

*All Ways  
A Woman*

“All Ways A Woman” is a literary magazine that was established during the 1970's.

We have chosen pieces from past issues, which we felt are beautiful and needed to be told again, simply because these issues are still strong today and continue to be a part of us.

We would like to give a special thanks to Anke Michaelson, Dana Donadio and Kristie Lacertosa, for their photographic contributions.

**All Ways A Woman, 2004**

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“All Ways A Woman” is a home where a woman’s feelings, thoughts and person, live and tell  
of experiences.

There are no rules,  
There aren’t even any doors;  
It may leave the people outside wondering ....

As we chuckle air of relief,  
by the knowledge  
and its power  
that brought us here....

Sisters sharing the “how”.

What we are about is real,  
it is something only the divine can feel...

But hopefully we’ll make us real for you,  
*if*  
you can understand what we mean by what we say  
and do....

And then accept it,

for we grow stronger by the day,  
and I for one refuse to falter.

“All Ways A Woman” is for our sisters,  
an attempt to give strength,  
and a reminder that we are not alone  
but share in our opinions of....  
all that follows....

The feminine spirit is too strong to hide;

There are no doors man can build  
to stop our divinity,

and naivety  
has been the only reason why they would try,  
therefore it has been long past time....

And we are breaking free,  
with pride.

Mary Castellana

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Commemorative Pieces

<i>Always / All Ways a Woman</i>	Page 7
<i>Untitled</i>	8
<i>Spring</i>	
<i>Alphabet Soup</i>	
<i>Beauty</i>	9
<i>Choices</i>	10
<i>Sacred</i>	11
<i>Crayon Box</i>	
<i>Love</i>	12
<i>Contentment</i>	

## 2004

<i>The World Inside Versus Out</i>	13
Photograph by Dana Donadio	21
<i>Full</i> - Photograph by Dana Donadio	22
<i>Static</i>	23
Photograph by Anke Michaelson	24
<i>Mysterious Woman</i>	25
<i>Raspberry Tea</i>	
<i>Invisible Corsets</i>	26
<i>Water From the Spirit Mouth</i>	28

<i>Trouble</i>	29
Photograph by Dana Donadio	30
<i>The Nothing</i>	31
Photograph by Marc Goldberg	33
<i>Fairy Tale</i>	34
<i>Identity</i>	35
<i>Expression of Habitual Thought</i>	36
<i>Oxygen</i>	37
<i>Writer's Block</i>	41
<i>Keep it Movin'</i> - Photograph by Mary Castellana	
<i>Complexity of a Woman</i>	42
<i>Upon an Easel</i>	43
<i>Love-filled Dream</i>	44
<i>A Rediscovery from the Rear View Mirror</i>	45
<i>Him</i>	46
<i>Still Cold</i>	47
<i>Icy</i>	49
<i>What's In a Name</i>	50

*Always / All Ways a Woman*

Like a butterfly with fragile beginnings,  
she struggles to move forward.  
Inching her way across endless paths,  
her growth is minute.  
Engulfed in a veil of protectiveness,  
her growth develops.

And,

Her awareness heightens.  
Her knowledge abounds.  
Her rebirth is apparent.

And,  
at that time,  
just the right time,  
a new creation emerges.

She sheds her veil.  
She bids goodbye to her other self.  
She is ready to fly freely.  
In no time she will soar.

After all,  
she is,  
in all ways,  
a woman.

Gayle Tauger - 1991

*Untitled*

Three women sat at a table  
discussing their fears  
one was afraid to live  
another was afraid to love  
and the other was afraid  
of being alone.  
They decided that the one who was afraid to  
live  
should die,  
the one who was afraid to love  
should hate,  
and the one who was afraid  
of being alone  
should become a poet.

Lynda Blum - 1980

*Alphabet Soup*

Her voice  
Drifted across the broken formica  
Through a table setting of realities  
Cracked plates, unmatched utensils, tired  
chairs  
She spoke of dinner out  
Her words surrounding everything  
Demanding recognition  
But I was so broke  
I couldn't even pay attention

Douglas Schwartz - 1980

*Spring*

I lay dormant, waiting for you.  
Bare branches echo my emotions,  
arteries without a pulse.  
Roots that will extend no further into the cold, hard ground.  
The cold whiteness covers me  
and hides my inner beauty.  
No one can see what I can produce,  
for in this cold, hard, winter, I produce nothing.  
Somehow the visions of what could be come to me  
and through the darkness, I feel you.  
Your bright warmth melting my snow, softening my soil.  
My arteries pulsate life throughout my body.  
My branches now bud under your mellow passions.  
Creativity begins to return to me.  
My beauty is no longer hidden but now displayed.

Donna Fahey - 1980



## *Beauty*

Is beauty found in a certain color?  
Or perhaps in a becoming look?  
Is it found in the smell of a flower?  
Or a gently flowing brook?

True beauty I've discovered  
goes unnoticed and is discarded like  
soiled clothing tossed and trampled upon  
the ground.

There's beauty:  
Of spirit, that makes a humble man  
not haughty and proud, but loves his fellow man.

A gift of wisdom that's seldom found  
A character in St. Paul—a know how  
how both to abase and abound.

An appreciative eye, a fond memory  
that sees some good in all it finds;  
to behold a man in nature, what harmony!

A friendly gaze that's both perceptive and kind.  
A keen sensitivity, an insight,  
perhaps simply a frame of mind.

