

# HAUTE — DISH

The Arts & Literature Magazine of Metropolitan State University

Summer 2007

Poetry. Fiction. Art. Graphic Story. Personal Essay.



Roberta by Photographer Clint Weathers

Welcome to the historic Summer 2007 edition of Haute Dish. We made and are making history with this issue. We hope you like our selections as much as we do.

We received a record smashing 189 submissions—our previous record was 88. And for the first time, we're providing a PDF version (in your hands) of our little magazine for those of you who prefer to hold your reading material in your hands. And for those who want to take Haute Dish on vacation. And for our esteemed library and the Minnesota Historical Society who want to keep copies of our publication in perpetuity.

Oh, and we've redesigned our website. Hop on over to <http://hatedish.metrostate.edu> to take a look. When Metro student and web designer Matthew Bates (<http://www.fortyseven47.com>) showed me the coffee-stained notebook design as an option, I knew right away it would be our next website design.

Most of us squeeze study time between putting our kids to bed and putting ourselves to bed. Or we write during down-time at an overnight job. Or we do homework on the bus to and from school. And some of our projects, papers and productions are coffee-stained, frayed around the edges, and taped together.

And despite our time crunched lives, we manage to excel beyond even our own expectations.

Hopefully, this edition will shine with Metropolitan State University beauty and brilliance as well. I think so anyway.

So come on up to our porch and sit for a spell. We won't bite. I can't make any promises about Roberta, though.

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N. Jeanne Burns, Managing Editor

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## Blood Red Beauty

*by Roshelle L. Amundson*

Deeply dark and luscious at her peak,  
slightly bruised  
pitted and uneven  
picked by careless hands.

Plunge thumb and pointer insider her, oblivious  
to the tearing of her flesh.  
Turn velvet berry on her side.  
Sweet blood sheds itself, entrapped between nail and skin.

Her berry body peppered with golden flecks of seeds;  
pattern less; like freckles.  
A bottleneck traffic jam seen from an airplane window;  
aimless chaos, yet controlled,  
iambic patterns.

Again, those hands.  
Hands which didn't see the innocence, rather,  
raw beauty;  
Hands which preferred to touch other things

Hands which ripped ruby beauty from mother vine  
grasped and groped for her flesh as a teenage boy.

She wanted love.  
She should have had it delicately,  
in and by  
tender hands.

Grabbed by her stem,  
she thinks to herself...

This is a day I will never get back.

## The Silence of Poetry

by Roshelle L. Amundson

Her fingernails, freshly painted the color of Bali orchids  
erupt and flash Beaujolais stained swirls  
against the backdrop; the blue and white of the monitor;

The length of her piano hands,  
her veins; rivers of words,  
bulge with language  
while she  
tap, tap  
clicks,

Tap, click  
taps  
against the keyboard,  
carving letters into her philosopher's stone

R s t l n  
reflect on fingernails, magenta in hue

Eulogize the  
spoken  
word.

Backspace, backspace, Enter.

All of this is an effort to stay  
silent

But to say something...  
meaningful.

Say it without sound and breath.  
Does it mean something to you?  
Her use of space,  
her commitment  
to the page as a  
living

breathing  
aesthetic?

Does it mean something to you? All of this  
clicktapclicking  
by fingernails the color of Bali orchids,  
silenced from oration,  
forced

to stand  
alone  
on the page?



*If Silence Can Speak* by Didi Alamsaputra

# Last Night

by *Carl Andrew Frie*

Two fat white carp were drifting through the fish tank when a fight burst out of the kitchen and into the tiny dining area of the noodle shop. Eight or ten men were brawling in a circle. Blue and white ceramic dishes exploded on the gray tiled floor. Bottles of red chili sauce spilled onto the floor and mixed with purple vinegar and sweet brown sauce. Red plastic tables and chairs tumbled about. A few men tried using them in the fight but tossed them aside.

We sat for a moment. I was surprised and silent. She pulled strands of noodles out of her bowl and blew on them. Arms, fists, and legs convulsed in a swirling heap. Then the cook burst through the white plastic curtain. His skin was dark, his face mottled and crimson. Puffs of steam and vapor escaped the kitchen. He waved a square butcher knife over his head and shouted insults in Mandarin and Cantonese. I bolted up and grabbed her by the arm. She spit her food out onto the table and we dashed out the door. It was raining again, or maybe it had never stopped. The pavement steamed and smoldered.



*Snowy Night* by Didi Alamsaputra

"Hurry," I said.

The rain smashed down on us, hard and warm. She put a hand up over her head. I tugged at her arm.

"Wait," she said. "My make-up."

We ducked under a blue canvas canopy. The faded yellow sign on the door read "New Look Karaoke Bar." Underneath it was chipped red Chinese script, then, in English, "New Macau Palace Hotel." She pulled a small round mirror out of her purse. I looked back down the sidewalk. The fight had spilled out onto the street. Scooters and taxis honked and swerved. More men joined the fight. Black hoods and dark handkerchiefs covered the faces of some of the fighters. Others had their shirts off. Tattooed bodies bobbed in and out of the melee. Bats and pieces of lumber swung about. The cook stood on the sidewalk waving the knife and barking insults. The cords of his neck stood out.

She tapped a red fingernail on the window behind us.

"Let's go in and get a drink," she said.

The rain came down faster and harder, falling straight onto the sidewalk and street, then running in a white surge down the gutter.

"C'mon," she said. "Let's have some fun."

I wondered if the cook had ever used the knife on anyone.

The barroom was awash with soft rose light and dank conditioned air. A red vinyl cushion snaked around the teak bar. She ordered whiskey, neat. I nodded for the same. I watched her light a cigarette, the bright spark of the lighter flashing throughout the bar. She breathed the smoke in and let it out of her mouth quickly, the stream of white passing between her dark cherry lips. The smoke trailed up and faded into nothing.

"God, I'm dying for a drink," she said.

A group of men in black leather jackets and dark shirts sat at a large round table in the center of the bar. Their faces were tinged with red and their eyes were watery. The bartender brought our drinks.

"Cheers," she said.

We clinked our glasses and gulped the whiskey. I took a second gulp, finished it off and looked around the bar.

"Relax." She patted my hand.

A small stage was on the left. In front of it a short, thin man with a shaved head and earrings was setting up sound equipment.

She offered her cigarette to me and I took a drag.

"Let's just have a good time," she said.

I handed the cigarette back to her and waved to the bartender for another drink.

"What do you think happened back there?" I said.

"Does it really matter?"

A group of Chinese girls filed in and sat at the center table with the men. They were dressed in red and black mandarin dresses, slit on the side up to the thigh.

"It happens all the time," she said.

The men at the table began a game of dice. The rattling sound of the dice in the small glass bowl echoed throughout the bar, followed by shouts of joy and disappointment. I wondered about the cook.

"I'm going to sing the first song." She stood up and went over the bald man who was sitting in front of a soundboard. They spoke for a minute, then the lights went down and shifted from rose to a dark red. She got up on stage and the music started. It was that Oasis song, the one about living forever. The dice game paused and everyone watched her. She sang loudly and clearly. A grainy video of Chelsea Bridge and rockets taking off flashed on the screen behind her. She waved at me, her gold bracelet glinting in the light. I liked watching her on stage, she had a nice figure and her skin wasn't too pale. When she was done we all clapped.

"Did you see me?" she asked.

"I did." The bartender brought two more and we tipped them back.

One of the girls got up to sing, "If You Need Me" in Cantonese. The men at the table smiled and raised their glasses to her. The other women lit cigarettes for their men.

She wrapped her arm around mine and pulled me close to her. The whiskey was sharp and fruity on her breath. She put her mouth close to my ear.

"I think it's time we both get drunk," she said.

Her eyes were red and fierce. I brushed her dark hair out of her face and kissed her.

When I stepped out of the shower she was under the white sheet. The TV shouted out football scores. The bottle of Crown Royale lay on the floor, empty and on its side. She turned over and held her arms out.

"Come here," she said.

I picked my shirt and pants off the floor and hung them on the metal rod by the door.

She rolled back onto her stomach and reached for the empty bottle.

I sat on the bed and slipped my hand under the sheet. Her skin was warm. I clicked off the TV.

"I'm so tired," she said.

The sounds of another couple fucking drifted through the wall, competing with the rain washing against the window.

She moved closer.

"You drank too much," I said.

"You shut up," she said. "Maybe I like it when I'm drunk."

An engine revved quickly and tires screeched on wet pavement. I went to the window and looked down at the street but all I could see was the dark and the rain.

She sat up in bed, lit a cigarette and turned off the light.

I wondered if the police would come this time, or if they had given up.

"Come here," she said. Her face glowed red in the cherry of the cigarette.

In the dark I could hear someone screaming.

In the morning the rain had stopped. The streets and the sky were a metallic grey. An engine gasped and fought for life. The smell of fish and rain haunted the air. Beer cans, empty bottles, lychee skins, and paper wrappers dotted the sidewalk and street. Three dogs with brown patchy fur sniffed for scraps.

I walked back to the noodle shop. The glass of the front door had been smashed. I pushed the metal frame open with my foot. Thou-

*Thousands of tiny blue shards of glass beaded the floor. Small holes dotted the lime green plaster walls. The yellow cash register was in the fish tank and the fat white carp lay on the floor, their mouths wide open.*

sands of tiny blue shards of glass beaded the floor. Small holes dotted the lime green plaster walls. The yellow cash register was in the fish tank and the fat white carp lay on the floor, their mouths wide open. The white plastic curtain that divided the kitchen from the dining room was gone.

The kitchen floor was spattered with blood. There was blood on the wall too. Dark brown, dry blood. A corner of the white plastic curtain peeked out from under a stainless steel table, the eyelets torn open. A thin red line ran across the grey tile, escaping into a rusty drain in the floor. The cook's knife lay next to the drain. The edge of the blade was covered with a line of brown blood and pinkish skin. I nudged it with the toe of my shoe. My reflection stared back at me, dark and distorted. I turned away and walked out.

The rain started again, very softly. Black dots formed on the sidewalk. I walked back to the hotel and stood under the blue canopy. She was standing there, waiting for me. She wrapped her arm around mine and pulled me close.

"Where did you go?"

"Nowhere." I said. "I didn't go anywhere."



*Treble* by Ian Aizman

## ...and Johnny Maestro Sings by Carol Critchley

Everyone Elaine Caccavale knew had a talisman of some sort.

