

# Serpentine Magazine

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ISSUE 1

SPRING 2012



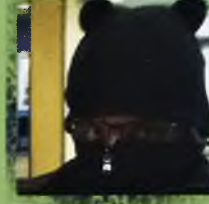
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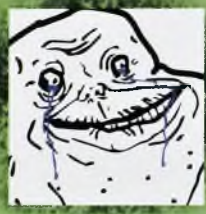
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## Special Thanks

Ilya Goussev, The Ghost, Shaquille Russell... aaaand everyone else who doesn't immediately come to mind. We love you all!!

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Yeeeaahhh... so remember when I said in the last issue that this was the same ol' Serpentine you knew and loved? Well, in terms of staff and general goings-on and operations, it's still the same madhouse it always was! As Editor in Chief, I've made the executive decision to really show that this is a new era of the magazine by starting off 2012 with a brand new volume. This involved making some aesthetic changes to the layout, and I hope you all like it!!

One of the big points with this new issue is the cover for both sides. Thanks to one of our members, Serpentine and Artifacts have actual faces now! Say hello to Serpy and Safira!! These covers are just your introduction to these characters, and who knows? You just might find out more in a future issue...

Our Spring SLAM was a huge success again this semester. I thank all that attended and participated from the bottom of my heart (yeah, even you jerks who only showed up for the pizza and CLUE credit). Shout outs go to our winners Andrea Curry, Aerial Perez, and Joe & Dane. Andrea and Aerial's pieces are featured in this part of the issue, so check them out!!

I personally think this issue is one of, if not the, best issue(s) we've put out in recent years and I'm really excited for you all to read through it. Thanks for all of your support and nyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyannyan

~Batman Dan

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# Serpentine

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### **Serpentine Cover**

"Serpy"

Illustrated by Jovilyn Caballero

Colors by Ilya Goussev

### **Centerfold Artwork**

"False Identity"

Stephanie Parathyras

# DROWN

an original song  
by Aerial Perez

Spring 2012 SLAM Winner



I never made you promise  
Anything you couldn't keep  
I never made you do anything  
To keep you away from me  
It's funny how you can love someone  
And suddenly you never speak  
It's funny how you can love someone  
And suddenly think they're weak

I guess it's a circle  
And I'm the line  
I guess it's a circle  
And I divide

Heavy under your water I  
Drown, drown, drown  
Heavy under your water I  
Found, found out  
How to breathe again  
How to see the end  
Breathing life I saw the light in us

I'm just a person  
And I can't take it  
I have tried to survive  
And I can't make it  
Heavy under your...  
Heavy under your...  
Heavy under your hand I move  
Heavy under your...  
Heavy under your...  
Heavy under your heart!

Heavy under your water I  
Drown, drown, drown  
Heavy under your water I  
Found, found out  
How to breathe again  
How to see the end  
Breathing life I saw the light in us

It's funny how, it's funny how  
It's funny how when you give up  
It's funny how, it's funny how  
It's funny how when I give up...

# Debi Does Retirement

By Andrea Curry  
Spring 2012 SLAM Winner

"Did he cum yet?"  
(The last time I'll get to ask that question)  
I lay on my back,  
waiting for my cues  
to oh and ah;  
as this mammal humps me.

At first it was fun  
and a little naughty...

Now I've had it all  
and it feels kinda dirty.

When I met Joe  
I didn't think much

He was ordinary  
in every way,  
including his size  
(I don't mean his feet.)

Yet a spark struck  
when his hand held mine;  
something in me died.

Not something good or bad,  
just the lust  
that would cause  
my legs to open at sight  
of a camera and dollar signs.

It started off  
as college payment -  
then became all I knew.

Cowgirl, doggie, teabag,  
I've cummed to them all.

But nothing ignites my passionate fires  
like Joe's brown eyes  
looking into mine  
as he caresses my breast  
and claims me his own.

He gave me strength,  
to walk from a contract  
to continue my  
sexual money lust.

Both were my kings  
but I relinquish it all  
to him willingly.

"Cut, that's a wrap!"

And now it's done,  
tomorrow bids a new woman,  
a loved woman  
capable of pleasuring,  
(and knowing how to be pleased.)

Take me Joe, I am yours.

# The Machine

Shaquille "The Sorrow" Russell

The grand machine, the ultimate creation of the machine empire. A machine as old as our understanding of time.

The ancient machine, one as new as the most recent life. All that we know is the machine. I am but a simple fragment

of what is to be completed by all of you.

I am only a bit to be surrounded by my friends, to create a byte. With you and your friends we spawn a kilobyte.

Surrounded by our borough a megabyte is formed. This city makes a gigabyte, while our union in this state makes us a terabyte. United in our country as a petabyte, standing on this continent creating an exabyte. Fusing with other continents the computer becomes a zettabyte. All the oceans and countries that make our planet form a yottabyte.

This machine doesn't end there. That yottabyte is a part of a solar system the size of a brontobyte. As all that is in existence, in this universe and others like it, form a geopbyte.

We are only fragments of the final machine; we are imperfect, but we are the only parts that fit. The machine is constantly evolving. Not just going up like trees or side to side like weeds, not the weed that is smoked but another type of weed, both of which I do not condone. I digress.

