A Note From the Editors

It is with pride that we present to you the creative endeavors of the Seton Hall University community as compiled in this Spring 2010 edition of Chavez. As Seton Hall’s Literary Arts Magazine continues to grow and flourish, we are consistently impressed by the submissions that we receive for each issue. The offerings for this issue were no exception, and we are excited to share their work with the entire University.

We thank our committed staff for their enthusiastic aid in the editing process, as well as the Student Government Association for its continued support. We hope that you enjoy this presentation of the poetry, prose, art, and photography of the students and faculty of Seton Hall University.

Sincerely,

Gesina Phillips and Brittany Biesiada
Editors in Chief

Assistant Editor: Jennifer Borland

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Cover Art by Elizabeth Bauer
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Beauty
Donna Scarola

Beautiful a word used by many
To describe so few
It is said
It comes from within
Though it describes
The opposite
We are to feel
This about ourselves
Our various
Different shapes
That don’t fit the space
Of perfect.
A perfect idea
To feel something
An emotion
From within
Based on our
Appearance
We tell them
Pictures of ordinary and full
And average will make up for the
Unreachable
Forgetting the only famous
Are the unreachable
Our actions scream out
Our words
Into nothingness
Leaving a shadow
Of dust a very thin film
Of
Dust.
Over our memory. . .

Elizabeth Bauer
Anthem
Shaina Tullo

Hurtling down the highway towards the city
Morning stretches itself out in the car
You, your veins throbbing from
That last night
Lips bloodied and skin yellowed,
Curl yourself up to the window
Breathing shortly,
Abruptly,
Comforted by the
Wash of buildings and blendings
As we drive by.

And I,
Petrified for
Your heart
And the delicate vessels,
Abruptly make noise
Turning the radio on
To stir you into an exhale
Too frightened to touch your outstretched hand,
Senses too heightened to
Shake the sight or sound
Of that morning light

You curl to me
Your last chance at a normal life
And I, I, whisper you,
Silently, away.

Shaina Tullo
Don’t Tell Mama  
Jessica Noto

Votive candles feebly illuminate coffee-stained circular tables. High-backed antique wooden chairs with maroon cushions permanently disfigured from overuse surround the tables like children to a piñata.

Pictures of former beauties and legends above the dueling grand pianos, lids meeting as if kissing while feet tap the checkerboard dance floor like fingers strike the piano keys.

Ice clatters in high balls from a bar tucked out of sight where tired men sit backs to the dance floor. Bottles on the shelves lean against the wall like women waiting for a dance partner.

Smoke wafts from an ashtray Water dribbles down the lone glass forming a damp ring on a napkin tainted by the deep red lipstick of a golden-haired has-been.

Face so flat he could bite a wall, he sits alone in silence awaiting her return.

Snow White  
Wyatt Bourbon

Your crimson peel,  
A beautiful sight,  
Your velvet feel,  
Casts a chill of fright.

My mind is weak,  
My senses stir,  
It’s you I seek;  
Your appeal, my lure.

Your taste is sweet,  
I desire a bite,  
My newest great feat,  
But am I wrong or right?

You've been dipped in death,  
Makes no sense to flee,  
You steal my breath,  
You, deadly treat to me.

Again and again,  
You have me to grapple,  
You make me grin,  
My poison apple.

A kiss can cure,  
Though only faster;  
Is love pure  
To happily ever after?

Dedicated to K.
This
Rudy Palma

This leaf is still golden, but look at its veins -
Only faint trace of a pattern remains.
It swirled in wind too angry and strong
To have had its beauty last too long.
Changing of season has taken effect
Leaving it subject to passing neglect.
And this? Oh, it can't weather this.
This bitter cold absence of bliss
Will send it away in a coming breeze
To land alone in a churchyard to freeze.

Fools Night
Vanessa Barden

For every strike
Thundering and lightning
The rain never stops
Crashes everywhere
The moon shines bright
Shocks interfere with the northern heaven
Stars pretend to stay still
Darkness dances around planets
The moon lets out a chortle
Its luminous presence awakens the watcher
Soon the sun will make its appearance.

Essence of Rain
Yvette Loftin

A soft, warm breeze carries a chill
gentle drops of rain begin to fall
the open window allows the raindrops to dance on the floor
a blue cup of daisies on the window ledge begins to fill
I rush for the cup before it spills
The green plants along the ledge seem to stand up toward the rain
It's as though they were waiting for the rain to call
the aroma of morning rain completes the essence in the garden I till.
The Land of a Thousand Barren Lakes
Winston Willis

Tears of sand run like mascara
across the soft slopes of her veiled features,
plush plains and crystal currents merely failing
memories
replaced by a thousand lifeless craters.

A black storm masquerades her once-vibrant eyes
beneath an opaque sky of dragon’s breath,
her turgid lips parched and blistered
from the winds of winter’s deadly kiss -

the petrous, desolate surface of our Moon
eternally looming, as if to say 'don't forget.'

---

Life Without You
Rudy Palma

I could drive down to those coastal towns
With the music blaring, the top down
To linger wistfully along the sand.
I could pursue beauty, let nature take course -
A conquistador riding high on a horse
Making that leap over the Rio Grande.
But I couldn’t imagine life without you.
One look at you and I wish I were new,
Experiencing life for the first time again,
So sad it can only be "remember when."

