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Calliope

Armstrong Atlantic State University
Savannah, GA
2010

Volume XXVI

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A Note from the Editor:

Acceptance into a literary publication is an honor bestowed upon those individuals who value their own creative gifts enough to explore them to their fullest extents. It is with great honor and pleasure that we present to you the 2010 edition of *Calliope*.

Calliope is published annually by and for the students of Armstrong Atlantic State University. The Student Government Association of AASU provides funding for each publication. Student submissions are collected through the fall semester for the following year's publication. All submissions are read and chosen through an anonymous process to ensure equal opportunity for every entrant. The Lillian Spencer Awards are presented for outstanding submissions in fiction, poetry, and art. The recipients of this award are chosen by the staff from the student submissions received that year.

For more information, or if interested in working on the 2011 Calliope staff, please contact Dr. Christopher Baker in the Languages, Literature and Philosophy department located in Gamble Hall.

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"Lips and Teeth"
Christopher Berinato
Lillian Spencer Award: Fiction

I was bewitched by Rebecca Sullivan's lips, smirking sassily at me from the silver screen. She was a ginger-headed vixen that starred in too few Hollywood films before she disappeared from the face of the Earth in December of 1957. I wasn't even born yet when she was lost to the world, but I fell in love with her when I saw *The Lady Awaits* on television at the age of twelve. Puberty made me highly receptive to her feminine wiles. It was her lips that attracted me the most. Her plump and protruding upper lip sat on top of a thin and recessed lower lip. The disparity in size and shape between the upper and lower parts of her mouth made Rebecca look like she was perpetually biting her bottom lip, which gave the false impression that she was vulnerable. On screen she was anything but vulnerable. She may have looked like a frightened child when her expression was inert, but the slightest curl at the edge of her mouth transformed her into a tigress. It was nearly impossible to cast her in romance films because anything demure about her face was eradicated when she smiled. However, she was a favorite amongst directors to play the femme fatale in Film Noirs or the witty foil to the hapless male lead in screwball comedies.

I spent my life collecting Rebecca Sullivan memorabilia. Naturally, I owned all eight of her films on 35mm prints. I bedecked my office in all of her movie posters and pin-ups. I had an autographed photo over my desk, but it was not her signature. It was actually William Holden's autograph, but I absolutely had to purchase the rare photograph anyway. It was a candid black-and-white of Rebecca Sullivan draped over the laps of actor William Holden, director Billy Wilder, and producer Charles Brackett on the set of *Darling of Brooklyn*. The compromising position caused her white shorts to ride up her legs, revealing more of her curvy thighs. One sandal hung off of the big toe of her left foot while she playfully twirled the other sandal around her finger. Her smile was big and silly; she was having fun with the boys. The men grinned half-heartedly, trying to pretend that it was typical Hollywood hi-jinks. Wilder and Holden stared hard into the camera

so as not to reveal their titillation, but Brackett had his hands and eyes all over her. I ignored the leering perverts whenever I looked at the photo, allowing Rebecca's incandescence to wash them out.

My prize piece of memorabilia was an actual dress that Rebecca Sullivan wore in *The Lady Awaits*. It was an evening gown with long sleeves and dangling cuffs. The neck line was not cut to reveal much cleavage; Rebecca had many curves, but not in her chest. The color, hunter green, complimented the cascading fire of her hair. I had the dress prominently displayed in a cherry wood and glass case that I built, rather than bought, to show the garment proper respect. Any scent she may have left in the material had long dissipated, but running the satin through my fingers would send jolts of excitement up my arms and into my stomach, as though I were caressing the actress herself. I never tried the dress on. I'm not some transvestite weirdo. It wouldn't have fit me anyway.

My wife, Pam, was always very tolerant of my passion. Not understanding, not sympathetic, but tolerant. I brought home a steady income as a copy writer for an advertising firm and I was a loving father to our ten year old son, Daniel, so she was willing to put up with my peculiarities. I eventually put Pam's tolerance to the test and nearly ruined our marriage when the Estate of the presumed dead Rebecca Sullivan finally put her Hollywood home on the market thirty-two years after her mysterious disappearance. It was a modest home by Hollywood standards and in some disrepair after three decades of vacancy, which put the price just within my means. I sold my company stock, scraped the bottom of our savings and borrowed a portion of Daniel's college fund in order to buy the house.

When I told Pam about our purchase I had to put padlocks on my office door to protect my collection from her wrath until she lost steam and accepted the idea of moving from San Diego to Los Angeles. As long as the school system was good and Pam had executive control of the landscaping, it didn't matter to her in the end where we settled down.

Moving in only took a weekend since we barely had enough furniture to fill a two bedroom apartment; the new home had four bedrooms with a spacious living room, large dining room, sunroom, and a parlor for entertaining. Unfortunately all of Rebecca Sullivan's possessions had been sold in an estate sale and I didn't

have a dime to spare after buying the house, so many of the rooms were to remain empty for the time being. Because of the lack of furnishings, every tiny sound echoed throughout the house like a cough in church. I could tell that it got on Pam's nerves. She would move through the house as quietly as possible and began to communicate with me in irritated, hushed whispers.

Daniel's first instinct was to explore the cavernous house and find all of the best hiding spots. Closets, cabinets and laundry room were thoroughly inspected. Daniel was especially excited by the wine cellar with its vast potential for concealment. The cellar was low ceilinged and low lit. There were two rows of wine shelves and various chests and storage, all perfect for hiding a ten year old boy.

I'm sure Daniel was overjoyed to find a walk-in closet at the rear of the cellar. A notorious clothes horse, Rebecca Sullivan had a monstrous wardrobe that filled every room in the house and encroached even into the cellar. It would serve perfectly as his hideout. I could picture Daniel downstairs, running his hands over every inch of the closet and evaluating where he would put his stockpile of weapons, drawing materials and Matchbox cars.

I didn't hear Daniel's scream, but it must have occurred given the look on his face when he returned upstairs to find me. Every orifice in his face was gaping open--his eyes, his nostrils, his mouth. A choked sob emitted from his throat and his eyes cast about while he tried to remember how to construct a sentence. After composing himself he said, "There's a dead lady in the basement."

I led Daniel by the hand back downstairs to investigate, more concerned with his expression of terror than the prospect of actually finding a corpse. The lights to the cellar were all on and the closet was wide open. At the back of the closet was a narrow opening that I didn't remember seeing the first time I checked out the cellar. I understood why when I approached it. A panel that blended perfectly into the wall was open revealing a short corridor behind the wall. The corridor was illuminated by the light that leaked in from the cellar behind Daniel and me, casting demonic shadows onto the floor.

"How did you find this?" I asked. Daniel pointed at the indentation of a nearly invisible button that he had

accidentally pressed.

The corridor looked like the hull of a submarine, with curved steel walls and rows of rivets. Five yards in was a thick vault door that was open a crack. A stale smell wafted out of the darkness beyond like bad breath. I told Daniel to stay put.

I had to admit the child was a brave one. I don't think I would have been able to go any further if I didn't know that Daniel had gone in already. I braced myself to enter.

I opened the vault all of the way to let in some more light. Inside the dimly lit space was a living room with contemporary 50's décor: pink and green geometric shapes on the wallpaper, checkered carpet, blue tweed upholstered furniture, fully stocked glass bar, pink triangular coffee table, futuristic radio and record player. The room was completely clutter-free, as though it had never been used. Along the left wall was a sofa which held the shriveled corpse that Daniel had seen. It...she was laying on her back with one arm dangling on the floor and her chin resting on her chest so that she was looking directly at me. The dark sockets that were once her eyes gazed at me sorrowfully.

It was Rebecca Sullivan. It had to be. I realized that this hidden vault was a bomb shelter. It would explain why she was never found. It was a stroke of dumb luck that Daniel discovered the secret switch that revealed this room. If she had died here thirty years ago then she was remarkably well preserved. She was dry and wrinkled like a mummy, rather than wet and rotting. Most of her face was wasted away to the skull, but some of her red hair remained. What had been her seductive lips were pulled tightly back over her perfect teeth.

Had she been murdered? Had she died here naturally? Had she locked herself away in this unknown shelter out of Cold War hysteria? I sat on the floor to contemplate my discovery. What was I going to do with her? I couldn't tell Pam. It would be the last straw in a tenuous marriage. Once Pam knew, the police and the press would follow. The house and our lives would become a circus. I didn't want that kind of exposure; I just wanted to privately worship Rebecca, my love...

Rebecca. It was really her before me. I scooted slowly across the carpet to seat myself next to the sofa. I gently took her hand from the floor. It was gnarled and brittle like fragile Papier-mâché. When I

lifted her arm, there was a crackling from her shifting body. Rebecca's head lolled towards me and her jaw creaked open.

If you're going to hold my hand, you better put a drink in it.

I nearly fainted when I heard her voice. It was a line from one of her films, *The Long Night*.

