

Progeny

Spring 2009

Poetry Photos Prose

Defiance College

Volume 5, Issue 1 of the Translucent Series

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Many thanks to our printing coordinator, Alan Francis of The Hubbard Company.

Progeny is the student–edited literary and visual magazine of Defiance College.

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Volume 5, Issue 1 of the Translucent Series

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Printed by
The Hubbard Company
612 Clinton Street
Defiance, Ohio 43512

Progeny would like to thank Writers Group of the Defiance County Arts Council for their generous support of the magazine. Each year Writers Group sponsors a contest for poets, essayists, and fiction writers.

This year's judges are Lorraine Andrews, Alton Myers, and Armella Schmidt.

The 2008-2009 winners are . . .

Christina Marie Drake, first prize
Ashley Brown, second prize
Angela Santo, second prize

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Substance Abuse

Hello, my friends and fellow (insert local sport here) moms.

Blah, blah, blah, blah

Blah, blah, blah . . . “country first.”

You look like a (insert name here) the (insert blue collar profession here) town.

Blah, blah, blah, blah

Blah, blah, blah . . . “you bet’ya.”

The people of (insert town & state here) are not going to be fooled.

Blah, blah, blah, blah

Blah, blah, blah . . . “associates with terrorists.”

Vote for (insert candidate names here) in (insert year here).

Tim Rickabaugh

On the Wings of Dreams

I'm flying free
with a dreamer's dream
to a land without fear,
darkness, and doubt,
where shadows and haunting
of all time and space
are rainbows with colors
that endlessly grace . . .
happiness, hope, all joys to embrace.

A land with no storms,
without pouring rains,
where changes abound
and comfort remains,
where hate is replaced,
all questions erased,
where new memories are shaped,
with wondrous light . . .
of romance and love,
before out of sight,
a dreamland of heaven
without jaded thought,
where butterflies flit,
their colors uncaught,
milk oceans to see,
fresh air to breathe.
Countless flowers and trees
fragrance the breeze.
No more webs of deceit,
where lovers have fought;
No battles of hopelessness,
where all love is lost.

Maybe our dreams hold
the land of our thoughts,
or maybe our hearts
have learned lessons well taught.

It's the stairway to heaven,
this dreamland we seek . . .
I hope for all, more than a peek . . .
a future end to the ultimate pain,
great loyalty and love . . .

This dance of life I endlessly write
is an end to the pain, bringing my soul light.

Christina Marie Drake



Inspire City
Erin Cartwright



Maiah
Brooke Shinabarger

Pennies for Jeanie

Looking in the mirror, Lizzie Stanton resolved to steal it. The tiny fingerprints on the reflective pane may have smudged the surface, but it certainly didn't smudge her motherly instinct and stubborn will to prolong her daughter's life. Little Jeanie Stanton needed a liver and time was not too quick to give the child even an extra day. She was wrapped in a blanket on the couch clad in a dirty nightgown stained with everyday grime and blood. Lizzie took a long look in the mirror and noticed the reflection of her husband asleep in the recliner. She knew where she would go. It was relatively close so the bicycle would do—she had to save the gas in the truck for the trip to the hospital—and the aging store keeper was rumored to be quite wealthy. Best of all, it wouldn't disturb her husband and subsequently give her more bruises. Lizzie walked through the living room, quietly avoiding the crumbled beer cans that were scattered across the floor around the recliner and out the door.

The yellow light that barely bled from the incandescent bulb made her skin look pale and brought her bruises to life, a patchwork of purple where the distinctly different shades denoted increased severity in the beatings. She wore them like badges of misfortune. Regardless of the bruises, Lizzie Stanton was on a mission, a mission for Jeanie. Her tired eyes scanned the small convenience store as Ron Dobbs stood behind the counter taking a call. He motioned for a moment and turned his back. Lizzie saw the old circus poster—framed in glass—that had the slender blonde next to the bearded woman, the alligator man, and the other sideshow misfits that made the poster worth noting when visiting Ron Dobbs' general store. Lizzie stood with her elbows on the countertop and peered at her reflection in the convex contour of the small bell that sat off to the right of tip jar. Though she felt the stinging pain of her bruises, she couldn't see them, and she grinned wryly. Without them she was beautiful.

