Cover

untitled
Travis J. Blom
silver gelatin print

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To rest, wherever it is.

Dialogue is a journal of commentary which seeks to describe and stimulate the intellectual and artistic ferment at Calvin through articles, interviews, fiction, poetry, book reviews, visual art, and satire. As such, Dialogue supports artists in the college community, working in all media, encouraging them to express their insights regarding how to closely reflect the image of God to the World.

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Editorial: "Dysfunctional Toasters' and the Human Condition"
Peter Stroobosscher

"Hello, Goodbye." (I)
Matt Poole

"nude reclining on asteroid"
Josh Ippel

"Hello, Goodbye." (II)
Matt Poole

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untitled
Tina Anderson

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Joe Lapp

"Blue Please Forget-Me-Not"
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"Deus ex Machina"  acrylic on glass  Jessica Getchell
"'Dysfunctional Toasters' and the Human Condition"

Dave, a friend of mine who is well acquainted with contemporary visual art, accompanied me on a trip to Chicago a couple months back on the condition that we would spend the majority of our time touring the city's alternative art galleries. I'm a curiously green little farm boy and on the drive out I asked him as many questions on the topic of art as my limited vocabulary would allow. He entertained them all, sensitive to the holes in my questions and on our arrival he even introduced me to a friend of his whose gallery had just recently been recognized as the most promising new gallery in the city.

From there we took to wandering rather unintentionally through the streets, finally arriving at 1550 Milwaukee Avenue where, on the second floor, the Beret International Gallery is shelved. A man in his mid-twenties sat behind a desk at the top of a narrow tower of stairs, he was fiddling with a small object in his lap and paid no attention to us. I ducked past him behind Dave who had already fixed his attention on the exhibit. The entire room was cluttered with toasters. Some were fastened with rotating wings while others were set without wings, on a row of parapets in the center of the room. Frustrated voiceovers were recorded and amplified through tiny speakers hung between the slots of each toaster—and each had something to say. When you pressed their levers they would complain about the sufferings that a toaster must endure. Collectively the gallery was a caricature of an asylum. The man at the desk had long grown accustomed to the absurdities but I found Dave with some poor appliance in a corner that was confiding in him about the lack of opportunity inherent in its career as a toaster. He laughed unabashedly, thrilled with the ridiculous genius of the exhibit. I managed to keep my head amidst the noise, critiquing the exhibit as professionally and unaffectedly as I could but after a few aimless observations I retreated to the artist's concept.

I read that 'toaster' is a casual term used regularly throughout the computer subculture in reference to a microchip designed for one sole purpose, which it repeats over and over again, obsoletesing with each task. This flock of toasters was no different. But the monotony had gotten to them, some were depressed, some were angry and others took flight. Now, inanimate objects are usually designed to perform only one task for the sake of efficiency but the exhibit suggests that the pursuit of efficiency has bled into the
concept we have of ourselves.

We'll pick this up this idea again later but before applying to its effect on the human condition we can take a look at a similar argument pertaining to Art, in and of itself. These arguments explore Art to find its truest definition: what does it mean? And what underlying need does it fulfill?

In his book *Art in Action* Nicholas Wolterstorff pins blame on the Modernists for trying to level art to one purpose. He argues, "seldom do we acknowledge that the intended public uses for art are diverse and multiple... theorists and non-theorists alike, assume that beneath the flux and diversity of purpose there is just one intended public use." In a parallel argument the Autonomists preserve the complexity of Art by saying that it is not a pragmatic medium. It is meant for contemplation. Yet another view- that of our Reformed tradition- demands that Art must glorify God (An argument that often degenerates to only two sides: CCM supporters and their opponents)

The above disputes could remain unresolved for quite some time. This is due, in large part, to the fact that the subject of their conversation cannot express its preference. As many things as a panting is capable of saying, it can never fully articulate its desire to be recognized for the rich complexities of its creation. We, on the other hand, are quite capable of making a case for ourselves. We are able to balance our gifts: we can balance our work ethic with our family lives, we can balance self-love with love for our community; we can balance our adherence to God's law with amity for those who adhere to no authority- and so on, and so on. This list could continue, and with any hope it will continue until the days that we'll no longer spend here on earth.

At the present moment, however, we are fostered by a liberal arts mandate that preserves the complexity of its students; a rich mandate that recognized what professor Basney meant when he wrote, in *The Space for Grief*, "We misunderstand the nature of gifts. We think about them as strengths; we ought to think about them as forms of weakness. In school we point our true technological faith at people and pull the trigger, and the people shrink instantly to resources: what do people contain and how can we get it to market? And then, when we have gutted the person and made all the courage and synapses into something the market will buy, we wonder why we have a blank left, a dead field, a cipher, an alcoholic."

--Peter Stroobosscher
untitled  silver gelatin print  Christopher Filippini
"A midnight walk: the gypsy's eternity"

by Melissa Kruse

You can't tell by looking at someone if they're afraid
Of what happens after the last guest has shut the door of a lonlied room.
You can't tell by looking if their riches are self-made
Or if they, like you, are out on this gravel road more alone with every friend they assume.

It's an old road, a night of diligent cold and tremulous stars,
An excellent night to be out with the gypsy, guessing at eternity.
"Maybe eternity is a place where pots are but jars,
Where both smoothed clays and gashed edges are cherished necessities."

The gypsy stares, and staggers to a stop.
"Eternity is a place where princes are but pilgrims,
Where every seeker's sideways glance is his most prevalent crop
And more definite than the corners of his puritan hat, his moral paradigms."

The walk resumes, wears to a trudge.
"Eternity is place where naivete is but an innocent token
Needed by every glaring, gray-eyed gypsy to be the ultimate judge
Of his own broken heart, his own words wished spoken."

An awkward silence prevails, and I stare up into what I cannot see.
"This faith is my tangible night and day, but my nemethue nebulous in disguise.
It sticks to me, but to no one who touches me.
I clear it, blur it, fear it, yet here it lies."

