

# C a r d i n a l   S i n s

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The fine arts and literature magazine of  
Saginaw Valley State University

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Produced by the students and staff of Saginaw Valley State University and published on campus by the Graphics Center, *Cardinal Sins* features art, photography, poetry and prose by members of the SVSU community, including alumni. All submissions are considered for publication. Selection is made by blind voting of the staff, who are excluded from receiving an award in any category.

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*\*Congratulations to the winners in their respective categories.*

*\*\*Congratulations to the winner of the Fall 2008 Cardinal Sins Slam-O-Rama.*

# Editor's Note

*"Art is what's left over after you've defined everything else."*

—Michael Vitale

Apparently, it's one of my official duties as editor to fill this space with some reflections on what I have learned. However, because I expect that you are less interested in my personal growth than in forging ahead to the art and literature on the following pages, I'll be as brief as possible. Editing this issue of *Cardinal Sins* has been—in a few words—exciting, exasperating, and, above all, a heck of a lot of hard work. I feel very fortunate to have been supported throughout the process by many talented individuals. The dedicated, creative people who study and work at SVSU make this institution extraordinary, and it is an honor for me to be able to attach my name to the result of these people's efforts. As you peruse this issue, I hope that you will share my sense of pride in being a part of SVSU's outstanding artistic and literary community and that you will be inspired to submit your own work for our Winter 2009 issue.

Matthew Falk

# Life beside the Sea

by Shiloh Slaughter

The fisherman, inside his house with too many windows,  
listens to the ocean in a conch shell given to him by a forgotten  
muse.

Outside these many windows, the muse is there among  
the people, occupying flickering flames in warm window sills,  
luring tired shadows that time has distributed to the wrong owners.  
Survival is the best motivator, sweeping the skinny along the shore  
in a pile of bad smells and doll-like eyes.

A dragonfly crawls inside a window, directing a million eyes  
like opposing winds. Just ride, having come from stiff stalks and  
abandoned caravans with wandering circus freaks lighting bonfires.

It comes, it stays, and it dries, becoming neat, collecting dust  
left in yesterdays.

Many dreams are traveled between muses inside one  
particular window, riding yellow kitchen squares of light. The  
fisherman sees only others' dreams, while everyone else sees only  
their own. The people have come to reclaim their sleeping shadows  
but find only dreams scattered throughout the dust collected.

The fisherman, crowded with dreams, finds the fly, hooks it,  
and steps outside. He has read somewhere of fly-fishing. Perhaps he  
could catch a dream, a dragon,

Something.

The ocean has dried and in its place is a desert. Drop-jaw  
wishing wells among the young and the poor, the old and the rich,  
amazed at the hairy fisherman. They jump at his hand bobbing in  
the air, treasure on a string, mankind's trash between teasing small  
fingers.

The fisherman sees farther.

Below sight,  
they are shrinking.

Up there catching light are the iridescent wings. A rainbow  
without rain. Sunrise is coming.

The happy man bobs his hand to the hungry orphans and  
shakes his head. One dream he yearns for, to feed his family of  
shadows.

He will build a ship. They will laugh at him. The rain will  
come. He dreamt it.



# What Birds Hear

by Libby Booth



Mixed Media on Cardboard

# Carving Love

by A. A. Nadeer



*Adobe Photoshop*

# Life Underneath

by Amanda Merrill

Strategic cracks on the ceiling,  
planned when dawns were young,  
create the shapes that form our lives  
(still and constant, familiar and strange).  
Our only stability, the old crumbling plaster,  
cautiously holds on above our heads,  
like upside-down prophetic tea leaves  
stuck to the bottom of an empty cup.  
The abstract bird looming in the corner,  
nearly kissing the wall, watches us and knows  
it is made up of cracks that are no longer new,  
just like you and me who lie beneath and breathe.

# Dishes

by Tyler Germain

She does the dishes. I read the newspaper. That's how it works. I come home from my job in customer service and, after a long day of paperwork and fielding complaints and answering phones and pretending I care about the fact that the forty-something woman on the other end didn't get the package she ordered, and promising that I will take care of it right away, I do pretty much the same thing after dinner, minus the phone. As long as I can make it through the comics page without finding anything too amusing, I can usually convince my wife that what she's saying matters to me. All I have to do is ask enough questions to make it seem like I'm paying attention to her story about how she ran into her cousin's husband at Wal-Mart and she still doesn't care much for him, but what I'm really interested in is whether or not Garfield is going to eat that cupcake that Jon just left on the counter. I bet he will. As long as I don't laugh, I can get through the evening just fine.