---

Fire Sermon
Gesina Phillips

All is burning.

The eyes burn,
the throat parches,
the heart is engulfed in flame.

Let it go, let it all go.

Absence breeds desire.
The absence of desire leaves behind the shape of desire,
a void filled with the memory of flames.

---

The Land of a Thousand Barren Lakes
Winston Willis

Tears of sand run like mascara
across the soft slopes of her veiled features,
plush plains and crystal currents merely failing
memories
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A black storm masquerades her once-vibrant eyes
beneath an opaque sky of dragon’s breath,
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from the winds of winter’s deadly kiss -

the petrous, desolate surface of our Moon
eternally looming, as if to say 'don't forget.'
Home
Matthew DiCarlo

I'm home again.

Endless waves crash and tumble
Making my stress and worries crumble.
The ocean here has more stability
Than even the Garden of Eden's tranquility.
I lie on the sandy shoreline
Inhaling the sweet sea scent, filled with brine.
And hear the waves crashing on the beach,
Ending their journey from a far-too distant reach.
An assembly line of crests and currents
Advance to this side by no odd occurrence.
This is their purpose on this beautiful Earth:
Results of past events create their berth.

My life rides these waves,
Affected by miracles and mistakes.
But I have yet to reach the shore;
A massive ocean still awaits.

Megan Hanson
The road to heaven,
Something some of us might call life,
It’s filled with misery and wealth
With impurity and anger, no?
Not all however want this to be,
They pray because they see
And rejoice in the truth,
While others walk in shame and head to
the ground.

It’s the good vs. Evil,
The soul so strong
And flesh so weak
The road to heaven is one to seek.
Though, it must be difficult,
Otherwise it wouldn’t be worth it.

The road to heaven,
Where people kill each other
Right in front of churches,
Or policemen sell drugs,
Where others try to help the homeless,
Or get rid of the fog,
I can see where this is going
So let me stop...
The road to heaven,
Full of surprises.
Some light here and
Some dark there,
The road to heaven is a lot to bear.
Starfleet
Caitlin Timmerman

Stars pass by the window
blurs of light against the spilled ink
The vessel moves faster than we could
dream of
gliding through the cosmos
We watch and we wait
for our stop to come.
Our objectives are all the same:
get home safely.
Our mission had been a success.
We had been able to get through
the cluster that made the infinite sky
light like day.
Kirk sits across from me
the fearless leader
Spock sits next to me
the logical and witty officer
Scotty is across from me
the one who can fix anything
and Sulu next to him
the diversity factor.
I, Chekov, am the newest addition
sometimes awkward,
I have my moments of brilliance.
We, the Starfleet crew,
are on the Transit Enterprise
calmly observing and resting
our worlds weary eyes
as we make our way back
to Starfleet Command.
Through the darkness
and past the pinpricks of street lights
in a universe of twisting streets
speeding through the black hole tunnels
back to our station home.

Elizabeth Bauer

Circle Back
Rudy Palma

If I were making good time down a dark
highway
And saw you broken down in a fiery
blaze
I would consider continuing on my way
Even if no one would see you, no one for
days.
You are bankrupt. You are full of deceit.
You are a coward. You are a thief.
How apt a sight, you consumed in heat.
Your loss would be no cause for grief.
Despite it all I would circle back
With my senses clear, my mind on track.
I open an old *junk* drawer in my room
and take out an old ticket stub from a night out
with my friends when I stop and wonder,
Why do I still have this ticket stub?
What is its significance to me?

This small piece of paper
with the title of the (bad) movie on it
and a sudden tear on one side is
bringing me back to a (good) day and time,
I can still remember that night we felt so alive,
like we would never die.

The crowded vehicle filled with friends
Like a clown car in the circus
Cars zoom by like missiles as they come and go
But we were all ready for a night of fun
A night to be filled with memories.

We walked through the bright hall way
filled with framed ads
and fresh painted yellow walls,
Just follow the string of lights to
the place which turns dim.
We find good seats and meet more people tonight,
as we draw closer we sense that buttery smell of popcorn is near,
which will later be shared.

Walking across colorful carpeted floor
and sit on the fluffy, cushioned chairs.
These are the good times, like pumpkin pie on Sundays.

I hope everyone enjoyed themselves
and looks back on this day smiling,
knowing they could not have spent the
time better if they spent it with others.

This is why I kept this simple piece of paper,
For every time I look at this old ticket stub
I understand that night is gone
and can never be duplicated
that some friends have moved on and others stay,
but I still have this ticket stub and that’s all I need.
Survivalism
Gesina Phillips

A plant will bend
to grow toward the sun.
An animal in a trap
will leave behind a tattered limb.

Fight or flight kicks in and
you’re there or you’re gone,
you’re battered and bruised
or you’re dead.

Survival is a basic instinct.

Tangled stem,
blood on the snow.
A stitch in the side
and split knuckles.

Withered leaves,
bundle of fur.
A body laid out
fresh, in the morgue.

Survival is the fine line between triumph
and tragedy.

Fighting, fleeing,
leaving behind pieces of yourself—
this is what living is made of.
And coming out of each day alive
if not whole
is some sort of victory.

But what if
survival isn’t quite enough for me any‐
more.

