sets one man next to Napoleon as confidant, historian, lover, cuckold, nurse, and murderer. In that context, what does trust mean? It applies to her own involvement with Simon and her potentially fatal search for her father. In this excerpt, Simon, in a fit of pique and anger, has left Liliana and driven alone to Sienna to drink, forget, and cool down. What he finds is a mad race and an intoxicating woman.

The Etruscan ladies stretch upon their divans as relaxed as only ashes can be. From this gentle garden with its columns, ruins and artifacts I can look down the long rolling slopes that disappear at the distant plate round horizon. Across this vast landscape the occasional clouds pass leaving dragon, elephant, or country shadows. I just saw England pass over the miniature vineyards and baked plains - she was the mad witch riding her pig ever in chase of elusive Ireland. Behind me the little museum displays row upon row of the small urns that hold the ashes of those patrician Etruscan women who rode their catafalques two and three thousand years ago. Outside in the streets are the mad of Volterra and the endless alabaster shops. Even though in the plains it is almost a hundred degrees, here inside the city walls it is windy grey and cold.

I parked the green bomba, Liliana’s shell, outside the gates. As I passed through them I read a plaque in memory of the forty thousand American troops who died in the slow taking of Volterra. I tried to visualize forty thousand men - I started with school, three hundred, University, twenty thousand - all the inhabitants of Sheringham lined up on the cliffs: impossible. And how many others? How many Italians and how many cock helmeted Germans? You feel the blood in the land as you rise to this aery place.

On the stone corners stand men who stare in that sightless way - they are there at each turn as you turn and turn about the maze of streets. I see myself there in their place - I see Lapo there.

I feel sick tired and depressed. I want to go back to Liliana - lie between her breasts, smell her neck, kiss her shoulders: but there is an obstinate will to go on, to go away, to create a rupture just for the sake of then repairing it in a new alignment. I must let her see who she is alone with him, without me: what I mean to her.

I drink beer in a square near the walls and listen to the Oxbridge whinnying of a group of extremely loud and self-satisfied English. In the tourist shops I buy a small alabaster of the leaning tower: a gift for Liliana, it will go well in the green bomba. As my debate about whether to go on or back continued, I overheard the English grotesques
talking about the Palio in Siena:
- Simply wonderful, horses and Italians all crazed and drugged and quite mad, absolutely mad, we must see it and if we hurry, oh we must, yes, they race bareback in the square on these perfectly mad nags that are nothing but ready for theackers yard; so, so. . . native.

Despite them, this sounds diverting and just what I need: a Palio adventure. I return back to the van and drive with a vengeance determined to out-Ferrari them all in my little bottle green ex post-office bomba of a Moriss eleven hundred van as I go hurtling down the crags like a spiraling green vulture swooping after fresh death.

It is a relief to leave Volterra behind - but I want to go back, I want to go back with Liliana. It is a very powerful place. There is something important there behind that stone mask: all that Etruscan business, the ladies in recline on their small urns, the madmen on the corners.

Siena is close.

I got a little lost in Poggibonsi, found a welcome bar with sixties American furniture and startlingly good color pictures of Manhattan: a fresh view of the stone henges of Brooklyn Bridge. After panini, Cinzano and a much needed visit to the bog - the English have me talking that way - I got directions from the friendly owner and headed south through Monteriggioni. As I drove I felt something heavy banging on my thigh and realized that I had driven off with the huge bathroom door key. I was already almost a half hour south, and with a shot of guilt knew that I was not now going to turn around and take it back: mea culpa - one of many. Soon I started to see the gay banners of the different contrades being flown from the cars that were all heading into Siena. I stopped the bomba in a large tourist parking lot on the edge of town and crawled in the back for a pizzolino - a wee and much needed nap.

After a half hour of sweaty rest on the mattress, I joined the crowd that was now flowing into town. The van smelt and felt too much like Liliana - every book, every tool, her clothes here and there, every little thing had her personality stamped upon it. Liliana! Xist! As an offering I placed my alabaster tower of Pisa in a special spot on her shelf.

