



Progeny

Spring 2007

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Poetry Photos Stories

Defiance College

Volume 3 Issue 1 of the Translucent Series

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The Stare

She stared
a blank stare, rather inconsistent with the previous look.
She blinked.

Her face was blank
cheeks cold
wind brushing on her face
the sun will soon set.

Heavy eyes
she had this day
trying, attempting
a better day
somewhere, yet so far away.

Coming, speeding faster
The yell she heard
“I’m here, it’s me!”
Waiting.

Leaving, racing slower
closer
the outstretched hand.

Andrew Pratt



Beautiful James Dean — Brooke Shinabarger

Just Write

Just write, you say,
but write what?
Write the fact that I'm confused
over who I am and what you want me to be?
Write about what you see me to be
and what I see when I glance in the mirror?
Write about the feelings that are slowly consuming,
eating from the inside out, but not being released?
Write about what you say?

Well, maybe I'll write about the dreams I dream
but don't know how to obtain.
Or about the walls I place and try to knock down,
but the internal force is far too strong.
Maybe I'll write about the few who stand by while I push,
push and guard.
Maybe I'll write,
just write
until you see just a glimpse of the inside of me.
Maybe I'll write,
writing leading to peace, internal peace.

So I'll just write,
hoping writing solves all,
trying to pull these pieces away,
forgetting them is better,
pain and angst encompassed in each piece,
a memory that just can't be erased,
each piece reminding me daily
how life isn't easy,
always hurdles to overcome
the pieces put back together.

Karlie Nickeson

Journaling from Cambodia

There is hope in these children's smiles (I see this most in the older boys). There is joy in the younger children's faces, eyes, smiles, laughs, voices.

I have begun to hand out the teacher's photos at the school. The first one stares at her picture, loving for moments. She then smiles and passes the photo to friends. After it is passed, she continues to stare at it for a while. They take photos with both hands, big smiles and laugh. They bow slightly as they receive the photo. Their faces squinted in consideration of the image. Is it true that they judge themselves as harshly as we do ourselves?

One of the boys has taken a misprinted photo I tore up, like a treasure. The photo is not even of him. The children have crowded around the printers, fascinated by the process and seeing their friends' faces come out.

They have set up a big tent for us with pink swags and a green roof. We have two microphones set on a table covered in bright fabric and two vases with silk flowers in them.

I wonder how they will remember this day . . . when they are 12, 16, 25, 50. Will they remember how they got a photo? Crowding around two modern printers in their school yard, with an American white female handing their photo to them. What will they remember? What will their parents say when they see the picture?

As the mothers begin to push their children in front of the camera, I begin to understand this may be the only picture they will have of their child's childhood. Babies, toddlers, children, and teens . . . a way to remember and be remembered for generations to come.

Now we sit at the airport. I think we all wonder, how it will be when we get back. Will we be tired? Sad? Lonely? Out of place? Misplaced in our bodies and society? Lost. Lost in our thoughts or lost at the idea of losing our thoughts. How do we make it happen? How do we do our best without regret? Time



Study Break — Rachel A. Baker

after time we fall. How much will we lose in the struggle to survive? Sometimes you just want to go back to a place and time that feels like home.

I got a letter from Paulette in Jamaica when I got back from Cambodia. A reminder. Cambodia seems like a dream. What can you take away from a dream?

Hope. We can all do something.

Abigail Reichard



Angkor Wat — Rachel A. Baker

A to C

I have written words upon words trying to rid you of my ink.
Stains on my fingers, stains of my conscience, dilate then
forced to blink.

I have lit match upon match trying to burn you from my
prose.

Flares of luster, post-morbid dim, life sequence of our own.
I have been gasping upon gasping trying to breathe you from
my lungs.

Soft and brisk air, poison creeps in, along the smog side we
are among.

I've kept pages upon pages trying to store you in my soul.
Avid artists, books not read, authors we love are ours alone.

Collin Selahowski



Dark Reminder — Rachel A. Baker

My Star

I can't find anything that's my own anymore.
These songs torment my head
until my thoughts are only my words,
and all I can do is vibe away in my sorrow.
It always seems to find me.
It always seems to find me.
It always seems to find me.