Lizzie looked to the floor and noticed her bare feet and unpainted toenails against the hardwood floor. She ran her tongue across the front of her teeth and felt the sizeable chip and a hole where a tooth should be. She was noting her imperfections, and the longer she had to wait, the worse she would feel.

Her hand found its way to the back of her head: she could still feel the hair product clumping in her stringy black hair. Even the birthmark near her nose seemed to stick out, not only as a physical blemish but as a character flaw. She was getting antsy. Lizzie ran her right foot up and down her left leg

to scratch an itch and felt the stubble that scraped—ever so slightly—against the ball of her foot.

“Ron,” she said in a worried tone, “I don’t have much time to waste standing here.”

He turned slightly as if to acknowledge her words and continued his conversation. Lizzie shrugged her shoulders and crossed her arms across her chest. As she did so, she realized her hands were still bloody from Jeanie’s nosebleed from earlier. She held her hand out and noticed the extent of the reddish stain that reached halfway up her forearms. She slid her hands into the pockets of her frayed denim shorts and stared impatiently at the rotund shop owner.

Lizzie could hardly keep from moving around. After a few moments of hesitation, she began to pace from one end of the counter to the other. She knew that Jeanie didn’t have a lot of time and couldn’t afford to wait much longer, especially for charity’s bureaucracy. If Ron wouldn’t give her what she needed, she would have to take it, just as Sickness had taken her daughter into His arms and now clung to the hem of her dress, just waiting for the child to pass from the land of the living into that of the dead. In Lizzie’s mind, Death was a beggar, scavenging for lives, and nothing would keep His creepy fingers from the metaphorical cup of Jeanie’s life.

Everyone in town knew where Ron Dobbs kept his money: it was common knowledge. Lizzie marched to the back of the small market with her hands still nestled in the pit of her pockets. Her eyes scanned the aisles, looking past the bags of potato chips and carbonated beverages. She moved in the direction of the alcohol. Lizzie knew she would find what she was looking for. Not because of the fluid—the disjointed solace that the bottom of the bottle had to offer—but because of the heavy glass containers of all shapes and sizes that held the whiskeys, the bourbons, and the cheap champagne.

Lizzie slipped her skinny fingers in between the bottlenecks and finally found a bottle of suitable size—a large square bottle of Tennessee whiskey with a black label. She gripped the neck of the bottle tightly and carried it to the front of the store with the whiskey splashing like miniscule waves against the walls of the transparent container as her arm swung back and forth with each advancing step. Lizzie reached the counter and sat the whiskey next to the cash register. Now she maintained the guise of a paying customer and therefore quite deserving of his attention. Ron turned at the sound of the weighty bottle coming to rest on the countertop—he peered at her and

laughed just enough to make the implicit insult known—then he turned around to continue his conversation. It must have been a woman on the other end, Lizzie thought, due to all the small talk and one liners—the kind she heard in high school.

Lizzie tapped her toes against the dusty floorboards as if the rhythm of her impatience would coax the storekeeper from his conversation. Yet it did nothing. Tired of waiting, the troubled mother gripped the neck of the bottle tightly and slid it off the countertop gently. Then . . . with one swift motion . . . she struck the storekeeper in the back of the head and he fell—along with the broken shards of glass and whiskey rain drops—to the floor. Lizzie climbed over the countertop and pulled the receiver off the floor by the cord. On the other end, Lizzie could hear the woman frantically asking what happened. With no hesitation, she hung the receiver on the hook.

As she shifted her feet, Lizzie felt the invading sting of the transparent splinters of fractured glass. Each and every step was painful, but she couldn’t afford to lose any time: Jeanie was waiting and she didn’t have much time to spare. Lizzie slid her hands into Ron’s pockets—unconscious or not, she knew he wouldn’t mind—and began looking for his keys. The tell-tale jingle gave them away and she pulled them out, the light glistening off the surfaces of the small silver keys. Now that she had them, she just had to find what everyone liked to talk about. She looked around, through the papers and in the cash register. It held at least a couple hundred dollars at first glance, and though it wasn’t enough, Lizzie stuffed the cash into her pockets.