The streets were packed with a festive crowd - a crowd riding a wave of excitement with a cordite whiff of violence beneath it. Horses being led about, elaborate flags everywhere, characters in medieval costume, everyone wearing a scarf and shouting incomprehensibly. I was swept along by the wave that pulsed through the small and ancient streets. I was on the lookout for a drink, a safe cafe. Through the crush I made my way under an awning and into a dark restaurant. Inside, everyone was at one table: cook, waiters and patrons. Above them, the cyclops black and white television eye that was showing scenes from the street and the grand piazza. Things were about to begin. When I pulled a chair out at an empty table, one of the waiters looked back and then waved me over to the big table where they shuffled and made room.

- Inglesi?

- Si.

- This day we all sit together, this is Palio day. We are of Civetta. What would you like?

Campari-soda. Pasta, any pasta. The waiter I had sat next to strolled to the bar while keeping a dark eye on the box. Next to me sat a woman in her mid twenties, not exactly beautiful, but exuding health and strength - a sexuality in her sheer aliveness.
- You speak English. She said with a heavy accent.
- Yes.
- I love to speak English. I practice with you. I tell you all about Palio. First you must know that we are of Civetta. Say it.
- C-i-v-e-
- No, no. Ci - ve - tta. Ve, Ve, Vetta. You say it.
- Civetta. What is it?
- Owl. We are of owl. Our enemy is Torre. This is, how you say .
- Tower.
- Ah yes. Tower. Very good. Very good. I will show you. You drink and then I will show you Palio.
I was taken in hand. Before we left the bar I had been introduced to the contrades - the sections of the city that compete in the Palio: they are like clans. I had to repeat each obscure name. This was becoming more like an Italian lesson than I cared for, but, never question the luck of finding a beautiful guide in the midst of an extraordinary moment. And so I repeated, schoolboy fashion:
- Aquila, eagle - Bruco, caterpillar - Chiocciola, snail - Drago , dragon - Giraffa, giraffe - Istrice, porcupine - Leocorno, unicorn - Lupa, wolf (and this she added, with a smile, was Lupa, the female wolf, the she-wolf) - Oca, goose - Onda, wave (she added that Onda was a great rival, like Torre: they must defeat Torre at all costs) - Pantera, panther - Selva, forest - Tartuca, turtle, and the last of these, with its onomatopoea in both languages: Valdimontone, ram.
This was a linguistic antipasto. Rolling the long sibylline sounds of the Italian that are then arrested by the short brutish grunts of the English: Valdimontone / Ram.
My guide drank with me and the table became more and more boisterous. I was pressed against her, arm along arm, thigh along thigh. We were laughing easily and the campari was flowing and the Civetta/Owl was in flight against the dark ogre of Torre/tower.
- Now we go to find our place.
Outside I felt unsteady. That was a lot of Campari after a long and angry drive. I couldn’t concentrate on Liliana or Lapo. Only this strong beauty breathing through the crowd, laughing and jeering, pulling me along.
- Your name? I shouted over the noise.
- Lucia. Lucia Degortes. My father was a great rider in the Palio. He won for many, many different contrade.
- How can he win for many different, wasn’t he Owl, like you?
- A rider rides for whoever pays best, sometimes to win, sometimes to lose. It is very . . . delicate. Here we are, go on in.
We were now in the Piazza del Campo. A shell shaped piazza that had been filled with a rich red earth to form the race track. We made our way up into packed bleachers where we were squeezed up together by the press of bodies. We were In piedi in what they call ‘the dog stands.’
The sun roasted the crowd. Below the contrades were marching around the piazza waving their banners, throwing the brilliant flags on their barge pole handles high into the air where they cartwheeled down and were caught with a simple twist of the wrist to be airborne again. A piazza of dazzling color. Everywhere the Palio flags with the three eyed madonna, the virgin, and around her the insignia of all the contrades. People passing out in the heat and being handed down the stands to be rushed away. The sweat of the crowd and then the horses being led into hoots and jeers as they parade about the track. Some of them look wild, bulging eyes and flanks in a lather. Lucia tells me that those are
the horses that were given too much,
- Too much what?
- Oh, speed, drugs, whatever makes
  them run fast. They are all drugged up for
  this. But if they give too much, then they go
  out of control - look there at the Bruco horse -
too much! Crazy already and they won't run,
you will see, there will be start after start.
One time Selva took the smell from a mare's
sex and rubbed on the post of Oca's horse - he
could not be controlled, could not run. Ah,
here they come now.
As the horses came in each jockey was
ceremoniously handed a short whip.
- Nerbo, the whip, it is nerbo - the
how you say . . .
And Lucia grabbed by groin and squeezed . . .
- How you say this?
- Prick! I laughed as I swelled.
- It is so, eh. Prick - this nerbo is prick
of a baby cow, that is the whip.
- Do that again!
- Aha . . . if we win. Ci-Ci-Civetta!

