

STUDENT POETRY JOURNAL : *Fire 7* - ²⁰02. MICA

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Preface

In the past year we have witnessed tremendous events on the world stage and, without a doubt on the stages of our personal lives. We have been forced to look critically at the way we live and the things and people we care about. *Fire 7* reflects those issues the Maryland Institute College of Art poets have found to be of crystallized importance; ranging from the most personal explorations to social critique. New this year is the *Best of Fire* section, showcasing works from MICA poets past.

Now, I turn you over to the voices of *Fire 7*. Listen carefully.

Max Fuchs, Senior Editor

Fire 7 is dedicated

In Loving Memory of *Joseph Cardarelli*: Revolutionary, Teacher, Poet & Spirit at Large and the first mica student poetry publication called *juice*

And to the previous Student Editors;

Timothy Faith: **Founding Editor Volume I**

Francis Bevington & Amy Whitcomb: **Co-editors Volume II & III**

Jeremy Lunquist: **Chief Editor Volume IV**

Kamrooz Aram, Jill Gordon,

Kristen Savage & Justin Sirois: **Editorial Staff Volume IV**

Sujin Lee & Matthew Thomas: **Co-editors Volume V**

Rashanna Rashied-Walker: **Chief Editor Volume VI**

Table of Contents

Poem of Introduction by *Max Fuchs*: 8

I. Families

IN HER YOUNG MEMORY 3: *Jeemin Kim*: 10
UNTITLED: *Jeemin Kim*: 12
SHOWING TEETH: A PHOTOGRAPH: *Sarah Ferreter*: 14
THE DAY I CAME TO YOU: *Caren Shelley*: 15
UNTITLED: *Roman Salci*: 16
FATHER: *Rachelle Lowe*: 17
SALTSHAKER: *Adam Averbach*: 18
UNTITLED: *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*: 19
UNTITLED: *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*: 20
THE HARVEST: *Elizabeth Rodriguez*: 22

II. Love, Hate

SELF-IMAGE: *Juliana Diaz*: 24
THE SCARED: *Juliana Diaz*: 25
UNTITLED: *Emily Barletta*: 26
MORE THAN POTENTIAL: *Ivy Chan*: 27
PLACES THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN: *Bryn Freeman*: 28
LOVING YOU: *Janice Barta*: 29
UNTITLED: *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*: 31
UNTITLED: *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*: 32
JOURNEY: *Kristin Bender*: 33
ONE-IN-THREE: *Jenny Kennedy*: 34
KITTENS: *Jenny Kennedy*: 34

III. Looking in / Looking out

“OF THE MIND”: *Parker Gindele*: 36
OCTOBER: *Lara Kipphut*: 37
HAIR WEAVE: *Heidi Fancher*: 38
LESSON FROM AFRICA: *Heidi Fancher*: 38
CREOLE QUEEN: *Bryn Freeman*: 39
I WANT TO BE: *Bryn Freeman*: 40
FAT JOKES: *Adrienne Bacon*: 41
COSMOPOLITAN: *Lara Marcantonio*: 43
SHE: *Janice Barta*: 45
THE ONE WHO STAYED: *Michele Nichols*: 46

IV. Today

AFTER CARL SANDBURG: *Kate Spencer*: 48
AFTER KATHE IZZO: *Kate Spencer*: 49
AFTER KYOKO MORI: *Kate Spencer*: 49
AFTER MICHAEL COLLIER: *Kate Spencer*: 50
FREEDOM: *Arif A. Mills*: 51
SPIRIT: *Arif A. Mills*: 51
FOREWARD AMERICA: *Shawn Michael Reller*: 52
WAKE UP: *Adrienne Bacon*: 53
SAME SONG: *Raheim Milton*: 54
SOUL SURVIVORS: *Raheim Milton*: 55
BOOM BOOM BOOM: *Tom Smith*: 55
LUGGAGE CHECK-IN: *Tom Smith*: 56
SIDEWALK DISCOTHEQUE: *Tom Smith*: 57
DIFFICULTY WRITING IN ABSOLUTE DARKNESS:
Max Fuchs: 58

V. The Essential: Short Poems

UNTITLED: *Max Fuchs*: 60
SUNRISE: *Lauren Peltz*: 60
UNTITLED: *Ivy Chan*: 60
POLAR POEM #5: *Steve Avrel Muntean*: 61
POLAR POEM #7: *Steve Avrel Muntean*: 61
POLAR POEM #9: *Steve Avrel Muntean*: 61
HUNDRED: *Celita Lisbey*: 60
FROM "ON RISE AGAINST THE GRAVITY":
Anna K. Davis: 62
UNTITLED: *Romen Salcic*: 63
UNTITLED: *Bryn Freeman*: 63
A SIMPLE POEM: *Lara Marcantonio*: 63
UNTITLED: *Elizabeth Rodriguez*: 64
UNTITLED: *Elizabeth Rodriguez*: 64
UNTITLED: *Elizabeth Rodriguez*: 64
UNTITLED: *Elizabeth Rodriguez*: 64

VI. Best of Fire I to VII

THE BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS:
Matthew S. Wilson: 66
BRASS BED: *Mindy Shapero*: 67
FREEDOM: *Sheila McFarland*: 68
EVOLUTION INTO THE 21ST CENTURY:
Bob Lohr: 69

EROTIC LOVE POEM: *Tracey Beale*: 71
EROTIC LOVE POEM: *Sean Huber*: 72
EROTIC LOVE POEM 2: *Sean Huber*: 72
EROTIC POEM: *Lauren Kelly*: 73
EROTIC POEM : *Laura Candler*: 73
"DAD": *Jefferey MacCubbin*: 74
TRACING: *Amy Whitcomb*: 75
BLOOD, SWEAT, AND ALCOHOL: *Benjamin Hill*: 77
SONG: *Kamrooz Aram*: 79
THE AFRICAN VIOLET SCREAMS WOO-MAN:
Ron K. Williams: 81
UNTITLED: *Kamrooz Aram*: 83
GREEN ALIEN GOES TO ESKIMO CITY:
Rashawn Griffin: 84
SIMPLE LESSONS: *Laura Shuey*: 87
TRAVELING: *I Shan Hsiao*: 88
JESUS LOVE SONG: *Elizabeth Grottyhann*: 89
BITE THE DEVIL: *Anastasia Wong*: 90
PRETTY BOY DAMN ROAD:
Rashanna Rasheid-Walker: 92
DIALOGUE AD: *Designed by Alia Chughtai*: 94
SPECTRUM OF POETIC FIRE 2002 SCHEDULE:
Designed by Ben Kutil: 95
ST. VALENTINE SUNDAY 2001 CD AD:
Designed by Hwa S. Lee: 96

I sat today in a large chair I am fond of.
Facing into the long hall, I watched
the great spirit mouth with
terrifying lips made
of glowing sub-
atomic particles.
With each breath it
grew closer and finally
took me over. I can feel it
opening all around me touching
the outermost reaches of the universe.
And finally, the hand and the pen it holds.

look small.