A pony, a number, a patron saint – ubiquitous symbols of possibility that helped temper the cinderblock realities of the people in the neighborhood where she grew up and still lived. She could not entirely dismiss the power of these charms; mystical intercessions occurred with just enough regularity to keep her heartily agnostic on behalf of luckier family and friends.

For herself, though...a childhood-long cavalcade of slights and indignations had convinced Lainie no obscure 15<sup>th</sup> century nun would ever – ever - ride shotgun with her in moments when an opportune intervention would have meant the difference between triumph or humiliation. She eschewed coins in fountains, turkey wishbones, birthday candles. A waste of pennies, meat and breath. She learned never to expect a serendipitous turn of events and to always decline entry into even the most benign of 50-50 raffles.

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Inexplicably, from the northern New Jersey soup of calluses, tar, and six-packs, Lainie had emerged a singer. She suffered the usual musical dalliances of a working class family; grammar school Christmas concerts, drunken renditions of songs from the homeland and impromptu summer concerts starring various grandfathers and their bocce ball leagues. But there was no genetic explanation for Lainie's undeniable, soulful voice.

As a kid, Lainie's voice was considered a nice little attribute, like good posture. It was a party trick her parents could trot out to trump a brother-in-law's poetry-reciting niece or a neighbor's home-run hitting son. Her voice, though, they thought, was nothing that would really make her "somebody"...like her cousin Georgie who was good with numbers and had already opened a little business repairing toasters and blenders.

After high-school graduation, while her friends poured over brochures from two-year secretarial schools and beauty academies, Lainie scoured the local weekly, looking for a band in need of a vocalist.

She was consumed. Music was all she felt, all she wanted to know. When it became clear to them that their daughter was determined to make a living with music, her parents, first-generation Americans both, reluctantly supported her with a 53-week subscription to *Billboard Magazine*. The understanding: if she had not made significant progress towards her goals by the end of the subscription, she would take her place at the family bakery and maybe teach a little piano on the side. Getting married and having a kid wouldn't hurt.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lainie wanted to be submerged in melody and rhythm. She sought out teachers and found Simon Marks, a drummer who had played with Strayhorn once but later in life sharpened knives for a living. He spent hours with Lainie, filling her heart and her head with vinyl names and notes.

"Remember, chickie...you ain't got Rosetta Tharpe, you ain't got Janis Joplin. You ain't got The Delta Rhythm Boys, you ain't got one damn Beatle, no how. Music is history that swings, that's all, capiche?"

Under Marks' tutelage, she'd bounce up and down the dial, flipping from AM to FM, between Top 40 bubblegum to Broadway to Ethel Waters to Clyde McPhatter to Monk to The Abyssinian Baptist Choir to Jimmie Rodgers to Ronnie Hawkins to Blossom Dearie to Johnny Maestro to the Boswell Sisters, and Nina Simone.

Things started off well.

Lainie left her home, moved to the City, hooked up with aspiring musicians and began her life. Intermittent minor successes seemed to indicate potential for something bigger. She traveled up and down the East Coast and parts of the Midwest with a cover band. She fronted her own group – "The Lilacs" - for a short time and spent a couple of months playing cruise ships out of Miami.

But Elaine had no talisman. That one big break never came.

In between gigs – sometimes weeks, sometimes months - and when creditors became particularly thick, Lainie stood next to her mother in the bakery, selling cannolis and day-old bread.

One morning, while taking an order for a confirmation cake, Lainie looked at the delivery calendar and realized she had been home for three and a half years.

\*\*\*\*\*

Her life was again populated by the mechanics and roofers and firemen and bar owners of her childhood, in the same sandwich shops where small-time hoods mixed easily with plumbers and priests. Here, the daily discourse of children was laden with an artful, colloquial embrace of profanity. Here, parents carried on the most private of disagreements with windows wide open in compact rows of single-family homes. Here, life was measured in decibels and broad gestures.

As it had always been.

Marriage, births and divorces brought new faces and new gossip to the streets but the butchers of her past made way for their sons to become the butchers of her present. The family homes of school friends were now owned by those same friends. And Lainie wasn't sure how it happened, but she found herself renting the apartment where Mr. Salvatore's grandmother had lived and haunted many of her childhood Kick The Can games.

The musical part of her life seemed completed. All her connections either moved so far up the musical food chain that Lainie did not exist or they dropped out to start talent agencies, web-design companies or families.

And then.

Lainie's cousin Bobby decided to open a club, The Starlight Inn and Spirit Club.

"This is it, Lainie," her mother said.

"This is it, Lainie," her aunt said.

"This had better be it," her father said. "Your big break."

They petitioned Bobby to hire Lainie.

She was family, she sang "good" – he hired her. With the caveat that she sing "only stuff I know, stuff I like. Nonnathat friggen' esoteric doit-doit-doit shit. You sing classics – Frankie, Dino, Tony, that kinda shit. On weekends, you throw in a little doowop, make it festive. You can do that, we gotta deal."

She could, in fact, do that. She wound up doing it for years.

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Lainie knew all the guys at the Starlight, had gone to school with most of them, dated a few of them and slept with one of them after a particularly good show, that, she felt, was deserving of some groupie adulation.

Too, there was the One That She Had Married. Just before she found out about the girlfriends. And the bills. And the booze. He had three kids now.

They were all the same, these blue-collar bully boys, who worked hard in their dark blue uniforms with embroidered white and red name tags. The constant grease under their nails was a badge of success; they had good jobs - union jobs - that paid decent. Their boots were invincible, spattered with paint or oil or tar or mud and those boots could kick ass from here to hell and back with the slightest provocation – and, often - without. These boys dreamed of muscle cars and pensions and spoke in the working class argot that inevitably led to beer-bottle boasts in the alley and apologies to any of the daintier broads in their midst who might have been offended.

They loved Lainie. She endured them.

But she would sing to them. Just for them. She would sing them through break-ups and layoffs and deaths and births. She would sing them through Superbowls and softball leagues and high-school reunions. She would sing them raucous lullabies and ex-girlfriends' favorite songs.

One day, they sang to her.

It was a boozy, belchy version of "Happy Birthday". Simon Marks, grinning like he grinned through that long-ago solo at the Vanguard, wheeled an impossibly large cake to the front of the bandstand, shepherding each candle flame heroically through the draft

*One day, they sang to her.*

*It was a boozy, belchy version of "Happy Birthday".*



from the ceiling fan. The crowd implored her, begged her, berated her into making a wish.

She wanted to disappear. She wanted this – all of it – to be over. This day, this bar, this life. To get the crowd to shut up, she did what she always did; pretend she was one of them. She closed her eyes, approximating an appropriate period for contemplation.

It snuck up on her. A wish. Before she realized, before she could remind herself that these things were a waste of her time, she wished a wish and blew out the candles.

As the applause and her shame were dying down and the plates and knife were being passed up to Lainie, the door of the club swung open.

His eyes adjusting to the dimness of the room, Herman Haier took a seat at the bar, ordered a Rusty Nail, pulled out his Galoises, lit one and absent-mindedly banged the pack against the counter as he waited for his drink. This was his last stop on a very long day of stops; he had come to hear a singer one of his clients had mentioned might be worth a listen.



## She turned to me

*by Louis Murphy*

and said, "I believe you." Then  
she smiled and winked  
the truth of the story into my eye—  
a sage-like lie  
just for me from my daughter;  
but, all the young terms of endearment  
were turned brassy by that wink,  
and then she was become old  
with tearstains and coffee grounds  
coalescing around  
the slants of her statements—  
and now she is ancient,

## bubble

*by Louis Murphy*

The colored bubbles now mean less than wonder—  
more than acceptance into the earth—  
they are glass ships floating and colliding—

A child's whisper—  
"I see the fleet go down  
on a rocky, turbulent shore—"

Soapy spheres caught soon on her clothes—  
survivors,  
eventually victims, that seem so alive in this moment.

A pair of rain boots was never meant to be  
the grave of childhood—  
feet placed with care?—

agony to me  
even years later to see youthful brightness—  
tenuous on the puddles surface—live so briefly—

no sooner does the rain start than it ceases.



*Light* by Ian Aizman



## Earth Bound Spirits

by Lynn Mari Ford

Earth bound spirits were drawn to her. A beautiful face hiding behind tangled hair. A voice strong enough to carry the truth yet unspoken. She stood against the rows of cotton, her pain to connect with that of the past. Her journey began when she met a much older man, who dressed so fine and talked so smooth and promised to hold her forever. She didn't understand what he meant. Until he pinned her down. His hands tore into her, his weight smothering her small body. He never said he loved her.

He pretended not to hear when she cried and begged, and tried to push him away. So she grew still and prayed to the lingering shadows ...take the pain away. Her tears joined ancient tears bleeding into the earth; turning Alabama dirt red with blood. Tilled from that deep wound earth bound spirits return to another generation's picking season.

*Sunlamps* by Didi Alamsaputra

Her eyes have dimmed as she pretends not to notice the fear she has of him. Silently she serves,

hoping she can make things right, the picture of a happy family, a doll house upturned by violence. Her story would have become another generation of tragedy if not for lingering shadows, calling her home...leading her to long rows of cotton, cabins disintegrated into the weeds, the earth still so red. Even as what remains was lost to denial and decay, she reclaimed her family story through clues left in historical records, through the warm and familiar line as she stood amidst earth bound spirits. In the records, she discovered something strange. Was it fate, she could not say that the man who instilled so much fear in her, has the same name, the exact name of the slave holder who instilled fear in her ancestors. The name of the slaveholder who swept her grandmother from the field so long ago. Who pinned her down with his body and impregnated a legacy of shame. And forced the next generation to deny their honey colored complexion and wavy hair, so that they only existed as earth bound spirits.

In Alabama she discovered her ancestry, even further she discovered herself. She found her rhythm humming the Blues that her grandmother loved to dance to. She found a sense of belonging retelling the family stories, giving name to what was lost. She found the warmth in her body to melt like butter over white cornbread. She found her resilience within the struggles, the pain, the sacrifices woven in all that had been bestowed upon her, by those ancestors who fought for a better life—many who did not live to see that life. She was no longer serving, no longer afraid. In the end, the cost to break free would be brutal, his rage hammered into her. She was shoved onto the floor. The door slammed into her side. He forced his way into the place that never truly was home. She found the scream she suppressed so long ago. No longer begging—pain opened a feeling she had almost forgotten.... Somewhere she felt life and embraced that spark.