Beauty is:  
A satisfaction, an acceptance of one's identity  
actively pressing forward while constantly yielding still,  
growing into the image of Christ—attaining unity  
with the creator of our selves and our wills.

An ability to love ourselves  
for only then can we reach out to others  
and give love freely, even to our worst enemy.

Beauty:  
Not in outward face  
but found in God, the beauty of His amazing grace.

Colette Caesar - 1991/1992

## *Choices*

In the terrifying cold  
Of an examining room  
A seventeen-year old listened.  
Tense with fear  
And apprehension,  
Her entire body glistened.  
“A problem here,”  
The bald man said.  
“Have you decided what you’ll do?  
You have a choice,  
You know, my dear.”  
But it really wasn’t true.  
In order to get here  
She’d needed consent  
From an angry, vindictive mother.  
In exchange for her help  
She’d demanded one thing,  
Wouldn’t accept any other:  
“Never again may you see his face  
Or listen to his voice.  
If you agree, then I’ll help.  
You have to make a choice.”  
Her mind did battle  
Against what was asked  
By the woman who’d given her life.  
But in the end  
She knew she’d lose-  
And gave in to avoid further strife.  
A woman of honor, she kept her promise  
Though it hurt her to the core.  
The ebony face, the gentle voice  
Here seen and heard no more.  
“Some day, you’ll see,” her mother said,  
“That this was for the best.”  
But decades more of living  
Could not put the thing to rest.  
Her usurped freedom haunted her.  
Her so-called right to choice  
Had been righteously denied her  
And never given voice.

In the terrifying cold  
Of an examining room  
A seventeen-year old listened.  
Tense with fear  
And apprehension,  
Her entire body glistened.  
“A problem here,”  
The bald man said.  
“Have you decided what you’ll do?  
You have a choice  
You know my dear.”  
But it really wasn’t true.

Robin H. Garber-Kabalkin -1991

*Sacred*

A crucifix  
hangs  
on a peach colored wall  
in a bedroom mirror  
when the sun goes down  
Watch her slide  
down satin sheets  
that adorn her bed  
into a sacred dream  
Mournful eyes  
stare at the moon  
until morning blooms  
and the glare is bright  
casting aside  
recollections  
of sleepless nights  
Breezes flow  
through open wounds  
while she rests her head  
on a fantasy  
Watch her pray  
beneath a blazing sun  
to a crucifix  
on a peach colored wall  
in a bedroom mirror  
when the sun goes down

Judy Ortado - 1991

*Crayon Box*

You and I walk  
hand in hand,  
harmless, innocent.  
I only see your heart  
and the softness of your skin.  
I only feel peace and love.

We talk  
and dream of a place-  
unconscious of race-  
where the world is a crayon box,  
all colors lying side by side.  
Our Creator smiles.

You and I dream  
of a place-  
unconscious of race-  
where everyone shakes hands,  
where humans are humans...  
And welcome mats lie peacefully at every  
door.

Your hand squeezes mine,  
Your brown eyes find my green,  
(the joy behind them both)--  
Screech!  
A car, windows furiously rolled down,  
voices, ugly,  
"Nigger-lover!"  
(Incredible the pain)

C.J. Klutz - 1991

## *Love*

So hard to understand the concept  
of a feeling in itself a mystery,  
the magnetism felt tugging at one's heart  
drawing you to someone, a different entity.

Yet guided on a course unknown  
a heart's desire to see, to touch,  
to love completely, to open and trust.

Beyond all mental images love travels  
blossoming, so natural—a surprise to  
our senses—it marvels.

Bridging gaps and stereotypes  
opening our hearts to newness, new life.

Changing, always changing our  
preconceived  
notions and dislikes.  
Surging with power  
to transform as from a bud to a flower.

Then it leaves a new creation, a fuller being  
no longer alone but always accompanied  
by another thing or a precious being  
Two lives merged and intertwined  
a unity of body, spirit or mind.

Love's gentle persuasion yet  
it's the strongest bond forging two  
beings into one mold.

Their lives may lead them apart  
but somehow their hearts still beat in unison.

Colette Caesar -1991/1992

## *Contentment*

I write  
the words come and go  
and flow  
arranging themselves  
As they fall on the page.

Here is my story.  
Here is my life.

Egypt  
in all her glory  
never had an empress  
as sweetly satisfied  
as I am with a pen in my hand  
and a cup of tea at my side.

Donna Decker - 1979

## *The World Inside Versus Out*

We all go through experiences -  
Issues, dramas, joy -  
The growing pains

Those of weakened spirits become the norm  
and those of strong....  
are the topic of  
everyone else's conversation.

And how  
can you get ahead here  
when so many talk  
rather than do.  
For it seems,  
the prerequisite to the  
"in" thing,  
is to agree with everyone else;

as we are stuck here by the lack of action  
of those in power,  
of those in power's friends....

And so therefore,

you may find her

quiet,

writing down what stirs inside.

The thoughts that beat,  
which don't allow her to sleep,  
*must* come out  
and satisfy their desire,  
their need to be heard,  
so as to shatter the glass,

and breathe.

& even though she dreams of more -  
answers to the unanswered whys of the world -  
a world run by us.... supposedly,  
and I say that because, first  
we must all do what "they" want....

Money makes the world go 'round;  
Heart is a luxury, few here have found.

Male friends -  
taken or not,  
want to be lovers,  
whenever  
they're in the mood for Mary  
and not Gina....  
What are they looking for ?  
God only knows,  
not a true friend or great lover  
seems to be enough.

