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**Coe Review  
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**POETRY ISSUE**

**2005**

# Coe Review

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Cover art by Kyle Mangan

*B.E. Stock*

**•Woman Eating A Mango**

It was 90 degrees in the shade, we were standing around  
On the street in the mall when Joe saw  
This little white woman with silver hair  
Eating a mango like her life depended on it, and said  
Hey Pete, look at this. And it was a ripe mango,  
The juice running all down her chin and a little spot  
Of yellowish orange pulp on her nose, and she had  
The plastic bag from the fruit cart under it,  
And it dripped on her hands. We could see her  
Peel it with her teeth, then run the peel  
Through her teeth to get the pulp that stuck to it,  
Glancing at her brown shirt and skirt expecting  
The juice to go on there, but for some reason  
Not a drop hit her clothes. And she stood over  
The wire trash can, dumping peel and combing the pit  
With her teeth and sucking the juice as she went,  
Until it was finished, and she dropped what was left  
Into the basket and walked away, licking her face  
And fingers like a kid with a drippy ice cream cone,  
Totally satisfied, ready to go on with her list  
Of things to do like any other secretary downtown,  
And we looked at each other and I said Damn,  
That's some chick of an old lady, while Joe  
Lit another cigarette and watched her disappearing  
Into the crowd.

*Holly Day*

**•Why This Could Be Happening To Me**

When I was 19, my friends and I went camping  
by the power plants over San Onofre Beach. We walked  
all the way down to the ocean, the shoreline  
of smooth, round pebbles and fist-sized rocks  
and kept walking until the ocean was up  
past our hips  
and oh, the water at the base of those twin nuclear domes  
was so warm, it was like  
swimming in a bathtub

There was this guy I fucked  
drunk blind behind a 7-11 dumpster, there was this guy  
I fucked  
in the bathroom at a party, my boyfriend  
on the other side of the closed door, there was this guy I fucked  
so accidentally it might not have happened, except that he kept  
calling me  
every single day afterwards

My mother's house is full of photographs  
of women who died  
way too young, my favorite  
is the one of the great-grandmother  
I never got to meet, such an angry, determined look  
in her eyes

Holly Day •Why This Could Be Happening To Me

16 years old and so beautiful  
in her buttoned top and school uniform.  
I hear her symptoms  
were a lot like mine.

*Holly Day*

## •Ray

he said I was making him  
lose his mind and all I could do  
was sit and smile, thinking  
it was the nicest thing anyone had ever said  
to me, the ugly little girl

but what did I know  
I was only fifteen

we celebrated his birthday by  
painting his bedroom gold  
naked, I let him touch one of my breasts  
and kiss me  
and I yanked him off once  
but that was all

I never told him  
I wasn't a virgin  
so we never went past what we did that one night  
he was one of my mother's very best friends  
and she had already told me  
he was much too old for this

*Tony Tracy*

•Fiction

In the more formative years Dad lodged  
his books in my room; their voluminous rows  
could uncork vertigo if you stared too long.

He wished to encourage reading,  
to be dazzled and desirous  
of the worlds he'd fallen into.  
But sometimes what you think  
might inspire others  
has the opposite effect,  
and for all their spined beauty  
(their queue of cropped color  
and variant font),  
they only served to bully my intelligence.

By high school my insufficiency  
I could no longer forbear.  
When the morning streets filled with rain  
I'd grab a novel and scrub  
their words clean.

On Saturdays Dad would clear a spot  
on the couch and ask what I'd read;  
he'd pat its cracked leather fissures,  
motioning me to sit down as the last  
of his coffee and Motown  
percolated through his head.

He wanted to know: what did I think

of his fiction? I began to see  
good books aren't judged by their fidelity  
to *how things are*, rather their ability  
to find balance with opposition,  
to make a home for the unruly;  
betrayal to veracity what makes  
a good story go.

He was amused with my sloppy attempts  
to decipher their weight, to express meaning  
in what I'd found. I confessed  
the torpid annals of Faulkner  
merely encouraged sleep, but that I loved  
the protagonist in Hemingway's *Farewell To Arms*,  
(unspoken was my desire for his angelic  
nurse, or the more lustful moments, the quasi-  
turgidity that wrinkled my teenage pants  
encountering New Englander's unabashed eroticism  
rampant in Updike's books).

My father listened to a mind gone partially  
literate, while the other half was reserved  
for touches practiced before love,  
for my coquettish friend who'd park  
curbside in her father's car,  
which was warm and waiting,  
which had little to do  
with the lives we lead.

*Samantha Bell*

•**This swollen space contains everything**

The plastic on the window  
breathes. A bitter scent  
of merlot festers,  
slowly  
staining the glass.  
His work clothes  
wrinkle in the dryer.  
The tomatoes  
shift and rot,  
and slump against  
the windowsill.  
His running shoes rest  
on the kitchen wall,  
the dingy laces  
uneven. Splayed  
across the countertops  
are half-smoked cigarettes,  
a water bill, pictures  
taken from trains.  
These beer bottles  
must have his fingerprints  
all over them, must at the  
mouth smell like wheat  
toast, cheddar and  
mustard. There is

a boot-shaped dent  
in the door he opened  
last, the handle perhaps  
the final thing  
he touched -- that essential  
marking of despair, no one  
here to look further. Sunlight  
bangs on a penny.  
The merlot coagulates  
like crushed plums.  
The cat  
is walking  
through shards  
of broken glass.

*Iris G. Garcia*

**•Dropped and Abandoned**

I've dropped things

Left things

Lost things

On somber grey sidewalks

On rainy days

In airport bathrooms,

The kind with scratched writing on the stalls

I've lost phone numbers

Pens

Eyelashes

Homework,

Sometimes I think I've lost my mind

I've left ideas lying at

The bus stop

With a sleeping man,

Possibly even in his shopping cart.

I know I dropped that beautiful pin

With pearls that my mother forced on my dress

Down the drain

I've lost business cards

Lip gloss

And old pictures

That were taken in a time when color

Did not yet exist

I've lost

My father  
More than one grandparent  
And my dog  
Who is now buried somewhere under  
Tragic mountains of waste  
I have lost opportunities  
Innocence  
Love,  
Which I left in the pasta aisle at Wal-Mart  
I lost my purse  
In a train  
In Mexico  
I lost my senses in  
Your arms  
I have lost words  
Because they manage to always escape  
And I can never seem to really capture  
What is gone,  
I have dropped things.

*M. Frias-May*

**•... 02 Monterey Letters**

On top of the world, ma, well, 4th floor, Monterey hotel, little  
before five, the sun

A meek presence. Punk and metal bands tonight on Alvarado and  
I have this

Feeling hippie chicks will knock on the purple door after mid-  
night for spliff.

No one looking up, ma. Eyes are straight ahead on human pieces  
of work like

The chocolate toothless dude chattin up the valet. I saw a third  
floor smoker

Yesterday on Cannery Row but he didn't see me. I ate calamari 0's  
and baby

Octopus on the Santa Cruz pier & gave a buck to a Sudanese beg-  
gar. Right now

There's fog rolling down over the tree line and faded street  
arrows and pigeons

Roosting on Spanish tiled roofs. I can't remember when death  
began and life

Disappeared.

2.

Ma, avoid the pub meal. For eight bucks I got ten steakcut fries,  
one plump

Beer-battered cod, two cucumbers and three shaved carrots. At a  
restored  
Capitola cabin, I got, for 15 bucks, four asparagus, and barely  
warm  
Saffron rice and crab and shrimp rolled in flounder. I guess all the  
money  
Went into the landscaping. You'll be glad to know I've had only  
three  
Drinks, a Guinness at the pub, an orange Cuervo thing at the  
Cabin, and  
A shot of Patrone at a bar with a bano behind a mirrored door.  
I've heard  
A lot of sirens, avoided taxis, tried on a leather jacket and a pork  
pie hat.  
I've tipped the valet nine bucks so far. I feel a little fat and I still  
think  
I'm not too old to grow a tree in a rock.

3.

The place? A burgundy theme with a flower print in the carpet.  
There's  
A sitting room, TV, couch, table, desk, fake fireplace, all the room  
for  
A man with a novel on his mind or a tumor in his soul. The  
Giants play

Nearby. Migrants toil in the fields between Seaside and Watsonville.

The Pacific, a reservoir of forgotten blues and mining. A man named

Chuy said there's a dead gnarled pine on top of Seintel Dome in Yosemite.

He got there sucking snow drifts, his heart beating like a stunned fish.

*Amanda Stiebel*

•Realism

When I imagine making love  
I think of kissing  
Into oblivion  
Quick cool hands on hot flesh  
Clothes quickly draping floors and furniture  
I'm pressed against the wall  
My thighs wrapped around him  
Fucked until I scream  
Fucked until I'm sore and sated

But when sex happens  
Kisses are soft and sloppy  
Hands are sweaty and groping  
Buttons are fumbled  
We wind up in bed  
Awkward and silent  
And much too soon  
The television comes on

*Thomas O'Connell*

**•Knowledge Which Does Not Soothe**

I peeled back the sentimental cover of the stationary to reveal a warped front porch with a washing machine sitting at one end, its electrical cord detached and draped across the dented lid; a diorama of a forest setting where a snake holds a bloated mouse in its jaws forever; a clear, square vase full of water and some boy's marble collection, the pale roots curling around the colored glass balls of various sizes.

An escalator in a five and ten cent store that leads down into the basement; a music stand with t-shirts draped over it, though the clarinet sleeps in a pawnshop window; the weary eyes of a girl on a subway train.

A cup and saucer somebody stole from a luncheonette, which does seem to be bottomless; a dry, withered carrot in the front yard where a snowman once stood; a train schedule, on which all the arrival and departure times are now wrong, buried beneath a package of C batteries in a junk drawer.

The distracting complacency of a Bengal tiger, reclining by a stream twenty feet below the cement wall that a group of school children hang over taunting the big cat; a practical joke bought in a magic shop that doesn't fool anyone anymore; a pair of sensible shoes sitting together on the shoulder of the highway where an accident has occurred.