Lies
Matthew DiCarlo

Say one thing and mean another,
Lies and secrets start to smother.
See every angle and hear every word
Without ever being where it occurred.
Emotions soon become confused and clouded
By everyone’s views condensed and crowded.
The solution so easy yet the problem so tough
Those involved will never call the bluff.
Hearts will be broken and friendships lost
The truth is withheld, but at what cost?
So escape and be true, while you still can
To when life was clear, before the lies began.

Jaclyn Boruch
A Turn of a Head
John Polanin

A turn of a head
With a toss of hair,
A pen tilted up
And I’m left to stare.

Were it sculpted stone,
Curved to caress,
‘Stead of flesh and bone,
Would I jump any less?

Or corporeal form,
But all stiff, would there be
A perfect storm
On my cerebral sea?

Skin flees from skull
At the anti-war mark,
The inner cosmos made full
By a second single spark.

Odd that thoughts are dispersed
That, as prose, try to ponder,
But then, reformed in verse,
Tell the female wonder.

Precious Love
Rudy Palma

All this love is precious love
Subject to sudden illusion,
Prone to at once lend itself
To immediate conclusion.
Genuine though it may be
Come tomorrow it may flee.
Like clay it takes on many shapes
Yet once hardened may turn brittle.
Something long thought known so well
May be understood so little.
It is a bitter lesson to learn
When you lose your heart at every turn.
Weekends
Joseph Rathgeber

Solidarity, unconquered, unconquerable!
--Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) battle cry, circa 1913

I.
Our family went on weekend excursions:
Edison’s lab in West Orange, Central
Railroad Terminal in Jersey City,
the nearby Hamilton House in Clifton—
a pioneer homestead. The Botto House
in Haledon was only a hopscotch scrawl
from the Great Falls in downtown Paterson.
On the front hallway wall hung a yellowed
black and white photo, displayed in a frame
made from scrap wood, with a scotch taped caption—
jaundiced, but still sticking, just as the joists
still supported and the studs still stood firm.

II.
Upton Sinclair spoke into chilled thin air,
and the balcony wobbled in the wind.
His voice drifted down Norwood Street, hoisting
the horde stretching back to the frozen gorge.
He was flanked by bay windows and workers.
These, the makers of your aircraft engines,
your colt revolvers, cotton textiles,
and steam locomotives. Winders, quillers,
pickers, weavers, artisans—in numbers
that stagger. Thousands of strikers tilted
up toward the gables, having left the looms.
Mayor Brueckmann made good on the permit.

III.
Skeins of silk workers filed in from mills
and dye houses—all rallied, rabbled, roused.
A vast sea, burbling like a vat of hot
water and chemical. Packed like sardines
in a crushed tin box—with spunk and tinder,
giving on tenterhooks a rekindled
meaning. Lambert sat stiff on castle cliffs
and saw men cramped between picket fences
and the bark of a brittle tree, where sons
sat perched like cherubim—wielding pickets,
hammers, and sickles. Heralding the force
of their fathers, heeding their fortitude.

Continued...
IV.
This front yard littered with pamphlets let loose—
a swath of workers with twigs underfoot.
What mower of men would brave this stinking
muskeg?—scythe the many-headed hydra.
Who’d apply the firebrand, cauterize
the necks shut, scorch and seal the stumps? We stopped
at Krauszer’s on the ride home. My sister
put her fists to the fogged window and
made footprints. I bent a straw into a
crushed carton of chocolate milk—not sure why.
I watched my father’s gnarled hands steer us
home—his knuckles gripped the wheel, revealing
the grease of his workweek, of his labors.

Bloom
Joseph Rathgeber

Who’s willing to witness a poem come into being?
It begins while perusing Bloom’s western canon,
or plodding through my lesson plans using Bloom’s
taxonomy, his verbs nothing more than cannon fodder.
Strumming along to “In Bloom” on my Stratocaster
knockoff. See, simple associations.

Bloom, synesthetically, has always been a navy blue,
for me. When sibilance sneaks in, the word blossoms.
(See the double “s?” That’s the idea.)
I’ve got a head full of ’em—ideas, I mean.
These ideas burgeon; they bud, like the bubbly
color streaks sprouting from Bob Dylan’s silhouetted skull
in that Milton Glaser poster. (The simile only works
if you know the poster I’m speaking of. Further proof
of poetry being a two-way street. Likewise, that one
only works if you know the idiom.) And so, we see
(when the variables and dubieties can be dealt with)
a poem comes into being, blooming.
Stella
Austin Tobelmann

It’s daring, to move,
to reach out for nothing, yet grasp something.
The lonely ones whisper in the dark,
“look at the stars,
see the patterns they make at night.”
But they are so far:
So far from us,
so far from human,
so far from nothing:
yet they are everything.

Even the brightest stars fall
and the greatest stars flawed.
How does it feel to look up
to something that won’t shine
forever
and feel smaller than before?

Cling to what you have grabbed
and pull yourself up.
Make something large,
and you will no longer be small.