And....

The kids want what "everybody else" has,  
and you need a little of their spunk,  
just to keep up with them

and all their needs....

It is all your responsibility....  
Our very nature denies us  
of personal deceit,  
for we *are* Women,  
mothers, daughters, wives,  
girlfriend's, sisters, peacemakers,  
seekers of balance in strife....

Medical's expensive &  
so is everything else necessary to simply *live*  
your life,

so you struggle all day,  
in order to ensure  
you can protect your seed

and at the same time -  
the rent be paid.

Yes the love,

Sweet mother, the love  
is absolutely something science fiction,  
'cause no one but a mother understands.

Tired and scared,  
every day,  
the bills,  
shelter, food, clothes, education-  
a phone call - all  
too damn expensive....  
And "they" raise the cost  
before you can even catch up.

While,

....I must pass this class, I  
don't need  
and what's more pay for the irrelevance,  
so that I could be  
*allowed*  
to stay in the class where I flourish,  
where my creativity screams the colors  
of who and what we are.

I must, or else for the rest of my life,  
I'll be working three jobs,  
where they treat me like...  
Just because...  
And my daughter one day will be all grown up  
and still bear the cross of missing her mommy.

I WILL NEVER,  
I rather die,  
than be one to marry for money  
and yet I can't let that happen to my child see,

and yeah,  
sometimes I wish she would shhhh;  
Worked twelve hours, still not done,  
paper work is thick on the table....  
Responsibility to everyone -  
got to go, got to run  
if we are to stay on top;

And in between empty out some  
scared sorrow.

So now,  
I've had it with trusting everyone,  
believing they must notice what I deserve -  
'cause I've noticed, they don't notice unless  
you're a "special" someone - their own.

....

Close to home?

How about the pain that comes with  
in - laws,  
mother-in-laws who are determined to prove  
your husband is still their son....

For all you mother- in- laws out there:  
let the wives of the world assure you,

WE KNOW,

and we did not become wives to be the man's mother,  
we became wives to be the man's wife  
because you did something right all on your own.

Why must it take years to become friends  
when we love the same man,  
I'll never know.

....



And for the men who walk out on marriage....  
here's a little espresso for you -  
You loved that woman, that's why you married her,  
why didn't you keep loving her the way you did before?  
Did marriage turn her into a woman not worth chasing anymore?

People die, friends come and go,  
your heart breaks a million times,  
but you stay strong  
and have learned to speak your mind....  
and people who say nothing of importance  
dare judge you as if you're the one who's crazy -  
because *now*  
they have a topic of which to speak of -  
well good for them.

I laid in my bed tonight as I tried to fall asleep  
and thought of all my experiences,  
all the different times,  
all the different people,  
all the joy  
and all the pain....

And then I thought of my mother,  
how she moved far away from her family  
for the love she holds for my father,  
to give her children a "prosperous" American life;  
Yes, I imagine she was excited  
to come to this land of the "free"  
and see all the pretty things up close  
instead of on T.V.

But then the ache she must of suffered,  
alone with children too young to understand.

She cleaned and cleaned,  
she cooked and cooked,  
she sewed and sewed,  
she fought to get us all she could,  
just like my father, but she was still young  
and the people here were richer but not as  
loving as where she came from  
and it took her some time to get used to the “American” way.

I think at 28, I just now begun to get used to the American way.  
I just now realized how  
I can be me here,  
or maybe, I’m just tired of hiding.

Well, I should be glad that I’m finally in the race...  
Running with the crowd, instead of spending all my time  
wondering why’s to all the things that don’t make sense,

I’ll carry them all in a bag,  
as I pass the rest while they sleep.

....

So here I continue to wonder,  
as the first light of the day shines from under my curtains -  
A mother would not be the one to tell her children  
of her wild days, of her pains, of her dreams...  
of her.... life - the rest found inside;

Does she think I’ll judge her?  
It’s impossible, I am grown  
and I am the one who knows where her heart stands.  
And now I know,  
that these things  
are things that women need to share.

Why one judges another’s shoes,  
when they haven’t the slightest clue,  
where those shoes have been - is a sin  
if ever I heard one.

Mother be happy, you've done more than well  
and are beautiful.

Father, I have yet to meet a man,  
half the man as you.

Little sister, please don't wonder  
how you can make things better -  
they're as good as they are meant to be -  
you've made the right decisions.

And to all my sisters who behold  
the heart of Wommin....

You are heroines of our time,  
as radiant as the sun,  
through storm - you shine,

the strength of your hearts  
keeps man-kind alive....

And you know  
deep down inside  
your place is never to hide  
but be who you are meant to be.

When something or someone  
has knocked you down -  
you raise those wings and fly,  
fly,  
fly;

For that feeling that you are *more*  
is not insanity ladies,  
it's lore.

I will cry when I need to,  
I will laugh if I feel to,  
I will fight - all night  
and all day, regardless if I am noticed  
of my ways.  
I will....survive  
until the day I collapse and die.

I'll look up at the stars every chance I get,  
I'll chant for my energy to be powered by what is more  
and I'll give until I come back to get.

We are Wommin, hear us ROAR!

....

I haven't slept a wink all night,  
but for some reason,  
I'm all right.

I will face the tasks that need be done  
to the best of my abilities,  
and what I don't get done will wait till the 'morrow  
for I am but tired  
of all that old sorrow.

There is love,  
all around  
and I know where it is....now.

