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On behalf of everyone who helped make this publication possible, I would like to welcome you, the readers, to this fifth edition of The Chestatee Review.

The wealth and variety of submissions for this year's magazine were staggering. My heartfelt thanks goes out to the entire editorial board for its help in narrowing down the selections, as well as to the teachers for all their help with proofreading this publication. Most of all, I would like to thank Mr. Sauret for teaching our creative writing class, in which many of the following works originated. Without his guidance and support, this magazine would not have been possible.

After many hours of difficult and deliberate consideration, I believe the works chosen will offer the most to the reader in the form of insight, empathy, and entertainment.

Inside these pages you will find tales of youth and coming of age. There are pages dedicated to first loves and tainted loves, restlessness and bitterness, as well as irony and humor. The themes explored here are numerous and complicated, not unlike life itself. The journey through this magazine is a journey through the lives of the generation that wrote it. It speaks for us, telling the world of the things we have seen and experienced, all in such a short period of time.

I can only hope that you will enjoy reading this as much as we have enjoyed creating it. Serving as the student editor for this year's magazine was an honor and a privilege, and I thank everyone involved for the knowledge and experience I have received from it.

Erin O'Brien Arrendale

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You Become
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You become the poet and I will be the poem
You relate the tragedy and I'll provide the storm
If you stumble, let me be your metaphor
And if you desire you can relate a dream to me

You become the painter and let me be your heart
You portray the imagery and I'll divine the soul
If I falter, won't you restore my luster
And if it comes too close to us, we will call it art

Bonnie's Sketchpad
Sarah Seaman

Like a testament to a truer love,
The pages:
Smoky-gray illustrations,
And plain, unfettered lines of prose
Scattered between pasteboard walls.
Momentary inspiration,
Fleeting,
Electrifying, heartfelt thoughts
Understated on vanilla sheets
In hazy sketch pencil.
Brief and unfinished stories told
In pictures:
Child's cave drawings,
Tinged in lust,
Only somehow faded
Into nostalgic,
Dried flowers
Like emotions in monochrome.
Shadows are Gathering
Josh Vaughn

My grandmother waits for the shadows as she twirls her silver hair with her finger.
Her memories being scratched away as if eagle talons were tearing her thoughts.

Sitting silently in her cold house she waits.
She has the heater on but this is a new kind of cold.
I notice how shrunken her fingers have become like twigs from a giant oak tree.
The kitchen once filled with light and warmth
Has turned dark.

Pots used to bubble with beans and noodles once,
But there is no vegetable soup anymore.
The golden elixir that flowed with abundance,
tea that tasted like the gods ambrosia is gone.

Then they come

The shadows glide up the driveway and wait patiently at the door like salesmen.
It would be polite to knock but there is no need.
The door is already unlocked.

I stand frozen like a silver stalactite unable to move, breathe, or act.
I'm unable to do anything as the shadows turn and face my grandmother.

They place their silky, smoky hands on her and raise her to her unsteady feet.
They lead her outside the door.
I'm left with the sound of the door slamming shut.

Untitled
Jan Malloy

Shattered, like pieces of a fallen glass, picture frame.

The family in the photo all scattered here and there waiting to be swept back together again.

The children torn, struggling to make sense out of something that doesn't -- never will.

Growing up, leaving their homes to make families.

Lives of their own. Childhood memories like internal cuts and bruises remain

and follow them, control them and confuse them.

Who said, "Children are resilient"?

Show them the bleeding, the numbness, the scrapes all still waiting to be healed as they lay motionless in their graves.
The Candy Store
Jan Malloy

Sweethearts, Sprees, Reece's Cups, and Twizzlers
all sit
on a shelf behind thick glass
at the corner store.

The young girl pulls her momma's hand,
"Just one, Momma. Please! I'll be good."
Momma feels around in her pockets for
the few dollars she has,
"Candy's not good for you."

Bud Light, Coors, Vodka, and Wine
all sit
on an open shelf
at the corner store.

Untitled
Jessica Milligan
Computer Graphics
"The New Look"
Jon Krueger

Wesley Cambridge dropped his heavy book bag to the foyer floor next to the porcelain pottery. His left eye began to throb and he tasted blood in his mouth. The coppery flavor made him feel sick. "Mom, Adam!" he called out to the empty house. Neither his mother nor younger brother answered. Wesley was relieved not to get an answer. "I've got to get cleaned up before Mom sees me like this," he thought.

Before Wesley could even think about heading to the bathroom to take a shower, Noel invaded his thoughts again. He stood in the foyer with his teeth gritted. "Damn," Wesley said out loud. "What is she going to think of me now?"

He looked at his right hand and made a fist. He saw his knuckles were purple and swollen. He thought back to earlier in the afternoon in the bus lane.

"Just do it, man," Wesley's best friend Luke had said again into Wesley's ear as they looked up towards the blonde girl in the red sweater. "She's about to get on to her bus!"

"Go on Wes, you'll do fine," Luke's girlfriend, Sara, reassured Wesley. Wesley stood staring at the girl he'd been infatuated with for months and thought about how easy this would have been for someone like his father.

"Dad could ask a girl out in a heartbeat," Wesley thought. "I should be able to do it, too."

"All right, all right, I'll do it," Wesley had then said and followed with a sigh. "I'll do it."

He straightened his book-bag on his back and began walking towards her.

*Be cool, be yourself,* he thought. *Be like dad.*

"Hi, Noel," Wesley remembered himself saying to the blonde girl who sat in front of him in chemistry class as she was about to climb on to the bus. "H-how are you?"

"I'm fine, Wesley," she had answered with a smile. "Oh, uhh, good," he had stuttered.

Wesley winced in the empty house as he thought about how he must have sounded. *Dad would've laughed for sure if he'd seen me,* Wesley thought.

Wesley continued to replay the brief conversation he had with Noel in his mind.

"Are you going to be busy, or uhh, do you have a date for the dance tonight?" he remembered asking, trying to sound confident like his father would have.

"Homecoming?" she had asked. "Well, no, I don't... yet."

Wesley remembered standing silent for a moment, trying to find the right words. "Are you asking me to go to the dance, Wesley?"

Noel then said.

"Well, I mean, I guess," Wesley had responded. "Will you go with me?"

"Noel smiled. "That'd be nice."

"Really? Uhh, great!" Wesley exclaimed and immediately realized he'd sounded too excited, not keeping his cool as his father surely would have done.

"Ohh, yeah, sure, I'll be there," he said. *Idiot!* Wesley thought while he stood in the foyer.

"Dad would be rolling on the floor if he knew I didn't even ask what time I should pick her up."


"She said 'yes'," Wesley answered.

"All right, dude, you did it!" Luke responded.

"I told you that you could do it," Sara responded. Wesley smiled at her.
"How are you guys getting to the dance?" Luke then asked.

The smile disappeared from Wesley's face.

"I said I'd pick her up at 7:30," he said.

Luke roared with laughter as Sara got a worried look on her face.

"You don't have a car do you?" Sara asked.

"No, he doesn't," Luke answered for Wesley between chuckles.

"I'm such an idiot," Wesley moaned.

"Dad would be laughing so hard at me, he thought.

"Well, don't worry man," Luke said as his laughing ceased. "I'll call Noel and tell her I'll pick her up and then we'll pick you up. She lives about two neighborhoods down from me."

"You'll do that, man?" Wesley asked.


"Thanks man, you're a lifesaver," Wesley responded.

"Don't mention it, man," Luke responded. "Oh damn, we gotta catch our bus," he said, grabbing Sara. "We gotta catch our bus," he said and grabbed Sara's arm. "See ya' around 7:30!" Luke called out to Wesley as he and Sara ran towards their bus.

Wesley waved in response.

Wesley remembered walking to his bus feeling confident, despite his blunder, when Roger Daniels approached him, flanked by his two no-neck friends. They all three wore their letter jackets like badges.

"Oh shit," Wesley muttered under his breath.

"Where ya' off to?" Roger asked Wesley.

"Move," Wesley had said and tried to push his way past.

"You're not going anywhere," Roger said and pushed him backwards.

"Man, back off," Wesley growled.

I hope Noel can't see this from her bus, he had thought.

"Why did you even try out for the baseball team?" Roger asked. "You know you suck. You didn't even make the first cut."

"Get the hell out of my way, man," Wesley said again.

"He thought 'cause his daddy coached all those years in little league, it would get him a spot on the team," the tall guy to Roger's left said. "But daddy ain't around no more, is he?"

Wesley felt hot tears begin to burn in his eyes. "You asshole," he said quietly.

"What'd you say, you little shit?" the tall guy had demanded as he grabbed Wesley by the shirt.

Wesley felt fury building inside of him as the tall kid jerked him forward. He took a deep breath and balled his hand into a fist.

