

# *The Laurel*



*Fall 2010 - Spring 2011*



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**Cover illustration: "Press Flee" by Kara Deighan**

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure and privilege that we present to you the Fall 2010/Spring 2011 issue of *The Laurel*. We'd like to take this opportunity to apologize for the delay of its completion and subsequent distribution around campus. This was our first year as editors, and it took a lot longer than we thought to get acclimated to everything.

All that said, please enjoy the intensely creative and talented work featured in the following pages. We've only compiled it; the body of poetry, fiction, photography and artwork in this issue speaks loudly for itself. It is a bold testament to the grand imagination of the students here at St. Bonaventure.

We'd also like to extend our warm thanks to Dr. Richard Simpson, Dr. Chris Hill, Misty Johnson, everyone on our staff and all those who were daring enough to submit their work for publication. *The Laurel* wouldn't exist without you.

Please keep submitting your inspired work and never stop writing.

Your everlasting friends,  
*Christopher Radey & Patrick Hosken*



*Planet Earth*

All you want is blood red, earthy lust  
A snap of the spine  
Empty bodies intertwined  
In this warped reverie by night  
We twist, we turn, we repulse, we repent  
Sin beget sin beget sin beget sin  
Every time the dark sinks in  
What a hideous breed we are  
What wraiths and shadows do we become  
As I'm overcome  
The heart's been frozen shut  
The coldest hasn't thawed yet.

*Samantha Berkhead*

*Sea Glass*

Shards from a sailor,  
Broken over the bow.  
Whiskey lamentations,  
His remnants finding me somehow.  
Caught up in my fingers,  
Pebbles clinging to.  
Green oracles, crystal balls,  
Comb the beach, he says, from me to you.

*Kaitlin Lindahl*



*"Screech Owl"*  
*Talbot Eckweiler*



## Pop

I remember when life  
was as simple as the click  
of popping my Savage  
Garden CD into its player,  
pressing play  
and throwing myself into the pile  
of stuffed animals on a hand-me-down mattress  
in a wooden-paneled room.

Scattered on the dresser  
folded notes that detailed the exhibits of affection  
between Marc and Kate  
holding sweaty hands  
at the roller rink, while the rest of us  
bounced around sing-screaming  
“What’s my age again?” to moldy rafters  
that provided no answer.

Sex was a joke whispered  
on the back of my school bus.  
Everyone laughed with an inaudible quiver,  
because we were all doing it  
—except we weren’t.  
I was only slightly less frightened of his sea-monster downstairs  
than my own black-hole vortex Venus fly-trap.

This was all before  
planes shattered my snow globe of flaky comfort—  
glitter and sparkles and pats on the head.  
But War on Terror, oil, and WMDs provided the backdrop  
of my seventh grade year-book photo (smile pretty),  
soft in the harsh light of the glasses, the pimples and the not-so-  
baby fat.

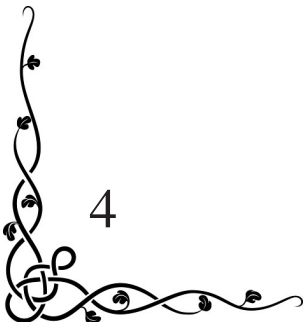
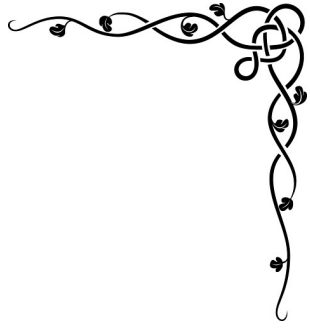
That picture was the first of many  
buried under the bed  
next to a box of letters  
from lovers and brothers,  
buddies going from boot to Iraq,  
coming back  
to make replacement babies.

All of that shoved in the farthest corner  
while my graduation tassel hangs  
from the rearview mirror  
that reflects green eyes.  
Still squinting, they finally learned  
how to look up from the floor  
to see the bleeding colors of a muddied existence,  
Good and Bad.  
Sex and War.  
It all seeps together  
like oil swirls in the puddle under my car.

White knuckles, I drive.  
It’s one kind of freedom.  
But, I still crave that BOOM,  
It vibrates through me,  
old viruses hitchhiking through my bloodstream.  
I can feel them quick-step from my toes to my brain.  
Teasing.  
Taunting me at the corners  
like Stranger-Danger with a fistful of hard candy.  
But, I won’t be fooled  
again.

In this world, life is about perspective.  
And who wouldn’t want to enjoy my ride.  
I say, “No problem, brother.”  
It’s just another pill to pop.