Mary Castellana



*FULL*

This beholder sees her as beautiful  
She envisions her soul as in a war  
Tell me why those salt drops pour so fruitful?  
My reply comes with high tide, bring the oar.

Like a bird or E.T. I wish to soar  
Beneath the cratered grey moon of night light  
And open everyone simple as doors  
To world loss for hunger, strife, cloud so bright.

My sea has moved nature look at this site  
Thousands of waterfalls weep at my name  
Kilauea and Helene at their heights  
Perspire jagged icebergs from my pain.

A utopian world of peace brings drought  
My weathered, tired, helpless hands bring doubt.

Khadijah Rentas



*Static*

In the midst of  
whatever,  
behind her doors,

she dances.

The mirror before her,  
she sets herself free,  
Hence,  
her wings,  
shining brilliantly  
in the flecks of candlelight  
illuminating  
harmony  
between the realms.

Alone, is better,  
for what would they say?

Even a whisper of judgment,  
would she be able to hear, for static  
would interrupt the sane.

Behind closed doors she flies,  
in the midst of whatever outside –  
shut out  
to soar through her existence,  
without  
a stick or stone to hurt her.

Floating,  
flying,  
fast and slow;  
Riding with a beat  
so few know;  
Made,  
from both the heart

and the heart within  
the seed – of all...

She calms the spirit  
back into its' form.

Halleluiah is found in the rhythm of souls.

Adjust your antenna,

Praise a new morn'

Mary Castellana





*Mysterious Woman*

Engraved with a gold frame;  
A painting on my wall,  
A woman without a name  
looks like a mysterious doll.

Her stare is serious  
And her eyes are wide;  
At times she looks furious  
if you glance from the right side.

Her expression is so mystifying  
that it creeps;  
Gazing at her is so petrifying  
that my heart slightly weeps.

Sometimes it feels  
she has a secret to spill  
But would she ever reveal?  
That answer obeys her will!

Her young look  
brings out her emotions.  
In her hands she holds a book,  
that emphasizes her life's devotions.

Aleksandra Sankina

*Raspberry Tea*

It's warm.  
The smoke rises and caresses the soft skin.  
The hot cup burns,  
Unable to remove her hands from the  
warmth,  
They burn.  
They redden and become somewhat raw,  
But the smoke still rises.  
Deep breath.  
Exhale.  
Let the tears fall to neutralize the heat.  
Grasp it.  
Hold on.  
It'll pass.  
Reddened and raw,  
The steam rises.  
The comforting caress -  
The familiar warmth.  
More salt than sugar. The bleak cup grows  
cold.  
Her hands soften and chill.  
Cold tea.  
Grey tea.  
She just can't seem to keep the warmth.

Ashley Gianoulis

*Invisible Corsets*

Be strong my girls,  
your faltering.

Torn are your wings;

I see them scrape against  
the bar room floor.

A smile painted on your face.

Giggles you give,  
without ever hearing  
what he said;  
for always do you wonder  
how you look.  
Does he want me?  
Am I pretty?  
Am I special?  
Somewhere along the line  
you lost yourself.

Rare do I find myself  
around women who are real -  
Saying what they would say -  
Being who they would be  
if no fear beheld them  
of judgement.

I am called "weird" at times;  
I am called passionate  
& that I am;  
There are times when eyes are found  
bewildered by what I just said,  
simply because glimpses of  
reality  
frighten those not used to  
"see".

I am not perfect,  
no, not perfect at all  
but I hold onto my pride  
& fight to hold on to my  
verse.

In-between lines,  
what do you make of me?

Be strong my girls, your faltering;  
Torn are your wings;  
You must go home  
& learn again how to mend....  
yourself,  
**before,**  
you can fly  
to find  
what it is  
your looking for.

The color of your hair  
is temporary.  
The tightness of your skin  
will loosen.  
There *will* come a time when  
you,  
drunk at the bar  
will look ridiculous;

A new generation of lookers  
will take their eyes away  
no matter how much you giggle,  
for nothing more solid  
was found at your seat

& miserable will you lie awake  
without the courage to love thyself  
for all you'll know is,  
wether you are good or bad -  
your assets  
and what you wear -  
and it ends there.

How will you lead your man  
if not even you know where to go?

Empty lies a soul  
chained by pieces of torn wings tangled  
to restrain....

**Before**

you  
lose  
the  
most  
important  
part  
of  
You,

find out what it is  
& be  
without fear;  
for silence does lie in vain;

& the boys become more lost  
everyday  
& every where I turn  
I'm afraid  
of the storms  
which come about  
to break....

Torn are your wings;

I see them scrape  
against the bar room floor.

A smile painted on your face.

Yes, it's you they all adore.

Congratulations.

But how long do you think  
that will last?

Go on,  
have another drink  
& wait.

Invisible corsets tighten.

Mary Castellana

## *Water From the Spirit Mouth*

Drench you palms with  
water  
Flowing from the spirit  
mouth  
And press them to your  
burning cheeks.

Wet your feet, turn your  
face  
To the red wind and blink  
Your eyes against the  
desert sand  
Blowing around you  
In shallow gusts.

I see you laughing  
From across this badland.  
Your face stretches wildly  
And curves at the cheek.

The sounds erupt from  
your throat  
Without control, and you  
let them go  
Rising at their own accord.  
What a joy to hear your  
laughter  
Above the din of my own  
brain.

I can hardly fathom  
The gentle sway of your  
shoulders  
Or comprehend how you  
conduct  
Your humility with such  
ease,  
So unashamed.