As I stared into her face, looking for confirmation that she really spoke to me, a fog enveloped my mind. The light in the room was faint and Rebecca's face was in soft focus. Green, heavy-lidded eyes slowly materialized in empty sockets. Luminous, creamy skin grew over stretched, gray newsprint. And lips...luscious, vulnerable...

I was awoken from my trance by Daniel, crying for me from the cellar. How long I had been sitting there, I don't recall.

When I returned to Daniel I ruffled his hair to reassure him that I was okay. Taking him by the hand again, I led Daniel to the bottom of the stairs, but before we ascended I got down on my knees, not just to get eye level, but because I was about to beg.

"Mom can never know about what we found. Do you understand?" I said sternly.

He didn't understand. "Why not?" Daniel asked, his face tensing for a cry.

I was too nervous about losing *everything* to be delicate. I had to instill in him the importance of discretion. My grip on his shoulders tightened.

"If Mommy finds out about the secret room and the lady, she will leave us. This is the most special secret you will ever keep. Don't let me down. Don't break up the family."

Seeing a withered corpse had turned Daniel sheet white, but my ultimatum left him translucent. I had never been so ashamed of myself.

In the following weeks, I found it surprisingly easy to keep Pam in the dark. Moving into the house--or mausoleum as Pam called it--had strained our relationship to its limit, so she was giving me the silent treatment. The garden was Pam's domain and she spent almost all of her time outside. Fortunately, it was always sunny in L.A. When she had to come inside, Pam would give me a wide berth. I was spending an inordinate amount of time in the cellar, but she didn't give a damn.

I was worried about Daniel, though. The color never did return to his face. He no longer spent time in hiding spots, but rather played with his toys in the middle of the essentially empty living room. He also complained of chronic stomach aches, loss of appetite. I assured Pam that he was just adjusting to the new city and would liven up once school began.

I moved my memorabilia into the bomb shelter. Having the artifacts around helped me in my reconstruction of Rebecca Sullivan. Scented candles and flowers stolen from Pam's garden masked the unfriendly odors. The room was lit by sconces that cast soft, conical light down the walls to the floor. I put Nat King Cole on the record player for some romantic atmosphere and poured some scotch from an unopened bottle of Johnnie Walker Black to calm my overexcitement.

Rebecca was wearing lavender colored silk pajamas when she had died, but as chic as they may have been, they were not suited for the image I was trying to conjure. The pajamas were stuck to her body and I didn't want to jostle her too much, lest a limb break off. I used scissors to cut and peel the pajamas off in strips. I was apologetic as I did so and tried to do the best I could without looking at her naked body. I blushed when I caught a glimpse of her breasts, like two dried figs on a rack of ribs. I ritualistically removed the green satin gown from its display case and carefully, inch by inch, slipped it onto Rebecca.

I sat across from her and allowed myself to drift into a love induced stupor. Starting from her feet, I slowly superimposed Rebecca as I knew her over the shrunken husk on the sofa. It was sorcery. Her feet, which were black and curled like old bananas, became soft and delicate under my gaze. Her legs, like drift wood, were long and sensuous again; they rubbed against each other in pleasure. Arms and hands that resembled grasping, bare branches became supple and dexterous. Her renewed fingers stretched out like a cat awaking from a nap. Luxurious hair erupted from her nearly bare head and ran like a lava flow down to her shoulders. Hooded, emerald eyes winked at me from what were, only a moment ago, black voids.

I took the most care with her lips. First I closed her jaw, creating a canvas out of her teeth. I laid down the lower lip, thin and petulant. On top of it I laid down the upper lip, thick and versatile. The newly

formed mouth quivered as it ran through a range of expressions, occasionally revealing the pearls behind it.

I love me.

She spoke. It was a line from another movie. The context of the line was different in the film, but here I took it as gratitude.

"I'm your biggest fan," I said. Not a romantic opening line, but I was star-struck.

She motioned for me to come closer. I moved in for a kiss, my eyes locked onto her parting lips.

"Dad!" I heard Daniel urgently calling my name from the cellar stairs. I should have closed the vault door. I ignored him and continued towards Rebecca's hungry mouth.

"Daaaad! Mom wants you *right now*." I could hear Pam's tone in Daniel's quavering voice. "There's somebody here!" He ran off.

Go on. I can keep myself entertained. Do you have a ball of string?

Another line from a movie. This time it was from *The Playhouse*.

I begrudgingly went upstairs, but stopped short by the threshold to the living room to pull myself together. I was sweating and shivering in arousal. I needed a moment before I could greet company. Leaning against the wall, I slowed my breathing and listened to the conversation in the next room.

"Here, drink this. You look exhausted," said Pam.

A sad croak, like something that bubbled up from the bottom of a swamp, said, "When I heard that a family moved in I had to come and warn you. Awful things have happened in this place. Horrible, unmentionable things. That is why you must leave. That is why I left. That is why I hid my face and changed my name. So that the awful things could not find me."

This peaked Pam's interest. "What *things*?"

"Depraved fantasies...dark desires....And I let them happen. Men would come here to do things they couldn't do elsewhere. I tried to stop it from continuing, but the house was marked. Even when the house was empty, the horrors continued, as though the house were a cinema, replaying the scenes over and over again. The house is marked, you see? The house is marked."

The voice made me shudder. Did this stranger know

about the bomb shelter? About Rebecca? What else were they about to reveal to Pam? I had heard enough. I stepped into the room to confront this intrusive creature. An old crone sat in the armchair, sipping a can of Coke through a straw, her cheeks sinking completely into her mouth with the effort. She had no hair except for a fine, white fuzz that covered her scalp. Her eyes were bloodshot and glassy. She smelled like an offensive combination of spoiled milk and rosemary lotion. She was in such a pathetic state that I could not tell if she was fifty or one hundred years old.

"I found her creeping in the garden so I called the police. She seems disoriented," explained Pam. Daniel, wide-eyed and even paler than usual, cowered behind her.

I frowned at the mention of the police, but then turned towards the old woman with a forced smile, hoping that I could cajole her outside again. She stopped sucking on her soda and warily returned my smile.

Her mouth was a toothless, wet cavity framed by two wormy lips, one fat and chapped the other almost non-existent. Recognition hit me like lightning, the voltage causing the hair on my arms to stand up. Those lips!

The spell I had so carefully crafted was shattered. This wretched hag was Rebecca Sullivan. I was sure of it. The fantastic being I had created downstairs reverted to its true form, the decaying corpse of a stranger.

I tried to remain calm and continued to smile at the old woman. Or so I thought. The changed expressions on everyone's faces reflected the madness I was projecting. The true Rebecca Sullivan emitted something between a laugh and a scream as I lurched stiffly towards her, arms outstretched like Caligari's somnambulist. She spilled out of her chair with clawed fingers held up in defense. I covered her lips with my hands to hide the proof of her identity from my sight. I could not stand to look at the evidence of my ghastly crimes.

In the chaos, Daniel vomited on his t-shirt and the dark secret that had been making him ill followed close behind. "There's a dead lady in the cellar," he cried out.

Pam did not fully understand what was taking place, but she knew instinctively that I had done something unforgivable. I could feel her angry, clenched

fists beat me on my back and head as I smothered out the rest of Rebecca's life. The old woman thrashed feebly under the weight of my body. Both of my hands were mashed over her wet mouth and a stifled scream gurgled at the back of her throat. My eyes were squeezed shut. I didn't want to watch the light leave her eyes. If I looked at her I wouldn't be able to remember the real Rebecca--the Rebecca from the movies. "I'm sorry, Miss Sullivan," I said, "I'm sorry, but you're no longer the one I want."

I am sitting in the bomb shelter again. I have locked the vault from the inside. It was designed to keep nukes and Communists out, so I am safe for now. The sounds from the other side of the door are on a repeating cycle: pleading followed by venom from my wife, negotiations followed by threats from the police, the whining of drills followed by the clanging of hammers.

I don't know who the poor soul on the sofa is. She is probably just one of the unmentionable horrors that Rebecca claimed had taken place in this house. Now I add myself to the list of atrocities perpetuated here. It doesn't matter who the body belongs to. She is an empty vessel, ready to contain my Rebecca.

I have renewed the process of resurrection. She speaks to me in movie quotes while I mentally copy the images from the posters on the walls and implant them onto the dormant corpse.

Kiss me and we can keep the world at bay.

Okay, Baby. This time I will make the lips first.

"Forgetting Morocco"
by Giovanna Chmielewski Saavedra
Lillian Spencer Award: Poetry

you will bring home with you the myth
and pull of a distant country
dimly remembered.

the forms of the ancient city will be
dying steadily in your packed and
cluttered memory as you struggle to
recall the name of a beautiful place
you made a point to retain or the height
of a certain wall, or the precise sound
of a heavy teak door closing

while the colors and texture of the warm
faded floor in a random government building there
will burn brightly on the backs of your eyes
and hotly in the dreams you never quite remember
until the day you die

effortless, significant, or unnoticed
like the once-distant common starlight
all around you

with no real destination for its insurmountable journey,
no less bright
in spite of its anonymity, futility, or pathetic pre-
dictability.



