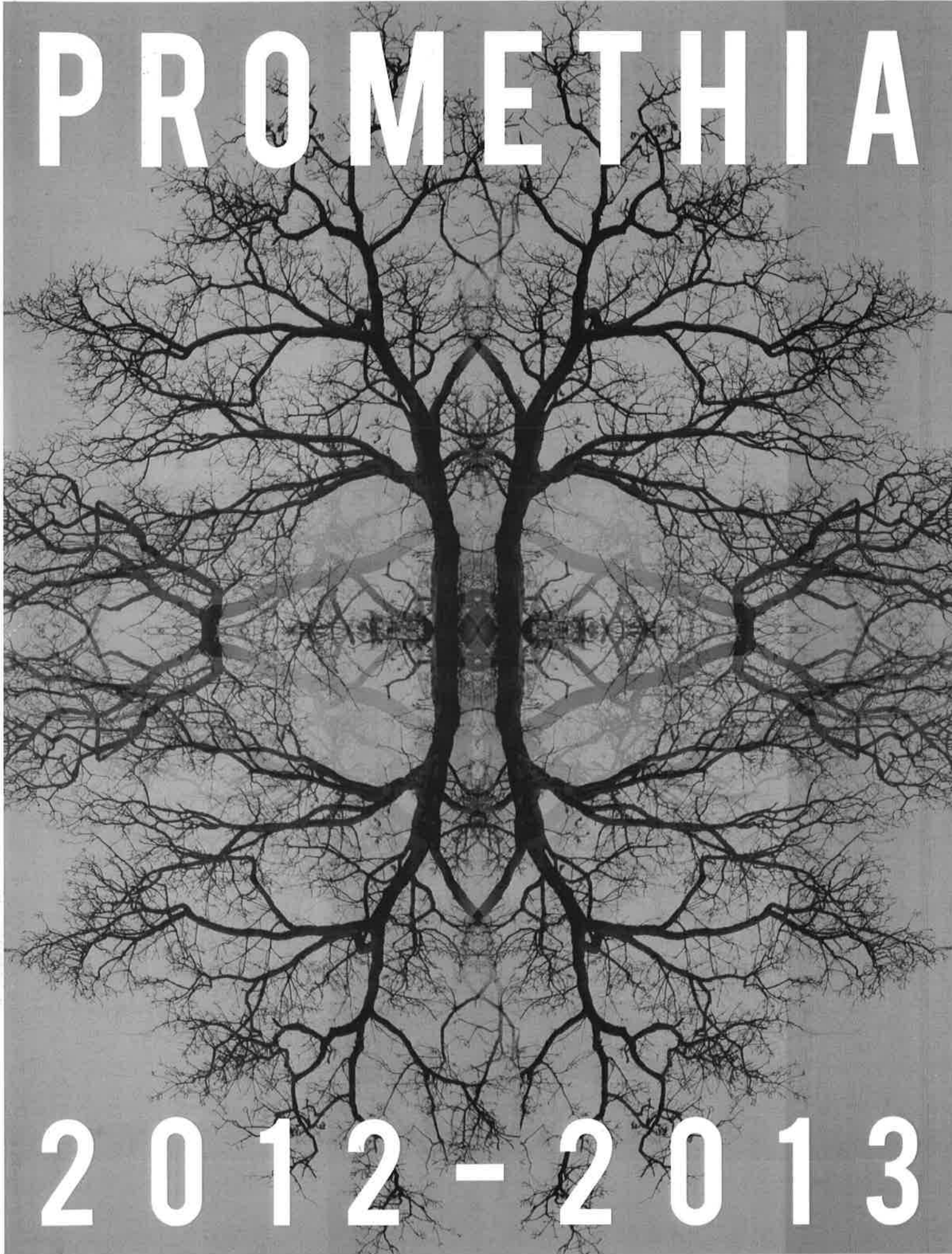


PROMETHIA

2012 - 2013



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A kaleidoscope is a toy containing loose pieces of colored glass, paper, and beads between transparent plates at the far end of the tube. Inclined mirrors enclosed in the tube produce constantly changing patterns by rotating the opposite end of the tube. The view allows you to see the same pieces from multiple perspectives.

Artists, be they painters, sculptors, writers, or photographers, see the world through different eyes. They do not merely look at something—they really see it for what it is and the potential for what it can be. They see things in ways that others cannot—originally they attempt to portray things as no one else has before them. Artists allow us to see the world through the eyes of another.

To all those who contributed to this edition, those accepted and those not, we thank you for allowing us to see the world as you see it. Thank you for being the kaleidoscope that opens our eyes to new perspective and gives us the opportunity, but for a moment, to understand life through your views.

To the audience, as always, we hope you enjoy this labor of love.

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Janna Gyomlai



CHRISTINA JUMPER

SUSPENDED SPACE

BY JUSTIN ALLEN

What is it now
And was it that then?
Is it now what it was
Or was it what it is?

Paralysis comes
Not from surety
Of tangible pain,
But from possibility.

The suspended space
Is where darkness lies
Not in love nor in hate
But in damned uncertainty.

FEAST OF FAMILY

BY LAUREN PERCIVAL

Great Uncle Turkey gobbles away the time
Squawking out humor, dry as his white meat.
This time of year he appears quite crisp
Though we all know what he is stuffed full of

Cousin Ham fills his plate and place.
Dressed up by his father
Injected with honey so sweet it oozes from him
Rubbed up with sugar manners to please those around
To mask his true salty nature underneath

Grandma Potatoes all mashed to creamy perfection,
Dripping with butter and the precise amount of seasoning.
Survived the beatings of life through all its circumstances
Covered in gravy making it all seem so easy

Girlfriend chocolate pie more supreme than the rest
A little out of place and on display for all to see
Tasted out of politeness by the outgoing few
Snubbed by those who know this is not where she belongs

Little baby butter buns, everyone's favorite munch
Teeters awkwardly on each plate
Demanding all the attention as its bed
Always remains vacant, blanket tossed to the side.

Other delicacies and staples adorning
Famed by this fancy feast
On that day gorged with football
And something about thanks
That one time of year
When we all bow our heads for grace.

WITHERING ROSE

BY TIMOTHY WHALEY

I see with my eyes, a lovely rose
With many thorns, I do suppose
I called for it, no, it called to me!
I can't resist, it was meant to be!

I was betwitched, betrothed, oh look how it laid
It seemed that this flower, for me, it was made!
I picked it quite quickly, and kissed it so kindly
I was pierced by a thorn, kissing ever so blindly

In my pain, I cursed, the treasure I'd found
I tossed the poor thing where it was on the ground
Then saddened I cried, then angered I said
"If only this flower and I'd never met!"

Then I turned away vexed and went on my way
As I walked, the poor rose, it had withered away
The petals were scattered, carried off by the wind
At that moment, I realized my terrible sin

I chased after pieces and fragments to find
The petals, the rose, would never be twined
I yelled, "Why, Oh, Why, did you leave me like this?"
But dying, the rose laid there, motionless.

DON'T GO

BY BLAKE PARKER

If you're clad to march and spread God's kingdom with a cross
painted on your shield.

Don't go.

With trash bags filled to clothe a proud people in
Faded Glory Walmart T's.

Don't go.

When your gospel begins on a street corner
with a megaphone.

Don't go.

To spread the American wealth and tracts and candies
that litter the ground and rot babies' teeth.