A row of yellow taxi cabs, dormant at the curb outside a train station waiting for the next commuter train to arrive; a statue of Mary standing on top of a globe with a limp snake trapped beneath her slender, bare foot; a saliva wet key, passed to the magician in a kiss.

*Eric Paul Shaffer*

• **The Life and Death of Somebody's Son**

By the riverbank, I spent the summer in the  
shade, pawing  
your thighs for gold, a teen forty-niner  
humped  
over a secluded stream. You giggled on  
scratchy blankets,

making me sweat and swear I'd write six songs  
just for you. I bought beer with fake ID and a  
face looking  
older than I feel now for a picnic you called

“an orgy of bestiality”--breasts, thighs, legs--  
tonguing them  
obscenely as you grinned. We swallowed  
every bite with a salt of sand braced by the bite  
of beer.

We drank to tears until the day you cried,  
said the baby was mine, your belly swelling  
with our son.

But when I called, someone said you'd gone,

and hung up. I left the receiver dangling in the  
booth,  
limping down the middle of Main Street,  
swearing I'd find you until sally or cindy or  
sandy someone.

This morning, years later, you park a faded  
blue,  
bumperless '68 bug by a rural roadside, selling  
green  
and yellow vegetables you grow somewhere  
in the woods with jimie or timmie or tom. I  
hear our son  
was stillborn, and I dream his body bobs in a  
jar  
on your kitchen windowsill among ripening  
tomatoes,  
tooth-picked avocados, and stained-glass but-  
terflies.

W.K. Buckley •We Have Our Sundays (In a sports bar for the Rose Bowl)

*W.K. Buckley*

**•We Have Our Sundays  
(In a sports bar for the Rose Bowl)**

Caesar's victory parade through Rome  
had him in a golden chariot,  
draped in purple robes  
with embroidered starbursts,  
a giant phallus the undercarriage,

and a slave behind him whispering:  
"Remember! You are just a man!"

Then Athena died  
when the Bishops baptized  
Constantine, yet he snuffed out  
his wife on Sun Day,  
with no one telling him

that he was just a man.

The Ancients  
have left their footprints  
on us,

so that at half-time our Tommy Trojans  
ride in Hollywood armor to defeat  
the Church of Notre Dame.

We glorify Diana as the  
car-wrecked goddess of the Web,  
and hide her fake virginity  
in the orgy of a *chip*,

while America sees in Caesar's  
phallic sorrow, his stab wounds  
as the metaphor of our politics.

Yet we have Sundays,  
where we hear the thud of leathery bodies  
in our coliseums.

America.

We simply just can't make it,  
without your beer and blood,  
and there's no one to kindly tell us,  
  
that we are only men.



Joan Rudel

•Hunger

I steal cookies from the jar  
when there's no one home  
to muffle cats howling in airshafts,  
trapped between tenement walls.

*Appetite is wicked*, she declares,  
then gives me chocolate to  
melt in my mouth instead of love.  
She measures my knuckles with wood;  
I become a good listener.

Cookies don't fill me up,  
but dark green bottles lurking cold  
near relish and milk soothe for a time.

In dreams without good sleep  
dolphins play some fifty yards out  
jumping free, shining in gray-blue arcs,  
barely a splash, just a lift and spray.  
They rise satisfied with water, light.

Longing is lust and  
when I wake, I want to  
trace every hunger to its source,  
vow never again to refuse touch.

But she instructs me to blunt my yearnings.

*After all*, she says,

it wasn't food Pavlov's dogs salivated for,

it was the bell.

*Laura Crow*

•**Ghost Limb**

Bob—“So this guy took the Bible verse  
a bit too literally, the one about cutting off  
any body part that offends”

Debbie optimistically jokes about losing  
fingers, brain, an eye—  
nope.

“Castration.”

Most guys I know are way too proud  
of their dicks to ever be offended  
much less chop that shit off—  
it takes the Lorena Bobbitts and their scissors  
grinning rabbis leaning over baby cribs

But I wonder if the self-castrating guy  
ever regretted it  
saw a gorgeous girl  
and reached down to adjust his ghost limb  
or woke in the morning  
ghost erection tenting his dry-dream-only sheets  
fingers anticipating a motion learned  
in middle school showers  
practicing until the hot water ran out  
now he only moves air  
a breeze between his thighs

*Michael Hettich*

•**The Peach Tree**

There's a photograph I love, of a man standing  
 at the mouth of a cave, too deep in shade  
 for his features to show clearly: scruffy beard,  
 lean face, bright eyes--and he's holding  
 a human skull in his right hand, at the height  
 of his own head, showing off for the camera.  
 He's tousled and shirtless, though he wears a bandana  
 at his neck. His shorts are baggy. He's thin.

I discovered the picture tucked into that huge  
 anthology of ancient Chinese poetry,  
*Sunflower Splendor*, one listless afternoon  
 the winter my first husband left me. It must have been  
 used as a book mark. I was sitting in a carrel  
 at the top floor of the library, next to a narrow window  
 which looked out on the snow. I was reading a little,  
 or trying to. I thought about my husband's lover.  
 I listened to the students whisper in the stacks.  
 I read Li Po: *Peach blossoms tinged by dew*  
*take on a deeper tone. By the brook I hear no bells at noon.*

I thought about the children I had hoped to have with him;  
 I imagined them so clearly I could smell their milky breath;  
 I held their weighty weightlessness against my aching chest.

I thought about walking for hours in that snow  
dressed only in white, like some swan: *flocks of birds*  
*fly high and vanish*. I considered that too--  
But then I came across this photograph and felt  
another kind of yearning: *like a peach tree that grows*  
from the bottom of a well the tired traveler  
leans across, thirsty, astonished by the fragrance  
rising from the darkness, at the rich fruit growing there--

Outside the snow was falling again.  
Soon it would be evening.

*Katherine Cottle*

•**Trucker Love**

reads the back loading door  
of the semi in front of me,  
scratched with a rough hand  
amidst the exhaust residue and dirt  
of the past year.

And I cannot help  
but picture the scene:

Him, still wearing leather boots  
and cowboy hat,  
tattoos of Rita and Pam wrapping  
down his right arm,  
and me, naked on top,  
rubbing my finger across his mustache  
while Randy Travis whines of lost love  
in the background.

It is only for a second,  
but long enough that I know  
I cannot look at him  
as I drive by,  
the deed already done and over,  
his wink sure to expose that he knows.  
So, I pretend to search for a new CD,  
something by the Indigo Girls,

and make it past unharmed.

Looking around, the nearby drivers  
are all still fumbling for sunglasses,  
repositioning their blinders,  
as they, too, still picture themselves  
in the back of the echoing trailer,  
hands outstretched in front of them  
like scared children,  
searching for something in the dark.

*Stephen Kopel*

**•Pablo Dearest**

Another cashmere sigh  
she flings over  
a Picasso shoulder,  
chills tattooed under  
her single mammary,  
all nine toes  
soak in rose  
though she's long past  
celebrating a romance  
short on Cuban cigars,  
rolls in the hay, flan...  
she masturbates a lime grin,  
a loud "Oh" the last color  
in his vest pocket  
snatched from Miro  
while visiting the Musee D'Orsay

Her left elbow,  
outside the canvas,  
awaits the painter's kiss  
or brushoff  
as he steals  
a Barcelona nap

*Anne Silver*

• **Waiting Room**

I am trying to distract myself  
in the waiting room,  
trying to imagine all the ways  
to politely tell the loud cell  
phoners to shut the fuck up  
when I drift off. The rumpled  
Travel magazine on my lap  
must have made me dream  
about being Paris Hilton--  
the hotel, not the slut.  
My double-paned windows  
prevent the noise of horns  
and French cussing from  
molesting the atmosphere  
inside my suites. Cezanne  
enters, his trouser pocket  
bulging. He reaches in  
to pluck an apple from  
his pants and offers it to me.  
I look up at him sweetly  
without tilting my face  
and he drops the apple  
in my lap. I cross my legs--  
rustling the taffeta of the skirts.  
I raise the shiny, red skin

to my lips, plump with youth  
and take a bite with my  
little white teeth and find it's  
the best apple I have  
ever tasted and want to call  
my mother and tell her  
about the tang, the bite  
but I can't read the numbers  
on the phone. I think  
the numbers must be in French,  
therefore I am perplexed.  
Cezanne leaves and a nurse enters,  
calls my name. Her voice  
smells like White Shoulders,  
tastes like the fringe  
of a chenille bedspread  
and looks like the doctor  
ready to see me now.

*Anne Silver*

•**Failings**

Hearing him berate himself  
 for lost keys, stubbed toe, fallen stocks,  
 I confide that I too am a self-loather,  
 although I never go out without blush,  
 mascara, and precisely pencilled lips.  
 And I never cuss at myself silently either.  
 After all, didn't civilization fall  
 into unwashed hands because Romans  
 whined while stretching out on divans?  
 And didn't Yahweh Himself say  
 "don't fear anybody except for Me?"  
 I dare say, would that not include  
 saying *fuck-me* to thyself when  
 you've forgotten your party host's name  
 again, chip dip dapples your best frock,  
 and you notice your stockings  
 have runs that make you look like  
 a Phoenician longshoreman's whore?

I recall all those consecutive mornings,  
 the bell ringing as I skittered  
 up the steps of Bagley Elementary  
 like a roach fleeing a giant Raid can.  
 I knew the kids swivelled in their desks,  
 turning to see Silver late again.

I'd slump to my desk,  
poke the inkwell with my pen  
and wish I could miniaturize myself  
and jump in. What clock ticked  
so slowly in my chest that couldn't  
jangle me awake in time?

I decided then and there to be  
a late person who came on time,  
a slob who balled her anklets  
and arranged them by color,  
a loser who wore badges,  
made the friggin' dean's list  
and earned a million bucks  
while the real me gnawed  
all the hair off her forearms  
and nibbled the sauerkraut  
of self loathing--delicious  
as a sugar-coated plum.

*R.D. Drexler*

•Hiroshima

The last time I was here slush collected  
 On our single, black umbrella before  
 It slid off, rasping across the nylon.  
 Today, the sky is clear like the eye of  
 Innocence -- as it was that other day.