What Feels Good Isn’t
Rudy Palma

You throw your cigarettes out the window.
You leave no drop of martini behind.
Lights on the bay have a seductive glow
And yet they make you feel stifled, confined.
Pleasant to relax and take a breather,
To sit and make a lazy day of it,
Until you notice how that works neither,
A terrible sin you cannot admit.
You seek comfort in productivity
Believing virtue is its own reward.
Then you suffer your exclusivity
As all things unfold to the untoward.
Immunity arrives only in sleep
And you long to sink further, further deep.
Strolling through Philadelphia
Ryan Piccirilli

I am on a date with a young lady I met the other day. Pointing and smiling at a stranger wearing the same polo. As we walk into the restaurant and through the bistro, I tell a random waiter “Great job!” as he walks away. Sitting at the table I order the most expensive tray, And slap a big tip in the waiter’s hand as we go. Should I go for the hand-hold or take it slow? My hands are clammy and I need a towel in the worst way. I stumble over a crack in the sidewalk. The city has lost some of its luster now. I’m frantically thinking of a suave comment. Awkward silence has set in. I hear laughing from across the street. She asks me to drop her off at her apartment.

Swagger
Seleta Hertlein

An oval head rests, lightly upon his shoulders like a nest resting on a branch
His walk, so confident and determined, letting nothing get in his way
The hair on his face, scratches mine like rubbing raw skin against bark. His sneaker collection, immaculate without the slightest scuff or dirt mark
His tilted fitted hat, remains flat with his brim towards the ceiling

Candy hands
Siena Coppa

Shy sticky hands
Clayful and moist
Perched on your chin
Like a bird
Slouched and hidden
Block their approach
With perspiring fingers
Then chew them all off
One by one

Megan Hanson

Shy sticky hands
Clayful and moist
Perched on your chin
Like a bird
Slouched and hidden
Block their approach
With perspiring fingers
Then chew them all off
One by one
Miss You, Gordo
Marcy Piscopo

Friends who I have not seen in months,
faces stern as if they are on trial,
quiet, cold, and cumbersome atmosphere,
awkward and solemn like an arranged blind date.

His mother cries in my arms.
All her weight falls onto my body;
desperation of companions on my shoulders.
I need someone to cry on too.

He would not have wanted it this way.
In his hands lay a bible and a maroon rosary.
On his body is a suit and his hair is slicked back.
It’s like a child trying on his father’s business suit.

I remember a few days before
he wore his baggy, worn-out army pants,
his brown hair wispy around his forehead,
his hands with dirt under each finger nail.

I remember the deep tone of his laugh,
the way he shook his leg when he told stories,
his crooked front teeth, the stubble he kept on his chin,
the way he never made eye contact.

The smell of cologne, perfume and hair spray in the room,
company in their best black clothing:
pressed slacks, ties or bow ties around necks,
mascara running down every woman’s eyes.

I can’t ignore the sniffs and stifles coming from behind me,
the “whoosh” of Kleenex from their boxes,
the clanking of shoe heels as more people enter,
“he was so young” repeated hundreds of times over

I put a pack of cigarettes in his casket,
lined with silk - soft and beige,
cold hands, concealer caked on his face.
Under each nail there’s dirt and I know he’s still in there somewhere...
Ode to True Friends
Caitlin Timmerman

They locked me in a place of everlasting night
hid the key and turned out the light
After I begged and begged for more than an hour
They left me alone forever to cower
Now they found me uninteresting, a bore
no longer laughing behind the locked door
I curled up in that dark so deep
and prayed the Lord my soul to keep
An hour turned into a day
and I gave in, I had to stay
I knew that I would never again see light
My will, my power, I gave up the fight
I gradually accepted that this was my fate
to be ridiculed, joked at, to never equate
And just as I grew accustomed to the dreary room
Something, someone, destroyed the coming doom
You kicked at the door and fell with it down,
looked up at me and questioned, quite simply, "Why the big frown?"
Without even waiting you pulled me by the arm
and dragged me out of the room, despite my alarm
You infected me with a smile of your very own
all the while making my past unknown
You were able to erase my past and my fears
I was even able to forget the all of tears
You had taken me by the hand and led me away
You were the first to tell me "It's going to be okay"
The room was demolished and the blinds were torn
You were the sun and I was reborn.

Untitled
Caitlin Timmerman

I am a quick flash
in the giant pan of life.
Pay attention now.
Autumn Oak
Jessica Camp

The trunk of a massive tree towers high
Over weather-worn buildings of brick and stone
And homes that line the neighborhood.
Ashen grey bark of the trunk, appearing as if dead.
Red and orange and yellow leaves light up the tips
Of the branches of the oak, bringing a color so brilliant to the dull neighborhood of brick and stone.
The leaves were once were a vibrant green hue,
Green as grass or even an emerald, depending on the light that would shine upon them.
Now and then the leaves fall to the ground away from the crown of that great and proud Oak.
A bed of foliage circles around the trunk cracked and crippled with age,
Its roots exposed and stretching out like a child’s arms toward the sky, arms aimed at catching those last leaves as they fall on their path to the ground. Or perhaps to catch the acorns, brown and rough and ready to toss at passing cars or friends nearby. That Oak tree stands tall over time, its trunk showing signs of storms passed and remnants of the names of young loves carved into its bark.
Buds grow into leaves, green, then red. Then, crumpled brown they fall to the earth, before beginning the cycle again.
The branches reach upward always, pointing to the sky on beautiful days and dreary ones, too.
The Autumn Oak shall stand through time.
On the Lagoon
Alyssa Perthold

Light fills my eyes as it creeps through the shades.
Water splashes rhythmically from kayakers oaring.
Bacon sizzles on a pan before a motor starts roaring.
Breakfast fills the air, the noise fades.

A warm breeze hits the windowpanes,
as the blinds swing back and forth clattering.
Outside the docks are filled with birds singing
the same tune for the past two decades.