"Old Man"

White Pencil and Spray-paint on Black Paper

Eric Clark

Lillian Spencer Award: Art

"Divulge"
Kevyn Arnott

An older man by the name of Edward Tenor sat on the number-four bus on the eve of April 24th. The glimmer of passing lights illuminated his face as he stared off at the blur of moving images. He patiently waited for his stop, Walter Street. Each night on this route, Edward would take out a single sheet of paper and write a note to the same woman, Jade.

April 24th, 2007

To my Jade,
I dare not indulge, but tonight I write to you a crippled man. I apologize for the darker tone, but I am in a worse mood. It's been twenty-five years since I've last seen you. If you remember right, that means it's only another month until our 30th anniversary.

I am older than you last remember but never a day wiser. I hate to tell you this, but every day I try to bury you a little bit deeper, shove a little more dirt on your grave because just maybe, just maybe I could forget and move on with whatever little time I have left on Earth.

His pen withdrew from pressing. Edward looked up and out the window, and without another moment he went back to writing his letter.

God Jade, don't you think I've breathed enough? Don't you think I've bled enough? You have no idea how hard it is see your face fade each day. You're floating away.

As I sign this letter, I feel this will be the last one I send you, for I doubt I will have the strength to weather another day.

I am finally ready for the floor.

Love,
Edward Tenor

The bus parked in front of the art gallery downtown, 10:03. He dropped the piece of paper in the mailbox. He worked as the graveyard-shift security guard at the art gallery. Edward never seemed to mind working such an entry-level position for so many years. Never asking for a promotion, never asking for a shift change, never asking for a raise, he was content.

The gallery was an art school gallery. It was mainly composed of unknown pieces, painted mostly by young coffee-drinking enthusiasts, the kind of kids who love to hear themselves speak, as they each spout off different definitions of existentialism and post-modernism, something that Edward had no interest in.

He entered the gallery. Some patrons still lingered, browsing the new collection by a new transfer student. After passing the hostess desk, Edward headed towards the office in the back, but the owner Gary stopped him. Gary was an older gentleman like Edward. They had grown to know one another pretty well over the years.

"Say Edward, I have to talk to you about something. I noticed you didn't clock out last night. I know you already know this, but..." Edward wasn't exactly keen on Gary. Gary only spoke about procedures or spoke frivolous things just to avoid silence. As normal, Edward drifted off when Gary spoke. Edward scanned the art gallery for something that would hold his interest as Gary conducted his nightly sermon. Luckily, something did.

It was a little boy looking at a painting. The little boy was looking at the painting fairly oddly; his head would move left, right, and sometimes upside down with abrupt switches from one to the other. Gary took a deep breath, "Hey Edward, a quick couple things I wanted to go over with you. The key that says..."

The little kid inched closer and closer to the painting. The little boy's right arm raised; his right pointer finger was fully extended. Without a moment of hesitation, he placed his right index finger squarely on the painting. After another moment, his hand relaxed, and he placed his entire palm on the painting. He began to move it around.

"Timothy!" The little boy's mother ran from across the hall. Gary quickly turned around and ran towards the kid. The little boy abruptly looked up and withdrew his

hand.

In the years Edward has worked there, no one had dared to touch a painting. It just wasn't done. Paintings are to be admired from afar.

As Gary struggled to regain his breath, he gave the sign for Edward to usher the little boy and his mother out. The little boy stared at his fingers. Particles of paint coated his hand. The little boy looked at Edward. The boy looked as though he was in a trance.

Before they left Edward asked the little boy, "What did you feel?" The little boy looked up towards Edward and smiled, "I... I don't know."

"Timothy!" His mother ripped him towards the road.

Edward was still perplexed as he shut and locked the door. "The nerve..." Gary groaned as he shook his head, "does anyone even watch their kids anymore?" He sighed, "Rules don't mean what they use to, huh Edward. By the way, make sure..." Edward had already lost interest.

Gary ushered the remaining guests out the door and turned off a majority of the lights. The only ones that remained on were the single strand lights that illuminated the paintings and the little lights that silhouetted the paths.

. . .

Edward was seemingly lost in the shadows. Like every night, he made his rounds looking at the abyss. He always carried two things around at night. He lugged a thick ring of keys, on which he had individually placed rubber cases so there was no annoying clatter from the keys. He also carried a large flashlight that he never used; in fact, the last time it was used was the time someone showed him how to switch it on.

Edward made his rounds as the flashlight and keys swayed on his pants. He made his paces, his turns, but for the first time he stopped mid-stride. "Touching paintings?" he mumbled to himself. Edward had been surrounded every night by paintings, and yet he never felt one. He had never had so much as accidentally grazed one.

He started again. How absurd. Does it feel just like canvas? He scratched his head as he continued on through the illuminated paths. All this time at the art gallery and he never so much touched one. It must feel like just dried paint on canvas.

He liked to hum a little tune as he walked around the gallery. Thankfully, no one heard this because it neither good, nor musical. It was the same note at different times. It sounded much like Morse code.

He kept whistling as he meandered, until he saw the painting the little boy had touched; Edward came to abrupt halt as well as the music. Although dimly lit, he could make out that the painting was a portrait of a house on a hill, a strange one at that. Why did the kid touch this one? Edward may have worked in an art gallery for years, but he still did not know much about paintings. However, he tried to make sense of the painting.

Edward stepped off the path and approached it. He flipped on his flashlight for the first time in nearly twenty-five years without a second thought. The bulb flickered a bit and died. It is a wonder it even had enough charge to make it flicker after twenty years. He struggled to read the title, but he couldn't. It was far too dark.

Edward moved his flashlight from his right hand to his left, and he raised his right hand upwards. What does it feel like? Is it still wet? Will it smudge? His pupils dilated. His tongue wetted his dry lips. His right index finger was hovering over the fingerprint. Will it be ruined? His finger lingered for a moment. His finger inched towards it. And all this time...

He forced his finger into the mush. His eyes opened wider. He was doing it. He was touching the painting.

"Remove it!" he heard from behind him. "What are you doing Edward?" He quickly turned around, but there was no one. He turned back to the painting. He looked at his fingertip. The tip of his finger had dark speckles of glimmering paint. The painting was still fine. Just another five seconds, and then I'll be done with this whole thing. He forced his finger into the painting a little harder this time.

His finger scanned the painting, feeling the globs none of them the same, none of them even similar. Each had its own texture, its own consistency.

Right then, he heard a voice coming from the painting. It was a familiar voice. The voice was a mere murmur. Edward held still on the painting for a moment as he ruminated on what voice it was, but still he could not decipher who it was.

His finger started to move again a little, trying

to find the spot again. He felt the globs, but the murmuring voice had begun to grow quieter and quieter. He hastened his movement. Fearing it was lost; he took his middle finger and touched the painting. The voice grew slightly stronger. Without caution, he thrust his entire right palm and grasped the painting, stroked the painting. Still unsatisfied, the flashlight fell. He thrust his left palm into the painting. The voice grew stronger and stronger; he continued to search, now frantically. Still, he struggled. Who was this person? Frustrated, he shoved his face into the paint. Closing his eyes, he began to smell the paint. His eyes bolted open. It was Jade.

. . .

In a shopping mall parking lot, a young Edward left the department store carrying a bag of merchandise that he picked up for his mother. There was a little precipitation out that day. He looked down at the receipt, but right then a twenty-year old girl pushed into the side of him with force. He quickly looked up to see nothing.

"Haha! Saved your life!" the girl said.

"From what?" He looked to the right and to the left. The only thing that moved was a truck backing up thirty feet away.

She smiled, "That maniac truck driver."

Edward quickly realized the joke and smirked, "You sure did. I was almost a goner."

The strange girl paused for a moment and laughed, "Say, you know it's customary to buy someone at least a dinner if they save your life." Edward thought a moment, but Edward did not take much convincing. Here was a beautiful girl asking him to go out to dinner. He took this peculiar girl to a dinner that night. They sat down at a local diner.

"So what's your name?" she asked.

"Edward."

"Edward... hmm... I don't like it. I'll call you Eddy."

"And what is your name, my hero?"

"Jade."

"Jade... that's a beautiful name."

"Yea, I know."

"Don't be too modest. So do you save people's lives all the time, or was I your first time?"

She grinned, "First." She swallowed her bite, "You

looked helpless, and I didn't want to see this man, right next to me might I add, get crushed by the truck. Have you seen what a truck backing up at 3 to 5 m.p.h. can do?"

"That situation hasn't crossed me before."

"Precisely! Thankfully, because of my heroics you didn't have to experience it first hand."

"You're truly an interesting one."

"What's that supposed to mean?" She quickly leaved back.

"I'm sorry. It's just you pushed into me--"

Interrupting him, "you mean: heroically pushed into you me."