More time passed and she feared her search had been in vain . . . until . . . she saw it. The poster framed in glass. Hanging as a testament to years past. The pale blonde with the ruby red lips standing with her hands raised as if to introduce the sideshow attractions of Barney’s Three Ring Circus, so the poster boasted. She quickly made her way over to the wall and slid her fingers behind the frame and tried to move the picture. It wouldn’t budge. Lizzie slipped her fingers up the side and to the top of the poster. She gave it a tug. Slowly the picture came down on hinges hidden by the edge of the frame. As the picture came down, the slender blonde revealed a safe tucked into the paneling with a single keyhole.

One after another, Lizzie inserted the keys and gave them a twist. Finally, one of the keys clicked into place and the door of the small safe now allowed entrance. Several stacks of bills lined the inside of the safe. Some of the greenbacks looked fresh but others had been in hiding for some time.

Lizzie took an armful of the money, pushed it into her purse, and dashed out of the small store. Before she left, she flipped over the open sign that hung in the door to deter any unwanted visitors. On the ground in front of the porch, Lizzie's rusty bicycle sat resting on one handlebar in the gravel. Lizzie pulled the bike from the dirt and climbed aboard, peddling as fast as her thin legs could manage. She was headed back to the house, back to little Jeanie Stanton.

The ten-speed raced down the seldom-traveled road. As Lizzie peddled, green bills fluttered behind her and fell to the ground to wait for discovery amongst the dust. As the house came into focus, her strokes on the pedals became more deliberate and she brought the bicycle to a halt, letting it fall into the dirt at the foot of the steps that led to the front door. The pickup truck was gone.

Lizzie threw the door open and took in the sight of her daughter wrapped in blankets streaked with blood on the living room couch. Sunlight shot through the broken blinds and pierced the musty darkness with rays that exposed the dried blood on Jeanie Stanton's face. Her red hair was ratty and her nightgown, although worn, was also spattered with blood. She was thin and frail, and the freckles that once brought out her green eyes now seemed to be the only bit of color left on the poor girl's skin. Except for the blood that had dried on her face. Jeanie's failing liver was far from better . . . and inevitably . . . sooner rather than later, her nose would again burst forth with the fluid reminder of her illness.

"Jeanie, where's your father?" Lizzie asked.

"He said he was going to the bank or something, Mama. Said he'd be back soon with some money," Jeanie said, wiping her bloody nose on her hand.

"I told him I would take care of it. I told him to stay with you—damn it—well, he's out of time . . . we got to get going," Lizzie told her only daughter. "Pa can catch up with us at the hospital."

Lizzie Stanton hurried into her room and pulled her housecoat off the bed, uneven because of its one broken leg. She put on an old pair of tennis shoes and the housecoat, its hole in the left sleeve showing. In the living room, Lizzie picked up her daughter from the couch and held her tightly.

"The best part about going to the hospital this time is that you will get that liver you need," Lizzie said smiling. "Now all we got to do is get you there. The doctors said we had a two week window and now it will be a cinch."

* * * * *

Lizzie Stanton wrote every day from the bunk in her cell and occasionally got a response. Jeanie had just turned six and had her whole life ahead of her, thanks to a last minute liver transplant. She was with her grandmother in Beaverton. As for Lizzie Stanton—she had five years left to serve on an armed robbery charge—and no regrets. She would see Jeanie soon, but for now she was content to send the little bit of money she earned shelving books to her only daughter. Oftentimes little more than five dollars and a fistful of pennies would accompany her letters, but that was better than nothing. On her sleepless nights, Lizzie thought about Jeanie and about the subtle pleasantries that nature had to offer: the cool autumn breeze, the morning rain, and the scent of flowers growing in the field behind the house. It brought tears to her eyes. The world was a cache of beauty and mysterious wonder that was waiting to be discovered by Jeanie, and Lizzie Stanton wanted to be there. But for now, these pennies would be the token of her presence . . . these pennies for Jeanie.