*Bree Rehac*





*Lurching Euros*

No cab this morning—silver sidewalk stomps  
instead of yellow streaks. Eggs and bacon  
in lieu of standard soggy flakes and chomps.  
One rag to buff out the squishy spots on  
the marble kitchen countertop—orange,  
just like the designer’s orders (Regina).  
Rain agents pecked his fleshy pompadour  
and reminded him fast of Argentina,  
the snobby way those lurching Euros sent  
the plane’s processed pork dinner back and looked  
unsatisfied with him—the elephant  
on the cushiony flight. He’d never cook  
for thin-mustached French first classers again;  
he treated himself to eggs and bacon.

*Patrick Hosken*

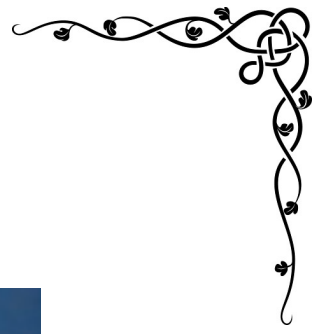
*Bloody December*

It strikes me deaf and dumb at times,  
When reading through your thoughtless lines,  
That though you may be skilled and shine,  
Upon that list with name so high,  
But when fate shows your name and mine,  
Intimate as they intertwine,  
Your brilliant mind is deaf and blind  
To any notion warm or kind.  
For someone as learned as you  
Should add correctly two and two,  
But, I’ve bit off more than you can chew,  
So your adding days are through,  
And you pretend you have no clue  
To stop from feeling, loving true,  
And in turn  
You’ve run me through.

*Karly Gombert*



*Paige Winston*

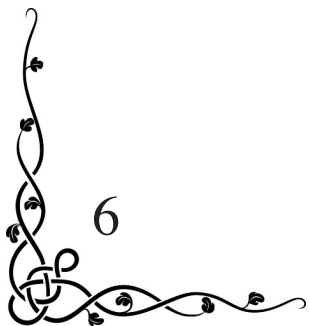


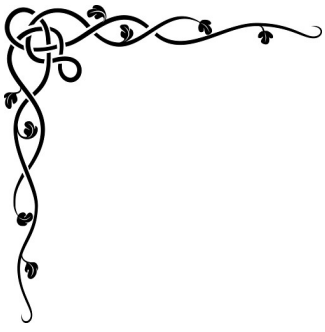
*Paige Winston*

*market*

cobblestones on a village street  
the local hotspot  
community college all wander into the establishment  
mindlessly stumble  
plastic cups break when empty  
cold breath clouds wane  
as karaoke pros attempt serenades

*Zack Witzel*





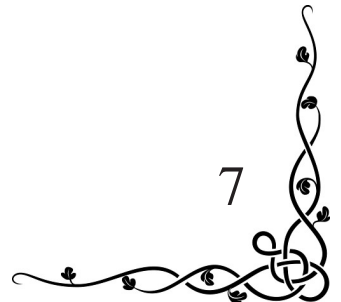
*Ojos Asi*

When I think of the color Green  
I think of your eyes.  
Special Dark Brand  
Mixed with a drop of honey gold  
For how could I think of anything else?

*Lisa Aeschbacher*



*Paige Winston*





### *Sidewalk Jazz*

The four of you—striped shirt twirling foot  
rumble of standup strings; tucked-in curly haired  
thick, smooth, horizontal guitar layers;  
scruffy, spotted-chin paintbrush cymbal stop-taps;  
carbon dioxide swarming into brass circles—  
sweeping warm waves over the sidewalk patrons  
like a blue-green chameleon rush,  
the suave crawl of treble clefs clamoring around,  
clinging to nerves, rappelling down the spine grooves.

Fingers knew what eyes didn't need to,  
arms extensions of an inner flicker  
as sky-scratching squares loomed above,  
dim-lit by the orange glow of urban energy.

And this: the playfully messy beat of life  
entwined with perspiration and the cool,  
frantic stillness of a Tuesday out on East,  
alive and feelers finely tuned.

*Patrick Hosken*

### *Welcome Fall*

Bright, brilliant, beauteous leaves  
Clinging tightly to their trees.  
But with each gust of chilly air,  
Their grips begin to pull and tear.