Curiously, he smiled, "Yes, heroically. So what would it take to do this again?"

Her lips jolted around, "Hmm... I'm not so sure about you. Mr. Eddy."

"I at least have to save your life once than you can get rid of me."

"Quite an offer, I must say quite an offer. "She grinned and wrote her number on a napkin, "Call that number at 5 tomorrow. I just might pick up."

They bid each other a good night. He went for a hug; she insisted on a handshake with a smile.

. . .

His body was motionless on the painting, but abruptly it jerked. He released the painting, and then placed his hands back on but nothing. He looked at the painting but still nothing. He moved his hands frantically like before. He stuck his head in the painting but no voices, no flashback. He moved his head back and looked at the painting. The house was hardly decipherable. The hill was a blur.

No remorse, no guilt, he grew restless and picked up the painting and threw it across the gallery. He moved on to the next painting. Closing his eyes, he did not even bother to look at it. There was no more hesitation. The victim lay unarmed. His fists unlocked, and his palms fed, and the sensations came.

. . .

On October 3rd, Edward took Jade out for her twenty-fifth birthday. The sky had begun to drizzle as the cab pulled up at the restaurant, "Hurry! Jade, I don't have umbrella."

"Oh come on Eddy, it's just sprinkling," Jade and Eddy took their seats and looked over the menu, Lobster,

Crab, Shrimp.

"Eddy, do you think we'll have kids one day?"

He took a moment to regain himself, "What kids? We're not even married yet."

"Oh come on, we've been together for five years. It's bound to happen, but in a couple years do you think we will? You know, there's a clock."

"A clock! What! You can't be serious!" Edward tried to fight smiling.

"Eddy, I'm trying to be serious."

"Jade, we're not even married, and now we're talking about kids... It's all happening so fast," he paused and looked away and thought. Deeply sighing, he looked back at her, "Well, do you want to get married?"

She grinned and screamed, "YES! I'll marry you. OH MY GOD! I'm getting married. I have to call all my friends!"

"Jade..." He tried to fight it, "Jade." She was too excited, but in that moment he knew. He knew there was something not only special but extraordinary about her, "Jade, you know what? Let's do this." Edward slid out of the quaint booth and got down on one knee, "Jade Willow will you marry me?"

"Of course, I will, and when we get married I'm going to name the first one Ferguson," She smiled and hugged him before he could answer, "I love you!"

Edward couldn't help but laugh, as he slid back into the booth, "Ferguson?" he started to chuckle, "What a horrible sounding name. Ferguson Tenor, God, that's bad."

"Would you ever allow me to name our child Ferguson?"

"I don't know..." He looked at her for a moment and grabbed his water, "Maybe if you looked into my eyes and smiled one more time; you could probably convince me."

She quickly looked away, "Well, I better not smile then."

The meal came. They ate, they smiled, they laughed, they finished. Without words, Edward stared into the eyes of his lovely new bride and smiled. She squinted her eyes but this time with a slight smirk.

"What?"

Edward shook his head, "Sorry."

Jade smiled, "My hubby, a mental case." He rolled his eyes. "Eddy, let me ask you something: do you know

why I love you?"

"Why is that?"

"Because you make me real."

Edward paused for a second, "I make you real?"

"Didn't you ever read the Velveteen Rabbit as a kid?"

"Not that I remember."

"Well, the Skin Horse tells the rabbit that real isn't how you are made, but you become real when someone REALLY loves you."

"Hmm, do you suppose I'm real too?"

"I suppose so." She grinned.

"Say, what happens to the rabbit in the end?"

"He's thrown in the incinerator. Hey, let's walk tonight."

"Wait. What? He's thrown in the incinerator?"

"Yea, the boy fell ill with scarlet fever, and the rabbit helps the boy through it with some sort of love, but the rabbit gets scarlet fever germs all over it, so they have to pitch it."

"That's a horribly sad story."

"Yea, it really is. That's probably why there is some crap about a fairy using nursery magic to turn the velveteen rabbit into a real rabbit. Most likely, some editor felt that kids would cry, and they wanted a happy ending to help the children cope with the loss of the rabbit. Why every children's story has to be a lullaby is beyond me. That kid is going to learn that bad shit happens, and there ain't no nursery magic."

Edward and Jade grabbed their coats and headed out the restaurant. Edward opened the door for Jade. The drizzle turned into a downpour.

"Oh man, it's a torrential rain storm out here," Edward said.

"You know they say if you look up when it rains you can see heaven."

"Who says that?"

"Me."

The two of them grabbed each other's hands and walked without hurry, without rush. The two of them laughed and even giggled as each of them became more and more wet. By the time they reached Edward's apartment, they were absolutely drenched.

. . .

Edward's eyes open. Tears trickled out. The nasal

mucus dripped down the painting onto the floor. Without another moment, he threw the painting off the wall, and moved to the next. The madness continued.

Painting after painting, he went through them quickly and violently, until he felt an awkward bump.

The following December, Jade and Edward drove back from his mother's house.

"Was I okay? Did I look alright?"

Edward smirked, "you looked... presentable." She hit him, "Woah! Domestic violence!" He laughed, "I'm kidding, you looked like a firefly."

"A firefly?"

"You know those little bugs that light up the summer night."

"What, I look like a bug?"

"No, no, no. They light up... You know all you see is the darkness on that quiet summer's eve, and then out of a nowhere a firefly lightens up. You are that. You're the thing that lights up my summer night."

She looked out the window, "Eddy, how do you picture life?"

"What? Was that the wrong answer?"

"I don't know. It's just... do you ever just try to search for a metaphor for life in the hopes that you could come to grasp it in some way?"

"No. Wait, what's going on?"

She took a deep sigh, "Do you ever just think when you were born you were pushed off a ledge. You are at first confused. You fall and fall, and then at some point you find stability. You are no longer tumbling. That is when you see the floor. You try to reason why that person pushed you off. You try to reason why you fall. You try to reason why the floor has to be there, but no one tells you. You just continue to fall. Sure, some fall faster than others, but you know that one day that floor will be there. It's too big; it's inescapable. No one can fly."

"Jade."

"I don't know Eddy. I just think about this stuff sometimes. Remember, I'm an interesting one."

"Is everything alright?"

She smiled, "Never been better."

"Why didn't you tell me, Jade? You knew, you knew! But why, why didn't you tell me? I could have helped. I could have been there for you."

Two months had past since that December night; it was a Monday. Edward came home before Jade returned home. He dropped his work papers on the table. A flickering red light caught his attention.

"One new message: Hello Jade, it's Dr. Stone. I was following up with your appointment on Thursday at three o'clock. We do have the tests back, and we'll discuss them when you get here. If you could just call us back and confirm your appointment, that would be great. Take care."

Jade came home an hour later. Edward greeted her as she came in the kitchen, "Hey honey, how was work?"

"Eh, boring, normal stuff."

"Say, Dr. Stone called today."

She turned her head to look at the answering machine, "uh, what did he say?"

"Something about test results. You need to call to confirm your appointment with him on Thursday."

"Oh. Okay, yea, I'll do that tomorrow."

"So, what are the test results for?"

"Uh, just general stuff. You know."

"Okay." Edward didn't know what to think, "Do you mind if I come with? I can take work off."

"You don't need to. It's really basic tests."

"Please, I would love to come."

"Don't."

"Why?" Edward grew more adamant.

"It's just basic tests. There is no reason for alarm."

"Alright, but if you want me to go with. I'm here." Edward backed off.

Thursday did not come fast. Edward grew more curious by the minute. She was hiding something. When Thursday did come, Edward rushed home to find Jade in the kitchen cooking. Edward couldn't wait any longer, "How were the tests?"

Jade turned to look at him. Her mascara was all smeared. Her eyes had never been so red.

"Oh baby," he ran to her.

"I..." she broke down and fell to the floor.

Edward let go. He purged himself of the painting. His face was covered in paint and tears. He stumbled as he tried to step back from the painting.

He looked behind him the darkness started to recede into the corners of the gallery. The sun had begun to rise. He fell to his knees. None of them escaped. Paintings lay on the floor everywhere. There were some that swayed on a single hook. Some had holes in them. What had he done? These were paintings that people instilled life into, and he had just taken them and ruined them without hesitation. Nothing was left. No painting left hanging intact. He had nothing left to feel.

He struggled to get up off his knees, but he couldn't. He tried again to get to his feet, but he couldn't. He fell to the floor. With his eyes fixated on the ceiling, thoughts clouded his mind about Jade. With another blink, he heard the voice. The voice was clear as it ever was, "Eddy." Edward quickly looked at his hands; they were touching nothing. He quickly tried to rationalize it. "Eddy, don't try to justify everything."

"But I have to." He couldn't escape it.

. . .

"Sometimes things just have to happen. Remember bad shit happens, and there ain't no nursery magic."

Jade sat in Mayo Clinic hospital. Her head was bald. Edward was right next to her holding her hand. They waited on a new doctor, Dr. Phillips.