Dustin Joshua Fuller



Cody
Brooke Shinabarger

For the Knight

My Knight, you are my love, my life, my sin
Your love's a guiding light, the brightest star
Ethereal your touch, like Angel's wing
Your fiery glance, embracing from afar
This heart is yours forever and a day
You lay upon my hand your fragile soul
My being trembles with delight each day
For you, my kindred spirit, passion soul
Oh Lancelot, you set my heart afire
But what, I ask, will come of my heart?
A cold and lonely dungeon, my fire chained!
As Neptune who cannot return to sea
I yearn to drink the cup of Love divine

Christina Marie Drake

First-prize winner of the *Progeny* contest
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Wheel
Karolyn Avila

Worn

Joe took a large sip from his mug of black coffee, the strong smell seeping into his nose and making his eyes water. The light that dimly lit the diner buzzed overhead, making the faded beige paint look like a putrid yellow, except for where it peeled, looking like a faded eggshell. The wooden counter felt sticky underneath Joe's dirty thick fingers with a plethora of coffee mug rings staining the counter. Joe ran his burnt tongue across the roof of his mouth, every bud feeling as if it were a grain of sand. The coffee had been hot as hell, but it woke him up, and it would keep him up for the next six or seven hours, or until he found another diner, whichever came first. Joe looked to his left at the other drivers, seeing others that looked just like him. Blank red eyes staring into nothing, sipping coffee that wasn't all that good, looking as if showers were optional. Joe looked down at his mug, swirling the dark liquid.

He heard laughter and turned again, seeing two thin men sitting at a booth, mouths stretched into smiles that eventually emitted laughs. Joe watched as the waitress went over to the table and, after a few words, began to laugh as well. Their laughs carried over to the other side of the diner where Joe sat, eardrums vibrating. Joe looked at the man whose voice seemed to be the loudest, the man facing him. He had as much grey hair as he did blonde, and his skin revealed years of smoking in every crease, but the wrinkles in the corner of his eyes were from laughing, and despite being at least in his forties, he was actually a handsome man. Joe was only twenty-four and he felt that he would never look half as good as that man.

Joe listened to their good times drift over to where he sat. He tried to remember the best thing he had ever seen while driving through the country, but all he could remember was the road, how it looked at dawn, at dusk, at midnight, at midday. Joe thought that every state was different, and maybe they were, but they all managed to have the same beaten road. Every hour driving felt like another year, the same road time after time, same direction, destination not seen in broad daylight.

One of the men said something and another roar of laughter erupted from the booth, and Joe slammed his mug onto the table, the now lukewarm coffee spilling over the side of the mug and onto his hand. He quietly grumbled an apology to no one and wiped his hand on his shirt, reaching inside his jeans and tossing a crumpled dollar bill onto the counter. He crammed his old trucker hat down onto his head and pushed his way through the door of the diner with excessive force. The diner bell rang and the echo followed

him, along with the laughter of the two men.

Wiping his face, Joe's pace quickened as he made his way around the side of the diner to the back of the gas station next to it, reaching inside his pocket to see how much more money he had. Determining that he had enough, Joe wiped his face in a feeble attempt to look presentable, or at least bearable. Walking into the tucked-in corner of the back, Joe could see a khaki pair of shorts sashaying, with a long pair of legs attached to them. His pace slowed and as he got closer, he was able to see that the pair of legs belonged to a tall redhead with a halter top and a cigarette in one hand. He was also able to see her friends, a short blonde who would probably be better off naked, a second blonde with hardly anything on, and a brunette with an unusually large set of breasts, among other women who were already preoccupied with other truckers. There was no need for Joe to be picky. He just wanted a woman. He needed a woman.

The women who weren't busy noticed him coming and began to smile. He walked up the small group. "This enough?" he mumbled to the nearest one.