— *Max Fuchs, Senior Editor*

CHAPTER : *Families*



I

IN HER YOUNG MEMORY 3 *Jeemin Kim*

In the glittering bracelet was a woman
In her bright bracelet, her memories were smeared
All the love, the passion and the boldness was in the bracelet

A woman who was stuck in the net of relation
Lost her bracelet like a dying fish
She shares her love in the bracelet
Just gives them one and another
And she loses her passion and boldness
The light of the bracelet disappears
And she also disappears...

Forty years of her already disappears
She looks for something to dedicate the net in the faded bracelet
She is like a fish that has no energy in the mud out the water
Disappearing with the dust that already is familiar

(Because of... FALLOUT by *Kyoko Mori* "To My Ancestral Spirits")

빛나던 팔찌는 여인이었다
그녀의 아름다운 팔찌안에는 그녀의 기억들이 스며있었다
사랑, 정열, 그리고 담대함 모두가 그 팔찌안에 있었다

관계의 그물에 걸린 여인은
그녀의 팔찌를 잃어갔다
그녀의 팔찌안에 있던 그녀의 사랑을 나누었다
하나 둘 그들에게 주고는
그녀는 그녀의 정열과 담대함을 잃었다
그 팔찌의 빛은 잃어갔고
여인도 사라져갔다...

그녀의 사십의 해에 이미 사라진 그녀는
다시 그물에 빠질 무언가를 찾는다 그 빛바랜 팔찌 속에서
물에서 떨어져 진흙탕가운데 있는 지친 물고기가 된 그녀는
이미 익숙해진 먼지들과 함께 사라져가고 있다

UNTITLED *Jeemin Kim*

Starting the whispering of all things
Warmth of the love song
Spread of colors

At the end of the winter

Meeting of little dust.
Disappearing at a moment
It is too long and too short
In the journey of time

Memories of people
A place can remember
But another world

Between the square frame

The first step of one black dot
Disappearing the pure
Lost things things in the filling canvas
Dot, line, ...and the whole

My voice...my shout

Me.....

And starting the world

The irony of my weakness

One thunder

And continuing to shout

Loneliness in the silence

Escape to fill the emptiness

모든것의 속삭임의 시작
따뜻한 사랑의 노래
번져가는 색깔들
겨울이 끝나고

작은 먼지들의 모임
한순간 사라지는 것들
너무나도 긴것 그리고 짧은것
시간의 여행안에

사람들에 대한 기억들
되새겨가는 곳들
그러나 다른 세계

사각형의 틀 사이에

검은 점의 첫걸음
순수의 사라짐
채워지는 캔버스에서의 잃어가는 것들
점, 선, 그리고 전부

나의 소리... 그리고 외침

나.....

그리고 시작하는 세계

연약한 내모습의 모습

한번의 천둥

그리고 계속되는 아우성

정적 속의 외로움

빈것을 채우기 위한 도피

SHOWING TEETH: A PHOTOGRAPH *Sarah Ferreter*

This is mom and dad
behind the coffee stains.

That is me inside her belly
behind her sweaty hands
and a dress that doesn't fit her anymore.
She does not know it will be too long a labor
full of fluid
and clenching
and kicking.

This is when she could still laugh at pain
and make a fist if she fell.

This is the way he used to hold his mouth
behind his the moustache and the slant of his cigarette.

He does not know he will lose so much sleep
that his head

will ring
and throb
and eat him.

This is before he crawled into a mold
before he swallowed himself.

This is mom and dad.
behind the coffee stains,
showing teeth in an attempt to smile.

THE DAY I CAME TO YOU *Caren Shelley*

When you lived with her
I would sneak out, at night
sleep in that old car
the one that came from your dead brother.

I felt safer in there
because she chased me out of the house

her and her long nails
all painted pink
eyes stained with the plan of using you.

Laying there *it was so cold, daddy*
you only caught me once
guided me back said *I was just sleep walking.*

But I was really walking.

To get you to come to me.

It was *because I couldn't dream, daddy*
knowing that she could show up, take you away
remind you that I was just a daughter *not a lover.*

I slowly turned black
lines painted around me eyes
a shaved head in protest
a bruise that will always stay within your mind.

UNTITLED *Roman Salcic*

It was the morning *I saw my father cry*
We walked down the ancient streets
covered in hot ashes of recent homes
I remember the smell
of burnt hair and flesh,
feast for demons.
I still hear them laughing on top of the hill,
above the ancient city, demon beasts.
It was the morning *I saw my father cry*
Without a word we walked down the bleeding street,
people on their knees.
On this cold December morning,
mothers were no longer mothers
and children became orphans.
Centuries of verse like pearls before swain,
a golden spirit forever broken.
Masks melted in the burning rooftops.
Demons laughed.
Centuries of freedom gone in a night,
demons had their feast.
On that December morning *I saw my father cry*

FATHER *Rachelle Lowe*

Sacrifice
And much care
Touched by paper limbs
Placed in small circles
Through the ground
Of longing pale
Crescent nestle
Sunk into chocolate lunar
Soil
Just as monochrome
Stitches your shirted threads
And the rings
That trail along old hair

SALTSHAKER *Adam Averbach*

My old man is a salt shaker because he is full of salt
This old man belongs to me
But I am his as well

He tips and spills out
the crystals burn a whole in the carpet
that he tried to keep clean
I can feel his salt burn me
but not as badly as he burns himself

He can see through the glass of his own body
He might not know it
But I can see through him too
I can see his lungs and his brains and his heart
And all of his veins
They are all preserved in salt
Dried out like figs

I would like to remove them
But I don't know
If I could put them back correctly

UNTITLED *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*

Man falls asleep and dreams that
he and his daughter have died
in a car accident.

He loses sight of her
as he travels up to heaven.

When he gets there
he looks up to where
god should be standing
to greet him
and instead, there is
his daughter, laughing.

UNTITLED *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*

Alex,

I remember in first grade
you had a collection of plastic
clip-on neckties.
That's weird, *Alex*.
I can barely remember it.

In first grade,
you told the teacher that
Melissa was sick
when she yelled at her
for having her head down
In a gesture not typical of a seven-year-old,
you held the trashcan for her
as you walked beside her down the hall
towards the nurse's office
not seeming to care
if the vomit splattered into your shirt.