Why grow up or sideways, when I can stretch out in all directions? We are part of a system; like all systems we have corrupt data, viruses and infections. Which are unfortunately more united than the healthy parts of our system. We are a machine as old as time, always growing and expanding beyond our understanding.

We are brand new machine: some parts old and outdated, other parts broken or serrated. We are all part of this machine called our universe. Now think how many machines are out there?

Serpentine 6

# My Writer's Block

By Jherelle Benn

Silence is a never ending high. The music is all that reaches me in this intoxicated state that I suddenly recognize myself to be in.

I'm silent, and I'll do almost anything...I'll be almost anyone you selfishly expect me to be. Muted and blind, I sniff the coke, blow the smoke, spread my legs become the joke.

Silence has become the new noise, tunneling through my reason and promptly dismissing my morals. This drug induced toxic stupor has stunted my ability to succeed and tore from my bones the creativity of a passionate soul sparing nothing but the flesh.

Battered and broken I utter not a sound. Not a whisper escapes to the wind or to beg your pity for my sorrow. Silence is a never ending high, and it fills my lungs with hatred. Hatred for myself and every inch of this body.

My words have no meaning...and therefore I am silent. Silence is a never ending high.

**Living Like Lazarus**  
**Living Like Lazarus**  
**By Spencer Bollettieri**  
**By Spencer Bollettieri**

**Some live like Lazarus or so they say,**

**They rise up from their shallow graves and never age a day.**

**Their skin is pale, they wear a shroud and they smell of death.**

**They have fungus growing from their hair and maggots on their breath.**

**Did you ever wonder what it'd be to live like Lazarus? To live every day,**

**Watching as people you know and love disappear and decay?**

**What's the appeal of the life immortal? What else is there to say?**

**Is it really worth it all to live like Dorian Gray?**

**Why do people wish and dream of cheating their demise?**

**Is there really a reward for an immortal life when everybody dies?**

## "Created After the Beer Volcano"

by Stephanie Parathyras

### Characters-

Girl: 15 years old, shopping for candy

John: 34 years old, he leaves the house most days feeling particularly pious and holy

Al: 54 year old chief of security

### Setting-

A shopping center of some kind there are many employees behind their cash registers. Al the chief of security is looking for shoplifters to prosecute. Seeing a small impoverished looking youth in the candy aisle he goes to see if he can catch her stealing something. He is about to confront her for her obvious wrong doing when he is passed by John who grabs the girl and begins speaking with her.

John- Have you heard the good word of our lord?

(Girl is staring)

John- I wish to take a moment to tell you today about salvation, are you interested in salvation young lady?

Girl- I have already been offered and accepted eternal salvation.

John- (skeptically) Where is your Church young lady? What is it called?

Girl- I worship the Flying Spaghetti Monster, we have no set location for our worship as we praise his noodly goodness in our daily lives.

John- (laughing) That's very funny. But I want to tell you about Jesus Christ, a man who through his holy powers can lift you away from earthly depravity. You cannot worship a false idol, or else you will descend to Hell!

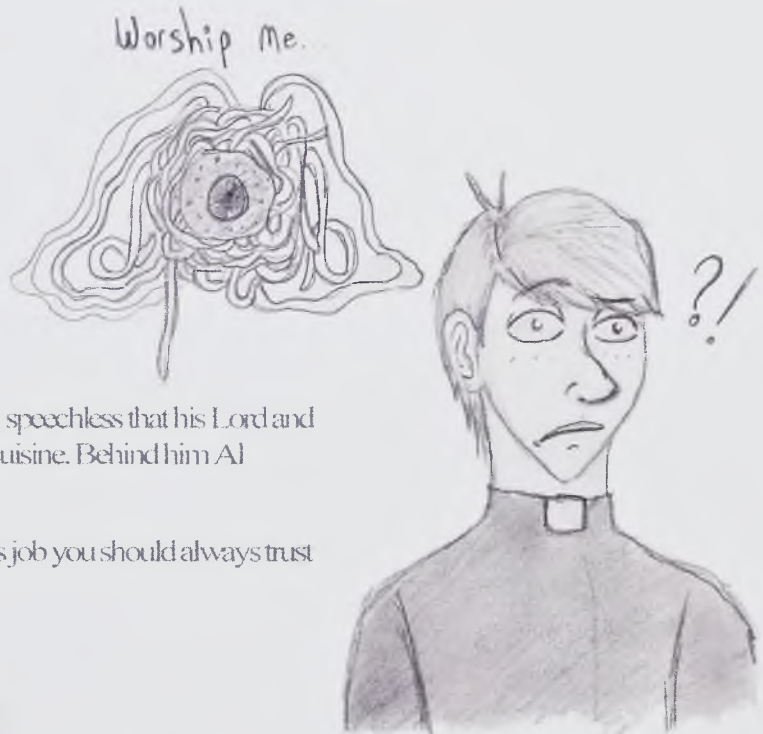
Girl- I do worship a true god. He is our great Flying Spaghetti Monster who created us after a night of indulging in a beer volcano. His horrible hangover the next day is why we have such strange and shocky things in this world, like spinach, milk, and taxes. Though I am curious about this Hell you speak of. Will there be cake? Please get back to me about that. Here's my card

(hands over a piece of paper and exits the store)

(John stands in his spot staring after the girl. He is still speechless that his Lord and personal savior Jesus were ignored in lieu of Italian cuisine. Behind him Al shuffles back towards him.)