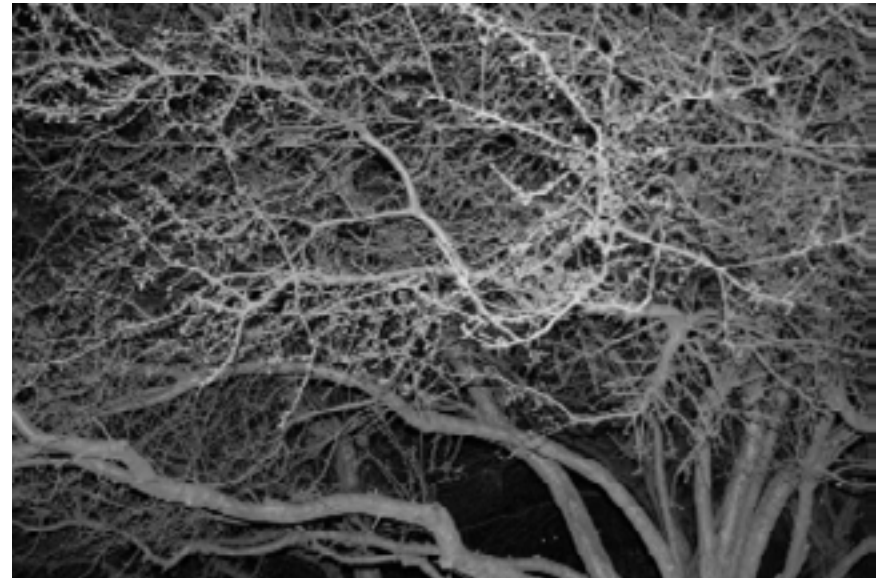
The women leaned in and examined the bills in his hand. "Yeah, that's good," the redhead said. She straightened herself up. "So, who do you want?" She and the rest of the women smiled, and Joe wished that he didn't have to pay to see it.

"Don't care," he said. He paused for a moment and looked at the blonde. "You," he said. "My truck."

The woman smiled and gave a small wave to the others. Joe took her by the hand and led her to his truck, his nerves hard. While passing the diner, Joe could see the two men still in their booth, still laughing, only this time with other truckers. Joe's brow furrowed and his pace quickened.

He helped the woman into the back of the truck, tossing his hat in after her. She had undressed by the time he had locked the doors and gotten in the back with her. He laid on his back, letting the woman do what she did best, the echoes of the laughing truckers floating in his head.

Karolyn Avila



Wooded Beneath
Erin Cartwright



The Waiting for Summer
Ryan Haughey

So I Move On

You want me to see rays of light
And wish on a star shining bright
You want me to try to find hope
When the world's hanging by a rope

I ask you how can I do this
When the world is such a mess
How can I rise above the muck
When Men in Charge keep me stuck

Look upon clouds for a sign
Rely on the media as a life line
This nation is bent on a road to hell
And you want me to act like all is well

I would see this world a better place
To see a smile on every face
But I think above me there is a ceiling
One invisible that keeps me reeling

So I move on just like everyone
And find my joy in those around
In the simpler things hope has won
So that's why my heart is free

Angela Santo

Second-prize winner of the *Progeny* contest
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The Forming of Fall
Ryan Haughey

A Maple Sky

A maple sky, the ground in glowing red
Maple leaves turn to autumn bed
The bark dark as depths of hell
A tree sings its final farewell
Wind makes branches scream with dread

The sky painted with blood instead
As the day becomes still and dead
With clouds fading to a dim pastel
Thunder screams like a bombshell
A maple sky

The scene, like the earth had bled
Sunset turns to a rose-color shred
Pure white stars dance and fall
Under a post-autumn spell
Upon the ground in widening spread
A maple sky

Siobhon Smith



Peaceful Epidemic
Erin Cartwright

Media Man

Hey, Mr. Media Man,
how about some change,
a new trend these days?
Got any good news?
'Cause we really need some.
People are tired of
war and economy,
murders and accidents
making the day depressing and dull.
Have you some sympathy
for those who are going
through a bad day?
Or like me just wanting
a positive change.

Hey, Ms. News Anchor Woman,
in your Botox and Pearls,
We, the people, are tired of stories
of the bad economy (we already know!)
how the Nasdaq and Dow won't go up,
and oil won't go down,
going sky high.
How about something inspiring,
families evading foreclosure,
banks getting smarter
about how they lend?
It won't kill you to put
good news on your show.
Your ratings might go up
or even better, a smile.

Ashley Brown

Second-prize winner of the *Progeny* contest
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Braeden
Brooke Shinabarger

Dream Forever

I am the butterfly you see,
flitting from flower to flower.
I am the birds in the trees,
calling to one another.
I recline in my own little world
to shield me from your reality.