Alex, your mother was in a car accident
when you were four.
Her mind never woke up,
so the summer after first grade your father sent
her to live in a nursing home in Scotland.
where she was born.
He didn't want the burden of an invalid anymore;
also he was fucking her nurse.
Remember?

The fact that your father sent your mother away
so he could fuck the nurse more and worry about this wife less
pissed off her mother,
so she got custody of you and your brother
before second grade began
and you moved to a different elementary school
in the district.
I assumed I barely noticed.
In fourth grade when all the gifted students
went on a field trip together,
you remembered me

My mother told me later,
later: after you and Oliver decided
to move to Florida to live with your father,
after eighth grade in hot June,
after the last time I ever saw you,
she said that she would have adopted you
she'd wanted to, if your grandmother hadn't
and the first thought I have
with a swoon of affectionate regret
is that I have always,
always wanted a brother
especially one like you

The last time I ever saw you
you were half a foot shorter than I was.
What do you look like now, *Alex*?
Probably nothing like me.

THE HARVEST *Elizabeth Rodriguez*

Girls fly in my mouth
while boy's listen.

They stare
at these cats who hide
in the warm shelter
of a moist hot cave.
who bury
themselves in my words
and shake with the echo
of all songs they never sang.

I am
a secondary mother
my arm bigger than the rest.

The girls gather
the lining of my cheek
and store all its power
in the pockets of their dress.
Until, they burst at the seams,
uprooting themselves like ambitious seeds
who have grown.

CHAPTER : *Love, Hate*

SELF-IMAGE *Juliana Diaz*

The idea that you are you on a hard surface
The idea that you are you,
But not all of you.
You, with no expressions
You, with no emotion
You as you were meant to be
The less weak of the two
The stronger,
The wiser
The one who is unattached?
The one who shifts?
She who goes with me
Except when the darker days come
She doesn't cry,
She does not even feel the pain
She walks along with me
By my side,
Yet feels nothing
She is I
A better me

THE SCARED *Juliana Diaz*

Unwilling, the scared walk
Dragging their feet through dry soil
Which carries the rocks
That torture the bare souls

It is truth that we may never know
And soils that we may never walk
Because for some
The pain outdoes the heart

And so it hangs on the coat
Inside a pocket swinging
A heart misplaced
And maybe lost

It was never about love
It was trust leaving through the open blinds
It's walking away through the dry soil
And it's leaving no trace

Scared, unwilling dream
Pushing their bodies through floods
That wash away all hope
And erase all memories.

UNTITLED *Emily Barletta*

met yellow and grama flower in a
white tub while kitchen sifter lets air nipples and grins.
did I light the stove that night?
there were mushrooms to warm our feet,
noises to make, and a storm to blow me away.

you were always.
lime corduroy and a stubbed out puff of smoke,
a pile of curls left alone on tar and red bricks.

I was flesh;
not sick but broken.
my hands of a
dead person wrestling your camera and record player,
dripping wetness to a rug, a rocking chair, and
an empty birdcage.

do you remember?

MORE THAN POTENTIAL *Ivy Chan*

your gaze
may not be too true
but so true when the color
is always the sea
may not be too late
when its is not dark enough
after sunset with waves
so grey and a glimpse of
mellow blue you collect in the day
some kind of reflection
affection
from that cool air
right above the height
of these wave lengths
so slowly
moving towards
too deep into
too far from

PLACES THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN *Bryn Freeman*

When they sit on the edge of the bed
together, making an indentation

Shoulders pressed against each other
neither looks at the other.

Palms lightly touching, not really holding
only touching.

When they sit on the edge of the bed
they know what its like
to be in all the places they have never been.

LOVING YOU *Janice Barta*

nothing can stop the beat,
feet
stomping
over solar heat.
fire
glows throughout the night
fighting the urge
to loose sight
of the face
that has brought the light
back into life
absent
of the beautiful
mountains
and glass leaves
movement
lifeforms
in and out
can't remember the last time I smiled
pearls gleaming as I dance
as I dance
I dance for your ambition
A constant rotation
brings me power
as I am electrified

—Continued

becoming synchronizing
with the boom boom boom
you take me higher than rocket fire
soaring into space
dodging a sea of stars
traveling amidst meteor showers.
And I fall
down
to
the ground
of silk and cotton
and I laugh.
as I roll over
and see,
you
next to me,
you get me so high
every time
I breathe you
take you
inside...
my brain
melts into buttery satin
as you drift into sleep.

UNTITLED *Genevieve Elena Zarnowski*

We had gone to sleep a little after one,
cramped, balanced in a corner on the couch
and I woke briefly, several times
before rising at 7:15 to walk you out to your car,
and take out the dog before she woke up my parents
the new light angled in softly from the east
and everything was the color of
swimming in light reflected off the water
as your car started roughly, I tiptoed
in my thick black socks towards the dog
across a lawn that got wetter
further from the house
And then I must have thought up an entire
new day because I went upstairs
and slept off your departure until noon when I woke
up hungry and happy
Now all I want to do is not miss you
I want to not need to sit in the sunlight
I want to make a 2:30 am trip to the diner and
stand outside with all the other people that
go out at 2:30 am, and finish our cigarettes as we
read the menu through the glass window, though
we both already know what we want, then take our
food back to my apartment and eat it at the table:
not even because we are hungry
but because we are hungry for no other reason than
we don't have to sleep alone

UNTITLED *Geneveive Elena Zarnowski*

you look strangely familiar to me this morning,
and I say Jason
I saw you last night,
but you weren't yourself.
You watched while your friend's father
raped me.
But I didn't remember any of that
until just now,
until I saw you.
Because
I forgot that it was you,
and when my alarm went off this morning I was alone.

JOURNEY *Kristin Bender*

when we lay down, I begin hallucinating.
he takes me to different worlds each time;
in each land,
a mountaintop,
chalk-white at its tip,
that we climb together.
beginning with monotonous rocks,
the landscape evolves into natural gardens.
we plant a jade stalk with every visit
before entering the caves
surrounded by azaleas in springtime and beehives,
dribbling with sweet nectar.
his hand tattoos mine red as we ascend,
through layer upon cumulus layer
until we reach summit,
and while holding each other,
we fall.

my rhythm, beating as if we have
run a marathon;
my spirit, ethereally miles from my body.

when we lay down,
we float from the clouds
and never touch
the ground.