One night a few years back I burst out laughing because this moron from *The Far Side* was pushing with all his might on a door that said pull. The door also said something about being a school for smart kids or something. I swear it's a lot funnier in the picture. Anyway, she was going on and on about her mother and I started laughing like it was the funniest thing I'd heard in weeks. Of course the laughing was because of the comic—it really was the funniest one I'd seen in weeks—but she didn't know that because she thought I was listening to her. She was pissed. I mean really mad. She started asking me questions like am I listening to her and do I even care what she's talking about, scrubbing the greasy pan in front of her and trying to make it clean. I put the paper down so I could make eye contact. That's the thing, make eye contact and remember at least one important thing she said, and then back to the comics. Yeah, I told her, I didn't know what her mom's problem was, but maybe she should tell her how she feels about it.

Anyway, she's talking about her cousin's husband or whoever it was she ran into today. I only know this because I'm paying enough attention to bail my ass out of trouble if Jon walks in on Garfield eating the cupcake and I lose it again. That's what I do at work when I'm playing solitaire on my computer and listening to some guy from Brooklyn talk about how he was overcharged for shipping on a package I don't care about—I pay just enough attention to know what's going on. If I get really lucky, he'll ask to talk to my boss and I can transfer him while I move the nine of spades to the ten of hearts and flip over a new card.

Then something weird happens: she stops talking. All I can hear are her hands submerged in the water.

I stop reading and set the paper down and she's looking at me and she looks like she's about to cry and I ask her what's wrong and is everything okay. She says that I don't listen to her and I haven't listened to her for the past ten years. I'm caught. My wife says that she wants to know what happened to the man she married. I look back down at the paper and Garfield is trying not to get caught with half of a cupcake hanging out of his mouth and he's doing a better job at it than I am and I'm trying not to laugh.

She wipes her face with her hand, pulling it from the sink, and it leaves a streak of soapy water across her cheek. I get up and walk toward her and see that she is crying. I tell her that I'm sorry and that I had a long day and I'll fix everything. I'll be better, I promise, and I think she believes me because she hugs me when I say so. She tells me that she loves me and I tell her I know. I tell her I will do a better job from now on because that's what I tell the people on the phone and it seems to make them feel better. I tell her I can fix it. She says she doesn't think so and goes back to the sink and finishes cleaning the things at the bottom that she didn't get to yet. When she's done, she washes her hands and I tell her again that I'm sorry. She takes off her ring and sets it on the counter and I look at it while she walks away and I think I really messed up this time and if I were at work I would probably be hearing from my boss pretty soon.

One time I accidentally swore over the phone because I realized that the ace of diamonds was probably buried at the bottom of my biggest stack of cards and I had to start a new game because of it. The person on the line didn't like it when I called him a son of a bitch even though I was really talking to my computer screen. My boss didn't like it either.

I stand there for an hour letting it sink in that I probably won't be married for too much longer. I try to remember what it's like not to be married and don't do a very good job at it. I try to remember treating her differently than the people I talk to on the phone every day and do an even worse job at that. I try to figure out why I ever started treating her like that in the first place, and when, and can't determine either.

I do remember that I used to look at her when she spoke to me and that I used to listen, too. I remember that her voice used to sound excited and I was happy when I listened to her speak. I remember that she had a lock of hair that fell into her face and she would brush it away ever so lightly and smile when it happened and continue with the

conversation, and I would smile back because I was happy. I remember that I would answer her with real sentences and real questions and I cared about what she said and I tried my hardest to make her smile. I remember that she would put her hand on my knee while I was driving and I would put my hand on hers and wonder what it would feel like with a ring on her finger.

She walks back into the room and I remember why I'm standing there, staring at the ring I gave her almost ten years ago. I look up at her and her eyes look tired and all I can do is say nothing. She is still crying. I look at the ring on the counter and back at my wife and I go to her and take her hand in mine. Her hand is soft and warm and wet from her tears. I tell her how sorry I am. I mean it. She looks away from me. I hold her left hand with both of mine, one on top and one on the bottom. I apologize again and try to remember what her hand felt like with a ring on her finger. I can't remember.

# Jack Sparrow

by Erin Dukarski



Oil Paint

# Support

by Adam Baudoux



Color Photography



# The Fountain

by Kalum Meyers

It sits it stands it crouches  
—I can never find the right verbs anymore—  
It towers it rests it exists  
—No longer do poems work for me,  
they don't tell it true or slant  
or say nothing at all.  
They sit unperturbed and humble  
like Terri Schiavo, while classmates debate  
if they're even alive.  
The fountain sits on a throne of rust  
with no water to channel through its lips,  
useless like a poet with no audience.

But the fountain insists upon itself,  
the pool drained for winter,  
and I can't decide the poem I want to write.  
It hovers, a sulky spirit  
who cannot listen but reads lips  
and speaks Latin,  
who studies alchemy when  
even the trees turn away.  
It has a hundred other useless talents,  
buried in stony pockets,  
while it watches and waits, restless  
like the unceremonious ending of a poem.