I feel like every word that I speak is running away from
a regretful mother as her son takes off for the service.
They say that the most fantastic pain is the pain
of an un-confessed mother talking in "I love you" tongues,
murmuring toward her lost kindred.

Have you ever had someone fall to pieces in your arms
and live to tell the tale?
Have you ever been that person who crumbles
at a rock's feet?
It seems that I have found nothing at all,
and the crying into shoulders has lasted for days.

Day in and out I shout through pillows and folded flags.
Pride brought him to the point,
compassion pushed him off the edge of norms.
His country laid him on his back,
stripped and ravaged him.
He fought a war too far from his shore.

I wish he could come back home and tell me
not to wait up as I lie in bed still watching the clock.
He was my son and my moon.
Now the night's sun is the only one that sings
me those blues as I vibe away my sorrow.

It always seems to find me.
It always seems to find me.
It always seems to find me.

Every pillow has lost its scent.
Honor, pride, justice . . . all figments that I have
to explain to Connor while in this hypnotic state
of mal-assertions.
He asks such weighted questions, and I am afraid
I do not have your shoulders to hold them.
That boulder is bolder than I can ever become.

I divert the question to whether these silent sighs
and midnight lies to Connor will ever become true.
What ifs and what nots, these knots in your hair
I thought would never come out.
I poured the booze over the sink;
you blinked and shook your head.

I'm not mad at you for doing this,
but I am so very disappointed.

October 4th . . . 20 summers and 20 falls,
you left four friends, two parents, a brother,
and wonderwalls.
October comes around that bend
and church becomes too hard to bear.
I bared my soul for you as that podium and I sank
deeper and deeper into the stained glass background.

I asked Kyle to speak on behalf of your "Fantastic Four."
My eyes were so very heavy when he picked you out in

just one line: "One last shot, coach, and then
I will be outta here." One last shot, coach . . . huh.

We have decided to leave your room just the way you left it,
just in case you decide to come back to us someday.
Connor asks those poor kids such weighted questions.
It always seems to find me.
It always seems to find me.
It always seems to find me.

So here I lie one October day, evening night and more.
Birthdays are the hardest, as I quietly shut your door.
Connor asks so many questions, persistence without sway.
So I answer him with Pride:

"I love you, son, and still him too.
He fought and fell . . . last breaths blew.
You saw that man the other day
who knocked on the door and came to say,
'to the valiant heart nothing is lost,
I am sorry for your loss.'
He walked away.
He just walked away.
But now I know, Connor, that no tears,
no matter how strong,
can wash these stripes away."

Collin Selahowski



Heart of Stone — Jamie Wilmot

Stay Safe

When you were newly born,
I held you close.

Worrying while you cried at night,
I prayed “stay safe my baby as you grow.”

And when you could barely stand,
I helped to hold you up.

Struggling to let go as you first walked away,
I prayed “stay safe dear child as you leave my side.”

On your first day of school,
I watched you nervously go inside.

Hoping they would protect and guide you,
I prayed “stay safe little girl while you find your way.”

Now on your wedding day,
I realize that I’m not alone.

He loves you almost as dearly as I do,
and I pray “stay safe young woman in your new home.”

Tim Rickabaugh



Innocence — Dee Morales

Zombie Loves Book

There was a smell of burning books in the air, accompanied by the droning sound of a thousand voices unable to form words. Among the bodies cluttering the dirty streets and sidewalks, one could find Cody. Until today, Cody was just an ordinary guy. He had a job at the local school where he made sure that the B-chips were always in tip-top shape for students who were seeking knowledge. It had been his responsibility to ensure that no students were left without a working B-chip and that they all were educated in the proper etiquette for plugging the chips in without damaging either themselves or the chips. All of that quickly changed, however, with the publication of Paige Wright's first B-chip. Now Cody was one of the drooling, single-minded masses staggering around in the street, trying to remember right from left while blindly seeking out the Wright residence; this once famous author had been losing popularity for refusing to publish in B-chip format. Losing popularity, she still continued to go "down with the ship," so to speak, by only publishing what would have been her top-sellers in paper. She blatantly refused to accept the future—that people no longer were willing to take the time to sit down and read from a concrete book. And why should they when they were able to download all of the knowledge directly into their brains in a matter of seconds? This was the future, the B-chip.