"Damn you!" he screamed and he fired his fist toward the tall guy's face. Wesley's fist connected with the tall guy's jaw and sent him flying backwards. He regained his balance and stared at Wesley with his mouth open.

"Big mistake, dude," Roger said and then he slapped Wesley in the stomach. The tall guy rushed back over to Wesley and backhanded him in the face. Wesley fell to the cold concrete of the sidewalk. Roger kicked him once more in the hip.

"Later, candyass," Roger said as the three guys walked away, leaving Wesley on the ground. He laid on the ground for a moment when he heard Luke's voice call out to him.

"You all right, man?" he asked frantically as he grabbed Wesley's arm and helped him up off the ground.

"Yeah, I'm o.k.," Wesley answered.

"I jumped off my bus when I saw that guy slug you, but I couldn't get here in time," Luke said. "Sorry, man."

"It's cool, don't worry about it," Wesley said.

"Where's Sara?"

"I made her stay on the bus," Luke responded.
Wesley stood up, then suddenly blurted, "Do you think Noel saw all that?"
"No, she didn't," Luke said. "Her bus left first."
"Good, o.k.," Wesley said. "Then, I'm gonna get that bastard."
"Hell no!" Wesley growled. "I'm gonna get him back."

"Come on, I'll call my mom, she can pick us up," he said as they walked towards the pay phone.
Wesley shook his head as he stood alone in his house recalling the events of the afternoon.

A girl like Noel needs someone strong, someone tough, he thought. Someone like dad.

Wesley walked further into his house, and, as he had done on many days in the past, he walked into the guest room that was adjacent to the foyer.

The tiny guest room still smelted of medicine and rubbing alcohol. The dull, brown paint on the wall was still peeling in the corners of the room. The silk painting still hung over the bed. The mirror on the wall was covered in white spots and dust. The single-sized bed still sat in the middle of the room. A white quilt sat, folded, at the foot of the bed. The nightstand that had been painted several times sat next to the bed and was covered in dust. Wesley wondered if the small lamp next to the bed ever had its bulb replaced. It had burned out the morning the ambulance was called to his house nearly a year and a half ago.

Wesley could still see his father lying in the bed as cancer ate away at his body. Lung cancer was a slow, painful death, Wesley had learned. He remembered coming home from little league baseball games on Saturday afternoons that spring and having his mother nag him until he went into the guest room to tell his father about the game. Wesley never liked talking with his father about baseball.

"You didn't make any errors did you?" Wesley's father would always ask his son when he went into the guest room that spring to tell him about the game he had missed. "You know errors will kill a team."
"I know, dad, I know. I didn't make any errors," Wesley would respond, even if he did let a groundball sneak between his legs. Wesley could tell his father wanted to be at the games. He had coached Wesley's team every spring except the last one when he was diagnosed with cancer.

"Well, keep getting better, pal," Wesley's father had told him one March afternoon after he had gotten his post-game report from his son. "Girls like guys who can play ball. You'll make the high school team for sure. I'll be back out there next spring to coach the team. We'll be the best team at the park, with me calling the shots and you batting clean-up."
"I hope so, dad," Wesley had responded with a small smile.

Wesley looked again at the empty bed without wrinkles in the sheets and felt guilty once again as he remembered how the only baseball season he ever really had fun playing was the spring his father couldn't coach.

He felt warm tears welling up in his blue eyes and they stung his bruised left eye. Wesley walked over to the mirror and peered into his reflection. The white of his eyes was faded red. His left eye was slightly purple and swollen. His lips had dry, chapped blood on them.

Wesley heard the rumbling of the garage door opener.

"Oh no," he said, and bolted out of the guestroom towards the stairs, but before he could reach them, his mother came in the backdoor carrying two plastic bags filled with groceries. Wesley's little brother, Adam, walked in behind her carrying a gallon of milk.

"Wesley," she said when she saw him. "Where are you heading?"
“Uhh, just going upstairs,” he responded, turning his face away from her. “Mom, come on,” he moaned and turned towards her without thinking.

“Wesley,” his mother gasped when she saw his bruised eye. “My God, what happened to you?”

“Mom, it’s n-nothing. I just—” he stammered.

“Did you get into a fight?” she asked.

His mother looked at him and squinted her eyes.

“No, I mean, yeah. Sort of,” he stammered. “It’s nothing I can’t handle.”

“What happened?” she demanded.

“That guy Roger Daniels said something about Dad!” Wesley blurted out. “So I punched the asshole and then his friends jumped me.”

Wesley expected his mother to run and hug him and commend his defending his father’s honor.

“You should have just walked away, Wes,” his mother said instead.

“What?” he asked in disbelief. “He said something about Dad!”

“It doesn’t matter,” she said. “It takes a bigger man to walk away, you know.”

“I can’t believe you’re saying this,” he said.

“One day you’ll know what it takes to just walk away,” she said. “When you grow up some more.”

Wesley tried to think of something to say, but he just turned and ran upstairs into his bedroom.

Wesley sat on his bed fighting back tears.

“Just walk away,” he muttered to himself. “Dad wouldn’t have just walked away. He would’ve beaten the shit out of that guy.”

Wesley then heard a knock at his door.

“Wesley, open the door, please,” his mother asked.

Wesley wiped the tears out of his eyes, walked to the door and opened it.

“Are you going to be all right?” she asked.

“Yeah, I guess,” he said.

“What are you doing tonight?” she asked.

“I’m going to the Homecoming Dance,” he replied.

“Really?” his mother asked, shocked. “You have a date?”

“Yeah, a girl in my chemistry class,” he responded.

“Great,” his mother responded. A slight smile appeared on her face. “You can borrow some of your dad’s old clothes,” she said.

Wesley wrinkled his forehead. “Dad’s clothes?”

“Yes,” she replied. “There are some nice clothes in his closet.”

“Mom, I don’t think that’s a good idea...”

“Wesley,” his mother said. “None of your clothes are decent enough to wear to a dance. Go on and wear your dad’s stuff. It’s all right.”

Wesley sighed and nodded his head. “O.K.” he then said.

His mother turned and walked back downstairs.

Wesley walked across the hall and entered his bathroom. He looked at himself in the mirror. His long brown hair was still matted with sweat and sticking up in the back.

Wesley walked over to the shower faucet and turned it on. He let the water warm up while he stripped away his clothing. Wesley looked at his white, naked body in the mirror. He could see his own rib cage covered only by a thin layer of skin. A large, purple bruise colored his right side under his ribs. His thin arms also had bruises on them. His flat stomach rose and fell as he breathed. Wesley looked away from his reflection and got into the shower.

He washed his hair and his body with a bar of white Ivory soap. He let the warm water flow over him and began to feel a small burning sensation in the pit of his stomach. He shook, despite the warm water, as he thought about his upcoming date with Noel. He’s so pretty, he thought. I’ve never even been on a date before. How do I need to act?
He shivered again and then thought, Dad would know.

He reached down and turned the shower off. He pulled the curtain back and looked out into the steamy bathroom. The thick steam made Wesley take small breaths. He let the water drip off him. He then stepped out of the white porcelain shower and stood on the cool, white bathroom tiles. He grabbed a towel from the rack and dried his thin body. He grabbed a stick of deodorant from off the counter and applied it to his underarms. Wesley returned the deodorant to the counter. He then reached out to the mirror and wiped the condensation away. He could only see his face in the mirror, and he could see how nervous he was in his eyes.

Wesley wrapped the towel around his waist and opened the door. He walked over to his bedroom. He approached the dresser drawers and pulled the top one out. He pulled out a pair of boxer shorts. He removed the towel and put his underwear on. He turned and faced the door, but then stopped.

Dad’s clothes, he thought. He sighed and walked out into the hall. He headed for the master bedroom at the end of the hall.

He entered the room and walked slowly to the bathroom. He entered the bathroom and saw his mother’s makeup scattered all over the counter. Wesley walked past the sink and towards the open closet. As he passed the mirror he looked over into it and a sudden memory flooded his mind.

Wesley remembered the last time he stood at this mirror. His father had been standing behind him, a full head taller than his son at the time.

How old had I been? Wesley wondered. Ten? Eleven? Something like that, I think. We’d been getting ready to go to the Academic Awards Ceremony for me at the middle school. It had been the winter before the parking lot incident.

Wesley remembered his father had been standing behind him, wrapping a necktie around his tiny neck. He had been trying to teach Wesley how to tie a necktie on his own. His father’s mustache had tickled Wesley’s neck when he leaned over and tried to see the knot he was trying to tie. Wesley remembered how the strong scent of his father’s cologne had stung his nose.

“You’ll need to know how to tie your own necktie one day, Wes,” his father had told him as Wesley tried to stand still. “It’s something every man has to learn.”

