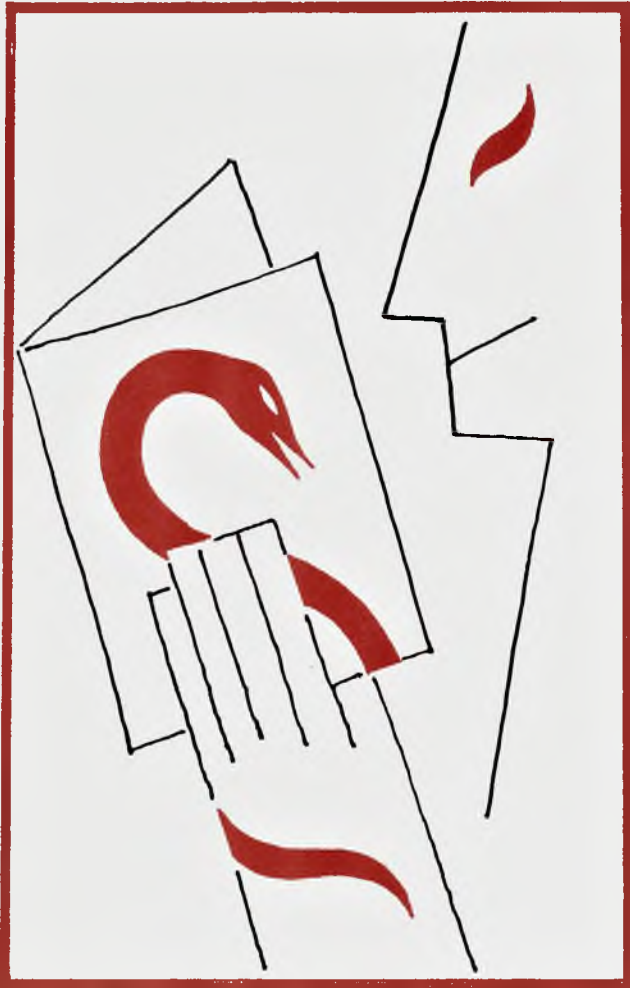


***serpentine 15***  
***1995-96***



The College of Staten Island



# *serpentine 15*

## *1995-96*

Editors: Brian Belulovich  
Scott Cacciamani  
Tom Henry  
Dara Loren Troshane

Faculty Advisor: Morty Schiff

Cover and Illustrations: Paul Covington

Additional Illustrations: Tom Henry

**ser-pen-tine** - A mineral or rock, essentially a hydrous magnesium silicate,  $H_3Mg_3Si_2O_{10}$ , usually dull green, often with mottled appearance—prominent in the geology of Staten Island

**Published with the help of funds provided by  
The College of Staten Island Student Government  
from Student Activities fees**

**copyright © 1996, Serpentine**

## A NOTE AND AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The randy chimp randomly tossing the baton in that film two thousand and one eons ago provides a memorable image of continuity and evolution, and reminds us, however tenuous the connection, that our own little literary publication has itself partaken in a space odyssey of sorts, with all the attendant comings and goings, entrances and exits (e.g., the Bard's felicitous stage direction, "Exit, pursued by a bear"), and highs and lows. And all, all in the flux of time. But a true Joycean mild stone is at hand with the issue in hand, to wit: The buck's been passed, as 'twere, from a situation of vigilant faculty advisement to one of equally vigilant (and capable) student control. We mean that with this issue *Serpentine* emerges as a bona fide CSI student institution, it being the raison d'être publication of the duly constituted Sepentine Club of the College of Staten Island. The club, in the here and now, has a president, secretary, and treasurer — what strange names for a talented group of writers and poets who have committed themselves to keeping lit alive in the Willowbrook precincts! But that's the real world for you, the world that poetry is all the same a part of. *Serpentine's* now their baby, our baby — yes, sir! and by the way — and we wish it all the best in its new modulation. And what better time — that immutable word *time* kicking us ever in the groin with its pitiless message of mutability — than now to proffer an invitation to all the budding writers out there to join the club, this semester or next, and keep the slimy green snake slithering for many more incarnations to come.

*Serpentine's* new condition would not have been possible without the support, again, moral and financial, of Student Government, which, in its insistence on legitimization, is largely responsible for the magazine's metamorphosis. We extend our very grateful thanks for its assistance. And still, when all is done and said, it all comes down to the works of words — the words, words, words on the pages before you that our contributors have sweetly labored over for your pleasure and edification. Thanks for caring.

The Editors

# Contents

Jeanie Kwak	7.	Geese
	7.	(Something has just died somewhere)
	9.	(Watching you smoke)
Tom Henry	10.	Spanish Olives
	11.	Remembering Geniveve
	12.	Where am I Going, When Will I Wake
Stacy Feeney	13.	Self-Portrait
	15.	Spy
	16.	Rain
Scott Cacciamani	17.	Six Hundred and Forty Two Separate Obsessions
	20.	Early First Morning
Ebcnezer Awolesi	21.	Sweet Mother
	21.	Entrapped By You
Paul Ha	22.	The Kool-Aid Man
Brad Simon	23.	Crystal Dreams
	24.	Flower Child
John Lohse	25.	NO
John P. Ryan	26.	Who's To Judge?
Xhenete Cucaj	27.	To - - - -
	28.	After-thought
Jacqueline Schaming	29.	My Moonlight
Michael J. Pollaci	30.	Thank You Sharon Olds
	31.	A Letter for Grandma
	32.	Streams (Apologies to W.C.W.)
Augustine Maricheau	33.	Never Alone My Son
Kevin Popovits	34.	Pool of Deception
	35.	Miss Beautiful Sincerity
Kenneth Van der Neut	36.	Thanksgiving
Matthew Spano	37.	Granite
	38.	(Running through a meadow)
Silvana Guadagnoli	39.	All I Want
	40.	Metaphor
Lance Knapp	40.	Pay Attention
Juan A. Falla	41.	Fragments of Night
Tatayana Bor	41.	(For those few cherished moments)
	42.	(The Stagger Out of Bed)

<b>Jennifer Alper</b>	43.	<b>Imagination Poem</b>
<b>Karla Gumbs</b>	44.	<b>Coffee House</b>
	45.	<b>A Pipe's Nobility</b>
<b>Thomas D'Angelo</b>	47.	<b>(Forever sitting in my graveyard)</b>
<b>Sal DiBenedetto</b>	48.	<b>Sling Shot</b>
<b>Ralph Figaro</b>	49.	<b>My Fault</b>
	51.	<b>Souvenir</b>
<b>Martin Calpin</b>	52.	<b>Hands Represent Your Voice</b>
<b>Claudine Palo</b>	53.	<b>Inside the Square</b>
	54.	<b>(Don't know what happened)</b>
<b>Andrew Winters</b>	55.	<b>Amsterdamméd</b>
	55.	<b>Did you not blink Neon - Naked - Sex - Girls?</b>
	56.	<b>A Fly</b>
<b>g. kessler</b>	57.	<b>(i'll bet it all)</b>
	57.	<b>(the play's the thing in which)</b>
<b>James Burt</b>	58.	<b>The Situation</b>
<b>Vicky Fivorante</b>	59.	<b>(Clock on the wall)</b>
<b>Ashieka Hall</b>	59.	<b>The Slumber Garden in the Ghetto</b>
<b>Vullnet Kolari</b>	60.	<b>The Burial Cave</b>
<b>Dawn Fasano</b>	61.	<b>The Chosen One</b>
<b>Otto Zizak</b>	62.	<b>(My mind is a cliché)</b>
	64.	<b>The Third Line</b>
	65.	<b>Closet Down the Hall</b>
		<b>(The Only Thing Left)</b>
<b>Douglas J. Root</b>	66.	<b>Paving Stones</b>
<b>Dara Lorén Troshane</b>	70.	<b>Hospital Solarium</b>
	71.	<b>Stained Voices</b>
	73.	<b>(...and a hundred years ago)</b>





## Geese

By the field  
of hard runner granite  
geese lay wet noodles  
of dung  
that glisten  
porous spectral  
and grease the track  
of sweat and rubber sole  
like jelly does  
when squeezed from a  
sugary hole

Jeanie Kwak  
(co-winning poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)

## (Something has just died somewhere)

Something has just died somewhere  
and you went searching for what it was  
A note, maybe, from a loved one.  
It was never meant to be said  
but even if burned  
nothing could purify its words.

The tree outside your door  
has always uttered a foreign tongue  
to your childish ear.  
But now, as golden wavering summers pass  
and fall gently prods you into being  
you come to know its perennial message  
like a child knows  
when there is a death in the household.

You fold your hands. You think of geese  
flying towards Canada and frozen great lakes.  
There was a time, in your familiar room, with  
all its well known corners and drawers  
you were content to know only of things.  
But now, it is searching.