Given the fact that it took such a long time for Wright to come to terms with the future, it was universally decided that she must have been secretly working on a book that would blast the other award winners out of the spotlight; thus people literally flooded the stores for her latest release on B-chip, *Zombie Loves Book*, only to be taken aback when they plugged it in and their entire mental storage space of B-chip data was wiped clean. Not even the download program was safe from this virus' wrath, leaving the minds of millions in utter, writhing agony, unable to recall any of the things that they had formerly learned from B-chips, nor able to plug in and process any



Stop in the Name of Love — Sandi Burden

new information.

At first, it was suspected that just a few chips had been faulty, contaminated; people eventually began to point fingers until they realized that Wright's B-chip was the source of the virus. Of course, by this time, it was too late. The vast majority of the population had already downloaded the book, their minds were wiped clean from the "B-chip filth," and it was revealed that Wright had been the leader of the Underground Librarian Rebels in secret all this time. Wright's intentions had been to restore the country to a time when books were still read; however, all that was happening thus far was an angry mob of The Erased gathering in Wright's town, hoping to restore their minds . . . or get revenge.

Shiny drool oozed down Cody's chin as he tried to form words to express his anger and frustration, a few flecks of foam appearing to aid the emotion. Beside him, an irate soccer mom was attempting to set fire to a pile of books that other Book Zombies had heaped up; unfortunately, the only thing that she had managed to do properly (or not so) was light the sleeve of her sweater on fire. Cody watched her through glazed eyes as she proceeded to smack another Book Zombie in the face with her sweater, and he wondered if his life had always been this ghastly.

* * * * *

Melody watched the others, a slight trail of drool at the corners of her mouth.

The others were mad, she thought; angry that the things in their minds were gone. She rubbed the B-chip opening on her temple. So, she really had one, too, just like the others. She wasn't angry, she was happy. Brian, her brother, had found a nice clean niche for them to sit in, no rats or trash. They had been there for two days. The book she had found in the library showed her, with pictures, what she felt when Brian found the niche: happiness. She even smiled just like the person in the book. A group of people walked by; they were covered in personal filth, dust, and torn pages. Melody caught their smell and put her hand up to her nose like person in the picture book did:

stinky. Brian, looking over at her, lamented the fact that his nineteen-year-old sister now had the mentality of a toddler. Luckily, his mind wasn't erased by the virus in *Zombie Loves Book*.

He turned to watch the mob of zombies, unable to understand why they were taking their aggression out on books, rather than B-chips. The people were tossing the books they were carrying into a pile. One man tried to light the mound ablaze with a lighter, but he failed. Brain and Melody watched them for a while; she even giggled as the man threw a fit when he couldn't make fire. The Book Zombies didn't seem to notice the two of them or Melody's small pile of stolen books. She had taken care to hide them in her bag after they trashed the underground library. Hugging her bag to her chest she curled up and waited. Soon she grew bored and her mind wandered. The books in her bag reminded her of something that happened . . . it seemed so long ago . . .

The memory of it came back fresh in Melody's mind. She was sitting at a coffee house talking to Brian about a man named Shaykspeer. She had a hard time remembering who Shaykspeer was or what he did, but it had something to do with books. After that, a man had approached and showed them a big B-Chip; only it wasn't a B-Chip, it was a book. Brian owned many books. He preferred to read them, not load them into his brain. Even though he had a B-Chip plug for college, he rarely used it outside of class. She thought he was old fashioned. She remembered how eager she was to load the book into her brain. She even put it near the B-Chip opening in her head but nothing happened. The man laughed at her and told her the only way to put it in her mind was to read it. He had taken the book and gotten up to leave.

Melody had asked where to find the books, and he told them to go to an underground library. So after a week of downloading directories and phone chips into her brain, both Brian and Melody found a library. While at the library, the librarians were busy handing out B-Chip plugs to everyone. The great Paige Wright had published her first B-chip and they were having a celebratory loading party. Melody

had been at several loading parties so she eagerly plugged a cord into her mind. Brain preferred to read the book himself so he refused the cord plug. After it seemed like everyone in the country was plugged in, Paige's face appeared on the screen, and she smiled and waved at everyone. Then she pushed a button and everyone began loading.