“No way, dad,” he had responded. “When will I ever have to wear a tie after tonight?”

“What about a date?” his father had replied. “When you get in high school you’ll be going to dances, and you’ll need to wear a tie to look appropriate.”

“Did you go to dances in high school dad?” Wesley remembered asking his father. “Did you ever ask a girl?”

“Well, yeah, Wes, I did,” he had responded.

“Why did you want to go with a girl?” he’d asked.

“Girls aren’t any fun.”

His father had chuckled at that remark. “You’ll change your mind when you get a little older, buddy,” his father had told him. “You’ll be calling girls on the phone, borrowing the car for dates...”

“I can’t even talk to girls,” Wesley had then said. “I mean, uh, even if I wanted to.”

“Well, it’s not that hard,” his father had assured him.

“Just be yourself...and always tell them how pretty they look,” he said with a wink.

“That’s all right, dad,” Wesley had replied. “I don’t think I’ll ever need to know how to talk to girls.”

Again his father had chuckled. “O.K., pal, if you say so,” he’d replied.

Wesley stood staring into the mirror and saw a wet tear run down his cheek. He thought about wiping it away, but instead he let it run down to his jawline and he watched it fall to the tiled floor.
"I miss you so much, dad," he sobbed to the mirror. Wesley put his hands to his face and didn’t fight back the tears for several minutes.

As Wesley began to get a handle on his emotions, he glanced to his right at the closet. The door was open and clothes hung from coat hangers on the doorknob. He swallowed hard and took a deep breath. He then walked into the closet and looked at his father’s side. He saw shirts, pants, and blazers neatly pressed and hanging. Several shirts were hidden behind plastic dry-cleaning bags that had never been removed. Next to the shirts, Wesley noticed a line of neckties hanging like colorful, lifeless snakes. At his feet, Wesley saw a line of black dress shoes, each pair side by side.

Wesley stood, wearing only his boxer shorts, facing his father’s clothing. He could smell the soap on his skin and felt a cleanliness he hadn’t ever felt before. He felt a hot rush of anxiety and fear run through him as he looked at his father’s clothing. Wesley again let out a sigh and reached out a shaking arm to grab a pair of neatly pressed black slacks. He carefully pulled the pants off the coat hanger and stepped into them. The fabric felt cool on his trembling legs. He buttoned the pants at his waist and zipped up the fly. He noticed the pants were a little big in the waist, but were the perfect length. Next, Wesley slowly reached out and grabbed a pressed collared shirt from its coat hanger and put it on his body. He slowly and meticulously pushed each button through its hole with his trembling fingers. He tucked the shirt into his pants. Then Wesley reached out and grabbed a black, leather belt. He carefully looped it around his thin waist. Wesley grabbed a pair of black socks from a small, white bin below the shirts and slid them on to his cold feet. He grabbed a pair of black dress shoes from off the floor, breaking the perfect line, and worked his feet into them. They were not a perfect fit; they felt tight on Wesley’s toes, but he tied them neatly and stood up again.

Wesley could feel his breathing become less labored as he stood wearing his father’s clothing. His stomach began to relax. He felt his anxiety melting away like snow off a baseball diamond on a warm springtime afternoon. A confident smile crept across his young face as he reached out for his father’s tie rack. Wesley flipped through about eight different ties before he found one to his liking. It was a dark red, with black lines running at an angle across it.

Wesley stepped out of the closet and stood in front of the mirror. He thought back to the time his father had tried to teach him to tie a necktie, but instead had discussed how to talk to girls. Wesley thought hard to remember the few instructions his father had given him about tying a necktie that night. Wesley flipped up the collar of the shirt and wrapped the tie around his neck.

"Over, then under, then back on top," he heard his father’s voice echo in his head.

Wesley tried his best to remember his father’s words as he looped the red tie around his neck in front of the mirror.

When he was finished, he noticed the tie’s length was a little short and the knot wasn’t quite in the shape of a triangle. It was good enough for Wesley, though. He tightened the knot near his Adam’s apple and straightened it out. He smiled approvingly at the new image he saw in the mirror.

*Something’s missing*, he thought.

Wesley reached back into the closet and grabbed one of his father’s black blazers from its coat hanger. He slipped his arm into it and pulled the other sleeve around to his other arm. He then pulled it up on his young shoulders and looked at himself in the mirror.

Wesley looked at the mirror and thought he looked older, somehow. He smiled at his reflection. He hardly noticed his purple eye. The throbbing in his ribs had subsided. He noticed how much like his father he looked in these clothes, yet how he had his own unique look.
Wesley turned and walked out of the bathroom and back through the master bedroom. As he walked down the hallway, Wesley seemed to take bigger strides than he had when he walked down the hallway just a few minutes earlier. He walked perfectly erect, feeling more observant, more confident, than he had ever known himself to be. He inhaled slowly, carefully through his nose and exhaled through his mouth.

Wesley headed back to his bathroom. He entered his bathroom and combed his hair. He brushed his teeth.

"Wesley!" he heard his mother call out from downstairs. "Come on down. Your friends are here!"

"I'm coming," he called back and headed for the staircase.

Wesley came down the stairs and saw Luke, Sarah, and Noel all standing in the living room waiting for him.


"That's a new look."

"You look very handsome, Wesley," Sara said.

Wesley looked at Noel. She was wearing a light blue dress. Her blonde hair seemed to glow. She carried a small purse in her right hand.

"Hello, Noel," Wesley said to her, as he looked into her blue eyes.

"Hi, Wesley," she said back to him.

Luke stood staring at his best friend with his mouth slightly open. "That's a new look for you, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yeah, it is," Wesley responded.

Wesley then turned his attention to his date and said, "You look great, Noel."

Noel smiled and blushed. "Thank you, Wesley," she responded. "You look nice also."

"Are you guys ready to go?" Wesley asked.

Everyone nodded.

Suddenly Wesley's mother entered the room. She had put on a pair of blue jeans and a white blouse. She had tied a red bandana around her head and was holding a camera.

"I want to get a picture of you guys before you go," she said. She then looked over at Wesley. She cocked her head to one side as she analyzed her son's appearance.

Wesley held his breath as she looked at him.

"You look great, honey," she then said, sounding relieved. "Do the clothes fit?"

"Yeah, they do," he replied as he let his breath out.

"Well, you look fantastic," she said back to him and smiled.

The four of them gathered around and smiled for the camera. Wesley slipped his arm around Noel's waist as his mother called out: "Smile, everyone."

"Take my picture too, mom?" Adam, who had been watching the proceedings from the sofa, called out after the flash.

"In a minute, honey," she answered back in the carefree tone that Wesley hadn't heard from his mother in some time.

Wesley, Noel, Luke, and Sarah all began walking towards the front door.

"Wesley," his mom called out to him from the living room.

He stopped walking. "Yes?" he said as he turned around.

"Can you lock the doors and turn off the lights when you get home tonight?" she asked. "I'm not going to wait up for you."

Wesley stood in silence for a minute. "Sure, mom, I can do that," he finally said.

Wesley smiled back at his mother.

"You guys have a good time tonight," she called out to them as they walked out the front door.


"Bye, mom," Wesley called out and shut the front door.
Outside, the sun was beginning to set as the couples walked towards Luke's car. The snow that had survived the sunlight crunched under their shoes. The temperature was beginning to drop.

"It's going to be a really nice night," Noel said to Wesley. He could see her white steamy breath it hit the cold air. "Except for the cold."

"The cold doesn't bother me much anymore. But I think it will be a nice night," he replied as he opened the back door of the car for her.

"Thank you, Wesley," Noel said.
"You're welcome," Wesley replied.

She climbed in and he shut the door behind her. He walked across to the other side of the car, but before he could open the door Luke called out to him from the driver's side.

"Yeah?" Wesley responded.
"Roger will be at the dance tonight," Luke told his friend.

"I figured he would be," Wesley responded.
"What are you going to do?" Luke asked, worried.
"Don't worry, man," Wesley assured his friend. "I'll be cool. All that's over."

Luke smiled and nodded his head
"Glad to hear it," he said and opened his door. Wesley opened the passenger side's back door. He climbed in next to Noel.

As Luke drove the car out of Wesley's neighborhood and towards the high school, Wesley reached across the backseat and slipped his hand into Noel's small, white hand and told her, "You look very pretty tonight."

She looked up at him, and he smiled at her. Her eyes darted away for a moment, but then returned and met with Wesley's. Noel smiled back at her date.
Earth's Celestial Waste
Chris Davy
(with apologies to Anthony Burgess)

The atmos is bright green again tonight.
The castron warns of fropping debris so it
is best to wear the gulliver cover.
Where does it come from and when will it stop?