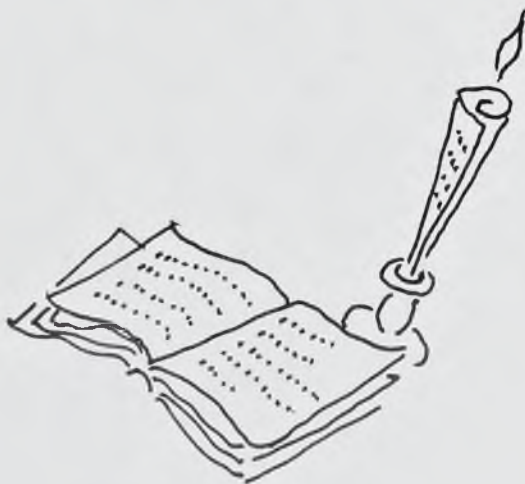
Everyday you think: a person, a hot meal, a cool drink  
is what you were wanting but no  
it has departed into winter like the wild geese  
when they know it is no longer their place.  
(All things full become empty once more)

Your bones have known to become heavy and arrogant  
They know where they have come and where they  
will go.

Like all things unconditional,  
they do not ask for acceptance no approval.  
Only we question  
the missing link, the unrequited union  
of things lasting and things lost.

Maybe in searching  
you will begin to know  
like a child  
familiar yet foreign  
and things will bear all the  
mystery and knowledge  
of sudden, ripening fruit.

Jeanie Kwak  
(co-winning poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)



## (Watching you smoke)

Watching you smoke  
the leaves wither and grab their coats  
the sky turns a sallow cheek  
and geraniums drain color like a  
coiled ear.  
The children in the playground have gone inside.  
They watch from their windows  
as you pass, a grey specter  
in an interrupted moment.  
Your scent carries burning forests  
dry whittled wood that seethes.  
Even now, as my eyeballs  
retreat in their warm, oily beds  
I can see the tops of cilia  
flame like Christmas tree burning  
Your lungs have become haunted  
and vessels shrivel inside their walls  
Your mouth inhabits the fleeting,  
sweet, narcotic scent  
of unrequited breathing.

Jeanie Kwak  
(co-winning poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)



## Spanish Olives

When I look into the pupils  
Of Spanish olives,  
My mind brings me back  
To the time they were an award  
For raking away  
Granny's fallen leaves.

She knew how much I adored them.  
To me, they looked like  
Autumn flowers that were  
Struggling to bloom,  
Precious hearts, sleeping  
In a grassy tomb, and  
When I squeezed them,  
They always greeted me  
With a kiss.

Over olives, we would talk about  
My silent fears and  
Granny's golden years.  
Tales of her fallen soldier  
Always flew in my ear.

To Granny, the olives were  
Not so special.  
She just tossed them  
Like they were pebbles  
Into an ocean of vodka--  
Then she jumped in and swam  
Until she drowned.

Since that day,  
Not a month has gone by  
That I haven't shaken up a jar  
Of Spanish olives and  
Watched those sweet little  
Fish eyes swim around.

Tom Henry  
(honorable mention poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)

## Remembering Geniveve

When I first met you,  
You reminded me of a  
Limbless pigeon,  
Waddling around in puddles  
Of tears in the city's gutters.  
When I first held you  
Close to my heart,  
I could feel your pain—  
Piercing through my pores  
Like injections and racing with  
The blood in my veins.

Swimming against currents  
As thick as tar,  
We raised up our arms  
Like abandoned scarecrows  
In a desolate ocean.  
Our still and fearful stares  
Travelled through your past  
Like a reckless drunken driver.  
As your family of abusive apparitions  
Began to drown like a tornado  
With the absence of wind.

As you pounded your limbs  
Down upon the earth,  
I followed the sounds  
Of your steps,  
As the echoes became  
stronger and Stronger,  
Breaking down walls  
Of Abandonment, Abuse, Insanity,  
and Isolation.

Swimming through the sewers  
And stripping away the rats,  
You found the key  
To lock the hidden door  
From your past.  
As you opened the gate  
To enter the present age of your life,  
I chiselled away the concrete  
From your statue like shell  
And embraced you  
I could still faintly hear

That little child—  
Echoing a scream,  
Crumbling down mountains  
To dust.

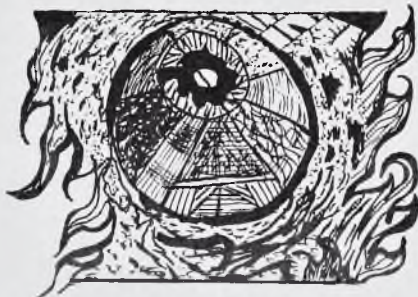
Fearing that deep down  
Inside  
You were still like that  
Limbless pigeon,  
I imagined myself throwing you  
High up into the  
Sky,  
As I watched you  
fly above  
The grayest clouds  
These eyes have ever seen.

Tom Henry

## Where am I Going, When Will I Wake

My mind drifts off like a ferocious storm--towards a place I've yet to inhabit.  
The sea--it is gray like stress and still like a naked canvas.  
Sharp hills stretch out to the sun like pyramids.  
The soil--it is hardened like clay--cracked like a mirror, awaiting raindrops to connect--  
the empty spaces.  
Unleveled steps sense the earth's thirst.  
The sun shoots down a spotlight through the clouds onto a child running through a  
field of ash with the last remaining husk of corn.  
Observers look on, as they slowly fade away like melting photographs.  
A strange man dressed like an eagle stands on top of a mountain, stretching out his  
arms like a conductor of nature, trying to heal the pain.

Tom Henry



## Self Portrait

Ivory snow  
White skin  
Dirty  
Streaked black with melted mascara  
Thick as mud

I was left alone  
To cry  
As I have always been  
Alone  
Because I was raised to be strong  
German women  
Are built to last

Dreams  
Broken in pieces  
To fit  
In my old leather handbag  
Wrinkled with age  
The way my skin will look  
When wisdom leaves its mark  
Across my face

A wide eyed child  
Left alone  
To chase the monsters back to hell  
The woman who called herself Mother  
My Mother  
Had a date every afternoon  
With a television romance

I was a mother, too  
For a few months  
I left that white room  
With a blanket of anesthesia  
Around my shoulders  
Alone  
Twin rattles  
Thrown in the dumpster  
Waiting to be taken away

I've met the Father of lies  
Slept with him  
Upon his bed of sin  
Covered in sheets

Of pure gold  
Sometimes, he called me Red  
Or Miss Curvy Hips  
He never asked me my name  
Or what my real hair color was

A quarter of a century gone by  
And finally  
I can feel the warm sun upon my face  
And know  
That it was all meant to be  
To make me strong  
To keep me strong

Don't call me Red  
I have a name  
I am a woman  
A strong woman  
A survivor

Stacy Feeney





## Spy

We lay in bed  
Covered in each others scent  
You  
Wrapped in daydreams  
I  
Cloaked in your robe of green  
Magic  
Curling fingers around your hair  
Bewitched  
As ghosts  
Appear  
And dance  
Change colors  
Sing their cryptic lullaby  
Before fading into  
Mist  
Watering a single lily  
In the glazed  
Marble vase  
Eyes heavy  
I reach out to catch  
A wave of velvet  
Sleep  
You turn away  
My astral crawls our of  
My slumbering flesh  
I sit upon the sill  
Of the open window  
To watch you  
When you think you're alone  
You rise slowly  
And make love  
To the shadow  
Of a girl  
It is not me

Stacy Feeney

## Rain

The rain fell from the sky  
Bathing the world in majesty  
Baptizing an innocent child  
I remember the fury  
The pounding rain  
Beating  
On the roof  
Herds of Elephants stomping  
Robbers looking for entrance  
Into my  
Sanctuary  
"Angels are dancing up there"  
Were the words my Grandmother used  
She always wore a smile  
Big yellow boots jumping  
In puddles by the curb

Chasing away the rainbows  
That disapproving stare  
From the old lady  
Forever imprinted in my mind  
She would never understand  
She would never see the diamonds  
Falling from the sky  
Clinging to the rose petals  
Waiting to shine in the sun  
She would sit at her window  
Face heavy with sadness  
As she watched me run wild  
Collecting magic  
In an old  
Empty jar

Stacy Feeney



## Six Hundred And Forty Two Separate Obsessions

How sweet the peace must feel  
How little effort there  
But I'm afraid the burden lives on  
Beyond the factory where it was built  
Beyond the giant who built it

Beyond the cancer  
Beyond an unforgiving tiptoe dance  
A dance of willow strength  
Beyond the scent of an invisible sea  
Beyond the visible sound and moon