I am still moved by the video of  
 How everything went on as usual  
 Before 8:15, how the innocent  
 Sky turned to debris, morning people turned  
 To debris in the time it takes to breathe.

Within the levitated concrete/glass  
 Museum, scorched clothing, fused glass, a watch  
 Stopped just when, displayed, inaccessible,  
 For our consideration, photographs  
 Of shadows cast in permanence in stone.

I wade through middle-school boys, girls, bused in  
 From God knows where, to learn about God knows.  
 I cannot tell what they think. To tell the truth  
 I am not sure what I think. This second time  
 I'm having trouble just holding my own.

What stays with me this second time is that

The trams were up & running in three days.  
Did people, burned, burned secretly within,  
Go west to Miyajima to stare at  
The undefiled shrine across the waves?

*Dayna Gulino*

•**Third Doll to the Right**

Sugar toes  
and no one knows  
the dancing queen, heart in hand  
with silver lips  
blood red tongue  
she twirls the infinite.

But no, she hasn't  
seen the sun bow down  
in weeks, it seems, or more--  
with sticky fingers,  
a pulled plum  
sparkling drops of cum  
on a neatly pressed, plaid  
pleated dress

skip, skip away dagger in hand  
whistle, lady, the moonlit maiden

bury dreams on parchment pages  
lipstick sealed confessions  
of the wonder girl.

Oh, I shall take tears with my tea,  
she blinks at nothing but the sound

of steel on bone,  
the snapping point.  
And the smell of burning fingernails.

To bed, the task is met  
the voice hushed mad for evening's sake.  
Pretty lady,  
my lilac doll of feather hair  
lay down against me one more night  
and we shall speak of tomorrow's  
dare,  
of anticipation  
of delight.

*Nichita Danilov*

•**The Man With A Pipe**

A twenty-seven-year-old man  
is standing with his back to a cemetery  
smoking a pipe.

Though he isn't a smoker, he's smoking.  
At twenty-seven Napoleon was a general,  
crossing the Alps and conquering Italy.  
Lermontov was dying, struck by a bullet  
somewhere in the Caucasus Mountains.

Esenin was trying to hang himself.

The man is standing with his back to a cemetery  
smoking a pipe.

In front of him is a bare field  
and beyond the bare field is the city.

Behind him are rows of crosses  
and beyond the crosses is the city.

At twenty-seven  
he's standing and thinking,  
"Napoleon was a general,  
crossing the Alps and conquering Italy.  
Lermontov was dying, struck by a bullet  
somewhere in the Caucasus Mountains.  
Esenin was trying to hang himself."  
And while he stands deep in thought,  
a cortege drawn by four black horses

makes its slow way from the city.  
 Behind the cortege  
 Napoleon is crossing the Alps  
 and conquering Italy.  
 Behind him a brass band is playing.  
 Behind the band  
 Lermontov is dying, struck by a bullet somewhere in the Cauca-  
 sus Mountains,  
 and behind him the band is playing.

The cortege arrives at the gate and stops.  
 Behind it, Esenin  
 is desperately trying to hang himself,  
 and behind him a band is playing. At almost twenty-seven  
 the man stands leaning against an iron railing  
 smoking a pipe.  
 Behind him a grave is being dug.  
 The gravedigger takes a break, lights his pipe.  
 The man has a cap on his head,  
 a scarf around his neck and flared, checked pants.  
 Though he isn't a smoker, he's smoking,  
 and behind him a band is playing..

Work translated by Adam Sorkin and Dorin Motz

*Rich Furman*

**•Forty Cats**

He tells me about the woman  
found with forty cats in her freezer  
as he grills chicken in the rain  
while his wife pan-fries frozen vegetables  
in virgin olive oil and seasoning salt.  
I finish the packaged Spanish rice  
as we wax about the poem and the past.  
Trying to hear with my heart  
distracted ears fail me,  
I creep towards the freezer  
and marvel at how organized one would have to be  
to pack forty cats inside.  
We roam and shoot a few games  
I sink an unmakeable bank  
and choke on the gifts.  
Stumbling home he whispers  
about his father  
who criticizes received criticism  
about being overly critical  
about his friend the tie-dye junky  
greasy strands of hair and Rorschach shirts  
who fails at music and love  
owes everyone a grand or so  
and now caresses little baggies  
small flames and prays

the linings in his nose will last.  
Ambling down Pearl Street  
in Boulder, Colorado in two thousand and three  
the moment perfect like mountain oysters and a beer  
after draining starvation hike over two miles high  
or marvelous like rows of felines  
in plastic bags, mouths carefully turned  
to delicate smiles,  
and this moment mysterious  
like the reason they were saved  
in the first place.

*Callie Chatterton*

• **Too Tight To Breathe**

"I begin again, Dr. Y., this never land journal full of my  
own sense of filth. Why else keep a journal if not to  
examine your own filth?"

Anne Sexton

I will enter death  
Without my shoes, my bra, my thoughts  
I will lie down for you  
Better aim and better pleasure  
I will moan for you, fingers still at my throat  
Waiting for vibrations through skin  
Then the sudden absence of air  
I give those fingers power  
I kill myself in small amounts  
Like how I taste and use medicine  
It is suspicious small dosages  
That keep me from moving too fast  
I will call  
Like the Jew at the gate  
And all the voices consume my bad prison  
Submerged in my own madness  
Hoping to bum away the burdens  
Of this love infection

*Charles McLeod*

•Elko

The red mesa is pitch black.

There are people here but they are just  
exit wounds, proof that something has  
gone wrong.

The desk nurse in Cheyenne was a bald woman  
with breasts the size of failed livers.

She gave me your clothes, your  
useless wallet. All it takes these days  
is initials, to turn someone to ash.

In the long mouth of the Salt Flats I stood for  
hours, car silent Nothing passed me;  
nothing moved at all.

A bronze plaque honored the dead, their intentions.  
It smelled like I was by the sea.

*Jonathan Barrett*

•Pandemic Sentences

On a sweltering morning in August a stray dog lies panting in the alley.

The drone of an air conditioner coalesces in an upstairs apartment.

A man injects dark nectar in between sacred veins & smiles, baring gray teeth.

His nerve endings go numb; tingle as if pricked by a thousand needles.

Down the street a young girl in beat-up high heels and a miniskirt tells a gray-haired man in a navy blue suit & crimson-striped tie: *ten dollars with condom, thirty-three without.*

The gray-haired man takes her to a cheap hotel where he feels her blood-soaked legacy run through his veins.

A man outside their room--next to the pop machine--listens for their voices.

He stands up--his gnarled hands tucked into his pockets--and walks weeping through the blue dawn.

*Paul Hostovsky*

•Wrecker

He towed me from Holyoke to Boston  
while I sat with him up in the cab, feeling  
saved, self-conscious, taller  
than the other cars, and grateful  
for this man's work which seemed to me  
very important, and very overlooked,  
altruistic and efficacious, and nothing  
like writing. That's what I told him when  
he asked me what I did for work and if  
I smoked, or minded if he did. He  
did most of the talking after that, fluently  
shifting his attention from me to his mirrors  
to the driving skills of the other motorists  
to the diminishing orange stub of his cigarette.  
He said he'd been driving a wrecker  
for longer than he could remember. I  
hadn't had a wreck--it was nothing  
so momentous, or earnest, or tragic--just  
my engine's spluttering refusal to turn  
over. Still, the name lent it a certain  
glamour of great sorrows, or beautiful  
catastrophes--beautiful in the way they  
bring people together over them,  
the way he and I were brought together  
over my dead Toyota, talking quietly,

me not knowing what to do with my hands  
 while he busied himself with the winch and chains  
 and hooks and cable hauling my ton-and-a-half  
 of embarrassment up onto the pitched flatbed,  
 his gloved hand resting on the crank,  
 his ungloved one lifting his cigarette up  
 to his mouth. Somewhere near Worcester  
 --barroom!--a yellow Corvette  
 cut us off--I thought I glimpsed  
 a bared breast, a hand on a thigh careening  
 toward Boston, New Hampshire or Maine--  
 suddenly we were syncopating on the rumble strip,  
 braking hard, and he spat a colorful string  
 of profanities into the rolling wake of that blonde  
 misdemeanor disappearing in a cloud of blue  
 exhaust...

Slowly then, a little shakily,  
 he adjusted his rearview, coughed, accelerated,  
 and was back on track and talking again  
 about driving a wrecker for a living  
 and having to share the road and the language  
 of the road with every Tom Dick and Harry  
 who thought he knew how to navigate a car  
 just because he had one...  
 And I saw that this man loved his truck  
 deeply; loved my Toyota too, and even  
 the prodigal Corvette with a love

that did not condemn. And I knew  
that this was important and difficult work,  
that he practiced it on his charges  
like his own children in tow  
whose made-up stories conveyed, he knew,  
the emotional truths.

And I saw on his mouth which looked  
hurt, austere, beautiful--  
that he needed me and I  
needed him too, though I didn't  
know it until it became my story.

*Greg Baysans*

**•How to Read a Poem**

for Conrad

In architecture you should not  
see the nails. In a painting  
if there's a nail, you should.  
Fiction and prose are architecture.  
Poetry is made of nails only  
and railroad spikes and arrows.

*Kathleen Tyler*

•Something Beating Through the Air

1. Joshua Tree, 2004

I almost died on the way. How many times  
has this happened? A van coming at me head-on. Box  
of cracked photos rattling in the back. Flash of my son's green  
eyes flat as he swings a broom at me. I pull over, stand  
outside the car, heaving. Landscape switches  
to desert, slowly, in the last trees *canv canv canv*. My eyes slant  
toward the sound. Nothing comes at us so  
straight so fast as grief. In the hollow at the bottom  
of my throat. Once the skull cap of a baby  
its morning hay smell head  
bobbing after the breast. Soft spot where  
bones hadn't closed.