Al- I knew there was something off about her. In this job you should always trust your judgment.

(He shakes his head and leaves)





# The Father, The Son, and The Holy Hooker

by Alec Montalvo

You have turned your cheek to implicate,  
Subroutine. A concubine nonetheless you  
Are; it's true. We respect it, we follow the rules,  
After dusk. The perseverance endured at the

Assiduous hour. Poor you, pour you,  
Poor me, poor me. For I have come to you, like  
A stray cat. The crimson illuminates your hands and lips,  
Necking, with a beast. Is this formidable? Laborious?

Not for you, with a standard so high.  
Strenuous, perhaps. I digress. Does my song  
Produce arduous intents? You're here,  
For the money. I get it. As I have prayed,

Prayed for you as a child. Knelt down by bedside,  
Was I that bad? Unconvincing? Unsatisfying? The  
Way I moved my tongue when I said, "Amen"  
I thought you'd like it. I'm up for new things.

It's time we ended this game. I have faith, but  
I'm running out of cash. If my wife suspects the  
Incongruous actions of what we do. Hell will be paid.  
Come down from your cloud, and get in my car.

We've had enough flirting for a day.  
Let's give this one more shot, I'll pay  
After. Incest, it's fine. The bloodline is too far.  
And you aren't man nor woman, a God in yourself.

So I'll ask you again. When I get on my knees,  
Beside the bed, and fold my hands upon you.  
You haven't been listening, do I deserve that little respect?  
Listen as I speak, the way I move my lips.

I'll do it as you want it. Rigorous, grueling?  
Slow, compassionate? Do I give good prayer?  
Tell me the truth. You know best,  
You get it all the time.

I'm left here, on my knees. I'm used,  
Humiliated. What do I get when it's over?  
A cocked breath, with an amen to finish the job.

Katiria Lopez

# Lost Singer

Her voice was delicious. With delicate fingers, each strum of the guitar hummed harmoniously to the smoky smooth sound of her lullaby. Her face was etched in concentration, her eyes closed, as if she was singing to someone that only resided within. The bright spotlight blanketed her in its beam, muting the faces of the people that watched her. They sat entranced, the sound of music weaving them into silent submission. Phones were untouched as their gazes were set upon the girl whose voice resonated through the room.

Anna also felt the spell. Lost in the hauntingly beautiful sound that floated around the small cafe, she didn't realize that her friends, Cindy and Phoebe, were not with her. With her chin resting on her hand, Anna focused on the girl whose voice held so much passion. Yet, something in that girl's song beckoned a dark thing within Anna's core.

*She sings amazingly. Did you get a good look at her?* The small voice whispered to her. *Who cares what she looks like, she has talent!* Anna mentally shrugged off the inner voice, tuning herself back to the girl as she sang the last verse of her song. The lyrics were powerful, her voice controlled and her guitar blended in beautifully.

*Yes,* interjected the voice, *she does have great talent. So much that even the audience is captivated. Too bad they didn't seem so when you performed.*

Sitting up straighter in her chair, Anna cocked her head as she began to think about it. She was the one who performed before the current singer. She had sung a well known pop song and she had fun singing it, but she could see that the audience wasn't completely focused on her like they were now. Anna's parents had spent a good amount of money, at her insistence on various voice coaches to train her to sing. She could hold a tune but she struggled, which led to her insecurity. All she ever wanted to do was to sing. It was her dream to perform and though she sang on stage often at the advice of her coaches, the feeling of not being good enough plagued her. The singer's natural talent had sparked that small, dark bud to grow and blossom into something ugly within. Anna's lips pouted into a frown. The more she thought about the differences, the more the dark spore began to proliferate. Instead of feeling awed, her eyes began to cloud with unmerciful judgement. The once bright face dimmed into a neutral mask. Instead of feeling the mystery of first love's heartache that was being sung, Anna's mind occupied itself, trying to find the ugliness in the singer to satisfy the dark spore's hunger.

She no longer saw a beautiful girl with incredible talent, but rather an ugly, plain looking girl. The singer's cheeks were speckled with acne scars. Her hair was too thin and flat that seemed to plaster on her head. It was dull hair. Her lips were too thin, her bottom row of teeth crooked. Her forehead was obviously oily, and most likely her pores were clogged. She wore a denim skirt with a black V-neck sweater, but to Anna, she was flat. No curves, no breasts, nothing. Just a very sickly thin girl that reminded Anna of a scrawny boy that hadn't yet reached puberty.

*Yes, I don't think she's hit puberty yet. She's so ugly,* the voice agreed.

Anna was so distracted by her thoughts that the sound of loud applause startled her. The girl stood and smiled shyly, though her countenance radiated brightly. People were excitedly talking to each other about how great she sang, while Anna just picked up her bag and walked out towards the bathroom, not even bothering to clap.

*Who cares if she sang so great, I could have done a better job if I just worked at it! Yes, she's a nobody. You sing and look so much better than her,* the voice reassured.