He took a deep sigh, "So, how are you feeling? Do you need me to grab you something?"

"Nah, I'm content."

"God Jade," as tears ran down his cheek, he busted out laughing, "You're so bald."

"Eddy," she cleared her throat, "don't be so scared. I hate to be cliché on my death bed, but it's just my time."

"Don't we still have a chance to beat this?"

"No. It's pretty much over. This procedure is just to make the doctors feel better, so when then they say I pass they can say 'we tried everything'"

"Don't give up, baby. There has to be a light somewhere."

"There probably is, but I'm too tired to find it. Do you hear me? I'm old at 32."

"Haha, even on your death bed you can still make me smile. I just wish you didn't give up. You're the strongest woman I know. Can you please just try for me, so I don't have to know what life is like without you, again?"

She took a deep sigh, "I can't. You know that. Eddy please just come to reality for a moment. I beg you. It'll make this so much easier on me. I don't want to go either. We have so much to do, but it just wasn't meant to be. You'll wander the Earth and find another incredibly lucky girl. You and she will get married and have lots of babies and live with her. Then one day, you will sit on this bed and say goodbye to your many children as your loving wife holds your hand, and as the darkness consumes you I'll be there to greet you at dawn."

"I don't want that Jade. I don't want another girl. I don't want children with anyone but you."

"Eddy, you don't have to just live a life of solidarity. See, I give you my permission. Find a girl, make babies, and be happy, so long as you name the first Ferguson." She smiled as she looked into Edward's eyes.

"But Jade."

Her smile quickly evaded as tears began to run down Jade's cheeks. "Eddy," She took a deep breath, "I don't want you to cry, you did something amazing. Do you know that? You did something for me that only a few people in the history of the world ever were able to experience."

"What is that?"

"Eddy, look at me." He turned to her, "Eddy, you made me real."

"But is that enough?"

"Yes, that is enough. That's all I wanted, to be real." Jade took her right index finger and started poking it into his arm, "Do you feel that?"

"Yea."

"Do feel that sensation of nerves? That's real. That's life. We rely so heavily on vision that we forget the most important sensation, touch. Just because you see doesn't make you real. Merely observing does nothing, yet when you touch another human being, they feel, they change, they become real. As long as you can touch, you're alive."

"Jade, I love you."

"I do too; even though I won't be able to tell you or show you every day, I will always love you. I may see the floor before you, but I am happy to have you fall by my side."

. . .

Edward awoke. The ceiling was fully white. The sun

"Underpainting"

Elena Fodera

I look out my window at the cobblestone street below and rub my bearded face in my hands. A graying blind man walks below, leash grasped tightly, a shaggy black retriever guiding him through the glow of the streetlight and I stare at a blank canvas, paintbrush in hand. Colored pencils and shavings and bottles of India ink spread out before me on the desk, little tubes of tempera lined up in the box like a rainbow. Nothing comes before my eyes when I close them but color and shadow. Lines elude me. Out the window the yellow of the streetlight cuts through the fog and I tilt my head to get an angle on it. At that moment a knock on the door snaps me out of my concentration.

"It's Jolene," says the voice behind the door. I spring up and comb my hair with my fingers a little and glance down at my paint-splattered slacks with a pang of self-consciousness. It is only momentary. I open the door and she looks at me, eyes wide.

"Is Danny home?"

"No, it's just me, and, painting..." I trail, looking over my shoulder at the untouched canvas. "Well come in, I mean, he ought to be home soon, right?"

"Yeah, sure," she says, kicking off her sandals and has a seat in the brown leather chair. I offer her some green tea and she says yes. From the kitchen I can see her-she is thin, graceful, with long hands and feet that she tucks underneath her in the chair, and pulls her dress down slightly to cover one knee. She leans back and her eyes wander around the room, examining my paintings and the charcoal sketches scattered on the round coffee table.

"I like these," she calls to me in the kitchen, picking one up.

"Oh, they're nothing," I say, "just some sketches for Life Drawing class,"

"Good form," she says, admiring one. Could be any of them. I hand her a cup of tea and she thanks me.

"Danny went out. I don't know when he'll be back but you're welcome to stay until he gets here," I say. "I'm just working on...this,"

I chuckle, nodding my head towards the blank canvas. Jolene laughs and takes a smiling sip of tea and I hope she doesn't ask what my plans are for it.

"I just came to give my brother his book back," she says, "Danny's so forgetful. He left it at my place and I read it in a night. Loved it! The Dharma Bums. You read it? Kerouac's amazing, don't you think..."

I smile at her enthusiasm as she trails on-I am a man of few words after all and what do I say to this pretty girl when my mind is on her skin and its peachy white tone and the wrinkles of silk dress barely hanging over that knee and before I can respond she is laughing, too.

"...Oh here I go rambling," she says, "Don't mind me. I won't interrupt your work."

My ears blush a little at the pride her comment incites. She thinks what I do is work. I don't think of it as work. Maybe if I did it would come easier. A sense of necessity might push inspiration. I sit down at my easel and pick up a brush, thinking of the white before me as a job to do.

"Here goes," I think to myself.

I hear the spark of a match as Jolene leans forward, legs crossed beneath her, and lights a candle on the coffee table. The flame throws the shadow of eyelashes against her brow bone for a moment and she catches me staring. She smiles and picks up a book of Impressionism.

"Monet," she whispers to no one in particular, enjoying water lilies.

I start with a curve across the right corner, not knowing where I'm going but I am embarrassed to sit any longer with no results. She must expect that I am good at this. She thinks I'm an artist. I think I'm an art student. Another curve and I glance up at her while mixing colors on my palette. The paint is thick and bright. She flips the pages of the book, her face changing with each. This one she likes. That one is interesting. She furrows her brow and scrutinizes this one, turning the book for another angle. This next one makes her smile.

She adjusts her place in the soft leather chair, pushing dark hair out of her eyes and breathes. Sipping tea. Her presence calms. She watches the candle dancing. Shadows on the table, on my sketches. Another curve, a new color. Line here. Shape, shade. More color. Shadow. It is coming along now, my brush dancing across the canvas, my hands and eyes intent on creating. I have a rhythm. A concentration. She breaks it.

"Can I watch?" She asks.

No, I am thinking, don't watch me, but she is up on her bare feet and behind me all in a moment. I reach for a new brush, a new color. I blend white with yellow, circular, like orbs in a line. "Sunlight," she says, but I am thinking of her eyes. Celestial, yes. They are as dark and blue as night sky and they lock with mine. There are patterns in them, like a Moorish fountain.

She moves, suddenly but fluidly, her hip grazing my arm as she floats past and picks a tube of color. It is aquamarine, two shades removed from those eyes and she places it in my hand, taking care to touch my palm with her fingertips.

"This color is my favorite," Jolene tells me, and sits on the couch, nearer to me than the soft, worn leather of the chair. I move quickly, hands confident, lips pursed in focus. She is watching me. Black lines stretch from one side and fill borders with darkness. My painting takes shape and she sits back, relaxed, as if satisfied to have helped with its progress.

She pulls a little tin out of her bag and rolls a cigarette with ease.

"Would you like one?" She asks me.

"No, thank you," I say, but I get up to push the doors to the balcony open. She steps outside and lights it with a flick of her matchbook. I return to my easel and I can see her from across the room. She stretches her slender body over the edge and looks out into the night. She tilts her head and puts the cigarette to her lips. I imagine she is getting another angle on the streetlight cutting through the fog. She is a fascinating creature. At peace. Something she gives off I can't quite place but I am trying to capture it. This must be what a muse is. She lifts herself onto tiptoes and looks down at the cobblestone, the arches of her feet curving in shadow.

The blind man wanders below, passes Danny on the street. When he arrives home he will find Jolene lying on the wooden floor, on her belly, chin in her hands and staring up at me. She is watching me work and blinking big eyes full of wonder and infatuation. Danny will shake his head with a chuckle and pour us all some sangria. We drink and laugh late into the night, I at my easel and Danny and Jolene arguing about Kerouac by the fire.

Later she will roll another cigarette-this time

I will have one, and Danny will go off to bed. We will stand on the balcony talking, looking out into the night and I will swallow my fears and tell her I want to see her again soon. She will smile and blush with a coy glance down at her feet and propose to model for me next time. She will take my bearded face in her hands and kiss me goodnight, sweet and firm like a good girl's promise to love you right when your world is a blank canvas, and leave the room filled with curves and colors of the sort that even the blind man could see what happens next.

"Albatross from my Father, Pt. 1"

Shawn Phillmon

To differentiate between the first outbreak and the second outbreak, the causes need to be addressed. While *Toxoplasma Gondii* doesn't appear in any remains prior to 3000 B.C., the transition from hunter gatherer into food producing nations prepared populations large enough to sustain and slowly spread the parasite across most to the globe.