Even after she fled, he would not let her go. He wanted her to suffer and would inflict pain in any way he could get to her. Was it fate, she could not say that the man with the slave holder's name stole the stories and photographs she collected to remember her family. Stole the very records of her family's place in history. A part of her felt the most profound loss. For so long her ancestors, her grandparents had their lives defined by a carefully constructed lie, forced on them. Had their voices suppressed. Had secrets imposed on their children and generations lost their truth. Only the cotton that rose from the bloodied soil could speak for them.

Too weak to stand, her body fell to the ground. Too weak to cry, she shook uncontrollably. All around shadows gathered. Voices whispered and shrieked as a wind with no direction. She had to let the photographs fade. She had to let the stories dispel. She had to let the records return to dust.

For in keeping them so close, so trapped in her grief, so trapped in a struggle, generations old earth bound spirits they would remain.

For a long time she lay against the earth, noticing the colors of creation around her. A rust colored fox skittering in the brush. A yellow dandelion against the drying grass. Noticing the rough contours of a leaf.

The faded gray of an irregular stone. The stories of her family, the stories of her life were found again in the stillness. In the colors, and textures that although silent and often trampled upon could not be denied.

Earth bound spirits, she called them by name...

All those who had suffered

Who had been forced to carry secrets

Who had been beaten, abused

Who had been betrayed

Who had been denied love

And spread her arms, as if she were turning the pages of her family album. When she closed her arms,

she hugged her memories close to her heart then shook her hair free so that it fell in wild tangles down her shoulders and watched as the shadows dispersed into brilliant rays.



*Coco* by Ian Aizman

## Me Gustas Cuando Sonríes

*by Rose Morantz*

Me gustas cuando sonríes porque estás como el sol.  
Tu sonrisa-lustrando, radiante. Tranquilo.  
Como un regalo nuevo cada vez que lo haces.  
Por un momento todo es perfecto, y yo sonrío también.

Me gustas cuando sonríes porque me alegro.  
Veo tus ojos felices, y tus dientes blancos.  
Todo es aprobando, porque yo sé que tu estas contento.  
Me gustas cuando sonríes.

*(I Like It When You Smile)*

I like it when you smile because it is like the sun.  
Your smile- shining, radiant. Calm.  
Like a new gift each time you do it.  
For one moment everything is perfect, and I smile too.

I like it when you smile because it makes me happy.  
I see your happy eyes, and your white teeth.  
Everything is okay, because I know you are content.  
I like it when you smile.



# The Usual Modern Dialogue

by Joshua Fischer

"Hello. Thanks for calling JC Penney. For quality purposes, your call may be recorded. I am an automated assistant. You can speak naturally to me. How may I help you?"

"Hello, I'm Kathleen Beasily and I need to place an order for a lilac blazer."

"I'm sorry but I could not understand you. Please say your response now."

"Hello! I'M KATHLEEN BEASILY AND"—

"I'm sorry. Please speak clearly. Now, how may I help you?"

**"ORDER!"**

"Welcome to JC Penney. To place an order say, 'One.' To request a catalog say, 'Two.' For inventory checks, order status, and all other inquiries say, 'Three.'"

"One."

"Hablas la ordena en espanol diga, 'Uno.' If you want to say your order in English say, 'Two.'"

"Two."

"I'm sorry. Hablas la ordena en espanol diga, 'Uno.' If you want to place your order in English say, 'Dos.'"

"Dos."

"Please speak your entire catalog number—"

"H dash 453 dash 7987."

"I did not get that. Please speak your entire catalog number without saying dashes—"

"H45379 eighty-seven."

"I did not understand that. Please speak the entire catalog number without saying dashes or combining numbers."

"O.K."

"I'm sorry. The silky laced onyx thongs are currently unavailable and are on back order. I will place this item on hold for you."

"No."

"What is the other item that you want to order?"

"No, I don't want the thongs."

"I could not understand you. Please speak clearly. Do you have the number available for your next order?"

"Yes."

"Welcome to JC"—

"Damn it. You, dummy."

"I'm sorry. I could not understand your message. How may I help you?"

"Buzz off, Buster!"

"Please hold on. A qualified operator will be with you shortly."

"Finally."

"Yez. Dez iz Jabbar Khalid. Ho may iz hepz eue?"

"Sir, I'm sorry but I could not understand you. Could you please put the automated assistant back on the line? Apparently, I'm having a bad reception and I was just making progress with the machine."



*Minnesota Nice* by Clint Weathers



# Calumet City

by Thomas Novak

"Mamma we got a pep meeting at school tonight."

Mamma glared at Maciej. She leaned close to his face. Maciej always knew mamma was not playing games when she spoke in Polish "nie jestem głupi syn."

"I don't think you are a fool mamma." Maciej said nervously.

Tomasz knew that Maciej would crack under pressure so he chimed in. "It's true mamma. Me and Maciej were the only ones to volunteer from Polish Hill." Tomasz pleaded. "We gotta go mamma."

Mamma sat back in her chair looking vexed. "Jest dom przez północ"

Tomasz sat back relieved "O.K. mamma we will be home by midnight." The boys quickly finished their dinner.

The boys lied to their mamma so they could go hang out in the parking lot of the Taco Bell. Taco Bell was the place where the public school boys would rev their engines to impress the girls standing around doing the dizzy giggle. It was the place to see and be seen. Maciej and Tomasz would see, but never be seen—except for this night.

Polish Hill was the rough part of the small factory town that Maciej and Tomasz lived in. The Taco Bell and The Walgreens were built at the foot of Polish hill as a levee. The sterile prefab buildings kept the unwashed masses of blue collar Pollocks from raging downhill and flooding the shiny new neighborhoods.

Most Friday nights Maciej and Tomasz would collect all of the change from papa's work pants and hit the town. First, they'd stop at Kristnesky's market to buy a pack of cigarettes, and then make their way down the hill to spend what was left on tacos and a large soda to share. Maciej and Tomasz would perch on the split-rail fence that outlined the drive-through. They would eat and watch the kids from the public school crank their stereos and laugh at each other. Most of the time they were ghosts, silent scruffy ghosts, but this night something amazing happened.

‡

When my boys were babies we moved from Slupsk in the north of Poland to Calumet City. Then, we moved from Calumet City to this little town for work. Some time after the people fought the communists. The boys don't remember Slupsk, I hardly remember it. Thank god for their mamma. Her cooking keeps me feeling like a Pollock. They are good boys. That's why me and mamma work hard to pay for their school and keep them fed.

Friday nights the boys always steal my coffee money. They lie to their mamma about where they go. They think we don't know. I was worried one time so I followed them. Those boys sat in a parking lot for most the night. I will never understand why they won't tell me. Why would I care if they want to sit in a parking lot?

I will never understand these American teenagers.

‡

"Hey don't you go to St. Mary's?"

"Hey you two! Don't you go to St. Mary's?"

Maciej and Tomasz never expected anyone to talk to them so they didn't hear the girl calling at them from the back of the long line.

"Hey you two!"

Tomasz turned around. The most beautiful girl he had ever seen was talking to them. She had blond hair. Her bangs were done up in a wisp that defied gravity and a fresh permanent of curls framed her perfectly proportioned face. Tomasz always dreamed of having a girlfriend who wore make-up, and the girl speaking to him had a powdered face like a kabuki girl which was punctuated with bright blue eye shadow and soft pink lipstick. Tomasz and Maciej had been having their typical waiting-in-line argument about whether it was cheaper to buy a pack of six tacos or twelve tacos, but now they stood there silent in disbelief that this magazine-perfect girl wanted their attention.

"Hey! Can me and my girlfriends step ahead of you." The angel sang to Tomasz. Both Maciej and Tomasz nodded their heads. The angel and three of her friends began to make their way towards the boys. The four girls took their place in line in front of Maciej and Tomasz. The girls smelled of bubble gum and hairspray. It was like the smell of heaven to the boys. Everyone in line behind the boys and their four new female friends protested, but Maciej and Tomasz couldn't hear a thing, and the girls didn't care.

"So... I'm Tommy, and this is my kid brother Matt." Tomasz announced to the girls. Maciej grimaced at the word "kid." The girls smiled and nodded. Then, they turned their backs to the boys. "So... What are you doing tonight?" Tomasz asked as cool as he could.

One of the girls with dark hair and a tight-fitting Coca-Cola t-shirt turned to the boys and said "We're gonna see a movie. What'r you guys up to?"

"Wow, that's crazy 'cuz me and Matt were gonna see a movie too."

**Tomasz always dreamed of having a girlfriend who wore make-up, and the girl speaking to him had a powdered face like a kabuki girl which was punctuated with bright blue eye shadow and soft pink lipstick.**

"Awesome, maybe we'll see you there." The dark-haired girl said to Tomasz with a cute little smile that made him weak in the knees.

‡

I'm a good Husband. I work hard. My boys, they had respected me. After that night I told the boy's mamma what happened. What I should have done is explained to the boys. I didn't. Now I can't.

‡

Maciej and Tomasz made their way back up Polish hill to the place that their papa could be found on Friday nights. They needed more money for the movies. Tomasz opened the door to the bar on the corner by their house. The smell of stale beer and cigar smoke nearly knocked the boys down. The boys walked into the bar. They looked for their papa in the dark bar.

"Hey Boys." The man behind the bar called to them.

"Hey Mr. lembowsky. Have you seen our dad?" Tomasz asked.

"Ya, I think he's in back."

"Thanks" Maciej said, and the boys walked toward the pool room in the back of the bar.

Tomasz and Maciej walked under the Budweiser sign and into the back room of the bar. Neither Tomasz nor Maciej could believe their eyes. In the dim light of the jukebox the boys could see their papa sitting with his arm around a girl in a cut-off t-shirt. The two of them were staring into each other's eyes smiling and talking quietly. The boys stood there stunned. Their papa didn't notice them standing in the doorway. The boy's papa kissed the girl on the cheek and reached to put his hand on her breast.

"Papa" Maciej shouted

Papa jumped up from his bar stool knocking over the pool cues that had been propped against the table he and the girl were sitting at. He looked over at the boys. "Tomasz, Maciej, what are you doing here?" papa asked in a shaken voice. Tomasz and Maciej walked over to the table. Neither of them could take their eyes off of the girl. The girl looked away and twirled her pitch-black hair nervously. Papa moved to stand in front of her. It was like he thought that if the boys couldn't see they wouldn't ask questions. "Why are you here boys?" papa asked.

"Papa, we need money for the movies." Tomasz said vacantly as he stared at the girl in disbelief.

"Yes!" Papa exclaimed "Movies" He pulled out his wallet and handed the boys forty dollars.