I can look up into the unmeetable eyes, I'm a gypsy and I can cry the most palpable,
cluey tears,
but they too, are too hot to hold onto, like He with your last finger,
The one that slipped through His sweaty handful of minutes and years.
"Eternity is a place where ice-rain doesn't drag me down to this glossy gravel to
linger."
untitled mixed media Tina Anderson
"Porifera's Swing"

by Tim Thompson

There in sessile isolation, she grew into a song.
Through intricate pores, her very body,
she pitched music beyond the frequency
of whales. Without ear, with only osculum, she never heard her song,
ever knew she had a song per se—
she knew no better than to be.
Her every separate spongin fiber
rang out undaunted by the water's
density; chordal cells intoned
a native laud—Te Deum, Te Darwinum—the sponge cried out, was
silent, kept doing what sponges do—
Porifera worked her daily groove,
transposed her mode to jazz at random
intervals; she cast her dice, her budding
gemmules. She beat the tidal rhythm
with flagella snapping syncopatedly,
spongin rocking with the tension,
the release. Those tremelo echoes,
excurrent through her dead bones still, now
shake the bather with each wringing squeeze.
by Jill Eelkema

"Slow In Coming but Waiting Hard"

Staring backwards
I see the seams of
Mountain tops and
Northern lights
Behind the
Emerald curtain
I once hung so delicately on
Songs lines from my youth.
I pulled it tight around me,
Like a shawl,
With only my eyes peeking.
Person after person
Winked at me and whispered,
Secrets so low I decided
I must creep out to hear.
Yet, I was slow in coming,
Fearing a tin man waited
To steal my heart.
Glancing back now
Is to peer forward
Down the yellow brick road of
Sacred Ground between
Myself and the angels.
Still, I walk
Where seraphim fear to tread—
Almost alone—
Finding I am not so fearful,
Putting one blistered heel
Behind the other.

by Peter La Grand

"Leftovers"

She is sliding shadows across water
the air I breathe
the words waiting on my tongue
the stillness of my mind as I drive in
frosty air to school
She is the middle of the night
the stars I glimpse above Detroit
the mumbling madman sitting next to me
begging smokes and telling jokes only he
know the end of
As I walk along I walk in and out of her
as clouds of mist
as breaths of smoke
as rays of sunshine
All perfect, timeless points
Even in my father I find her
staring at me eyes wide
flushed cheeks
My whispers never can reach her
before they fall and stab me again
untitled  mixed media  Stafford Trapp
I kissed Rachel goodnight, and as she turned to walk away I took my lower lip between my teeth and bit down until I felt the skin break and the warm, red blood trickle soft down my chin and bitter onto my tongue. It was pure dramatics, simple symbolism. I was at times prone to such expression. But it was a poor symbol after all. The emotional pain that I had been inflicting on myself with that woman was not so sharp as my teeth on my dull, throbbing pain that was easy to distract with tap water, I was struck with a sudden sense of curiosity. Why did they call it "putting on some tea?" All I was doing was putting on some water. Maybe there was an alternative method of tea preparation that of which I was naive. Still, it seemed that this way was a pretty good idea. What if I should change my mind before the water is boiled, and decide that I would rather prefer some coffee from the French press? Why, this would be no problem—I would have some hot water soon enough. And what if, when the water has boiled, I change my mind again and decide I have a taste for hot cocoa? Why, if I had put on tea, I would then be at a loss—but I had put on water, and so the possibilities only lay spread before me. I allowed myself a proud smile while I poured my freely-chosen tea.

It was only too bad that no one was around to share my ruminations with. Indeed, where were my roommates? Well, if my memory served me correctly, Derek was at a movie with his girlfriend. Being a Friday night, Mark was sure to be at Lewis’ house playing video games on the computer (a past-time leftover from their high school days). But where could Lisa be? She never would tell anyone where she was going. Of course, this was less a problem than that she never told us when she would return, and so often changed upon one of us while we were...entertaining a lady. No matter, there would be no entertaining tonight, only a collection of short stories by Dostoevsky and my Earl Grey tea.

A knock at the door. Rachel entered.

"I forgot my mittens," she giggled at me, seeming a little nervous. My goodness! I had completely forgotten we even had seen each other this night! Her memory was so far from my mind that I must have looked quite confused while trying to recall who she was, for Rachel screwed up her face.

"What's wrong?"

What's wrong indeed! My insides sank to the bottom of my gut as I saw a long discussion approaching. Quickly, how to escape?!

"Oh, um, no, no! I mean, I'm only surprised to see you. I was, uh, just heading off to an early bed and was in my 'settled-in' mindset, you know?"

"You and your mindsets!"

I just stared at her awkwardly, expecting her to go on. It became apparent that she had no such intentions.

"Uh, where did you leave your mittens?"

"Oh, here they are, on the table. I guess it's bedtime for me, too."

"Sweet dreams."

"Are you sure you don't want me to stay? We could just go straight to sleep."

"Oh, um, no, no. I mean, I have a lot of stuff to do tomorrow, and I want to just get to it. I wouldn't be very good company."

This seemed to at least shut her up, although we both knew that I was full of it. She came over and snuggled her way into my embrace. She looked up longingly with her sugary blue eyes. I tilted my head down and kissed her slow and soft, pulling lightly on her lip as I released.

"My tea is getting cold! Although my kisses must have been getting colder more quickly. Her eyes betrayed the cheerful smile she flashed at me. We both felt the complete emptiness of the air in the room, and yet we just carried on the charade. I walked her to the door and lied that I would miss her until tomorrow night. She lied that she wouldn't be able to sleep without my arms around her. I was mad that she could lie to me as easily as I could lie to her, so I decided to show her that I could lie better. I grabbed her chin lightly and inclined it to meet my lips again. My other hand reached up and wove its way through her hair. I just held her in my kiss for an eternity longer than I could stand inside, but I did not let go until I could feel her shaking. When I looked at her again she was teary-eyed and frowning at me. She had felt that one. She couldn't tell if I was lying.

"You...can be such...a jerk..." and she turned and left.

I lied to myself that I had enjoyed that. Even though we were a lifetime apart emotionally, I knew I had injured a human being, and I was sorry...
I had done it. But I knew I would have done it no matter what. I knew that given the opportunity to relive that moment, not one second would have transpired differently. And I had enjoyed it, to tell the truth. For once I had asserted myself over and above this relationship, over this dead, limp fish that hung from the wall and emanated its stench throughout the house. Still, I was alone again, and her face had faded more slowly that time, and the lifelessness of my apartment was demanding its presence be known to me.