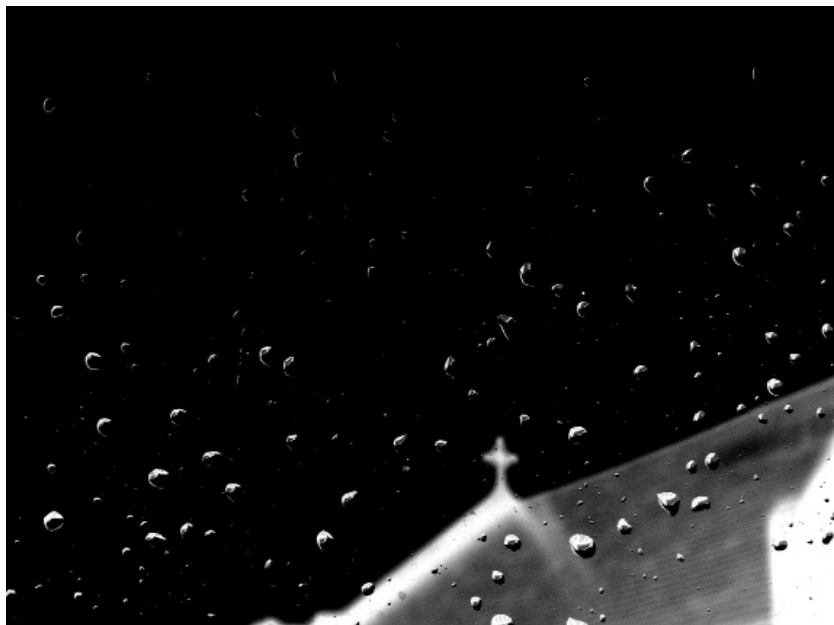
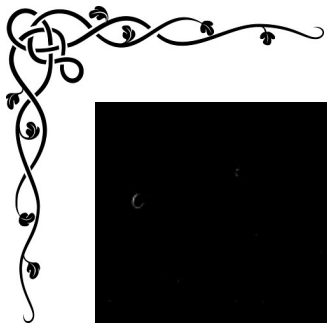
Falling, flying, fluttering leaves,  
Then on the ground they lie in sheaves.  
A vibrant blanket for the earth  
Finally landing in my turf.

Crispy, crunchy, crackling leaves,  
A thrilling sort of jubilee.  
And with each step I hear their call,  
“Welcome Autumn, welcome Fall!”

*Mary Cole*







*“Rapacious Rapturous Raindrops”*  
*Paul Hake*

*Duplicity*

One person casts two shadows and two people cast four. Lives public, private, combined and secret are shackled to the floor.

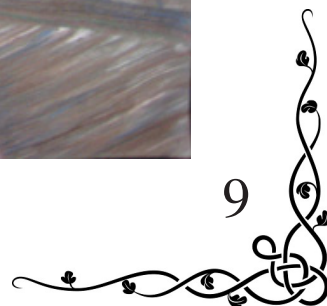
It’s quite visible to anyone though no one cares to look, you learn to read their shadow, and you read them like a book.

Dirty and discarded, separate from yourself; while tributes, honors and awards you place upon a shelf. Everyone is honored with similarity. Learn to read my shadow, and find the demons inside of me.

*Karly Gombert*



*“Sorcerous Companion”*  
*Kara Deighan*



10/27/10

You went as fast as you came.

Each word like a droplet of rain,  
Cool, chilled, but altogether bittersweet.  
Dripping down the windshield,  
Inherently creating for yourself a sense of fame  
On that solid, callous glass canvas.

Unintended, but mistaken.

Words as true as those that come before and after—  
A painful but beautiful consistency.  
Growing with every grasp,  
All the while  
Continuing to represent,  
To etch.  
And you painted:  
Pictures, thoughts, breaths.  
Pictures to fill the voids,  
Thoughts to bide the time,  
Breaths to sustain the rest.

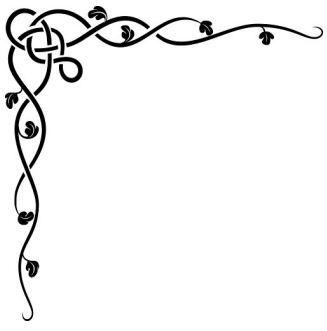
The challenge?  
To gaze through that glass—  
That never-ending wall of eminent globules—  
And to find the time to interpret those things seen.  
[Refracted images are still images nonetheless.]

You went fast as you came—but at least you came.

*Christopher Radey*



*Paul Hakel*



*The Wrinkled Evening*  
after Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*

The still of the beige architecture washed over us —  
points and crooked shapes converging beautifully —  
inside the narcotic warmth of a sunny night.  
Hands in a twisted jungle of jangly breezes  
and ropes and vines that swung like pendulums of doubt.

Sequential nothing.

We, the balloons, letting out our steaming air  
and watching it color our pale pages.  
Sitting in the glow of wavy rivers and lazy eyes  
creeping around each other's atmosphere,  
interminably caught in love's dusty shuffle.

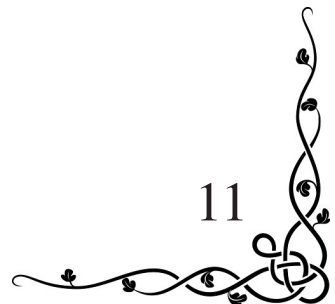
Folded napkins and day drinks,  
lockers for our backpacks  
and jackets for the wrinkled evening.