Maciej and Tomasz moped out of the bar. They had the money for the movies, but not the stomach; so they walked home.

‡

My family has too many secrets. My husband he comes home smelling like the perfume—I wear no perfume. He pretends I don't know. He tells me stories. The neighbor girl had too much beer—I helped her. I need to work Saturday—there's no pay for Saturday. I pray to Saint Christopher for him every night.

My boys, they lie too. We have pep rally. We have Four Hs. There's no Four Hs for those boys. My boys—they will grow up. I think they already are. There has been no lies on Fridays. They say 'we want to go to movies.' They have gone to the movies now for the last three Fridays— no lies about four Hs or pep rally.

My husband-I don't know what to do to him. There is more secrets between him and the boys than they tell me. The three of them, the boys and my husband came home early on a Friday last month. All of them looked as if the had seen ghosts. Not one tells me what is problem.

The boys are silent to him. He gives them money but they don't care. Last week he gave them twenty dollars. The boys did not say thank you. I tell him not to give them so much. We are in a recession. He does not listen.

I never understand America. This place makes people crazy.



*Skyscrapers* by Didi Alamsaputra

## Attoma, the Fool with Good Intentions

by Kirsten Jacobson

As soon as the keymaster unlocked the shackles on Attoma's wrists, he handed over a key and said, "Go around the whole dungeon and free everyone you can."

Attoma took the key and began rejoicing in his newfound freedom. Eager to fulfill the keymaster's simple request, he approached the first prisoner he saw. "Hold out your wrists so I can unlock the chains that bind them," he said.

The prisoner kept his hands in his lap and responded, "My wrists are not bound."

Attoma held up the irons that were once fastened around his own wrists. "See here," he began. "I did not know that the cuffs on my arms made me a prisoner. But now I am free, and you can be free also. Let me unlock the shackles on your wrists."

The prisoner shook his head and repeated, "My wrists are not bound."

Attoma was becoming frustrated, but he presented his offer once more. "Please, neighbor. You have been in this dungeon for so long that you don't know you are a captive in it."

The prisoner sighed and looked at Attoma sincerely. Again he insisted, "My wrists are not bound."

The sharp clang of metal echoed in the dungeon as Attoma shook the irons in his hands. He called back to the prisoner as he walked away, "I will go and help those who wish to be free."

After Attoma had gone, the prisoner looked around hopelessly and said to himself, "I wish someone would come and unlock the fetters that bind my feet."



## An excerpt from "Honey's Closet"

by TJ Kampa

It's a drag queen's worst nightmare...thank God for Bertha.

"Bertha's House for Big Girls...this is Bertha what can I do for ya?"

"Bertha, darlin' this is Honey."

"Girl, how you doin? Ain't heard from you for too long."

"I'm fabulous, but I got me a crisis. Can you hook me up?"

"Watcha need Honey?"

"My favorite girdle done ripped. I guess I done been eatin' too many biscuits, and I need it for the show. I'm doin' Whitney tonight and you know how skinny that bitch is."

"Damn girl, ease up on the biscuits, but I got what you need. I'll send it to the club."

"Thanks sweetie, you done saved my act."

The Corner Pocket, the only gay bar in Hueytown, Alabama, is home to Ladies Night every Friday and Saturday. Honey Tubbs is the star of the show. At six-foot-four, Honey is an imposing girl, but is as sweet as her name and expects to be treated as a proper Southern woman. Honey's success depends on always looking fabulous, but her size limited her wardrobe choices, so she enlisted the help of one her best friends, Bertha. Honey and Bertha met 15 years ago on karaoke night at Woody's in Birmingham. Poor Bertha couldn't carry a tune with a basket, but she had a killer fashion sense. Honey was a great performer, but looked like she dressed in the dark. Together, they knew they could be successful, so Honey convinced Bertha to open a clothing store in Hueytown.

Bertha's House for Big Girls, a clothing and accessory boutique, is best known for servicing the "special" women of Alabama. Bertha specializes in extended sizes, particularly shoes and gowns, for those women over six feet tall. Honey's success as a performer helped put Bertha's shop on the map in Alabama. Now girls across the South have access fabulous gowns, shoes, wigs and any other accessories needed to become their stage idols.

Ladies night is about two hours away when Honey arrives. Backstage is a whirlwind of feathered boas, sequins, wigs, cases of make-up and shoes...lots and lots of shoes. Honey's co-stars: Ginger Flame, Gail Force and Trixie Shooter are helping each other with their make-up.

"You best git them eyebrows right," snaps Ginger.

"Girl, you should've waxed, Patti Labelle don't have bushy eyebrows," warns Gail.

"Just pluck the dang things, the shows startin' soon."

**"Relax girl, it just means you have to tuck yourself much further."**

**"I'm gonna cuss Bertha out, shoot, you know Whitney never had to tuck no package."**

"Hey y'all, did Bertha send me a new girdle?" wonders Honey.

"Yeah, sweetie it's on your chair."

Honey always starts getting ready with the girdle followed by the pantyhose. Might as well get the toughest parts out of the way first, then she can have fun fixing her hair and make-up.

"Ginger, stretch this thing out will ya?" "I can't get it over my belly."

"Dang girl, try puttin' your pantyhose on first, maybe then the girdle can slide over that belly of yours."

"That ain't the way it works, the girdle has to go on first," barks Honey.

"Don't matter no how, this thing's not your size anyway...you ain't a 14," chuckles Ginger.

"Damn Ginger, now my stuff's gonna be hangin' out!"

"Relax girl, it just means you have to tuck yourself much further."

"I'm gonna cuss Bertha out, shoot, you know Whitney never had to tuck no package."

Honey puts the finishing touches on her hair and make-up. Nothing is going to stop the show. She rehearses back-stage trying to move and breathe at the same time; glad she's not the first performer. She hopes she can get through the show without anything "popping" out. Honey peeks out at Ginger performing Patti Labelle and scans the audience for the evening. Sitting near the front, just off to the left, Honey spots the most gorgeous man.

*Is he alone? Is he wearin' a ring?*

She can't tell but sure would like to know. No time to think about that now, she's on.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we'd like to present our tribute to three queens of Motown...the Supremes...Baby love, my baby love...."

"Whoo hoo! Boy, the crowd sure did love that number," says Honey.

"Yeah, the place is packed, and there's some fine lookin' men out there too," quips Ginger.

Honey tries to forget about the guy she saw earlier. He didn't look familiar to her and around here, she knows most folks. Besides, right now she needs to get off her feet and have a drink. While Foxy and Ginger present their songs, Honey counts the money she has made so far.

Damn, he could have at least tipped me. Whatever, dude's probably married anyway, or it's this girdle I'm stuffed in, my curves is bulgin' all over...damn Bertha!!!

As she enjoys a cool drink, Gail runs into her dressing room.

"Honey, girl you won't believe what someone left in my bra during our last number."

"Girl, please, You don't fill that bra up no way, and I ain't got time for no games. My solo act is next, I got to get ready."

"Who cares? You got yourself a note from someone."

"Say what? From who? And what did it say," wondered Honey.

"It says, I love Honey...sweet, smooth, beautiful Honey. Will you meet me after the show? I'll be waiting at the bar," read Gail.

"Ooooh Lord, did he sign his name? Maybe it's that fine piece of dark chocolate sitting in the front. He caught my eye right away, and I know he checked me out more than once." Honey started to heat up.

"No name sugar, that's all it says. I don't know who it was." Gail said.

"Girl, how can you not know? Shoot, for all I know it could be crazy Leroy from down the way."

"I ain't your damn secretary Honey. I got my own hook-ups to make." Gail snapped and left leaving the note behind.

Honey did her best to prepare herself for her final number. How could she concentrate with her man outside? Whitney Houston was not her best character, but she was still working on Aretha Franklin. As Honey took the stage to the words of "I'm every woman," she felt sexy anyway and looked for mystery man. But, the man who caught her eye earlier was no where to be found. Not at the bar and not in his seat.

*Why would he leave? Damn, it must have been that fool Leroy. I'm not goin' out with him no way.*

After the show and a shower, she could finally relax. She resigned herself to the fact that she scared the man away; she usually did. She knew that meeting men at work didn't amount to anything more than flirting, but she always hoped for more. Life away from the stage was lonely, so she wished she could meet new friends. Still, it was flattering to be noticed and it meant that her girdle hid what it was supposed to hide. She called Bertha anyway and cussed her out for sending the wrong size girdle. As she packed up her things to leave for the evening, a stagehand knocked on her dressing room door.

"Excuse me Miss Tubbs, but this was left on stage after your last number."

"Thanks Oscar. See ya tomorrow,"



It was a yellow rose with a note: "I'm still waiting for you. Did you forget about me? I would really like to meet you, perhaps for some coffee?"

Who did this fool think he was? He never approached her directly, always sneaking around leaving notes. She did not play games, but did intimidate most men, and she was curious.

*Was he the one she noticed?*

*What did she have to lose?*

*Maybe he is just shy...that's romantic.*

She decided to go for it, but now had to change her outfit. She didn't have a costume to hide behind anymore. She tore through her closet looking for something appropriate for a first meeting deciding on a tailored black skirt with a nice low, but not too revealing white blouse. She also, of course, had to re-apply her make-up and re-adjust herself. As she finally approached the bar, he turned to greet her.

Sweet Jesus, it was him.



*Sawbill Pines* by Bonnie Hugley

## Winter #6

*by Matthew Spillum*

Dog walkers shiver  
in bundled starts, fitful stops  
gifts are left for spring.



## Strange Currencies

*by Kristin Payne*

Canoeing through the canyon,  
sun shines false security  
and we dress in purchased warmth.

Nature sings her song of Spring  
yet naked, gnarled branches  
still whisper words of Winter.

Hum of wind's dull harmony  
with the rushing river's rapids  
is consumed by our silence that  
eats at my ears.

Our innocent paddles  
anger hibernating waters.

It is hard to distinguish  
if we are fighting  
the current  
or  
if we are fighting  
each other.