Well, my tea wasn't quite cold yet. At least I could enjoy that in peace and quiet. Just lie back on the couch and forget about the world. And I could have, too. It wouldn't have been difficult for me to forget all about everything that happened that night. But I had kissed her. Twice. I hated myself the instant I did it. I despised that bed—just to show the other one the depths we were willing to go to. Well, perhaps no one could have made me kiss her. But why was that? When did I ever put myself on being always an individu—

...music, books, art, movies, wine. It was important to me always to gain a greater knowledge about a thing, to know enough about it to justify my liking it to others. But why was that? When did I ever care greatly about what others thought? I prided myself on being always an individual—

The phone rang and I almost jumped as I returned from my voyage into the center of my mind. On the other end my friend Geoff inquired into my goings-on that fine evening. I was forced to remember that I had just spent so much time with Rachel, but she, uh...had to go home early. Well, it was only eleven, said Geoff, and there was this small party that he was going to and I wanted to talk to, especially if it meant yelling my brains out. For the next two hours I got up only to refill my cup. The slight buzz I was getting was sadly unable to numb me to the obnoxious bass beats and mindless chatter and squeals of delight that all swelled together to surround me, even in my corner, in a deep, stifling pool of disdain for my whole existence. Of course, that was dramatic. I was really quite
numb to my own situation. I knew I should despise my life, but I couldn't bring myself to do so—that might mean that I'd have to do something about it, and that was clearly not something I could allow myself.

What did that mean? What couldn't I allow myself? A better life? That was sick to even think about. How twisted I must have been. It was as though I wanted not to feel, or rather, that I wanted to feel the despair of being unable to feel. But there was something about that feeling that was so good, so delectable, something that made me want to hang on to it tenaciously. At times it made me feel quite high and powerful; I could do anything when I was steeping in it (remember the kiss? the spilled punch?). Perhaps it was the one thing that kept me aware that I was really alive, but at least I didn't have to like being so. But what was I afraid of? What would happen if I let it go? Would--

"Hello."

I hadn't even seen her sneak up on me:

"Um, hi."

She must have made it through while I was deep in my thoughts and had let my shields down.

"Your sitting here all alone."

I knew by her slutty dress and squeaky voice that that was the "your" she meant. But I would drive her off; I would have to show her that there was one more line of defense that she wasn't aware of. The punch? No, I was bored with that. How 'bout something more perverse, more despicable? I moved over on the couch:

"I don't have to be, eh?"

She sat down: Skank.

"I thought you could use some company. Most guys think I suit that purpose well."

I wasn't sure that was a proper sentence, and I almost contested her on that point, but I had already decided on my strategy and was in that mode, so I followed the momentum.

"You certainly suit me fine."

I reached my arm around her, pulled her near, and as I kissed her I put my other hand on her chest. Now, this was pure spite and hatred, an outright display of my absolute lack of respect or admiration for this girl—the alcohol only intensified my likelihood of doing it. But she didn't resist: Skank. So I began to squeeze her and become somewhat more aggressive and pushy. What I had forgotten about was the punch that I had placed in my lap and when she reached down by my legs she tipped it onto me.

"Omigosh! I'm sorry! I'm such a slut!" was what I think she said. She jumped up, too, grabbed my hand and led me through the crowd—those sweaty stench had created a haze in the middle of the room by this time—and to a bathroom, where she quite freely and unhesitatingly began to dab my pants with a towel. Normally I might have reacted with alarm, but I wanted to show her that I was at least as free and unhesitating as I had first made myself out to be. She was apologizing profusely the whole time, and I let her without saying a word myself. She should know that I cared little for or about her. I simply stood there and watched as she crouched down in front of me with the towel. When she was finished to her satisfaction (I wasn't about to tell her to stop or to keep going) she stood up to face me and said "I'm sorry." one more time, quietly and with some uncertainty this time.

But her sudden sincerity wasn't enough to clear away the mist before my eyes through which I saw only a detestable slut. I hated her because I was trying to drive her away and my own putziness had landed us together in this grungy bathroom. I hated her because she tried to help me, and because I had let her: I had let myself be vulnerable to her.

"Hey," she said; I wasn't hopeful about what would come next. "You know, this place is dead anyway. My place is just a couple doors down; why don't we head over there? It'd give us a chance to get a little fresh air."

"Yeah, okay." I suddenly felt I should have been more talkative to her—she was trying to be nice, after all—but I still had to lord my indifference over her.

We got our coats on and just walked out. Nobody at the party was coherent enough to understand a goodbye anyway. It was very late already, and I was growing sleepy, but I followed the girl to her house. The night air was cold, and I didn't bring a very warm jacket. There was really no good reason for me to be awake and outside at that moment. There were no lights on in the house we approached; the girl explained that her roommates parents are renting this place would probably stay at the party until tomorrow. For some reason it wasn't until she mentioned her roommates that I realized that I didn't know her name even. Oh well, I suppose it didn't matter. She didn't even offer it to me; I was probably just another face—or body, rather. Skank.

Inside it was very warm, almost hot. The décor was surprisingly conservative: creams and tans and light blue. Prints of famous paintings and potted plants hung on the walls, and the lamps and furniture were all designer-looking. Looked like her parents probably designed the whole thing and I hated them for having so much money. And I hated her for being so dependent on them and not living her own life.

*My roommates parents are renting this place
to us. I hate the furniture, but they pay to keep it warm, too.*

Oh, so that's how it is. You probably think you're so with-it and hip, don't you? You don't like anything unless it's sexy or weird. But you're just like the rest. I'm so unimpressed.

"Would you like something to drink?"

Great. Haven't we both had enough alcohol? We were going to get ourselves in trouble.

"Yeah, sure, whatever you have is fine."

She went into the kitchen while I sat down on a couch, trying not to get anything dirty. She returned with two glasses of orange juice.

"I think orange juice is best late at night or early in the morning, but rarely during the day. You do like it, don't you?"

"Um, yeah, sure. It's fine. Thanks."

I don't know why I said "thanks." I didn't mean it; it was only a formality. But I said it anyway, and I regretted it for making me seem polite when I didn't feel so. I drank half my glass immediately, which proved to be a mistake as the sugar rushed into my head and made me feel faint. I laid back in the couch and sighed heavily. I wanted badly to go to bed and not think about getting up.

"Hey, you came on kind of strong back there, for being so subdued right now," she observed, almost as though to herself. Boy was my plan shot. I had lost all my momentum and now I was still with her and now we were getting into a conversation. No, I couldn't do this, not like this. It was carry it through or get the bloody out. I did--

"That's alright, I ... I don't always think tender, sweet and slow ..."

...and leave her exposed, cold, and fearing my abandonment of her, only at the last moment, before all is lost, to pull away and leave her exposed, cold, and fearing my abandonment of her, only at the last moment, before all is lost, to press myself against her again so that she would cling to me desperately. I was concerned about my inner world? Why did she ask that? Why did she choose me of all the lushes at the party, of all the sweaty, smelly, brain-dead party-hoppers, of all the lost souls who thought that their life could only get worse from there? Why this prying into my inner world? The razor-sharp blade of the question had just enough time to pierce into that inner world that through the slit I saw that it was...it was...weak.