Ci-Ci-Civetta!
The heat and the body swell were
overwhelming. The crowd shifting as one -
that transformation of a mass that joins
individuals into one voice, one heaving breath,
one rhythmic muscle and laughing straining
flesh. I was intoxicated by it, intoxicated by
Lucia. Where was this going? Away from
Liliana . . . away . . .
Looking at Lucia's bawdy laugh,
Liliana suddenly seemed hard and contained -
middle class and anxious - judgmental and
confining. She wanted it all one her terms.
How lucidly anger and rejection turn love into
hate. Fuck her! Fuck Him! I lent over and
kissed Lucia, a long tongue swallowing kiss
that brought our sweating bodies arching up
and into each other. And then the crowd was
up on its feet with a shout: it was the first false
start of many.

Our stands were at the tightest corner
on the track. Beneath us there were mattresses
ready to catch the falling riders. The corner of
San Martino. The race is a bareback hell-for-
leather scramble around a packed piazza while
the jockeys hack and pelt each other with calf
pricks!

And they were off. Turn after turn,
mud slung up into the crowd from the hooves.
The roar: O-O-Onda! Ni-Ni-Nichio! Ci-Ci-
Civetta! On the second round, with a gasp of
horror from the stand, Civetta's rider was
down on the mattresses and crawling for
cover.
- Stronzo
Screamed Lucia.
- Stronzo longo! Ahyeayayayay! San
Martino! Stronzo!
It felt as if the owl bleachers might
collectively lean out and claw his face to
shreds. I understood that he had cheated them
and thrown the race at the San Martino corner
- the well-eyed mattress that he had calculated
a little too clearly. Lucia told me that Tower
must have paid him to take a fall. Dark Furry.
Tower came second, but won its victory by
forcing owl out.

On our way out there were plenty of
roving fists and sullen stares. Plenty of heat
and light. Plenty of adrenalin. Through the
fights and laughter, the packed streets, Lucia
and I walked in a tighter and tighter embrace.
Bitter compari with less and less soda. Our
mutual lust seeking a place. She could not go
home. The mattress in the van - as good a fall
as San Martino. Could I overwhelm Liliana's
presence - desecrate her space, take this
woman into her shell? Yes and be buggered.
Ayayayay. For this . . . For that leg winding
up and over my buttock, my hand lifting her
buttock up and into me: the smell of oleander
about us.

Womanthought
We fell into the van, crawled along the mattress. I had to go outside to work at locking the back doors, which was always a job, as the mattress was too large and spilled out as soon at the doors were open. We were slugging straight from the bottle of campari now. Sweet bitter hot liquor burning inside, our tongues mixing in it: I wanted that taste inside her. Ripping at clothes, parts bursting out to be licked. The bottle swaying between us. I pulled her over on top of me and pushed her up with my hands. I hold her breasts as she straddles me and I pull her forward so she is sitting on my chest. Her breasts loom above like torpedoes. She drops a breast in my mouth and I inhale it. I pull on the bottle and move her up again so that as she lowers herself onto my face I squirt the campari inside her. She shrieks and gasps. Her cunt is now a hot thrashing dip of the bitter drink. She screams and writhes and I pull her back down and onto my erection. She stops and turns, and then as I did, pulls on the bottle and lowers her full mouth into my prick - the Campari flows out in acid trails as she engulfs me and lifts herself back over my face. We are locked together in a heaving knot. Time after time we repeat in every way possible. The bottle is empty and I pass out in contor-

tion with her in the heat and sexuality of the night and its ongoing cheering chant of the Palio celebration. 