Melody felt the memory slip away, everything in her mind slipping down a drain. She couldn't stop it. As her eyes unfocused, everything that had been loaded into her mind, from foreign languages to basic color identifications, was gone. Gone, just like that. Melody stood trembling, aware that she had lost most of her loaded knowledge. She walked to the children's section and began grabbing at books that caught her eyes. Alphabet books, color books, emotions, Red Dog, shapes—all of these landed in her lap. She looked at them eagerly and her favorites were snuck into her bag. The others who had plugged in went crazy. They were yelling and tearing books from shelves. More severely affected people were like zombies.

Brian found Melody happily stuffing her bag full of books. He tugged her outside and hid them both in a niche. Someone screamed in pain. A woman had set her shirt on fire and fell on a pile of books. She tumbled, catching the books on fire. Brain leapt out to aid her, but it was too late. By the time he was at her side, she was already dead, burning on a funeral pyre of books.

The Book Zombies looked at him, but they didn't move toward him; instead, they walked back into the library. Brain ran back to Melody. Grabbing her hands, he tugged her out onto the street. They had to go, they had to leave. Somehow they had to get back home, he thought. Somehow.

* * * * *

With the mayhem going on outside, Press pressed his face to the window and looked outside with a grin on his face.

"This is getting good, Paige. I mean, like in that horror movie of the 50s you showed me, even if the color was gone and stuff. Those people are real idiots, you know? With the B-chip messing up their input brain data. So how long do you think they will be like this,

Paige?"

"Who knows? I just called Lily and we have a meeting in twenty-five. Get your coat. Get your greased-up face off my glass or you're going to have to wash it again."

Paige could see her assistant giving her the finger out of the corner of her eye and gave a chuckle as she left the room. In the lobby of the house, Paige gathered up her glasses and ballpoint pen. She could hear Press running down the hall and the stairs to catch up, his worn fighter pilot jacket flapping behind. He put on his shoes as she adjusted her Mink hat and fur and they walked out to her BMW SE200.

On the drive, Press glued his face to the window once again and saw the many people wandering through the streets. There was a man yelling at a news-chip vender about the chip not working, a teen girl slurring her words and drooling on her phone. From the looks of things, it seemed as if everyone had gone back to the day of "cave men." The neon lights, HD screen, and Hologram street informers could fool anyone, but Paige and Press knew the truth. In this world, the technology was smarter than the human beings.

"Hey, Paige, you are, like, the 'master' of this. You're like . . . like a god now, you know? I mean, you can really do anything you want with these meat puppets, like . . ."

"They aren't 'meat puppets.' No wonder you don't have any friends . . ."

"I do, Paige! Oh, look, there's one right there." He pointed to a boy about 5'7" who, in a daze, had just fallen on his face.

"He's high."

"Yep, he sure is . . . and we're here."

The car pulled to a stop at the old City Library.

Paige had started a revolution, her resolution for all those years of inactivity and the end to her creative meltdown. In response to her virus, the government developed a Re-education Process and carefully crafted military units into re-educators. After the outbreak, the re-educators in training were plugged up to prevent any further spread. Further strict controls over B-chip software kept

soldiers from the Paige Virus, enabling them to maintain “human-state” behavior. Mapped into sequence and using shuttles to round up hordes of Book Zombies, Re-education was in full swing and had the upper hand. Zombies were defenseless, taken into custody . . . or shot down in their frenzied attempts to get at B-chip software. Pseudo chips were fed into the system to disconnect any feed that might contain the virus. Re-educators were fit with B-chip scanners to locate and destroy any straggling B-chips. It seemed the virus had been contained . . . until now.

* * * * *

Emily had wept for days, drooling on the rubble of her former B-chip download center. All that remained was a hole and fragments of her skull . . . memory still there . . . somewhere up there . . . and in the dried brains she remembered her past . . . in a fragmented sort of way . . . something about driving the twins to soccer practice. B-chip technology seeped into her brain map, she bled binary. She was . . . a monster . . . but that was better than the others. She still had determination. Now filled with pain and sadness, she plotted her revenge. She pulled on her sweater, grabbed the charcoal lighter leftover from last summer’s barbecues . . .