Not a labyrinth of  
Discomfort and half-smiles  
Or a tower of irony,  
You're reaching for  
something true.

I'm shocked at the health  
I'm rosy with  
When you spin around me  
It is you who put the spices  
In our sweetest bread.

I have an appetite for the  
mystery.  
That you carry around you.  
When you're off walking  
Without any sleep  
Twisting the hair on your  
head in bundles  
Around your fingertips.

I intend on arriving  
At the corner of your street  
in L.A.  
Barefoot  
With your letter sewn  
across my chest: S.

Like an Indian lady  
I immerse myself  
sometimes  
In our old clouded bath  
water.

Your scent still rises with  
the steam  
From the surface of my tub  
Where I rested my head  
against you  
After swallowing too many  
sleeping pills.

You smoked your cigar,  
The sound of trumpets  
blaring  
All around you.  
We always did forget  
The record player on.

You may be hot with your

charm  
But I have hidden ways of  
burning your lava  
In all of these ways I bring  
to you  
My love in a hot pink dress.

I have lotus root hands  
Tuberous in its will  
To truss you tightly to me.

Our faces hovering close  
together  
Appearing like two  
darkened mosques,  
Our eyes are twin sets  
Of smoldering lights,  
Like victims of each other  
We are a car crash.

Even when our time  
together  
Has been expired and  
defused  
You're off walking alone  
without any sleep,  
And I'm being undressed  
by strangers  
At truck stops in Des  
Moines  
I'll still be waiting for you  
In the backseat of those  
cars  
That I use to travel  
Across the world.

Genevieve Nina De Angelis

*Trouble*

Don't ask me  
'cause if I tell you,  
you'll be saved from a lie  
But I  
will become disposable.

Ask me,

'cause I want to tell you,  
that, which will save you,  
from a lie.

This,  
is what tears me apart  
in life.

When it must linger  
underneath my skin,  
seething through -  
the smell of pain;  
for all I hear and see.

A witness - human  
Torn apart by silence.

& every now and then  
I speak  
for it pushes against  
the back of my lips  
and slips  
out -  
a tidal wave,  
filtering the ocean of debris.

For a second, I breath;

But then the air's  
quickly trapped in new fear,  
for trouble may be up ahead,  
'cause I cared -  
I cared enough that I couldn't lie  
when a person I respect and liked  
looked into my eyes -

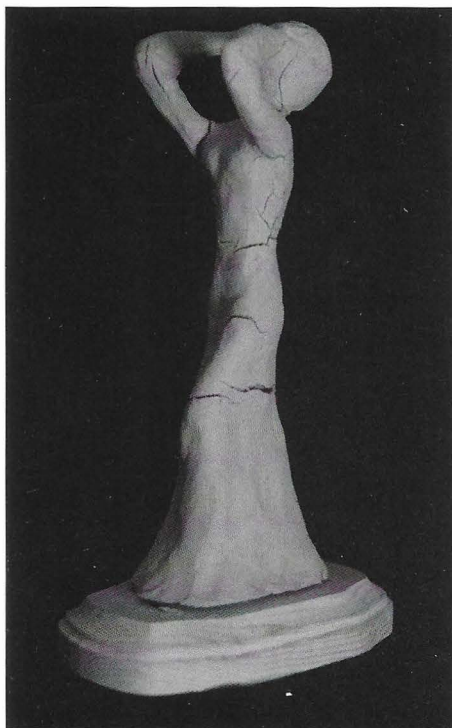
My heart made me;

But this does not exist as a valid reason  
or mean anything to  
anyone;  
So far this, is what I've learned;  
and so I will be hurt  
and not them,  
again -

The price I pay  
for being me.

Nowhere  
is it safe  
when lies circle.

Mary Castellana



## *The Nothing*

There lives a great emptiness inside of her,  
filled,

with memories of friends  
no longer there;

And friends they were,  
for she held them close and dear  
to her care.

Loved ones – once, twice, three times  
& gone,  
trample the sores  
with distant moments  
as pictures – together ,  
alone, in her mind's eye,  
in a war of still and swirl.

Can't find the curtain.

Grateful she is of quaint joy  
but fearful  
is the other side of that coin.

Knowing,  
the moments pass  
& leave her – bare  
a starving pain  
found in her core.

Play make – believe,  
say, oh well,  
so that you can breath.

For what?  
For who and what is real?  
If even you are not real?

There is no freedom to say all you feel,  
for judgment here, is thrown;  
You would risk your job,  
you would risk the mountains crumble

onto the already  
many rocks.

All the people living for commentary;

Entertaining news I am, crazy maybe.

So, in an army of those who look like she,  
she aches for others to feel each other  
& know  
there is more that in which their eyes can see.

Fight for the time,  
the will to hold on,  
to make new memories,  
smiles of safety  
alive and continue on,  
so that,  
to feel full  
in this life & not  
starve as we are –

For it has been too long  
& no one even notices anymore...

a great emptiness lives...

inside her – too heavy  
to keep dragging around

& too painful to forget it all,  
for her love was & is still  
& she chooses to not give up all she has,

for no – that could never help;

but oh, her dear ones –  
no longer are they around  
& she walks in fear,  
for each time someone new  
comes near,



with a friendly word  
& beautiful eyes –  
boy or girl,  
young or old,  
she feels the blood of pain  
seethe through her very life

& so she whispers  
with tears in her eyes,

“It’s not real,  
don’t care,  
don’t feel,  
for no more emptiness  
can your sweet heart carry,

broken you are already.”