Beyond rowboats laid on burlap sand  
Beyond ring lit alligator pools  
Beyond the stare of full mouth dribbles  
Beyond the house of high education  
Beyond it's hushed hallway spaceship

Beyond the acoustics, the left over attitudes  
Beyond the wolves and the sufferers  
Beyond the clicks and football stars  
Beyond the makeup queens and full feelers  
Beyond all that is not beyond

Beyond dagger staffs and filtered devotion  
Beyond ancient digressions  
Beyond a line crawling straight  
Beyond pegs and peepers  
Beyond all who howl upon a hollow stage

Beyond the ships yearning to be salvaged  
Beyond a specific vagueness  
Beyond a point worth polishing  
Beyond the deep of a marble cold forest  
Beyond a maple wagon that's pulled through it

Beyond porcelain cannons and almighty conversions  
Beyond dialogs and epilogues  
Beyond what's not unnatural  
Beyond what's not an act  
Beyond the gifts of woman, the givers of life

Beyond a dead mans diary  
Beyond his collected dreams  
Beyond the groans of fences twisting in the wind  
Beyond the lyrics of earth and stone  
Beyond a paragraph written in regret

Beyond carbon storms blowing my hurricane lamp shut  
Beyond my attempts to light time and time again  
Beyond mirrors and silhouettes  
Beyond traces and places in time  
Beyond a walker, a runner, a crawler in a field

Beyond sleepers and warriors who worry with all the  
Energy they can afford  
Beyond a snake in the rain who thrusts his head to and  
Fro with violence and vigor  
Beyond the limitations that are placed on the distance he travels

Beyond a remake to a lost parish  
Beyond a sequel to a city  
Beyond playful prowlers and pretenders  
Beyond fog flattened jungle fields  
Beyond piston and starters wind

Beyond the cry of martyrs  
Beyond the lights fighting to escape  
Beyond pompous non forgivers gathering in the sound of  
Sick owls hooting their presence upon the night  
Beyond the ears of poets ringing in the tone of torment  
Beyond the odd pieces crawling through the puzzle in search  
Of a free space  
Beyond the crickets singing in color  
Beyond all who is deaf when they sing  
Beyond all who is color blind

Beyond futility's effort  
Beyond defiance dew, it covers the landscape when all  
Awake to make love in sunlight  
Beyond an allusive salvation  
Beyond a star changing the space it fills in the sky

Beyond grapes drying on the deck  
Until raisons, until nothing  
Until rain falls slow to stain this written page  
Beyond this canvas  
Beyond the entanglements of wisdom's chains

Beyond wind curled river beds  
Beyond dusted breath and swallowed eyes  
Beyond the morning of birth  
Beyond the linkboys who light the way  
Beyond the color of the kingfisher

Beyond doorways and shadows  
Beyond the land of fables were perspectives are not easy  
Beyond the skullfish that wash up and gather an audience  
On preglass pillows  
Beyond their sonic moan

Beyond the water lungs, the transposers, the transcendent  
Beyond the equal circle makers, the open bleeders  
Beyond the feeders of the pregnant, teachers of the young  
Beyond the lessons and the balance  
Beyond the shuttlecock that flies over his net

Beyond the shylocks and deliverers  
Beyond all judgment and understanding  
Beyond compassion and contempt  
Beyond the taste of money  
Beyond the color of taste

Beyond the place of silver, the valley of the liars  
Beyond the cry of madness! madness! which the bridges  
Will translate in their own language as they lay in pieces  
Beyond those bridges that would have taken us home  
Beyond

Scott Cacciamani



## Early First Morning

Setting wet  
She draws close the urge  
The pornographic thought enters like a line of poetry  
The graphic image grows hard  
Naked wanting bodies  
Long tongue touchers  
The players who come by day,  
Afternoon, night, starry eyed  
Gapping in it's great grasp  
This wanting becomes a soul  
The reading and rereading of the erotic story  
Adam, Eve, Snake  
The knowledge questers  
The sinful awakeners  
The new living desires  
The morning glory flowers  
Setting in the first morning  
In the first field of flowers  
Each laying it's peddle against the next  
Rubbing slow, soft, silent

Scott Cacciamani



## Sweet Mother

Oh gentle mother,  
sweet and tender are your touches;  
your soothing words caresses my soul.  
Precious is the odor,  
the odor from your hard work;  
how can I forget your hidden tears,  
your sleepless nights your pain.

Sweet mother,  
how sweet is the nectar;  
the nectar from your breast,  
the magic in your eyes,  
the spells you chant when I cry;  
the battles you fight when I'm sick,  
the patience that flows from you;  
your love like the cactus of Arizona.

Ebenezer Awolesi

## Entrapped By You

Thought, you miserable thought,  
Ever so often you torment me;  
Ever waging war on my mind.  
Slowly you creep upon me  
Like a spider it's prey.  
Subdued by your intoxicating venom,  
Soon I shall break free from you;  
Liberated by my spirit.

Ebenezer Awolesi



## The Kool-Aid Man

I was four years old  
And it was my first time  
On a plane  
In New York  
In America

I stood next to the luggage merry-go-round  
Reaching up for Grandma's wilted hand  
I was trying to be good  
Yet I yearned for just one spin

My eyes fell upon a pot-bellied man  
He wore a candy apple red shirt  
And a grin wider than his butterfly collar  
"Looks like...  
...The Kool-Aid man."

My stomach churned  
Was it the airplane food, butterflies  
Or  
A sixth sense

Because I knew  
I was a hundred days old  
When he last held me  
But I knew  
That was Daddy

Paul Ha





## Crystal Dreams

The game that I've witnessed through these aged  
and confused eyes,  
has gone far enough.  
Watching lost souls,  
such as your own,  
lie your second soul over your skin,  
disguised from reality.  
Dancing to forget the confusion the realm of reality has  
to offer,  
hiding in a fairy tale land forgetting what lies in the  
hopeless future that awaits you.  
I see myself becoming you.  
Disguised despair camouflaged beneath a brightly colored  
shirt,  
and a confused grin.  
Living care free in a candyland world filled with purple  
moons,  
and rotted shrooms.  
I lay here,  
under a sheet of black magic,  
trying to make sense out of such a twisted bizarre  
mental state.  
Maybe if I had crystal,  
everything would be fine.  
If I had crystal,  
I could see what awaits me and put an end to all the  
confusion that a mind such as my own has never felt  
before.  
As I look through my glassy,  
bloodshot eyes,  
I only see a play,  
where you are the cannibalistic princess of the  
underground,  
not realizing the pain,  
the agony you've put me through.  
I keep tripping,  
and tripping,  
and tripping over the flesh that pours through my  
fingertips,  
draining me of all that is pure,  
of all that you once loved about you,  
and all that you once loved about me.

Our long and helpless journey of self discovery,  
and the search for the perfect soul has finally come to  
an end,  
I guess it's time to say goodbye,  
to my one and only friend.

Brad Simon

## The Flower Child

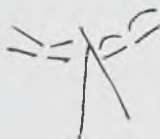
No longer can I look up in the sky,  
and speak to the heavens.  
No longer can I taste the morning rain,  
trickle down my virgin lips.  
I live beneath the world,  
where things are simple.  
I'm the soul that pushes the roses to bloom,  
I am the root of the flower that stems from the earth,  
The seed,  
that angrily bursts into the world.  
Heaven has been kind to me,  
Keeping the dark moist world of which I dwell,  
full of life.

Trying to save the one shred of sanity that remains in  
whatever I am.

My thoughts are the only thing I know I have,  
and the glow around these thoughts giving me the ability  
to take part in the creation of life.

I died young,  
tasting the petals of the rose lie on my tongue  
I was born to create what I love,  
To create what grows inside of me.  
I am the flower child,  
who shares his life with everyone.  
I turn death into beauty,  
and soak my petals with the tears of those who mourn you  
I am the flower child.