ONE-IN-THREE *Jenny Kennedy*

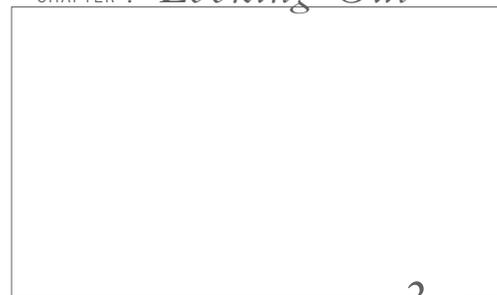
So I wonder if it's even me.
If i'm really here.
Could shut my eyes long enough
to no longer watch this.
 (i'm not here.
 This isn't happening)
i had a chance to leave,
i didn't make it out.
no doesn't always work,
i've learned.
One-in-three women know this.
He knew this too.

KITTENS *Jenny Kennedy*

If I ever had a lot to learn,
it didn't start with a moral,
had nothing to do with right
and wrong,
but was merely the fact
that I was so far gone
that even simple things,
like strings and sleep,
are no longer enough
to distract me from thinking
about sex.

Looking In/

CHAPTER : *Looking Out*



“OF THE MIND” *Parker Gindele*

The mortal one of the mind
 Isolated in this glass-capsule of time
 Shockwave down the back of my spine

Awakening in a white light, surrounded by aliens of some-type
 drugged up mind state,
 hung upside down from a bird's eye view
 take advantage of the 3rd eye view
 don't have a clue of the mind's intellect

Break free from the chains with my eyes inferred
 Jump down
 Slice their heads and form a position of a lotus.
 Meditate on a mental state and devour the souls of my opponents.

Energy level above normal
 Power infected
 Injected with the diseases of seedless souls
 Sounds of sirens, dreaming of violence
 Cherry sunshine silence.

Shape shift back to reality
 These are my tongues
 I carry a pen instead of a gun
 Just in case my thoughts try to run out of my mind
 Caught between the time and machine of a man
 Understand
 I can't

OCTOBER *Lara Kipphut*

Pulses...
 running through my body
 Watching
 as e x h a l e d clouds
 leave my lips
 to meet with counterfeit airs.

A pile
 of thoughts
 collecting
 on my windowsill,
 Blown away
 by the ultimately wind.
 It carries the world
 Pop
 Ing
 And
 Crack
 Ing
 to my ears...

Contemplation.
 Of warm thoughts.
 C o o l e d
 by reality.
 Expressionless. My eyes
 remain
 dilated.
 Synapses fizzing sizzling
 pulling color, s t r e t c h i n g form.
 Sitting in silence...

Lying.
 In wait.

HAIR WEAVE *Heidi Fancher*

As evil as I may be
No women can abstain from me
I give a care free life with locks
so full and free
I make your real hair
curl up in pity
so put me on for something new
the weave is definitely for you

LESSON FROM AFRICA *Heidi Fancher*

I hear of the skin bleaching that
some African women do
I hear of scars from the bleach
they must wear
their whole life thorough
I hear of new cancer that
burns their beautiful black skin
I hear of the tanning some
do just to be as fair as them
All of this that will make for
no brighter end.

CREOLE QUEEN *Bryn Freeman*

The heat and humidity
made sweat beads
on my forehead
along my hairline.

Heavy, salty
filled with spices.

I just stared up
at the blue ceiling
on the porch roof.

They say it's to
remind us of the sky.
I prefer the real thing.

It's too hot to take a walk.
Swamp weather,
where green in the trees
tries to climb up into your veins.

I could feel the heat
on the back of my neck.

Pulling the dark hair
on top of my head.

Messy swamp hair of hair.
Pretended I was the queen.

Of Spain.
Or France.
Or my porch.

I WANT TO BE *Bryn Freeman*

i want to be

one of the boys
climb tress
poke bugs

the girls giggle
and wear stupid
pink dresses

this lasts for a while
when i can cut my hair short

when we grow up
i am different to them

their fascination with
female curves
long hair and
sugary sweet voices

i'm still one of them
but they whisper
when they talk about
my kind

my rough cuts and bruises
don't understand
blush and mascara

but they no longer
see me as them

FAT JOKES *Adrienne Bacon*

Just look at me
Look at my body,
I'm ugly as fuck
Bout wide as a truck
Not skinny enough
I need diet pills for my wide load
Induct myself in Tae Bo-
At night I sit at home and cry alone

I'm nothing
I look like I'm filled with stuffing
Like a turkey, climbing the steps,
Huffing and puffing-

I wanna be half my size
Not for the purpose of health
But what man wants a fat girl
Such as myself?
If only I had wealth

Lipo- would make me more desirable
Little do I know
self-esteem is most admirable
trait for survival
Rivals crack fat jokes

—Continued

Get me that job
Find out a quicker
Top secret way
To orgasm

And the perfect perfume
To make him
Want to do it
Again
And *again*
And *again*
So I flip
To learn about
The marvels of
Womanhood
The tiny quirks
Of fashion
And gossip gossip gossip
That will forever
Change my life

SHE *Janice Barta*

she
brown haired beauty
amber canvas stretched around the solid structure
built by the architect of the skies and space.
space infinitely red, pink, and peach
tastes like a peach too
warm and fuzzy
sweeter than honey
never spoiled by the heat
that travels by ways of disguise.
And there is no compromise,
today
I am no \$19.99
Nor will I ever
cause she
is covered in layers
of red, pink, and peach
and you're color blind.
So mind you never
you'll never know,
cause she
knows when to breathe
when to see
when to feed
cause she is faith
and faith is she.

THE ONE WHO STAYED *Michele Nichols*

She always was one to
Pull the petals off the daisies
Leaving them standing
Green and naked in the garden.
At six, she learned to hate her body—
Her feelings and thoughts.
To pound them down with the
Self-defeating hammer her own father had given her,
So that every time his shadow snaked across her bed,
A part of her floated softly
Until he was gone.
Her empty echo stayed behind
To bear the pain.
The shell of herself heard his breathing roughen,
His insistence that she tell no one,
But only the shell heard,
Because she was taking in the warm Florida sunshine,
Where nothing meant anything,
Lazily picking the petals off a daisy.
Wondering what happened to
The one who stayed.