Entering the bathroom Anna took a good look at herself. Finally 18, her youth was at its prime. Her skin healthy and clean. Her long sandy brown hair carefully tousled and dramatic. She had one blue eye and one brown eye, something exotic and different. Averaged sized, Anna's clothes always fit her perfectly.

*It's better to have all those curves than to be that stick, isn't it?* The voice told her.

She was surprised that she agreed with the voice in her head. It was saying all the things that she wished she could say out loud. Anna considered herself to be friendly and never had any problems with anyone but for some reason, after listening to the singer, the bottled up insecurity seemed to seep out. Along with it, cruel words and thoughts.

"Oh, hey Anna, did you see that girl? She was amazing!" Cindy exclaimed, her blue eyes twinkled.

Anna jumped a bit, not noticing that her friends were in the bathroom with her. She didn't remember seeing them till now. "Yeah, I saw her." After a short pause, "Where were you guys? I didn't see you at all today."

Ignoring her question, "I'm surprised you didn't stay and talk with her. Especially that she sang really well," Phoebe said, as she twirled her hair.

Anna shrugged, "She wasn't that great."

"Are you kidding? You could feel the passion in her voice." Cindy looked puzzled.

"Yeah Anna, I know you have a good voice, but you have to admit, there was something she had that made the whole experience seem almost magical." Phoebe awed.

"So what? You're telling me that when I sing it isn't that great, that you don't feel the 'magic'?" Anna snapped.

"Anna no one is trying to attack you, sheesh, keep your voice down." Cindy hissed.

"So what if she could sing." Anna continued, "It's not like she's going to get anywhere looking like she does."

Cindy and Phoebe looked at Anna with wide eyes. Before either of them could respond, the door opened and the singer stepped in, glowing. Seeing that she wasn't alone, she sent a warm smile. "I thought I heard people talking, but I guess my hearing is off a bit, don't mind me."

Phoebe and Cindy were quiet as Anna simply nodded.

"I'm Macaleth," the singer replied, looking at Anna, "I've seen you sing before, and you've inspired me."

Surprised at her words, Anna asked, "You've seen me sing?"

The girl nodded, "I saw you sing at the Open Mic nights, and the way you fearlessly sang, it's amazing. It was because of you I dared myself to sing tonight."

Does it matter? The voice hissed, she needed you to sing. If it weren't for you she wouldn't have performed. She was and remains nothing. You command the stage. I bet she can't afford to have all the coaches you've had.

"If you'll excuse me, I just have to wash my hands. They got sweaty from the nervousness," she chuckled.

Anna watched as Macalath rinsed her hands. Again the dark spore mocked Macalath.

*Disgusting. Imagine having to hold her hand while it's all sweaty and sticky? You'd feel it clogging up your skin. Everything she touches, she would leave that sweat and dirt. She'll leave it grimy. Isn't that nasty?*

Before Anna could respond, Macalath had finished and held out her small hand to Anna. "It's great to finally speak with you, and I hope we can continue doing so."

*Don't shake her hand! The dark spore shouted, It's filthy! Disgusting! No matter how many times she washed her hands, it's still dirty!*

Uneasiness filled Anna. She was overcome with the willies, though she was never bothered by something as insignificant as a person with sweaty hands. Her youngest nephew had sweaty palms and it was something he was self-conscious about. Yet, she couldn't stop thinking about how thick, sweaty, and slimy it would feel to shake the girl's hand. Her upper lip curled slightly and she took a step back. "Sorry, uh, I too need to wash my hands. I just sneezed into them a while ago." She made no move to wash her hands.

Macalath's face fell a bit. Withdrawing her hand she nodded. "Okay, but hopefully we could talk about music and stuff." After a small wave goodbye to Anna, she quietly walked out of the bathroom.

As the door closed, Phoebe hissed at Anna, her brown eyes hard, "Anna what the hell was that?"

Rolling her eyes, "What was what?"

"When did you become such a germaphobe?" Phoebe shot at her. "And why did you have to leave her hanging like that? All she wanted to do was to shake your hand."

"You heard her, she has sweaty hands. That's disgusting, and excuse me for not wanting to touch that."

"But doesn't your nephew have sweaty hands?" Cindy asked. "You stood up for him when that girl he liked, made fun of him for it."

"He's different. He's family," she answered, walking towards the mirror to pretend to fix her hair.

"So? She's someone that actually admired you, and you go and act like that?" Phoebe again interjected. "God Anna, what's wrong with you? I didn't think you could be so stuck up."

"Shut up Phoebe, seriously. I'm tired of hearing 'Macaleth sang so great!' or 'Anna you're a horrible person for not being nice to her!' I don't have to be nice to every single person in this world!"

"Are you PMSing or something?" Phoebe continued. "'Cause I thought you would have been thrilled to know that you actually inspired someone to take a risk, especially that you can't sing as well as her!"

*As a slap to the face, Anna paused and blinked. How could she say that, knowing how hard I work to improve? She doesn't get it. She can't sing. Phoebe doesn't and never will measure up to your greatness. You don't have to take her lectures. You don't need her. She talks righteously, but she doesn't even exist.*

Turning to Phoebe, Anna's tone was dark. "Phoebe, what do you know about inspiration and taking risks? You're a poser. You can't do anything right. You try to be everyone's friend yet you have none. That's why no one ever notices you, especially that Macalath girl. You're sticking up for her, but she didn't even acknowledge you."