That was it: no more talk. Action. It was time to get out of there.

I reached over and caressed her hair. She gasped quietly and then slouched slightly before leaning against me. I worked my arm around her and she put her hand on my chest. Then she looked up at me and I saw green eyes that had that same sugary-

quality like the ones I had kissed earlier that night.

"What am I doing?"

I moved in and met her mouth with mine--soft, tender, sweet and slow...

...and leave her exposed, cold, and fearing my abandonment of her, only at the last moment, before all is lost, to press myself against her again so that she would cling to me desperately. I was conducting the whole intercourse (do you like my choice of words?) with my own body; I was toying with her, pure and simple. There was no justification for it, so I offer none. I only wanted to...
teach her that she should never give a human being the power over herself that she had given me.

I knew after this brief bed-in that she was not quite the skank I had thought her. She was much too giving and involved in the exchange to be the detached, physical object I had previously judged her; she had yet to become cynical about the cheapness of a physical relationship. I even considered that she might think that she loved me now, or more amusing and detestable: that I loved her. Looking at those tiny lips, that soft skin and hair--I reached out to stroke her hair one more time, so lovely did I have to admit it was. So soft...so soft...I smiled slightly to myself just looking at her.

Just then I could not stand being myself in that room with that girl in that way. It wasn't a moral guilt at the wrong I had undeniably done her, nor was it a remorse, nor even a fear of her anger or hurt feelings. Rather, it was a sort of sense of aesthetics that viewed the whole scene as a painter his canvas and was so disturbed as to desire only to remove the offending subject. So I slowly pulled back the sheet, edged my feet off the bed and lowered them slowly to the floor. Breathing quietly and deliberately, I rose to sitting, leaned forward and eased myself onto the ground. I took equal care to put on my clothes quietly, and before I left I stopped in the doorway to look one more time on the girl. So peaceful now. So...beau--...beautiful. This thought struck me as curious and strange, at least for me. But no matter; I turned to leave.

"Why are you trying to sneak out?"

"I just thought, maybe... (take this)...that you expected me to."

"Why?"

"I couldn't leave unnoticed then I was going to at least make it painful for her to have caught me:

"Isn't that how you girls do things?"

This noticeably hurt her, and she hung her head. It was pretty dark so I couldn't tell if she was crying yet. She raised her head again:

"Please leave."

Ouch! Why did she have to say it so nicely, so innocently? If she had insulted me I could have replied in kind and left in a dramatic huff. If she had simply been stern and demanding I could have made a witty, chauvinistic remark and proudly walked away. But this! This humility! This crushed my calloused heart and I saw myself as I must have looked to her: wretched, cold, inhuman.

"Look," I began, growing angry at her, "this whole thing was your idea. I was happy to be alone and you had to bother me. So don't get all bent 'cause I don't want to play along with the rest of the game, alright?"

"Please leave."

Desist, foul beast!

"Hey, I don't need this. I don't need a guilt trip, and I don't need you."

A blank stare. Say something! No response at all. Why can't I leave?

Finally, broken, I slumped down to a sitting position inside the doorframe and just stared desperately at her, beseeching her to release me from her spell. She only sat back against the wall and returned my gaze, never uttering a sound. I could not understand my situation at that point, sitting in the doorway staring at the Girl Without A Name and her staring right back at me helplessly in the face of it all. Unbelievable yes, but we sat that way until morning broke, when the girl got up, dressed, and actually stepped over me and left the house. I hated her every minute of that long night: for not letting me leave quiet-
grown angry or frustrated with me a hundred times early on that evening; most girls would have left. But this girl, this mere mortal being, had managed to slide in under my front lines time and again. I mean, she was obviously a skank, I had concluded that long ago. She had to be one of those slutty chicks that just wanted to "get wasted and laid." Otherwise, what was I doing that whole night?

Huh...

But the guy across the aisle from me was beginning to talk to himself. I wondered whether he was just oblivious, or didn't care either way if someone heard him. Or maybe he had a mental illness and was prone to fits of talking to himself. I knew that in some autistic individuals talking out loud was the only way to focus on a single thought, or could also be a repeating of a memorable word or phrase, but this guy wasn't repeating himself, so that probably wasn't it. He looked pretty ragged and dirty, so he could have been homeless, in which case he could have some mental illness but have been marginalized somehow. Too bad, really, how that can happen to people.

* * *

I threw my coat on the couch instead of hanging it up; I wanted only to go to bed. A distinct citrus smell permeated the apartment--Derek was home. Whatever. I was far more concerned with getting to my bed, and quickly. The shoes came off, the shirt next, then my pants, and I crawled into my bed...right next to Rachel.

Bloody!

By the time I noticed her getting into the bed had woken her up. Thank goodness she was wearing my flannel pajama pants and a T-shirt of mine--otherwise we may have done something I'd hate myself for. I knew that nothing good or easy was about to happen to me, but I chose to act as though I was expecting to just go to sleep. After all, who gave her the right to come back to my place and crawl into my bed when I wasn't even home? I tried to quell my growing anger only for the sake of being able to fall asleep.

"Where were you all night?" I heard her mumble from her pillow.

Here we go.

"Oh, uh, Geoff took me to a party to cheer me up. It went real late but it wasn't very good." 

"Geoff just called here a half hour ago to see if you'd made it home alright."

Blast! Oh well, no turning back now. Just go with it. Maybe enjoy it a little.

"Yeah, I...left before him. The Girl Without A Name wanted to leave, so we just went for a walk."

"The who?"

Aagh! She is no longer here and she has done me in again! Cursed Girl! Why did I even mention her?

"It was just a walk. We talked for a while. No big deal."

"Did you sleep with her?"

I quickly lifted myself onto my elbow.

"What?" Feign hurt, quick! "How can you say that? My...gee...bloody! Don't you even trust me?"

"Should I?" She was starting to get upset herself now. I could feel months of pent-up hostility bubbling up her esophagus and making their acidy way up her throat to be vomited out in my general direction.

"Isn't it your own personal philosophy that you shouldn't trust most humans with anything more than your first name?"

"Listen, I--"

"You know, I don't even want to hear your response."

Show time.