We viddy them all through spectals of gold.
So many picks yet we spy blind.
The roundness that is red, pale blue or yellow
hue. What do the patrons look like?

One day our rassodocks will reach that of the
Jalil Maphoriny (as legend has been passed),
and we will be able to cast our waste out to
the unknown strats. Like patrons from there out.

For here we are at the mercy of the green falling
mass. What can we do, but receive the occasional
tolchock?
At least it is not the hot rouge rain with the tallical pieces.
What is NASA or toxic, or USA?

It is unsafe for our little doplers to leave the svelt hut.
Doplers resoot questions concerning the problems.
No, we have no swers, as we resoot the chamber ourselves.
They can't say, but rever to the scriots of moments long
past.

Hol Scriot tells the future, maybe Jalil Maphoriny knew
who
was the one. But for now, may I treden this memnat
to whomever is there? Please stop dumping your trash
into the strats without cernment for our doplers and fabor
way of life--YOU'RE KILLING US!

Untitled
Tim Anderson
Three Dimensional Art
Identity From Publisher's
Clearing House
Chris Davy

Trees dying daily, destroying your land.
Small metal abyss, in slides my hand.
Free money, insurance, a new car, a new van,
All led by the demi-god, I call him McMahon.
It is constant, voluminous... no end, it won't fail.
I'm Occupant and Resident; I need my junk mail.

Without it I'm no one, just useless, just me.
Please give me my junk mail and then let me be.
I am nameless without it, my mail must be sent.
It is my identity... Occupant and Resident.
I need it to exist: buy, beg, borrow and sell.
It has reached 2 o'clock; I must go check my mail.

The Inside of Eleanor
Nick Brown

All in the name of power.
Is it stupid? A waste of genius?
It was Einstein who said,
"The only difference between stupidity
and genius is that genius has limits."

The hot gasses whipping the spindle
As it desperately searches for an exit.
While the crisp, cold flow moves its way
To empower life anew.
Unknowing of the thrashing it will obtain
To become the power so desired.
The Big Apple
Josh Vaughn

The smell of hot-dog stands mixes with smog
which leaves a dirty taste in my mouth.
A picture of Liberty invades my thoughts
as my eyes glance in her direction.

Two kids using Bud bottles as crystal
drumsticks against a trashcan.
Parents yell at each other above
while the other tenants turn down the TV to listen.

The wall up ahead has become a big picture book
with its gang symbols and Sean Loves Stacys.
Glancing at a faded street light
wavering from on to off, I continue to walk.

Untitled
Jessica Milligan
Computer Graphics
Spring Break
Jon Krueger

Sitting in wooden rental chairs under the black night sky
Staring up at the full moon like a wild animal
Three hundred miles away from responsibility
Twenty feet away from the crashing waves of the Atlantic Ocean.

Smoking cheap cigarettes and drinking Miller Lite,
With an old friend and my younger brother.
Watching to see who will come walking up the beach
As a cool breeze whistles past my sunburned ears.

I begin to lose track of time, but I don't care right now.
My friend calls out to three girls wearing tank tops.
I can't quite understand what he says to them
And they giggle, and with a carefree wave,
give him what he wants.

Somewhere a boom box plays a song by the Beach Boys.
"God only knows what I'd be without you."
I feel calm wash over my red body like a salty wave.
This moment feels so incredibly perfect.

As I rise to my feet, I feel hot blood rush to my head.
My friend and my brother ask me where I am going.
With a sun-scorched hand, I motion to the ocean.
They nod and return their attention to the girls walking past.
I walk across the sand wondering how many Millers I have put down.
And I wade into the cool ocean water up to my ankles.
I turn and see my brother and my friend still talking and laughing.
The moon continues to pull on the tides.

Too Easy
Sarah Seaman

It is an amazement
To me
How simple it would be
To (when you teased temptation,
When you call me sweet
And good enough to eat, and
Ask me what it tastes like,
The food inside my mouth,
And I marvel at how easy
It would truly be)
Take your face in my small, pale hands
And press my lips to yours

I wonder if popcorn salt
Would linger on your lips
And if I would taste the thirst
For more of what I'd done.
I watched her bathing again last night
Ken Abbot

The crow's-wing-black of her hair,
not quite lightened by the reflected purple of widened
eyes,
seems to flee the blood-red blush of her round cheekbones.

She doesn't see me--or if she does, she gives no sign.
But she's always there, this time of night.
I think she knows I'm watching, and doesn't mind.

I've never seen lower than that blazing red--
the rest is hidden beneath the rippling surface of the
distant hills.
If I walk over those hills, can I meet her?

I can try.
4:00 am
Sarah Seaman

Hours lost in flicker-fine, silver light,
just another full moon night.
Scarcely breathing when not breathing in your breath,
Barely believing...this is how it feels.
"If I don't leave you now, I never will!"
Kiss me just one more time,
Wait, just once again
"I've more care to stay than will to go..."
Poetry is made of such as us...
Only just met, but such love of years
In your eyes.
In my eyes
Are the words I do not know how to say...
Stay.

They Play The Anthem at 8 in Laredo
Ken Abbot

And before they do I have to drive.
The miles pile up before me--
hitch-hikers that choke on my dust
one at a time as I pass.
I want to get there soon;
my ride is at eight.

But that's a long way off.
A long time before I tie on,
before the fear and thrill
explode inside
as the muscle and horn
explode beneath.

I could quit, I think.
Find a job, settle down,
raise a little family in a nice house
behind a cute white picket fence
with pink flamingoes in the yard.
But why?

Instead, I fly through the night
nearly stoned from coffee and Copenhagen,
hoping I win tonight so I can eat tomorrow.
It's this time of the night
--when everything is darkness and cold,
and nothing provides light but a few scattered unreachable stars--
that I think about home.

But now the sun's coming up.
VICIOUS CREATURE

Ken Abbot

It was a clear night, with the full moon shining, and Joe smiled, looking out the window. Perfect, he thought. And that's just how it needs to be. Carefully, he reached into his closet, letting his fingers guide his arm by feel past the jumble of boxes and clothing he'd artfully arranged to block the backpack. Lifting it out delicately, he pulled it out, making sure it didn't scrape over any cardboard and wake his parents. The backpack was white, and so were the rest of his clothes, or nearly so: white T-shirt, thin white jacket, extremely faded blue-jeans, white baseball cap, and white sneakers.

He slung the pack onto his back, even this casual movement performed with the utmost care, picked up a spray can in one hand, and eased carefully out the bedroom door, leaving it open. Slowly he crept down the hallway, counting his steps. After the sixth, he paused, fingers searching for the doorjamb of the open bathroom door like octopus tentacles, then gripping it for support as he took a long, ungainly step forward. That creaky board had warned him of his father's approach and given him time to hide "them damn nerd-books" more than once; it would be foolish to fall for the same trick himself.

When he came to the living room, he paused for a moment to look around, then shrugged. Jill won't see any of this. Don't worry about it. Joe glided past the television, careful of its drunken footing—slowly, very slowly—and waited for the familiar sounds of the old trailer settling. Once he heard a sound, he used the spray can on one of the door hinges, then waited and did it twice more. All of this was done slowly, with long pauses between and the utmost care.

Joe eased the door open, then slid out as soon as there was room for both him and the backpack and onto the stoop. After easing the door shut with the same painstaking care, he carefully negotiated the icy steps, left the can of WD-40 next to the stairs, and jogged through the snow until he was under a neighbor's tree. There he watched the house for any signs of movement and checked his watch. The whole maneuver had taken 25 minutes.

He smiled as he looked over the snow, a thin white shroud. Perfect. As he walked across the trailer park to his friend's driveway, he pulled the keys out of his pocket, heading for his friend's vehicle. Bud's truck was new; it was nice, and--best of all--it was white.

A coyote called plaintively into the night as Joe unlocked the truck, then again, as if asking the moon why it hadn't responded to him, and Joe grunted. His dad had tried in every way imaginable to kill the varmints: traps, poison, .22 bullets. None of them worked, but he kept trying anyway. Why not? It was easier than hunting work, and the hours were more flexible.

The truck handled gently as he drove it onto the gravel road, and Joe grinned wider, ignoring the butterflies in his stomach and patting the backpack on the passenger seat. He had noticed Jill immediately when she walked into his fifth-grade classroom, her arms and cheeks and legs still dark with California tan. It had been seven years until she had noticed him, but she finally had, and everything in him was riding on this night.

He had heard the same radio reports as she had—in fact, the same ones that everyone had. Some environmentalist nutcase had let three wolves loose up in the mountains, and when the police caught him, he told them he had more than thirty of them running around and a half-dozen mountain lions as well. The theory was that with such animals in the area it would have to be protected from development. Instead, according to the news report, all three wolves were recaptured within a day, and the nut was facing charges. No evidence was found of other animals, but of course rumors were flying. These rumors were not at all hindered by the fact that the daily newspaper of the small North Carolina town where Joe
lived had taken on the environmental nut's crusade as its very own and was avidly quoting every remark he made—even going so far as to post a 1-800 hotline for wolf or mountain lion sightings.