## The Over/Under: A Lesson in Exaggeration

by Josiah Titus

The Over:

I was cooking dinner the other evening when I found a crack in the kitchen wall. Of course, I immediately dropped everything I was doing and ran from the room, yelling, "Get out! Get out! Evacuate! Rapido! Vomanooose!" My family came quickly, like we practiced, and I filled them in as we kicked through the front door dove from the front step, rolling into the front lawn. My son, who has always been a bit too sensitive, began to cry. "It's all going to come down, isn't it daddy? Isn't it?" I had to think quickly. I whipped out my cell phone and speed dialed the federal government. "A crack," I said. "Yes, a crack." A Blackhawk was circling our house within minutes. I communicated with the pilot through hand gestures. "Ten four," he said over the copter's p.a. I saluted him and gestured back, "Go with God." I held my wife and son in my arms as the special ops team disappeared into the house through the chimney. The situation was hairy, to say the least. But nineteen grueling hours later, the team emerged through the front door with sweaty brows and an empty tub of Spackle. "The crack's been neutralized," the tired captain said between pants. "I repeat. *Haw*. The crack's. *Haw*. Been. *Haw*. Neutralized." We were almost a day older and totally relieved. "Thank you," my wife said. "God bless you," I said. "God bless this house."

The Under:

I was cooking dinner the other evening when I found a crack in the kitchen wall. I didn't think anything of it, but a moment later I was setting the table and felt a draft. I took a step back and discovered that the living room had fallen away and had spilled into the front yard. "Nuts!" I exclaimed, looking back to the table. Soup was never going to be enough—I needed a salad. I had to think quickly. I threw a bag of mixed greens and some strawberries in with a creamy peppercorn dressing. I called my wife and kids to the table and felt the floor shift. We said Grace. "Be careful," I said, "the soup is still hot." The dining room ceiling began to split apart and bits and pieces chalky plaster were sprinkling our food and heads. I was using my fork to extract a fleck from my soup when my wife asked how my day had been. "My day?" I said. And then, before I could say another word, the chandelier snapped from its place above us and fell on the table, giving our utensils and nerves a rattle. My son, bless his heart, kindly offered to remove the chandelier from the table. As he struggled with it, I looked up at the hole in the ceiling and let out a sigh. "My day?" I said again. "Oh, it was fine. How was yours?"



*Roberta* by Clint Weathers

## Josiah Titus, Man of Letters

*Matthew Spillum*

The chill of the moor seeped in around the velvet curtains lining my carriage as we slipped over the cobbles toward the stern, imposing elegance of Hawthorn Manor, the Metropolitan State Alumni Club's hallowed mansion. The horse clattered to a halt as I looked up at the stately site of so many recent revels. But this night was for business. I called for my driver to see whether Mr. Josiah Titus was within.

As my driver walked off to the service entrance, I mused about Mr. Titus. He had preceded me into alumni status, and had gone on to Hamline University's fine Creative Writing MFA program. He had served, as I had, as an associate editor of our dear alma mater's excellent literary arts journal, Haute Dish. In fact, he had been one of the people most responsible for my joining that august cultural bellwether. I waited for my driver to return. When he did, I descended from my brougham and swept swiftly to the iron and oak door of the Alumni Club.

There was no question of sending a current student for the interview. Hawthorn Manor is a pleasure open only to alumni, and so I was given the assignment. I relished the chance to catch up with Mr. Titus. It had been some time since our last conversation. My overcoat safely stowed, I followed the doorman (a pitiable wretch from the University of Minnesota, forced into servitude by spiraling tuition costs) to the Clint Weathers Lounge, one of the most intimate drawing rooms on the grounds, well appointed with plush burgundy leather chairs and a large fireplace surrounded on all sides by books. My subject rose from his place at the fireside and warmly shook my hand. He cut, as always, a dashing figure, with his six-foot frame smoothly enveloped in a brushed velvet smoking jacket. The firelight played upon his singular white eyebrow and strong jaw. A Metro man, through and through. Josiah and I exchanged the customary pleasantries and settled in to the work at hand with a snifter of Hawthorn Manor's house cognac. Naturally, we began at the beginning. Where, I wanted to know, had the writing bug first bitten?

Born March 14, 1979 to a "recovering hippie mom," Josiah had been home-schooled until high school. One of the central tenets of this experience was breakfast while being read to. Josiah was deeply affected by his heavy exposure to the printed word in those formative years. Growing up in a house literally crammed with overflowing bookcases, he remembers trying to count all the books. "There were a thousand, easy. I picked a book out, and looking at the spine, I could see the words that I knew were the name of the book and then other words, a name. I realized that someone wrote that book, and I remember thinking 'I want to do that.'"

This dream would be postponed, though. Through high school, English was Josiah's worst subject. He found it "too structured, and I didn't like what I was writing." He kept his writing dreams submerged still more at Trinity Lutheran College in Seattle, where he spent two years majoring in Theology. The influence of his wife Jamie, whom he married in 2002, finally led him to Metropolitan State in May of 2004. "I told her one day that I wanted to be a writer. I hadn't told anyone that. She just said 'I know.' She even signed me up for Metro classes." While there, Josiah honed his quirky wit and subtle satiric sensibilities. His first piece in Haute Dish, "Rapture Leaves Rome's Cats Unfed" appeared in the Spring 2005 issue.

The following summer produced two published pieces, "The Piano Will Fall On Your Head," published in Double Dare Press, and "You Were Like This," in the Rake Magazine. Both stories are written in second person point-of-view, and illustrate how that difficult perspective can be effective. Leaning forward, snifter in hand, he noted "it was the summer of second person stories for me, though I'm not that crazy about second person. It's hard not to sound preachy or accusing. Sometimes, you have to work on certain aspects of writing, certain tools, to get comfortable with them."

At Hamline, Josiah works on everything from flash fiction to his current class, The Novel. "We write ten pages a week or more, not a lot of analysis. Each session, the characters get more interesting. That's been my latest epiphany; I sit down and let the characters take me where they want to go." With flash fiction, on the other hand, the central epiphany was governed by the two-page limit. "You have to decide the theme, the deep level, in the pre-write. Getting the deeper level established before writing allows the story an inner compass." Such epiphanies mark the progress of the writer as a craftsperson, an idea central to Josiah's understanding of writing and school. With a glance to the rich walnut bookshelves, he expanded on his idea of writer-as-crafter. "There are mechanical aspects of writing. Point of view, style, theme, tense: school is for learning where you are as a craftsperson. You have to work at it, to show up every day."

In addition to his studies, Josiah teaches writing at the Courage Center. "I really just answered an ad in the Loft Newsletter. They needed someone to teach their adult writing program... to start it, really." His two classes (Beginning and Advanced Writing) each meet once a week. Josiah noted that the classes took some time to figure out and he continually works on the curriculum. He paused at that, looking thoughtfully into some far corner of the room, and then spoke again: "One of the biggest challenges in teaching a community writing course is that you have writers of all different levels. I wanted to create classes that would be challenging to all the students." Leaning back into the shadows of his plush armchair, he continued; "as writers, as people, my students have a lot to say. My job is to give them an opportunity; you have to find a way to bring out that voice. They are the most generous students ever. They are grateful and work as hard as they can." The slight smile picked out by firelight told me he regarded his classes at Courage Center to be a labor of love.

At the same time, Josiah works on improving himself as a writer. He noted that working on a novel has expanded his idea of what he is capable of. While “short stories are more academically expected,” the underpinnings of the process remain the same for any kind of writing. “I’m beginning to realize that it isn’t a matter of forcing a specific page count, but letting the work come to me.” When that isn’t happening, he dives into the works of others. “The best thing you can do is pick up a favorite book and start reading. When I’m stuck, I grab one of Steve Martin’s books.” Our Guest Alumni Editor considers a sense of humor to be integral to being a writer. “I try not to take writing more seriously than it deserves. Art is art. If you want to change the world, pick up some tools and help someone get drinking water, build a house. You should write because you love to write.”

As the last mellow drafts of fragrant cigar smoke mingled with the warm essence of cognac swirling from the snifters, I leaned into the embrace of the rich leather chair and nodded at my fellow alumnus’ sage words. How fortunate, I thought, that the current Haute Dish staff would be able to benefit from his wisdom and gentlemanly mien. How truly blessed they would feel, the haggard, pale, toner-stained staffers, gathered as though to a comforting bonfire around his fine silk and velvet. I found his lingering warmth comforting still as I clambered into the velvet interior of my town brougham, signaling the driver to home.



## Lagging behind my father

*by John Lee Clark*

as he revisited the North Carolina School for the Deaf at Morgantown, 1996

I lingered on the hill  
where my father often walked  
as a boy, perhaps daydreaming

just like I was, eyes  
deep in their sockets  
so not to see too much.

Then my eyes peered out  
of their sweet recess  
to see the sidewalk ahead

no longer carrying my father.  
So I ran, my feet pounding  
the sloping squares

of muted light bridging  
over the swell of land  
that suddenly became air.

My surprised legs floundered  
then wheeled mysteriously  
as I swam through sky,

somersaulting once, again,  
my fingers brushing  
concrete as a heel bumped

against the railing  
of the stairs leading down  
to where my father stood waiting.

His mouth opened  
as I somehow landed,  
staggering but still standing

as his first son, eyes  
slowly peering out again  
after a dream just lived.



## Open Wounds

by James Byrne

Brian didn't even know the bride or the groom. He was on his way out of town to do some rock climbing that morning when his sister, Kaila, asked him to drop off a wedding gift for her friend Katherine. Now he was being blamed for the whole mess.

Kaila handed him a big box in silver wrapping with white bows.

"Why can't you drop it off?" Brian said.

"There are certain complications that I don't want to talk about," Kaila said. "Katherine lives right on the way." She shoved him out the door.

Brian really didn't know Katherine. She was three grades ahead of him, but he remembered what they used to call her and what she was known for. He was curious to see who the lucky guy was.

Brian walked up the steps of Katherine's house and rang the bell. The door swung open and there she was. Her messy black hair fell on her shoulders; some of it was tucked behind one ear. Her eyes were reddish and puffy. A sleeveless embroidered top made her slender upper body look muscular. See through white cotton pants gave anyone who wanted to, a delicious view. He was weak in this regard, so he did. She captured him. A casual, slightly open stance was all it took. He lost his breath and blushed. She enjoyed his attention.

"So, you're Kaila's little brother?" Katherine said.

Brian cleared his throat. "Yes."

"You certainly have grown up."

"Well, here's your present."

Katherine's eyes swelled with tears. Her face puckered and turned red. She covered her face with both hands let out a yelp and that seemed to calm her.

"I'm okay. Really," she said, and disappeared into the house. The door was left wide open.

Brian hesitated, and then went in with the present. He stood in the middle of the living room and waited.

Katherine called from the next room. "Put the present on the table and please shut the door."