In the morning I wake alone.

The sun is already high and hot. I am drenched in sweat. Everything is sticky and red. The van is trashed. Someone has gone through everything. The back door ajar. Xist! I’ve been robbed, and what’s worse, Liliana’s meticulous interior is one ugly red Campari stain. Xist!

Head and gut heaving as I roll out, to the shock of a passing group of Japanese tourists, who stare at the naked, morning erect, dazed, thin white man, covered with livid red stains, who totters into the burning light. I look around at the crowd that starts to gather - then realize what I look like: the pomegranate stains on my soap white skin, eyes shot. I creep back into the dark womb of the van and begin the slow and agonized process of rehabilitation.

In the empty bottle, a note.

Ciao darling. You were robbed, it was not me, I could do nothing, you must understand - we were followed - I could do nothing. Ciao, forgive me, Lucia . . . Your own Civetta.
Where’s the radio?” Eddie asked, carrying the last duffel bag in from the car.

“You won’t believe it, but it’s in the next room—or maybe two rooms down,” I answered. A Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash duet was crackling through the entire Lamplighter Motel and grounds.

Eddie leaned out the front door of Room 3, yelling, “Hey, down there, turn your motherfucking radio off.”

“Up yours,” was the decisive reply, as the radio went from too loud to blaring.

“REDNECK!” Eddie screamed, above the blare. He slammed the door, and the shade which had been delicately balanced on the nightstand lamp tumbled to the floor.

“Goddam fucking hippie,” was the reply which sailed through the closed door.

“Where are Amy and Robbie?” I asked.

“They’re out at the pool giggling over nothing,” Eddie replied, his voice tolerant and parental, a tone that irritated some of his friends, although I liked it. “They’ve got some good Colombian dope.” Smoking never made Eddie silly. It improved his sense of humor—made it even more incisive and dry.

“That flashing orange light adds a lot to the decor,” Eddie commented, motioning to the window, where the “Vacancy” sign was reflecting, about once every two seconds. “Oh well, for $8 each, what can you expect.”

“Lowlife, Eddie,” I answered absent-mindedly. I was doing a crossword puzzle, and Eddie stood still for a moment, apparently unsure whether I’d just thought of a word that fit or was answering him. “How far is it to Washington?”

“Far enough to require us to stay here for the night. Why? Did you see that cockroach?” Eddie said, looking down at the bathroom floor.

“What cockroach? No. I was just wondering what time I had to drag you all out of bed tomorrow so we’d make it to the march on time.”

“No earlier than 6 AM. I’d rather miss the march.” Eddie’s voice was sharp. He was tenser than usual this evening. It didn’t look like he’d be asleep any time soon.

I jumped up and joined Eddie at the window when we heard a deafening roar, which turned out to come from a painted van with a broken muffler. Six guys with long hair and beads tumbled out. Two of them went into Room 4, to our right, carrying a keg. The others headed for the pool. Before long,
two of them were in the pool, fully dressed. Robbie and Amy were offering joints to the dry ones. I was glad to be off dope tonight. Someone had to keep track of the overall situation. Eddie usually filled that role, but tonight he was too wound up. He might get himself into a jam.

The two wet hippies were walking toward their room when a pickup drove up, with dirt bikes in the back end. Seven NRA stickers graced the back window, one for each year since 1963. The clean-shaven driver and passenger both had crewcuts. They sauntered toward the office and banged on the locked door.

"Go get Amy and Robbie," I said to Eddie, trying to be decisive without becoming hysterical.

"Shame to interfere with their education," Eddie muttered. "Bet they've never seen Klansmen before." He went out the door and started toward the pool.