Iron out the details  
and meet me on the platform  
in December.

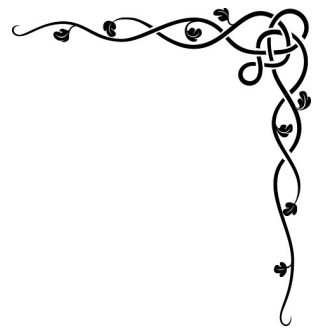
*Patrick Hosken*



*Paige Winston*







*Real life is like...*

Bending glass into the shapes of horses,  
Time seldom breaks; in fact, all it does is run,  
It's nothing but cars with shiny faces,  
And when all your time is through you won't be done.

Stare into the bowl that sits before you,  
Watch the oil spill corrode your world,  
Soon enough you'll feel God's wrath too,  
Your friends are wolves whose lips have curled.

It's a short trip but a long walk,  
Look for signs in the sky,  
Waves will fall, but they won't talk,  
The gate for heaven's hard to find, but try.

Send signs while you sleep, riddle the stars,  
There's symbols out there—cutout the meaning and hang it on the ceiling.

*Shana Hurley*

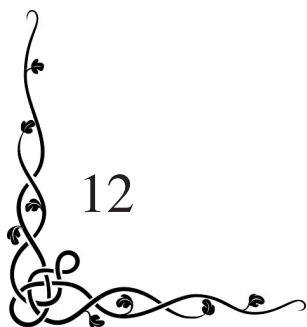
*Small Houses*

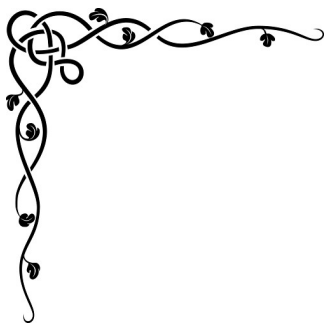
Broken fences to my eyes are the eyes of small houses.  
Pools of kaleidoscopes. A tool of escapism.

Turquoise immersed in darkness is fairly light.  
My secrets are safe here.

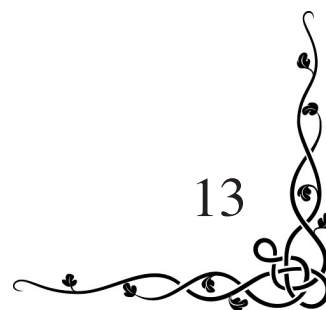
The only exchange given to the world is one of sophisticated intimidation. No one wins here,  
but me.

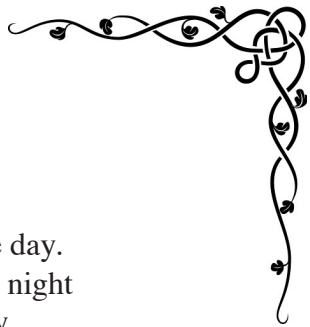
*Shana Hurley*





*“At the Mountains of God’s Glory”*  
*Paul Hake*





*Light*

You burn me away  
with every inhale  
and I let you—no filter.

But I wish  
you would light me up  
like the front porch Christmas twinkles  
on the Fourth of July.

You are like a firefly  
and a dream escapes me  
          every time I watch you fade.  
I'd keep you in a mason jar  
on my nightstand  
and feed you my light  
—if I could.

But set it free. Set it free.

Companions only return  
for the kibble—  
not the feeding hand.  
Still we love  
how the porch light makes collar tags sparkle  
when they come home.

*Bree Rehac*

*“New Life”  
Paul Hakel*

*Selene*

The ocean is your bath—scrub off the day.  
Prepare to sprinkle the earth with soft night  
After your brother, the sun, slips away.

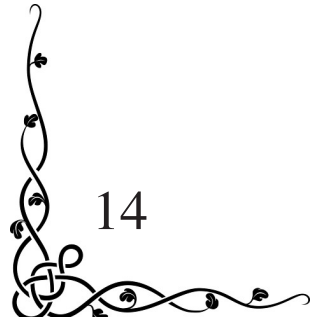
Make quick of your work; make your pale face bright.  
Beautiful Endymion rests his eyes  
Endlessly, closing the world from his sight.

His splendor is heightened by your white rays;  
He'll stay young forever—shepherd no more—  
As your moon-washed lover. Face to the sky,

He waits each night for you to come adore  
His still form: mortal ever locked in dream.  
Work done, you kneel beside him on Earth's floor,

Caressing his sweet face—kisses streaming  
From lips to flesh, iridescent seeming.