If he put it down on the table his errand would be over and he would have to leave. He elbowed the door shut and hung on. Katherine returned wearing big sunglasses. She perched on the edge of the sofa. He joined her. Air whooshed out of the puffy cushions and he sank downward. Anything he wanted to say, which was very little to begin with, was forgotten during his descent. Katherine sneered at his predicament.

"How's Kaila?" she said.

"Kaila?"

"Kaila. How is she?"

"She's ah... fine."

The phone rang and she sprang up and ran to the kitchen. He leaned back and closed his eyes. He couldn't remember whether she was wearing underpants or not. Glass shattered in the kitchen. It sounded substantial. Not a small juice glass or even a water pitcher but maybe a window or a mirror.

"Katie?" he called. That name didn't sound right to him. He wondered what the hell was going on. Was the wedding really tomorrow?

"Hello, is everything okay in there?" he shouted. No reply, just silence. He thought he heard crying so he rolled off the sofa and went into the kitchen.

A window was broken. Slivers and sparkles of glass were everywhere. Katherine rinsed her hand and wrist under running water and cried. Brian walked toward her with the present still in his arms and stepped on her sunglasses, smashing them to bits. He pretended not to notice.

"What happened? Are you okay?" he asked.

She wrapped her hand in a towel. "Follow me," she said.

She marched into her bedroom and Brian followed. They sat on the bed and he hugged the silver wrapped present.

"He's gone," she reported, "he's just... gone."

Brian flipped the box onto the bed behind him. "Is your hand okay?"

They looked at each other for the first time.

"Want to see?" she said.

She peeled away the towel. Some of the fabric strands stuck to her white skin. She tugged and they snapped off. Jagged gashes ran from her fingers down across her palm and through her wrist. Bones were visible. Blood oozed. Katherine and Brian hovered over the mangled skin and exposed tissue. Something private was shared.

Their eyes met again and something passed between them. They were the only two who saw the damage. She allowed him to look. He found a clean towel and wrapped her hand in a tight bundle.

"He left me," she whispered.

"Oh," Brian said.

She screamed some really loud non-words mixed in with hysterical laughter, all jumbled together. He stood by. She flopped on the bed. The closeness he felt when they were looking at her wound disappeared.

"Maybe I should have another look. I've had some medical training," he suggested.



*Wannabe* by Ian Aizman

"Give me your most sincere diagnosis," she said. She sat up and opened the towel. He sat down next to her and looked at it. He felt the closeness again and could tell she felt it too because of her willingness. Blood drained down her hand and she closed the towel. It wasn't too long before she opened it again. She drew him in and relished her power. He liked the intimacy. Their eyes were glued to her wounds.

Katherine covered it with the towel and the moment passed. They looked in different directions.

"Do you know what they used to call me?" she said.

"No... what do you mean?"

"In high school."

"I didn't know you in high school."

"I know you didn't know me in high school, but did you ever hear what they used to call me?"

"No. I'd better put a bandage on this," he said.

"They had a lot of names for me. Each one hurt. Do you want to touch me?"

"Is there a first aid kit around?"

"There is no first aid kit anywhere," she answered.

She opened the towel and they looked at her wound, like it was their special secret. Their closeness returned. Brian closed the towel and held her.

"Have I lost enough blood yet to die?"

"You're not going to die."

"Tell me a story," she said. "That will make me feel better."

"A story?"

"Tell me story about yourself," Katherine said.

"Well, I, ah..."

"My ex-boyfriend, ex-fiancé, ex-shithead, had a thing for your sister," she said.

"I'm kind of out of the loop in terms of Kaila's love life," Brian said.

Katherine jumped to her feet. "Love life? What the hell is that supposed to mean? Love life?"

"It's just a figure of speech."

"Were they fooling around?" she said.

"I have no idea. No. They weren't."

Katherine winced in pain and grabbed her injured hand. Brian stood to help her.

"Hey, take it easy. Sit down."

"Do you want to marry me tomorrow instead?"

"I'm going rock climbing this weekend."

Katherine burst into tears.

"Katie Hole is no longer engaged. I'm so stupid."

Brian sat her down on the bed and comforted her.

"It's okay. You'll be all right."

She sobbed. "Katie Bang wants to die. I'm so fucking worthless."

"No you're not and I don't want you to die. Come on Katherine Wonderful, let me take you to the ER. You need some stitches."

"Stitches hurt," she and wiped her tears.

"They invented Novocain years ago. I'll make sure they give you some."

Katherine relaxed and leaned on Brian. He held her.

"Everything hurts. Everything," whispered Katherine.

"I know. I know. Let's go," Brian said.

He helped her up and they walked toward the door.

"What did you call me?"

"Katherine Wonderful."

She smiled. "Tell me a story about Katherine Wonderful."



*Hipsters in Love* by Clint Weathers

## Gothic City Street

by Courtney Huber

That night I walked the gothic city street  
past a backlit costume shop window  
blood-red roses pinned to a wedding gown,  
seemingly floating, draped over invisible shoulders,  
pearlescent beads and the wet sheen of white silk  
stark against the black-velvet background  
a cursory glance and then away, as if my ringless fingers  
somehow shrieked out, here is an unclaimed heart,  
barren and naked and shamed,  
I shove my frozen fingers under my armpits,  
and farther on down the cracked concrete sidewalk,  
the reassuring comfort of spiritual simplicity:  
terra cotta Buddhas placed on fringed scarves  
with red bead strings draped over carven fat folds  
surrounded by floppy petal lotus flowers  
antique ivory infused with a pinched-cheek pink  
my rapt gaze diverted by the bubble-cackles of  
stiletto-tripping, gape-mouthed girls who slink past  
elbows linked and laughing with paint-splattered lips  
their long, odalisque throats bared to the sky  
smooth like the necks of reclining violins  
too tightly strung and overplayed, snapped,  
each note of laughter a chalkboard-scratch scream,  
a vaudeville act of intoxicated sexuality  
advertising their gorgeous danger  
and I wrap my arms around myself, feeling the double cold  
of icy midwinter and the hostile female freeze  
as I sidle past them, angling my shoulders away  
they sniff the cold air, and at me,  
my breaths are ghost-clouds, it begins to snow,  
I am a ghost as I duck my head,  
trying to keep warm but succumbing to shiver-tremors  
because nothing can warm a granite statue  
relegated to cold and solitary seclusion—  
snow falls upon the spiked gates that surround me.



*Stainless Steel* by Stephanie Kamerud

## An Easter Poem

by Courtney Huber

*"Within the memory of man, [penny-loaves] were thrown from the church steeple to be scrambled for..." – John Brand, Observations on Popular Antiquities, 1813*

The children stand outside Saint Peter's church  
On Easter Sunday, clothed in kitchen rags,  
A hundred pair of skyward gazing eyes  
That blink as raindrops fall from charcoal skies.

Their gazes fix upon the steeple cross  
Above the vicar's roped-off wooden stage;  
He stands there, bearing bread in silver pails  
His flowing robe as white as ocean sails.

The quiet hush gives way to wild shrieks  
As crusty loaves of bread are thrown to all  
But out of hundreds, one small child begs,  
Entangled under bramble-arms and legs.

And as they scramble like a pack of mutts  
In London gutters fighting for a bone,  
The vicar laughs and rubs his garnet ring  
Bestowed upon him by the pious king.



## Corporate Cleavers

by Misha Jameson

"June? Honey, I'm home."

"Hello, Ward. It's good to interface with you. Here's a nice Cosmotini to help you leverage some relaxation momentum."

"Thanks. It's been a rough day."

"Poor thing, you do look rejuvenation-challenged. Did you have to do a lot of strategic whiteboarding in your one-to-one today?"

"Yes. You know, Gary's resume was solid but he's not fitting into the team very well. He got pretty defensive when I encouraged him to get to know his co-workers better."

"Sounds prohibitively non-synergistic. Doesn't he understand that as the only FTE in a group of PTEs, proactive relationshiping doesn't just happen out-of-the-box?"

"Apparently not. You would think he'd try a little harder since he's got the best job in the group, wouldn't you? I don't see him make much of an effort, though."

"Well dear, I hope it trickles down holistically into a non-issue. But enough about the office. Your chronogistics are perfect; I was just about to implement dinner."

"Terrific – I'm starving. What's on the menu?"

"I'm visualizing an entrée-ified Pasta Primavera."

"Just veggies? Honey, that meeting with Gary really took it out of me; I'm pretty hungry."

"I comprehend your stress-induced feature set, but we've had quite a few beef-based dining applications lately. I thought I'd transition us to a new vegetarian paradigm. We could both stand to architecture a little weight reductionizing."

"You have a point, dear. So, how was your day?"

"Well, there's been a downturn in the quarterly domestic engineering budget. The aquatic infrastructure administrator predictionates that the cost-basis to replace the malfunctioning human-waste disposal device will be in excess of \$500. That's for the new best-of-breed low-flow technology, of course."

"500 dollars for a new toilet? That sure seems like a lot. Although, when you consider the alternative..."

"Exactly. Social networking during the holidays is going to be a broad-based challenge if our invitationed co-participants can't use the facilities 60/60/24/7."

"True enough. Well, if it's not one thing, it's another, as they say."

"My thought-pattern, precisionistically. And now...dinner has been orchestrated. Let's masticate and digestify, designated life-partner."

"With pleasure, dear. Thanks for cooking."



*sunflower 1* by Misha Jameson



## Stop Looking

by Carl Andrew Frie

"It looks so pure," Mai said.

She held her right wrist up and admired the jade bracelet in the light, sliding it from her wrist to her forearm and back again.

"Should I tell him it was a gift?" she said.

Then she held up her left hand and looked at the diamond on her finger. The stone shimmered in the orange light of the citronella torch.

We were sitting on the patio of the bar next to my hotel. It was around three in the morning and the humidity still had itself wrapped



around everything. The *cyclos* that slowly buzzed the streets all day now sat dormant at the end of the block, the drivers in the front passenger seat.

"It was good today, wasn't it?" she said.

"Yes," I said, "it was."

But it hadn't been. I had been thinking about him and that damn ring the whole time.

"Let's have a few more before we go back." She squeezed my thigh under the table.

I turned away from her and looked up at the dried banana leaves that were sown together for a roof, blocking out the glimmering night sky. Slender green geckos hung upside down, their pink tongues lashing out at lazy flies.

She leaned back in her chair and ran her hands through her long black hair. Strands clung to her neck until she shook them off. My eyes followed the curve of her neck and its soft descent to her shoulders.

"Listen," I said, "what we talked about earlier..."