Historically, densely populated societies with fifteen percent *T. Gondii* infections or less were able to maintain stability for a few decades as shown in Ancient Mesoamerica, Egypt, and Persia. However, each experienced large scale aggressive behavior upon reaching fifty-percent population infection levels. Though discovered in 1908, the correlation between *T. Gondii* infections and social violence wasn't recognized until well into the next century.

According to studies dated prior to the first outbreak, non-infected men found *T. Gondii* infected women significantly more attractive than non-infected women. Even though direct connections between mild to severe psychotic disorders and *T. Gondii* were established, mental health care improvements had created complacency. By the start of the first outbreak, sixty-three percent of the world's population was predicted to be infected.

Until this point, *T. Gondii* victims rarely displayed more than bad decision making. It's been said one can look at a politician's domestic/foreign policies and know whether her or she was infected. The myth of Capitalism as a large scale *T. Gondii* effect and the misconception between it and *T. Gondii*'s induced resource consumption increase will be further explained in chapter 3.

While the original incident isn't known, the catalyst begins with a population becoming dense enough to perceive necessities as scarce. The incubation period prior to an outbreak can vary between two days and a month, allowing for hormonal synchronization of local infected populations upon proximity, explaining the spontaneous global violence within six hours.

Because military and police levels of *T. Gondii* infection were generally high compared to the civilian population, most cities and bases were quickly overran.

With my family's permission, chapter 2 contains my father's journal describing the eleven months before *T. Gondii's* cancerous effects took hold. After infected body communication stopped and olfactory degradation occurred, indiscriminate genocide reduced numbers enough for effective eradication.

I only had the chance to talk to my dad about the subject once when I caught him without a shirt on. I remember at least a dozen bite scars. I asked if he'd ever seen a zombie before. He told me that after the infected killed anything not diseased, they ate all the food; fresh, canned, rotten, still sprouting. Some survivors simply starved. My dad fried zombie meat.

"Ode to Van Gogh's Severed Ear"
Stephen Allums

I know Van Gogh and you did part
so sad, and you don't wish to hear
of one excuse, Unlucky Ear.
But hear me now, you should not fear

fault, on your part, for Van Gogh's heart
is attached to you always, though
his head is not. Don't start to start
blaming yourself. It was his Art!

His theories 'nd thoughts, he thought would grow
to fame, but famously not. No
one was blown away, not even moved.
So you, dear Ear, received his blow.

And so Van Gogh's Ear, there I've proved
that you, by him, were truly loved.
But something which him more behooved;
of course, it was his other Ear!

"Haiku 1"
Olivia Daroza

His eyes like daggers
the perfect gentleman moves
with hands like feathers

"Mortality Leaves"

Jerald Flowers

I

Do you consider the wings your mother had you wear
Each year, familial now in attic space to dust and moth
The passage of passing; each year borne stage left
In glitter and tinsel, each year driven with coffee and
errands
Unto and until this (the silence between that which was
And that which lives)

II

Do you consider the term perennial organically
Or as a term; does your house recognize its own speech
The coughing of wood against itself
The laughing crack of plaster or the calm caesura of
brick
All leaning toward the before
All awaiting soil

III

Do you consider the tear drops that grayed your papers
And were they explosions of light or of song
And could they have reached the one in question
Would he have lost himself from map to terrain
Or heard at all these wordless images
Or replied with any substance

IV

Could you explain the difference between moment and
momentum
As easily as muse on Roman ethos
Or reconcile grass to stone
Or survive a death unknown

"Poem 521"
Elena Fodera

What of spring follows into summer?
Nature's careful changing, things that get taller and
bloom
or fruit, and days stretching long in the sun.

There are beginnings hiding under the dirt there,
where you buried some seeds in perfect rows.
Now you watch and let me know, the watermelon
is as big as a fist
and last week it was tiny tiny.

The smell of night floats in:
holding onto your waist, looking up
while Nothing sits unchanged,
and while feet and hands dance,

banjo upstairs

through the walls

and while okra and peppers grow
and twenty-three tomato plants
in sandy earth outside your window,
(I will tend you like a garden)
the same thing grows in me again,
just like before, but greener,
awaiting the chance.

"Not Pornography"

Jenny Lambeth

Two Venuses intertwined—
breast upon breast
cherry lip upon cherry lip.
Can two soft beings bring
the adamantine harmony
needed for passion to explode?
Asexuality
a flower with tender petals
that brush the flesh
wired—
The body's electrical pulse
warms the petals
succulent breath
and delicate fingers find places unknown.
The soft flesh under her belly button
exposes the need—
me for her
And
her for me.

"I pass my days"
Brandon Nelson McCoy

-living vicariously
through needles and pins and safety clips
attached to angry scarves hanging from the sultry
necks of lonely wives
who just don't get the newfangled fuck they seek
and just don't get the newfound hope they desire-
an affirmation of their validity-

-and sentimentality
is the treacherous bastardization of yesterday
echoing nothing more than fiction-

-evenings void of contact
with lovers and saints and drunkards alike,
sitting in an evening chair, her hair a frame
shaping up the day's hanging, molding
this week's never ending absurdity-
she tastes the sweet slippery salt on her lips-

-and loneliness
has been known to be obtrusive
and dismantle 'sacred' bonds-

-living vicariously
through candles and scents and expensive liqueurs
that resemble romance and resemble love
but revel in the flesh and the sweat
and the lust of just another newfangled fuck
by a wife lonely as the scarf sways
from her sultry neck.

"the battle"
Matthew Moyer

they sent us into the desert and told us
"shoot them kill them save them"
we did
and they shot back and were not saved
many of them were turned to dead things and we cheered
but that was not when the battle started

i watched part of my friend's brain
fall into the sand
and his eyes rolled back into oblivion
he died and we picked up his brain
but that was not when the battle started

once it was a child but then it was
rubber, arms and legs and jelly
and the enemy yelled out for a moment
victory!
the mother cried for the arms and legs
but that was not when the battle started

lots of dead maybe for the good
now its quiet over the sand
and they tell us all
victory!
and mothers sigh relief because their
sons still have arms and brains
but that was not when the battle ended

sitting alone and safe i thought
my god, my god, horror!
and legs and bullets filled mind,
blood and sand and flame -
retreat! i thought i dreamed
that was when the battle started
and no, no, it has not ended.

"Peridot"
Matthew Moyer

This barren Maze, this Labyrinth dark
hides gems that blaze like unseen stars;
warmth in the fallow torsions of the murk
where shadows do their aphotic work -
Garnet gleams and Kunzite glows
but none glow like hidden Peridot.

Ruby, red with passion's burr
invited me to hear her words
and I was mesmerized by her lustful gaze -
but then the cold wind of the Maze
forced my thoughts with rage and snow:
My love is for Peridot.

Sapphire, born of sea and sky
whispered in a flowing lullaby
like streams and waves her song could calm
anxiety in tender psalms;
but of my passion she could not know -
My passion is for Peridot.

Jade seduced me with her dance
and bound me in a sorcerous trance;
but by the traps the Maze had laid
I saw the fragility of Jade,
the wind, the wind whiffed "on you go,
to search for Perfect Peridot."

Moonstone, Beryl, Onyx, Pearl:
The Maze hides all in its wicked swirl,
treasures far beyond our blood and bone,
beyond the highest mortal throne;
Amber, Emerald, Diamond - no,
I long for only Peridot.

"She Waits for Me There"

Matthew Moyer

Within the forest's emerald run,
beyond the timeless river's berth,
behind the unseen, perfect sun,
in every nook of perfect earth -
a place approached with truest pray'r -
Radiant, she waits for me there.

Atop the mountain's shining crown,
gleaming white and glowing gold
in morning's flowing yellow gown,
where eagles soar so high and bold,
where courage spikes and heroes dare -
Splendid, she waits for me there.

Below the wet quag of the moor,
dark and dank and rotten through
are truths the fen holds now obscured
below the grim and noxious dew;
where strongest hopes confront despair -
Shivering, she waits for me there.

Inside the dragon's wicked den
where flame and scale reject appeal
for love of cowards among men,
where claws meet flesh and battered steel;
to this den I tread aware -
Beseeching, she waits for me there.

Beyond where telescopes can see
is truest beauty in my eyes,
beauty: freedom - so to be free
away from Earth I have to fly;
so to the sky I'll yearn and stare -
Forever, she waits for me there.

"You, the Sunlight; I, the Stone"

Matthew Moyer

You, the sunlight; I, the stone
that rests sturdy in a warm embrace,
ever on the wind has blown
in Autumn's bashful, hopeless race
against approaching cold and gloom;
but in the Winter these remain
again to see the foxglove bloom -
stone and sunlight amidst the grain -
You, the sunlight; I, the stone.

You, the birdsong; I, the tree
rooted in the sun-kissed soil,
calls reach out from finch and dee
that glide across the morning foil;
solid, stern are spruce and oak
though they hear beauty on the wind
when sparrow trills and veery jokes
of bark and feather, leaf and skin-
You, the birdsong; I, the tree.