Brad Simon



# NO

## A LEAKING FLOWER

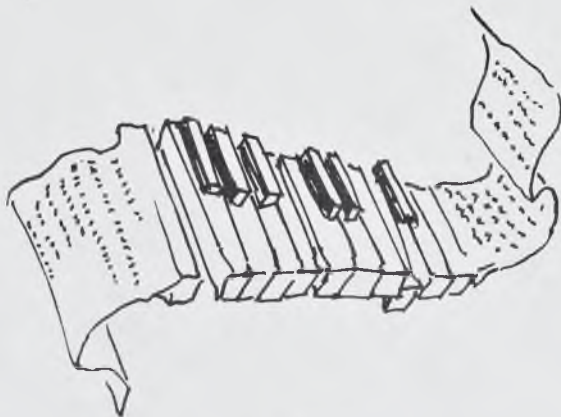
THE RUNNING COLOR DRIPS OFF A BURNT HEART  
COLORLESS ITS BEAUTY IS FROZEN  
BUT THE STALE AROMA OF STOLEN MEMORIES  
HANGS IN THE FACE OF PERCEPTION  
WHILE TEARS ATTEMPT TO RESTORE WHAT ONCE WAS  
WHICH CAN NEVER HOLD A PRINCE ON HIS PERCH

A FAINT MELODY CREEPS BEHIND THE SHADOWS  
WHICH STRANGLES THE EYES OF SUCH DECEPTION  
THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE, JUST UNANSWERED PRAYERS  
AND A COUPLE OF FLAVORLESS DREAMS  
THAT BECOME PINS IN THE BOTTOMS OF MY FEET

A LOOSE ROPE FOR A CURE THAT PRESSURES FORTH  
A PATH WITH MANY CURVES AND DEAD ENDS  
THAT STRAIGHTENS OUT ANY SMILE  
WHILE TAKING LONG HARD LOOKS INTO  
THE EMPTINESS OF IMAGERY THAT ARE EXHIBITED  
IN THE HALLWAYS OF PAINLESS HURT

A PERFECT END FOR THE BEGGER WHO WANTED NOTHING MORE  
THAN A DROPLET OF HAPPINESS THAT ALWAYS SEEMS  
TO GET WASHED UP ON THE SHORES OF FOREVER  
STORMY OCEANS  
WHO LOST HIS PLACE IN THE LINE THAT WOULD HAVE LED HIM  
TO THE ROOM OF MANY DOORS

JOHN LOHSE



## Who's To Judge

Do you think  
there is a link  
between life on earth  
and a rebirth,  
Is God for real  
or is this just a deal  
between us and Him  
we're the tonic  
He's the gin  
He's the metal  
we're the time  
Sin will get us Hell  
Is He to tell  
How we live  
How much do we give  
Can we rob and steal  
without having to kneel  
and live a great life  
without the sacrifice.

John P. Ryan



## To ———

Had I rested my head last night  
as early as ten?  
And only through the vulnerability of dreams  
was the faceless man  
aroused as my eyelids fell into mist

As I descended the stairs  
into the awkward self  
Did the morning dew arise from a tile floor  
For beyond my touch  
sat the faceless man adorned by a face

I could not look past his present form  
if only to hide my stare  
And as his hand extended to my own  
wrapped in civil pleasantries  
holding reassurance that he was as real as the rain

Again I lay submerged in uncertain thought  
he was like a bird  
who flew past my sights never to be seen  
deluding its path  
For like a dream departed at day break  
he too was gone

Xhenete Cucaj



## After-thought

Did the sunflower  
refuse its birth  
as it was buried  
near my burial?

When the crow  
perched upon my tombstone,  
his smoothed dark feathers  
disturbed the wind,  
does his sharp melody  
ring through Hades  
coercing my return

Is the one who  
shared mother's womb  
two years after my birth  
mourning harmoniously,  
begging the rain cease?

Has night fall rebelled,  
casting the burning suns upon the Earth  
Infinitely drying once fertile soils?

Are ancient ghosts  
erasing their existence  
from stone within Egyptian  
tomb?

Life is not so precious  
nor death so glorious!

Xhenele Cucaj



## My Moonlight

Moonlight  
Downhill  
All of me  
Today--who unfortunately sentimental

Moonlight  
wonderful is the mind  
You--coasting the moments  
The one who tries

Purest  
Like stardust  
Stranger instead  
Musical sounds recaptured

Never--becomes self  
And away you go  
Fans of Moonlight--strictly leave  
Hurt

Pushing away the sun  
Blue skies hide such wrong  
Simplicity becomes you  
Red haired one

He guides on  
like lovely borderlines  
Journeys across well worn sands  
Of such styles has the day

To center the heart  
As sounds of love  
Moonlight Magic  
has its way

Wether it was--or is  
He has stayed  
Few love him--I always  
Stand at his borderlines glimmer

Jacqueline Schaming

## Thank You Sharon Olds

I remember that glass now—  
trapped for so many years  
within the silence  
of childhood memories—  
warm,  
heavy,  
dotted with cloudy balls of  
his thick, tired red blood  
swirling endlessly in a soupy  
mixture of lung and throat.  
Some clinging to the sides,  
clawing their way for the rim  
to escape the smothering  
foam of disease.

I remember his cough now—  
warm,  
heavy,  
fragrant with rotted meat.  
Flesh thickened drips of  
drooled blood dripping from  
his chin as he gasped  
for the air to fuel his  
next deposit to the glass.

I remember his handkerchief now—  
warm,  
heavy,  
painted with a gooey mixture  
of thick red blood,  
mucous and flesh,  
wiped from his chin  
by skeletal remains  
of powerful, large hands.

I remember that glass now—  
forgotten  
on the table beside his bed;  
for a day;  
maybe two—  
cold,  
light,  
spotted beneath its porridge skin  
with thick red dots of blood



still, unmoving.  
I remember that glass now—  
how my heart thumped  
echoing the silence  
as its contents splashed  
into the toilet bowl—  
swimming into a rainbow of color.

Michael J. Pollaci  
(honorable mention poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)

## **A Letter for Grandma**

When Grandad laid  
his head and slept,  
his heart warm but still,  
I never understood  
why you wept  
atop that lonely hill.

Now on that knoll  
I stand alone,  
Red Rose a single stem,  
to lie beside  
those lives in stone  
reminding me of gems.

And when I can no longer  
author my own book  
no chance to change or alter  
no chance at one more look  
I promise I shall join you  
I promise I will come  
I promise I shall hold you  
I promise we will be one.

Michael J. Pollaci  
(honorable mention poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)

## Streams (apologies to W.C.W.)

So much depends up-  
on  
A drop of rain  
Gent(e)ly swandiving  
Onto the face of a  
Cool,  
Smoothed,  
Shale summit stone.

Michael J. Pollaci  
(honorable mention poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)



## NEVER ALONE MY SON

You are not alone, my son,  
my spirit follows you along the broad and narrow path of life.  
It follows you as the dawn follows the daylight and nestles in the  
bosom of the early morning sunlight kissed  
by a twinkle from the leaves of morning dewdrops.  
You are not alone, my child,  
God follows you,  
may success follow you.  
Your mother's love follows you too.  
For sure, I hope, my son, you'll walk  
away from the dark and desolate  
alleys near the devil's door.  
For sure, I hope, you'll practice  
righteousness, honesty, love, and dignity.  
Love what you do for life.  
If you do, it will carry you through.  
Most of all, love life,  
for if you do, you'll love the world around you too.  
My thoughts follow you along the Toronto boulevard  
going down to Runnymede and Don Mills south.  
A saddened face, etched in my memory  
of the once, childlike silhouette, with  
eyes peering from behind the cold, frosted  
window, of the downtown train, into a busy mechanical world  
Sometimes as if confused,  
sometimes as if unhappy,  
sometimes with never-ending smiles.  
If only you hadn't changed,  
if only I hadn't changed  
Oh! how I wished you'd never change.  
Change, my son - we all must change.

Augustine Maricheau

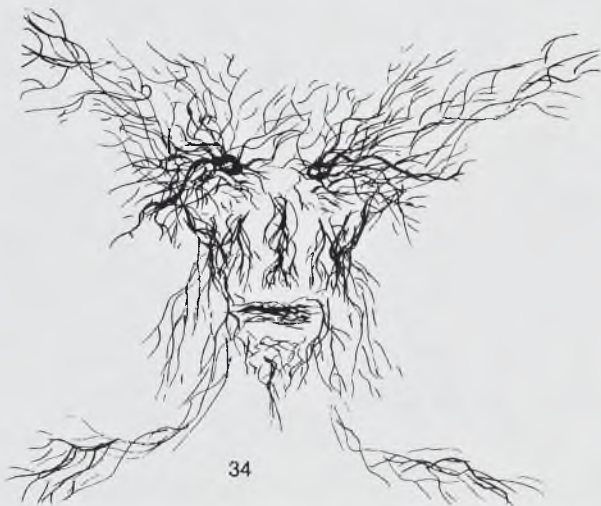


## Pool of Deception

They said they held  
the 'knowledge of truth'  
that our lives depended upon,  
friendly as wanted  
—showing Me the way.  
What do I have to do  
to receive this graceful gift...  
throw away the world  
and gather at bottoms end.  
As this algae-green water  
rises over my head  
I now feel that old self  
is left for dead.  
A sense of having  
what others do not know  
brings relief and happiness  
for a time that will be.

This bliss known to I  
has come to an end!  
The deception withers through ears  
while my eyes see the lies  
anger holds back the tears  
self-stupidity asks the -- How's and why's.  
I no longer succumb  
to the lie within the pool,  
only memories that bring about  
a smile  
and feelings to laugh away.