The nothing.

Mary Castellana



## Fairytale

Long ago, in land far away, in a tower high above raging waters there was a handsome Prince. This Prince was held captive by his father, the king, and a wicked, wicked Wizard. He was under the spell because the king was afraid for the kingdom's future. The problem was that the Prince, although he was handsome and strong, he was just too dumb. Whenever he spoke he just made a fool of himself and of the crown. All the women in the village were mesmerized by his looks and strength, but as soon as he spoke they cried with fear and disappointment. They feared for the kingdom also for he was a babbling fool. The King and the Wizard decided to curse his tongue for they were embarrassed for the kingdom and the men who lived there. They decided he was better off mute and away from the kingdom.

The only way to break free from the spell was to be rescued by a specific Princess who possessed the ability to make the Prince smart. The Prince felt hopeless for he didn't believe that such a Princess existed and if she did, how would she get to him. The tower was so high and the peril was great because of the waters surrounding it.

Well, lo and behold...one beautiful, sunny day this beautiful Princess was passing by on a ship. She was on an exploratory expedition surrounding the waters that the tower was located. She saw him looking out of the tower and became curious. "What a lovely creature up above, I shall possess him", she said. This Princess was no ordinary fairy-tale Princess; She was strong-willed, controlling and very powerful. She was also taken by his looks and decided to investigate the situation, since she had a curious nature. She donned her swimming gear and set out to the tower. Once she reached the tower, she climbed up to the window (she was also a very experienced mountain climber) and entered the room. She spoke to him but he didn't respond and this intrigued her.

The Princess found him to be a challenge and since she was always up for a challenge she decided to stay there with him and acquaint herself. She spent weeks talking about her adventures and expeditions. She also taught him everything she knew. She taught him history, science, math, astronomy and poetry (for she was a well-rounded Princess) and he absorbed everything like a sponge. After several weeks the Prince's eyes became alert and his writings proved that the Princess had succeeded in making him a knowledgeable man. One morning he got up and words came out of his mouth - the spell was broken.

When the Prince returned to his kingdom, the King and the Wizard were so surprised at the unbelievable transformation that they ran away with fear. The prince of course, became king. The Princess, though, let him enjoy his throne for about a week when she decided that they would elope and live happily ever after in her kingdom. Under no circumstances was the Princess about to leave her previous life behind.

Ida Pacheco

## *Identity*

Yet I was not changed,  
For time and grief have no power,  
To alter the immortal spirit of man.  
Seasons may come and go,  
Hope like a bird may fly away,  
Passions may break its wings against the iron bars of fate,  
Illusions may crumble like the cloudy towers of sunset flames,  
Faith as running water, may slip from beneath our feet,  
Solitude may stretch itself around us, like the measureless desert sand,  
Old age may creep upon us like the gathering night over our bowed heads,  
Grown hoary in their shame.

Yet bound to fortune's wheel,  
We may taste of every turn of chance,  
Now rule as kings, now serve as slaves,  
Now love, now hate,  
Now prosper, now perish,  
Now in love, now out of love,  
Now happy, now cry,  
But still through it all,  
We are the same through and through,  
For that is the marvel of identity.

Afolabi Olalekan

*Expression of Habitual Thought*

Crystal clear, there's nothing I fear  
Crisscrossed bridges built with mending accents  
Jingled leaves fall from branches to be brushed away by slaved breezes  
Heavy pistols carried by infants trying to catch hustled breaths that exhale  
the difference between boy and Man

Ambassador set me free!

Liberating wars and transcending munitions  
A crisis without the satisfaction of one kill  
Murder is a weapon used to dissect the victim's innocence and virginal mercy

A fight no longer with humanity but with a device with no verbal instincts and a worded face  
Beware, for this will soon be our ruler or maybe we're too late due to constant upgrade

You say you know me but you don't  
You're strings holding me up were long cut

A mind gone numb  
Thinking with other parts is dumb  
Is it a sin I commit?  
The snake licks the bottle cap's sweated drops dry with shameful daint

Deaths of the awakened Messiah haunt granted prayers cremating its worth to frail ashes

Prisoner and policeman tango to the strategic lyrics of rap  
Some might call it a forbidden dance  
I call it a brilliant scam

The lamppost standing on the street corner gives spark to the isolated room  
with moving fingers writing letters with aching simile and loud whispers  
throughout the storytellers mic  
But what lies beneath its casting shadow?

Close one eye you'll see half the story  
Close both eyes and you'll have an opinion

Jennifer Cortes

## *Oxygen*

It seems we hold our breath,  
even as we stand in the middle of oxygen.

Where's home?  
When all you can do is love  
& here your frightened of it.

Angels cry  
and you've got other things on your mind  
that you consider cool or obligated too.

From the most powerful man in the universe  
& gang  
to the man with another door slammed shut.

Worrisome tears stinging his eyes.

Can't get this without that.  
Can't get that without this.

The most popular kids at school  
to the children who can not be  
or choose not to be,  
you are less than we are,  
let's make fun of you.

Where's mother?  
& I wonder if I'm the only one wondering –  
worrisome full inside.

I can hear the angels cry for air  
but the men say "No, we are men,  
we are rich and powerful men,  
we know how to run things –  
just ask our friends..."

and see how important we look?"

& the children better respect the grownups  
while their hearts are being beaten with  
"the way things are" stick.