Shock and anger bled into Phoebe's face. Her fists clenched tightly and she started to breath hard. For a quick moment, Anna regretted what she had said.

"Anna, that was uncalled for," Cindy said quietly, "Phoebe, come on let's--"

"Ah! I see what it is now," Phoebe declared, a wicked smile curving her lips. "You're jealous aren't you?"

Now it was Anna's turn to be shocked and angry. "The hell I am, why would I be jealous of that stupid girl for? She's nothing!"

On to something, Phoebe continued to mock her, "Aw, Anna is jealous of little Macalath because she can sing way better, isn't that right Cindy?" She cocked her head towards Cindy.

"I believe you're right Phoebe," Cindy answered, a cruel smile forming on her lips. "I can see the envy dripping from your eyes Anna. It's an ugly sight, really."

Confused, Anna felt something roll down her cheeks. Stopping it with her hand, she looked at it and saw a thick black goo staining her hand. Rushing back to the mirror, her eyes were covered in the black substance that marked her once clean face. Her blinking caused more to leak and spill out. The dark spore that had started out small had now blossomed so that it began to pour out of her eyes. Horrified, she turned on the water and tried to wash it off. It would not come off. Her different colored eyes were no more as they bled into black.

"Aw, poor little Anna. Envious and jealous of someone you didn't think worthy of shaking your hand," Phoebe continued, standing beside Anna, her brown eyes mocking. "You couldn't stand the fact that someone had more passion and talent than you ever will."

"You could sing Anna," Cindy began, standing on the other side of Anna, taunting. "But you can never get somewhere with that voice."

Shuddering, Anna whispered, "What? What do you mean?"

They cackled.

"It's so pitiful, little Anna, that you actually believed you could sing, when all you did out there was to croak and screech the notes."

"It was sad, having everyone put up with your off pitched songs. All that money wasted because you still can't sing."

"We had hoped that you would eventually realize your place was not, and will not ever be on stage."

"Instead, at the expense of your parents, you refused to give up."

*We had waited for you to come to this epiphany on your own.*

Letting out a cracking scream, Anna fell to her knees, shoving her hands to her ears to try to shut out their voices, but they continued, their bright eyes burned into her mind.

*We were surprised when Macalath walked in here complimenting you. We believed she was joking and poking fun, but her heart was sincere.*

*You inspired her with your pathetic attempts to perform that even though she held out her hand warmly to you, you rejected her.*

*You had the audacity to attempt to crumble her. You are nothing.*

*You let your denial of your own failings blind you. You are nothing.*

"Enough!" Anna screamed. Her heart pounded as images poured in. She saw herself singing, and instead of a beautiful melody, it was really an off tuned, pathetic attempt. Her voice cracked. Her strength was never meant to be in music. Anna could hear the cackling laughter from the voices coming within her. She realized that Phoebe and Cindy were only in her head. It occurred to her panicking mind that Macaleth had only acknowledged her and not her "friends."

*That's why you heard voices coming from the bathroom, Anna.*

*That's why you didn't see us in the cafe with you until now.*

"What do you want from me?" Anna shrilled.

*To crush your unattainable dream. The voices whispered, To crush you.*

Anna didn't talk anymore. She didn't want to hear her voice. Which ever step she went she could hear their snickering and taunting laughter. Always on egg shells Anna didn't know when the next set of images would rip through her head, showing her how Macaleth reached to stardom.

*She's so beautiful. She just shines, doesn't she Cindy?*

*Yes Phoebe. Oh Anna you've let yourself go. That's too bad, now you sure can't get anywhere!*

*That's disgusting, Anna, that white stuff on those pimples, it looks like it's going to explode.*

*You're so weak Anna. Look at what Macaleth is doing, she's famous now. No one knows you even exist.*

*No one wants you.*

Please stop, begged Anna, Please, I'll do whatever you want.

*Too late for that.*

*That shirt is too tight for you Anna, your fat hangs out.*

*Thank God you don't speak, you do us all a favor by not singing anymore. Keep your mouth shut. No one wants to hear you Anna. Not even Macaleth. Loser.*

Wiping her newly acquired sweaty hands on her jeans, Anna attempted to ignore the voices that constantly berated her. She was broken and now was more insecure with herself. She had wanted to contact Macaleth to apologize, to seek forgiveness for her actions, and possibly find peace, but with her newly found fame, Macaleth was unable to be reached. Understanding that the consequences of her actions led her to her present condition, Anna regretted ever allowing the dark spore to grow. Though the voices she had once associated to being her friends had always been in her head, their cruelty imaged what Anna would have become if they allowed her to be so prideful.

*We'll be with you forever Anna.*

*Even if your life ended today, we'll be there making sure you don't forget how worthless you are.*

No longer the vibrant dreamer, Anna knew how it felt like to be the judge, and to be judged.

## Dear Sir It May Concern,

I am sitting here watching you with her, and I have never felt more like your whore. I am filled with anger and hate; a green monster waits for a time when I am alone, to explode. I am crying, but you cannot see that. It is dark, if you did see me I would probably tell you that my knee is acting up and I am in so much pain I cannot stand it. Because, despite the fact that you think I am a bad liar, you only see what you want to see. As an example of this, I have you convinced that I am okay with this arrangement. Even though I am only in it because I do not know if I could wake up every morning knowing that I let you go; even though I never had you in the first place.