* * * * *

They arrived at the library, and she breathed a sigh of relief. So much chaos, she thought sadly. That had been her purpose in creating the tainted B-chip. But even she hadn’t realized the amount of destruction that would result.

Press turned to her, looking for an answer, but she hadn’t heard his question. “Were you listening to me, Paige? I asked if you knew which way to go.” He was annoyed at being ignored by his mentor. “You’re my assistant. Aren’t you supposed to know these things?” she asked with a cocky little grin. “I’m not your lackey,” he replied, perturbed.

“Sure you are . . . but to answer your question, the Washington conference room.”

They continued to walk. She had to put up a façade to hide the pained guilt she was feeling, or no one would believe that she noble reasons for The Erasing. She decided that’s what this time should be called in history. She had made history. Was one person allowed to change history? Someone had to. If she hadn’t, then this world was truly doomed. What were values, ideals, if they were never learned, just downloaded?

She realized suddenly that people might revolt against her . . . but it was still worth it. It had to be. Right?

She was jolted out of her thoughts again as Press shouted to look out the window. Paige came to the glass and withheld the gasp that rushed up her throat. A woman was ablaze in the middle of a pile of books, her mouth agape in a silent scream. Paige imagined that she heard the painful wails through the layers of vacuum-separated glass. A man ran up but didn’t reach the woman in time. He seemed to look around wildly, run out of sight, then back again with a blonde woman in tow, a disheveled, dirty woman. Turning, Paige saw Press’s expression.

He looked at her in horror, with sudden realization. He had gone from cool to overwhelmed to disgusted in two point three seconds. She smiled at him wanly and gave a small shake of the head. Press tried to smile back, but it never quite reached his lips. They both turned around at the same moment, and headed toward the conference room doors.

This was it. No more doubts, no more guilt. She had a world to rearrange. A mask of righteous determination slipped on her face before she pushed the doors open and was blinded by bright light.

Kristi Leaders, Robyn King, Siobhon Smith, Torin King,
Lauren Brown

Wander Worlds

There are only two sides, but you prove that you can be in the middle. One foot is on red and one on yellow, making your body orange. Sometimes you venture into the red world and roam there freely, but only for a time. Then you bring yourself back to the middle. You dabble in the yellow and try to find freedom there but then you wonder what the red world thinks of you, so you turn orange again.

You try to have “the best of both worlds,” and you find that you do not feel the best anywhere, but you also do not feel the worst. That is what is important. You do not want to feel bad. You want to be comfortable, but you feel uncomfortable all the time. Which world do you fit in? You believe that if you stay in the middle, both worlds will revolve around you (and it has been true so far). You feel torn because you are pulled both ways, red against yellow, orange turning both red then yellow then red when being pulled back and forth and back again.

What you do not see is that one world (or both) will give up one day, when they see your true orangeness. Then where will you be? Stuck in the middle of two worlds that do not want you? Red and yellow may mix for you, but they will not mix with each other. Choose a world, before they let go, or before you do.

Jamie Wilmot



Roll and Smile — Brooke Shinabarger

Scrawled on the Back of Class Notes

God, I'm drowning.
In all of my thoughts
I'm losing ground, falling back,
can't climb out, lost my breath,
like wave upon wave it all rushes by.
I'm in fear of losing myself.
But if I'm already lost, what do I fear?
The emotions I feel,
they can bring me up
but they're tearing me down.
I never had a chance.
It was all meant to be
with my head under water
and my lungs slowly filling
with this slithery sick feeling.

I'm trying to shout for someone.
Dear God, I'm drowning.

Lauren Brown

Homeless

My home is where I lie
It depends on where I stand
My clothes are always packed
I don't know how long I'll stay
My walls aren't always cement
I don't really have a front lawn
There is no street to turn on
because the address is long gone.

"Instability at its finest,
The epitome of uncertainty"
With my empty plans and distant
eyes I couldn't blame you for
saying that about me
but believe it or not
I've chosen this path
I planned to be lost
I wanted to wander
If I wanted to find myself
I needed to be lost
and if I wanted to find clarity
I needed space to think.