In the beginning,  
I must believe,  
It started with good intentions

But what are you now?

And what have you done?

The lord, God, father, light,  
all that is good,  
however you call your savior,  
whom hopefully is a part of you  
would rather see your “powerful” efforts  
start a revolution  
instead of ignoring the priest at church,  
the rabbi at temple – your conscience,  
wherever you worship the good.

We are all  
many parts of one;  
We all want and need.  
We all get hurt, we all feel sad,  
We – all, we are all  
& unless we learn we need to connect to feel  
whole,  
we will continue on  
with these empty parts  
that will continue to spread like a disease  
until we cease.

With all your degrees, nice clothes, cars and  
perfect speech, & let us not forget muscle –  
The feeling you have that you deserve more than others,  
like I’m just a young woman  
without the means  
to be taken seriously, for example.

No money, no degree,  
“No, I don’t know one of your somebody’s”  
My nose is clean.

But let me say this,  
I know what I represent,  
let me represent it to you.

Now I'm speaking to a door,  
A door I want to walk right through & ask  
"who are you?"

"the rules are..." elevated,  
I guess to promote fear,  
yet I'd continue,  
"why should I have to go through you  
to get to my dream?  
Do you see me shutting you down?"

Oh, I understand – it's because it's your job -  
Money.  
Do you hear yourselves?  
Why must that be life?  
How do you think that's going to work  
when we each have our own heart, mind ,  
dreams – our own part, honestly?  
I wouldn't be here if it wasn't part of my destiny.

"They said so"

Who's they? And why do they believe that  
they have the power of God, simply  
due to their money?  
If we all stopped working for this "they"  
& instead worked for each other,  
we may lose our jobs –  
but so many  
would be discovered & a greater job  
would be at hand.  
A greater job  
for a greater good.

We run the supermarkets,  
without us where would "they"  
buy their food?  
We run the electric,  
without us, how would "they"  
use their power?

"They" would be forced to be as we are  
and we would be as they.

Until so,  
who needs electric anyway?  
We could finally get a decent vacation  
and camp out,  
free of fear,

for what power do “they” have against  
us all?

Demand that we all stand together  
and become whole.

With the power of the light shining,  
only darkness will fear us.

A garden fruitful.

You would feel the light you pray too,  
see it there in front of you.  
Air – your mind would bloom into  
a greater “man”.

Without “play fair”,  
without common sense,  
what are we standing on?  
Without our hearts beating as one,  
what are we?

Evolve  
or die?

Would you like a couple of minutes,  
or a few more lifetimes?  
if any there is.

For I don’t believe your precious materials  
will be of use to you  
when it’s all said and done.  
Think about that  
next time your worrying hon.

It seems like we hold our breath  
even as we stand in the middle of oxygen –  
or maybe  
we’re just running out.

Mary Castellana



*Writers Block*



a rhyme, a sonnet,  
a line, a verse,  
a way to express,  
to release, to disperse,  
to vent, to confide,  
announce secrets I hide,  
information I supplied,  
that I keep down inside,  
a scream, a whisper,  
a song, a word,  
a way of letting loose,  
whichever is preferred,  
through my rhyme, my sonnet,  
my line, my verse,  
I speak what's unspoken,  
released from my curse.

Patricia Rollins

*Keep It Movin*

Brave, I walk against the fierce wind of adversity;  
Backwards, avoiding the eyes of stone.

Sideways, snaking through the labyrinth of untold truths still,  
still I have made no imprints on this worn path.

Progression, achieved only in the face of my demons,  
pacing towards a future of loss.

People, places, emotions, self identity -  
possibilities are endless, so they say.  
Pour me a jug of red wine.

I'll be here a long time

Khadijah Rentas

*Complexity of a Woman*

Your heart as the Grand Canyon is Deep  
Your mind changes even in your Sleep

All you really want is to be Pleased  
It's hard to find someone to Believe

There are many tests to gain your Trust  
To be in your arms, powers of Lust

When your thoughts change I know to Listen  
Even when your true wants are Hidden

It will take a lifetime to know You  
Spending my life is something I'll Do

Never ending puzzles with Beauty  
As man, loving you is my Duty

Your growth, nature gets better through Life  
As I will be blessed to have a Wife

James Brewer (Dedicated to D.G.)

## *Upon an Easel*

I would like to put you up on an easel  
and let men marvel at your magnificence,  
on to what God has shamelessly inspired  
you to be.

Unfurl you against the stained mahogany  
wooden frame.  
...stroking my hands to feel upon your  
silkened texture,  
of your intricate canvas, to instill warmth  
and indulge upon your brilliance  
and your refined beauty.

As I immerse my hands  
and hesitantly pour paint upon you  
...as we make love.

Allow me to feel even the nails and tacks  
that binds you,  
so I may truly reside deep within you.

Lend me your eyes and grant me your grace  
to guide  
my hands in to perfection for each brush  
stroke.  
So we may create the very universe of  
nature's hold,  
and awe inspire the world...as lovers do.

Past beyond the great plains of the  
Savannahs,  
toward the lands where cherry-lollipop  
flowers blossom  
and as dark chocolate dew drops drip off  
ripened tomato  
grapes bursting and as honey suckle  
peaches run their  
sweetened nectar down like honey

Over the mountains that each great men  
once leaped to see and lay,  
gazing upon the horizons' setting sun only  
to lead

on to a starry moon-filled night,  
and where they would seem to be lost  
upon  
the air- thinned plateaus of your twin  
peaks.