Daylight grows shorter and shorter each week.
T-shirts and flip flops traded for jackets and boots.
Coldness freezes the flowing water to a halt.

Boats move to driveways, wrapped up like lollipops.
Logs are put on a fireplace to help fight the cold.
Ducks leave their footprints on the snowy asphalt.

To My Dear Friend Kerri
Donna Scarola

the dark words came from
their mouth one year ago
but I know one thing is for sure
Someday you’ll have it all
you’ll have the love of a lifetime long
the strength of yesterday
the dreams of tomorrow
the mystery of humor
Everyone will wonder how you did it
the impossible accomplished
the wonder of it all will daze us
the love of your heart will drown us
the miles you’ve walked will accumulate
the hills will flatten into plains
the memories will dull in a haze
but you will remain
shinning forever

Matthew DiCarlo
Pumps
Gabrielle Magliano

Soft black suede
Silver buckles
Thin stilettos
Pointy toes.

Carry her tonight,
Stand up straight
Walk the line;
Have another drink.

Big black boots
Not for walking,
Not for dancing;
Sit there and look cute.

Favorite pair of boots
Heels worn to the quick;
Bottoms kill cigarettes
Where’s the label?

Frayed black suede
Tarnished buckles
Worn out heels,
Her favorite pumps.

Shaina Tullo
There was an old fashioned prestige shared.
People upheld their morals and faux pas they spared.
Dressy gentlemen who took no stress in blending,
And no 50 Cent without an “s” upon the ending.

And there she was justa walkin’ down the street.
There our paths would cross with the talk of town complete.
The enchantment of romance, the sixties had it best.
I used to dance The Twist in a glistening satin vest.
When she struck me, POW, KABAM, like the fists of Adam West,
Dressed in grey with a bat patched at his chest.

We prayed for Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper.
One airplane so rich in talent; by golly, they should have stopped her,
Kept it operative instead of dropping so improper,
So we could snap our fingers to another chart topper.

There were no desperate groupies
Seeking an encounter with the Duprees.
We were hiding doobies at drive-in movies;
Unaware what we were watching but it looked groovy.

We’d act the fool and sat blooming on the corner;
Sloshing our hand-stirred milkshakes, two for a quarter.
So sing, dance or fight? It’s six o’clock, what do we do?
We were a tough city crew, the town truly knew.
Friends or Lovers?
Rebecca Schaffner

Some days I wish my mind was as blank as white paper
without any ink
I think way too much, it takes so much away from me
My stomach curls into this nut
Oh how I miss you so much...
Our friendship won't be the same
Not now not ever
Because of my experience and your mind
We now collide
My heart is open
Re-learned to trust
Redefined friendship and love
That was a must
Here I think of you day in and night out
But I can’t find a way out
Of this feeling, I try to hide and ignore so much
Oh how I miss you so much...
Who knows what might happen
Next time I see you
Or will I ever hear from you
Without me having to call you
Will we kiss again
Or even hug?
Happily ever after,
friends or lovers, or
nothing at all?

Jaclyn Boruch
Breaking the Cycle
Jessica Noto

I tried to quit because the judge always tells me
being sober will enhance my life.
I am drifting in and out of shelters
but my drug counselor says
being sober will enhance my life.
I may have tried hard drugs once
but my drug counselor says
there is always hope for people like me.
I may have tried hard drugs once
it might have become a habit but
there is always hope for people like me.
I still can’t hold a steady job

which might have become a habit
I can’t afford. To go to rehab again
I need to hold a steady job and
I have no place to go at the end of the day.

I can’t afford to go to rehab again
so I know where I will return because
I have no place to go at the end of the day
except this place, my stool at the bar.

For Leeroi Moore (1961-2008)
Winston Willis

Remember the sweet taste of subtle lips,
golden sunshine spread on yellow hair,

the cold beer and electric crowds
gathered together to celebrate

curiosity that clings to youth,
the will and wherewithal to kiss

briefly, if only for one moment
in time like spotting a shooting star.

How tragically ironic that a death
wakes us up to times long lost in nostalgia,
a period when our hair swung freely,
priorities hazy but pristine,

we were sheltered from the world around us
or at least momentarily censored,

lost and found in the saxophone’s solo,
submitting to the flow that weaves

in and out of the drum’s beat-
love.
Love <3
Daryl Valerio

The love of two is very powerful. To fall in love is not that very hard. Is love a need we never live without? For love appears but a habit of pain. A reason to find the entire world at fault. It is love that imprisons your heart and mind. It is love which leaves you lost in loneliness. Love that tells you to leave all others behind. And concentrate on the one you've deemed the best. And though there are plenty of reasons to doubt, Love is a need and feeling that we can't live without.

Inspired by: CO

Mirrors srorriM
Donna Scarola

To see the reflection Is impossible
What we are Is not what We see but What we Believe
What we do
To judge what we see Is not the person But our preference Because the person Is beneath hiding Waiting To be seen From an eye That isn't looking But that is listening
My Afternoons with Mrs. Streisand:
Falling in Love with Music, Dancing with my Mother, Singing away the Day
Ashley Graham

Second day of second grade
Got two gold stars today
Pondering my day
Taking little steps with my little feet
Splashing in puddles, dancing in the mist,
Rounding the corner
With the exhaust of school bus fresh in
my lungs,
I puff my own smoke with winter breath
hopping up the stairs, squeaking the
screen door as I go.