Joe had simply read through the paper and set it aside—objective and non-biased, my foot—until the 800 number had caught his eye. His father was still chuckling over the "noble creature" comment which was used at least six times on each page.

"Noble creatures? Them ijits should try comin' home to find an entire pen of lambs slaughtered by one. Too bad there ain't really any out there—mebbe if one of them damn fools got hisself killed, the others would quit goin' on about the 'poor animals.' Catamounts are vicious little bastards—ain't nothin' noble about 'em."

Joe had simply grunted, drinking his coffee, but an idea had blossomed in his mind like a small, slightly malicious, probably illegal flower.

If one of "them damn fools" were killed, then it may not make them stop—but it would certainly be noticed. The local newspaper would snatch it up with all the poise and dignity of a dog racing into the kitchen at the sound of the electric can opener, and it might even make one of the larger papers. And hadn't Jill been saying she wanted to do something that would always be remembered, something that would get into the newspapers? Didn't she even speak of trying to start a defense fund for the nut, and wouldn't a fake kill arouse more attention to his cause?

Joe had run the idea past Jill, and she had agreed.

More than that, she had been ecstatic, excited, fascinated, everything that Joe had hoped he could make her. Even had he only halfway intended to do it, her reaction ensured that he would go through with it.

Joe smiled, thinking, and turned on the radio.

Diamond Rio played loud and clear over speakers that weren't blown like those in his own truck.

"Settin' in my pickup truck, listenin' to the country station... Singer singin' 'bout a lastin' love—me, I'm losin' patience... I don't know what he's talkin' about, I'm in—" Joe changed the station. THAT's guaranteed to build confidence, ain't it? On the new station, Confederate Railroad began.

"She never cried when Old Yeller died, she wasn't washed in the blood of the Lamb... Never stood up for the Star-Spangled Banner an' she wasn't a John Wayne fan... Her baby blue eyes never bore me a sign, that woman was bad to the bone... She never cried, when Old Yeller died, do you think I'll cry when shh—" Joe sighed and turned off the radio. Never mind the music then—I'll drive without it.

It was great of Ted to lend me his truck. Joe took his time, still thinking. Ted had tried not to laugh at him, had in fact told him with a sigh that he was wasting his time trying. Little did he know! Ted just wanted him to give up so he'd go out with Maryanne. He'd been trying to hook Joe up with Ted's cousin for more than six months now, and Joe had—skilfully, he thought—avoided the topic. Ted should have known better already than to try.

Maryanne was all right, he supposed; but next to Jill? Next to the girl—the woman—who was the head cheerleader, who was the first to have her own car, who came from California, that land so far away from this little hick town in western North Carolina where the biggest item on the news was a nutcase with a couple of souped-up dogs and there wasn't a thing to do on the weekend but hang out at the diner and hope maybe someone had gotten hold of some alcohol? And that was without even considering her looks—Maryanne was pretty, but Jill... long flame-gold locks of hair, eyes so green it looked like there was a light behind them independent of the light outside—like if the room were dark they would glow—and a body that would make... well, let's not go there.

Joe liked Maryanne—she was good people—but Jill had been a part of his thoughts and his heart so long that he couldn't imagine walking into a room without looking to see if she was there or not. Ted had tried a few different tricks, but to no avail. The journal entry she had written
and he had left "accidentally" in Joe's sight had been studiously ignored; Ted's suggestions for a double date had been turned down; and even on the few occasions Ted had arranged an "accidental" meeting at the 66, Joe had happened not to be there.

Even the afternoon before this night, Ted had tried again. "You know," he said, spitting tobacco juice unerringly into the styrofoam cup which sat on the patio at his feet, "There's goin' to be a Chris LeDoux concert out Rockford way next Friday night. I know you ain't got the money for it—Maryanne wants to go, but she's only got a Learner's, can't drive down there herself. I bet if you was to give her a ride down there, she'd spring for ya." Ted pursed his lips as if to whistle and another brown glob of spit spitted faultlessly into the cup.

"Well..." Joe had chosen his words carefully. "I'd like to, but... Wal, what would happen if folks seen her? They'd think me an' her was together?"


"Well... no—but what would Jill think?"

Ted sighed. "Jill wouldn't care, Joe."

"After tonight she will." Joe grunted. "You still don't think I got a chance, do you?"

Sffip. "Man, you been moonin' over her since you was ten. An' she been ignorin' you since you was ten. You just ain't her type."

"An' what's her type, then? You ain't goin' out with her."

"Rich."

Joe shrugged. "You'll see."

Sffip. "An' if I don't? What if this don't work neither? Then what are you goin' to do? Why ain't you managed to do it yet?"

Joe chuckled. "You ain't been payin' attention. I was over at her house just yesterday." He grinned. "Got a kiss when I left, too."

"Course you did, you're makin' her famous." Ted sighed, then pursed his lips again. Sffip. "I bet come tomorrow you'll be seein' 'the situation different.'

"You do, huh? Care to put your money where your mouth is?"

"Nope. Better yet, yeah." Sffip. "I ain't goin' to tell Maryanne you ain't goin'. I'll just say I forgot to ask you. Here's the bet. You actually get her, I'll shit a solid gold brick—but on top of that, I won't bug you no more 'bout Maryanne. Hell, you'll be taken. But if you don't, then you ain't got to do anything. But you gotta think about Maryanne's offer. Hell, she's a pretty girl, an' she thinks a lot of you."

Joe nodded. "Sure, I can do that. But I'm tellin' you, I'm gonna want that brick."

"If you had it already, you'd have a chance." Sffip. "But in the meantime, here's the keys."

It wasn't long before Joe drove into the nicer part of town and pulled the truck up to the curb next to Jill's driveway. She ran out from the shadows, climbed into the truck, and gave him a kiss on the cheek. Trying not to float through the roof, Joe put the truck into gear.

Jill set the backpack on her lap and giggled. Her clothes were all white; a ski outfit. "Did you get everything?"

Joe smiled, his head still buzzing like a bugzapper with a grasshopper caught in it. "Sure did. Didn't forget nothin'."

She smiled, then settled into the bench seat, leaning against his shoulder. "This is gonna be great! It'll be, like, on the national headlines!" Her face was a bit flushed; her breath just a tad quick, and Joe started wishing he had come up with two or three such stunts instead of just a flash in the pan.

The road was unplowed, but not enough snow had fallen to cover it, and there were only scattered points reflecting the soft moonlight at them. A lover's moon, he thought. I hope. Jill snuggled closer in the warm cab of
the truck, so unlike his own where the cold searched for
and found every crack in the floorboards, as the yellow
lines passed by, keeping time with the telephone poles.

They didn’t have far to drive—after about five miles
they were at the path, and Joe pulled over. “You know
what to do, right?”

“Duh... I’ve been thinking about it all day! I just
walk along until you catch up. Make sure I leave tracks,
but try to act, ya know, natural.”

Joe nodded. “Remember to walk slow.” He paused,
not sure how to continue with what he intended, despite
his amazingly unexpected success so far. “And take this
with you,” he said, before touching her cheek with one
hand and kissing her gently.

She didn’t quite collapse into his arms, but her
response wasn’t exactly cold either, and she was smiling
when he broke off. “I’ll meet you there.”

Joe paused for a moment after the door shut to
gather his thoughts together, but it soon became apparent
they weren’t going to gather, and so he pulled the truck
around to a side road, parking it and getting out with the
backpack.

He reached into the bag and pulled out several
contraptions of wood and cloth—four of them, in pairs. He
slung the backpack on with the same care as before, then
bent down and strapped the first two wood platforms to his
feet. After taking a few steps in the snow, he looked back
and smiled. Each platform left two tracks, and the pattern
was just like that pictured in the library book—a trotting
mountain lion. As he grinned and hummed a tune under
his breath, he headed for the hiking path.

“Cougars don’t register,” he had told Jill, standing
over the workbench in her father’s garage and marking the
blocks with a pencil.

“They don’t what?” Jill was watching over his
shoulder, standing close.

“Register. Cats, when they walk, put their back paws
into the same spot they put their front paws. If you’re

lookin’ at the tracks, it looks kinda like they was walkin’ on
two legs.” Jill was listening intently. “Most relatives of
cats are the same way—bobcats and lions and tigers and
such. Well, cougars don’t—they’re actually pretty clumsy
for a cat. So when they’re walkin’, the tracks look more like
dog or wolf. If I just used the same blocks of wood for all
the tracks, I’d have to put right, then right, then left, then
left,” He drew the marks in the workbench’s sawdust—
probably the first sawdust that had ever been on it, “Pretty
much, I’d have to skip through the woods. Not only is
there no way in hell I’m doin’ that, but I don’t think I could
carry you an’ skip.”