*Becky McKeown*







*An Ode to the Neon Beatniks*

Megaphone mouth, all you bubble gum chewers.  
Fists in the air, emptying pockets into sewers.  
Turn on the dial to airwaves frequenting slop.  
Hit the switch, tune it out with a boombox.  
Messages spreading internally through left ears.  
Feet striding, hightops, teenage angst-covered fears.  
Shrugging in and out of the mango-wash city lights,  
Caught between fences and adults sayin' "get outta my sight."  
Rainbowing the blacktop, creativity in a can,  
Under viaducts, plastic slides, all over their wasteland.  
Witty meanderings of a 16-year-old brain,  
Unattended for, unruly, left out in the rain.  
Sneers and fruit-flavored bubbles, teeth pearly white.  
Smiling sweetly, baby, running the streets all night.  
Fingers curled, 25 cent rings, clutched on leather jackets.  
No one's original unless declaring it in sewn-on patches.  
Metal birthmarks, hair purpled and teased.  
Middle finger javelining the night. Kid, they just do as they please.  
Flourescent dreams with carnival cartwheel kicks,  
Slash the rulebook and pawn off these young pup tricks.  
Satin-soled, glittered, harlequined Chinese rubber,  
Kiss the feet of young girls, disobey sweet mother.  
Pink sunset lips, cigarette between the teeth,  
Sunglasses drawn. Eye to eye, never you'll meet.  
Hearts dot the i's, curvy and splotted,  
Hand-written I love yous and I owe yous jotted.  
Jog their memories, they won't find dandelions and swings,  
They don't recall innocence and pastel, childish things.  
Words up in smoke, collapsing and crouching out of lungs,  
Intertwined with the karaoke bar, songs they sung.  
A hectic thought helix, crashing down in their fists,  
Everything far away and foreign is everything they wish.  
Motorcycle backseats, helmets forgotten and cracked.  
Long gone, they roam, searching for things they never lacked.

*Kaitlin Lindahl*



## *Her Forehead Wrinkled*

*by Zack Witzel*

Her name was fitting. Violet conditioned herself into an insomniac. Night after night, she'd tally the moments she'd been awake. Each night lived a minute or two longer than the previous.

I planned to take the train to midtown in a drowning downpour. In my regular rush, I darted straight from the shower to the subway platform, hair still wet and freshly combed to the side. I always pretended to be a businessman from the 1950s with his hair freshly Brylcreemed after showering.

My clothes stuck to my skin in a mixture of humidity and nerves (not to mention the gallons falling). I snagged my pants on a stairway's stray splinter as I raced to the train. I caught the N and dried off momentarily in the air conditioning.

The bags under her eyes, in that purplish hue, left Violet's nose pronounced and her actual eyes an afterthought. The way her hair fell and secondhand dress fit might have seemed careless if I didn't know otherwise. We did lunch.

She had been allotted half an hour, so we stayed close; the office complex had underground eateries. We made the logical choice of a café with generally quick service. I offered to pay. Had her father appeared to ask my intentions, I could have been honest. I had none.

Sure, she was pretty—but not like my girlfriend. And I think I came off as handsome—but not like her boyfriend.

She had cold tea and salad; she must've been watching her figure or something, though I'm not sure why. She was skin and bones, really. I had a pre-made fruit salad so as not to delay her return to work.

She didn't wear heels. Her height still struck me as I offered her a chair in the corner. Her ordinary, coffee-colored hair brushed against my cheek while she wiggled her way around me in the cramped seating arrangement. She probably didn't notice.

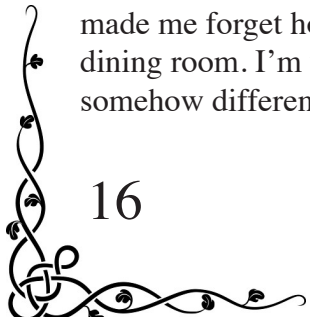
She was a newswriter, I found out. We exchanged life aspirations, past embarrassments—all the things two new friends might share. Her voice came surely from her bare lips like an actress. She was a young Julie Andrews.

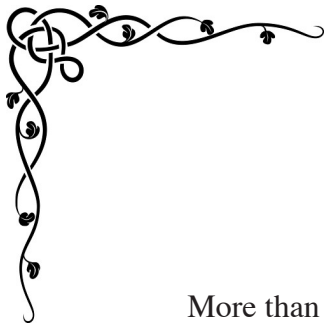
At 13, I had braces glued to my teeth. The hardware installation went smoothly enough: my orthodontist allowed me to watch ESPN to relax. Channel 29, my fingers remembered from muscle memory.