The Crewcuts hadn't succeeded in getting anyone's attention at the office. Now they approached Eddie. I had always considered Eddie a universally acceptable type. (You could take him anywhere). His hair was just a little on the long side, but working the "Justice", as he called the government department, he had to be ready to appear as a clean-cut lawyer at a moment’s notice. Politically, he was slightly left of the S.D.S., but the Crewcuts must have considered him the least weird person around.

Eddie pointed down the road. I thought it was a good move—directing them to another motel. But just as he did, a chubby gray-haired man in a bathrobe unlocked the office door and let them in. "Shit," I mumbled under my breath. I'd expected trouble tomorrow, but it seemed to be creeping up on us, a little too early for my taste.

Eddie went to the pool and sat down with Amy, Robbie and the dry hippies. Someone was handing him a joint when the Crewcuts came out of the office and started walking towards the room on our left. As they passed the hippies' room, a hand came through what must have been a hole in the screen with two paper cups of beer. Without missing a stride, one of the fellows spit into one of the cups, and the other knocked both cups to the ground.

"Mellow out, a little, huh, guys? We're all in this together," I heard Eddie call out from poolside.

"Keep your nose in your own business, if you know what's good for you," one of the Crewcuts yelled back.

The Crewcuts went into their room, things calmed down, and I took a shower. When I came out, Eddie was packing our things, and there were footsteps on the roof over our room. Amy and Robbie were already in the car. As Eddie and I got in and he started the engine, I looked up at the roof. Four of the hippies had dragged the keg over the Crewcut’s room, and were about to tilt it over the edge above the room, making obscene gestures.

"Good timing, Eddie."

"It’s costing us another ten dollars each," he said, with a straight face. I never did figure out whether or not he'd actually bribed the hippies to wait till we were gone. 

Womanthought
Lying in bed with my mother early one evening before I was to go to camp, I noticed that my father was getting dressed to go out alone for the evening. After he left, I asked my mother what was wrong. She told me that she would explain everything as soon as I returned home from camp.

I began smoking cigarettes and refused to eat. I spent a lot of time alone during those two weeks away. I wanted to be alone because I was suffering greatly inside. I lost a lot of weight during this time. The kitchen boys sold me a joint to smoke and I was clearly heading for trouble. I refused to participate in any of the camp-like offerings and felt as though I was totally alone in my suffering. I felt an incredible need to be freed from myself, escaping from what was waiting for me at home at any cost.

When I arrived home I was told by my mother that she and my father were filing for a divorce.

Outwardly, I behaved as though it did not bother me at all. I acted like a mature, responsible adult and pondered all that was explained to me. I put on a great show and expressed nothing of my real feelings to anyone.

The pain and hurt was so deep and I did not have the resources, at twelve years old, to express my pain. A monster had reared his ugly head and thrust himself into my life. He clawed my heart out of my chest with his bare hands.

Dark days followed the dawn of my parent’s divorce. Drugs and alcohol provided a welcome sanctuary for my saddened spirit, but they carried an unforeseen and unwelcome companion, apathy. My grades plummeted and my social scenario changed; all the time I was unaware of the desperate place the monster within had taken my weary soul. I was standing on the edge of a precipice. People kept trying to save me from falling, but I was blind. The alcohol and the drugs had done exactly what I had wanted them to do - eliminate all access to my senses.

The pain turned to anger. I hated everyone, especially my parents, and treated anyone in an authoritative position with the utmost disrespect.

Unlike in fairy tales when the shining knight slays the monster and rescues the princess in distress, I had been slain by the monster.
When Irish Eyes Are Crying