The sky floats lazily overhead
in no rush to move anywhere.
I lay there in my lucky field,
my field of four leaf clovers.
I can almost hear the little man,
running to hide his pot of gold.

Cotton candy clouds play games in my head
as I taste the sugar against my tongue.
I wish I could stay here forever,
away from the complications of life,
away from the danger and heartache,
away from the evils and hatred.

To stay this way forever,
now that would be a dream.

Emily Arnold



Fallen Alone
Erin Cartwright

Justifiably I Was Upset

Justifiably I was upset at the way things were going. If I stayed one more night with this thought, I'd be lost to the proverbial wolf. Except this wolf had tangible teeth. To put it in less complicated terms, I was in fear, I was afraid, I was absolutely mind numbingly terrified.

Feigning nonchalance, I walked past the double glass doors of my boss's office and did not look his way, but it was hard when I knew that every step I made he was watching. A lone shiver ran down my spine and I knew he was giving me the once, twice, thrice over. I wanted to call my mommy to see if that would help, even though I knew it wouldn't.

Note to self: Sleeping with the boss is about the worst idea ever. What? He was hot, I was ambitious, neither of us had any objections, and he wasn't my boss at the time, just some guy I'd met at a friend's party. I was trying out my impression of the women on *Sex and the City*, if you hadn't guessed. A long story short, it was good and we both knew it. Unfortunately, I had recently gotten hired—to the personal sin I like to call work—and there he was, all 6'4" of him in a crisply pressed blue suit that brought out his stormy grey eyes. I almost melted on the spot. It took him all of two seconds to recognize me, and his wolfish grin said "all the better to eat you with my dear."

That little scene happened over two months ago, and like a good little employee I have avoided him ever since. It is inappropriate to sleep with the boss, but he doesn't seem to see it that way. One time in passing he called me his lamb and as I gulped nervously, I wondered where my little boy blue was. I wonder if I cry "wolf," would anyone try and save me?

Lauren Brown



Mirrored Reflection
Ryan Haughey

Therapy

The lights flash before me,
the colors so vivid and enthralling.
I stare out focusing on nothing in particular,
the sound of the river soothing my turmoil.
This has always been my therapy,
calming myself at a stressful point.

The stars twinkle at me,
smirking as if to say "Don't worry,
nothing will be all right."
The trees look dead to me,
the grass black.
The leaves rustle past me
as if trying to run and hide.

I sit there alone,
not thinking of anything in particular,
simply waiting,
waiting to catch up with my own life.

Emily Arnold

Naomi

Naomi lowered her naked body into the bathtub, the cold water feeling like silk sliding over her. She closed her eyes and relaxed her neck and arms on the curled ledge of the tub, the cool white ceramic a relief to her burning skin. The echo of water dripping from the faucet thumped her brain, the plunk of water growing louder and louder. There was a cool breeze coming from somewhere, although she wasn't sure if she had left a window open or not. The distant smell of air freshener wafted to her nose, jasmine and white tea. Naomi loved the floral smell. She was ecstatic when she had found a perfume that smelled similar to it. It had come in a small glass bottle that faded from pink at the top to purple, with a jasmine flower as a stopper. She had been wearing it the night she met Weston. A smile spread across her face as she remembered how he had pawed her body when they made it back to her apartment. "I love the way you smell," he murmured into her neck. She bit her lip to keep in the giggles.

They had had sex for two hours that night, and by the time she had woken up the next morning, she knew she was in love. It was also the time when she noticed the gold band around his ring finger. Hurt but not defeated, she tried to confront him as he was leaving.

"You know, this doesn't have to be our last night together," she cooed into his ear. "I won't tell if you won't."

But Weston made his way to the door, then looked back at her, mouth half open as if he were about to say something. One hand was gripping the doorknob but he had yet to open it. She wanted him to say something, and she swore he was about to, but instead he just shook his head and walked out. Naomi could hear his footfalls across the hall at the elevator, and she could hear the ding of the bell as the elevator descended with him in it. Naomi crumbled in the pit of her stomach as she realized that she wouldn't see him again.