2. Photo of crowd waiting at street corner, Tampa, 1941

On the brink of another war. Crowd of men, heads  
swiveled east. What has risen without  
them. The brick street, its grunge. The tallest rolls  
a cigarette, trousers soiled. Only one looks  
the other way, hair puffy, girlish. A coin  
bag circles his waist, *Tribunes* under an arm. Smear  
of bombs across his sleeve. An umbrella

opens against the sun. Beyond the glum  
background an iron foundry smokes  
the sky all clarity lost. Sink holes once rimmed  
the woods and deep within a grasshopper  
of a boy green and long-limbed crouched  
in maiden cane. The holes bottomless. Giant

fish called gar circle the depths. They will eat  
you if you fall in. A rattle then the sudden  
unwinding. He waited for hours still  
in the high grasses, sun brazen along the tips  
of slash pines.

3. The shadow of a crow

eclipses the fish pond, ghost-like in the cottonwoods where  
I have come to write. Two landscapes of extremes, one  
brooded over by ocotillo, mesquite. The other imploding.

4. The woman in a plaid dress on a balcony at the back of the  
photo speaks to me

Hurricane season, 1918. They came with a letter fresh from a  
ditch uniforms  
pressed. Down the long alley bordered with pecan trees, they  
came. Wind tore tree  
leaves skyward, cleared of clouds back to its original whiteness.

The servant boy ran ahead beating trunks with a stick. His pockets full of the raw nuts another boy once dried then shucked. The blond one who squatted hours in warm muck just to watch, night wheeling around him. How did it

shatter a stone's throw away someone screaming *bitte bitte* then light exploding as this afternoon standing on the Spanish tiles a door shuddered open, split the fiery afternoon light you did not know what side to spin into always dragging a darkness with you. Is that what he sought

cap under arm, looking over his shoulder one last time: dewy fern marking his cheek the crumble of peat against his palm as he left to that other festering hole?

5. *Mother, I am cold.*

Hush, child. I'm going to bury you by the fence. The earth is warm there.

6. The cottonwoods

are not the same cottonwoods as yesterday. The crows not the same crows. Even the telephone poles that stretch down the highway are different as if something sinister assumed their shapes overnight. My baby son so needy his head open, almost, to the sky what sifted in little shape shifter now grown ordinary, banal even, if it is true that evil is banal. Through dust wind whirls up from the desert floor a soldier approaches rifle slung over his shoulder. He walks steadily but looks back. Something followed me here. Not crows, their little eyes brassy as pellets shot from my son's gun swung 'round toward his sister. Birds anchored on wires outside their window. Nothing screeched or flew. Their bodies black boats rocking in the blast. A bad sign worse even than the one that read *Danger Do Not Enter Military Operations* as I crawled under barbed wire on my way out.

## 7. Interrogation

Whose little boy fell down the hill?

*Yours did. Mine did.*

What was in his little pail?

*Nothing, Mother, nothing.*

Why did he climb the hill?

*No reason at all but sun glinting off the side of a little  
tin pail. The love  
of something metal.*

8. I forbade him to bring the gun here

His father bought it. Keep  
it there. The gun he shot  
his sister with. Pigeons dropping  
from the eaves. Some contagious  
disease (I thought). A trail  
of pellets led me into a dark  
wood. What ate them behind  
me grew heavy, monstrous. Obsidian.  
Copper. It had to be hauled  
into air. In the garage I clicked  
on the lamp, tangle of extension  
cord cut from my body. The bloody  
afterbirth. Gleaming in the light rags  
torn from jeans nested, a needle, duct  
tape. In the black vinyl guitar case  
zipped open the gun stuttered out  
a lurid, carnal song.

9. The woman in the plaid dress speaks again

War made us rich. The need for iron

--we worked round the clock, women too. Everyone but my son whose presence would give this picture meaning. The day we buried him, rain, and birds twittering in oak trees. I don't know what kind. Jays, or mockingbirds. Once he found in the woods a block of ice covered in green mold. So he was shaped to the world's mystery and we ate from it day after day. Moss swaying through the oaks called after him *Prophet* though he did not divine the mortar, its whining summons. You hear its shatter--the clack of power lines--and outside though dusk falls you beat milkweed to flush the uniformed stranger you think has come to offer water you cannot drink. Crows rise, whirring their peculiar blackness. In the shadow of smokestacks, I read to him. Wind dragged clotted gray streamers over the bay, boats waiting. In the long distance of his story, towers burned. From high walls, a boy thrown down.

10. The future goosestepping toward you

This is the father.

The father's father.

The father's father's father.

Look at the smeared  
 date on back of the photo  
 the young bride. Then a hand  
 swelling open. Plump cactus  
 flower. Detached from the body.  
 A dog tag. Boot. Molar. What  
 did your son cut loose  
 candle burning in a can  
 perforated with nails  
 constellations diminished  
 night held in a fist his rage  
 a trajectory that began:  
 a shell exploding. Listen  
 to it sing. Close your eyes. See  
 pinpricks of light.

11. So I buried the gun

in the compost pile out back (mother mother mother  
 what would you have done?). He took the metal broom handle  
 swung and swung blond one shattering poppies crimson  
 around my feet chasm in the stained glass a great hole  
 open to the sky: clouds, the tops of trees, telephone lines stag-  
 gered  
 in. *What you see only the beginning* smashing every glass thing  
 my shouts drove him out *I'll get my knife* he carved

a swastika on the front door Jew or no Jew I felt faint the distorted  
crosses x's started a pinwheel spin. But I refused to go.  
I took the box of photos to study the one whose eyes he has only  
lacking brightness and drove to this desert place what has killed  
me over and over.

12. Who would name a war *great*?

I tell you things--my own son's death--that cannot be traced to  
any single  
reason: a shot--the archduke screams, blood streaming down his  
blue tunic.  
And from this beautiful day with its infinite causes the world  
shatters.

Your world a little world. Your son a little son entrenched in his  
own rage.

And when he swings another gun up, aims at your cheek, it is not  
a spray of BBs  
that will be released, but something more calamitous.

*Kai Straumanis*

•U.D.2

“that’s a pretty fancy necklace,” he said,  
chewing on a piece of chalk “did  
your boyfriend give it to you?”

“no,” i said, and kicked over a chair.

*Jason Tandon*

•**Toronado**

Drunk and imagining tattoos  
you suggest a face on my face,  
a Chinese guy's face on my face,  
your ass on my face.

We contemplate a shamrock.  
We like bootstrong chanteys and boiled potatoes  
and think, if we had emerald isle ink  
smack dab on our deltoids, we might feel  
more connected to our families, possibly Catholic.

Two girls join us at the table  
eating hot pizza from their purses.  
They suggest a mermaid, and I am slapped  
for illustrating the bouncing boob routine.

I feed the jukebox an ashtray's worth of quarters,  
punch in birthdays I can remember.  
To the bartender, I make the international sign for,  
"Do my songs stand a chance of playing tonight?"

The girls rattle the bathroom door  
hurrying the poor sap on the throne.  
You are no doubt at the table,  
sucking your hair back with nose grease  
and pinching the skin below your eyes.

*Ezra Stewart-Silver*

**•Late Night**

We borrow a rusty yellow taxi  
with a cracked side window,  
drive through New York City  
until the sun shines through the broken skyline,  
bleaching the neon off the walls.

I can't have religion, so  
I have an abiding love for all things  
worth thinking through.

I covet time like  
another man's wife.

*Matt Schumacher*

•Crushed

Despite smashed atoms and flattened pride  
 I had such a crush on you  
 That I could only guess what dumb stunt I would try next to win  
     your love.

Would I jump off a building into your arms,  
 Or serenade you momentarily  
 At the crazy apex of my trampoline jump  
 Outside your fifth story window?

You were unimpressed with the wildebeest I had tamed for you,  
 Bemused by the paper airplane skywriting on the ceiling,  
 Unmoved by my extravagant bouquets retrieved from cemeteries.  
 You ignored my fake broken leg, the false paper mache cast I'd  
     made.

I wanted to invent a new language just to describe you,  
 A complicated, elegant hieroglyphic script, that would  
 Appear mysteriously only in places deserving of your legend--  
 Watertowers, steeples, and theater marquees, for example.

I stole your marching band uniform, slept in it for days,  
 And dreamed I had become music so unusual  
 That your saxophone sounded like  
 The voice of another human being trying to communicate.  
 You played that exact music for weeks in band practice,  
 Trying to understand the voice caught in it,

Without knowing what you were doing,  
Without knowing that it had been me all along,  
Trying to talk to you from my dreams.

Once I fantasized we grew wings in Math  
And flew out of the room, claiming angels  
Had more important things to do than homework,  
But not before the teacher, Mr. Evans, in an epiphany,  
Furiously scribbled the precise equation on the board  
Which meant we were really in love, an equation that,  
When read aloud, would let the other students grow wings, too  
Patterned, of course, after ours.

Grace Bauer

•Crepuscular

It has become the adjective of the season,  
 appearing in poems as frequently  
 as Calvin Klein in Glamour and Vogue,

replacing the recently popular  
*chiaroscuro*, which has mercifully faded  
 back into the shadows it describes,

not unlike the ever-recurrent *stones*  
 of the seventies that finally settled  
 into silence. But I tell you, I can't

warm up to this word. I hate its rasping  
 in the ear, how it evokes corpuscles  
 on treadmills and universal machines.

It's too harsh a word for the time of day,  
 the kind of light it refers to. I tell you,  
 it needs to slide back into the obscurity

from whence it came. Let us eschew this  
 most recent obfuscation. Give me *dusk*.  
 Plain old *evening*. Give me *twilight* any day.

*George Eklund*

•Dying in the Kitchen

I think collapsing in the kitchen  
would be a fine way to go,  
a pot of dumplings suspended upon the face.  
Provided the kids are grown and employed,  
and Laura is at the museum among the Expressionists.  
And that the children have forgiven me.  
And that Laura and I have made love in the morning.  
And that the cats were fed  
and the overloaded washer were not banging  
like a mad drum without a drummer  
in the trembling webs of the basement.  
I don't want to die in a racket  
of machines or humans.  
There's been enough of that.  
I want to expire in a rare privacy  
without the strange, blind companionship.  
Of a voice on the radio.  
My two favorite heroes entered eternity  
through the noble quiet of the kitchen  
Grandma Ruth, in her morning ritual  
of Raleigh cigarette, solitaire and coffee.  
And the fine poet, William Stafford,  
who was making an apple pie when he fell.  
Great God of kitchens,  
let the dog be near to lick my face clean.