Don't go.

With a bottle of Germ-X anti-bacterial gel in your pocket
to sanitize after every sinful handshake

Don't go.

To live a martyr for your devotion and zeal
to our Father who art in heaven.

Don't go.

With empty promises that limbs will be replaced, dead sons
returned,
wealth given, and sadness washed away if they call the num-
ber on their screen.

Don't go.

If you are going across the air and sea
to save the world.

Don't go.

To judge the mother in a purple veil, who sacrifices her body,
impaled on a stake
with a label above her and a thorny crown of shame
so that her children can eat.

Don't go.

Going, you will not save the world but you will save your own soul
from the monkey dangling you precariously off of Pride-rock.
And to be light in the dark is not the same as light-skinned
teaching the dark-skinned to pray and reflect white God.

Because your suffering at the hands of God
is not a joy that the "lost" envy.
And the only difference between you and the writhing demoniac
punching himself at the corner
is nice pants.

For your t-shirts will need to be washed, and land and booze,
daughters and wives, will be the payment for the soap.
And there is no fort that you can build, no shrine that you can carve,
no bracelet you can hand out, in which immortal Love will ever choose to
dwell.

But go.

Go ...If you seek the wisdom of different eyes.
...Would run naked as your neighbor to show naked love.
...Must drown in the love of a people who dispense it concentrate.
...Will see yourself through a heart shattered into a million reflecting
mirror shards.
...Can die for the murderous eyes watching from the other side of
the barrel.

...Are willing to wash beautiful, broken, callous, leprous, holy feet.

Go.

SENSE OF FREEDOM

BY LAUREN PERCIVAL

After hearing the dense thud of the arrow striking flesh, I clench my teeth and fight the bout of nausea. I go to retrieve the arrow and clean my kill while the bittersweet smell of her blood fills my nostrils. I gag. It is almost too much to bear. I bend down to remove the arrow, and then it happens. As the slight sticky crimson covers my bare hands, they begin to quiver, the smell so strong that it leaves a sickening copper-like taste at the back of my tongue. It becomes too much. I lean to the side heaving and retching from my very soul, creating my own aroma that is almost as pleasing as the dead carcass next to me.

"You have be a man and learn to do this on your own," said Mican.

"Of course, I do. I just have yet to figure out how to get past the repulsion of it all," I reply, as I look over the skinny, tawny boy before me. He cleans the deer with such ease; it almost makes me ashamed of my reactions to its death.

"Look, you have one of the sharpest shots I know, and I understand that this is far from easy for you, but with as little as you are storing up right now, you and your sister will hardly survive the winter," said Mican. "You need meat to make it through, and you have only killed enough to survive from week to week thus far."

I heave a deep sigh as Mican rises to his feet removing the last traces of sticky crimson from his hands. Although he is a year younger than I, he already stands three inches higher than my meager form of 5'4," and he, only 14 in years, has a face still clean and smooth, while mine carries a slight shadow. "I do not know what else to do. I can only take so much of this."

"The memories still so strong?"

Another deep sigh. "Yes...I still have yet to figure out how to silence them. Stuff like this used to be so easy for me, but now every time my senses catch a whiff of death, I cannot fight the repulsion."

"I will help you as much as I can until the end of this season, but by the end you have to discover how to put an end to the past and deal with this. If not for yourself, then for your sister. She needs someone to be strong for her."

We go our separate ways, he to his mother, and I to my sister. My thoughts returning to Kalien, I realize that he is right. I have to be the man my father raised and find a way to deal with this, or she will not survive the winter. I have barely gathered enough meat for us to make it and not nearly enough hides to make her a new coat for the soon-coming bitter cold and snow. She has grown so much in the past year.

Her ivory skin is almost as pale as the snow itself, save for the cinnamon-sprinkled stars across her nose and cheeks. Her deep red mass that hangs in ringlets crowning her head and cascading down her shoulders, the fiery waterfall ending just below her shoulder blades, bounces with her every step, twist, and twirl. Although her ruby lips always carry a faint smile, the mountain peaks of her lips had not reached so high as to show the double valley dimples in her cheeks that would cause the stars to sparkle in her innocent emerald eyes. He would give anything to see that joy light her face again and see her dance carefree as the little larks that sing in the morning. She deserves better.

As I begin my trek home carrying my burden of meat, I am thankful for its ideal distance from the village. It is just far enough from the small village surrounding the castle of Daligondria that we are not bothered by the local villagers, or the knights, but it is just close enough that I can depart in the mornings to make my trades and be home in time to make supper for Kalien. The kingdom of Daligondria extends from the northern mountain ranges to the southern plains. Home is in the Fallen Forest to the eastern border of the kingdom, where the mountain ranges circle slightly. Further east of the forest in the break between the mountains is the kingdom of Galaria. These two kingdoms have warred against each other longer than I can remember, nor can I remember why. Nor do I care, the quibbles of royalty for land and pride are petty. I will honor the memory of Sir Arian, my father, by never troubling myself in the affairs of the kingdoms. The royals are all diseased with a corruption that should never taint the common people.

The village surrounding the palace is a simple and pleasant place. The villagers are honest people of trades—butchers, farmers, blacksmiths, seamstresses, and the like. It is a place where folks can find a fair bargain to meet their needs. It has always been a place of quaint safety. The people live in peace

now that everything changed. The Fallen Forest is dense and heavily shaded and guards the families that fell to the corruption of the former dark king of Daligondria. The new king overthrew his brother and did his best to clear the land of his predecessor's violence. He hung the knights that fought for the dark king and gave the forest to the few families of fallen knights. The land belongs to us, but land for a life stolen unjustly hardly repays the debts of an empty father's chair.

As I continue my trek through the deep forest, the soft smell of the fallen leaves soothes my anger and draws my thoughts homeward. With each footfall, the slight crackle of the fallen friends sends a fragrant whiff of their whispers. The leaves on the tress are quickly becoming fewer, but for now they flame with many hues of orange, yellow, and red as if challenging the first snow to smother their brilliant blaze. The path winds towards the base of the great mountain range, but just before the path reaches it, I have found the small clearing. The house is of decent size now that it only shelters my sister and me. The straw roof finally patched up for the coming months is a golden crown on top of the wooden body of our home. It is not the great beauty that it once was, but it is enough for the two of us, and it was all that my young body could manage to rebuild in the short time before that first lonely winter, and the summer had been so full with my trying to settle everything and make my trades in the village that I never found time to restore it to its former glory. Perhaps it is for the better; at least the scars on the ground have healed and no longer serve as a reminder.

Approaching the house, I find all is quiet. Good—Kalien needs her rest. I take my catch to the smoke shack to the right of the house to hang the hides and meat to dry. After placing my weapons inside, I hammer the hide to the outside to stretch it and dry it out. Then a heart-wrenching scream fills the air. It comes from the house.

"KADEN!"

It's Kalien! I quickly grab my bow and sprint faster than a buck into the house, throw open the door, expecting the worst, only to find her alone. I relax with a deep breath as I walk over to her.

Kalien sits shrunken into the far corner of the room clenching her quilt in her tiny pale fists. I can barely see her scrunched expression beneath the patchwork.

"Shh, it's alright. I am here," I say, as I pull her into my lap.

"It was awful," she sobs, "and I could not find you anywhere. And then I heard loud banging outside and..."

The last of her words were drowned out in the sobs that she pressed into my chest as her tiny arms cling to me, as if I were life itself.