"I don't want to know if you slept with her, or why that might be acceptable according to your 'all mighty system.' None of this matters to you anyway. You--your eyes are already glossing over 'cause you don't care one way or another whether I walk out on you right now or throw my body at you. I don't matter a thing to you. You--your own life hardly matters to you! And I can't say or do anything to make you wake up to your own...frickin' delusions or whatever they are..."

Apparently this wasn't so well rehearsed a speech as I was bracing myself for, but it was surely a heartfelt one, although I wasn't sure what that meant to me. In fact, I was admittedly off balance by this time. My initial intent had been to get her upset and have her leave so I could get some rest, but now she was on to a whole different issue than my nocturnal exploits.

Suddenly I was on the defensive again--a theme for the last twenty-four hours, it seemed. And I was getting quite tired of it, too. I couldn't recall a time recently when I had had to react to so many people (two) rather than having had them in the palm of my hand. It was like I was losing my touch or something.

"...and I almost wonder if you don't enjoy being all depressed and miserable all the time and never having anything positive to say about anything. It's like you have some sort of masochistic need to feel crummy! I just...I...just--"

At this point her throat was constricting too strongly for her to talk anymore and she was reduced to a crying, tearing mess. She buried her head in the pillow and just lay there, thrashing occasionally. I could have said a few things to debate her on most of what she had accused me of, but I opted to just let her cry, that having been the more productive strategy in the past.
Well, that could have been worse.

I put a consoling hand on her shoulder and stroked it along her back for a while (another proven strategy). For a brief moment I began to think about what she had been saying to me, but I was instantly offended by the idea that this creature here could have anything significant to teach me. It was becoming clear that her usefulness to me was waning in light of the growing number of expectations she was holding me to. And now these accusations! As though she was suddenly some expert on what went on inside my head, when I had meticulously allowed her to see only those parts of me that I felt she should see. Rachel knew so little about me—and that was why the Girl Without A Name was so upsetting to me, because she had somehow managed to see sides of me that I wouldn't have otherwise let her see.

The throbbing stopped and her breathing evened out; she had fallen back asleep. I wondered how late she had stayed up waiting for me. Oh well, enjoy the quiet while you can, huh?

So I lay down next to her and closed my eyes, too. But there was a problem hadn't planned on: I couldn't fall asleep. I lay there and cleared my mind and breathed slowly, but that mistress of the night would not come upon me. For nearly half an hour I must have just lain there becoming increasingly frustrated by my inability to doze off, until finally I got up, dressed, and decided to go for a walk.

* * *

Considering how upset Rachel was likely to be when she woke up and found me gone, it probably wasn't the best idea I could have had at the time to go for a walk. But I did it anyhow—who would control me? Well, the Girl Without A Name seemed to. No matter: I would probably never see her again. The whole incident, while disturbing, was over, and I could forget about it as long as I never saw her again. Besides, Rachel was a more pressing problem. Couldn't I just break it off now? No, it must be her. She must break this off if it is to happen. She had to admit that she hated me, that she wanted nothing more than her freedom from me, for why should I give it to her of my own choosing?

Bloody...

The air was cool in my little mass-produced suburb; the sun was making its way through the sky, and all-in-all things were picture-perfect. But the Girl Without A Name's question suddenly came back to me: why do we do any of this? Why do I do any of this? What's it all mean? And with these thoughts something else came upon me, the same thing I had felt last night when she asked me that. It was somewhat confusing, and unsettling at the same time. I could not find the words to give it expression, which only magnified the intensity of the sensation. It was as though my mind was unwilling to process the question it had presented itself with, as though there were some uncertain end that was repelling me from pursuing it. And at the same time I was aware of another sensation, this one less disturbing and more invigorating. There was a kind of energy accompanying it that made my hands tremble slightly. Whatever was going on was simultaneously horrible and amazing, and for lack of coping ability I turned around and began running.

I had to try and communicate with someone, quickly, before this thing went away and I couldn't get it back. But was Rachel the one? No, it had to be the Girl Without A Name! Yes! She would understand; she would help me. But, (oh, cruel fate!) I could not remember where she lived! How would I ever find her? No time. I would have to go to Rachel then. Yes, Rachel! I would have to apologize, of course, but then we would embrace and I could try and describe it all to her and I would stumble on all my words in my haste and confusion but it would be okay because we would both be happy to just be friends again because that's how we worked best together and she would intuitively understand—she'd have to!—and things would be better somehow...

I jumped up the stairs to the door of my house, burst in with reckless abandon, and knocked over a table lamp en route to my room where I stopped dead on my feet: Rachel had gone. The breath seemed to evaporate from my lungs and the adrenaline must have drained along with the color from my face. I slumped on the bed and knew—intuitively knew—that she had left me...for good. She had made the decision I had been doing my damndest to force her into: she had decided that she hated me and wanted her freedom. And what could I do? Where was I? There was no going back on my deeds, I knew that. And I wasn't so that the relationship was over; I had wanted that myself for some time. But during the run over there I had convinced myself that we would be great friends again, just like in the old days. Now I knew that that could never be. Nothing would be the same again.

And sitting there that morning, alone, I saw clearly the extent of my wretchedness toward my friend. A drop of liquid gathered in my left eye and dripped down my cheek and to my lip, where I tasted its saltiness. I think that was sadness.
idea: make art thru/during sleep  
record nocturnal movement

process: purchased bed sheet  
and rolling ball pens  
pens affixed to my body with duct tape  
slept approx. nine hours

result: marks recorded on bed sheet, blankets, pajama pants, me

"bed pen" mixed media  
Phil Orr
"A Doxology of Love: Three Poems"

by Jay Robinson

After Eden

We sit in the dimmed light that bars undusted through the blinds.

I watch you: your cheeks carved from bone, your hands cut like a stream into mine.

I see you face for what it is: fruit clinging to the vine, thirsty for light on your skin like mine.

Choosing the Dark

We meet in the groove of our lips: shoulders overlapping.

In the dark, the light from the television blinks on the wall.

You watch my cheeks blue in its light: all sound out of reach.

Then my eyes catch yours: closing, opening again: not knowing which dark to choose.

Advent

For Christmas I wanted to give you flowers for your garden.

All winter you would tender their warmth and thirst on the window sill in your kitchen facing East.

Come Spring, you would offer them to the rested soil and the full faced sun, so we could celebrate Christmas In June.
"He did talk to me, you may choose to
believe me or not believe me— that con-
cerns me in the least. Right there
bright as day, two large wings of glory—
right there when brushing my teeth, the
dogs too were there and the maid, it was
all there, brushing my teeth as usual on
the verandah, the morning silent as it
always is— and right there he came out of
the dawn fog, he was a lamp, his face a
ball of lightning, you had to shield
yourself from his glory— right there!"