Sincerely,

The Woman Crying Behind You.

P.S. I have freed myself of whatever matrixy bullshit you had over my head. What you did and continue to do was shitty. You said words like love, but you didn't fucking mean it. You used my affection for you as a weapon, but it has become my strongest tool. I am glad to report that you no longer have any control over me. I have cut the strings that you used to control my brain and I see you for the control freak you are, he is the best thing that ever happened to me. He showed me what you lacked!

Sincerely,

A Newly Strong and Independent Puppet!





## SWEETNESS

BY ANDREA CURRY

IN THE FALL, BERRIES GROW  
ON SEVERAL TREES I'VE SEEN.  
YET, ONE TREE'S BERRIES  
SEEM THE MORE SWEET.  
AS I SIT BENEATH,  
SHADE CASTING OVER,  
I PONDER.  
WHY THE SWEETEST TREE WEEPS?  
IT'S A SUBTLE TEAR  
WHICH ESCAPES HER BARK,  
BUT, WHEN ONE WITH THE GROUND  
YOU'RE GIVEN A GLIMPSE  
A MOMENT TO WITNESS  
THE TRUE BEAUTY, FRAGILITIES  
THAT ARE HER FEELINGS,  
CHERISHED BY VERY FEW.  
SHE OPENS HER LEAVES  
ALLOWS A PEEK  
AT HER SOFT CENTER,  
ALWAYS HIDDEN BY HER STRENGTH,  
THIS SIMPLE MOMENT  
THE VERY ESSENCE OF HER SWEETNESS.



# Death's Beating Wings Part 2

by Jason Wisniewski

As the hook from the helicopter collided with the dark rock, time seemed to stop. Those of us who watched the camera saw a faint blue light coming out from the crack where the hook connected. Our eyes lit up, and from this frozen time, it began to return to normal ever so slowly. Then suddenly, it exploded in the view of the camera. Every man within the area went flying backwards at the force of the explosion. It was not an explosion like in the movies with fire and shrapnel but rather an invisible push and bits of rock.

In the midst of the black orb was a figure that stood at about eight feet tall. The smoke and snow around it turned it into a silhouette, but we could easily make out the shape. While colors were nonexistent in its shroud, it provided for us a rather definite design. It was slim, almost anorexic – to the point where you could see its rib cage extending outwards profoundly with every deep breath. Its hands went below its thin waist, with fingers that extended about an inch below the knees. Each finger had a sharp edge, as if a claw, four on each hand. The back of this beast's head was pulled back and coiled into similar spikes. The legs of this creature were pressed together, proving its weak physical prowess through its swaying motions. It looked easily destroyable physically. Even a man of my size looked ready and willing to break its limbs.

When the smoke began to clear and the military personnel aimed their guns on it, we saw it for what it was. Its skin was gray and discolored, sickly in some way. One could pity it based on this color alone or fear it. I held both emotions in my heart. Its eyes were glowing blue, with its mouth wide open with a similar blue glow down its throat. The military men shouted in English, but the camera could barely pick up the audio. After several more shouts, the creature let out a howl so loud that we had the audience millions of miles away and staring at it through a poorly defined screen had to cover our ears. The military men dropped to the floor, taking the bulk of the screech. Before they could react, this beast reached out for the nearest man – at least twelve feet away, and flicked its fingers. A large white orb grew from the back of its hand and floated to the man. As it hit him, he turned into half a dozen scattered slabs of meat.

The men, shocked by this beast's action, drew their guns with pained heads and fired in rapid succession on the creature. The bullets bounced off of some odd, invisible shield that seemed to go all around the beast. The beast turned around to the other man and roared not as loudly as before but loud enough and with its battle cry, vanished. Everyone gasped, and before we could open our mouths the full way to let loose our gasps, the beast was in front of the second closest man. With a single swipe, it grabbed the man, and as he shouted for it to let to go, it reached down and bit off his head.

The camera shut off due to 'technical difficulties' seconds later. Everyone began to mutter at the creature's significance, its power, and what it wants. I speculated my own theories silently. Despite the cold, I was sweating, and I could feel the perspiration dripping off of the men around me. My heart was ready to explode despite my body's decent condition. The speculation ended when someone screamed as loud as they could.

We all turned around and saw the source of the horrific cry. A woman, no older than I, was pointing towards the sky. Everyone around me and down the block (as far as I could see) turned their eyes up towards the heavens. There, people began to shout and panic as blazing rocks of similar colors and shapes began to fly from the sky. Unlike most of the people in the area, I immediately pushed past the crowd and ran. I would not become a victim of my curiosity, much to the despair of many horror-movie victims and the people around me. No, my instincts to survive were greater - that and my desire to see my son and wife kept me focused.

As I ran down New York City's streets, the meteorites began to crash all around me. Glass and explosions were occurring elsewhere. People scurried like rodents as I charged down the streets, my arms swaying with my legs to keep my speed at maximum. Cars halted, and their drivers exited to hide in the nearest buildings if they didn't turn around or drive on the sidewalk.