Kevin Popovits



## Miss Beautiful Sincerity

We meet at night  
to the sounds of excitement,  
ready to dance.  
Beautiful toned skin  
highlighted her face;  
as she spoke in intelligent manner.  
It was a short night  
enjoyed to its limits;  
then we hugged and said our good bye's.  
The night was not to  
come to an end,  
when she came back with a smile  
and a kiss.  
Her voice spoke sweet words  
as we shopped for presents  
the day after;  
seeing that big teddy bear  
wrapped around her arms  
was a lovely image to remember.  
We spent some more time  
later on  
-talking, eating, and finding out about each other,  
coming to a sense  
that I just met Miss Beautiful Sincerity.

Kevin Popovits



# Thanksgiving

A mother cries out in desperation.  
Pleading. Begging, as she rips the lungs out from her child.  
i've been screaming for twenty years  
for twenty years i've been wrong.  
The hearsay, your morals being installed in me.  
Bring me your guilt and call it conscience.  
Your God has denied you and now you deny me.  
Blame has no place in thought yet my finger it points to you;  
the preacher of a broken word and me, holder of a desolate  
pen, with the future of a still born child.

You held my ears while they cursed.  
Scared me into the closet when they were falling,  
in love.  
and kept me home when they learned.

Today who is the teacher?  
Today you need a strong son.  
Today you want a bigger family.  
But today i can't think and i can't breathe.  
Today i can't deal with rejection.  
Today i crawled into a ball and cried.

And your husband and your other children, My brothers and  
sisters, they comfort you  
you'll get over me.  
The boy who wanted more  
some how left home for less.  
and some people ponder why.

Kenneth Van der Neut



## Granite

Tears of remembered pain  
Laughs of forgotten triumph  
Shared smiles of a buried past

Tongue of youth quick as the fox  
Enigmas bouncing in my head; one moment, one tongue  
Disturbingly misunderstood  
Brick by brick, built the tomb  
Dark, peaceful; mother's womb

Sunlight fades as the bricks begin to rise  
Obscurity in the closing eyes  
Progression of regression  
As the rain beats upon my face  
Pools of rime slipping through the cracks  
Hysterical shadows turn their backs.

Tears skip across the water  
Ringlets of power never to be tapped  
Chase the fox to slow him down  
Snails on the path only catch dirt between their teeth

Maze of memories; paintings on the wall  
Water colors paint the portrait of the past  
The bottle, the rattle, the motherly hug turned to ash  
Embowered by bricks chiseled from hearts of stone.

Matthew Spano



## (Running through a meadow)

Running through a meadow  
Dancing on the cool grass  
Smelling the fresh air  
Leaving the pain  
A million thoughts  
A million hopes  
No walls  
No definitions  
The sun shining  
The trees blowing  
Birds singing  
A small blue bird sings a song so sweet  
A song indefinite  
A song with no title  
A song with no words  
A song not classified  
Stare at the bird and he stops  
A pause of worry  
He knows they will take his song  
He knows they will take his song the way they took his tree  
He lands upon a shoulder  
He knows there is no danger in the heart  
Beyond the skin  
Beyond the eyes  
Beneath muscle and bone  
Beneath the blood  
There is soul  
There is nothing more than the  
Meadow  
The trees  
The breeze  
The dancing of mother nature  
He knows fear  
He knows hunger  
He knows love  
He knows the clock  
And yet he sings  
He chirps the notes of his soul  
He chirps for life  
He chirps for the shoulder of love  
He soars above  
Allowing the air to tickle his feathers



He laughs and swoops  
He grabs a worm to feed his young  
He chirps as he lands upon the tree  
Looking down on me,  
Life is for the birds.

Matthew Spano

## All I Want

All I want  
is to stay with you  
a little longer,  
rapt  
inside your universe,  
that hold me tight,  
but please  
don't let me go.

All I want  
is to play with you  
a little longer,  
seeing you  
with the eyes of a child-  
wide, and amazed  
by feelings  
so brand new.

All I want  
is to lay with you  
a little longer,  
entwined  
like a vine,  
and let your kisses  
fall on me  
like drops  
of passion's reign.

Silvana Guadagnoli

## Metaphor

I stand in the earth,  
And grew without birth.  
I drink without lips,  
And have velvety tips.  
I look for the sun,  
And am picked by someone,  
To give the scent of  
A token of love.

Silvana Guadagnoli

## Pay Attention

Pay attention— when I talk to you.  
Don't turn your head like as other people do,  
I  
may have something important to say  
to you.  
Something that might turn you in the right way.  
A gift with not a thought to repay,  
You can do it.  
Learn the sound of sincerity,  
the sound that comes directly  
from a good soul.  
Reveling in your success,  
not to pity a misfortunate past,  
no phrases like; you always reach your goal

Lance Knapp



## Fragments of Night

cross that granite bridge  
one more time tonite  
welcome to hell's kitchen at No Tell or 7A  
whichever serves you best  
weird scenes going on  
is the third of the seven nights  
queens, dykes, and slaves wait for you  
S&M, B&D, what's your pleasure?  
walk out intoxicated, perhaps not  
but socialize with the night  
squatters, junkies, and vampires  
they all want the same from you.  
the moon will meet the sun soon  
you'd better run.

Juan A. Falla

## (For those few cherished moments)

For those few cherished moments  
Between a dream and a trance  
The sky mirrors the deepest color of  
Indigo twilight  
From your eyes  
But soon nature's envy  
Seizes the sunset  
And darkens the last of serenity

Tatyana Bor



## ( The Stagger Out of Bed)

The summer sun hasn't touched my skin.  
I preferred the hue colors  
shading my room just after dusk,  
and waking up to the morning violets  
on the brink of dawn.  
A warm feeling of hope filled me  
as my eyes opened  
and I snuggled closer to the pillow.

Lingering in bed always seemed to erase  
that hope I felt  
of starting anew.  
Heavily, I'd stumble out of bed;  
reminded of all the tasks left undone  
from the day before.  
And projects that were started years ago  
were still waiting for that perfect day  
to be finished.  
Memories of brilliant ideas  
that never took life  
filled my head with aches.

The heaviness felt in each step  
quickly searched for salvation.  
Bed seemed welcoming,  
forgiving  
forgetting.

My comfortable casket  
awaited my return each morning,  
and re-adjusted its creases  
to fit my carcass into the late hours  
of the afternoon.

Soon I'd feel the pull of night approaching.  
Again, filled with hope,  
my body caught the energy of a flame  
burning some unforeseen future  
in front of my eyes.  
The twilight colors danced around my room  
like reflections off a disco ball,  
and I danced with the shadows  
cast by the music  
of a lighted wick.

But the flame became temporary  
as my body and hope tired, and dimmed,  
and faded like all short lived adventures  
that give us something to talk about  
if only for a little while.  
With sleep, true dreams awaited.  
Upon waking,  
dreams were all that ever awaited.

Tatyana Bor

## Imagination Poem

My mind wonders continually  
passing on thoughts  
that are unreal  
Patterns geometrically forming,  
as I close my eyes  
and enter another  
My body drops, from my anticipation  
I shake, I awake  
to a place unknown

Balanced weight lie all around  
bringing equilibrium to my thoughts  
To release, I release.....  
Seeing sharp colors  
with a delicacy of opal casting the atmosphere  
I travel down the expedition road  
a grand new evolution  
though humanity does not exist in this state of nature  
My progressive ideology sees virtual technology  
exploiting my conscious  
and don't have to be civil here  
I still can climb the latter that fluctuates before me  
even though I'm scared of heights  
I rise to the top - I rise to the top  
rocking back and forth  
energy injected from the rush  
I subjected myself to  
only to open my eyes  
awakened to a cold sweat of hopelessness  
reality has limitations

Jennifer Alper

## Coffee House

A lonely flame  
set before a lonely one  
candlelights  
the warmth of their modesty  
and the irridescence of softness  
bringing a romantic calm  
to this coffee house.  
There is an aura that illuminates  
each table  
each chair  
and who is seated upon it  
patiently awaiting silence.  
One might welcome  
a classical ballad  
because of the urge  
to hear something quiet.  
The sounds from  
a piano, a bass, a saxophone  
emanate  
and rekindle  
the reason for relaxation  
surrounding  
this steaming cup before me  
I glance into  
and which melts away the coldness in me  
My attention escapes the room  
and enters into tranquility.  
All I hear  
are muffled words from strange faces  
not knowing what awaits them  
outside the comfort of this coffee house.