Sure, I may be confused
Yes, I may seem naive
but don't worry about me
I can do whatever tomorrow
because I'm homeless.

Karolyn Avila

Easily Forgotten

I never really asked for much;
that's what's wrong with me,
empty handed,
broken hearted,
that's all I seem to be.
I try to give the space you need,
I try to be your friend,
but as soon as I walk out the door
the thought of me ends.
I always sit and listen,
I always answer the phone,
I always go out of the way
and then I'm left alone.
I make one friend,
I make another,
I try to equal three,
but somehow
in one day
three becomes two, minus me.

I've never told your secrets,
I've always fed your pride,
now seeing how you treat me
makes me want to cry.
I want to say I hate being last,
but that's not entirely true,
you see, I'm not even on the list
when it comes to you.
It's been a while since I've felt beautiful,
for once I want to be number one,
but that's something I try not to hold onto,
it's now a dream that's become undone,
empty handed,

broken hearted,
that's all I seem to be.
I never really asked for much
and that's what's wrong with me.

Karolyn Avila



A Moment of Silence — Jacob Mulinix



Boardwalk — Jamie Wilmot

Salvation

A broken soul with lonesome tears
I have myself experienced
delivered of bondage
free of pain
now ransom paid
and Salvation gained.

Alicia M. Johnson

The Air Is Dry

The air is dry
but it burns.
The sky is light
but it looks dark.
You think you may just skip today,
yeah, tomorrow looks better.
The sun will warm you then.

But the weather only seems to change,
the same show,
the same performance,
the same stage under
the same sun for these
thousands of years.
Only the actors have changed,
and season to season they
still follow the same script:
turn your eyes to the horizon
when the sun rises,
when it sets,
ask yourself why this wide sky
and solid earth were created, why
the sea roars and birds soar
while your own two feet are stuck
on this solid earth,
suddenly less of a foundation
when feet are swallowed
in shifting sand,
like hands clawing for safe land,
like eyes closed to open the mind
to think of things you've left behind
for those who will succeed you
as the day grows dim.

You feel your chances are getting slim,
but if you can make it until daylight
then there's a chance of the all right,
so you leave your cold, cold car
and eyes behold the large imposing signs:
Buy, Splurge, and Spend some more.
With hesitation you enter the daunting gates,
no turning back,
no wishing for yesterday,
the spell of night has begun
again, again, sadly it seems
echoing, echoing, "save me again"
from the trap, the scheme, the plan of
Buy, Splurge, Spend.

No! Dream of
Experience, Patience, Silence.
The silence of a dream,
the experience of silence,
of night patiently waiting,
pain and angst encompassed,
a memory that can't be erased,
of each sun reminding you daily
of what there is to overcome,
how life isn't easy,
always hurdles
but slowly the suns can be put back together.

And one by one they fall into place
until you know where you are,
you who are unimportant,
just another person among masses,
conformity being the game.

But a contradiction, also, in you
to be something different,
something bold,
something bright,
an oddity among so many others,
you can't hide,
you won't,
you'll be a hero and the villain both,
playing all the roles before the sun.

You know who you are,
from where you came,
why you are
not meant to be where
the air is dry,
but it still burns.

Karolyn Avila, Jamie Wilmot, Jessica Renfro, Andrew Pratt,
Nicholle King, Karlie Nickeson, Lauren Brown



Goodnight Light — Jamie Wilmot

Taking Chances, Creating the Fight

There are some who say they're number one,
But who do they know? I'ma get it done.
We're the ones who go through it all;
No one else knows how to take a fall.
I'ma get the one thing I want;
It's that one thing that I can flaunt.
Who's to say what's wrong or right?
I'm the one taking up the fight.
It's a fight within me that goes on and on.
Fights with you until you're gone.
Some people like to prolong this venture,
But why would you want to take it further?
Just end the agony and make it better.
Put up the umbrella and take the weather.
Some things can never be broken—
Those lines can never be spoken.
Just written on paper for you to look,
That last chance that you know you took.
Again, last chance, trying to impress—
Now it's your turn to release the stress.

Carrie Cleland