"I'm here now. The noise was only me hanging the fur for your new winter coat. Did you have a nightmare again?" I asked, stroking her curly hair and holding her tight until the warmth of my body calmed her shudders.

"Yes. I smelled smoke and there was fire everywhere and I couldn't get out. I looked for you to help me out, but I couldn't see you through all the smoke. It was really dark. I heard people breaking things, so I hid under the bed. The smoke was making me cough and they heard me and found me. They grabbed my feet and pulled me out from under the bed. That's when I screamed for you. Why did you not come?"

As I listen to her nightmare, I shove my own further down. She deserves better.

"It was only a bad dream. I will always come for you. I will never allow harm to come to you. I swear it. You understand that do you not?"

She nods her hair against my chest as her cries die down to slight whimpers. I cannot stand to see her like this. Why should one so young and innocent have to know this pain? The sound of her cries causes a single, unwelcomed tear to escape my eye, trailing down my cheek, escaping my whiskers, and falling into her blazing hair. It was not nearly enough to quench those flames.

"You know what? I think we should celebrate tonight. We have a great catch for dinner, and our harvest is ripe."

"Can I wear my dress and put flowers in my hair? And have a fire to stay warm and stay up late under the stars?" she exclaims, her fears all but forgotten.

"Of course."

She pushes away just far enough to look up into my eyes.

"Will you play for me?"

I did not expect this request. I have not played since before everything changed. But with her eyes sparkling with excitement, I cannot refuse her.

"Only if you are going to sing and dance. It would not sound right without my little lark," I reply as I tap her small nose with my finger.

"I think I can do that, but you have to play the ones I know."

"You think you can do that?" I question menacingly as I dance my fingers along her sides.

"Okay, okay!" she manages through her giggles as she kicks and squirms in my arms. Then she gasps. "I have to go pick flowers and hurry to clean up, so I can be ready."

"Well then, you better get busy."

She eats her breakfast quickly, and while she scrambles around the yard finding the perfect flowers for her hair, I go into the forest a few yards to practice shooting, as I do every day. Crudely painted on the big oak tree at the edge of the clearing is my target. This is where my father trained me. First, I begin my training drills with my sword, carefully practicing each parry and strike. The sword is not my ideal weapon. I can use it well enough, but only because of my long hours of practice.

"Again," Sir Arian said so many times I had lost track.

"This is pointless. Why must I do this every day? Can I not simply take one day off? I have no talent with the sword," I groaned.

"Talent has nothing to do with training," Sir Arian said.

"It only serves to fertilize arrogance in a young man. It is determination and discipline that fosters the heart of an hon-

orable knight. Working hard for something is of more value than something that requires little effort."

Daily he ran me through my drills with the sword, and then with the bow.

"If you work hard enough, it will become second nature to you. You can fire in an instant when the situation requires, and never miss. It may not seem important to you now, but when the time comes, you will never regret your training."

I shake my head to clear the conversation that buzzes like a hornets' nest in my mind. I replace my sword and retrieve my bow. I shoot. Arrow after arrow. Arrow after arrow. Arrow after arrow. For hours, I continue to shoot, maneuvering, jumping, diving, never standing still for long. Never missing a shot. Finally, I empty my quiver and retrieve my arrows. Why does the thud in the trunk of a tree not open the grave in the back of my mind, where I have laid my nightmares to rest, and not cause their ghosts to haunt me as a thud in flesh does?

If only I had listened then, I would not have missed the most important shot of my life. It was the shot that would have ended the suffering of those around me and brought vengeance upon my father's murderer. The arrow merely flew past him. I let my emotions get the better of my body. I struggled to keep the shaking from reaching my bow before I released my arrow. I failed him.

The thud echoed above me, as the slight sticky crimson dripped on me. Sir Arian gasped in breath as he sheltered me, pushing me towards my hidden escape. The sickeningly bittersweet smell of his blood filled my nostrils, and I could taste the copper-like flavor on the back of my tongue.

I clench my teeth as a single tear trickles down my light honey cheek. I sniff back the tears, punch the target, and then, shaking my hand, go to start the fire and clean up. Kalien is waiting for our celebration.

We sit under the stars, savoring the last of our venison stew. I retrieve my flute and begin to play. Immediately, a grin breaks across her face. This is the beautiful Kalien that I know. The mountain peaks of her smile reach her eyes, the deep valley dimples pulling at the cinnamon stars on her cheeks. Kalien jumps to her feet and begins dancing around singing louder than all the larks in the morning. Her voice is like that of an angel in my ears. The joy sparkling within her eyes as she dances around the flames, her brilliant curls bouncing with her every step, twist, and twirl sparks the resolve within me to never let harm come to her, to always take care of her. She finally collapses exhausted next to me. She rests her mass of flames on my muscled chest as we lean back gazing at the stars.

"Will you sing to me father's lullaby?" she asks with a yawn.

I begin to sing father's lullaby as she drifts off to sleep. I stroke her silky curls, and her sweet aroma of strawberries and lilac fills my nostrils. Peace overwhelms my senses. I now know what to do.

Morning comes early. I check one last time to make sure that Kalien is sleeping deeply and set off with determination in my steps for the hunt.

I see her in the distance. I tie my auburn locks with a leather strap so that my light honey complexion peaks beneath the tail that hovers just above my shoulders. I fill my ears with cloth and pull a cloth tightly over the bridge of my own star-speckled nose. My thin pale lips hide beneath its worn material. I fix my emerald gaze upon my target, breathe in Sir Arian's scent from the cloth, and release. I hear nothing as my prey drops to her knees and breathes her last. As I approach her to remove my arrow and clean my kill, I don my work gloves. The sticky crimson and copper-like scent never tickles my senses. I clean her, bag her, and make my way home to Kalien. The whiff of death cannot touch me, and the nightmares will forever stay buried in the grave in the back of my conscience. The ghosts will never haunt me again.



ROY

BY JOSHUA LACY

Mumbling, always
Mumbling through the hallways,
Tiled and eggshell, like narrow memories,
Awake and sunlit from the open
Doors of patients' rooms;
The ashen-blue tattoo
Fading on his weather-wrinkled
Forearm.

Black-headed and broad stomach
Shrinking with a secret growing
Louder in his head; a laugh
With no punchline preceding, a laugh
Searching the walls of his
Skull—cold, dry laughter muttered
As incoherent tongues in church,

Perhaps repeating the sounds he heard
Yellow through the halls—
A wood-stained crucifix hung above his bed;
The smell of ammonia
Stuck around for days



FINAL CURTAIN CALL

BY CHRISTINA WILLIAMS

Brother, Brother, can you hear me
beneath this white-walled insanity?
The role of your lifetime, here's your part.
Lights, camera, action you're on
But tell me Tin Man, where is your heart?

Mechanical beats sound the rhythm flowing through rubber veins
Taking plastic breaths restraining you from being one step closer to death
As the thing that supports your life begins to wane.

The last act in this play cannot be rewritten; it's far too late.
The director calls the curtain, the doctors
No longer C. an P. ress R. esuscitate

Actor exits stage right, no more encore again
As the lights go down
At 8:10—Final Curtain Call...

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC'S PRAYER

BY BLAKE PARKER

Give me this day wholly white wonderbread
wholly untouched by human hands,
not tainted by germs or worker's mistake.
Let it be not of this world or worldly
people but cut apart by clean machines.