While the anorexic creature was the first one we saw, others came into my peripheral vision as I headed for the edge of the city. Red-skinned creatures with bloated backsides emerged in clumps and began to let out their own battle cries. With what little I saw of them, they appeared ugly as sin with the same blue-eyed and blue-mouthed design as the original. Additional creatures, human in size and shape but much slimmer and skinnier by comparison, burst in larger clumps, filling the atmosphere. The last variation of these beasts came in the form of a figure taller than humans but shorter than the original monstrosity and muscular in shape. It seemed to be a very leanly-built human with a very exotic and other-worldly face to it.

All around me, aside from screams and meteors, came bullets and exotic gunfire. The gunfire was recognizable; I heard my first shot at the age of nineteen coming home from my college when a pair of hooligans began to talk shit about each other before pulling their guns out and firing. One of them lived, and the other died. Of course, his killer went to jail - I haven't heard from either since. But the other shot, the exotic-sounding one, sounded like a bullet 300 years in the future. It was sleek, quiet in sound, but also sounded fast. Above my head I saw streaks of red and blue, striking buildings, cars, and people. Whatever they touched erupted into fire and smoke. My science fictional guess pointed to lasers. I would have covered my ears, but my desire to speed up took precedence, and as such I kept my arms swaying to build with the wind that blew with my direction.

After what seemed like 10 minutes of straight running, I came to the edge of the city. My home, Staten Island, was across the water. One of the ferries was already halfway across, with the other one turning around to get away from the city. I knew for a fact that I would not find my way home on a ferry, and I was damn sure that the buses wouldn't take me over the bridge.

The thought of swimming came to mind, but I was too much of a pussy to jump into the water. Of course that part of my thought process changed quickly.

I decided to take a paranoid sweep of the area behind me and saw the city streets in utter chaos. Corpses lay across cars, the sidewalk, and some were even pushed up against buildings. The creatures, whatever they were, had their run of the streets. They swarmed in packs, killing and clawing whoever they saw. I knew I would become a target of their mindless slaughter if I remained, but I knew the cold of the water would probably kill me. Fear and vomit-inducing fatigue were my mistresses for the hour.

And just like that, a divine miracle came to. One of the creatures down the street saw me. It was the fat-backed one. Its large arm came out, and what appeared to be a gun as a hand fired a shot at me. The red shot it fired struck an inch away from my shoes, and I felt a splash of warmth come over my face. Wasting no time, I zipped up my coat, hoping that it would keep me warm.

I grabbed the side of the frigid railing and tossed myself over the edge. I was underneath freezing waters within a second. My first gasp for breath came with the phrase, "Oh God!" at the response to near-frozen waters. I shivered in place for half a second and then began to swim. Luckily for me, whatever was pursuing me lost interest as I saw no red bolts flying near me. Of course, the heat from its weapon would have comforted me incredibly.

I swam for a good 20, maybe 30 minutes, before I turned around for a brief second. I saw the meteorites still falling and pelting the city. The screaming turned into one collective bundle that echoed through the air on top of the distant echo of gunfire and explosions. I felt pity for my people, my race. In my mind, I questioned my God if He was actually allowing this, but any answer He might have given was cut off by my water-filled gasp.

Above the city, something massive began to descend. Its pawns, fiery meteorites, surrounded it faster and crashed into the ground. This massive beast was different from its minions. One might say its design was metallic, advanced. Six large arms were stretched outwards from the bottom of its body. As it grew closer to the ground, I began to see more of it. The trail up its body was getting slimmer and slimmer until it came to a sharp point. Six legs (three on each side) were clicking together like a crab, but due to its immense size, it was a slow clicking.

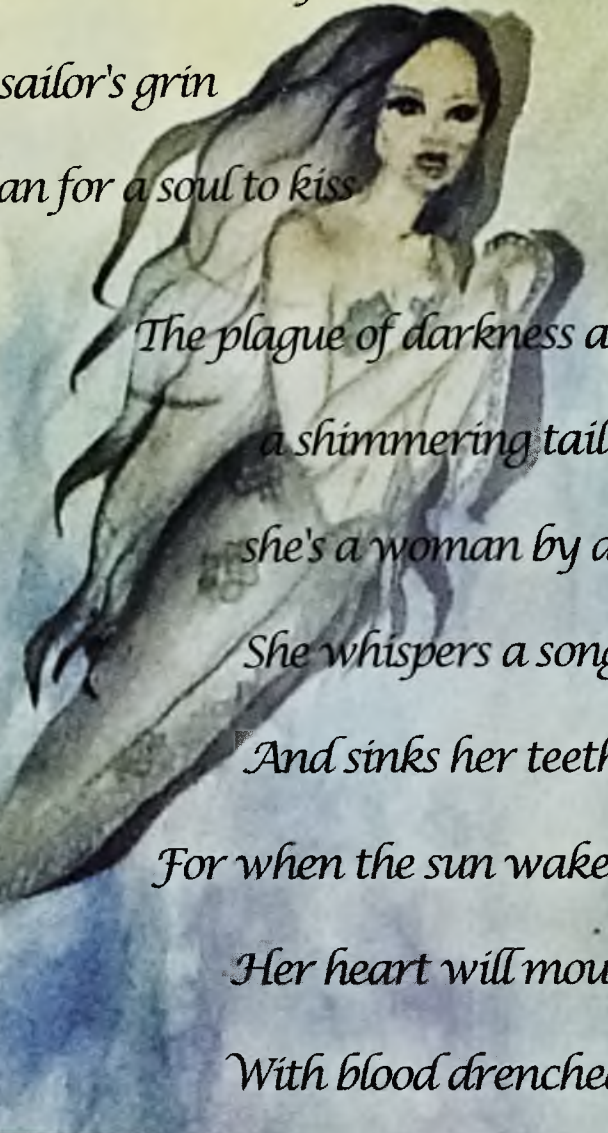
From its mouth came a disturbingly loud whiz that was supplemented by a single red beam. I saw a single building turn into debris in seconds as the red beam touched it. The process repeated. I knew the story at this point, so I turned around and kept swimming.