And might you perform the slight miracle  
of turning off the burner  
and the light above the sink  
before we go?

*Anthony Cristofani*

**•Twenty-Five Year Old Man Eating A Grapefruit**

A twenty-five year old man stands  
in a dark kitchen shivering, eating  
a half of a grapefruit.

He is eating quickly, common sense like cataracts  
on the eyes, which are stuck on the hands  
of the glowing clock  
that already points past  
the comfort zone he calls "Early"  
and sick men should Go  
To Bed Early.

But halfway through  
the half  
he understands the grapefruit  
is good, in many ways.  
So first he lets the juice  
form a pool on his cupped tongue  
and then he lets the seeds slide  
around the tongue,  
and then he moves his tongue  
and lips through the word  
"grapefruit."

But these overtures are not enough  
to redeem the profanity

of his first half  
of grapefruit half  
in the last quarter  
of the tenth hour  
of the thirtieth day  
of the sixteenth month  
of his incarceration.

And so he makes a poem.  
But first he had to wash  
his hands as pens  
in prison are hard  
to come by.

and he doesn't want to leave his  
greasy with grapefruit  
juice.

#### COMMENTARY ON TWENTY-FIVE YEAR OLD MAN EATING A GRAPEFRUIT

Does the poet really believe he can make a Moment out of any profane instance? A poem is not a palliative for Catholic guilt. Neither should it be a substitute for the tongue and eyes and hands and nose. In any case, if he keeps this habit up, he's going to grow addicted to mezzomoments and the poems they bring about. I prescribe for

**Anthony Cristofani •Twenty-Five Year Old Man Eating A Grapefruit**

him a week of tropical fruit and penless hands, assuming the poet is not literally incarcerated.

I would have opted for a simple poem about identity, in this case:

If anyone asks who I am--

I am a twenty-five year old man standing  
in a dark kitchen eating a grapefruit  
half.

*Lauren Haldeman*

**•Portrait of Destruction as a Lepus Cuniculus**

What can I say, my Chess Piece Face? Across  
the span of Cumberland you ate, you tore  
a gap and now you're gone. Where are the cords  
that sparked between your teeth? Empirically  
across my room, you chewed through phone lines, razed  
the plugs of clock alarms, and gutted out  
a defenseless old Koala lamp, you  
somehow toothed great craters in the mountains  
of a Topographic Italy, impaired  
the right eye of a puppet head that lay  
in horror on the floor - you didn't stop  
at that - you even clawed the drawing down  
that I, in weakness, sketched to bear your visage.  
You monster! Always making nests and forts  
from overdue Library Texts! Destroy  
the photos while you're at it, rip the past  
from slide projectors, but - and yet - I see  
now, you are really gone. I've checked the pound  
where last I found you caged beneath small cats  
and parakeets. Alas, no Chess. I've asked  
the neighbor who once took you in, I've peeked  
inside the Squirrel House for your lazy thump;  
indeed: the paths are bare; no fog of hair  
comes floating from my pillow now. How could  
I not have seen? You're irreplaceable.

While other Mini Rex rabbits might have  
just wallowed in a fatty patch all freaked  
with shallots, thistles, radish, beets - not you -  
instead, you traveled into rotten lots,  
the wrecking-balled forgotten haunts, and there  
in new-found beauty, ruled, with drapes of duct-  
tape, dust of saws all shawled around your nape.  
You were the king of entropy--always  
insisting: nothing stays. For this, thank you,  
my little beast. May lawlessness and dis-  
array continue spilling from your wake,  
and transformation be your jaunty ward  
'til all things turn inert and uniform.

*Andrea Christoffel*

**•After I Was Dead**

After I was dead I ate only chocolate for seven and one-half days.

I crawled into Jamie K.'s frizzy hair and made-up face and told the principal to go to Jamaica and discover the wonders of pot.

After I was dead I took little Cindy's hand and pulled her across the street away from the drunkard in his BMW.

I found the gnome who stole your sock.

After I was dead I did all these things and more.

But my lips are becoming stiff and chocolate is getting boring.

I want wings.

*Linda Wojtowick*

•Professor in Furs

As I went farther north my nose bled in the mornings.  
This frightened me but I didn't stop.  
One day while walking it ached. The clouds  
grew threatening and held their breath.  
I saw a woman sitting beneath the great spiked wheels  
for moving over child-deep crusts of snow.  
White leopards caught there too sometimes  
on thin moons, when prey is most bold.

I was months traveling to reach pink fossils  
moved up through centuries of ice.  
She looked through me, saying what you think  
you can do here but die. There was nothing  
I could describe of my journey after that.  
She pulled pale grey ropes of sinew onto spools.

I went on. Two years from then  
my research would be praised for its teeth  
and mythic angles. Grants were passed.  
Things would change for me but in small,  
disappointing ways: I felt familiar,  
recognizable, though I was not.  
I slept more because I told myself  
that I deserved it. My desk was kept clean  
though my house, with its vapid busywork,

turned to ruin. I imagined that more things  
waited for me to be taken. If interviewed again  
about my origins I might emphasize the difference  
in the landscapes from my birth to my Arctic science.  
If asked what happened to me and where,  
I'd describe it like this... Full weight  
of the southern sun. The words *gum* and *kudzoo*.  
Swamps as black as pitch and the high, wet smell of snake.

*Linda Wojtowitz*

•**The Senator Chooses a Calcium Supplement**

The doctor is young  
and can wear his two day beard with ease.  
The senator remembers those days, before fatigue  
set in like oil on cloth. He feels the bare back.  
Listens, feels the lung drums float the ribs.  
The senator leaves with advice,  
a pint less urine, and a pamphlet on salt.

He'll tell his driver to leave him and he will, reluctantly.  
To him the streets are viscous, unnameable streams.  
In the drugstore he removes his hat  
and stands before the rows of vials  
flayed by their vast varieties, the labels  
with their bright stabs of promise.  
All the names earthy, biological, slipstream.  
He knows vitamins, the herbs one uses for sleep,  
but minerals are a mystery to him.  
He grasps, vaguely, folic acid. Zinc.  
Polyunsaturated fat.

The cashier pauses, pinches her pink lip with teeth.  
Her long earrings brush her collarbone.  
They are soft cascading chains. Years ago  
his wife had jewelry like that but with feathers,  
white and blue as from a miniature jay.

On vacation they drank salty drinks in thin shade  
and when he reeled with the heat and briny richness  
she took care of him, bore him up.  
She called for ice, cooled his head with her hands.  
Don't think of it, she told him. He tried.

Salt is bad for bones. He has been given  
words that suggest brittle chalk,  
the shale of white cliffs. He knows  
to haul himself out of bed while it's still dark  
and go to the basement, fighting the chill.  
The treadmill arrived with a note from his trainer,  
cardstock, in calligraphy pen: *Simulation is better than what's real.*

*Susan H. Case*

•Quantum

Reading another poet's poem about a snowstorm  
 in Iowa, I think about my poem  
 about a snowstorm in Ohio,  
 both of us with love wrecks, in car wrecks near Christmas  
 and I wonder if we could be living  
 some sort of Einsteinian accident, god nasty-drunk  
 before the respectable hour,  
 playing dice with the universe  
 back of an alley off Arlington Street. Maybe,  
 she travels too fast--more cocaine  
 in her poems than mine--maybe I move  
 too slowly, a pack of parallel possible lives  
 I've stuck a toe in, scattered  
 like cast-off heels on a red Persian rug. Then  
 somehow, as she plunges forward,  
 and I dither backward, a space opens up in time,  
 each conscious mind now one, as suddenly  
 we're both in cheap hotels. We're both spilling drinks.  
 We're both skidding on yesterday.  
 If our experience put us together in the same room,  
 this much would be observable:  
 the same trash-dyed red hair, the same sun damage  
 on our faces. I'd look at her and know all about Iowa,  
 a state in which I think I've spent two days.  
 She'd nod her head about Ohio.

*Been there done that*, she'd say  
as I start to tell her about when,  
its failed circumstance.

*Nancy Means Wright***•Getting To Know You**

This morning you find yourself  
 hugging a tree: it's your front yard  
 ginkgo, bare-leafed and rough,  
 the trunk just narrow enough to get  
 your arms around. It's one of those  
 moments when people and trees  
 come together, when the mind empties  
 out like spilled milk and you are  
 that tree, and when the UPS man  
 climbs out of his truck, surprised  
 to see you hugging that tree--but too  
 polite to ask why, and hands over  
 a package to sign for, you think: who is  
 this Wright woman?

And when

the neighbor who just moved  
 in with six cats, a goat, and an old  
 red pickup comes jogging  
 down the road, you holler, *Kettle's on!*  
*C'mon in.* And though her eyes  
 widen to see you stroking the bark  
 of the ginkgo--she turns  
 and trots up your walk. And you  
 know this is exactly what  
 you were longing for when you

first embraced that tree: a cup  
of green tea and a neighbor who looks  
bewitching today in her purple  
cape, her tall rubber boots and a rusty  
frizz of hair that sticks straight up  
like an antenna, like a genie  
dropped in from some distant star  
and in your own front yard.

*Jack Coulehan*  
•The Elephant

In memoriam, KDR

The elephant fetish from Mozambique  
with a cork in its butt. The wooden  
mortar and pestle from Mindanao  
and the Navajo medicine belt  
with bells sewed on it. After you died  
I tossed them, along with stacks of files  
and boxes of musty survey forms  
from 20 years back. I trashed the lot  
and dumped stuff from my drawer--  
your envelope with a note that said  
what I should do if you died  
in surgery, and the keys to your cabin  
tied to a piece of wood you had carved  
and finished. There was a three-inch  
naked Chinese woman, too, a device  
that allowed your patient to point  
to where it hurt. And a boar-faced god  
screwing an iron goddess, with a snake  
around his shoulders. And an icon  
from Petersburg. And a set of gourd rattles.  
All, to the garbage, along with the other  
junk of hope, including the elephant  
from Mozambique with a cork in its butt,

the best charm for getting over grief,  
the witchdoctor said, if you bless it  
with a special medicine--a recipe  
he never gave you, or you didn't give me.