Warmth floods my flushed skin.
Peeling off my outer layers,
Sounds tickle my ears
Luring me to my father’s lair.
bounding down the stairs
it pulls me more with each step
from tickling to thrumming.

At the bottom of the stair,
They sing to me.
The voice full of body, sweet, and strong
Like Cuban coffee overflowing a dixie cup
The walls buckle at the sound.
It’s “finesse and richness”
With “velvety legato and expressive coloring”
The phrase escapes the speakers—
“Here’s to the ladies that lunch.”
Beautifully comedic and serene,
She sings jazzily to the beat.

Her voice—just as sweet, just as strong
Trembles through her lungs;
Changing the atmosphere with each breath
Adding harmony to the melody.
Her body moving to each note,
Swaying with each jazzy beat,
Sweeping along the floor,
Like the broom she holds.
My mother warned me never fall in love
that only fools would open up their hearts,
but when the zombies tried to eat us all
I saw the one my heart had waited for.
At first the smell of rotting flesh was foul
but soon I learned to love his putrid stench.
His body shimmered with congealing blood,
and yet I wondered: Can it really be?
a hundred reasons why it can’t be real!
But when I kissed his undead lips I knew
That zombie Fred would be the one for me.
Together Fred and I were quite the pair
though he was dead he gave me back my life
and yet our quick relationship did end
when zombie Fred consumed my brain instead.
Living the Life
Donna Scarola

Though the words of
Identity
Originality
Confidence
Rang loud and clear
They muffled through
And through
As my years grew
The once confident being
Was a doll with strings
Twisted, distorted and
Controlled by them
Failed attempts
Starvation
Cutting
Thick liner
Red lips
Never made the confidence ap‐
pear
I lived in between the lines
Drawn by my peers
I followed
Religiously
The path I once
Saw as gloomy as night
Never reaching the goal
Though my mental image
Remembered
Her
Beautiful
All I saw
Was the changed
Mangled
Distorted
Shambles
Of a doll.

How About a Lie or Two?
Rebecca Schaffner

How about a lie or two
Just not telling the truth?
How about a lie or two,
yes I am not in your shoes
but once you lie, it will multiply
and picking up the pieces in the end will not
be like
going shopping with a friend...
How come, you the one that gave birth to me
Would lie and lie and lie
Does it make you feel free?
Or are you just afraid of me, of God
And what about yourself?
You buy me shoes, you buy me books,
You buy me all material goods, but
you are so far, so far from me,
do you know at all how I feel?
I cannot say out loud to you,
this is when I write and pray so
that you and I can fly someday
They say “the truth shall set you free”
So why not just tell me?
Oh, how about a lie or two,
What happened to the truth?
The sound of water flowing—the graceful patter and drift of a steadily moving stream. Water laps at the sides of the old grey trough as the hose fills it with cold water for the dusty, soft-nosed horses that graze nearby. Golden light filters through the leaves of the only living tree remaining in the paddock, the only tree they haven’t knocked over or slowly worn down to a pitiful stump. An evening breeze ruffles the manes and tails of the horses and they stomp and snort into the parched earth. Flies buzz lazily through the air, collecting around the horses’ eyes and biting their flanks. The beasts shiver their thick skin and the flies, startled, go off in search of another source of food. They find it some yards away, sitting on a sun-silvered wooden fence, minding the slowly filling trough. The girl utters a bitten-off curse, simultaneously slapping at her leg. It’s no use—she comes up with only a thin stripe of blood across her hand and a quickly growing welt on her ankle. Jumping from her perch, she examines both points of contact, then plunges her clean hand into the icy water, breathing in deeply at the shock of cold. Washing her hands, she savors the scent of an August evening: the stale, earthy smell of the paddock, the clean smell of wet grass, the aged and weathered scent of the wooden fence, and her own sweat, at the same time smell and taste, salty and sun-ripened and drying on her skin. She clammers back onto the top rail of the fence, slapping at another fly and risking splinters with her bare feet. She leans back, drowsy with the heat and heady sounds of summer, and falls almost accidentally into a daydream. It is not until she is nudged insistently by a small chestnut pony, all loose fur and shining eyes, that she notices that the trough is overflowing.
The Hilltop Grave
Samantha Desmond

Dead sycamore wood. Dead daisies and wisteria. Dead bug carcasses scattered on broken windowsills and in dusty spider webs. Hell, it even smelled dead, musty and dusty and sour; a foul stench. Nothing about it was alive anymore. The hay bales were undone and strewn across the concrete floor, lying in puddles of stagnant water. The wooden beams were eaten through by termites, and the doors were hanging by their rusty hinges. He didn't touch them; the whole barn would come crumbling down.

It was whittled down to its bones. Crimson paint was peeling off the wooden walls and it was a dismal likeness to what used to be; a strong fortress for a farmer's livelihood. He stood in the center of the concrete floor, cracked underneath the soles of his heavy boots. Dust started collecting on the shoulder of his coat, and the stale air began to tickle his throat and he let out an agitated cough. The broken down farm equipment was covered by ripped tarps, dirty and dusty from neglect. It was indeed a lost cause. He couldn’t bring it back to life. He didn’t want to. He felt as if it would be like digging a corpse buried six feet under and trying to revive its rotted heart. It was time to leave it behind.