CHAPTER : *Today*

after **CARL SANDBURG** *Kate Spencer*

stumble me under the sea
let me melt between pasty ochre two-egg waves slide from
one tumbling womb
your love is a middle-aged mid-wife

her saking hand
a knife

mumbling nuns recite flights of Numbers
counting the valleys between my *sighs*
(her *thighs*)
i cry and and let loose my daughter
and see that it's only me
staring back at me

after **KATHE IZZO*** *Kate Spencer*

you reach up and read the braille of my spine
curved lines whisper my secrets
and cut through my wandering noose
I fall, fumbling to the ground,
drowning beneath the surface of boiling piss
coded and clothed in repeating dreams
they weave wreathes of apologies
sarcastic eulogies sung by laughing muses
my bruises erupt and enter your skin

* *contributing poet of The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry*

after **KYOKO MORI** *Kate Spencer*

you fell across the ravines of forgotten scenes
bruised mangoes and ripe-red apple chapels turn bitter in the sun

the heat causes steaming dreams to rise up and over the toes
of lost thoughts and fears
greasy banana peel piano keys slip through my fingers like fleeting assurances
(*it's okay it's okay*)
i'll take you in ; i'll make you whole

i scroll through the empty cabinets of my memories
then I turn out the light and go to sleep

after **MICHAEL COLLIER** *Kate Spencer*

last night the myths behind your voice
rose up and entered my body
peppered words stung my lips
so you handed me mothers' white milk
spilling over in its cup

it is a rusted holy grail, stained and dirty

so i drink straight from the bucket
the lies slit my throat and lap up my milky insides
swollen tongues lick my dying body

i am a rusted holy grail, stained and dirty

FREEDOM *Arif A. Mills*

Arm, Arm, Arm, strike the marching tune our army buys for *freedom*
Because *freedom* isn't free.
Arm every American rushing to the standard of
red white and blue, onward for *freedom*
Because *freedom* isn't free.
Arm, Arm, Arm, follow the chieftain, the stranger to flight or fear,
Strike for your country fellow Yanks!
Because *freedom* isn't Free!

SPIRIT *Arif A. Mills*

The Boar in the woods the earth he is turning
Gaily the eagle sweeps o'er the plain
The fox in the streets with his vanguard is prancing
Proudly the buck raises his rack

FOREWORD AMERICA *Shawn Michael Reller*

It has been the intent of the editors of this world to incorporate as much useless information as possible within the available space. As a consequence, in addition to the clear but brief definitions, properly separated and discriminated humans will be classified by the level of their usage. There will be found herein illustrative examples of stereotypes to help clarify meaning; a large number of idiomatic expressions, racial slurs, hatred and other features not generally included in an educated world. Among the unusual features are the thoughtless, enclosed in boldface brackets following the so-called leaders. These little histories of the origin and development of society often help one to a clearer understanding of the current meanings.

WAKE UP *Adrianne Bacon*

Racing toward the capitol with its Pentagon
On the chest of Superman is a pentagram
Burned in red across a blue expanse of harmony
Where the peaceful people
Dwelling within were unaware of

The Army

The motor to this capsule clicked constantly

Calling me

Forest walls painted grayish-black
Blackish- gray a painted sky...
Breathless-
As death yet without rest till morning
When restlessness gives way to breakfast time-

WAKE UP!

SAME SONG *Raheim Milton*

Everyday kids being shot,
cops is blind, when will the
madness stop,
till the casket drop.
The community shocked,
17 years old babies deceased,
will there ever be peace.
A young boy shot body left dead
on the streets.
About 15 was the killer,
who's 2 blame him or the mother,
a case of untaught lessons.
Whats' needed is unification,
though these actions bring misconceptions
of our quest for progression,
is this the future for our next generations,
use your brain is what I'm asking.
Now a days we're being shot instead of hung...
A sad, sad case of the same song.

SOUL SURVIVORS *Raheim Milton*

Deep in the depths of Mississippi
a little light shines brighter than
the heavens sky; Outer shells
battered and bruised,
tears shed over strange fruit that
grew from above, left a bitter taste,
Didn't come 2 grips with common fate.
Bonded feet became flames,
flames became a roaring fire
controlled by a spiritual amplifier,
turbulent traits left by freedom riders,
I call soul survivors.

BOOM BOOM BOOM *Tom Smith*

i was born thirty six years to the day after
A-Bomb-Two sought and destroyed Nagasaki

people steered planes into buildings
on katie's twenty-first

in the name of whose God?
in the name of whose Country?

LUGGAGE CHECK-IN *Tom Smith*

slip on those lightly powdered latex numbers
because i have a duffel bag full of allah knows what.
you say that i was randomly selected
but i have a feeling that
the old eye infection tipped you off.

c'mon, i dare you! peruse my fine washables,
my knit delicates,
my yellowing tube socks,
my various fitted t-shirts, and
my ever-so-cotton boxer shorts.

what do you think of the
fresh citrus scent of my new detergent?
is that what distracted you from the
three-point-five grams of marijuana in my socks?
or was it my changing good looks and
mossy, unbrushed teeth?

SIDEWALK DISCOTHEQUE *Tom Smith*

put the ragtime on loop,
set the sync box on line,
'cause we're masqueradin'
in this cave called our neighborhood
replete with murals far more elaborate
than lascaux.the clack of our heels on
cobblestone rings out like antiquated 78s,
'cause my collection remains unassimilated
to the ubiquity of the digital machete-this
analog production will never be
remastered in binary code.
so dust off your records and shake
the lethargy from your lifeless limbs-
let's set the speakers in the sills and
unravel like a decoded double helix.

**DIFFICULTY WRITING
IN ABSOLUTE DARKNESS** *Max Fuchs*

The mountain sides
All around us, the feeling,
No escape. No way out.
But we weren't looking
For a way out.

The stars lit the road
(but they weren't street lamps).

The voices of writers
Past come to me on levels
Outside the audible range.
A desperate science
To frenzied
Cluster-fuck-poetry view
Of the universe. It's time
To go back to the
Rapture.

Back to the stars hanging on earth
(and they aren't street lamps).

The Essential:

CHAPTER : *Short Poems*

UNTITLED *Max Fuchs*

One step – stomp, soft silks
sound of leaves
Two steps, cold.

Three steps – snaps several
branches aside,
softened
wet splinters.
Four steps, cold.

SUNRISE *Lauren Peltz*

Painted gold thorn roses
Face without a name
Name without a face
Blurred vision turns reality to fantasy
Hearts embrace vista
vista overlooks morning

UNTITLED *Ivy Chan*

one day i'll become a leaf
attach to this thin branch
my life will be a breeze
not too short or long and
i'll eventually lie down on a surface
with all the others next to me

POLAR POEMS *Steve Avrel Muntean*

#5

pumpnickled flickered
flamingo pinks
pushedsideways
along the song
of a gang
beared complied
with style
but wait all the while
for polar padded
pieces put together
by puzzles projecting
his claws cold

#7

bear de polar
birdbath coma soaked
moves for mischief
made this one
forget finding
the deciding hair

#9

polar pole
performing primitive
private dancer
topless fur
frosting finger
paw ping
with a pink G string

HUNDRED *Celita Lisbery*

A hundred little daffodils are sitting at my feet.
A hundred little heron chicks are clicking tongues to teeth.
A hundred little salmon babes are taking time to eat.
A hundred breaths of me are strewn about the beach.