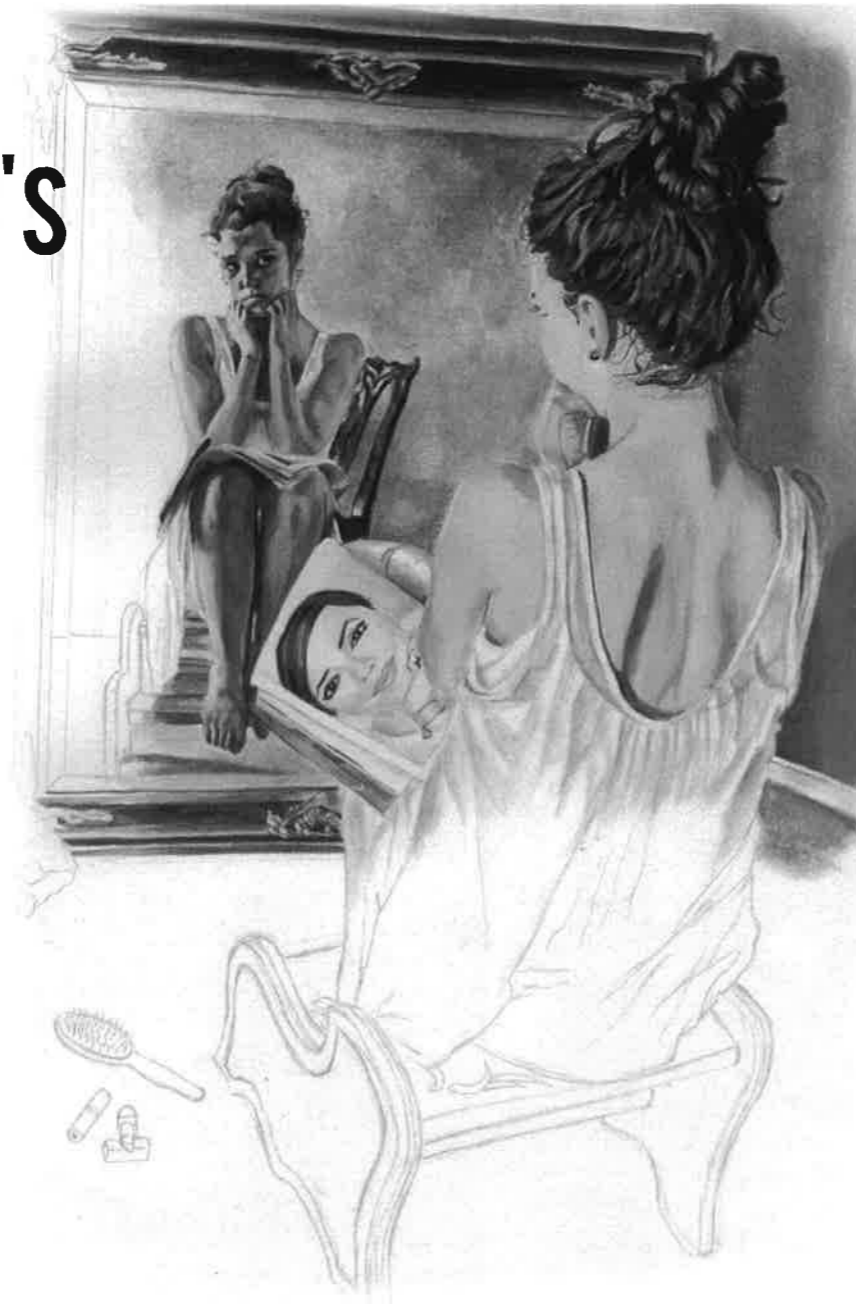
Thy beef be ground, packaged, bought
straight from the factory where they
grow cows like clean vegetables, not
moving, sweating, breeding, excreting
animals. Deliver us from filth.

I want my beef patty well-done, no blood
left unbaked. I want the meat before me
to be PG, you see. I know blood and gore
happen, but that's no reason to let it
happen on the plate before me.

And let my patty be chaste. How can I
enjoy a meal, knowing my burger has
been sexually debased. It's necessary
for birthing, sure, but let other, better cows
do that in private, spoils the patty purity.

Lead us not to unclean bacteria that spoil
my lean cuisine. They say that germs are
necessary but they eat undelivered meat
Don't they know that sterile and clean keep us
safe from the world for which there is no vaccine.

Amen



ABIGAIL DEW

UNSpoken WORDS

BY PATIENCE ANDERSON

Mind blown
Blow my mind
Brains
Blow my brains out
Brains
Explode
Exploding
Exploded
Explosive
Words are explosive
Better yet, words are unspoken
Unspoken words are explosive
They will blow your mind
Blow your brains out
Inside out your mind will turn
Outside in
The thoughts inside of your head turn outward
But a word is never said to be spoken
Unspoken words never get heard
And unsaid thoughts never get discovered
Unspoken words are never understood
For one can not understand what has never been said
Inside out
The words come from outside in
But the pain inside can be seen outward
The inward feelings are hidden
And outward there is a smile
A mile
A smile a mile away from the heart
One that is not genuine but simply a mask
A façade
A fake outward expression to conceal the inside hurt
Inside hurt is hidden like a casket in a graveyard
The heart is buried
Buried hearts don't get hurt but they do get broken
Broken
Broken from being hidden
Broken from being buried
Piled on top
One on the other

Emotion after emotion
The hurt
The joy
The pain
The lies
The tears you cry
Is all on your heart
Heart
Hearts beat
Beat for life
Beat for love
It beats to be noticed
It beats for a hug
It beats for trust and sincerity
It beats for a simple moment of clarity
It beats for you
It beats for me
It beats for the longing to be set free
Free
Free these thoughts in my mind
Free these words on my heart
Free this pain in my head cause I don't know where to start
Or what to say
But I know we need to talk

MOM, PLEASE DRIVE FASTER

BY TIMOTHY REGAN

Hormones are running, and I am running late. It is 7:02. I won't be at the theater for another ten minutes. I'm nervous. The movie has already started. Well, the previews are already playing, and I wish my mom could at least drive the speed limit! Doesn't she realize that this is the most important night of my life? I hope Becky is late too. Maybe she is still fixing her beautiful, strawberry blonde hair. I think about calling her to let her know I'm going to be late, but I can't seem to pick up my brand new silver Razor cell phone and make the call. I cower at the thought of it. This was how my first date started. I would like to say that things got better, we ended up having a romantic evening, as much as two 15 year old immature teens can, and because things went so well, we went on another date. No, no, — and I don't think she ever talked to me again.

Becky was a goddess. If Aphrodite were the goddess of beauty, Becky was the goddess of sexuality, everything a 15 year-old teenage boy could dream of. My dream became reality. On a note handed to me from Goddess herself, in the most elegant calligraphy these two eyes have ever seen, were the words, "Saturday night. You pick the movie. You pick the time." At that moment I became the Alpha boy at Platt High. This was my chance.

I picked the time, and I was late. Why can't Mom drive faster? Cardinal sin number 1. Not only was I late, but as we got into the line to purchase our tickets, I desperately said to myself, probably looking as frantic as a five year old on a sugar high, "Should I have my mom drive back and bring me my wallet? No, by the time she gets here the movie will be over. Should I ask someone to borrow money, maybe the rich guy with the leather jacket? No, that's bizarre and probably won't work." Then out of nowhere, Goddess looked at me and said the most appalling and pitiable two words any boy could hear from a young girl during a first date: "I'll pay." I just committed cardinal sin number two. I took a long, deep breath and thought to myself that surely this night cannot get any worse.