He turned around to look outside the large sliding door. Outside the sun shone brilliantly and the fall breeze was kicking red and yellow leaves up off the asphalt, gliding them fluidly through the air. He walked towards the door and turned around to close it, looking once more inside the dilapidated structure. He swallowed hard and his eyes began to glaze. It was just some dust in his eye; yes that’s it, just dust.

“Dad.”

He turned quickly back at the barn, but no one was there. They hadn’t been in years.

He pulled the heavy sliding doors to padlock the chains and stepped back before he turned and opened the door to the old red pick-up parked on the dirty path. Now that he had walked away from it, he felt no need to linger. He opened the truck door; it needed oil. It was starting to sound like the irritated yelp of a dog after stepping on its tail. He didn’t look back at the barn after he got in the car. The truck rattled and shook as he pulled the oversized shifter into drive. On his way down the dirt road he passed the sign on his front lawn. “SOLD” it read; sold to the highest bidder. They could deal with his ghosts from now on. He didn’t care. He drove down onto the main road, and followed the yellow dotted lines towards town.

He saw the small town appear as he drove over the crest of the hill, the “Welcome to Camden” sign was accented in gold on the roadside. The small town on the harbor, the sailboats floating peacefully in the shimmering tide. He passed by the inn with the royal blue shutters, the small pizzeria with the whimsical statues in the window, the local coffee shop that managed to stay family owned, apart from the Starbucks’ and Dunkin Donuts that seemed to devour the world in their monopolies. Before reaching Main Street he passed the church on the hill, the cemetery enclosed by the wrought iron fence. He didn’t look at the cemetery.

Continued...
He pulled up alongside the curb outside of the old chowder house and placed fifty cents in the old iron parking meter. As he walked around his car towards the side street he saw a familiar face, someone who used to be able to make the dead man laugh. It pained her to see the man he had become; a skeleton of his old self. She clutched her woven tote close at her shoulder.

“Hello, Alan.”

“How are you, Maggie?”

“I haven’t seen you in a while, not since “

“September. I know,” he muttered. His hands were in the pockets of his old corduroy blazer, his shoulders slightly hunched; signs of an introverted soul.

“I saw the sign at the farm,” She said. “You are really doing it.”

“Yeah, I’ve been packing my things for a couple days now,” he said, shifting his eyes to his feet, avoiding meeting his with hers.

“It’s a shame,” she said, her eyes fixed on his seemingly diminutive stature. “So many memories at that old farm.” She looked at his unshaven face with the dark circles under his eyes. “I was going to come and talk to you the other day. I haven’t forgotten.”

She moved closer to him, touching his arm. He kept his hands in his coat pockets and his shoulders remained heavy. His eyes still moved in patterns, looking beyond her right shoulder and the ground.

“Yeah.” He sighed tensely, begging to leave the conversation. He looked around the empty street sides down the side street that lead to the harbor side. “Don’t worry about it. I mean, don’t go worryin’ about me.”

“A girl can’t help but worry about someone like you.”

He breathed deeply and shrugged his shoulders, still averting her gaze, desperately searching for life in him.

“Well Maggie, it was nice to see you. But I have to go.”

“Where are you off to Alan?”

“I told Shirley Winters I would help her move her mother to the old folk’s home up near Bar Harbor, and I have to pick up a new hitch for the truck from Mitch Keller down at the hardware store.”

Shirley was a lonely widow who had lost her husband and son in a car accident on the way down from Rockport a few years back. Shirley survived, and had the scars to remind her. People called her a poor soul.

Maggie was tired of looking at poor souls. “You should go see Andrew, Alan.”

She had said it. She wasn’t sorry she did. But she was sorry when his eyes didn’t lift off the pavement and he began to turn away. There was a time when he never looked away from her. She didn’t recognize this man.

“I don’t think so. He can’t come home so I can’t see him. I need to go. Goodbye Margaret.”

He completely detached himself from her; from them. Margaret. The warmth in his voice was truly gone, the intimacy dissipating in the sorrow.

She nodded her head to appease the delusion he had that she understood him. She watched him walk down the sidewalk, his hands still in his pockets. She turned back to look at the cemetery sitting on the hill. Andrew wasn’t coming home.
Explosion on a Friday Afternoon
Brittany Biesiada

Sarah felt the house shake. The table trembled beneath her for a moment. There was a loud popping noise that sounded as though something inside the house had exploded. It was like a huge bullet passed through the foundation of the house.

She looked out of the window, expecting to see something on fire. Instead, she saw the green grass coming up almost everywhere and the tree in the yard sprouting tiny pink buds that would blossom in a week or two into large pink flowers. She put her hand over her eyes to shield the sun’s harsh glare. She wondered what had happened.

Her mother was outside putting her hand inside the mailbox when she felt the shaking. Her hand was clasped around a few bills, a card, and a flier when she felt movement beneath her feet. She looked up and around, but saw nothing wrong.

She watched as her neighbors came out onto their porches and looked up and down the street, as she had done. She pulled the mail out of the box and glanced down at it. She looked through it as the neighbors came down from their porches.

Sarah went down the stairs and out onto the porch to join her mother. The neighbors across the street had already gathered together on the white sidewalk. The kids from the house across the street had gotten a ball stuck in their tree and were staring up at it. One had emerged from the house with a broom. They were oblivious to what had happened.