*Nathan Nass*

**•An Incident Gets Revealed in Water & Light**

Our bodies all made from wicker and string.  
Not meaning to - I was standing by a river  
and overwhelming light tore between the  
branches of leafless trees bouncing off the water.  
The light deafened me, and her lips  
opened and pressed together without meaning.  
I was unraveling her arms and had gone  
past her hand when this man walks by  
like he's a Scott Joplin rag.  
He's an elite syncopation. And the way  
that his arms weave in and out  
of his coat sleeves. A melody cloaked in strides.  
Follow him back to the road trailing  
strings and glossed wicker bouncing.

*Erik Lesniewski*

•Shooting The Shit

*I am the imagination of everyone's dreams,*  
was the first thing he said to me. Then  
he went on, talking at me like a brick to the face.  
He was saying something about rabbit pellets.  
Wanting to pick them up, use them as buckshot,  
and *wouldn't that be funny?* Then he blabbed  
about moving. Heading out to Kansas, to find  
the portal to OZ, so he could ask the wizard  
about the etymology of *shooting the shit*.

All I could say was, "who the fuck wants to live  
in Kansas?" But this guy thinks everything he says  
is great, fanfuckingtastic, simply because it's all  
about him. So when he reached new lows,  
had run out of catchy phrasings, I stopped  
listening and wrote that first line down.

And why not, I had the knife to cut my finger,  
scrawl it out in blood on the bar napkin which  
already read, *If you want to feel guilty, call your mother.*



*Edward Beatty*

•Sandcastle

His mind, since midnight a swimmer stroking to reach shore, gives up, becomes a white terry cloth beach towel floating on blue water. It grays, folds, sinks, swaying lazily like a ray. In minutes it nears sand, shrinks into shadow until it penetrates, discovers a submerged life.

He has returned to the hall of his birth home, but the floor's yellow linoleum is now ice drifted with snow, its fiberboard walls are stone, sparkling with frost. A miniature man in a swollen purple parka is at play, patting wet flakes to form a friend. Again he waits, longing for it to speak.

But the only sound comes from the hall closet, a scratching as though nails were digging into wood. The door crumbles and cedar scent enshrouds his head like a nylon stocking, tints the air brown, blurs a row of skins his family shed for him to wear. Mother's perfumed fur cape

with fox collar that nipped his probing finger, turned it red. Father's wool suit with tarnished eyes. Grandpa's leather coat still weighting wire shoulders. On the floor slacks sprawl across gaping pumps, crawl toward a gown grandma wore to be lowered beneath the ground.

When the bulb dangling from a cord flashes he finds himself

in the kitchen, leaning over the sink. His arms grow heavy as baggy sleeves of a sweatshirt his brother outgrew draw his hands into greasy liquid. He feels broken plates, caked silverware, a tumbler's slimy hole,

cup handle, set of false teeth sharp and jagged as a saw blade. His forearms begin to dissolve. Looking up he notes knives hanging from a rack block the clock, cast metal bars over the window. His sister's scarlet mouth undulates by. A cough in the living room, a sigh in the laundry.

He is on a narrow glass staircase, stepping like a puppet past framed faces, familiar but possessing no names. At the top glows the orange room in which he once slept. A parrot extends emerald wings across a red pillow; embroidered snakes and apes peer up from the bedspread's jungle.

When wheels screech and the attic trap door releases a ladder his toes touch a rung and he ascends into a room illuminated by a neon mirror. The walls hold shelves of multicolored boxes. Firecrackers, ammunition, cigarettes, condoms. All sealed in cellophane, not to be opened.

On the floor are stacks of men's magazines, breasts peeking through uncut wrappers, and there is a table where a naked woman sleeps, covered with gauze. He approaches slowly as smoke to examine the neighbor who took his hand,

bit his lip, licked his teeth, sucked tongue.

He tastes coal dust, smells mouse droppings, dank basement walls, sees onions' pale fingers, potatoes' sunken eyes, rust from a furnace thickening the air. Cellar doors open like languorous thighs. He swims, seashells ringing as castle collapses and the towel washes up onto sand.

*Charles Rafferty*

•California

When my wife and I took off from Newark.  
spring hadn't kicked its engine over yet:  
the sky the color of chain-link fence,  
the air pregnant with the rain we never saw  
falling. In San Francisco the air was blue  
and painful, the buildings clean, the girls already  
in their summer skin. We were tourists:  
the Golden Gate. Alcatraz. Chinatown for dinner--  
sea lions barking beneath our beer  
at the end of every night. I remember watching rafts  
of Pacific foam stumble up the beach  
as we kept to the path our friends advised.  
It seems inconceivable now  
to have gone all that way and have been  
too busy to taste it. This was years ago--  
the friends we traveled to see married  
are divorced, the souvenirs we suitcased back  
long since broken or boxed away.  
But still the sun glancing off that surf is  
tangible as quartz in the fraying bag  
of memory. It is a thing worth going back for  
and a thing that won't be there  
when at last we finally do. Gone  
like the money we squandered in our youth.  
Gone like the skin we used to wear

when at first we fell in love--before the treachery  
of the world revealed itself,  
the relentless impulse to corrupt all beauty,  
even as we slept between the bars  
of our bed's familiar brass.

*Jason Lee Brown*

•Changed

Cells completely regenerate every seven years, she says.  
What's that have to do with us, I say.  
We've dated eight, she says. We're different people now.  
I'm not different, I say. See, same cock (grabbing myself).  
He's not the same, she says. He doesn't like me anymore.  
He's the same if we say he is, I say. That's identity.  
People live longer nowadays, she says. Change careers, marriages.  
So, you need a variety of husbands before you die, I say.  
You can't argue with biology, she says.

*Peter Lorenz*

•Cover to Cover

The New Yorker  
was covered by  
a pile of snow  
and old gray  
streets

only one jazz diner  
lit the street

fire hydrants looked gray in the chill of  
January

water towers rest atop  
drab brick apartment buildings

neon signs and Christmas  
lights adorn the tops  
of downtown skyscrapers  
burning millions of  
watts and amps of power  
every minute heating  
and lighting fifty-three  
floors where secretaries  
make career moves with

pants down or pencil  
biting maneuvers in  
tight spaces

and the jazz plays on

*George J. Searles*

•Naming the Baby

Then there was Paul DiNardo--speaking of *real* nutcases--  
the new young math teacher at the high school  
the year my nephew was a senior there.

All the girls were hot for him (DiNardo, not my nephew).

Everyone said he was a genius at algebra,  
but he got hung up on it...went to extremes,  
wanted to name his baby daughter "Boolean."  
His wife said, "Forget it! Over my dead body!"

So DiNardo totally freaked out and blew her away  
(the wife, not the baby daughter) with an AK47  
he'd been hiding in a golf bag in his garage.  
The whole deal was really a rotten shame.

DiNardo got life in Attica (the prison, not the town),  
his students endured a parade of truly awful substitutes,  
and the baby went to live with her grandma, who named her  
"Tammy," after her mom (the baby's mom, not the grandma's).

Really "Boolean" would've been classier. Boolean DiNardo.  
When she got older, her nickname would've been "Boo":  
perfectly fine, especially if she wound up going to Bates,  
Skidmore, Vassar, Wesleyan, or any place like that.

And at least DiNardo hadn't been crazy enough to suggest "Algebra" itself for the baby's name, though if you really listen to it, it's lovely, with those graceful, Latinate a's at front and back.

Beautiful, like so many other excellent words that will never get a chance to be names (*people's* names, I mean). "Salada," for example. Just imagine: Salada Rodriguez--perfect!

Or "Gulden" (like the mustard): Gulden Jones. How about Nabisco Hapanowicz...or Budweiser Smith? Tropicana Lapinski? Smucker's O'Reilly? The list could go on and on. It's such a loss, such a waste.

All those sparkling, elegant syllables, scores of them, all harmoniously arranged, in felicitous array, but squandered forever...on routine, ordinary, everyday stuff (*products*, I mean).

*James Doyle*

**•Anecdotes of the Hearse Driver**

I transported a dead turkey  
in a top-of-the-line coffin.  
The turkey was named Wattles.  
The child who raised it  
followed in the family limousine.  
At the animal cemetery, the child  
wandered off to pet the dog  
monument stones and missed the service.

When the prima ballerina leapt  
into a mid-air blood clot,  
the company wouldn't let her  
touch the ground. Her body  
arched from finger-tip  
to finger-tip as I followed  
in the car. Her coffin tilts  
to the famous entrechat  
while the worms and shale  
surround it like footlights.

The procession for the company's  
three executives was in order  
of seniority. My hearse carried  
the third, so far down the ladder  
of years, I had to follow  
two blocks behind. I kept

getting stopped by cross traffic  
when the lights changed.

The Memorial Gardens made me  
use the service entrance.

Mementoes of the deceased  
are often put in the coffin.

That way, the perfume-maker's  
body will smell sweet  
six months from now,  
the concrete-worker's coffin  
will be anchored against  
ground-swell, the cell phone  
in the paranoid's coffin  
will have back-up batteries.

On my off days, I wax  
and polish the hearse  
for sleekness, so it can  
slide through the nights  
searching for stray corpses  
to slip off with  
as a public service  
or to hone its instincts  
for skimming  
the layer of reverence  
from inexhaustible landfill.

*Chad Faries*

•Black Water

Night chores.  
Purple blasts at the Ayer's barn.  
Hay decays in a corner;  
a rusted bridle hangs from a nail.

This smell of old leather and rotting grass....

The kiss, the first  
in that barn. The hay crude on my ankles.  
The dank smell of air and her  
red hair. My back against  
weathered pine boards.

mouth.

knothole

feet.

I lick the rim of your

The ray through the

warms my little

The angle of everything is 45°  
She looks like she will fall over,  
I try to catch her, but I myself  
am falling at 8 years.

“Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang”  
held your hand under the covers  
watched the car fly  
and now our angle of departure is much  
the same, only looking back,  
I have words, and some good  
lemons in my stomach, a pack of matches.  
I could not have hugged  
you more awkwardly.  
The sun couldn't be  
caught.  
And if  
I'm sorry about anything, it's  
that  
country blues is mistaken  
for  
lament.  
If  
there is no breath in an orchid,  
if  
arias, abridged, travel sideways

through a lingering breath in the air

will

there be enough light to

shine on that tilt of your chin?