I the mountain; you, the gale
bursting forth in wave and rain,
beasts and forests crow and flail
in grandeur they cannot contain;
the beauty of the gale is seen
in quiet slides of earth and ore,
above the meadow's rolling green
gray mountain stands above the pour-
I the mountain; you, the gale.

You, the nova; I, the force
that unseen binds the universe
so Truth can set about its course
and light and eyeball can converse;
in radiance does star explode
to break the force of order's scheme,
when nova sings of Beauty's ode:
with order can the nova gleam-
You, the nova; I, the force.

"My Leaf, Banana Soul"
Giovanna Chmielewski Saavedra

Inside each of us there
Lies a small spooled spirit,
Wound unto itself and
Tightly enclosed in seed.
Inside, there is no sound
But a slow, muted growth,
Innumerably bound,
Blind to its own motion.

And the banana stalk
Breathes imperceptibly
In anticipation
Of a fresh wind coming.
It sends up a warm green
Lacquered coil, clenched and moist,
Lean and plastiscene, curled
Upon itself and new.

Inside each banana
Tree lies a silent ear,
Seashelled into itself.
It hears the old ocean,
At once deep and wrought with
Echo, yet brimming still
With a restless, washing
Water it drinks and drinks.

The leaf-fist slips open
In a series of clicks
And slips. The greenest leaves
Are opening slow, an
Incessant flow that laps
At its own shore, at once
Depositing shale and
Stripping away, thirsty,
That unquantified slow
Grower swallowing shells.

The broadly-waxed new banana leaf lies open.

"The Rage within the Storm"

Joseph Schwartzburt

Personality plops front row center
curtains pull back- unmistakable, it enters.
A bully barreling down the playground-
the winds push and tug, poke and tear.
Kamikaze drops pelt so hard as if to puncture.
A thousand lions roar ripe with rattling rage
followed by a flash that causes daylight shame.
This tumult of turbulence dethrones once dominant night.
Sought shelter and havens safe tremble, reverberate.
Rough and violent it pursues its victims-
there's no hiding form the rumbling beast.
Its slumber unable to last, it casts aside the firm
sheet.

The rage within the storm grins across the sky-
a jagged Jack-O-Lantern grin-
like a god hoarding the vacancy of a once vast
atmosphere.

It imposes, though it doesn't care,
it certainly bullies, it more than exists:
Havoc culminates.

The rage within the storm presents itself unabashed
hogging every bit of attention, inspiring wows of awe;
absolutely corrupting,
it descends intent on disrupting.

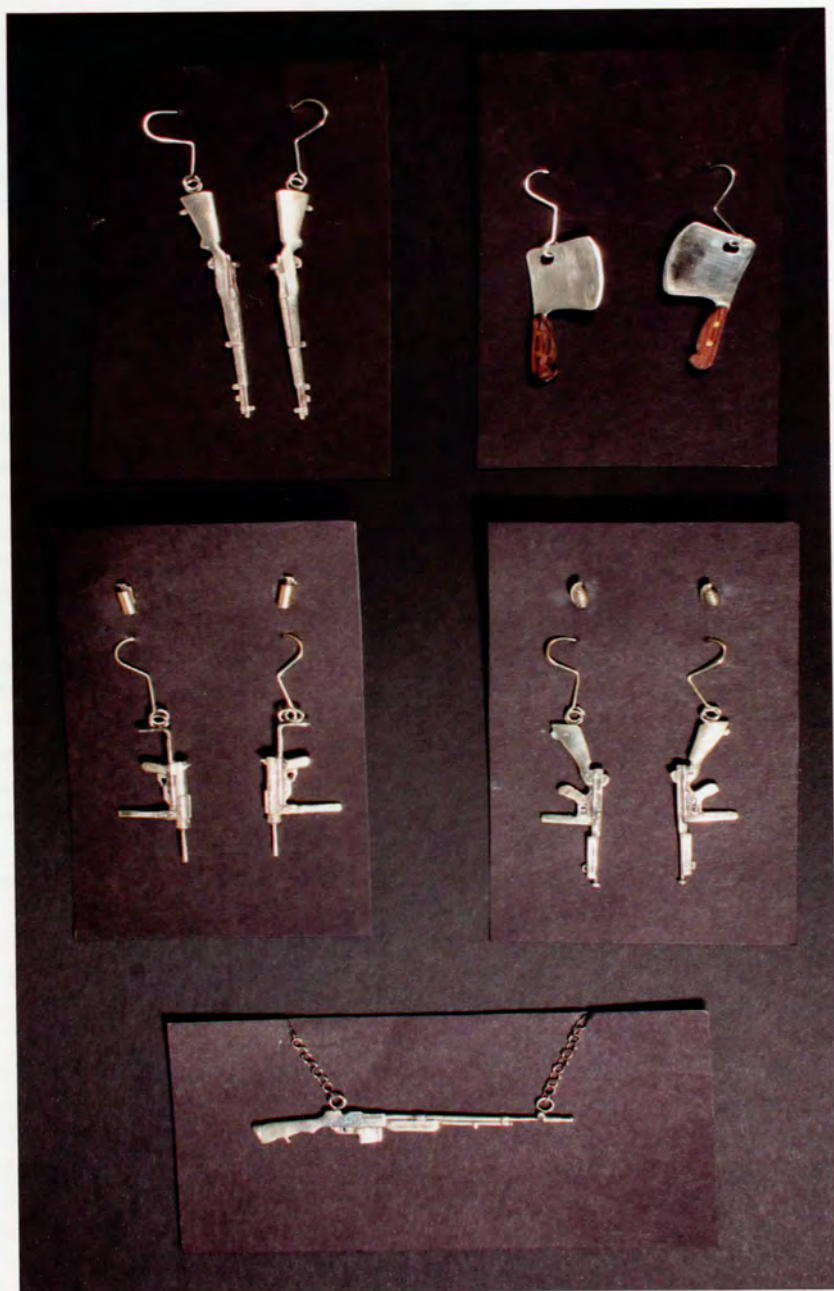
Ruiner of picnics, baseball games, and holidays
Humbler of aged, rooted oaks,

The rage within the storm is a force
beyond control, beyond reason, beyond discretion.
It cannot be beaten, it will not be avoided.

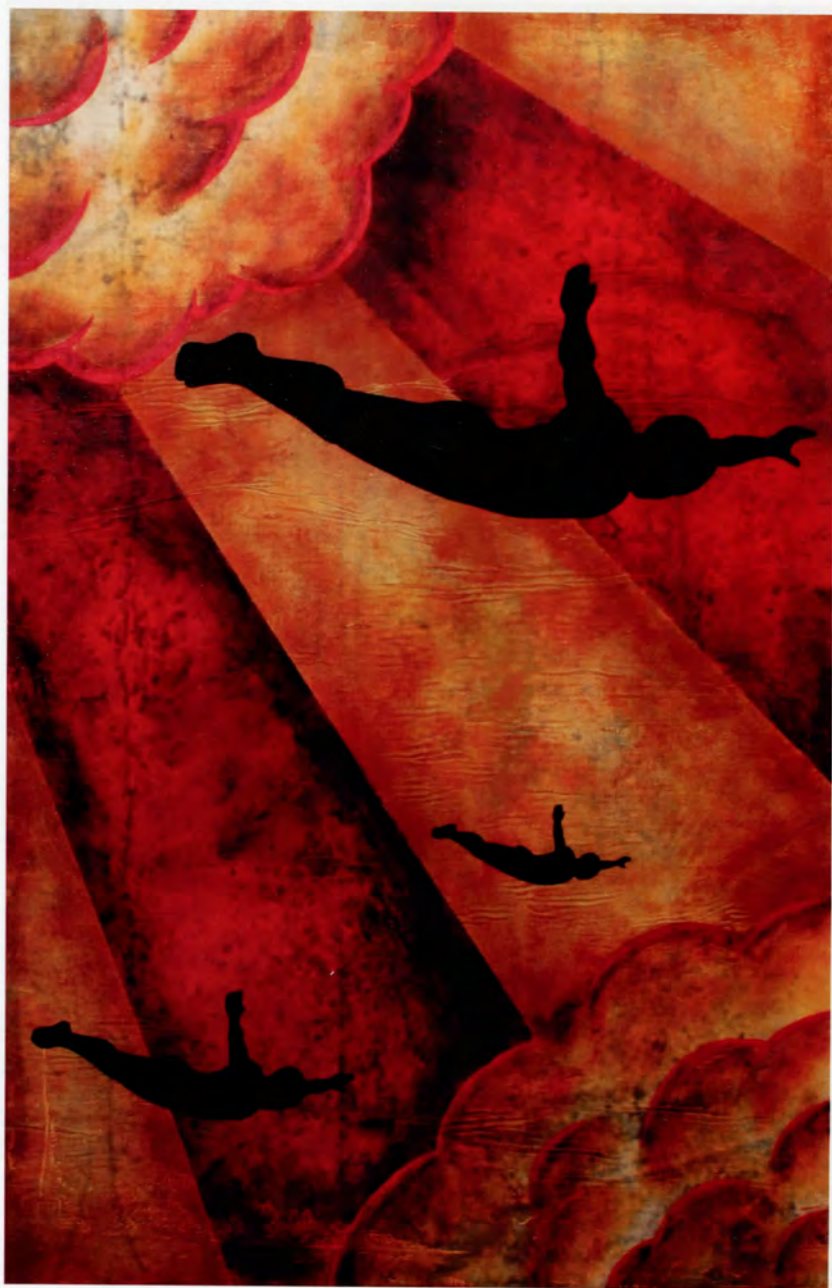
The earth's inhabitants become its pawns to be toyed
with.