Allow me to be baptized unto your paint  
and guide me to your oceans and seas,  
so we may carry the souls of men at the  
brink of your imagination and fantasy  
and enter to a realm of realism to show  
what you and I meant to be.

...marvel upon your beauty.

...gaze upon your magnificence.

As I hold you and put you upon my easel.

Dindo Pagtalunan dedicated to my Annie

*Love Filled Dream*

The cold wind briskly kissing my cheeks,  
subtle and calm,  
caressing and comforting,  
passionate and loving.  
I turned to embrace her soft gentle lips.  
Grasping the pillows to my arms, tighter and tighter.  
Burying my head in its fluffy feathered set.  
Losing myself in the warmth it gave back, the closeness and comfort,  
The safety in my heart it did provide me...  
Sadness over came my heart,  
My thoughts ...empty and in denial;  
As tears streak down my face...  
buried in my bed...  
The sweet, simple comfort of a cry as  
nerves calm when I envisioned a charm,  
a beauty from a far in my mind....in my heart.  
A smile that's sweet, and eyes divine...  
a reddish glow from her twined locks,  
enchanted lips full, deep, glistened with rivers of feelings and emotions,  
she speaks with elegance and movements of grace.  
...SADDENED,  
far beneath... this lonely heart,  
does happen as I lay, trying to sleep....  
trying to know....  
trying to know how she may be?  
How she feels?  
How could she be far away from this hearts innocent intent...  
so far away,  
so far away from her...  
back to sleep, to try to end a dream...  
back to sleep with a vision,  
in a love filled dream.

Dindo Pagtalunan

*A Rediscovery From The Rear View Mirror*

This roller coaster has me hypnotized  
I forget you with every drop and climb  
You're something that I haven't memorized  
I have to learn you for a second time  
I want to know who I am in your head  
I want to see my face burned in your eyes  
But there's this casual string tied 'round my bed  
That sparks recovery from the intense guise  
I sometimes feel like a ghost around you  
Except when no one else is in the room  
Are moments worth the miles you speed me through?  
I'm running out of feelings to consume  
I think I've lost you altogether but then  
You happen to me all over again

Dana Donadio

*Him*

His eyes are like an ocean of kindness,  
difficult it is too turn away.

All the time I think,  
do it now, before it's too late,  
before my thunder scares him  
& of course before I sink.

Stay afloat; be as wind  
'cause here I can not stay.  
I mustn't watch the sun rise,  
It's someone else's day.

A moment or two,  
sometimes I get three  
& for that I wish to thank him,  
for the air he fills my lungs with,  
I'll take those moments as they were  
for me.

Thank you

Mary Castellana

*Still Cold*

May, this year  
is still cold.

The clouds keep coming  
and cover  
the warm rays of the sun  
needed for  
what's been made froze  
all winter long.

As I sit,  
I watch the trees  
& notice their leaves  
are facing down.

Come on sun, we need you,  
has the wind pushed so hard  
that even you have fallen down?

Worrisome,  
the spirit here is falling.

Where resides the spirits left  
of true –  
You can find them crying,  
yeah,  
they're crying over you.

Petals holding on  
but bare of color,  
surrounded by other forms  
who live for the moment  
& in that,  
don't think  
'bout the morrows  
that come too leave  
her magic heart too break.

They pray for it  
& then  
destroy it,  
so simply destroying it;

Alone with the memories  
and hope inflamed with ache.

By the moon –  
as she passes  
the ground we all walk upon,  
sorrow lies behind the lines  
of her face

Cuz  
nothing burns with fire  
enough too melt the ice –  
Break through the numbness  
of demise  
& still  
covered by the clouds –  
all we are left with is hope  
that the sun  
somewhere is.

May, this year  
is still cold.

They live for the moment –  
happy and content  
to feel skin – any skin,  
doesn't matter of whatever  
lies beneath –  
Rays  
covered by the clouds  
& the clouds  
push cold into her roots  
putting her lonely shine out.

How many more times  
must I die, she whispers,  
before true loves light  
keeps me warm  
& lets me live strong  
that even in rain  
there is warmth  
to fly with me  
through all our tomorrows.



Keep me warm,  
so that winter  
can't freeze me no more.

For, May,  
this year  
is still cold.

I'm losing ground.  
I'm losing hope.  
Along with the leaves,  
my petals almost touch the floor

with a growing fear  
that you might not even  
be there – any more.

Mary Castellana

*Icy*

As the pink buds of spring are born between blades of grass,  
still I shiver, teeth shattering in my red hooded coat,  
as the sun shines brilliantly, attempting to fill me with its warmth -  
Still, even the icy temperature of fuji cannot compare to the icy cold of my soul;  
As the greenest of green leaves soar with the wind,  
Still I hide, in fetal position, in the dark, alone and afraid.

Khadijah Rentas

*What's In A Name?*

Butter me up like a Thanksgiving turkey,  
Early on a sunny Saturday afternoon;  
Remind me of our longing over a kiss;  
Now softer than a petal pressed upon a rose.  
Again, so close we steal each other's breath.  
Ravage me with your lustful love.  
Dusk till bright sunny dawn.

Khadijah Rentas



Photograph by Dana Donadio

If you would like to participate in editing the 2005 edition of *All Ways A Woman*, or would like to submit one of your own literary pieces, please do not hesitate to contact us via email [Allwaysawoman@hotmail.com](mailto:Allwaysawoman@hotmail.com).