"Right there? What did he say?"

"Oh, he spoke of the most ghastly
events that await you daddy, then van-
ished in the sky— poof! Like that."

"That's quite an imagination for a
thirteen year old, wouldn't you say?"

"I say what I saw!"

"You should take up fiction, then you
could join me and both of us shall die."

"No daddy, you will die. You best
take care and sort it all out— soon."

Daddy walked out, giving a wave of
the fingers and a wink. Suppose he did-
n't believe me. But I saw what I saw and I
saw myself seeing it. Daddy goes out
each day into the woods and remains
there after dark. He says he works and
makes money for the both of us. Since my
mother died he had to give up the writing
life and do something to make money. He
never talks of mother, only maybe in his
dreams, He tells me a lot when he's
asleep, he has the unique gift of
telling all the secrets of the dark, of
his little bottled mind in where all his
sorrow and tears are filled. That bottle
overflows and spills out in his dreams,
I often stay awake and listen to his
tales.

The news came in the afternoon over
the radio, all the phones were dead. The
village phones are always dead. All
important messages are brought home by
the police— just like this one.

"Apparently she died in her sleep,
rolled over to the other side. We would
sit each morning with our tea and listen
to the morning news, she didn't stir, I
shouted and then furiously shook her,
she didn't move, Death came to her at
midnight, the way she wanted, What more
can I say— look after Ma."

"Don't cry Ma please, it's a waste.
You know she'll be up there— the place
you talk of each day. What's the point of
tears? Is she happier then you and I will
ever be?

"I would like to go now."

"Oh, don't speak like that, it's sad
to hear you that way, I shouldn't handle
it long."

The feathered beast met with her hus-
band too, just like the way he met me, in
the morning whiles saying his prayers—
it's the morning revelation to all who
believe. I didn't believe, but he did
and it was good.

Her body was brought home. It was
etched, wrinkled and undone. Two pieces
of cotton stuck in the nose to stop the
blood. The blood was soaked, the cotton
a bloody sponge, her eyes were a hollow
vacuum of words, they said it all— yet
not. The coffin was decorated with flow-
ers, candles and cards white, red, yel-
low— roses smelling of new birth. All the
family was there, each walking up
solemnly to the coffin, head hung low—
respect for the dead.

"She can see us you know," a stranger
spoke to me. The house was full of strangers, patients and beggars— all moaning. This house will never be the same again. Its walls had understood sorrow—it was decaying.

"I know" I replied.

The same night after the ceremony, I crept up to the attic with a butter knife to slit my wrist. I would die of a sharp butter knife. I wanted the impossible to be possible, like the razor sharp butter knife, like the acceptance of suicide. I crept up in the dark—my hands trembling. The ghosts in the English house were there. I shook and cut. I cut again, digging and tearing only a drop of blood for my reward. Death had to wait. I staggered down, a defeatist. I slipped past my Daddy and collapsed in a corner—a dog licking my childish wound.

A month later my father died, just like the feathered beast had said. It was a quiet funeral—now everything was gone. I no longer was saddened. Nobody cried, the priest gave me a warm hand-shake and offered a place for me in the parish. I declined the offer with great thanks.

Back up to the attic, with a bigger weapon— and army tool, handsuffed and this blade in my wrist. I stopped at the sounds of rats running in confusion over me. The sun beams burst through the crack in the attic, glorifying what they hit, my eyes, my hands—the blade.

I staggered down once more, no daddy was there— I crumpled on the floor and lay there with the blade still in my hands. It was done now—I had to go on. So I did; and now I write of those terrible times, a glimpse in a child's nightmare. Ten years later I met the ghost of Ma, who once had wished the scene, it was like she wished. She was no different, she was a constant, bland white and I was the same. She had rolled over and was waiting for me to roll over.
Traveling Mercies: Some thoughts on Faith
by Anne Lamott
review by Benjamin Boss

"It's funny where we look for salvation, and where we actually find it." This single statement gives us insight into the traveling mercies of Anne Lamott. Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith is another humorous and uplifting work of Anne Lamott. This memoir of her journey through Christian faith reveals moments of a personal hell and moments of grace. Traveling Mercies deals with alcoholism, body issues, and motherhood.

Anne Lamott is the author of five novels, including Hard Laughter, and some other books on topics such as motherhood and writing. Anne Lamott will be one of the featured authors at the Festival of Faith and Writing 2000. Anne's story is one of a single mother who has spent her life in the surrounding areas of San Francisco. Traveling Mercies tells of a childhood with parents who were quite liberal but didn't provide for a Christian childhood. Out of this childhood, we find a woman whose life has been complicated by the realities of the world. In the introduction, she makes confessions of reaching the depths of substance abuse. During this dark time of her life, she finally reaches the conclusion that she needs salvation. This is when she falls into the arms of grace.

Throughout the rest of the book we are told of other misguided tales of her life as an alcoholic and mother who constantly makes mistakes. It is through these mistakes that we are revealed of the loving Christ that comes to her rescue. "My coming to faith did not start with a leap but rather a series of staggers from what seemed like one safe place to another. Like lily pads, round and green, these places summoned and then held me up while I grew. Each prepared me for the next leaf on which I would land, and in this way I moved across the swamp of doubt and fear" says Anne about her journey of faith. These lily pads helped keep Anne Lamott afloat during her days as an alcoholic and bulimic. In the chapter, The Aunties, Anne tells us about being a bulimic and of having anxieties over the body. The traveling mercies of Anne's faith give her piece of mind over this issue. She tells us that, "You tend to your spirit through the body."

Although the book constantly tells us of her triumphs, it does seem that she may be a bit obsessed with her own victories, leading one to question the authenticity of her humility. She states that, "I am a sucker for a good resurrection story." I wonder whether it is another stories that she is a sucker for. At times, the book may seem self-indulgent. Other statements, such as, "It is so much hipper to be a drunk than a bulimic", make me ask whether she is glorifying her past. But if anyone who has gone through the hell that Anne has gone through, then I guess that they would have the right to say whatever they want.

Anne Lamott reveals a resurrection story that is accessible to all Christians. "I love these stories because they show where we began, and therefore how far we have come, from the blame and delusions of our drinking days to the gentle illusions by which we stay sober." It is these stories that have kept Anne Lamott afloat and show us that there are traveling mercies along the way for all of us. Be sure to catch Anne Lamott at the Festival of Faith and Writing held March 30 through April 1.