# Casual Communication

by Holly Bird

The moral  
choice,  
a blazing light,  
becomes nothing more  
than an empty reflection—  
a vampiric illusion—  
when it looks  
into  
the mirror of desire.  
We can have  
sunsprinkled clouds,  
but  
we choose  
needles and thorns.  
And their pricks leave scars,  
mummified layers of conversation pieces,  
that tell stories of when we  
followed the siren's song  
into  
the beast's lair.

# White Headstone

by Britt Barnett

Babs O'Conner is headed towards me. Breasts down to her hips. They sway, synchronized. Today's muumuu a bright cotton floral print. I turn back to the weeds gripping the brick of the house.

"Honey, you've got some balls! This place looks fan-tas-tic!"

I can hear her dentures click with the C. I smile as I lift my gardening glove to forehead.

"I never thought this place was gonna sell! You kids have done a shit ton of work!"

She throws her head back. Her large breasts quiver with laughter.

This is why I wanted to buy a house in the country. But Kitty wanted neighbors and sidewalks.

"Where's your lady friend?" she says, shifting her weight from one hip to the other with great movement.

"She works. I stay home."

I watch Babs try to work it out in her mind. Clicks her dentures and smiles.

"So have you met Lulu yet?"

I stop pulling weeds and stand to meet her eyes.

"Now there's a story!"

"Who is Lulu?"

"Her and Jim's the ones that built this place."

We both turn and look at the giant white brick pyramid. The red Arizona desert behind makes the white blinding in full sunlight. When Kitty and I had pulled up to the address the realtor had given us, I'd groaned. The cactus had looked plastic in the sheen of May, and I'd imagined trying to give directs to our friends.

"Jim fell in love with Lulu overseas during World War II.

They got married right off and traveled Europe. Even took her to the pyramids over there in Egypt. When they got back to the States, Lulu was sad all the time. Jim thought it'd make it better. And it did. She was happy as a lark. Till she died one fall morning."

"That's a sad story."

"Lord, I know!" Breasts quiver as her head flips back.

"So why would I have met Lulu?"

"Well, see, Jim was so broken up that he had her buried in the backyard, there. Anyway, he kinda lost it after that. Started drinking a lot."

"Yeah, okay."

"Anyway, after Lulu died, Jim just got old. He got old quicker than most. Was walkin' home from the bar down the road and got hit by a pickup truck. I heard the sirens and thought it was finally that old whorehouse goin' up in flames."

"Did he die?" I ask.

"They say that Lulu still lives in this house. It's why I asked." Babs puts her hand down the front of her dress and pulls a pack of smokes from some hidden crevice.

"Kitty talks about her, I guess. Says she turns the hall light off at night when we forget. It's not really my thing. Ghosts wondering through hallways."

Babs' eyes narrow as she sucks on the end of her smoke. "She was a good woman." Clicks her dentures. "Well, it's gettin' late. Al'll be wonderin' where I've been. Crabby bastard."

The sun has set behind the looming peak of our pyramid. I watch Babs swish across the blacktop to her 50s ranch. She cackles as her screen door slaps its frame. I walk to the backyard and stare at the dried lawn. Next Wednesday it'll be dug up for the pool Kitty wants. Turquoise water attached to white brick, dropped in the middle of nowhere. I imagine Lulu's bones poured into a pile of dark, wet dirt by a giant yellow backhoe.

# Crystalline

by Moses Fellini

Grub-like fingers displace warm loam. Worms and woodlice squirm away. Small pale hands dig little holes, making little piles of soil all in a line.

At the end of the row, she pauses, kneeling in the dirt. Fans herself with the broad straw hat that shields her from the large cantaloupe-colored sun. Takes from the pocket of her blue cotton apron a packet of seeds, the label depicting bright green cucumbers.

She moves back down the row. Puts a single seed in each hole. Buries it, pats it down. On to the next hole. And so on to the end, where she'd begun.

Hat off, fanning, hat back on. Next row. Carrots and radishes: plant them together, one of each in each hole.

A sound like whispering bees approaches. She looks up. It's that man, what's-his-name. She's seen him somewhere before. He's wearing a plastic yellow jumpsuit with a pointed mesh hood. Paper mask over mouth and nose.

Through the mask, he says, "You have a lovely garden here, Molly."

"Whatever you're selling, I don't want any."

"Do you intend to eat these vegetables?"

"What?"

"Aren't you worried about poisoning?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't you find it remarkable that you, unlike all your neighbors, are still able to work outdoors with no ill effects?"

"What do you want?"

"I can see that you have a gift, Molly. Wouldn't you like to share it?"

"I'm busy."

"What am I supposed to think if you won't even speak with me?"