“What was that?” she heard the neighbors ask.

“It felt like an earthquake,” someone said.

The kids from across the street were trying to get their ball down from the tree. One of the bigger kids was poking it with the broom. He was only successful in hitting the branches and knocking out a few leaves.

“Do you know what happened?” Sarah’s mother called across the street.

“No,” someone yelled back. “I don’t know what it was.”

Sarah’s mother walked over to talk to their next-door neighbor on the sidewalk. She looked up at the clear blue sky and only saw a few birds gathering near an electric line. She wondered if they knew what had happened.

She looked back over at the kids across the street. The bigger child had managed to smack the ball out of the tree and was holding it victoriously in the air. The children gathered around him and jumped up and down, excited. The bigger child led them down the street, back to his yard.

Sarah went back upstairs when no one had any answers for her. She sat back down at her computer and went back to what she had been doing.

She forgot about the sound until she heard the helicopters circling over her home. She walked out onto the porch to where her mother was already standing. She looked up and the sun blinded her. She put her hand over her eyes to shade the sun and saw a helicopter circling, as though it was a large, lost bird looking for its mother.

“Something serious must have happened,” her mother said. “Maybe there was an accident at the construction site by the park.”

Continued...
Sarah watched the helicopter move across the sky, passing over her house and then the next. She didn’t think there was an accident by the park. The noise had been too sharp, too near. It was something else.

“If there’s helicopters, then it’s probably on the news,” her mother said, as she turned and hurried back into the house.

Sarah stayed on the porch, watching her neighbors, who hadn’t moved from their spots across the street. They huddled together, creating scenarios and false truths about the noise they had heard.

Her mother called her inside. When Sarah entered, her mother merely pointed to the television. A house across town had exploded. She looked at the image of beams standing among a pile of rubble, and remembered what the shaking had felt like beneath her feet and the way the whole house seemed to move for a moment.

She looked over at her mother, who had turned white. Her eyes were fixated on the television and her mouth was slightly open, as though she was searching for words that she couldn’t quite manage to say.

“It’s your grandmother’s house,” she said, finally.

Sarah jerked her head back to the television to see what her mother was seeing.

“See, that’s her neighbor’s house,” she said, pointing to a small white house with a blue door and matching pastel shutters. “I have to call your father.”

Sarah stood, staring at the television, listening to her mother on the phone, telling her father what had happened. She wondered what the house looked like, if the pillars in the living room were still standing. She wondered what the new people had done to the kitchen, she had heard that they were having it renovated.

She liked the pillars in the living room, tall and white, they met you when you turned to go into the living room and guided you on your way out. When she was a child, she would place her arms around them and sway her body from side to side until she got dizzy.

It had been a small, compact house with a kitchen, a living room, and a dining room on the first floor and a few bedrooms on the second. When her father took her to visit her grandmother, she would run past the pillars and jump onto the brown couch and say hello. She would sit there for awhile and then wander into the kitchen to look at her pictures on the fridge and then into the dining room.

She remembered her grandmother’s tea pot collection in the large glass case in the dining room. She imagined it too shaking from the explosion, the way the pots would tremble and the terrible noise they would have made as they shook across the glass shelf and tumbled to the ground.

But they wouldn’t have tumbled, she realized, they would have simply been blown up, shattered in a single instant, leaving only glass and pieces of flowered china among the rubble. She hoped the people who lived there hadn’t had any tea pots in a pretty case. But she knew they probably had figurines lined up across a shelf on a wall somewhere and that they, too, had been shattered.

She was relieved to see that no one had been in the house when it had exploded. But she saw the owner’s faces on the television and knew that they were thinking of everything in that house that was gone now.

Continued...
Her grandmother had died a few years earlier and her father had sold the house to a young couple, who wanted a starter home. She wondered how he felt. He had walked around the entire house once when it was empty and all the furniture had been removed and they had ripped up the carpets. He had walked through each room and touched the walls, as though feeling a memory in each place. Then he had come out of the house and locked the door behind him.

“He’s coming home,” her mother said, as she walked back over to her by the television. “He wants to go over and see everything. He’s very upset but he’s not saying he is. I think it’s hard for him to say how much.”

Sarah kept her eyes on the television, seeing among the rubble pieces of what she thought looked like broken china pieces with small flowers painted on them.

When Sarah, her mother, and her father drove over to the street, it was completely blocked off by police cars and news vans. They parked around the corner and walked over. People were gathered around the ruins of the house. Every neighbor was standing on the street, talking or just watching.

There was no smoke. There were only a few beams left, gathered as if meeting to talk in the center, and some half burnt walls. Sarah could see one of the walls was from the living room because the yellow wallpaper with the blue birds hadn’t burned entirely off. The ground was littered in debris, broken pieces of walls, burnt objects that resembled nothing, and pieces of fabric that were probably from a couch or a bed.

She looked up at her father, who just stared over, wordless. She knew he was thinking of each wall, every beam in the floor and tile in the kitchen, and the pillars that were gone now. It had all been erased, as though it had never existed. His childhood had happened at a place that was gone now, and would be rebuilt upon. The memories would be replaced by new walls, a large kitchen, and a few new baths.

The birds could still be heard, chirping to one another, going on with their day. Sarah could see the birds piling straw into the bird’s house in the backyard, building a home for their family for their summer stay, as though nothing had happened.