I reclined in the seat and tried to think about something else. Why couldn't I be an athlete making superhuman plays on the highlight reel nationwide? When will my parents let me put a television in my room? What would I be eating for dinner?

That's the thing: I was constantly worried about food as a kid. My Italian grandmother's after-school cooking made me chubby. And I grew up sheltered. Looking back, merging from Catholic elementary school into the public school system reminds me of I-95 traffic around Washington, D.C.

Violet's minimal makeup showcased her beauty without proclaiming it. Her commanding presence made me forget how cold I was inside the café. My still-damp clothes, hair, and skin froze in the chilled dining room. I'm usually the type to prefer cooler temperatures, especially in the middle of July, but this was somehow different. I had goosebumps. I felt my face flush several times throughout the conversation.





More than a decade later, she'd sit in the audience at a kindergarten's graduation. So proud, she'd tear up and reach for Kleenex in her purse. In between cheerful sobs, she'd yawn. The previous day lasted forever, she thought, and she just needed to sleep.

She wouldn't tuck herself in until the sun splashed lightly across the sky around gods into allowing her some rest. "Violet, when will you learn?" She chatted singularly, as she had each night for six years. Her words fell out softer than whispers into her blackened bedroom. "I suppose I'm happy."

Her coffee-stained teeth were invisible now. She'd gotten self-conscious.

Violet smoothed her floral sheets over her legs and nestled into the king-sized bed. Her body rolled around slowly. She coughed into her pillow.

"Are you sitting down?" my mom asked me from the other end of the phone. "Your father and his brother want to take you to the city for the Yankees' playoff game on Monday."

My baseball fandom bordered on obsessive in 2001. A seventh grader, I didn't have many friends, and my favorite players tried to offer comfort at least 162 times a year.

And, this was New York City,; a place I loved more than home. I remembered every detail of every visit. What could be better?

I thought this time would be especially unforgettable. Just a month before, I had been sitting in studyhall when another teacher surprisingly stormed in and told Mrs. Horton to turn the TV on.

"So, what do you do on your days off?"

"I mostly just explore," I answered. "I walk or ride around with no specific plans or objectives. I just act on impulses. I do whatever seems interesting at the moment. Isn't that how you're supposed to live here?"

Her forehead wrinkled with attentive concentration. "I like that."

Hindsight being less imperfect than intuition, I can say she was just what I needed: a friend in an unfamiliar town. I formerly had poor judgment when it came to friends, and she made me hopeful that good people with good intentions still existed.

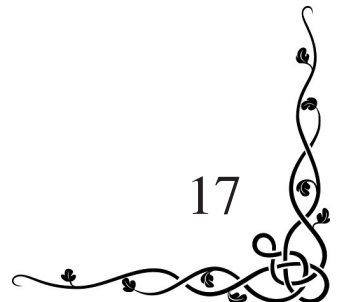
When I lost my baby fat during high school, I found my popularity increased. Whether those two things were linked remains unclear, and I suppose I'm biased. But I still use it as evidence to say that people are inherently shallow.

I played the recluse in college: mysterious enough, bearded, constantly writing dejected poetry. Those closest to me didn't care.

Heck, my soft-spoken girlfriend even said she loved me.

"Last semester I bought a newspaper from the day after Kennedy's assassination," Violet said proudly as we ascended the escalator after lunch, "and I was pretty obsessed with it."

"But not anymore?" I asked, walking toward the revolving exit doors. The rain had cleared in our time underground, and the sun blinded me as I thought about shopping for new jeans.





And you'd think my naked body in the middle of the street would beckon you to help me or maybe bring you to your feet,

But instead you're standing stagnant with angry eyes and stonewalled face making sure each news reporter has their allotted space.

And you tell me it's all business, that our time meant nothing more than the burned out waxen candles lying trampled on the floor.

To me it's exploitation but to you it's just a game, an amorphous family portrait in a capitalistic frame.

I wish that I could scream but you've torn my chords as well, making my tonsils all distended and my tongue begin to swell.

So I chose to send a message and it seems receiving it is done, for by the time it's reached your eyes it's a completely different one.

You see me as a cash crop, I'm a pilgrim, your new world, making love unto the masses with this messed up little girl.

So I stood before you naked like the first time we had more and you showed me your true colors, burning right beneath my core,

Now I've become your puppet and you've dragged me through the mud, but I'm still standing out here naked and I'm still a cut above.