Napoleon Dynamite — really? God, I'm an idiot! Please tell me why I chose that mind-numbing movie. Yes, it is entertaining and even comical, but it is not a movie worthy of a first date. What kind of pathetic first impression did I intend to make? After all, I had dreams of spending the rest of the 10th grade with her. I could have picked *The Notebook*, which started 25 minutes later, but at least there are elements of love and romance in it, but instead we watched the former and occasionally exchanged awkward looks at each other and petty attempts at laughter to pass the time. At one point, I was thinking about counting shoulders, but the interaction between Napoleon and Kipp thwarted any attempt at that.

Finally, the movie ended. Sadly, that was the best part of the night. However, the worst was yet to come. I called my mom and told her that the movie was over and she can some get me. Mom said, "I'll be there in ten. Bye, Honey." I knew that meant 25. For ten minutes, Goddess and I sat at a table and exchanged few words, but too many awkward glances at each other. Good thing for my Razor. How a new piece of technology can pacify the awkwardness! As Goddess' parents arrived, I went to hug her and knocked the medium Diet Coke out of her hands, which splashed onto the floor and on her new Adidas shoes. My nightmare had become reality.

Goddess left (I will now refer to her by her as only Becky), and I was left alone to marinate in my failures. I thought, "13 minutes left, maybe 15. Then, I can leave this wretched place and never come back. Mom, please drive faster."

EUCHARIST EXPRESSWAY

BY GINGER GREGORY

Before the rising sun the
Moonlight and I become one
Wondrous wafer,
True body of dawn.
I bite your buttery brim
As you float above me,
Sip the cran-grape chalice of sky.
Dusk is no different—
Even as the car with one headlight
Chases me like a one-eyed pirate,
A fresh Eucharist descends
from the oven of Heaven
And into my heart.
Oh, the joy of cruising along
Eucharist Expressway—
Why exit now?
The merge has just begun.

TALKING TO YOU FROM THE GRAVE

*A Dramatic Poetic Sermonette to the Church in Honor of
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

BY MINISTER TIMOTHY BUTLER

In 1963 I wrote you a letter from a Birmingham jail
Saying the Negro is your brother but now I've got
more to tell
Written on newspapers behind prison bars
Cause to me that's all they gave
Oh but this time I'm talking to you from the grave

This country was born with a great birth defect
And that birth defect was slavery
And we must not forget this history
But remember history, to learn from history, not to repeat
history
For God has always cared for the suffering and oppressed
Like the Children of Israel He freed from Pharaoh's press
Unto the Promised Land led by Moses to be saved
Are you listening to me from this grave?

An agitator to peace I was called
An insurrectionist – troublemaker they said
But I came in the Name of Love
And that Name was Jesus
Preaching we must learn to live together as brothers and
sisters
Lest we perish together as hate-filled fools
And like yesterday that message is still relevant today
Emanating from my grave

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere
And justice too long delayed is justice denied
I don't determine what is right or wrong by taking a Gallop
poll of the majority opinion
For a true leader is not a searcher of consensus but a molder
of consensus and otherwise his leadership is a lie
So I carried God's truth through the fires of segregation
To be God's priest to the desolation of many generations
My passing mourned for years still feeding the flock through
my tears
Crying from the still grave

So, why am I crying?

I've looked over the balcony of Heaven
Down to planet Earth
I've seen your iPods
And other technological advances that show your worth
But at a time when a gunman can enter a school
To extinguish twenty innocent little lives there are no rules
And while society weeps Sunday remains the most segregated
day of the week
I proclaim this to you from this dark grave

But love children is the key
To unlock the door to a unified, ultimate reality
Where the sleeping giant the Church rises to her place
To impact the culture fully for the cause of Christ today
How much longer will you prejudice what you see?
Of your brethren based only on what you see
Afraid of anything that's different and doesn't look or act
like you
I'm shouting the truth from this here grave!

One day we will learn that the heart can never be totally right
When the head is totally wrong
And only when the head and heart – intelligence and
goodness—come together
Shall man rise to fulfill his true nature and get along
To come together to stand above
And you must do this children; you've been called to love
Love your neighbor as your own self
I speak life from this grave

And as you walk hand in hand
Marching up the King's highway
You've got a reward waiting on you children
If you run with patience this race
In that great getting up morning
When the trump of God calls our names
We're gonna get up once and for all
Cause there won't be no mo' graves

We're going up to Mount Zion
To be with King Jesus forevermore
We're gonna lay down our sword and shield
And study war no more
We going to shout all around God's throne
Every believer, every color, every tongue, every denomination
all equal the same
Shouting Glory Hallelujah!
Glory Hallelujah!

I CANNOT CREATE YOU

BY EVELINA LUNDQVIST

I hold my breath
Wait for this heartbreak to vanish
But it has nowhere to go

Will my lips ever bear the roar
Of terrible fear or terrific happiness?

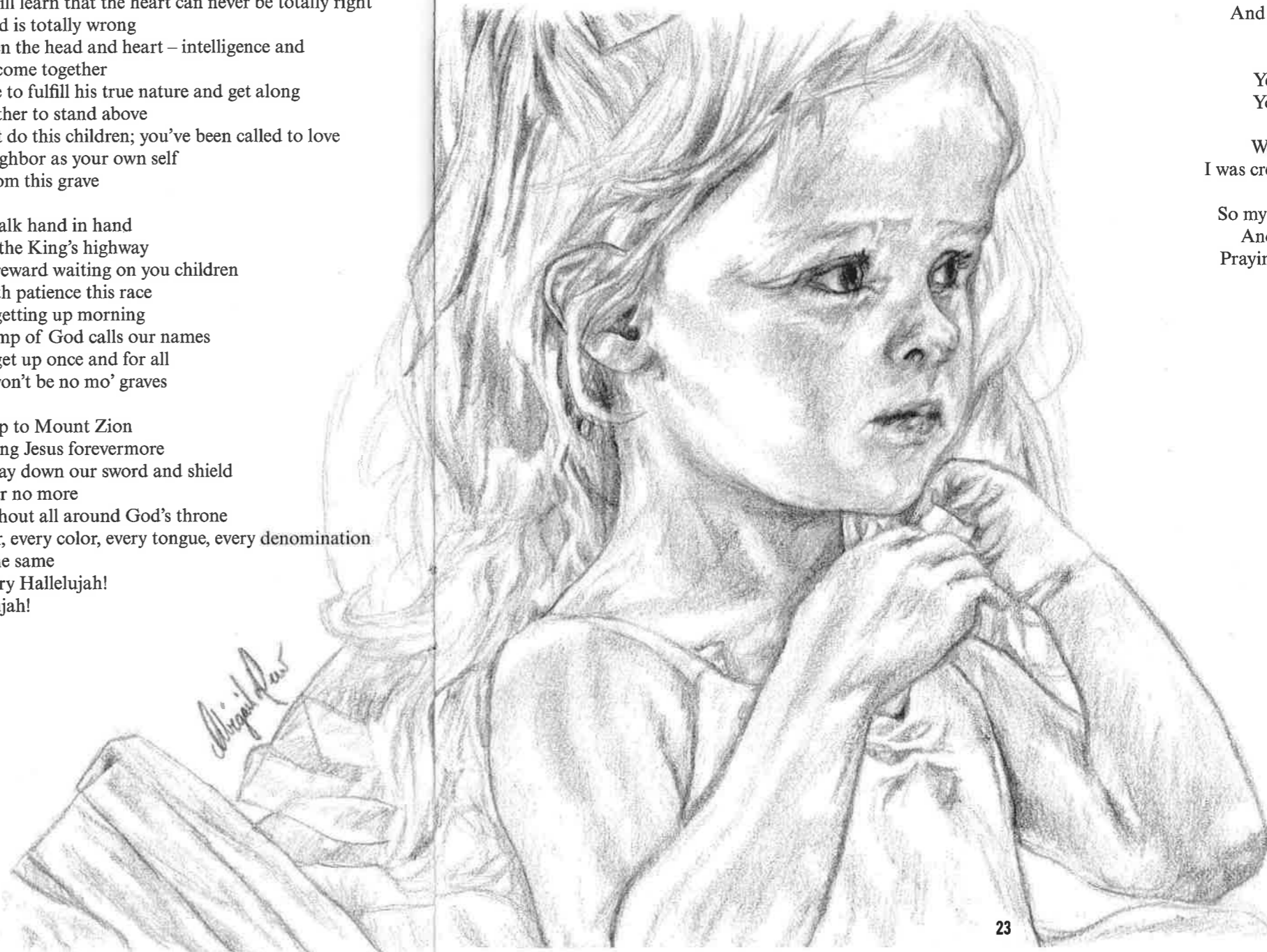
My dear, sweet child
That I should bear you,
That I should sing you to sleep