Jane Leschinsky

These eyes once shining blue, Irish eyes,
They sparkled just for you and yet
The void and loss resounded
Loud enough to drown my heart.
A loyal heart, washed away with
Ears that so enjoyed a baby's yawn
Legs that loved to dance beneath the moon
To hear children laugh
Dean Martin swoon and still
Waiting on your absent kiss.
Still it exists, the tightrope of life
And all my nets denied me.
Forgive me, God, most days I wish I'd fall
But I cling.
Was my need to be loved
Stronger than my desire to love myself?
Where lies his punishment?
His crime exists, his need to control me
I confess my longing to be held and rocked
Attracted him to me like a shark
A shark to a bleeding wound.
My lover turned ruler to jailer then Judas
Stealing from me all I ever looked forward to
My children! And now so alone
How could this be? It was my womb
Mine that was fulfilled by so many
Their voices faint, their silhouettes fade.
I can survive through my own miracle
My miracle of mirage-Behold!
The family I had hoped for
The family I need to see and hear
The feelings I need to feel
My mirage is my dream of my reality.
Some may call it denial but it is survival
In a world which offered no place for me
And no one with which to share it.
You don’t even know me, I’m a Princess
Someone’s true love, burning desire
I am a doctor with healing medicines
I will warm, nourish, and coddle my loved ones
I am the gracious woman of this palace
I care for many and am loved by all
This is not denial but a way to win
A way to win the love I need
My denial is a well designed dress worn
As a brave knight would his suit of armor
In a world of uncertainty and death
My death denied dignity
And all that is left be my voice
Let it hang forever in the air......
UNFAIR.......
The world changes
friends move in separate ways
relationships become experience
reality has new meaning
I am new
changing as the seasons

Conceived in the spring
flourishing through summer
descending with the passage of fall
perishing in the depth of winter

Only to begin again
Contributor’s Notes

Violet Bassett is a sophomore in the Middle School Math and Science Programs.

Greta Buck is a student in the WLC Outreach Program. She works part time as a secretary at M.I.T. and as an ESL teacher through the Boston Church of Christ.

Barbara Callahan is a freshman in the Human Services Program, specializing in Arts Therapy.

Judy Campbell graduated from Lesley in 1963. She has a Master’s in Fine Arts from Goddard College. She’s a practicing artist and writer who is experimenting with middle age. So far, she likes it.

Kathleen Collins is an alumna (‘90 / Counseling Psychology) and presently works in Graduate Admissions at Lesley.

Naomi Congalton has taught Art at the Undergraduate School for eleven years; she works mainly in drawing media. Naomi graduated with an MFA from the Lesley Outreach Program in 1985.

Erin Connelly is a sophomore in the Undergraduate Education Program. She hopes to someday teach in New York City and eventually become a college professor.

Kristen Lynn Darnell is a junior in the Undergraduate Education Program. She wants to someday write and illustrate her own book.

Holley Daschbach is getting her Master’s Degree in the Creative Arts and Learning Program. She is presently student teaching at the Cambridge Friends School, and hopes to teach at a Quaker school next year.

Joan Dolamore works in the School of Management at Lesley College, where she teaches and advises students in degree completion.

Rebecca Drey is a freshman in the Undergraduate Human Services Program, and is the Fiction Editor of this issue of Womanthought. She is pursuing a career in broadcasting next year.

Alexandra Farah is the pen name for Alice LoCicero, who teaches at the Undergraduate School.

Spring 1992
Jennifer Gage is a sophomore in the Undergraduate Human Services Program. She is on a leave of absence this semester.

Leslie Gibbons graduated from the Creative Arts and Learning Program last May. She says, "Both personally and professionally, my work involves freeing the imagination to allow for expression, empowerment and celebration through the arts."

Andrea Goff-Tower is a sophomore in the Undergraduate Education Program / Literature and Art. She is expecting her first child in July.

Kristen Heller is a senior in the Undergraduate Human Services Program. She has been published in Womanthought for two years, and has also been published in the American Poetry Anthology. Kristen is happy to say she's finally graduating.

Jennifer Hill is a junior in the Undergraduate Education Program. She has been on the Womanthought staff for two years and is the Editor of this issue. Jen attributes her poetry writing to the craziness of life.

Kate Huston is a junior majoring in Elementary Education and minoring in Art.

Stephanie Krauss is a senior in the Undergraduate Human Services Art Therapy Program. She has been on the Womanthought staff, as well as being published, for the past two years and is the Art Editor of this issue. Stephanie still doesn't know what to do with her life, and is currently freaked out.

Kris Lagace, our Cover Girl, is a senior in the Education Program. She is specializing in Elementary School Math and Art. She believes that these two fields can help to embellish each other.