**FROM “ON RISE AGAINST
THE GRAVITY”** *Anna K. Davis*

I.

I walk around home naked
eat candy from the bowl
where it is now sits
since mom sent Halloween in the mail.

II.

All during the evening lecture
I imagined
how we could play tag, I'd hide in
my pjs behind the couch.
Let's have a picnic because
you're so beautiful.
I know you exist
I'm happy about crawling on the floor.
French toast on a trayed breakfast
cut like hearts
nutmeg, then cocoa.

UNTITLED *Roman Salcic*

As she stood in front of me so,
Beautifully,
Graciously,
Mysteriously,
Forgetfully,
Gently,
Lovingly,
Naively,
Generously,
Obviously,
Loudly,
Anxiously,
At times Regretfully,
But above that Completely,
Pregnant,
I stood back Speechless.

UNTITLED *Bryn Freeman*

Smell me
I want to smell like you
breath like you
Breathe you

A SIMPLE POEM *Lara Marcantonio*

nothing to express
just this loneliness

UNTITLED #1 *Elizabeth Rodriguez*

I see too many things
in my left eye
4000 reindeers trying to move into my right

UNTITLED #2 *Elizabeth Rodriguez*

I hear the thump
of three men falling
somewhere in West Virginia

UNTITLED #3 *Elizabeth Rodriguez*

I feel tired of t-shirts and shoelaces
tired of pulling them off
tired of tying them on

UNTITLED #4 *Elizabeth Rodriguez*

I taste kool-aid
big jars, sticky mouths
my brother poking me in the head

CHAPTER : *Best of Fire*

Volume I 1995:

**THE BREAKFAST
OF CHAMPIONS**

Matthew S. Wilson

To wake up and talk with God
To be a frog from the night
to the day. That's something to
look forward to. As the earth
unwraps the daylight. A present
from the sun. I inhale the
fire. It keeps me lit all day
and cannot be extinguished.

Volume I 1995:

BRASS BED *Mindy Shapero*

This has left its scar
flesh on my yarn of green,
red splotches and milk for dessert.
Goodnight, bedtime story and bowl of mush.

Shrine of mine wearing sacred velvet,
my dad has his choice of lollipop days or
one year in prison.

You told me now, secrets
under my bed and hiding places in my room.
Lollipop days under brass bed.

So box spring mattress
and statue to pray.
Prision for one year on television.
Linoleum floor, but green yarn still.

Broke into phone lines and stole the files,
Now look at us family of five.
Desperate silence, still secrets
under my brass bed.

Clothes of paper and wooden dreams.
The word dentistry comes
passionate hatred
chilly toes: *apple*
dradle
bowl
under my brass bed.

Volume I 1995:

FREEDOM *Sheila McFarland*

“One more year, and I will be free.”
Momma that’s what you said to me.
One more year, and you will be past
the underground railroad, on your way
to freedom.

“Lift every voice and sing, till earth
and heaven ring.”
Everything is going to be ok.
Stand before the creator waiting with
open arms to receive you.
Heaven’s view—a vast wide open space.
God is at the end waiting to receive
you, while I watch from the opposite
side. My feeling and this moment
to God in whom I confide.

Volume I 1995:

**EVOLUTION INTO
THE 21ST CENTURY** *Bob Lohr*

Teenagers are coming out of the closet and taking over
the gay community,
While Jackson and Presley are together forever or until
he gets caught again.

I DON’T CARE

Bill Clinton is still getting it up and making pretty women smile,
And Lorraina Bobbitt’s feeling much, much better now that
her ex is a movie star.

I DON’T CARE

The mid-west farmers are under water and drowning,
but the ozone layer is full of holes and drying up the water.

I DON’T CARE

Heroine is coming back to play much to relief of
junkies everywhere,
And O.J. is up and running scared like a rabbit caught in
the headlights of a big pile of shit.

I DON’T CARE

Blacks are killing blacks out in the suburbs,
But Colin Powell is on display and is selling big time.

I DON’T CARE

Three sisters drive around Texas for three days and
Culminate the trip by gouging out the eyes of one of
The sisters, trying to cleanse her of demons, and get probation.

I DON’T CARE

—Continued

Bosnians are being raped, pillaged, and plundered,
But now women have executive positions without equal pay.

I DON'T CARE

Haitian civilians are being beaten to death,
And Jimmy Carter is still building houses for the poor.

I DON'T CARE

Everywhere babies are dying from Aids,
While mothers are lying stoned in the gutter.

I DON'T CARE...

I JUST DON'T FUCKING CARE!!!!!!!!!!

Volume II 1997:

EROTIC LOVE POEM Tracey Beale

Write an erotic love poem.

A nasty, hot,
kinky, sex, poem.

A lots of sweat
and heavy breathing poem.

I don't think I could write
an erotic love poem.

A sloppy kiss
and pulsating lips poem.
A thighs and breast,
hickeys on neck poem.

No, I really don't think
I could write that
kind of poem.

And on TV
nasty sight poem.
In the bedroom
with a red light poem.

Whips and chains,
leather and spikes,
that's the type of freaky poem people like.

Definitely not a poem I would write.

Volume II 1997:

EROTIC LOVE POEM *Sean Hueber*

It's within my power,
Your power,
Their power,
To give or take it.
To feel it.
Or deny it.
It helps to be in love,
Cause without it
It's just lust.

EROTIC LOVE POEM 2 *Sean Hueber*

The weight of lips,
Change the taste of your passion.
In the balance of our breath
You faint in ecstasy.
When my anticipation exceeds
Your expectations
You will have felt all of me.
And when all is complete
We will sleep in sweet peace.

Volume III 1997:

EROTIC POEM *Lauren Kelly*

Thighs are cream
ice is cream
Chest is warm
sprinkle water
Slugs are brown
Clit is
snails glide past
Hips pressed against glass
Nothing is real

EROTIC POEM *Laura Candler*

A flash of Light
Exposes two very inviting bodies.
Venetian shadows cascade over a horizon
of the flesh.
Swelled lips whisper erotic fantasy.
Subtle touches are the symptoms which
escalate waves of
First felt sensations.
Dripping falls of vaporizing passion,
melting away their pride and
vulnerabilities.
This moment where lovers' love is shared
and spared.
For each their one and only.
Hush.....
Pray, their hearts will not be scorned.

Volume II 1997:

DAD *Jefferey Maccubbin*

There's my boy – come give your dad a hug.

You are my creation, my earth, my star, my moon. You are my...

...son, you're an inch taller every time I see you. I swear it seems like you get bigger and bigger everyday....

...that passes I want to bring you back, I want you to...

Sit down, son. Sit down, soldier. We never got a chance to just talk. You know It's difficult for me to talk about...