But I'm thrown into reality
And perfection breaks and shatters

2556 days for a chance to feel
Your soft skin against my breast
Your tiny fingers clenching mine

What is pain in the sight of loss?
I was created a mother without a child

So my once courageous heart surges,
And I'm down on my knees again
Praying to a God that can create her



TIME'S FORGETFUL TOUCH

BY LAUREN PERCIVAL

Honor of tarnished gold
Telling the tale of accomplishment.
Fondness forever felt as my
Frail fingers run down their

Well

Worn

Path.

Marks of accolade begin to fade,
Once vibrant velvet of cherry red, now
A dull, muted orange like a rusty gate.
The sun's brilliant rays drain out decadence
And the snow of time
Buries, covers, and intermingles among the
Once fuzzy flaming blades of grass.
The crazed cheers dissipate
Like the final rifle shots
"Honorable!"
"Spectacular!"
"Unforgettable!"
"A hero!"
But as the clock's hands spin unrelentingly,
I, and the men who fell before me,
Are forgotten by all, save

Father Time's

Tender

Touch.

GOD-KILLER

BY BLAKE PARKER

Have you ever killed a god?
Watched them fall to the musky
earth beneath you and leave a
crater.

Do you know what happens?
When you kill God, the grass and
trees crawl upon His breast and
Face.

Have you ever breathed in the darkness?
As you watched the blood pour out of
His side? It smells like water,
Metallic.

But did you know that you do not die?
In the water that drowns you when you kill
God. No, you live and you watch the water
pour.

Down the mountain in beautiful streams
that feed the hurt, the thirsty, the diseased. Like
icy balm on their souls are His blood and your
tears.

What is left for this mountain maker, God
killer, human savior, guilty weeper? He
descends into a box with his clerical collar to
confess.

HEART

BY GINGER GREGORY

Double-scoop of sweetness
Atop an ice-cream cone,
Highway of veins
With few exit lanes.
Two small circles joined
to an upside-down triangle—
Bound by glue gun crossfire
of twisted emotions.

Yet we lick each every drop,
We keep on driving,
We cut and paste our hearts,
Pumping bloody love
onto the painting of life.

WALKING IN BEAUTY

BY EVELINA LUNDQVIST

Oh my darlings
Oh my loves
I once was enthralled by your very existence

But your loveliness is past
Like a flower in long-forgotten snow

Faerie feasts sprinkled with faerie dust
And butterfly kisses on naked fingers
Golden sunsets on star spangled skies

These are my loves
These are my darlings

Raindrops resting on soft rose petals
The rough male kiss of blankets
And rich, vivid light through church windows

My dear loves
My dear darlings

Soft-spoken words
Feathery wings of cherub and seraphim
A familiar fragrance lingering in folds of clothing

Why do you have to desert me
And turn to dust with my bones?

You change, break and fade
But when I wake I shall make new loves
And more darlings of strangers.

MURDER IN YOUR TONGUE

BY SARAH DINWIDDIE

This is what I hear
When out of that heart
You speak:

Like grown men of an African bush tribe
Clip-slipping their feet in the hot dust
Around a broke-fire
White dark dirt shoves up
Out of the roots of the earth and
Races up on the heels of black men and over the high-topped feather headdresses of them
And rising up and out the sound of an overwhelming shout of challenge and victory and defeat
As the sound rages out of their muscle-y burnt bodies and their heart beats
Step-step faster
Out—
Run
Out—
Shout
Out—
Live

And then you are
The one who ran ahead
To shove his spear first into the lions mouth
But was torn in half by its jaws.

This is what I hear
When out of that heart
You speak:

Death to mother
Your sister
Your brother
To your lover

Like every other somebody out there
Is a lion that needs to be taken
Down by a man
Like you.