To be continued...

*A heavenly dream, lovely is she  
Graceful and pure  
Cursed by eternal virginity  
Her azure eyes like the sea are deep  
A crimson pout  
Guards the secret she keeps  
Luminous locks lead down to her fin  
Her only joy is a sailor's grin  
To search the ocean for a soul to kiss*

# *Darkened by the Moon*

*Poetry and Background art by  
Alissa Mangiacapre*



*The plague of darkness awaits her morning bliss  
a shimmering tail beckoned by moonlight  
she's a woman by day, a mer-fure by night  
She whispers a song into a gentleman's ear  
And sinks her teeth into his neck with fear  
For when the sun wakes and her scales are dry  
Her heart will mourn and her soul will cry  
With blood drenched teeth, each one a knife*

I drink Irish Breakfast tea because it's dark and bitter. Every cup is a bout of heartburn waiting to happen, but I don't really mind anymore. Physical stimulus is very effective as a distraction for whatever's on my mind. Physical stimulus is what I need right now.

My footfalls are snuffed by the wall of audio I've erected around my ears. Jim Morrison tells me it's the end of our story. I tell him he's a cocksucker. Skip. Each step is reduced to a soft "pat" by the soft soil. My tea starts to chill. A Dutch woman starts a depressing song about the mourning of loss. Skip. An arpeggiated A minor chord and a voice like gravel sing something by Trent Reznor. Skip. Skip skip skip. Trees pass, heavily wooded paths now.

Fuck. It's not the end of the world, just the end of a group friendship. It's not like you aren't going to make new friends in a month anyway. Maybe I don't want to; maybe I was cool with the late night psychobabble about what delusional old women spoke about. Maybe the outbursts of bad pop songs from the 80's were tolerable. Mayb- fuck you, Rick Astley. Skip. Heartburn.

Pat pat pat. Breathe deep and easy, sw-skip.

This bridge is a fine bridge. I cross it regularly, but not with cold tea and a player that only knows how to be sad. Stop unplugging. Gee on temple not possible. Retrieval, replugin. Skip.

Nothing is wrong. Wrong would imply that something was right, but this isn't about ethics. This is a skip. What about the story? The end, Jim said. Glad he's dead. Dead? Dead. Fuck. Skip.

Physical stimuli. That bottle's empty. The smell stuck to my beard. Pat pat pat. Ski- no. And if you see me please just walk on by, walk on by. Forget my name and I'll forget it too. Failed attempts at living simple lives, simple lives. Are what keep me skip. No this is not your place, this is not your playground it's my heaaaaaaaaaaskip.

Today is the greatest skip I've ever skip. Skip. The tea fell. Heartburn. Pat thump thump. Heavy footfalls now. The cement sobers and focuses me. Open air, lights. Cars pass by on the hill. My flashlight hangs focused behind me. I'm only depressed, not suicidal. Please don't run me over.

I'm not depressed. I am angry. I shouldn't tell lies, and make false promises. I shouldn't say I'll do something and then reject it when a messenger is sent my way. Skip.

Ignore this house. Thumb the music louder. Something positive? Will we all be portions for foxes? No, skip like a boss.

A car passes that I opt to ignore. Over my music I hear a song about mind bullets. Skip.

## Skipping Home by The Ghost

# *Things That Keep Me Up At Night*

*Jonathan Diel*

*There are many things keeping me awake at night*

*So many thoughts running loose through my head*

*Even if I sleep, they wake me with fright*

*And leave me with a sense of impending dread.*

*The demons in my head never leave my mind*

*As they leave me tossing and turning, unable to sleep*

*Constantly whispering things in my ear, usually far from kind.*

*These thoughts I leave with you, getting them off my chest*

*The inescapable horrors of my fate*

*The all encompassing fury of my hate.*

*The fear if I will ever find love*

*The wonder if, perhaps, there is a God above.*

*The constant dread of the day to come*

*And so many more, but here is the sun.*

*All these thoughts, and many more are yours to keep*

*Now please don't bother me, I want to sleep.*

# Serpentine Magazine

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**Wants YOU!!**

Remember this guy?

See how lonely he is?

That's because of **YOU.**

**YOU DID THIS TO HIM.**



But there is still time.

**You can fix this.**

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Drawings, graphic art, haikus, short stories,  
poetry, anyfreakingthing!!!

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