A glorious upheaval, a teaming torrent of moments,
moments lost and obscured.

Severely blurred moments
of the rage within the storm.



"Assorted Gun Jewelry"
Sterling Silver and Wood
Daniel Amrhein



"Untitled"

Acrylic and Aerosol on Canvas
Daniel Amrhein



"Untitled Cuff Bracelet"
Sterling Silver and Fossilized Mammoth Ivory
Daniel Amrhein



"Palestinian Child"
Acrylic on Canvas
Daniel Amrhein



"Tension"
Graphic Design
Andrew Bufalini



"Barn"
Print
Eric Clark



"Beetlejuice"
Bleach Washout on Fabric
Eric Clark



"Elephant Graveyard"
Digital Photography
Kendall Norman



"African Beautiful"
Mixed Media
Tracy Parker-Ranew



"Maria's Granddaughter"

Pastel on Paper

Alicia Perez



"Silk Elephant"

Acrylic and Fiber Paint on Synthetic Silk
Alicia Perez



"Trumpet in the Kitchen"
Acrylic on Canvas
Alicia Perez



"Bird Bowl in Art Deco"
Acrylic on Ceramic Sculpture
Jessica Shaufelberger



"Cocktail Hat"
Yarn-coiled Wire, Wood, Feathers and Grass
Jessica Shaufelberger



"Spring"

Acrylic Paint on Untreated Canvas
Jessica Shaufelberger

Contributors' Notes:

Stephen Allums:

Stephen Allums is a chemistry major. His expected graduation date is December 2011.

"I am originally from a small town in Georgia named Hawkinsville. I wrote 'Ode to Van Gogh's Severed Ear' one day as a result of a challenge that a friend and I came up with. The challenge was to write an ode in 24 hours. I did not realize how difficult this challenge would really be! I was racking my brain for the first few hours trying to come up with something decent. Well, I had recently heard that song by Don Mclean, 'Starry Starry Night,' which is an awesome song by the way, and I suppose in an indirect way this was the inspiration for the poem."

Daniel Amrhein:

Daniel Amrhein is a senior at AASU finishing up his B. F. A. in Visual Arts with concentrations in painting and jewelry. He works primarily in sterling silver, acrylic, and aerosol paint. In both his 2-D and 3-D work, he focuses on socio-political themes and militaristic iconography.

Kevyn Arnott:

Kevyn Arnott is an English Communications major graduating in May of 2010.

"For years, I've struggled with the question does life become art or does art become life? Sure, it's a silly paradox but is it just that, something so easily written off. When does blood turn into paint? When does a breath turn into a brush stroke? With 'Divulge,' I obscured the previously defined line between art and life, and I use this bizarre blurring as the foundation for this peculiar progression."

Christopher Berinato:

Christopher Berinato wrote this macabre tale at the behest of an artist friend of his. His friend had an interest in illustrating a horror comic book in a similar vein to the E.C. comics of the 1950s (i.e. Tales from the Crypt, Vault of Horror). Christopher pitched the idea to his friend as something noir, creepy, and ambiguously supernatural, or "Sunset Blvd. meets Edgar Allen Poe." Rather than write it in the form of a script, Christopher decided to write it as a short story first, since he was enrolled in a creative writing class anyway. He was also enrolled in a horror film class at the time. Christopher's class schedule and his friend's artistic interests were perfectly aligned for this story to come to fruition. Some of the names and people in this story are real, but the circumstances of their appearances are fictional.

He graduated in fall 2009 with a BA in English.

Andrew Bufalini:

Andrew Bufalini graduates in May of 2010. His major is art with a concentration in graphic design. The inspiration for "Tension" was to create something simple yet bold. His personal goals after graduation are to get a job at a design firm and eventually become the lead designer.

Giovanna Chmielewski Saavedra:

Giovanna is a senior majoring in English. Her favorite activities include smelling book spines, following any path which disappears into the distance, caressing plant leaves, letting cats out of bags, staring at the heavens on starry nights, and trying desperately to cheer her chronically depressed-looking hound dog. Giovanna wrote "Forgetting Morocco" as a desperate stab at making some kind of personal peace with her own impermanence and the clumsy jumble known as human experience. She feels that it worked remarkably well.

Eric Clark:

Eric Clark graduates in May of 2010 with a B.F.A. in Visual Arts with a concentration in printmaking. His work is inspired by vintage, antiquated, worn-out objects and people.

Olivia Daroza:

Olivia Daroza is a sophomore and is uncertain about her prospective graduation date:

"This haiku is sort of a message of strength, for anyone who feels intimidated by an uncertain future. The man with piercing eyes and soft touch is symbol for this uncertain future. His eyes intimidate you and make you uneasy. His touch is reassuring, and makes you feel safe. You can't trust him because of these seemingly opposing features. Tremendous growth is possible in these times when you are forced to face things that intimidate you, perhaps set off emotional triggers that have long been buried. Embrace these times, and strive for clarity."

Jerald Flanders:

Jerald Flanders is a Freshman English major expecting to graduate in 2014.

Elena Fodera:

Elena Fodera is a fourth-year English Communications major at AASU and has submitted to Calliope in the previous years. Her featured poem, "Poem 521", was written in the spring of last year. "Underpainting," her first short story, gets its title from the preliminary layer that goes on a canvas before it receives its masterpiece. After graduation she hopes to pursue a career in editing as well as graduate studies.

Jenny Lambeth:

Jenny Lambeth wrote "Not Pornography" on a whim one day after a gender and women's studies class. "We were discussing how there is a stereotype that exists which assumes that lesbian sex is for the enjoyment of men,

such as in pornography. I wanted to depict an intimate sexual encounter between two women in which both were participating out of pure emotion and raw passion, not for entertainment or for the enjoyment of any man. The poem is all about the two women sharing their moment, no one else."

Jenny is a senior majoring in English with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies and graduates in May 2010. She plans on going to graduate school and hopes to teach at the university level one day.

Brandon Nelson McCoy:

Brandon Nelson McCoy graduates in the fall of 2010 with a B.A. in English and will pursue graduate studies thereafter. "I pass my days" is a contemplation on marriage and all of the various digressions that subject entails.

Matthew Moyer:

Matthew Moyer is a graduate student in the history department focusing on economic theory's impact on political systems.

Kendall Norman:

Kendall Norman, who graduates in 2013, submitted "Elephant Graveyard."

"I love the idea of making nature appear to be something else in a photograph. I feel that my piece accomplishes this quite well. The palm tree in this photograph reminded me of the Elephant Graveyard scene from the movie The Lion King."

Alicia Perez:

Alicia Perez graduated on December 12, 2009 with a BFA in Fine Arts and a minor in music. She explains her submissions as follows:

"With 'Trumpet in the Kitchen' I was trying to focus on the practicing routines of musicians before they go onstage and perform. There is no excuse for not

practicing; you can even do it in the kitchen. 'Maria's Granddaughter' was a commissioned portrait that I made for the secretary in the Fine Arts building. And 'Silk Elephant' is a synthetic silk piece that involved dying the silk and then painting the elephant. The outside borders are acrylic paint and are therefore stiff. It is very interesting to see this piece hung as one does not think of an elephant floating or being silky."

Joseph Schwartzburt:

Joseph Schwartzburt graduates in May 2010 with his B.A. in English. He is planning on going to graduate school to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing, someday, and hopes to be a professional novelist and poet:

"My piece, 'The Rage within the Storm,' is a companion piece to a poem printed in last year's collection entitled 'The Gray Before the Storm,' which details the build-up surrounding storms both natural and within ourselves. 'The Rage within the Storm' seems cliché even to me, but the poem deals with notions of unadulterated violence and expression that even humans are capable of. People tend to read the poem quite literally, as an actual storm being described, which is fine by me because I wanted to capture the awe that thunderstorms inspired in me since I was a kid. There is another story being told, however, a story about those moments in our lives when we are prone to erupt, to make ourselves known, due to the pressure of any number of factors. Sometimes we wreak havoc when we get caught up in these 'storms' and while those instances can be scary, there is still something primitively beautiful about them."

Jessica Shaufelberger:

Jessical Shaufelberger is a junior and is working towards her B.A. in Art with concentrations in both Art History and Ceramics.