"Aren't you glad you're with me?" She pulled her white skirt over her knees, up to her thigh. Her skin was dark from the days we spent on the boat.

"I'd be lost without you."

Nearby a baby cried out.

"You're having fun aren't you?" She examined the ring on her finger and spun it around so the stone wasn't visible.

"Of course," I said.

Across the street a woman shouted in Vietnamese. Her voice bounced off the cement buildings and the paved alley, echoing up into the night.

"I'm not ready yet," Mai said.

She slid the bracelet off dropped it into her purse.

"We've gone over this before," I said.

A waitress dressed in a tiger beer soccer jersey and mini skirt came over to our table. The pitch of the baby's cry escalated.

"I have to talk to him again," she said.

"You said you wanted to leave."

Suddenly there was a light thump and a slap. It came again. And again. And again. I looked over and saw a baby boy, naked, lying in the street. Its hair was thin and light brown, its ashen grey skin stretched tight over its ribs and bones. A woman charged out into the street, shouting and waving her fists. The waitress turned to look. Mai snapped her fingers and the waitress turned back, her mouth frozen in an "O." Mai continued the order. The woman ran up to the baby and kicked it. The baby flopped over, and rolled a few feet, wailing. The woman yelled again, her face twisted and red, framed by a shock of short choppy black hair. Spittle flew from her lips. The waitress scribbled Mai's order and hurried back inside the café.

"What the fuck is going on?" I said.

Mai took a cigarette out of her purse and lit it.

"It's a fucking baby," I said.

A few lights came on in the neighborhood.

"It's nothing," Mai said. "The kid's a bastard."

There was another crack of flesh on flesh.

"Hey!" I stood up and pointed at the woman.

Mai grabbed my wrist and pulled me back into my seat.

"What are you, some kind of hero?" Her face curled into a sneer, then she snorted and returned to her cigarette.

The woman walked up to the child and slapped it again. It stopped crying.

"Stop looking." Mai blew smoke in my face.

The baby's breathing was ragged and uneven. The woman picked up the baby and



*4 Doors* by Clint Weathers

yelled in its face. Its pale arms and legs hung limp as the woman raged. Its gaunt head wobbled about on its neck, its face was streaked with dry tears.

"Stop looking," Mai said.

The lights in the neighborhood went dark. Doors closed. The woman looked over at me. Our eyes locked.

"Stop looking," Mai said. "Just ignore it."

The woman jabbed her chin at me, tucked the baby under her arm like a package, and stormed back into her house. The waitress brought our drinks and a plate of *banh cuon*. Mai gulped her cocktail down, then plucked one of the rice rolls off the dish with her chopsticks, dunked it into the fish sauce and tore off a chunk.

I laid in bed sweating. The darkness of night was fading into the gray of morning. Mai laid next to me asleep, naked except for her diamond ring. I could still hear that woman's voice and the smack of the baby hitting the concrete.

I crawled out from under the bed net and went out onto the balcony. The air was moist and thick, still holding the heat. The sun was inching up over the bay, slowly igniting the waters and the fishing boats puttering out to sea. In the street below, a skinny boy wearing dirty red shorts and rubber flip-flops pushed a flat cart piled high with scraps of metal. He leaned into the handle of the cart. His legs pumped slowly like pistons in a dying engine, carrying him forward, step by step.

He stopped at a pile of newspapers on the sidewalk and pushed them into the street. Underneath was an old man, lying naked on the concrete, face up. His head was shaved and dull. His bones pushed at his leathery skin. The boy slapped the old man on the cheek but there was no response. The boy said something to him and kicked him in the ribs. The old man still didn't move. The boy left him and returned to his cart, marching towards the rising sun.

Mai came up behind me and pressed her body onto mine. Her skin was cool and soft. I thought about the days we spent on the boat, swimming in the ocean and sleeping in the shade of the cabin. The whole time we had pretended the engagement ring on her finger was from me. She wrapped her arms around me and kissed my neck.

I stood there looking at the old man, dead in the street. I thought about the woman beating the baby and the nights Mai and I had spent drinking, dancing, fucking, high on ecstasy. I thought about what she had said to me. She was right. I wasn't a hero. I wasn't going to save anybody from anything. So it was best not to look. It was best not to think. She would never leave him, never leave with me, because it didn't matter. Nothing in this life matters. The world is buried in shit. So it's best not to think.

I turned around and kissed her, pressing her body into mine. We stumbled back into bed, shoving and tearing at each other. Afterwards, as she showered, I dressed and packed my bag. In the hallway I heard her voice, calling me. But I didn't look back. It didn't matter. Nothing matters.



Chula Vista Barstool, 9A.M.

*By Nate Thomas*

Old devils lurk these winding neural seas;  
some synapse forty thousand fathoms deep  
unleashes creaking skulls hard bent to lees,  
who duck before the scythe's quick-slewing sweep.

Old ghosts about the crippled yardarm flail  
as thinning ribs in abject hunger rake  
and tooth the blood down sky in ragged sail;  
across the deck skeletal waters break.

The sea each rotted timber swells and creaks,  
the rigging stripped in violent wind laid low.  
The crew lets moan: "It's been this way for weeks,  
With neither help from god, nor from below."



*Self-Portrait With Loading Dock* by Clint Weathers

But yet there's hope: I've sixteen hours left,  
To drink – and drink – these goddamned ghosts to death.

# Salinas

by Nate Thomas

*Here we part.*

You will drive back to Salinas and pray your bus does not break down again like it did at that gas station at the foot of the Golden Gate where we stopped to ask directions because we became so confused by the arrows and ended up someplace else—where the transient tapping on the window did not know either he only wanted smokes but he tried to help “The Golden Gate? Yeah, man, I think it’s right over.....Wait man, you don’t want to go there, just go down to Haight Street. Just go down to Haight Street, man,” and we thanked him for the advice then rolled the window back up and separated ourselves from the emptying face that continued to stare right on through while calculating additional smokes and when he tapped on the glass again we gave him a few more Camels and he left satisfied and we joked and we laughed but then could not get the bus started again until those kids to whom I’d given money—to whom I’d given money when barely asked—to whom I’d given money and dispensed it with the generosity of a suicide— until those kids (we weren’t any older, were we?) happily assisted with a push out of the parking lot—a push just long enough for the engine to turn over and catch and separate the rear of the bus from their trailing hands and then we were back on the highway and all the signs made sense this time and the bridge was right there right where it should be this time stretching calmly like sleep walker arms over the black water of the night silent bay—and if time could have stopped right there in the bus on the bridge with you at the wheel and me in the passenger seat and Marie with Magnolia in her arms—if time could have stopped right there in the cab like that moment before we left when we traded hats you wearing my sailor’s cap and I your ball cap both smiling back into the camera for Marie—if time could have stopped and stayed stopped just like that I would have been content to be suspended over the bay forever



*Passing the Time* by Didi Alamsaputra

but the wheels kept turning and the wheels carried us forward and the wheels took us away from your one room apartment in Salinas—away from nights huddled in the bathroom with your guitar trading songs while trying not to wake Marie or the baby away from pancakes without syrup or the turkey you had saved from Thanksgiving your first holiday bonus from your first real job—the turkey that we accidentally cooked upside down in the pan until it was dry so dry but we ate it anyway and it tasted good because it was ours and the wheels brought us away from there and the wheels brought us toward the sentry at the gate who let us through without a pass since it was too late to get one and he could read it in our faces that we had come too far and now we have arrived at our destination where now you must leave and now I must stay.

*Here we part.*

You leave me no teary goodbyes just loss and silence and the bus like a time capsule in which you disappear into memory—your tail-lights slowly fading while I stand on the curb staring with my two sea-bags—one full of uniforms and the other full of all the books that I could not leave behind—and I can think of nothing but only the one thing the thing I wanted to tell you—the thing I would have said all along but knew not how to say.

*Your honor outlasts three emperors.*

*With excerpts from “Farewell Once More to My Friend at Feng Chi Station”*

*Tu Fu (c. 750)*



## Art Purchase Award

by Misha Jameson

The creation and appreciation of art are two unique traits of humankind. When you gather talented people in a university setting, it stands to reason that there is some very good art being made, and an audience who wants to see it. Enter the Art Purchase Award Program at Metropolitan State University, an annual competition for student and alumni artists. Erica Rasmussen, CWA Associate Professor and resident fine-arts guru, created the award.

Inspired by a similar program at the U of M, Erica sees the Art Purchase Award as a boon for both the artists and the school. The campus is made more interesting and inspiring, and the university gains a permanent art collection showcasing the work of its own students and alumni. The artists (anyone, not just those in the Studio Arts minor) learn how to photograph their artwork, create a slide portfolio for professional presentation and display a piece in a public space. They also have something really interesting to add to their resumes, and they get paid. This year two pieces will be selected, awarding \$850 each.

The Art Purchase Award is funded by the generosity of many individuals at Metropolitan State as well as several campus organizations, including the Alumni Association, the Department of Communication, Writing and the Arts, Academic Affairs, the Student Senate and VP of Academic Affairs William Lowe and Pamela Lowe. The selection committee consists of students, staff and faculty drawn from these groups, and the appointments change from year to year. This gives the award a dynamic perspective. Already hallmarked by a diverse aesthetic, the collection will continue to develop this characteristic over time.

The collection currently contains the six artworks listed below; this year's selection process is underway. Located throughout all three campuses, the works chosen for this award are more than decoration. Michele Peine's quilt entitled "Phalen Heights Park," which hangs in the registration lobby of Founder's Hall, was inspired by a school project she was working on. It features portraits of individual homes around the park and has a strong sense of time and place. Erica's vision is to enliven each of Metro's underground classrooms with a piece of art whose ideas and content inspire thought and conversation. She hopes these rooms will eventually be known by the artwork they house. How nice to attend a class in "Still Life with Oranges" rather than Midway D.

This year's winners will be announced in April; the deadline for next year's competition will be in March 2008. For more information on this and other art opportunities at Metropolitan State, contact Erica Rasmussen in the Department of Communication, Writing and the Arts, and keep your eye on The Catalyst for updates.