"Hello, Goodbye." (I)
mixed media Matt Poole
MC FALL — Terry L. McFall, aged 29, of Grand Rapids, passed away Friday, January 14, 2000. He is survived by his children, Arnika Fudge, Laneshia Berry, Tykeese Rosa; his father, Terry Burton; his mother, Elsie McFall; grandfather, Johnny McFall; grandmother, Dorothy McFall; special sisters, Latanya McFall and Lakeisha McFall along with and additional four sisters and eight brothers; and a host of aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. Funeral Services will be held 1 PM January 19, 2000, at Macedonia Church, 60 Dennis with family hour from 12 to 1 PM.
"I am not a Romantic Person"

by Amber Vander Molen

I am not a Romantic person

and yet I rush toward the flowers in your face and on your heart, your hair, your soul

attaching them to myself, adorning my body, my soul.

I do not like flowers and candy and cards with sweet Nothings

and yet I rush, to build my House of Flowers with you.

I do not like to rush

the stems of the flowers bend in the wind and the petals are almost broken off

and yet I rush

 toward Your flowers, toward Your heart

 into Your grasp,

 in the Budding of my days—

 to destroy my childhood with you.
"nude reclining on asteroid" mixed media Josh Ippel
"Winter Aubade"

by Mike Buma

Morning silences are the loneliest
when I scribble over Bran Flakes and skim milk
before class or work or Saturday
when the day stretches out before me like
an argument deferred.

In these moments past patio windows
winter's gray indifference promises nothing
and I slip into the despondence of losing hope (again)
in what we have called words.

Thrust into this world like a pencil into a sharpener
we form our petty allegiances and die for preferences
that fail to feather on eternity's scale.
Selfish, I force myself
with the full strength of a drop in the ocean
to write words trying only to bring me to you
and fail even at that.

In these moments I remember
hair framing your face,
eyes wandering slightly left so that your smile
angles just right for a slight dimple in your cheek
that speaks to me about the nervousness of taking chances like
first dates and the precise randomness
of what we have called love.

The irony of winter's aubade
is that my words don't make a ripple in the infinite
or even a whisper in your ear,
but in the frustration of my failure
a symphony is composed in the gray landscape
making the silence unbearably lonely.

"Hello, Goodbye." (II)
mixed media  Matt Poole
LUEBKE — Mr. Ralph W. Luebke, aged 80, passed away early Monday, January 24, 2000. Mr. Luebke was born to Pastor William and Magdalena Luebke, August 19, 1919 in Shelby, MI, he was raised in Muskegon, where he was an accomplished baseball player, and served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He graduated from the University of Michigan, worked as an executive for Michigan Bell Telephone for 30 years, living in the Detroit, Grand Rapids and Port Huron areas. He retired in 1980. He will be remembered as a kind, gentle, loving man by his wife of 56 years, Bernice; his children, Tom Luebke of Grand Rapids, Daniel and Janet Luebke of Kalamazoo, Mary and George Bennett of Port Huron; eight grandchildren, Tom, Rob, Lisa, Levi, Eric, and Katie Luebke, Adam and Laura Bennett; one brother, Raymond and Valerie Luebke; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Lee Roth, Georgia Luebke, Jean Decker, Ann Wierenga, George and Lois Flik, Bob and Jackie Wierenga, Don and Jinny Wierenga. Funeral Services will be held Thursday at 11:30 AM at the Messiah Lutheran Church, 2727 - 8 Mile Rd. NE, Pastor Terry Hoese officiating. Interment Fairplains Cemetery. The family will be at the Zaagman Memorial Chapel Wednesday 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 PM. Memorial contributions may be made to the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center or Messiah Lutheran Church Memorial Fund.

ZAAGMAN MEMORIAL CHAPEL
2800 Burton St. SE
untitled  mixed media  Jill Bonner, Luke Moore, Jessica Getchell
"When I think about it, I shouldn't be alive. It's been so hard. And when I think about it, I'd do it all over again."

I wouldn't have, if I were her; wouldn't trade my life for hers' even if a golden moon hung within her reach. People like her don't come around often and something very eerie exist about them when they do. She was 29 going on 6 when she came downstairs with a pacifier in her mouth. I tried not to look surprised but my jaw has psychological rumbles from hitting the floor.

"It calms me down," she mumbled in explanation and followed it up with a slobbery suck. "Do you have any coloring books?"

Her one arm was lashed around a chestnut teddy bear with completely rotateable limbs and head. As I tried to gather my chin from where it had dropped at my feet, I noticed only one thing with odd clarity about this old child—the head of her bear was twisted backwards, facing me in a grin that almost said, "Doesn't she make you smile?"

I smiled and stood up from tedious notes of report.

"Your bear's head is backwards," I mumbled, grabbing its soft brain and turning. I didn't need any lumps of fuzz talking to me right now. I see enough crazy stuff at the shelter and having my brain mildly play hide and seek didn't overjoy me. Some days I wanted out just as bad as the women did. Likewise, we were also afraid. In the end, who would be strong enough and who would become a statistic, returning to her assailant eight times before getting out? And I, how many people out of those I told would run away, just standing near me giving them the faint impression of a mental ward? 8, 9, 10?

Then it often amazed me how much we had in common. Coloring books—I hadn't thought of that. Not everything worked to calm my sporadic moods. In fact, little did so I often had little more control than a player in a game of chutes and ladders.

"Have you ever delivered puppies?"

Had she seen me pause at this question on my way to the cabinet?

"It smells awful. The dog eats the afterbirth. Oh, my medicine."

She hefted her free hand to the top shelf above the coloring books but I beat her to it, mostly out of curiosity. I set the pink plastic baby bath on the table behind me. I'm not a fan of pink but the shallow pail did match the plastic doll house we. I reached for the Ziplock bag of meds and glanced at the assortment of orange plastic bottles. Just like mine, I thought. It is hideously curious how various their contents of condensed life-supporters are. Something so vital to me being hidden in a container that stood out no more than a flower in a field—just not as desirable. Airport security checks didn't even bat an eye at these containers and I was glad. I still struggled to explain myself to those I knew and tried to trust.

This woman-child, though, had no problem trusting. Perhaps it was the safety of the shelter which caused the next proceedings into her life story of abuse and prostitution. Are prostitutes upset by rape? I wondered, noticing her brain stabilizers were pink but didn't match the rest of the tables' decor. She popped one in her mouth and I wondered
what would stabilize.