“Maybe you could,” Jill’s chest was pressing against
his arm. “But I see the point. So what’s the other set for?”

“Wal, uh...” Joe picked up the other two blocks.

“These are for when it’s stalking—They almost register
when they’re stalking, so I just get m. Get me feet a
bit.” Joe grinned. “It’ll be near-exact. I’m pretty sure it’d
fool a... whatever expert in that is called. It’s sure to
fool someone just takin’ a walk. And them newspaper
folks’ll just eat it up.”

Jill kissed his cheek. “Great!”

He couldn’t be sure, but Joe believed she had
followed with, “Then let’s get this stuff put up. Daddy will
clean up the sawdust.”

Joe nodded and packed the blocks away.

Apparently, his guess was accurate, because Jill keeps on
smiling. “I’ll have to sand ‘em a little—might even carve a
few lines on ‘em—but they’ll be ready. Saturday night,
then? At least, if it snows like it’s supposed to.”

Jill nodded, smiling. “I’ll be there.”

Jill waved to him once she could see him though the
trees, and Joe waved back. Carefully, making sure not to
leave any other marks in the clean snow, he took off each
platform, putting on a different one and sticking the old
ones—carefully, still carefully—into the backpack. Now he
walked more slowly, scuffing his feet slightly each time he
put them down. This time he looked back again, and chuckled—perfect.

He continued to walk, remembering the awkward foot movements, until he found the spot he was looking for. After hissing to Jill and grinning, he waited for her to catch up.

Jill walked briskly now, her cheeks flushed and green eyes shining bright in the fiery halo of her hair. "Now what?"

Joe smiled. "Now I hop down off this ridge onto the cleared trail, first. After that, we get out the rest of the stuff." Carefully, he set his feet at the edge of the drop-off— as close as he could get without fear of slipping—bent down almost into a full squat, and launched himself into the air, as high and far as he could.

For just an instant he hung in space, then came down hard, falling forward as his feet hit, a little in front of Jill, and catching himself on his hands, which almost went numb from the snow. After getting his balance and setting down the backpack, he tucked his hands inside his jacket, feeling a few tiny needles sting as the heat returned to his hands quickly. Jill smiled and crouched down fluidly, unzipping the backpack.

Inside were the pieces of wood, two sealed plastic bags that were apparently the reason Joe had handled the backpack so carefully, and a three-foot length of garden hose. After tucking the fake tracks inside the backpack again, he dug around for a few seconds and pulled out the last item—a large scrap of denim, from an old pair of bluejeans. "Now we scuff the snow up a little bit."

Joe set the bags aside, then the two of them simply walked around, kicking up snow and making a mess of that small section of unspoiled ground. Before long, Joe smiled and picked up one of the bags. "That's good enough."

He cut a notch in one corner of a bag and tilted it, smiling as a red stream ran out—beef blood. He sprinkled the blood liberally, then made a similar notch in the second bag, first pouring a large amount onto the scrap of denim and then sprinkling more around, staining the snow with blood. Jill lay down in the snow, and Joe handed her the half-full bag as she held out her other hand to him.

Joe made sure the blocks were secure, then took her offered hand and dragged her down the path, then off the path and into the woods as she occasionally sprinkled blood behind her, only pausing for a few minutes to catch his breath when he heard a coyote call lonesomely into the night.

"Pretty sound," Joe commented, and Jill agreed. "See one of 'em... got into a fight with a big ol' German Shep... chased it off, but he ran off hisself when pa come-- came--outside with his rifle." Jill nodded, somewhat disinterestedly, and Joe paused, wishing he had the words to describe what he had seen—how the powerful dog had lunged forward, mighty jaws clamping viciously onto empty air as the mangy cur dodged aside and tore the handsome dog's ear to ribbons, always moving. How time and time again the dog had attacked only to find his scruffy little opponent elsewhere while the coyote kept the pressure up—nipping here, biting deep at the back of the leg, raking teeth across the dog's muzzle, gripping the tail in his mouth and yanking. It hadn't taken long for the dog to give up and trot off, and an especially hard nip to the hindquarters turned the trot into a run. His father, enraged, had rushed outside with the .22, but the coyote had already proved itself to be no fool. Before the man was even fully out the door, the thing was gone, vanished into the underbrush as if it had never existed. Joe wished he could find a way to tell her about it, how the mangy cur had seemed invulnerable, but didn't have the words, and he cursed himself for it. You're not impressing her very much so far, Joe....

Jill looked up. "Is everything all right?" Joe nodded, then gathered his will for a supreme effort, bent down, and kissed her. She responded. It was several minutes before their journey continued.
moonlight. Joe squeezed Jill's hand. "It's beautiful, ain't it?"

"Yeah, I guess so." Jill shivered and pulled her hand loose, walking over to the passenger side and climbing in.

Somewhat disappointed, Joe slid behind the wheel, started the truck up, and cranked the heater. Jill immediately scooted to his side and leaned against him, and he kissed her forehead, gently. "It'll heat up in a few minutes."

Jill's lips found their way to the line of his jaw. "It'll heat up quicker than that..."

Again, several minutes elapsed before they continued their journey.

As Joe followed the yellow lines, arm around Jill's half-asleep form, he smiled cheerfully and thought of the days to come. Even the coyote call coming in through the window and over the road sounds was not enough to dispel his mood. His dream had been realized—how could he not be happy?

Joe pulled up alongside the curb, leaving the engine running, and walked around to the passenger side, opening Jill's door. He looked at the backpack as she got out, noting that none of the blood had dribbled onto his friend's floorboards. Jill stepped aside as he closed the door, and he wrapped both arms around her waist, kissing her forehead gently, as if she might break. "I'll call you in the morning."

Jill stepped back. "Huh?"

"You know, give you a call, maybe see you again tomorrow"—Joe looked at his watch—"tonight."

"See me...oh!... You thought..."

Joe paused, waiting. Surely this was some kind of joke.

"I mean yeah, it was, you know... fun... but, you and... You didn't really think..."
"No," Joe replied slowly. "I, uh... I guess I didn't." Making sure the door was shut, he nodded to Jill. "Good night, Jill. Hope to see us on the news soon."
"Yeah," Jill said, sounding relieved, and walked to her house and in the door. She didn't look back.

Joe got back into the truck, put it into gear, and drove away. He didn't look back either. Instead, he drove down the road he had just come down, parked next to where he had parked earlier, and looked over the trail. The cougar tracks were there, plain as day. There was no possible way they would be missed.

Joe got out of the truck, turning off the lights, and climbed into the bed, sitting down on the cold wheel-well and looking around. The moon had started to set, and while only slightly less bright, the angle changed. The deadfalls and bushes, ant mounds and holes were more visible now, as the moonlight seemed to cut through every shadow and illuminate everything in stark relief.

Joe just looked around, not knowing what he should think. He didn't remember how long he had been sitting there when he heard something rustle in the brush on the other side of the road, but he remembered his feet getting numb and his legs starting to.

Joe whirled to look, trying his best to make no sound, and saw only a pair of gleaming eyes a little above the roadway. But before long, the creature came into view—a coyote, maybe attracted by the blood-scent. Joe didn't worry. Coyotes often scavenged other animals' kills, and if they scuffed up the snow and blood it would only add credence to their—his—charade.

The coyote walked out to the roadway, then stopped and looked around. When it saw Joe, it yipped lightly in surprise and hopped back a step, but didn't run. Instead, it watched Joe curiously, and Joe did the same. He'd never seen a coyote up close—not a live one, anyway—and the creatures seemed to possess a dignity that the old fur-and-sawdust images couldn't quite capture.

Joe's second look revealed that it was a small creature, smaller than most dogs, its fur short and trim, lean and long-legged, with a sharp nose and dark, intelligent eyes. The teeth—neat, white, and even—showed slightly, gleaming in the moonlight. The coyote simply stood for a minute, tail straight out, and watched before whiffing quietly and turning to trot smoothly down the road. If the cold of the blacktop bothered the velvet pads of the creature's paws, he gave no sign.

Joe raised a hand. "Goodnight, old boy." The coyote turned back as if to return the farewell, then turned at a right angle to the road and loped off into the forest. Joe could see him as he trotted to a high hill, one that would have been covered with green and blocked from sight in the summer. It paused for a minute, then lifted its muzzle to the sky and cried out to the moon, as if to a lover he already knew wasn't going to answer. For a long minute the cry flowed out and hung among the cold stars, calling out to no one at all.