With our right hand in each others'  
back pocket and a couple of combs  
we set out to fashion a perpetual young dusk.

*Terry Savoie*  
•Bad News

When my baby sister phones long distance  
all the way from Santa Fe the second time  
in the same night complaining how her  
boyfriend right now, this very minute, is  
mistreating her, I say, "Zoë, what exactly do  
you want from me with this problem of yours?  
Here I am on this godforsaken Iowa farm.  
How many states between you & me, do you count?  
Tell me that, Zoë? Here we're harvesting icicles;  
we got an honest-to-God, true winter on our hands.  
I bet you any money it's a blizzard right now,  
& I don't even have to go to the window & look.  
I know. Look, the wife's up & now baby's up too.  
Gosh, Zoë, I love you to hell, but before you know it  
the whole goddamned family & the dog will be pacing  
the floor. Zoë, you & me, we got to talk. We're worlds  
apart. Right now you're probably sitting on the sun porch.  
Go ahead, tell me you're not sitting in the sun while we're  
freezing our asses off under tons of blankets? Zoë, what  
I'm trying to tell you is there's enough bad news to go around.  
You keep yours, & I'll feed & water mine, making sure no  
bad news gets out & runs to the neighbors to bring  
them any more grief than they already own."

*Louise Moore*

•Helen: Again

That femme Helen  
Didn't really like them butch  
Chose another option

Preferred Paris  
who had no beard  
to Menelaos

Menelaos  
stank of garlic  
had hair on hands and back  
and liked it rough

Paris kept his nails  
clean and short  
had a knowing tongue  
Kept his cock most times  
for the servant boys

For him  
Helen kept her hair blond  
Hid peroxide in the bath  
Plucked her eyebrows and other body parts  
Knew Paris wanted cool and unapproachable

But sometimes even then  
she sucked him off  
She understood  
survival

*Fredrick Zydek*

•Letter to the Gleasons About Editing

Dear Dan and Marg: I don't mind the actual search for misplaced commas, badly spelled words or glyphs where a letter of the alphabet ought to be. I farm all that work out anyway. The part I've grown tired of is the actual reading of manuscripts that come in over the transom every day. I try to give them all a good

read, but I hate to tell you how many times I don't even get past page two. Call me old-fashioned, but I like to find a metaphor or two placed among the lines, and if I don't savor at least one image nudging into the truth of the poem, I read no further. I'm willing to guess that at least a third of what is sent in for

consideration is written by someone who has never purchased a collection of poems or so much as browsed the *Norton Anthology of American Poetry*, not to mention their anthology of *English Verse*. Not much of what comes in gets a full reading. Once in a while a typescript will come across my desk like

a Spanish dancer clacking his castanets. The poems are so good, each one calls special attention to itself while making plenty of room for the poet's voice to be heard along the way. I see about twenty of these each

year. We only publish four or five collections in each twelve-month period, so I must send some back

with tears in my eyes. What is the biggest lesson I've learned in all this labor? That the poet's true merit should be determined in the hard anvils of the tabloids and periodicals before they come my way. No one should publish a book of poems until at least a dozen of them have been seen in public places of good repute.

*Fredrick Zydek*

•Letter to Stockton in Omaha

Dear Richard: I'm not sure how the world became a place where morality is reduced to just what is legal or against the law.

I've been around a long time. I remember when civility was considered a cultural norm and certain topics were kept locked

in the filing cabinets of our psychologists. It was a world in which priests still prayed to their meager gods but fasted into the bed-

clothes instead of with choirboys and acolytes. It isn't that innocent places weren't tasted by tongues in those days; we just didn't see much

point in putting stuff like that in the marketplace. Guilt and suspicion were the expected luggage we believed we were supposed to drag behind

us. When I was twelve I had a crush on an altar boy who I knew damn well used to kneel in his white-robed innocence and secretly

contemplate the calendar of Marilyn Monroe

in the Texaco station men's room west of town.

I envied that it turned him on but could not,

in those days, figure out why seeing him excited  
got me hot. One day the priest caught us French  
kissing and jacking each other off in a confessional

we knew no one ever bothered to use. He swore  
at us and told us we were going to hell—but to this  
day, I'm convinced that boy took me to heaven.

*Dion Farquhar*

•Meta-Local 1:1964

*Nostalgia is always for something that is  
forever lost because it was never present.*

--Kelly Oliver, *Family Values*

The family made me a lover of extremity

marches, demonstrations on TV (black and white)

rows of cops with plastic shields snarling  
dogs

while my parents

read Ellery Queen *Readers' Digest*

in their twin beds

shook their heads *trouble-makers*

the fall of senior year

Catholic Worker (soup kitchen by day) Friday night lectures

subway to Spring Street the Bowery

going to "the dance"                      telling parents      I was

but sat on folding chairs

room    in a crowded small

listening to speakers                      world ripped wide open

college students back from Mississippi

Freedom Democratic Party                      registering voters

priests thrown out of Latin America

for teaching peasants

how to count

and after

we all (Jews, Protestants, even atheists)

went out

to bars (my first, though I didn't drink) and talked till dawn

In the beginning then boundless choice

that heady stew

and hubris of knee-jerk romanticism, rock 'n roll,

revolution around the corner (we all believed)

future looming infinite I on automatic

my twenties through

but having a ball

before I knew

under-

sides shadowing

the headiness of pure feeling

(like)

everything and nothing

I chirped my way through eager greedy

thinking I was reading my way out

of the family of class

omnivorous

(shit)

job after graduation

moved out at 18 dreaming I was free

going to school (at night) loving it

doors opening

others closing    *but who knew?*

music set the mood

boppin' and rockin'    all night long

Ravi Shankar          The Beatles          Janice Joplin          Joan  
Baez

Jimi Hendrix    Judy Collins    The Who  
Rolling Stones

voices

inspiring    celebratory    heady

the void

filling

(end)

Tina Egnoski

•Our Lady of the Ubiquitous Knees

She had ballet at four and five. Piano at seven and eight. Tap, gymnastics, elocution. When sister came along she followed form and called it electrocution. Proper education included all-girls parochial (pleated skirt with knee-socks and white panties) and concurrent advice from mother, nuns. *At all times while seated, my dears, left knee kisses right.* Forms of prayer: kneeling, Our Father, on your back.

Her first recital she peed on the piano bench. In tap she was flat-footed, in the gym clumsy. *A proper lady wears pantyhose, Peds, knee-highs, tights.* Tightly. Once mother let her serve tea at ladies luncheon and a China cup jitterbugged off the tray and shattered. Forms of punishment: extra time at the piano, ear-pinch, Sister Timothy's waffle-paddle.

As teenagers she and sister climbed out the window and ran at midnight with neighborhood boys. Spin the bottle. Seven minutes in heaven. Billy Grimes kissed with cherry Lifesaver breath. *Boys want one thing: a loose-kneed girl.* If the house was locked, she found a way back in: unlatched window or dog door or laundry vent. Like vapor.

Away at college, knees in all manner of passion: tight-lipped, tongue-tipped, wide-mouthed, smash-faced. When the Saints Go Marching In.

There was a time when riding the subway a man put his hand on her knee and she went home with him. A time when men in bars came home with her. Form of defense: knee in groin.

She married another Billy. On her wedding night and at the birth of her son: knees pushed up to ears. *Oh, mother.* Every Good Boy Does Fine. Alternative forms of devotion: incense, felicity, knee-jerk desire.

R. *Flowers Rivera*

•**Not My Guitar: CC Rider Revisited**

*You C C Rider, see what you done done*

*C C Rider, you see what you done done*

*You C C Rider, you see what you done done*

*You done made me love you and now your man done come*

*-Big Bill Broonzy version*

Woman riding Metro: Greased tube through a tunnel,  
Glistening silver rods track the ceiling, monkey bars  
For the lonely. But I ride these rails, I pull this train  
The way only a plain girl can. So come on  
CC Rider. Tell me the secret of emptying  
Myself to become somebody else's fantasy.

Push comes to pull and I ain't got no time  
For modesty or shame. Each window  
A psychotropic projection screen, image against reflection.  
Man with eyes closed, a woman with lips parted.  
Money-shot like no other. People shudder then pretend not to  
Understand how I could slam on brakes, leave them wanting.

*Contributors' Notes*

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**Susan Case** is a college professor in New York. She has recent work in *Eclipse*, *Georgetown Review*, *Tar Wolf Review*, and *Slant*. She is the author of *The Scottish Cafe* and *Hiking the Desert in High Heels*.

**Andrea Christoffel** is a senior elementary education major from Cedarburg, Wisconsin.

**Katherine Cottle** holds an MFA degree in creative writing from the University of Maryland. Currently, she is teaching creative writing through Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth distance education program. Her work has appeared in *River Oak Review*, *Willow Springs*, and *The Cimarron Review*.

**Jack Coulehan** lives in Satauket, New York.

**Anthony Cristofani** recently completed a BA in philosophy through the University of California, Riverside. His work has been published in *Chiron Review*, *Minnesota Review*, *Distillery*, and *Free Lunch*. He is currently touring the U.S. in a rock band, attempting to subvert rock 'n' roll with poetry.

**Laura Crow** is a senior English major. She has already picked out her future cats' names, but not her children's. She recently moved her belongings into her new dorm room: the *Review* office.

**Holly Day** currently works as a reporter and writing instructor in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and lives with her two children and husband. Her hobbies include skateboarding, crocheting, and trying to peaceably communicate with uncooperative vending machines. Her work has most recently appeared in *Canadian Woman Studies*, *Skyway News*, and *Ruab*.

**Katie Devlaminck** is a senior at Coe College.

**James Doyle** is the author of *Einstein Considers A Sand Dune*, and his work has been included in *Literature: An Introduction to Critical Reading*. His magazine publications include *The Iowa Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Poetry*, and previous editions of *The Coe Review*.

**R. D. Drexler** is a professor in the English department at Coe College.

**Tina Egnoski** lives in Barrington, Rhode Island. Her work has appeared in *Cimarron Review*, *Folio*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, and *Louisville Review*.