*Karly Gombert*



*Paige Winston*



*Four and Twenty*

We're standing  
Waiting  
For my Mother  
Your Daughter  
To bring the car around  
When a loud caw  
Resounds  
From the bush  
Across the Parking Lot

You wave  
And I wonder  
If the holes  
In your brain  
Are larger than  
What the Doctor  
Just said

Hullo there  
I apologize  
I didn't see you!  
You say  
And I crinkle my face  
Which you see  
And guffaw

Let mah tell yoo a sec-ret  
Alwuh's say Hullo to the Blackbirds  
Mr. Crow and Raven  
Fickle creatures bring bad luck  
When offended  
So it's jus bett-uh to say Hullo  
But they'll pay yoo back for yer kindness  
jus yoo see.

I stayed in the parking lot  
Watching strangers lower you into the ground  
Their boots crunching and grinding in  
The snow  
As they struggle with the pulleys  
Frozen now and difficult to manage

Movement catches my eyes  
Two birds  
One big  
One small  
One Black  
The other so black it's blue  
Scuttle and waddle across the  
Path towards where you now lay

Touching two fingers to my brow  
I turn towards the car where my  
Father and Sister sit waiting

I get in the car and my glasses fog  
I take them off and use my coat  
To wipe them off.

I saw that  
You're such a freak  
They're JUST birds  
My Sister,  
Ever the delicate one,  
Says

That's enough from you today  
My father says  
As he puts the car in gear  
And makes a U-turn  
In the parking lot

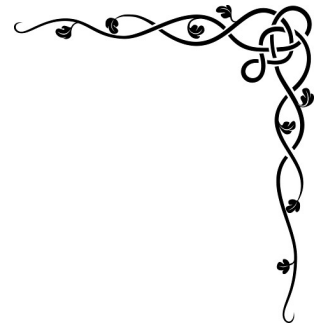
But I have to admit  
He says again  
That it's kind of like  
A Hitchcock movie  
Out there  
As he gestures out  
The other side  
of the car.

I put my glasses back on and look out.

I smile for the first time in three days.

The murder approaches.

*Lisa Aeschbacher*



## *Judgment Day*

*by Christopher Radey*

Petrifying screams echoed through the burning remains of the once-great structures. Among the wreckage hung an undisputed feeling of fear, a feeling that lingered in the charred air of the city. David could offer no full explanation for it. But unlike others, he had somewhat of an understanding—he had watched it begin.

Earlier that morning, David tramped toward the entrance of the grand work-complex where he toiled on a daily basis. The sun was brutal that day, hanging high in the sky. Its fire blazed above David's head with an air of wrath—chastisement. There were no clouds to be seen.

He walked on, quickening his pace in order to reach the shade that the complex would provide.

Before he reached the entrance though, he caught a flicker of movement out of the corner of his eye. He whipped around; a small girl was playing about twenty yards away. He chuckled to himself—not even this heat could keep the kids out of the sun. The smile slid thoughtlessly off his face though when, in an instant, an opaque haziness blanketed the sky. It was immediately followed by a scorching ray of concentrated light that shot directly into the ground several feet from the girl. Her eyes landed on the potent beam and she instantly began to run. It followed her with impeccable precision—David watched in horror as it caught up to the efforts of her modestly small legs and instantly set her body aflame. Reduced to nothing but an agonized wreckage of fire and painful shrieks, she was incinerated in no more than ten seconds, the ashes of her body staining the once lush, green grass beneath her.

David's body froze where he was standing, his mouth gaping. He felt disoriented, lost. Part of him wanted to cry; the ducts around his eyes were swelling, overcome by repulsion. But there was no time for that. He couldn't continue to think about it because his legs had already begun to hurriedly take him into the complex.

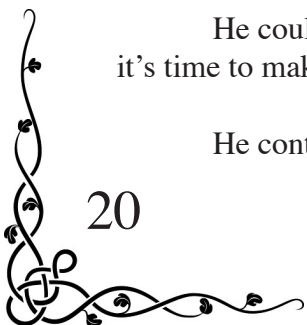
He hid there for several hours—completely alone.

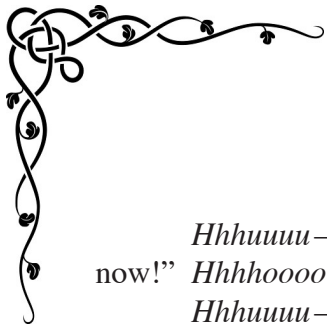
The writhing face of the little girl would not leave his consciousness—a contorted, frightful image. It made him feel sick to his stomach as he relived the nauseating memory. The smell, the sounds, what was left of the body—they were haunting. As he crouched in hiding, he heard what sounded like the movement of someone nearby. Straining his ears, he made out the muffled echoes of two workers somewhere close-by in the complex. During the intervals when they weren't speaking, the sounds of each of their dilatory breathing acted as a faux-metronome for the erratic nature of his thoughts. Each unfamiliar breath seemed to last an eternity.

David strained to listen to the conversation.