However, a week later he called to say that he was on his way to see her. She was so excited that her hand was shaking as she put on her make-up. As soon as he walked through the door she ravaged him, not caring that the bedroom was nowhere near. This is how it went for a year. She knew he was hers, and her confidence became stronger every time he left his wife to see her. He loved her, which was why she felt no qualms about being pregnant with his first child four months after that. So you'd think that after two more years, a penthouse, and another baby, Weston would be coming home to *her*, giving his new family a bigger and better house than the other, giving

Naomi his last name through marriage. But no. He still went back to Laura, she still had the better house (the better *everything* actually), still had his last name. Everything Naomi wanted, *she* had. Naomi fought so hard to make him hers, but he just kept going back to that woman.

A tear rolled down Naomi's cheek. After all she had done for him! He said he still loved his wife! But Naomi knew him. She knew him better than *Laura* did, and she knew that he loved her more than his wife. They actually had a family together, and what had his wife given him? Nothing! He had to love Naomi more. He was just confused and desperate. He didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. Once Naomi proved that he loved her more, she would insist that he leave Laura. And this time, he would.

Weston said he would come by to pick up the kids at 4:15. Naomi looked up at the pink rose plastic clock hanging on the wall. It was 3:47. The timing was good.

Naomi could hear Weston Jr. singing to his baby sister in the next room, and the tinkering of their toys knocking together. She reached behind her and felt her way across the cold marble countertop of the bathroom sink, her fingers resting on an orange pill bottle. She twisted open the bottle and poured a handful of long white pills into her palm. She looked at the lines in the pills, trying not to count how many she had resting in her hand. Naomi closed her eyes and downed the pills, swallowing them all without any water. She then took a deep breath, listening to the thud of her heartbeat. She stared at the wallpaper of the bathroom, following the lavender flower pattern across the gray background. A white light was coming in through the windows, not the typical orange-yellow that came from the sun on a normal day. From the little that Naomi could see, clouds had begun to accumulate in the sky. Huh. One of the windows was open.

The dripping water began to echo in her ears again. Her eyes went to the chrome faucet, watching as another drop of water accumulated along the mouth. The drop slowly swelled, growing larger and larger like a bubble gum bubble. The drops boomed and banged around the shell of her brain, sounding as if someone were pounding on a thick oak wooden door.

Naomi looked at the bathroom door, as if expecting Weston any minute. Her son was calling her, but Naomi didn't answer. The drops began to sound distant and deeper, slower, the room darker . . . Drip. Drip. Drop . . .

Karolyn Avila



Ghost
Brooke Shinabarger

The Year Will Go On

My loss of you will be a minor thing,
unnoticed, the seasons yet will flow,
waltzing proud with beauty
through the months they know.
Still will seeds be sown,
giving birth to buds of billowing spring
for your death remains unknown
to the waking sun and the April rain.
Your quiet passing will go unobserved
by the boisterous birds and bees of May,
and so will wide-eyed infant squirrels
clamber around through our backyard tree.
June will not cease, nor will July,
blithe unaware you no longer exist.
Ambered autumn bows to winter's bride
as if nothing significant is amiss.

Oh, there will perish with your passing
little of beauty that is not your own,
only the grace of common flowers,
only the lilt of morning's song.
No one will remember you.

Christina Marie Drake



Splintered Home
Ryan Haughey

What I Need

I need a heart that works through the pain
When the walls start collapsing again
Give me a soul that always shadows
Despite the infection within
Our careless feet leaving trails
Not minding the dirt we all die in

This is where I find my fall
The best relationships don't work at all
But every step away from there
Takes me back to what I fear

Awaiting my end
Breathing the day that finds me new
Redemption begins
Bleeding the flaws in place of you

Christina Marie Drake



Open Mind to Disaster
Erin Cartwright

“In” or “Out”

Who are you looking at?
(Everyone should notice me)

What did you say to me?
(And please talk about me)

No one talks to ME like that!
(This is my Real World)

You don't know who the hell you're dealing with!
(My parents used to think I was special)

You don't scare me, bitch!
(Now I'm drunk and out of control again)

I'm about to go off on you!
(And I always make a scene)

I'll kick your ass right here and now!
(Because I don't have much to lose)

That's right . . . get out of my face!
(So I'll stay right here)

Tim Rickabaugh