**Carol Ellis** lives in Claremont, California.

**George Elkund** is on the creative writing faculty at Morehead State University; he has received the Al Smith Fellowship in Poetry from the Kentucky Arts Council. His work has appeared in *New York Quarterly*, *North American Review*, *Crazyhorse*, and *The American Poetry Review*.

**Chad Faries** has published poems, essays, photographs, interviews, and creative nonfiction in *Exquisite Corpse*, *Mudfish*, *New American Writing*, *Barrow Street*, *The Cream City Review*, *Afterimage*, *Post Road*, and others. He has a Ph.D. in creative writing from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and was a Fulbright Fellow in Budapest. He now has almost four unpublished manuscripts. When not traveling, he is a carpenter and professor.

**M. Frias-May** lives in Cambria, California.

**Rich Furman** is an associate professor of social work at the University of North Carolina Charlotte. His scholarly writing is concerned with social work ethics, theory,

practices, and the application of poetry in social work and research. He is working on a 203 bowling average and enjoys mountain biking and single malt scotch.

**Iris Garcia** has been voted Coe College's best poem reader from Albuquerque, which is a crippling super power because now her poetry needs to be submitted with audio files. Iris has been made fun of throughout her life for writing her "I"s as upside-down "T"s.

**Katie Geltz** is a senior art major at Coe College.

**Dayna Gulino** is currently in her last year of graduate studies at Arizona State University, where she is pursuing an MFA in creative writing.

**Lauren Haldeman** is currently a graduate student at the University of Iowa. Her poems have previously been published in *Fence* and on GutCult.com.

**Debbie Heckert** lives in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with her family. She is a nontraditional student, graduating this year with a double major in English and writing. Besides being an amazing mother to her biological children, she is currently in the process of filing adoption papers for all members of the *Review* staff.

**Hannah Heselton** is a freshman at Coe; she enjoys vanilla hazelnut lattes and chair wrestling.

**Michael Hettich** lives in Miami Shore, Florida. He published two books of poetry in 2005: *Swimmer Dreams* and *Flock and Shadow: New & Selected Poems*.

**Carla Horsley** enjoyed every piece of poetry she read for the *Review*. She eats hummus and is not a Republican. She can speak Swahili. I yeye alimpenda kunywa safari lager.

**Paul Hostovsky** has previously been published in *Poetry East*, *Slant*, *Visions International*, *Comstock Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and *Free Lunch*.

**Stephen Kopel** is a teacher, cyclist, dancer, and art collector. He abhors waste and keeps his waist 31" with 500 daily crunches. His most recent book is *Crax*, published in 2005 by Calliope Press.

**Deborah Kwan** is currently a sophomore at Coe College majoring in psychology and Asian studies. When she was a first grader, she participated in a poetry competition where she forgot all the lines to a poem she was supposed to recite. She was embarrassed, and therefore, stopped liking poetry, until just recently.

**Eric Lesniewski** works as a high school teacher in Toledo, Ohio, and spends his summers doing carpentry work in northern Ohio and southern Michigan. He is also the proprietor of Aeropause Press. His work has

appeared in *Yale Anglers' Journal*, *Inscape*, and *Santa Clara Review*.

**Kelsey Lindaman** is a freshman at Coe College.

**Peter Lorenz** only frequents three locations. If he is not in his room or the *Review* office, he can be found at the Moose--there are no other possibilities.

**Kyle Mangan** has submitted paintings that he doesn't think suck. He continues to overcome his crippling fear of drinking, resides in Iowa, and still enjoys cartoons.

**Charles McLeod** holds a BA from the University of Iowa and an MFA from the University of Virginia. His work has been published in the *Iowa Review* and received a 2005 *Iowa Review* Award. Currently, he is a Winter Writing Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

**Melissa Mickael** is possibly the only out-of-the-closet anarchist living at Coe College and has gathered a rather impressive group of comrades through distribution of clever pamphlets and feeding starving artists stale cranberry muffins. She writes. Most people wish she would stop.

**Liz Miles** is a starving artist in training; she has been known to barter pop-tarts and Diet Coke for inspiration.

- Louise Moore** lives in Los Angeles, California. She has been writing since the 1980s and was most recently published in *City Works*.
- Nathan Nass** has been trying to wake up closer to sunrise every day for about three months. The scent of his room oscillates between espresso and kimchi. But when the sun is rising, everything is still, and the perfect mixture between the two occurs.
- Thomas O'Connell** is a librarian working for a library software company in the mountains of southwestern Virginia. His poems and stories have appeared in *Cranky*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, and *Prose Ax*.
- Meagan Porter** is a sophomore English and creative writing major at Coe College. She hails from the great state of Wisconsin.
- Charles Rafferty** lives in Sandy Hook, Connecticut, with his wife and two daughters. He teaches American literature and writing at Albertus Magnus College; he also works as an editor for a technology consulting firm. His *Man on the Tower* was published in 1995 and won the Arkansas Poetry Award. Other awards include the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Prize for Poetry, the River Styx International Poetry Prize, and a grant from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

**R. Flowers Rivera** is a Mississippi native with an M.A. from Hollins University and a Ph.D. in African American literature and creative writing from Binghamton University. She was a finalist for the May Swenson Award for Poetry as well as the Journal Award in Poetry; she was also a two-time nominee for Pushcart Prize XXVII. In addition, she has been awarded a grant from the Georgia Council for the Arts.

**Joan Rudel** received an B.A. in English from Columbia University, an M.A. in English Literature from New York University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and a Ph.D. in education from Fordham University. Her work has been published in *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *South Carolina Review*, and *The MacGuffin*.

**Terry Savoie** has been previously published by the *Coe Review*, as well as *North American Review*, *Phantasmagoria*, and *Poetry East*. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

**Jenna Shaw** is \_\_ years old (going on\_\_ ). The following are smells she enjoys: paperwhites, gasoline, cigarette smoke on the street at night, powdered graphite, rum cake, hot tar, sandy shoulders, bleach dissolving in a sinkful of hot water, boiled sugar, clean wet hair, grapefruit residue on fingers.

**Matt Schumacher** is a native of Pleasant Valley, Iowa, and a former graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. At present, he is teaching writing at both Husson College and the University of Maine. His work has appeared in *Exquisite Corpse*, *Gumball Poetry*, *Permafrost*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*; and has also been performed live onstage by Iowa Beef Experience, a punk rock band.

**George J. Searles** has been published widely, most recently in *Oberon*, *Taproot*, and *Words & Images*. He teaches at Mohawk Valley Community College and at Pratt Institute's upstate extension center campus. In 2002, the Carnegie Foundation named him New York State's "Professor of the Year."

**Eric Paul Shaffer** is the author of five books of poetry including, most recently, *Living at the Monastery*, *Working in the Kitchen*. His poems have also appeared in *Ploughshares*, *North American Review*, and *American Scholar*. He received the Elliot Cades Award for Literature in 2002.

**Anne Silver** received a M.A. from the Instituto de Allende in Mexico as well as a M.S. in psychology. She leads workshops for people living with life-threatening illnesses and works as a forensic handwriting expert in court cases. Her poem, "Needs," was selected as the International Publication Prize Winner in *Atlanta*

*Review's* 2005 International Poetry Competition, and her work has been published in *Death, Be Not Proud Anthology*, the 10th Anniversary Anthology of *Atlanta Review*, and many other notable journals.

**Ezra Stewart-Silver** once threw a key ring at his sister on her birthday and hit her in the eye. She had to end her party early, and the doctor wouldn't let her bounce on the trampoline for months. Ezra feels very badly about this.

**Amanda Stiebel** has been a dishwasher, janitor, model, substitute teacher, caving instructor, high school teacher, telemarketer, adjunct, steelworker, and perpetual student. She is now an adjunct professor living in St. Louis. She spends any free time playing with her husband and brand-new son, petting her numerous animals, and writing. Previous publication credits include *Blue Line*, *The Georgetown Review*, *Poetry Motel*, and *Bellevue*.

**B. E. Stock** holds a B.A. in creative writing from Sarah Lawrence College and studied under E.L. Doctorow, Muriel Rukeyser, Maxine Kumin, and Miller Williams. Her work is archived at the Brooklyn Historical Society as part of the Brooklyn writers' section. She has performed frequently in New York cafes, and in January

2000, she was broadcast on television as part of the poetry show "Earth Is Not On Tape."

**Kai Straumanis** is junior and token Latvian at Coe. She also hates puppets. No, I mean REALLY hates puppets.

**Ann Struthers** is a professor at Coe College.

**Molly Sullivan** is a senior English major who has learned to love poems and soy ice cream.

**Jason Tandon** has been previously published in *The Broken Bridge Review*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Folio: A Literary Journal at American University*, *Eclipse*, *Epicenter*, and *SLAKE*. He has taught pre, middle, and high school; currently, he is teaching composition at the University of New Hampshire. In addition, he is an intern poetry editor at *The Paris Review*.

**Tony Tracy** lives in Urbandale, Iowa, where he teaches as an adjunct at a local community college. His first collection of poetry, *The Christening*, was released in 1997. His work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Puerto del Sol*, *The Son's Ear Poetry Review*, and *Parting Gifts*.

**Kathleen Tyler** lives in Los Angeles where she teaches literature in a public high school. Her work has appeared in *Visions International*, *Xanadu*, *Runes*, *Poetry Motel*, *The Great American Poetry Show*, and *Moondance*.

**Sara Voss** is a freshman at Coe College; she enjoys randomly breaking out in song, specifically children's songs.

**Linda Wojtowick** lives in Lake Oswego, Oregon.

**Nancy Means Wright** lives, teaches, and writes in the environs of Middlebury, Vermont. Her poems have been published in *Bellingham Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and *Green Mountains Review*, as well as in two chapbooks and several anthologies. She is also currently a scholar for the Vermont Humanities Council.

**Clarity Wyland** is a freshman at Coe College.

**Fredrick Zydek** is the poetry editor of *Lone Tree Press*, as well an agricultural entrepreneur, raising soybeans and corn. He has over eight hundred publishing credits, including personal essays, fiction, academic articles, plays, poems, and reviews.



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