Jane Leschinsky graduated with a BS in Human Services in December, 1991. She will be entering the Lesley Counseling Psychology Masters Program in the fall.

Elise Letourneau moved from Canada to Boston in 1985 to pursue her lifelong ambition as a musician. She received her Masters in Education from Lesley in 1991.

Sebastian Lockwood is a novelist and poet. He has two novels in manuscript: Eely Isle and The Oak & The Olive. He performs his poetry from a collection entitled Lion Up, with a band, at various Boston venues. He teaches at Lesley College and Northeastern University, and lives in Cambridge. He grew up in Canada, Brussels and England and has traveled extensively in Italy.
Elisa Lucozzi has been working in the Office of Student Affairs for the past three years, writing poetry that’s gotten good since she met Anne Pluto. She’d also like the name of the magazine changed to *Commonthought* (Thanks, Mike Galvin!)

Claudina Massena is a freshman in the Undergraduate Human Services Program. She plans to use her talents to serve people in the best way she can.

Vivian Marcow-Speiser, Phd., ADTR is a dancer, dance therapist, and Creative Arts educator. She is an Associate Professor and Program Director in Creative Arts and Learning at the Lesley College Graduate School.

Tara Martin works in the Graduate Education Office and takes classes in the CCDA Program at Lesley.

Caryn Mayo is an undergraduate student who is eagerly awaiting to teach future generations. She has been on the *Womanthought* staff for two years.

MBFXC is the signature of Marialice Curran, who is a graduate student in Creative Arts and Learning. She has a BA from the University of Arizona in Fine Arts.

Somaly S. Meas is a senior in the Undergraduate Education Program. To date, she has written about twenty-five pieces and hopes to someday publish a collection.

Molly Morgan is a graduate student in the Art Therapy Program. We’ve had the pleasure of publishing her artwork for three years running.

Rebecca Nye is a graduate student in the Intercultural Relations Program. She hopes to practice cross-cultural counseling.

Jennifer Orvis is a Middle School Math/Science major with roots in Memphis, Tennessee and Putney, Vermont. She has been writing for ten years, and this is her first time being published.

Jennifer Peskin is a junior in the Day Care Leadership Program with a double major in Social Science.

Anne Elezabeth Pluto teaches at the Undergraduate School. She’s been the *Womanthought* advisor for the past three years. She hopes to change the magazine name next year to *Commonthought* (Thanks again, Mike Galvin!)

*Spring 1992*
Foster Rockwell is currently a student in the CCDA Program. He is working on his poetry and fiction in hopes of publication. He was published in Womanthought in 1990.

Stephanie Ruediger is a sophomore in the Undergraduate Education Program. She claims that her poetry usually comes from her heart.

Bharati Samnani is a freshman in the Undergraduate Human Services Program. She is the Business Manager of Womanthought this year. Her piece is dedicated to her favorite person in the world - her mother.

Leigh K. Sasen is a sophomore in the Undergraduate Education Program.

Sigal Shapira is an international student from Israel. She is enrolled in the Creative Arts and Learning Program. She is there in order to help build a world where one can be creative.

Edy Shapiro is a junior in the Undergraduate Human Services Program. She is the Poetry Editor of this issue of Womanthought, and this is her second year being published.

Daniel Skolnick will be starting the Intermotive-Expressive Therapy Program in the fall of 1992. He has been writing for many years, and says that writing expresses his soul.

Stacy Spumberg was the Editor of Womanthought in 1990 and 1991. She is a student in the Undergraduate Human Services Program. Writing and literature are her temporary escapes from reality.

Carlos Suarez-Boulangger previously worked for the Lesley College Substance Abuse Prevention Project. He is currently a collective member of the South End Press. This is his second story published in Womanthought.

Jennifer L. Thompson is a graduate student in the Art Therapy Program. Sometimes she uses her poetry to express her artwork.

Karen Tripp is a graduate student working on an MA in Intercultural Relations.

Tracy Wright is doing graduate work in Education. She is Womanthought's Staff Photographer, and also one of the magazine's Assistant Editors.
Fish Tales