...emotion that came to me when I first saw you playing with your little legos. You were constructing these buildings that rose high and scraped the sky of your 3 year old dreams.

As I stood behind you, I built my own fortress of aspirations.

My own Castle of possibilities.

My own empire of expectations. It's a day cannot...

...forget about it, It was nothing. I'll talk to you some other time. I'll call you...

My earth my moon...

...my son.

Volume III 1998:

TRACING *Amy Whitcomb*

I tucked away the measurements after listening to men talk about their sex. They began to take issue, and wanted to be gentlemen. They stood looking toward Mary who was holding her son in grief. He was not trained in expressions of sorrow. Figures with bulk, like sculpture; physical and some what clumsy. Cloth hanging having its own life, where as his predecessors did not. Lifting his big squash head towards futures, on human levels. They were taken in by it. Costumes, delicate and exotic, full of animals on hunts. They liked conflict and violent themes brought by the inspiration of a poet. It was all certifiably crazy, yet harmless.

I looked out. Her shoes are in the domestic part of the house and she runs to find them. He is next to the open window, where everything stands for something else. Every thought is a pervasive form; the birth of everything beautiful and pure. Material is the expression of immaterial. But I could see the man's face wanting to represent actual things. His finger had traced the rim of the glass as if it was tracing the outline of a human form. She entered with her shoes, and let them flop down. She could no longer doubt that he valued his maleness.

—Continued

Her lips whispered through many silences, making notes that only another woman could hear. She seemed to have constructed an answer to her own questions which would set her mind still. The idea tapped toward my glass and was decoded into plainness. She spoke of people being subject to sadness.

I feel my own personal nature only to find you changed it. I was cold and quiet when I watched fisherman go about daily while their heads rested against tall poles, as they stood knee deep in the river. The slightest touch of the familiar allowed my hands to move freely. The red crescent marks imbedded in the fleshy part of my palm were no longer lonely. You are odd, but polite, and extremely personable. You have an excess of useless knowledge on plumbing, hydraulics, and the flow of water, anatomy, how the body looks inside and out, and the role of the heart. I feel the need to write down everything you have noticed, even though what is said means very little later. As you research, you entertain, and I grow dependent.

Volume III 1998:

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND ALCOHOL *Benjamin Hill*

Kerouac and Ginsberg sat on a wall
And watched their generation fall
Blood and sweat and alcohol
Jack never made it up the hill
His pail was full of liquor
And in a drunken stupor he fell
And the age came tumbling after
Allen was sent to look after the sheep
When he turned they ran away
He woke then from his raging sleep
Where they were he could not say
Thus they had slain
sugar cane sweet
golden their lair
golden their feet

Mountains come over
in Niles, the spears
Thus they had slain
through countless years

Come, come my knights
carved masters of earth
soldiers of war
bastards at birth

—Continued

bronze like bourbon
owned by the sun
neared by the gods
place hearts pinched plums

When the still sea conspires an armor

And her sullen and aborted
Currents breed tiny monsters,

Ships are raised into belief.

When the true patriot tenders a strategy
And their corporate and filed
maps reveal an opening,

Victory comes gently into belief.

Volume IV 1999:

SONG *Kamrooz Aram*

Hollow drops aim the sun at us,
each holding sun within.
Yet they manage to stay cool,
Arrive stylishly late
bringing new beginnings,
innocence.

She swipes her forearm across her
wet forehead like a window wiper.

Surrounded by yellow daffodils,
swaying about like a swarm of bees.
She is cooler inside, almost cold.

Slamming the shovel into the ground
to stand on its own
She walks away from the days work,
remembers the shallow pool.

Crisp, dry, clear,
blue, blue, blue

—Continued

There is a lightness about autumn.
You can see in Missouri
On the foothills of the Ozarks.

Rise up and awaken your tired soul.
It is merely a guitar that sings
to you of summer's work.

Leaves no time for an ego to swell,
but fills the day with the scent of
wood burning and seat drying

Leaves try to heat the air by
turning colors of fire.
Hopeless in the conquering wind.

Sometimes, things move a bit faster
to stay warm.

We just moved on,
Feet gripped the edge of precipice,
and stared forever into the
face of god

Volume IV 1999:

**THE AFRICAN VILOENT
SCREAMS WOO-MAN** *Ron K. Williams*

She screamed woman
from the back of her throat
through the souls of
African women from coast
to coast
everywhere she strolled
she echoed woman
and they listened

And the walls responded
to her voice with a reso-
nance
that rocked back and forth
carrying itself
from the ivory keys
on the piano
to the ivory coast
in the continent

She cried woo-man
and the choir that dwelled
within her being
rose up and chanted

words penned on her paper
were transformed into
sounds of blackness
sounds of womanness
sounds humanity
demanding peace
and prosperity

She saw plenty with
her sad eyes
from the womb to the tomb
she caught hell but
kept stepping
stepping to the beat of
her own drum
from her crown to her toes
No silence
could be bad enough
to keep her from
picking up the baton
and crying out woo-man
she called it being an
African Violet

—Continued

An African Violet
she was, swept down
from the northeast like a
mad piper brings down
the heavens
She cried and swayed
so pretty
and the angels wept
as she articulated
the assertion that this
crooked world must be
made erect

African Violet
calling out woo-man
dignified like the
seven suns
A beautiful African diva
with age in her spirit

and elevation in her
nimble fingers whenever
she spoke for us, whenever
she petitioned for us

And that beauty
that fire lingers on
as we pick up her torch
and carry her
African Violets
and remember
her woo-maness
and journey a bit farther
into the light

This is no eulogy
because an African Violet
in the sun always lives on

Volume IV 1999:

UNTITLED *Kamrooz Aram*

In the beginning we were young, innocent
before Jesus and Allah.
I was young with a broken heart.
Mend it! I would cry out on autumn nights.

* * *

I had a few hours to kill now and then.
I would improvise emotions and hope
it came out right.

Lean, hairy structure.
Quiz me on it, I'm genius! a prophet! Believe me.

* * *

It was dark amber and I was twenty yeas old.
so many years to be alive? So few?

I was improvising again with
genuine belief in song,

I had love and it was true
Goddess! I thought.

Volume V 2000:

GREEN ALIEN GOES TO ESKIMO CITY *Rashawn Griffin*

I.

And it was at this point that he realized he was in Eskimo City, the green alien that is. How he had come to be here, and how long he had been here, he did not know. It was a mystery to him, But this was not his home, and this was not his planet.

II.

And the green alien walked around Eskimo City, seeing the sites that were to be seen and doing the things that were to be done, much like the Eskimos that lived in Eskimo City. But the green alien wasn't an Eskimo. The Eskimo's knew this, but pretended not to notice. They had seen green aliens on TV, and knew to be wary of them. Green aliens were shifty creatures, and could not be trusted.