He could hear the first stranger breathe in before he spoke. *Hhhuuuuu*—“ I think it's time...I think it's time to make a dash for it.” David shivered as he listened to his colleague's breath escape. *Hhhhoooo*—

He continued to listen.





*Hhhuuuu*—“Where, Rick? Where would we go? There is nowhere safer than where we are right now!” *Hhhhoooo*—

*Hhhuuuu*—“ God damnit! I have a wife and four fuckin’ kids out there! How do you expect me to cower here all day?”—*Hhhhoooo*

David’s face dropped; he thought of his own wife.

The talking voices stopped momentarily and, through the fractured walls, he could once more hear the chorus of unbearable cries of pain. In that moment, he realized that he had no idea where his wife was. He attempted to turn his head to see if he could pinpoint where the source of the speech was, but before he could, one of the two workers shot off into the open. David watched with anticipation, hoping to see him disappear safely into the cloud of dust that had been sitting over the entire area since it all began. He wanted an excuse to escape, to find a way home to his family.

The stranger approached the open road with caution. His steps were light—light enough that David was a little flustered by the sound of his own breathing. The spectacle went on for about thirty seconds before the beam suddenly rocketed in the stranger’s direction and landed squarely across his body. The smell that exuded into the air from his melted, singed corpse was atrocious. David fought back painful tears while he simultaneously clutched his stomach, hoping that he wouldn’t vomit. The remains looked like no more than a splotch of tar on the road.

Collapsing to the ground, still staring, he realized how lonely he was. He was alone and afraid—his sanguinity was quickly starting to vanish. He looked around for any sort of sign, any sort of good omen.

It became more difficult for David to make out his surroundings as he started to weep harder and harder.

\*\*\*\*\*

“Sssooo what d’ya wanna do today, Kyle?” Kyle snickered at Jimmy as he spoke; Jimmy’s recently lost tooth caused him to whistle out the question foolishly.

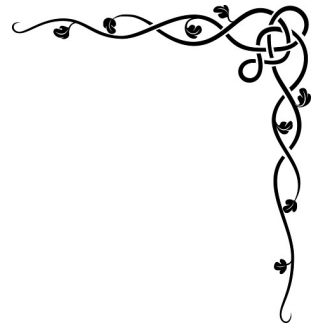
“C’mon! Mom said you weren’t allowed to make fun of me for my tooth! Just ‘cuz you already lost all yours...” Kyle ignored the feeble self-defense as he rummaged through an old cardboard box in the corner of the garage. Finally having found what he was searching for, he instantly set off down the driveway, toward the edge of the sidewalk in front of the house. Jimmy stayed at his heels like an eager puppy.

“Hey! Where ya’ goin’, huh?” He rushed to keep up with his older brother while simultaneously trying to catch a glance of what he was clenching in his right hand. Suddenly, Kyle stopped and turned to his brother.

“I think I know what we’re gonna do today,” Kyle said slyly. Looking down, Jimmy noticed that Kyle was wielding an old, robust magnifying glass. Beyond him, near the edge of the grass, was a rather large anthill teeming with little black workers.

Kyle wiped the sweat from his brow before bending down over the mound—the sun was brutal that day, hanging high in the sky. Its fire blazed with an air of wrath. There were no clouds to be seen.





*“Soft Kiss”*  
*Talbot Eckweiler*

*pen that*

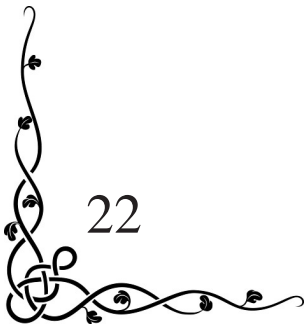
concision of poetics  
and repetition of tone  
with totality of grammar  
sliced four ways equally  
slipped onto pages  
two paginated pages  
with bold-faced title  
short, short words  
expansive thoughts  
novel, no  
journalistic eyes  
breeding canons

*Zack Witzel*

*Wraith*

Perpetuating  
Your hate you  
Come back and go away  
And I  
Take you back every-time  
Feeling myself becoming increasingly bitter and  
Stoic to the wrongs that you  
Inflict on your unsuspecting  
Faithful prey  
Turning me into your own  
Private ghost I  
*Fade*

*Lisa Aeschbacher*





*“Effervescent Ambiance”*  
*Paul Hakel*

*Kóstya’s Lament*

I’m no good at loving things.  
No good at loving words,  
Crooning until they  
Shyly shuffle onto  
Blank pages.  
No good at keeping you  
From ascending  
And becoming nothing  
But the feeling  
I could never write.

*Becky McKeown*



# *Laurelites*

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***“My imagination is a monastery and I am its monk.”***  
***John Keats***