"Yeah," Joe said slowly. "I know the feelin', friend."

The coyote trotted off, and Joe got back into the truck. Only one night... helluva lot to happen in just one night... Joe smiled now as he looked over the article again, and finished his coffee. After folding the paper up, he put the mug in the sink, made sure he had all his books, and walked out the door. After climbing into his old truck, he pressed the clutch, let out the park brake, and rolled downhill towards the street. With the ease of long practice, he slapped the gearshift into second, let out the clutch with a snap, smiled as the old truck fired up, and headed off to school. Somewhere, one last coyote howled at the faint outline of a moon in the still pre-dawn sky, and Joe grinned.

He would have the same class with Ted, in Physics. Ted would be able to talk to Maryanne to see if the offer was still open the very next class, and Joe always had been a Chris LeDoux fan.

It's gonna be a good day, I think.
Turning Your Back on
Every Girl's Fantasy
Shana Stevers

The flowers you handed me were
Slightly wilted from too many hours
In the relentless summer sun.

Clumps of soil still hung
From the tiny roots of my
Freshly picked gift.

Most girls yearn for flowers
And that comfortable silence.

I left my flowers in the car.
Testimony
Tricia Madison

Like an anvil pressed upon me
I lie against the floor
That is worn and stained from
Beer and Jack.

Tasting the bile,
Of my stomach wall,
While the odor of vomit,
Creeps into my nose.

Like an infant displayed for a crowd,
I lie awake without the clothing
That had protected my breasts
From eyes and hands.

Carpet
Joy Harper

Sit in my $10 orange chair
Thinking how strange it is
Yet possible

Vacuuming up particles of you
Memories embedded deep in the grains
That you left behind

And every time I clean house
I take away some more of you
That never belonged here to begin with
Four Years
Erin O'Brien Arrendale

Part I
Do you notice the nights when I lie awake in our bed,
As the wet, silent streams dampen my pillowcase in the
darkness?

Has it been years, or only moments,
Since the light once softening your dark brown eyes was
extinguished?

I remember eyes of mirth and energy,
Full of laughing elves and dirty faced boys
That dared me to join them in this game of life.

Now your eyes are dull and glazed over,
Drugged with apathy and too few fond memories
Of the time we have spent together.

I turn my head away from your sleeping form,
And learn to ignore the pain that comes
When love at first sight slips away.

Part II
I take my shower and brush my teeth,
Knowing that you are already gone.

A halfhearted hug goodbye was all that you gave,
Before you pulled your truck out of our driveway.

I wander through the motions of my day-to-day life,
With my face frozen in place with makeup.

You get home late as usual, tired and worried about work.
I look for something left for me, but find nothing.

As you flick the channels from news to sports
I wonder how we were ever once so in love.

I find few traces in you of the man I made my vows to,
And I often think that you feel the same way about me.

So here we sit, watching the television and pretending
That we are more than just shadows of who we were.
Joy
Erin O'Brien Arrendale

Hazy memories of the time that has passed.
   Words fade in and out
Like the stream of colors in a painting.

   On the floor beside her window,
       We inhale music and politics,
along with the smoke that crawls away from us
   And escapes through the mesh screen.

It's nice to sit and listen to an unfamiliar voice,
   As I search the room for traces of her
       Found in the pictures and clutter.

   The afternoon has spent itself,
       Unfolding before us like a lazy Georgia river
       That leads nowhere...
       Yet beckons us to follow.

I peddle their poems
Stephen Ross Green

If I were a poet right now I'd have nothing to say
that has not already been said by the chirping crickets
outside my window

there are plenty of fine poems spoken by the night who
breathes outside the other world
where strange critters with high-pitched virtuous voices
make their reiterations

of everything that every firefly poet paints against the black
canopy
like harmonious birds that are never seen all singing the
same melody

that's only part of everything that whispers in the
moonlight
about all that is and ever was and is again right now

everything's already said yet they insist on repetition
and all this time they never tire in their faith

night by night they ply their wares on me
and I peddle their poems by day
Iron Wheel

Greg Miller

Wearing his aviator's cap in early Indian summer,
hunched on his flipped-over pail,
he knows and doesn't know me.
He knows and doesn't know himself,
bombardier in wire spectacles,
red bandana slipped under his spectacles and tied
to keep dirt and dust out of the hole
his pocketed glass eye has left.

It's the cobs themselves that he wants, not their hard seed
which he lets fall on the concrete floor in a pile.
He says that they make the winter's best kindling,
and kindling is what he needs in the cold.
His frame is spare. He looks as thin as a girl.
His daughter swears no heart's more tender.

He lay stretched out asleep on the couch by closed curtains
in his bedroom last time I came to look for him.
Lights in the dark room clung to his face as to white stone.
His thinness let show another man's bone.

And that pallor on that face was the face of his father,
the father he forgave as he sat by his deathbed
to which he took me as a boy so I could meet him,
where he blinked at me, spoke, and turned away.
My grandfather's brothers and sisters thought he must be
mad.
Of all of them, he had the most to forgive, and he forgave.

With the stub of a thumb and his palm's hard heel
he squats on the pail and kneads the ends of an ear bare.
The cast-iron wheel with thick waved spokes
and the little knob by which he works
the magnificent antique grinder
turn as he drops in an ear so that the gears can tear
kernels from the cob, spitting out kernels and cobs
in different places at different sides of the wood box
in the center of which the wheel hangs square.
Greg Miller

Greg Miller is the E.B. Stewart Professor of Language and Literature and the chair of the English department at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. His poetry has appeared in several journals, including the Threepenny Review, the Paris Review, and the Berkeley Poetry Review. His first book of poetry, Iron Wheel, was published in 1998; the poem "Iron Wheel" is reprinted with permission from the University of Chicago Press. Greg is currently working on a second book which will be out sometime in 2002. His hometown is Hodgenville, Kentucky- Abraham Lincoln's birthplace.
Interview with Greg Miller

CW: Is there any one poet who you feel was the greatest influence on you?

GM: I think you know what you are doing! Several things: Nurture the community that you create in the classroom; let it live on after the class ends. Some of my most important learning has been from other writers who have been willing to read what I write, make comments, and take interest in an engaged way. So keep this community and nurture it.

Read widely. Read “promiscuously,” as Milton would say. Read poets who don’t on first read strike you as interesting. Sometimes you learn the most from those. Ask other writers what they are reading. Talk with them about what you’re reading. Ask them why they like what they like. You are part of a community of the living and the dead. Some of the people you like to read will still be kicking around in the world, and some will be voices who live in print and who aren’t in the air otherwise.

CW: Are there any poems in particular of Frost’s that inspired you?

GM: Frost is a master both of the short lyric and the longer narrative. “The Hill Wife” sequence. I’m mesmerized by the music of his short line. “Directive,” the poem I read to my supposedly unconscious friend Cecelia Andrews after her stroke and the subject of my poem by that title (“Stroke”). “Birches.” “To Earthward.” Since I’ve read about Frost the man, I can’t help but think that Frost the poet was smarter, that he somehow tricked himself into a deeper humanity, in being able to write what he wrote, in losing himself in fidelity, if only momentary, to his subject.

CW: What advice can you give to young writers who are just starting out, like us, who don’t know what they are doing yet?

GM: That’s a poem about my grandfather. I spent a lot of time with him and my grandmother on their farm when I was growing up, and he was always very good to me. I wanted to meet my grandfather’s father—he was estranged from the family—and Papaw took me to meet him when he was dying. I was about ten then, I guess. It wasn’t until years later that I came to understand some of the history of their reconciliation. My grandfather was a good and forgiving man. When I found him in the barn one day stripping corn with his old mechanical shucker, one eye covered with his red bandana, he looked to me like an allegorical figure of judgment or justice. He forgave when he didn’t have to forgive. That was one core part of his goodness, one of his gifts.
CW: "Intensive Care Waiting Room" was by far my favorite poem in your book. How much of that was autobiographical, and who is the tiger lady? Was she a real person?

GM: Yes, she was! The poem is entirely autobiographical, about a month spent in an intensive care waiting room. I was studying in California when I got a call from my cousin, who said that my mother had been in an accident, and that I should get on a plane to Kentucky immediately, and that my mother would probably be dead by the time I got home. So I made the first flight I could, and when I got home, I lived in a waiting room with my father and family for about four weeks, not knowing whether my mother would live or die. There were people coming in and out, day and night. It was surreal. The “tiger lady” was a large woman, an angry woman, and all through the middle of the night she kept talking about somebody she wanted to “cut.” She was wearing a tiger skin dress, and she stretched out on the couch next to mine much of the night. And then there was a boy whose major organs began disintegrating because of a fluke virus he contracted on a camping trip and who had to go through a series of transplants. His story was on the local news, and we watched the story in the waiting room with the boy’s family. You sat there listening to people talk about their lives, and now and then people come out in body bags. Others just disappeared to other parts of the hospital.