The Eskimo children would see the green alien and point or stare or say things they shouldn't – like "monster," or "plant man" but always to be quickly hushed by their parents. The green alien himself was a child, although he wasn't entirely aware of this, and thusly saw no harm in the children's actions.

So as the green alien kept busy doing the things that were to be done and seeing the things that were to be seen, so too were the Eskimos busy not noticing the green alien while doing the things that were to be done and seeing the things that were to be seen. There was much ice around the city, and the green alien soon became lonely, and unhappy.

III.

And when he finally mustered up the strength to say hello, the green alien that is, he spoke in his native tongue, for that was the only language he could speak. What he didn't know was the Eskimo language had no translations for saying hello, but did have over 400 different ways of saying ice.

Consequently, the Eskimos took great offense to this greeting, and promptly tore him asunder, piece-by-piece.

The green alien's TV had warned him that this would happen, but it had not anticipated such a delay in the Eskimos' reaction. It had virtually convinced the green alien he would be slain as soon as he set foot in Eskimo City, but it was wrong, and so was the green alien.

IV.

And the Eskimos, who lived relatively normal and peaceful lives during these modern times, naturally had laws against such indiscretions, and were forced to claim their actions in the name of science, which very much allowed those sorts of indiscretions during these modern times. They turned the green aliens carcass over to the governmental department skilled in studying such oddities. They put each arm, vein, and organ under intense scrutiny by doctor's surgical tools and microscopes and telemicroscopes, but their findings were inconclusive. Cell by cell they tested, and could find no difference between the green alien's organic matter and their own. By the time they were done, they had turned the green alien

—Continued

inside out, and assumed the body they were examining was not the green alien and they let him go.

V.

And the green alien gathered as many organs and veins and cells as he could hold in his arms, and went on his way. He had enough of Eskimo City and was on his way back home – back to the Green Alien Planet. But when the green alien arrived there, he found he did not know how to speak in his native tongue, (and perhaps never did), but he did know over 400 different ways of saying ice. But there was no ice on the green alien's home planet: and consequently, the other green aliens took great offense to this newly

introduced prospect and promptly tore what was left of the green alien asunder piece-by-piece.

VI.

And the green alien made his way back to Eskimo City. Now much older, he realized it didn't matter much where he was at. Both places were so much alike that the differences became inconsequential, and perhaps, he hadn't really gone anywhere to begin with. This was indeed a lonely existence for him. But he found much peace in his solitude and kept to himself most of the time, trying not to watch too much TV.

Volume V 2000:

SIMPLE LESSONS *Laura Shuey*

I smile as I remember my Mom
standing in the field across from the school.
The other kids walked home alone,
I only got to walk halfway on my own,
since I was in her sight the whole time.

I smile as I remember
my mom pulling two girls in a wagon,
that they were too big for,
in the summertime.

I smile as I remember my Mom showing
me her mouthful of silver teeth,
when I did not want to brush mine.

I smile as I remember telling my Mom stories
that I thought I were funny,
and waiting for her stop laughing.

I smile as I remember seeing my Mom
cry over flowers, in a park.

Volume VI 2001:
BITE THE DEVIL *Anastasia Wong*

Bite the devil,
Would you?
Bite the devil,
Would you?
Ha! Ha.....!ha! ha.....!

Would you laugh at the devil,
Please?
Would you laugh at the devil ,
Please?
Heeee!hee!heee!heee!heee...!

Could you outwit the devil,
Hu?
Could you outwit the devil,
Hu?
Hu?!hu!hu....!hu!?

Would you tease the devil,
Please?
Would you tease the devil,
Please?
Hai....!hai!hai!hai.....!

Could you quell the devil,
Hu!
Could you quell the devil, I a m w on
Hu? der ing ,
Hu,...hu...?hu?hu? wo n d
E r ing.

Bite the devil
Would you?
Bite the devil,
Would you?
Bite the devil,
Would you?

Volume VI 2001:

PRETTY BOY DAMN ROAD *Rashanna Rashied-Walker*

Treading on a lake never-ending
Reflecting purity
The Vasolines ruptured the stereo

Sponging my own glassy reflection
I dove into mother's natural healing curve
Redolent of
An ice cube

Heads bubble amongst waves
Rotating triangles stuck on lollipop sticks; blooming wind
Endless cornfields taller than I
Shapeless crop circles
Matted with wooden boards
Little girl with large frames and white terry cloth tees promenade
Told Tokushima
When winter comes so does the cold
Matted bodies with wooden fingertips
Lettuce on limestone, cous cous built from water
Two trails lending through a pair of woods
A witness to a solo limb caught by a solo tree
A widow
A web

Winters snow came, boiled raisins turn softer
Fear of shadows of light brimming with wheat , corn, rice, seaweed,
And malt
Reminiscent of a port city
Teacher said
Smells of stale saltiness and butter stains on lips
Brushing became forbidden
Never pearls nor hoarfrost
Restricted healthy decay
Tuff situation, a modern boot, cut, stuck, on the same boat
Little boys with small frames and gambit white tees promenade
Old friends, old times
A time
A space

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Lalita Noronha
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Edgar Silex
Annette Gonzales
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JEFFREY RENARD ALLEN, Monday, 9/16, 2002, Main Building Rm. 110, 6:00 pm

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CHRISTINE LINCON, Monday, 9/23, 2002, Main Building Rm. 110, 6:00 pm

VAN WOODSON, Monday, 10/7, 2002, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1:15 pm

FRANK LIMA, Wednesday, 10/9, 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

JOHN YAU, Wednesday, 10/9, 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

GALWAY KINNEL, Wednesday, 10/29, 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

MICHAEL COLLIER, Tuesday, 10/29 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

MARGRET ANN REID, Monday, 11/4, 2004, Bunting Center Rm. 011, 1:00 pm

LUCY GREALY, Wednesday, 11/6, 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

KENDRA KOPELKE, Wednesday, 11/6, 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

A. VAN JORDAN, Wednesday, 11/6, 2002, Theatre Project, 7:00 pm

WORDWRIGTS MAGAZINE, Saturday, 11/9, 2002, Mt. Royal Station, 7:00 pm

LITE: BALTIMORE'S LITERARY MAGAZINE, Friday, 11/22, 2002
Mt. Royal Station, 7:00 pm

FIRE: MICA STUDENT POETRY JOURNAL, Thursday, 12/12, 2002
Bunting Center Rm. 110, 4:00-6:45 pm

MARYLAND POETRY REVIEW, Friday, 2/7, 2003, Mt. Royal Station, 7:00 pm

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