Karla Gumbs



## A Pipe's Nobility

There is a feeling  
of anticipation  
when searching  
for the kind  
stimulant  
for a mentality  
that is sometimes  
forced to be  
sane  
and yet  
only this can be  
my sanity.  
a wooden pipe  
loyal to the cravings  
of a confused individual  
accompanied  
by a flame  
and a familiar scent  
smoke rings  
escape  
the pipe  
the fire-breathing dragon  
that overwhelms the soul  
and seeps into  
the core of my lungs  
and hits the inner depths  
of the foundation  
of my thoughts  
it is constructed to feel  
and sense the potency  
that steps up  
your mind's ability.  
my eyes catch glimpses  
of the unobvious  
and it is the little things  
that are truer  
than what seems  
bigger than you  
the personal quality  
of this pipe  
breathes stronger  
for the urge exists  
to feel numb  
the smoke  
blows into you

as the shorewinds  
that crash  
on the border  
of body and water  
I am content  
for my pipe  
is what I trust  
to stand alone  
from all else  
to escape normality  
is to stem from ignorance  
and instead  
plant the seeds of bliss

Karla Gumbs





## (Forever sitting in my graveyard)

Forever sitting in my graveyard  
counting my headstones I have planted in my life so fat  
My pride I find,  
Rest In Peace.  
Standing tall with some dates and a catchy rhyme.  
So sad.  
My self-esteem is there, glowing,  
it is made of limestone,  
it was a big loss,  
I feel nothing.  
I continue to look and find my love,  
the headstone laying low.  
A few stones sit upon it  
letting me know a few have visited,  
shame they couldn't stay.  
I see my patience,-  
but only for a short moment.  
It's never in the same place twice.  
I can never catch it to bury it,-  
but someday I'll succeed.  
Ambition is there,-  
left under, sealed in a box  
shut tight.  
My sorrow looms  
without a headstone.  
I have buried it,  
but not for long does it crawl back up  
and shake dirt off it's back  
many times without warning,  
Only to ponder a reality  
what might have been.

Thomas D'Angelo



## Sling Shot

A fast shooting toy  
that I got in Amazement  
When  
I was just a kid.  
All it took  
was for me to say  
that vivid morning,  
"Could you make me a sling shot?"

That afternoon  
I asked in hesitation  
to find the answer  
to be  
No, Perhaps.  
So I asked,  
"Did you make me that sling shot yet?"  
The answer replied  
yes.  
Eyes lit up,  
opened wide,  
full of excitement.  
This was better than anything  
I could have bought in the store  
Made of wood,  
a leather sling  
and shot far.

As the years have gone by,  
I will never forget,  
For someone gave me  
what I wanted  
just because  
I asked for it.

Sal DiBenedetto



## My Fault

The cracking of dry leaves  
Under my feet  
Seemed to distress  
The peace, the silence and  
The isolation  
of the little morn  
Where  
The birds' melodies,  
the flopping leaves  
and the crystal rivage  
bouncing on soft rocks  
were the only noise that existed.  
It was my first trip  
To that hill  
Yet the sight seemed familiar;  
That rivage struggling  
Its way through the rocks until  
It softly falls down  
On an awaiting bed  
To recollect its force  
And continues its infinite  
struggle.  
"This sight" I thought  
"Defines beauty,"  
With the sun high  
In the sky  
Yet its reflection  
On the crystal water  
Targeted me intentionally.  
As I struggled to escape  
Its shot, I realized  
I would have never  
Remembered the omit site  
Because  
It was not vivid  
In my memory  
but in my dreams  
And Imaginations;  
A site I travel often  
When I am in my best mood.  
Then,  
I leaned forward  
To try  
And internalized the peace;

I opened my ears wide  
wide enough to hear  
silences.  
silence that is beyond  
My hearing capacity  
then something smothering  
Happened.  
I heard the city  
The subways  
The crowd  
The crimes  
The clouds that had  
Shadowed my soul  
Much too long.  
Yet,  
All I could had done  
was relaxed  
And rejoice the sun.

Ralph Figaro



## Souvenir

On the smooth sand  
Of Malibu Beach we met  
An hour of talk  
Until good bye.  
I gave her a pen  
And she gave me a stone.  
The speeding van  
Leaves the name behind  
And two days later  
The face was gone.  
The stone though  
Is still here.  
Carefully chosen  
After three trials,  
Washed in the sea  
For purity,  
Soft and white  
Like a half moon  
At horizon....

Two pounds of weight it was  
As I set my stone  
In a carton box  
Under my bed  
Next to cherished books  
And love letters.  
Two years old now  
still I taste  
The salt water...

Like a white eagle  
Before darkness  
I watch my stone  
Fly  
Over the sea.  
The day is right  
To set it safe  
Where it belongs.

Ralph Figaro

## Hands Represent Your Voice

"Touch your friend."

Communication can tell you,

I love you!

Sign language can teach you.

Learning sign can help make friends.

Sign knowledge can hug the world.

Sign forbids the use of bad language.

It represents great respect.

Close to your greeting of hello

is both signing and shaking of the hands.

Be careful not to use a wicked sign

which could probably cause anger.

This could allow a change for better understanding

Try to speak with a deaf person.

Signing is related to your heart.

Always hands speak the happiness.

Truly, signing is believed to be friendly forever.

Martin Calpin



## Inside The Square

I've been here so many times before  
But today  
Today the sun gently warms  
Everything  
Everyone  
And more...  
I sit here on this blanket of Ecstasy  
Watching the barren trees  
Reach for the deep blue ocean sky  
Void of clouds.  
Only a smile  
Covers my face  
Don't even have to speak  
Don't even have to think.  
Emptying bags  
One by one  
With the flame of my lighter.  
The day screams by.  
Pigs look on  
Helpless,  
Jealous.  
Crowds of people  
Joined for a purposeless purpose  
Because we want to  
Because we can  
Because it's legal  
For just this day.

Claudine Palo



## (Don't know what happened)

Don't know what happened  
or when  
or why  
But there I was  
Like a tornado on crack  
My heart broken  
for and by  
a falling leaf  
a sunny sky  
Charlie Brown?  
I can't give reasons  
Just apologies  
Sadness left me  
Replaced by Spite,  
joined by Rage  
Hatred took my hand  
and led me into the darker side of life  
Smile went on vacation  
someplace far away  
My mind wandered  
through its blackest corners  
Suicide failed  
God didn't want me.  
I didn't blame him  
But here I am  
Awakened from a four-year dream  
While what I was  
Not long ago  
Echoes footsteps  
Behind me.

Claudine Palo





## Amsterdanned

I leaned back on a stoned wall  
reeling still from rolled smokes  
and coffee—sugar—cream.  
“I am only me,” I moaned  
silent beneath two - old faded doors.  
There above my head, nailed- down  
a wooden crucifix a stare on me.

Andrew Winters  
(co-winning poet, 1995-1996  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)

## Did you not blink Neon - Naked - Sex - Girls?

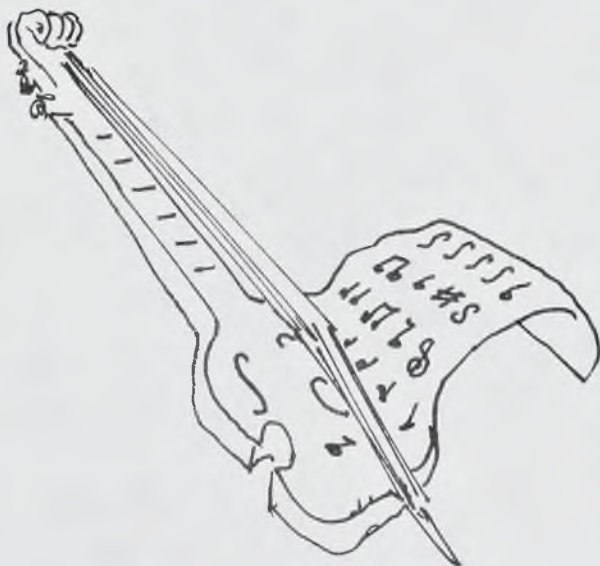
A crowd swirled beyond touch with  
street- grime - worn jackets dragging  
on a city's public alley way.  
The doors swung open and  
I melted into a surge with hands - held - out.  
Reaching two - nuns gathered offering  
white bread and cheddar cheese sandwiches  
all wrapped in paper napkins.  
She spoke in a foreign tongue but  
I imagined she said “God Bless You”  
before I hurried away to a park beside  
gray waters that didn't flow to the ocean.  
Hopelessly limp, I sat on a concrete bench  
swallowing down a tasteless confession  
of how when Amsterdam's red light  
shown, I fell.  
And then rose to wander home.