### Fine Arts Purchase Awards:

- 2002 Judy Dion Bracci "Some Discord" Minneapolis Lower Lobby
- 2003 Marlene Tupy Gaboury "I Wish You Were Here" Midway Computer Lab
- 2004 Karen M. Marcheses "Triptych #1" Library & Learning Center Periodicals
- 2005 Timothy Carroll "Remembering to Forget" Midway P
- 2006 Michele Peine "Phalen Heights Park" Founder's Hall



Award winner: *Phalen Heights Park* by Michele Peine

## A Few Questions With a Winner

by Emily Urness

*What's it like to have your artwork purchased and on display?*

When researching the Art Purchase Award, that's what I wanted to know. So I typed up a few questions for the 2005 co-winner, Timothy Carrol (Michele Peine also won for her quilt entitled, [Phalen Heights Park](#)). Carrol won the prestigious award, got paid for two paintings, and holds the honor of having his work on proud display. Check out the CWA office building at the midway campus to see his work. Carrol has moved on to study at the University of Minnesota and was kind enough to e-mail his answers and more.

*What was your major at Metro?*

Liberal Arts

*Was this the first sale of your artwork?*

No. Actually, I've sold other works outside of an academic setting. I also won scholastic awards for painting at the University of California, Sacramento (Peysen Prize in Painting and the RW Witt Art Scholarship—both for painting).

*What advice would you give others thinking about submitting?*

Submit! Really, just do it! The purchase award at Metro came as a complete and wonderful surprise. Just follow whatever instructions you're given (slides, DVD, paperwork) and submit. If you continue to submit, you will be heard eventually.

*Are there any classes you enjoyed most while at Metro and would recommend?*

I really enjoyed working with Erica in the Gallery Internship program. I also enjoyed the galleries and museums class, and not simply because they were engaging. I learned a lot and became more aware of the arts in the Twin Cities. Another high point was a comparative religion class I took at the old (pre-MCTC) Minneapolis campus.

*What do you think about the Twin Cities art community?*

I think the Twin Cities has a well-educated and comprehensive art community. There have been great strides accomplished with Outsider Art through the "Outsiders and Others Gallery."

The gallery just closed after four years, but its director, Yuri Araj (pronounced: A-Rice) will soon curate other shows in the cities. He also teaches art to mentally handicapped individuals. His gallery was an important spoke in the wheel of art exhibition. He'll be going strong under his new program, "Placement."

I think there is a great mixture of galleries and exhibition opportunities, not to mention grant application opportunities in the Twin Cities.

There are also amazing educational opportunities, not just at MCAD or the U of M. In fact, Metro is especially fortunate to have Erica Rassmussen at the helm of their gallery. She is truly one of a kind. She is also one of the best artists I've had the pleasure of knowing.

*What are you currently studying at the U of M?*

I am STILL studying! I am working on getting my BA in art studio FINALLY accomplished. I've had quite a trek. Three transfers including my move here in 2004. Transferring can set one back, actually. I accumulated close to 20 units toward what would've been my masters in Sacramento, but my relocation dissolved those credits.

I keep looking forward, though. I have more than enough units to graduate, just not the ones that fit into the U's program perfectly, so, I have been backtracking.

*What's it like knowing that different people everyday at Metro see your work?*

That is a great question because the purpose of visual art is certainly in hopes that others might view one's work.

I can only hope that the work might give a viewer an opportunity to reflect and have some visual enjoyment. My good friend Mollie Slade is finishing her degree work in social work at Metro. She mentioned how, one day in a lecture, it dawned on her that the [art] piece that had been living happily in her lecture room was mine! We both had a laugh at that.

*Any last words?*

I have been working with the [Soap Factory](#) lately and they have some really great shows lined up for the summer and fall. Check 'em out! Also, I encourage all students to take on internships, especially in the arts. Interning gave me many opportunities that I never would have realized.

## Chocolate Polka Dots

by Debra Kelly

Mmmm. Toasty doggies. Toasty doggies and that icky green jello with the carrots in it. You know what color green and orange makes? Nope, not gray. It's a real yucky color that's good if it's mud, but bad if it's supposed to be food. You can't even see the orange 'til you cut into it, if you *can* cut into it. Forks bounce off that stuff!! Jello should have fruit in it, not vegetables! It's so annoying!

But the toasty doggies will be good, especially the cheese one. They give you one cheese and one mustard. I don't know why, they just do. And if you try to ask for both cheese, Ferocious yells at you and says "You get what you get and you don't have a fit!" She says that all the time. Brian can do her really well. He kinda screws up his face and wrinkles his nose and talks in a funny growly voice.

So I take my tray and go to sit down at the girls' table with my class. "Move over Sue, I gotta talk to Debbie." I say. She skooches over and I step over the bench and sit down real carefully. My legs still hurt from playing dodge ball at gym. It's not fair, the girls have to wear skirts and the boys throw way harder! It's so annoying! I have big red marks all over my legs. That's how you can tell if a boy likes you, he throws the ball at you really hard. I'm pretty sure Brian likes me. He hit me *really* hard three times today and he even called me 'monkey' once. So that's why I have to talk to Debbie. (Her name is Debbie and my name is Debbie and there's one more Debbie in my class. There are always extra Debbies in my class. Couldn't parents think of any other names back then? )

"Debbie", I kinda whisper so no one else can hear, "D'you think Brian likes me?"

"Well, Patty Johnson thinks he likes her." she whispers back just a little too loud, so I look and make sure no one else heard her. But, no, it's way too loud in the lunchroom.

"OK, PIPE DOWN EVERYONE!!" screams Ferocious. Ferocious? Oh yeah, she's the meanest lunch lady, the one who wears her hairnet pulled way down over her eyebrows. Brian named her that. Brian is SO cool! "IF I HAVE TO TELL YOU AGAIN, THERE WILL BE COMPLETE SILENCE!!" she screams again. So, of course, Brian has to do his Ferocious imitation....and gets caught! OK, Brian's funny, but sometimes he gets annoying, especially when he gets us all in trouble.

It's alright though; us girls know sign language. Okay, not *real* sign language, but different letters so we can still talk. Pretty soon I hear snickering at the boys table, but I can't see what's happening 'cause they're behind me. I sure hope they're not gonna get us into more trouble!

So, I'm right in the middle of trying to sign to Debbie how Brian doesn't like Patty, when I hear a gulp and a snort and all the boys start screaming laughter!! I turn around with the rest of the girls on my side of the table. I guess Brian musta been doing his very best Ferocious imitations. Billy Murphy is sitting across from him holding his milk carton with chocolate milk dripping from his nose. And Brian doesn't look cool anymore with chocolate milk polka dots all over his Doors t-shirt! We're never gonna be able to talk in lunch again!



*Gallant Shadows* by Ian Aizman



*City Skyway* by Didi Alamsaputra

## The Day Cherrie Winthrop was Born Again *by Suzanne Nielsen*

Cherrie Winthrop decided at the height of menopause  
What she really needed was total immersion of the Holy Spirit.  
At River's Trust Baptist Church one  
Palm Sunday morning she would take the plunge.

She'd prayed about her fear of water at previous dusk  
but fear still dampened her face and made her palms slippery.  
By dawn day of, Cherrie dug out of her closet  
her favorite Cleo sling backs, metallic white to match her gown.

At 10:00 am Monica Connelly sat at the organ playing  
"Nearer, My God, to Thee" as Cherrie's cue.  
The fishing sinkers she'd slipped inside the hem  
of her white gown were intended to weigh it down.

Alta Latessa's baptism last month previewed Fruit of the Loom's because she hadn't thought of sinkers.  
In addition Alta lost her footing on the third stair so at the last minute Cherrie super glued the Cleo's to the  
soles of her feet. Alta would be in the  
congregation, most likely in the front pew.

At 10:10am Cherrie embarked on her journey down those the six steps  
into the pool of water; her gown obeyed, and a cloth was placed over her face  
while she was immersed. When Cherrie rose again, waterproof makeup remained in place; a miracle like her second chance at life.

## An Ethical Man

by N. Jeanne Burns

As soon as I saw Didi Alamsaputra's photographs among the summer submissions, I knew we would publish some of his work. I also knew that our readers might be as interested to hear about his artistic process as I was.

Born in Jakarta, Indonesia, Alamsaputra came to the United States from 1999, following his sister to school in Charlotte, North Carolina then to Minnesota in 2005. He first studied photography for three years in junior high at the behest of his father, also a photography enthusiast.

"But I wasn't into it then. Until 2002 when my mother asked me to research digital cameras for my sister."

In 2004, Alamsaputra returned to Jakarta when his father died, and he worked in a commercial digital photography studio doing portraits of children. His mother was the studio manager and told the owner that he liked photography. The owner invited him to photograph a few models and hired him when she saw his skill.

Alamsaputra says that his photography has been compared to Alfred Stieglitz but he was unfamiliar with Stieglitz before his friend mentioned the late 1800's photographer. The comparison is an apt one. For instance, compare Alamsaputra's *If Silence Can Speak* to Stieglitz's *Icy Night* to see two photographers who can express deep human emotion without humans and who can express a sense of time, place and action in a still photograph.

Alamsaputra found his first photographic inspiration in *National Geographic* magazine. Now he admires Magnum photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Steve McCurry and David Alan Harvey. In particular, Alamsaputra admires McCurry because his photography is accessible.

"If you don't know anything about art, you still like McCurry's photographs," he said.

One notable difference between Alamsaputra's photographs and the photographs of the artists he admires is that Alamsaputra doesn't often photograph people.

"I think about the ethical question of photographing people. For instance, if I were to become famous for a photograph of someone, I would want to share some of that fame with the person I photographed."

He sometimes asks people for permission to photograph them, but he finds that it takes away from the photojournalistic quality he so admires in artists like Cartier-Bresson or Harvey.

Computer science keeps his attention at school, but Alampusatra dreams of being a lay-pastor back in Indonesia after he graduates. I just hope he continues taking pictures too.



*Straight Path* by Didi Alamsaputra





## Summer 2007 To-Do List

Spit-shine white shoes

Go to Costco to buy case of sunblock

Write, draw, paint, sculpt, photograph something fantastic

Work for Mosquito Control to get 10% discount on product

Submit to Haute Dish at [submit.hautedish@gmail.com](mailto:submit.hautedish@gmail.com)

Drop kids off at camp (finally!)

Pick up kids from camp and drop them off at Grandma's

Procrastinate creating something fantastic

Pick ticks off dog & cat & iguanas

Try not to get kicked off golf course for swearing

Schedule body wax for me and cat

Pack for week at Family Therapy Camp

Drop kids off the edge of the dock

Stop procrastinating and **SUBMIT to Haute Dish!**

**by Friday, July 20th!**

Show off your  
Creative  
Concoctions.

**Haute Dish:**  
visual art  
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fiction

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# Haute Dish

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Summer 2007