"And this one's for my tummy," she
confided about a white tablet, "Had a
hysterectomy. Can't have no more kids."

"Kids?"

"Yeah," she stuck the pill to the back
of her tongue and swallowed dramatical-
ly. "I've got two girls. He took them. I
don't know where they are. Lost them."

I added that to losing her house, her
job at McDonald's, her boyfriend.

"I'm manic-depressive, too." But she
didn't have meds for that one. So she'd
lost her mind; that makes two of us, I
thought. How often the shelter housed
more than just women and children, being
a human conglomerate of mental illness.
The security system kept the women and I
safe but not from ourselves and the
emptiness of depression. Less was more:
more meds, more tears, more anguish,
more of simply feeling less than the
world we saw normally spinning outside,
completely tangential but unreachable.
Outstretched, humble hands did not
catch the willingness or the comfort we
hoped existed. Indeed, many were fortu-
nate if an SSI check fell into their
hands.

I glanced at the old-child's hands
there in the office. They were tender
and strong; strong nails tucked in by
tanned Puerto-Rican—Native American
skin through which flowed her hot blood
of temper. Had she ever picked flowers?
I don't know why this question came to my
head but to avoid another commentary of
her life I asked,

"What's your favorite flower?"

Expecting her to say the faded red
rose tattooed on her wrist she surprised
me.

"Forget-me-nots."

"Forget-me-nots? Why?"

The wonderful blue blossoms reminded
me of old folks' homes and grandparents.
They seemed to remind me of the archaic-

ness existing in a life well-lived,
noticed and now comforted in oldness.
But to a 29-year-old they didn't fit.
The rose seemed more realistic, fitting
the spearing bursts of passion in her
life, bethorned with the scars of a hys-
terectomy, a mood disorder and lack of
self-worth. But forget-me-nots pleated
truth and worth around her rough
demeanor.

"A lot of people forget that I have
feelings. They think that I should be
feeling-less and overlook me. I'm not
going to feel sorry for myself, though."

"Why not?" I asked, pulling down a
bucket of crayons and a Little Mermaid
coloring book.

"Girl, I could write my story and make
millions but that's not what I'm about."

So that was it. Her life to her could
not be captured, indeed was worth more
than a cheap exhibit of words. Perhaps
forget-me-nots were not that far off in
the quiet blueness of an unspoken
belief, that is, when one is forgotten
by everyone she holds dear, it is per-
fectly reasonable to look to the stars
and the flowers. The sun doesn't always
play a tune we can dance to. How often
have I felt offbeat—fitting in only
with the forget-me-nots in the day and
the celestial globes caught in the
night. Some people are not meant to be
part of this world, made so unique we
don't match anyone in temperament or
thought. These few pepper the world with
life's spice and often are spat out for
the blandness of normalcy. Maybe this is
the glory of mental disorders—the bril-
liant uniqueness and radiant feelings
of dirty out-of-placeness. It permeates
us, makes us who we are and hides us
under a newspaper dripping in "it of sorrow
and moods, growing ever soggy in the
rain. A Latin phrase comes to mind: E
quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle. And
so we came forth, and once again beheld
the stars. Sometimes the sun does not come out and the night shines brighter than day ever could. And so it was with this young-old woman who had delivered puppies but could never again bear children. She wrote a poem she shared with me, a poem titled 'Three Wishes' and dedicated to the daughters she only knew by the tattoos on her wrist. It is not overpowering but it carries the voice of one smitten by domestic violence; one of young strength who has many more miles to walk. If you can, read it in a field of forget-me-nots or under a streetlight signaling the stars.

If I had three wishes
I'd choose them carefully.
Yet, I know my first wish is
To hold you close to me.

Now for my second wish,
I'd wish for happiness
To surround us with the love
Which we both express.

Love is not a word for me—
It's a feeling I have for you.
Love is knowing deep down inside
That you love me, too.

[And] my third wish,
Before I choose all three,
I must remember where I'm at
And where I want to be.

In order to get my first wish
And hold you close to me,
I shall choose my third wish:
My wish of being free.

And that was her poem, this woman I knew so much about from intake interviews and assessments. She left the shelter and moved into her new apartment the next day after sharing a cigarette with me and a final hug good-bye. I called her later that week but no one answered and I expect she is one more to add to the list of those I don't expect to see again. In the meantime, I cannot say what being free is, for her or myself, but I am as sure as the meds saving me from the black hole of depression that freedom is not the same shade of pink for everyone, be it a mood-stabilizer pill or a doll house. Freedom, as close as I can guess, tastes like the stars and smells like forget-me-nots growing in a roadside ditch.
"It's because I've always had to push people away," she said, balancing the phone on one shoulder and cleaning the bits of dirt out from under the fingernails of her right hand with those of her left.

in new york, on the opposite side of the country, in the middle of his nightly sit-ups, he remained silent for a rare minute on the other end of the phone line.

she waited with clean nails and a brown phone stuck to her ear. then she added quietly and almost absentmindedly "that's why I didn't kiss you."

after his carefully released "oh" they both sat in a moment of surprise, still and staring.

then he said something to her but she wasn't listening, his voice was like a muffled snap. she raised her head and simultaneously blinked quickly three times, and said "what?"
untitled transparency Beth "Turtle" Barber
"The Troubadour's Song of the Hummingbird"

by Heather L. MacLean

In the hour of the pale white moon
feet glide the shadow of beauty
(bloom in essence earth)
with no fear of sinking
gladly being washed
and whole body immersed
in the light of this night's journey.

Dreamy landscapes cloud up in windows form
and the shadowy, green wings omen hiss
the invisible barrier
then falls from his heavenly sky
to the cold blue surface below
giving the illusion of death and hopelessness.
Yet he rises, and these last split into mere clouds.

Bewildered feet draw down a fertile valley
where gleaming rosemary marks the place
of walking vision,
lush and whole from waterfalls'
overflow; they rest and drink
in the sweet air
to sing in the shadow of his wings.
"two rabbits after Mass"

by Joe Lapp

frozen
brown on brown
ears amber, almost translucent
glowing with diffused sunlight

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

broken
light on light
scattered glass and tile glitter
on flat, peaceful dirt

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, grant us your peace.

brazen
rabbit on rabbit
the beeline rush
the leap up, over, the laugh

And on the night that he was betrayed,
he took the cup, and gave thanks...
this is the blood of the new covenant, shed for you.

graven
white on white
shadowed statue of St. Jude
shines down on us, all three

still life on ancient, crumbling rocks