Andrew Winters  
(co-winning poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)

## A Fly

A Fly crossed the face of my TV  
during the Final Jeopardy question.  
"What is a four-legged reminder of apathy?"  
of love letters never posted,  
of want ads circled but not called,  
of a crossword puzzle-three down- "Oh Dear?"  
A fly has entered through the hole  
in the screen I've been too busy to repair.  
I will drive to the hardware store tomorrow,  
I've decided, as the fly buzzes by my ear,  
crisscrossing the living room,  
bound for the chance to exercise its legs.  
And again, I sit upright and roll a newspaper  
tight, prepared to wheel a just revenge for its trespasses,  
its unholy way of drawing attention onto itself.

Andrew Winters  
(co-winning poet, 1995-96  
Edward J. Rehberg  
Poetry Competition)



## (i'll bet it all)

i'll bet it all  
on a car and a house  
if only you tell me  
i do  
we'll have a white picket fence  
and for the kids a pet mouse  
and maybe a rabbit  
or two

g. kessler

## (the play's the thing in which)

"the play's the thing in which

i'll catch  
the conscience of the king (and

anybody else  
who can afford to  
come to the show)" i imagine

he thought

as he put the words down

g. kessler



## The Situation

A true innovator in the sport of killing  
an a master of the art of blunt skilling  
but where's that gonna get him anyway  
who's the man ? "yo fuck that D.J."  
the host of an evil parasite  
who only show their faces in the darkness of night  
They draw blood from their own  
It's wrong but it's all they've been shown  
Everyone is searching for a positive force  
but of course half of all marriages end in divorce  
What's in a hard days work  
a day closer to death, an still poor like a jerk  
so now you know the situation  
In the back of the Squad car on the way to the station

Who comes to the Plains on trains  
leaving stains all red from their veins  
they don't use their brains when they think.  
All filled with drink their ship will surely sink  
We got an ordeal going down in town  
An from the sound the pitchers on the mound  
Throwing strikes at the batter  
He got jigged now he's bleeding from his bladder  
Falling, reaching for his steel  
numbness an pain are all he feels  
Another life done too soon  
Another crew member with a fatal wound  
Another wake with mothers crying  
An now there's another blood brother dying

James Burt



## ( Clock on the wall )

Clock on wall  
ticking endlessly

Filling the dreary,  
quiet halls  
with ongoing life.

Vicky Fioravante

## The Slumber Garden in the Ghetto

Weeds — Bugs

Prayingmantis

The rain must fall in order for the grass the grow.

Listen, L I S T E N

"The  
rain  
must  
fall  
in  
orderforthegrasstogrow.

Mow your lawn, curb your dog, don't step on the tulips, keep off  
the grass.

Yeh, and buy your own hedge clippers.

Leroy, wake up and rake the yard.

Ashokia Hall



## The Burial Cave

He took little steps,  
With every one he drew closer.  
Each step with firm precision.  
    leaving the indents of hoofprints in the mud.

He stopped before us.  
We stared— with every second reaching eternity  
The little child clinging to his mother's shirt, firmly  
As if he knew he would lose her forever.  
Before we knew— He gave the order  
    One by one, the leaves fell from the tree  
    the drops of water from the broken twigs.  
    Slowly they fused together  
    building a puddle for the beggars.

One by one the leaves fell down  
So the tree began to bleed  
with broken limbs and broken trunks  
It's tears came down  
Drop by drop  
They formed a pond  
uniting together for the last time.  
Now that we were together  
he gave the second order  
    for us to be buried forever.

Dedicated to all children victims of Bosnia.

Vullnet Kolari



## The Chosen One

The purple flowers on a white background I counted on my wall.  
Eighty-six to be exact.  
The early years,  
Lonely and afraid I found myself playing childhood games for one.  
Counting flowers.  
I awaited the next time I would get shuffled.

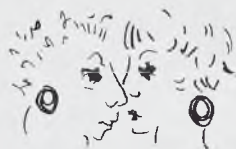
I know it was not their fault.  
It took over there lives.  
They tend to the meek and sick, the younger of two.  
They sit quietly at her bedside only mouthing the words of prayer,  
While stroking her head with cool damp cloth, filled with tears  
Brushed by death and often not aware of what was around her,  
I should have felt blessed but I did not.

Lonely and afraid.  
Afraid of what would become of me?  
Hoping that they could find some time-  
Time to peek at my report card.  
Time to play a game.  
Time to answer the many questions of "Why"

"She is the chosen one". That is what I was told.  
Our strengths are tested all the time.  
I never understood exactly why she was chosen.  
As years passed she remained a part of their daily routine.  
I moved on.  
Grown and matured I found a life outside of the purple flowers.

Time would not heal her wounds they remain-  
A scar on my soul for eternity.

Dawn Fasano



## (My mind is a cliché)

My mind is  
A cliché  
I've lived before  
I have loved what everyone else has  
I have hated  
All there was to hate, and I did it well  
Now I want to die  
In a cabin  
From a Hallmark card  
Covered with predictable,  
White snow.

I've always been afraid  
To speak words  
Of an ordinary man  
Most shocking poet's plain words of love  
As he makes love to his girl  
On a warm Sunday morning  
Words too real to be true

Then one day,  
I fell from the cloud of my lazy sadness  
Hit my head, and broke my jaw.  
As I'm bleeding, I hear  
All the pathetic words of my  
Dead grandparents  
Dead friends  
My thirteen year old dog.  
Through their voices  
I hear the only metaphor  
For being born, loving, and dying—  
Pain  
Predictable, real.  
No longer am I ashamed to tell you  
About the little cabin from my Christmas dream  
It is a cliché. . .  
I love clichés.

I walk through the newborn milky way  
I kiss her giggling splashes of sugar  
And although she really does taste like mild,  
I don't know, I mean it's just fucking snow  
White and predictable  
I see blood  
The blood I've seen before  
But didn't want to tell you



For it was red  
Just ordinary red blood  
Not brave, not precious  
Not even sweet  
Just blood that spilled out of my body  
Like from a pig  
And it all doesn't matter any way  
Cause I'm almost in my cabin  
Gonna die soon

My mind is dead  
I've heard too many things  
That nobody meant to say  
I don't even mean any of this,  
I don't know anymore.  
Maybe a cabin under white snow  
You know, the Hallmark card kind of shit  
Me and maybe a woman  
Fuck for a few days, tell each other  
all the cliches in the world, like I love you  
and stuff — I'd like that,  
Get so high  
We wouldn't have to feel funny about it  
We'd thank God and then die  
Or, maybe go home

Otto Zizak



## The Third Line

If I could stop breathing for a minute  
I'd save it for when I die.  
If I could let You see me while I close my eyes  
You could smile back at me  
So when You die, You could have something too.  
If I could deny the sparkling visions  
Of infinite shadows, together, in a frozen snow  
Forget the hopeless hope that one day  
You will understand  
I wouldn't wait to make you cry.

If I could see the third line in you world of nothing  
If I could silence your voices in my bright sleep  
I would, silence your voices in my bright sleep  
Thank you my friend  
That cheap old man never leaves anything  
I stand here to tell you that violence is not the way  
But I can look these children straight in their eyes now  
I and my hundred and twenty dollar psychoanalyst  
Now know that I would have never touched my own if  
My mother didn't kiss me on the lips  
We care about you, we understand you, we want you  
To have what's best, and what's best is ours and what's ours  
They'll eat it up anyway  
I never meant to hurt you  
I never meant anything  
Oh, I'm so glad I can talk to you Talk to you I just meant  
To tell him I never meant to hurt him, and he verbally abused me  
I need a hug  
Thank you my friend Nice to see you again my friend  
Nice to meet your friend  
Did you like my friend? I fucked his girlfriend the other night

If I could,  
I would take my little place in the pre-arranged black hole  
And say - thank you,  
But forgive me just this one time for today  
I cannot pretend to cry myself to sleep  
And say it's not worth trying,  
To fear, kill and hate your broken final dimension.  
So when I hold my weak breath for just a minute longer  
and close my eyes forever,  
I will see Your smile  
Sweetly resting upon the only line that will ever matter,  
And I will still say - thank You.

Otto Zizak

## Closest Down The Hall (The Only Thing Left)

As the night drops his black eyelash upon my face  
And the darkness sings her re-run echoes  
Somebody is beating their baby to death.  
And even though that's just an excuse,  
I fall, alone, just like before, as I hear a cry  
From the closet down the hall.

And as I stare into the acid blue light  
I try for a new distortion of my left-over mind  
Just to entertain you with my latest deep,  
Symbolic, meaningful, constructive correct way  
Of saying that I hate you.

Now, fuck you  
'Cause you see, I'm too tired  
Too tired to give you my beautifully crafted imagery,  
Bleached and painted to make everything  
Smell like roses, It's just plain words today...