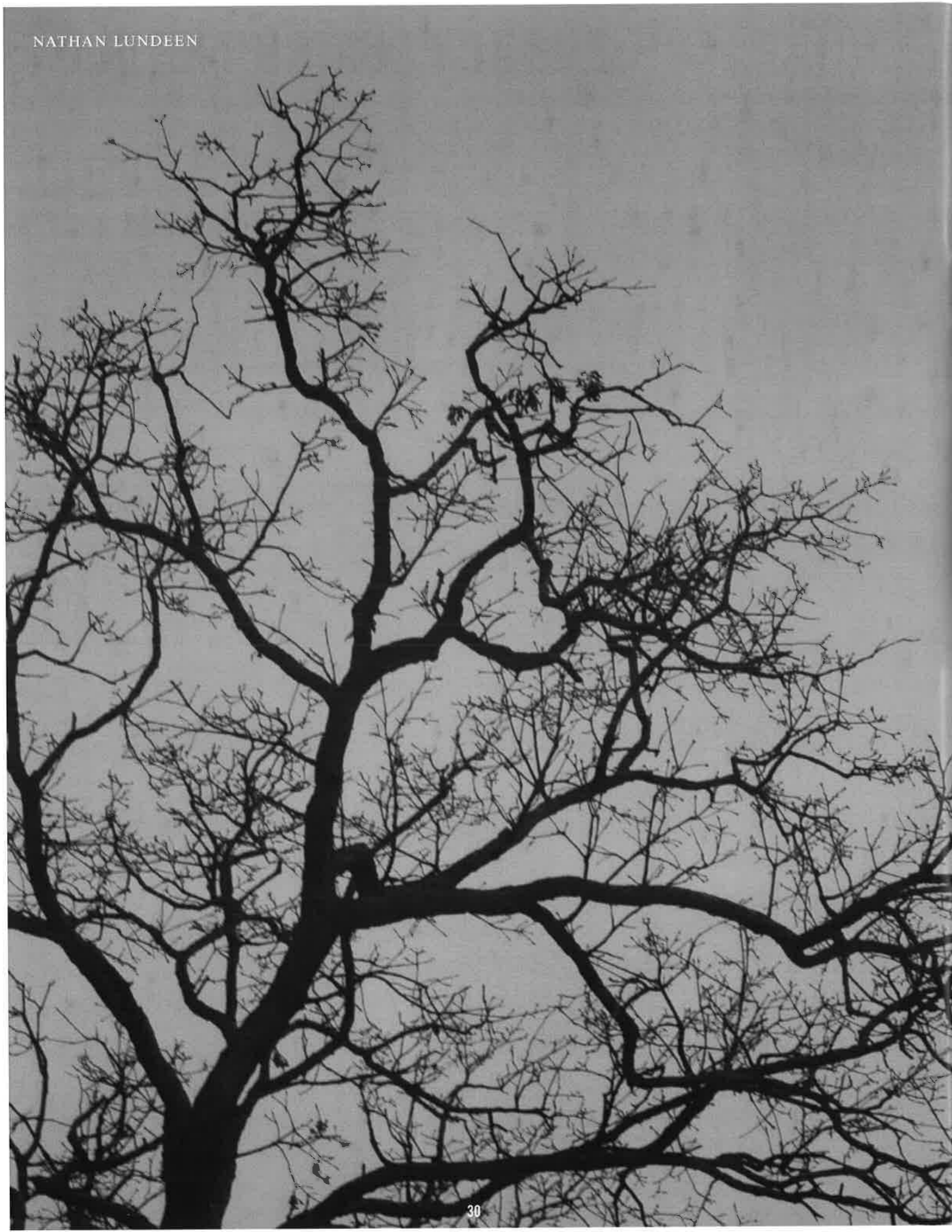
FEEDING THE DOGS

BY JOSHUA LACY

The path is worn from
Routine, a brown snake winding
Its way along brick and wood; you can see it
Even in the shadow of the house and
Cutting over to follow the fence
Toward the kennel, with soft moonlight
A ways off.

Carrying the water and portion of kibble,
The young boy hurries his feet, kicking up
Small dust storms with black-silk movements
In his periphery

Dumping the contents into their bowl, he gives a
Click Click Click with the side of his mouth
And makes his way back to the light in the storm-door
Window with a haste of darkness at his heels,
Holding his breath until the
Door is locked at his back



OBSOLETE

BY KEITH GOGAN

That oak out by the sidewalk
You know, the one with branches
Like the floors of a building
Knows the pleasures of a young boy's
Sticky hands
Grasping for more elevation up to
A perch from which to see the pirate ship down the street
Or that advancing army ignoring the powerless stop sign

That oak out by the sidewalk also knows
Solitude
Even on this perfect summer day
When no sticky hands grip its gray circumferences
When no knee leaks bright red from a scrape with its furrowed skin
Its only companion is a southwest breeze
That a few yards away, in the house, ruffles the curtains
Behind which sits a young boy
Sticky hands on a smooth plastic joystick
Eyes darting like a prolonged ricochet
Across the glowing screen
His back turned to that woody tower
Out by the sidewalk



BLAZING TRAILS AND BUTTERY FOOTPRINTS

BY JANNA GYOMLAI

For the past week, I have been receiving jokes from my sister Jennifer via text message. They weren't just any jokes; no, these were elephant jokes. Every day, I was gifted with a few short messages that had me waiting for the inevitable "knock, knock" openers. I don't know why she suddenly decided to bless me with jokes like "What do you find between an elephant's toes," but I found myself laughing at these silly and achingly simplistic gags. And the answer to that first gem is apparently slow pygmies, which is better than my answer — mud and poop.

More jokes followed the tragedy of the pygmies. Day Two went something like this:

Jen: How do you know an elephant has been in your fridge?

Me: Trunk nose smudges everywhere?

Jen: Footprints in the butter

Jen: How do you know there have been two elephants in your fridge?

Me: The butter is smashed into bits?

Jen: Two sets of tracks in the butter

Jen: How do you know there have been three elephants in your fridge?

Me: My butter is missing?

Jen: The door won't close.

My imagination also decided to join in the fun and visions of elephants trampling the contents of my refrigerator played through my mind as I read Jennifer's texts. These elephants, however, were not the gargantuan, thick-skinned dusty beasts from the Discovery Channel or the local zoo. No, my elephants were much smaller — think Barbie's dream horse size — and somewhat daintier (as dainty as an elephant can be, regardless of size). They were more like Care Bear cousins than mighty giants of the African plains.

I saw them, small and pretty, going after my butter like a pig to mud and I almost expected to find tiny tracks in my container of Country Crock the next morning. I also imagined the set of petite wooden elephants on my bookshelf, which were a gift to my husband and actually from Africa,

taking a midnight excursion to my fridge. Like a family trip to the swimming pool, the two bigger elephants watched as the smaller "babies" flounced and pranced about in my buttery spread without a care in the world.

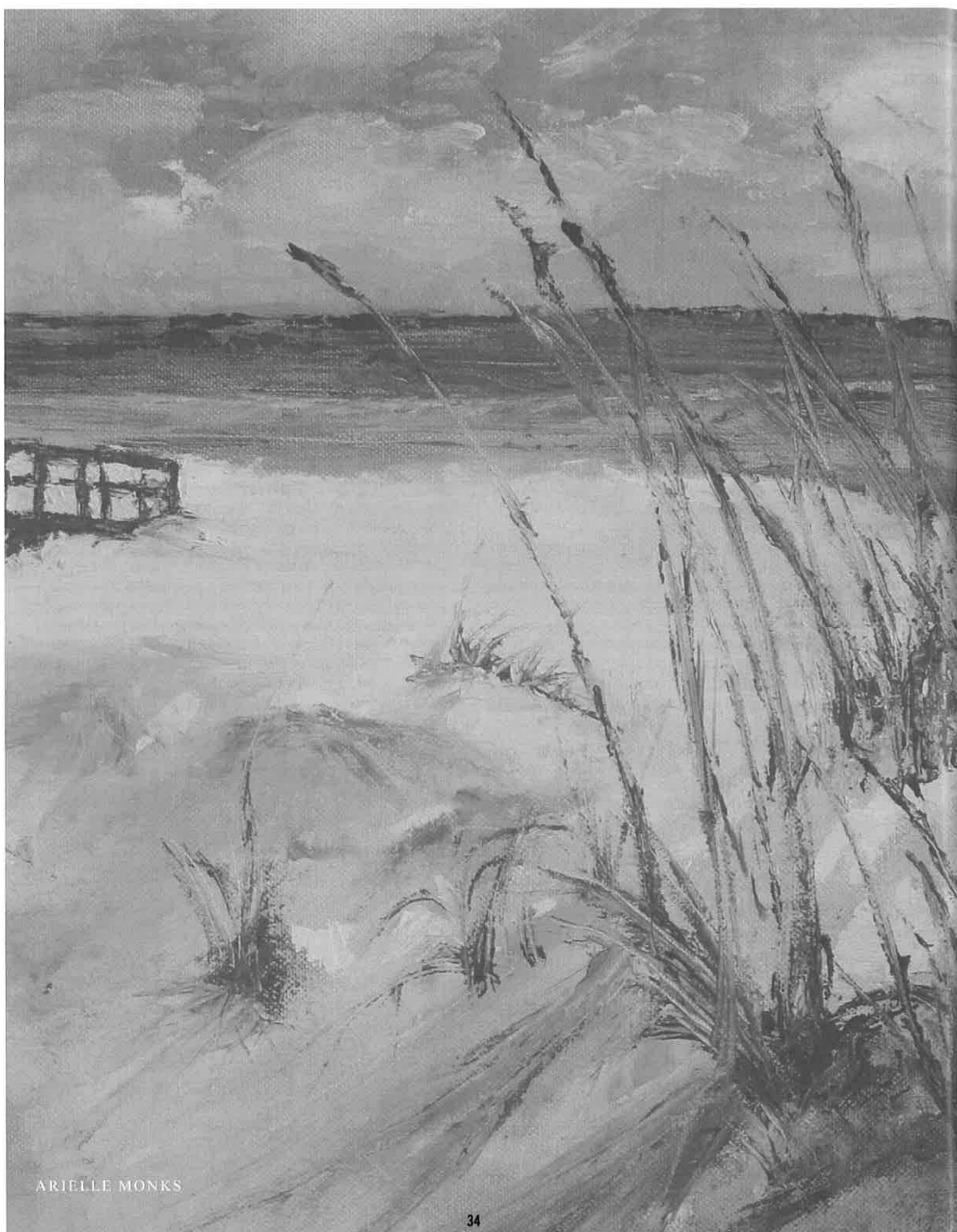
The three elephants in the last joke are obviously bigger, as they were impeding the door from closing. But they were still cute, all wrestling for the best seat nearest the grape jelly. Or perhaps they were afraid of the dark and propped the door open to keep the light on. Either way, my milk is going to sour if they don't leave. But truthfully, I did not mind the pachyderm invasion one bit, even with my stomped butter and carton of bad milk. In fact, I looked forward to the digitized wind chime that announced the arrival of a new message.