CW: What are some of the other sources of inspiration for your poetry?

GM: Other sources? Stories I hear. I take a story I’ve heard or a part of something that happens to me and I alter it, and in some ways that fiction frees me to render the emotions more faithfully. Sometimes blending your own experience with other people’s experience in a fictional way allows you to lie to tell the truth. I’m sort of going off on a tangent here. But readers often assume that the “I” of a lyric poem is the poet. The more I have gotten to know poets, the more I have realized that this is sometimes true and sometimes not. The “I” in the poem is the “supposed person,” as Dickinson wrote. Poets in the generation before me, the few that I have gotten to know, have taught me that the poems that I thought were directly autobiographical very often are not at all, and the poems that I thought were fictional are often more autobiographical than I had supposed. So poets lie a lot. Sometimes they don’t. They can’t quite pull off the Cretan paradox of “I always lie.”

CW: Expanding on that, how do you choose which poems you publish? Just you, or do you have an editor or someone who chooses most of the poems?

GM: Sometimes it’s easier to publish the poems that are less innovative or less important because you know the venues for them. You have a sense of what a magazine might want and you think, “Oh, this is perfect for them,” and you send the poem out, and you’re right, and they take it. When you write a book, that’s another matter, and you have more freedom, I think, though the freedom varies from press to press. The University of Chicago Press has an editorial board; the series editor summarizes the comments of the board members so that all the comments remain anonymous. After the editors read a manuscript, and after they’ve accepted it, they make suggestions about order; sometimes they suggest that you drop poems or that you work on lines. So there’s an interaction between you, the editor, and the editorial board. Chicago writers talk about how helpful those editors are. I know some writers with other presses who find their editors heavy-handed, even overbearing, but the writer’s control varies from publisher to publisher and editor to editor.
CW: As a student, when you first started writing, did you have a teacher who helped you become a better writer?

GM: I had a lot of them (I was really lucky!) and they helped in different ways. One of my first teachers was Donald Davie, at Vanderbilt; he was an Englishman and a very strict reader; he was an English Baptist--an old non-conformist--and he had a definite vision of what poetry should be. He encouraged me to try to write in traditional forms for the first time. I had written almost exclusively in free verse, and I was strongly influenced by Plath and by imagism in my late teens. At Davie's suggestion, I started writing in regular meters and stanzas, and now I am addicted. I mean, I write a lot of free verse, too, but Davie pushed; he encouraged me to try new strategies. Then he was willing to read my poems and to make suggestions even when I wasn't in his classes, and in part because of his harshness I believed him. He was willing to say what he thought. I didn't always agree with him, but I always believed him, believed that he was giving me the straight scoop. Another Englishman, Thom Gunn, at Berkeley, helped enormously. I never had his class, but he took time to work with me during his office hours. I wrote my first couplets, rhymed couplets then, with his encouragement. The mere fact that someone whose poems I loved took some interest in my work made me want to write more. And then there was Robert Pinsky: what a gifted teacher! He worked to hear what each student was trying to do. Very few teachers know how to do that! There are a lot of really good writers who--often unconsciously, I think--try to make their students into some form of themselves. He didn't do that. He was a wonderful teacher, in being able to see what was instinctive in each writer and to nurture that voice. In the classroom, sometimes there were factions. One group might ask of a person who was writing in a radically different style, "Why on earth are you doing this?" Robert would gently encourage the group to see what the writer was seeing. Robert's a powerful poet; he just gets better and better over time, and that's wonderful to see, and it gives you hope about the future! I recommend The Inferno to you. I think it's the best translation in English of Dante's Inferno I've read. I picked it up, and I started reading it, and I didn't finish it until it was four o'clock in the morning. Great stuff! And in a totally different vein, Gunn's Boss Cupid—one of his best books yet, published in his retirement. So those three incredibly generous teachers have been the most important for me--Davie, Gunn, and Pinsky.

CW: When did you first become interested in writing poetry?

GM: Probably when I was about six. In first grade, I remember reading Carl Sandberg's "Fog" with Mrs. Omer. I remember sitting at a little table and being blessed-out by that little poem, and making little poems of my own in response. As long as I have been able to write words, I've been interested in poems and trying to write them.

CW: A lot of the poems that we went over in Iron Wheel seemed to have a lot of a musical feel to them. Do you have a musical background?

GM: Yes, thank you for the compliment! I have been singing in choirs for about twenty years now. I sing with the Saint Andrew's Cathedral choir in Jackson, and singing with the group gives me a lot of pleasure, though the music is difficult and I often have to struggle hard and long to get anywhere close to right. One of my favorite poets, George Herbert, also loved music. You're as close as you get to heaven on earth when you sing, and we work with intricately textured music--mostly early music and modern--so that your voice and part are playing against other voices and parts and you have a voice that's not yours alone but part of a larger moving order--if all goes well--with other voices. Music is beyond yourself but also
deeply in yourself at the same time. Physical—in your gut—and mental and emotional and spiritual. Poetry should be these things, too.

CW: How long does it generally take to complete a poem? What is your revision process?

GM: It varies a lot for me, and I think it's different for different people. I have one friend, a wonderful poet, who must write a poem quickly in the white energy of the moment. Any revision after that initial moment almost without fail diminishes the poem. And so she's learned that she has to be open to that moment. For me it's a very different process. Sometimes when I am laboring and struggling over a poem—sometimes I'll spend days or weeks struggling over something—something else pops out finished. But I can't trick myself, unfortunately. Sometimes poems come out quickly and they feel finished, but more often, I go through many, many drafts. As I was telling you all in class, I like to keep all of the drafts—and I suggest that you do that, too. Often, one of the drafts that you think isn't good turns out to be the most organic and real and powerful, but you can't make this discovery until you've come back to all of the drafts a few days later.

CW: Do you have a new project underway?

GM: Yes! The University of Chicago Press has accepted my second book, Rib Cage, and I am trying to finish my revisions by the first of December. It's due out the fall of 2001.

CW: About the cover art on Iron Wheel, did you help pick it out, because it seems to have a lot of symbolism in it? Does it reflect the themes in your book?

GM: Oh, yes—I did actually suggest the painting to my editor, and I was lucky: they took my suggestion. A lot of writers become irritated by the choices made by their editors for book covers; they often feel that the cover art has nothing to do with the book. Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick were fellows at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown with me in 1994-5, and I loved their work and remembered an image that I thought would be particularly fitting. The instruments in the upper half of the semi-circle echo the shapes of farm instruments and yet also seem eerily other-worldly. And the couple with the piece of fruit passing between them—Richard and his wife in front of the pastoral landscape—I found suggestive, for some reason.
Ken Abbot is a journalism major at Gainesville College with an interest in creative writing. His poem "They play the Anthem at 8 in Laredo" won first place in poetry in the Gainesville College writing contest. His short story "Vicious Creature" won first place in fiction.

Erin O'Brien Arrendale is an English major at Gainesville College who served as President of the Literature & Film Club and as editor of The Chesatee Review this year. Her future plans are undecided.

Nick Brown is a journalism major who plans to head west this fall and pursue a mechanical engineering degree with a desire to work in the area of product development, research, and design. He would also like to be a contributing writer for an automobile magazine.

Chris Davy is an English major at Gainesville College whose future plans include becoming a high school English teacher. His poem "Earth's Celestial Waste" received an honorable mention in poetry in the Gainesville College writing contest.

Stephen Ross Green is a computer science major whose future plans include pursuing a master's degree in computer science so that he can teach it at college level. He would also like to publish a novel.

Joy Harper is a former Gainesville College student who now attends The University of Georgia. She is pursuing a degree in journalism. Her poem "Carpet" won third place in poetry in the Gainesville College writing contest.

Jon Krueger is a journalism major at Gainesville College who plans to attend The University of Georgia next fall to pursue a degree in journalism or law. His short story "The New Look" won second place in fiction in the Gainesville College writing contest.

Tricia Madison is a journalism major at Gainesville College with an interest in creative writing as well as film.

Jan Malloy is a student at Gainesville College with an interest in writing. Her future plans include attending Brenau University to pursue a degree in education.

Sarah Seaman is a theatre major at Gainesville College with an interest in creative writing. Her poem "Too Easy" won second place in poetry in the Gainesville College writing contest.

Shana Stevers is a broadcast journalism major who plans to attend either University of Georgia or Georgia State University after completing her associate degree at Gainesville College.

Josh Vaughn is a student at Gainesville College with an interest in creative writing. His short story won third place in fiction in the Gainesville College writing contest, and his poem "The Big Apple" received an honorable mention in poetry.