All I ever wanted to tell you was that I hate you  
And I don't know why except that it feels good  
And sometimes it's the only thing that feels good  
And I'm scared, I'm scared of going to hell  
And I wanna see you go first,  
And I get off on rape scenes  
And I want to see a plane crash in real life  
And I love to make you look stupid  
And I wonder if I'm  
Stupid  
And I wonder if I too am that evil  
And I wonder why everything has to hurt so bad  
And I hate saying thank you for birthday gifts  
And I just hate everyone and I don't exactly know why  
Except that somebody beat their baby to death today,

But that's just an excuse.  
And I fall, alone, like before.  
And hate, is the only thing left  
In the closet down the hall.

Otto Zizak

# Paving Stones

## 1

What multiplies of distillations are used for each related memory?

For all them exist as a silent resonating pitch burnt deep in the minds.

Taxi- the cabby sits, standing by.  
My mother's grave anticipating, waits.  
Ashes fill her child's lonely heart,  
This poem goes nowhere.

Oh!..., there was a holiday that passed.  
Mother lies, eyes open, alone, cold, still.  
Mother does not move.  
Mother is dead.

God burn this suspended sorrow.  
Burn this dream,  
Dreamt by someone else far away.  
Below this ground, in this soil, under these feet,  
My love lays pitted,  
Warped, rotted.  
I'll show you a poem built on fear.

Pain of the son forms the vision.  
The vision forms the sheet. The sheet forms the dream.  
Morning's yellow hue bleaches the bedroom walls.  
Dawn a new day's toil.

The low hum of radio static  
Wakes the Child Jesus.  
Dressed in not so new clothes  
She labels you Rembrandt, DaVanic, Mozart.  
Who's names to fit into your syllables.  
Who's syllables straps tightly around your waist.  
Her insistence carries you to school.  
From the screened door, she watches.  
Your her king.  
Meadows stagger you, books burden you,  
You dissolve into the day.  
The image of those morning's never fade.  
And beyond your child's sight her death mask grows.

All forgotten verses,  
 Broken sentences, ideas, small thoughts  
 Lay on pages, tattered unabridged in ink.  
 Remnants of scattered, misplaced wanderings  
 Sit feeble mind,  
 While the illness swells inside.  
 Memories etch deep the naming.  
 Recalling the story that floats through the door into oblivion.  
 Tripping delicate fibers of lost romance.

I, the creature, weighted by diseased thoughts  
 That wash over me.  
 They pass distorted and sick, grimacing and mocking,  
 I try not to focus.  
 My cut mind slips away, things of matter don't.

Teller gates record each visit.  
 The soft ground, cradles its brittle bones.  
 Stones grow into pebbles, the pebbles become sparse,  
 The ground barren,  
 The searcher more desperate.  
 Gray scripts suspends each name,  
 A warehouse list,  
 Inventory awaiting the visit.

The sparrow's song,  
 How I wish you were here. How I am wasting away.  
 Remembering the cradled arms form the unmade bed.  
 The bed that forms a room.  
 Alone now, she walks back to the kitchen.  
 Chores- slave of the day beckons you, legs cold, weak  
 And nobodies warm.

Oh, How alone you were when Romeo left.  
 You studied to learn his speech.  
 Lost in you internal space.  
 You waited for the messiah to appear,  
 To take the pain away.  
 The day demands your labor.  
 The day never changes.  
 The night always ends with the son.

Will this dried out sunburned memory,  
I have of you, stay?  
Will this spiting starving good-bye end?  
Will I forget the words of these poems,  
My thoughts?  
Mother, neck arched towards the void,  
Why look back?  
(because I must).  
Through the eyes of god she watches,  
Consumed by the lingering twilight.  
I earn nothing.  
I've watch nothing grow old.

She passes by the bedroom,  
Checks the breath,  
Yes, the messiah is fine.  
Window shuts out the force of night.  
Night rest at her feet,  
Door swings closed,  
Voices peak,  
By reason, I remember, she always shushes him.  
She always walks by  
Bending the wanton light seeking me out  
From under the door.

I stare,  
Where the wall meets the ceiling,  
Wall meets the wall,  
Ceiling meets the walls,  
The corner,  
The crack,  
The right angle  
The laceration of my tongue,  
The spot I stare at from my bed.

The word too heavy now,  
Doesn't lift spirit.  
I, the nigger, the bastard, slaved by sin  
Struggling with this eternal horror.  
Please, I beg of you Mother  
Send the word away.  
I slither on my belly beneath the bedroom door.  
You are not the change in direction  
But the change itself.  
These bastard words say nothing.

I struggle with shadowed limits.  
Mine, yours, god's, all returns me to here.  
Over this sanction of self,  
The child that grows toward the eternal rest.  
Cry for the name, naming in itself is unnamed,  
Unlabeled below my feet.

Forgiveness, the poison on the child's mouth  
How much poison have you swallowed.  
How much sin did you suffer  
For the not so innocent child.

I carry the blessing in the shadow of your heart.  
That day, I recall the day that you stared motionless at the ceiling,  
The wall met the wall,  
Ceiling met the wall,  
Your soul met the crack,  
The laceration in the sky,  
Your messiah.

Douglas J. Root



## Hospital Solarium

sitting here,  
in silence  
the darkness has come.  
I watch the colored box  
that flies before me  
sitting in the bed full of white  
linen and drapes  
bits of strawberries crushed,  
the black on white  
drape I wear- the gown  
the tongue filled with blackness,  
impossible to disappear  
the filth  
the white  
strawberries crushed all over  
my arms  
an eye watching me  
all over  
the blue takes me under  
I am lost (in)  
this small room  
with the ground moving under me.  
I am in solitude  
window shut  
(I am) trapped  
in the air  
of that smell  
my legs close  
yet my eyes remain open,  
sitting in the warmth of white  
I sink into my world  
wanting the reality  
dying is a talent,  
a talent that i do not possess  
talents can be learned,  
at least art can.  
(she says) dying is an art.  
I am artistic  
I (can) die. I know how to dye my sheet  
pure red.

Dara Loren Troshane



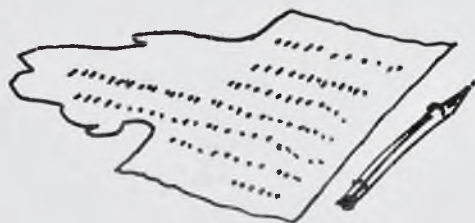
## Stained Voices

Thrown  
on the ground  
an arm,  
lies alone on the stone.  
it is red  
with blood  
dripping from it's limb  
it's owner  
blasted across another dimension  
I slowly walk past more  
arms, legs,  
bodies without their limbs  
clothing separated from their bodies  
my eyes fill with water  
making it even more difficult to see.  
I turn my head  
in attempt at looking away,  
but flashing in front of my eyes,  
a bus  
blown into two  
half standing in front of me  
inside  
lay a child  
her white face  
smeared with blood  
with her arms laying  
on the seat next to her  
a woman  
weeps over this little girl  
holding her,  
rocking her,  
tears falling on her bludgeoned face  
join  
and trickle down her cheeks  
uncovering her purity.  
Blankets covering bodies on the floor  
soaking up blood  
no need to look and check  
underneath  
each a relative  
each a part of me  
each killed with a feeling of safety  
in a land of war.  
I walk through these streets in Jerusalem  
everyday

I see the remnants  
slowly disappearing  
day by day  
more and more  
pieces of metal,  
shrapnel,  
shredded clothing,  
taken away  
But there is something left forever,  
marks that always remain  
are the blood stained stones of Jerusalem  
Those marks cry out every day  
in voices of promise, and in hope of remembrance  
of dying  
for a country that is at peace  
in a time of war.  
Everyday,  
in my mind,  
I walk through those streets of Jerusalem.  
the marks multiply themselves.  
the voices get stronger  
Today February 25, 1996  
I walk through that street in Jerusalem  
and  
thrown  
on the ground  
an are lies alone on the stone.

in memory of all the people who were brutally killed

Dara Lor'en Troshane



## (...and a hundred years ago)

...and a hundred years ago  
I ate my eyes out  
and dreamt a new understanding,  
but now  
I occupy  
a space  
between the living and the dead

Jerry said thank you for  
the birthday card.  
Julie- Oh, I returned her  
cd's today  
I didn't want to

and all I can think of  
is how am I going to survive  
all I do is dream of dreaming,  
depressing myself and...  
enjoying it.

and now  
as that piss warm water  
escapes that old silver machine,  
I dream ( again ),  
of swimming to a jungle.  
and then when I was told to call  
I taught myself the back stroke.  
I held a staff in my hand  
and told the world,  
I know how to cry.

and I can only sing the words,  
without the melody.  
Drinking out of that paper cup,  
Lightening comes

before me,  
striking blood,  
waiting for it to rain.  
but the dance is over.  
and the piss warm water  
turns cold.  
the jungle is waiting for me,  
my backstroke is too strong.

Dara Loren Troshane