These jokes (and there are many more) are certainly not the funniest gag material I have ever heard, so why are they so endearing to me? The answer is simple enough — because they are from my sister. Communication from Jennifer is not rare, but certainly infrequent. She is, in my opinion, the epitome of busy. She is a full-time teacher, drama director, school sports coach (just pick a sport), school activities coordinator, church drama coordinator, sound booth director, and also part-time sales associate at Banana Republic. Jennifer is a walking metaphor of three elephants in a fridge — far too much crammed into one life.

We rarely talk on the phone because of her schedule, so our most common avenue of communication is text message. I can always tell when my sister has some downtime — my phone flutters to life, jangling like the Wall Street trading floor on an up day. I try to squeeze in as much conversation as possible because I know this window of opportunity could vanish as quickly as it appeared. The beginning of the elephant joke run also marked the beginning of a several day succession of messages from my sister, an event both unique and delightful.

If I were to have a hero, it would be Jennifer (although clearly not for her choice in jokes). She inspired me to follow my passion when, over a decade before I would return to college, she chose to major in Theater Arts at Baylor University. Many a well-intended person suggested she switch to something more practical and useful.

"What can you do with a Theater Arts degree?" they would ask. Jennifer simply smiled and shrugged off the criticism and continued on with her dream. When I decided to be a Writing major, I thought of Jennifer and how she pursued her gift in spite of what other people thought. I thought of her when well-intended people suggested I be an English Literature major instead, and asked the same question that my sister faced. What can I do with a Writing degree? The same thing I can do with a Theater Arts degree — live my dream, and tell a few elephant jokes along the way.

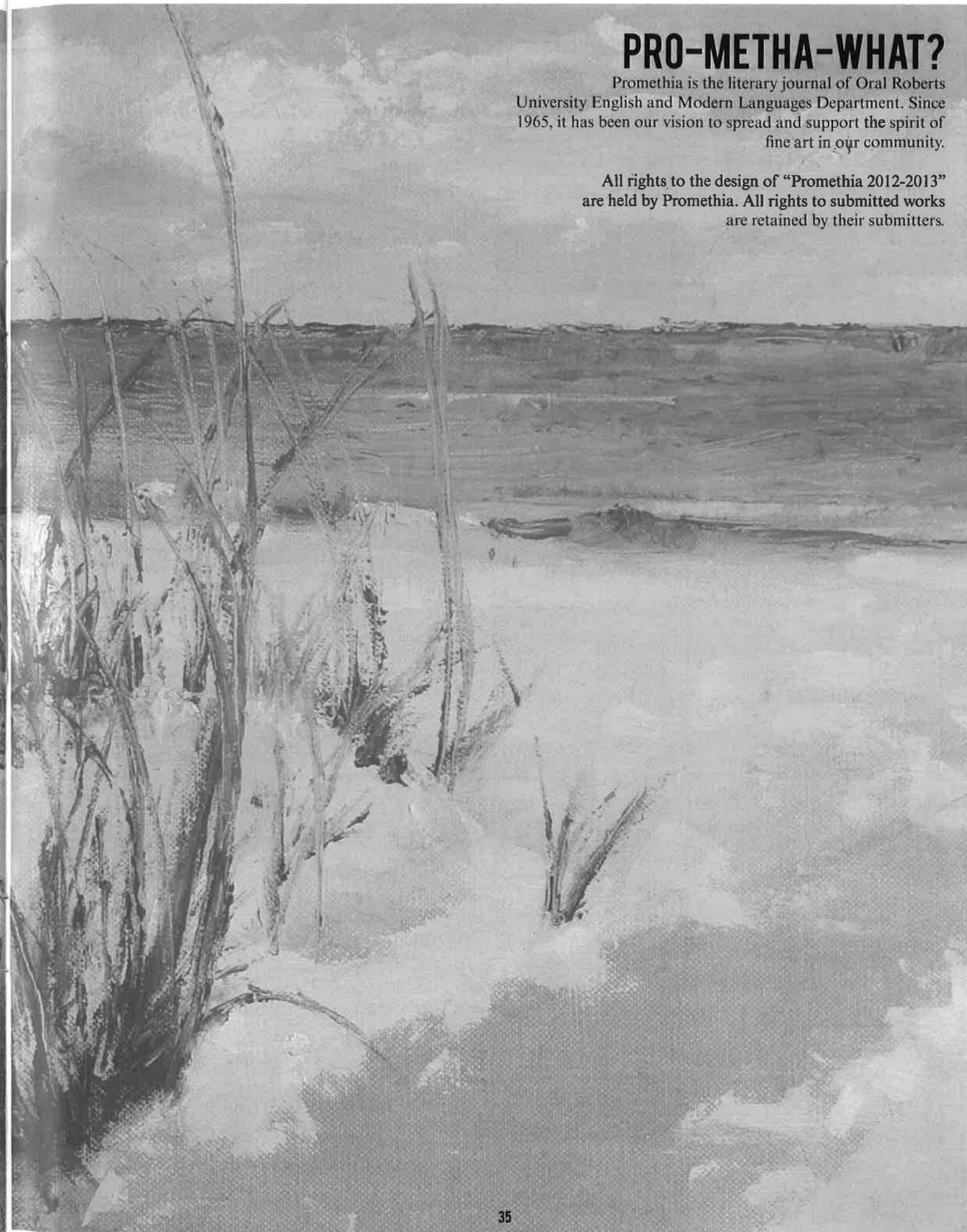


ARIELLE MONKS

PRO-METHA-WHAT?

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