"Go away. Get out of my yard."

"Yes, I suppose I should go, if that's how you feel."

He retreats, his suit softly buzzing. She turns her attention back to the garden. Makes another row of holes. Takes a packet of wax bean seeds in her now-shaking hands. Packet rips open. Seeds spill everywhere.

Leaving the garden half-planted, she shuffles across the yard

to her house. Puts the kettle on the stovetop, waits for the whistle. Brews a cup of peppermint tea, takes it into the next room.

She sits in her favorite chair, turns on the TV.

"...are requested to remain at home until further notice, in the interests of..."

Changes the channel.

"...exact nature of the toxin is still in dispute. However, the situation is under complete control as police and public health officers...."

The phone rings. She mutes the TV. The answering machine speaks. "Hey, it's me. Pick up. Hellooo."

She puts her cup of tea down on the folding card table next to the chair. Gets up, answers the phone. "Yes?"

"Hey, Molly, 'sgoin' on? Just wondering if you had any of that stuff left we had the other day."

"No."

"I know, I know. You only ever have enough for you. Hey, that's cool. So but how about just, like, one dose? Just to get me through 'til tomorrow?"

"Um."

"You know I never normally ask you for stuff like this."

"You ask me all the time."

"But I'll never ask again. I mean it."

"I don't know."

"I'll even come over there and pick it up."

"Oh, no. I don't. Don't think so. That won't work."

"You got plans or something?"

"Stay at home. TV said so."

She hangs up, returns to her chair. Tea's still hot. On TV, an unblinking anchorwoman silently opens and closes her mouth like a goldfish in a bowl.

Later, she's awakened by her tea-filled bladder. Stiff and sore from sleeping in the chair, she struggles to her feet. Goes down the hall to the bathroom.

Snared on the way out by her image in the mirror. Round chinless freckled face. Thin lips, sharp nose. Small droopy hazel eyes too far apart beneath eyebrows shaped like upside-down checkmarks. All surrounded by ever-unruly red hair. Age indeterminate: she's fifty-two but could pass for thirty-five.

Hunger. She goes to the kitchen, peers into cupboards. Finds

peanut butter. Behind that, a nearly half-full jar of clover honey, left over from before the coup. Contraband now. Crystals have blossomed in it.

She goes over to the stove and puts the kettle on again. Waits. Puts the honey jar in the hot water. Stirs it with a knife until the crystals dissolve into the liquid medium that seeded them.

She spreads the peanut butter and the warm honey on a couple slices of heavy brown bread. Divides the sandwich into two equal triangles on a dirty plate from the sink. Pours a glass of chalky soy milk to wash it down.

As she settles in at the kitchen table, the phone rings. She puts the sandwich back on the plate and listens to the machine.

"Hey, yeah, it's me again. Come on, Molly. I know you're home. Come on, come on. Look, there's some people here, want to talk to you. Hellooo. OK, so I guess we're going to come over there now. I don't know what else to do. If you don't pick up—"

She's on her feet. "No, I'm fine."

"What took you so long?"

"Nothing."

"Everything all right?"

"Yeah."

"So look, there's, like I said, these people here."

"Who?"

"Well, there's three of 'em. A man and two women. They got IDs from the—Hey, where were you from again?" Muffled exchange. "Office of Stewardship."

"No. No, don't. Don't bring them here."

"You in trouble, Molly? What's it about?"

"I can't. Can't talk about it. Don't talk to them. Send them away."

She hangs up. Pulls the phone cord out of the wall, pulls the other end from the phone.

She drags the chair into the middle of the room. Climbs up and stands on the chair. Takes the phone cord, tosses it up, loops it around the light fixture. Loops the other end around her neck. Knots it. Kicks the chair away.

She dangles there for only an instant before the light fixture gives way, taking chunks of ceiling with it. Glass, metal, and plaster crash down around her.

Lying on the floor, gasping, she starts to sob. There's a knock at the front door.



# Home

by Kim Latuszek



Black & White Photography

# Last Call

by Shiloh Slaughter

Swallows sorrows, belches poisons,  
bursting breaths of dream ruining  
an eight-hour sleep. Smitten between fashionable fat  
lips, a red tongue  
with spots  
caught up in exposure, lengthy and telling  
of velvet curtains, parting, so glorious  
damnation depends on the spotlight.  
Prism of phantoms caught in my hoop earrings,  
lonely on hotel nightstand with wads  
of tissue paper, writing lust letters.

I am cold, escaping in a bed  
always made,  
awake with buzzing infomercials.  
Dancing with fingers, I discover  
painful surprises in bruises,  
echoing and pounding with questions  
in a barren head. I thump that melon,  
tracing those knocks. I try to find them,  
those titles to the stories.

I save the tossed coins, too.

Hurry, before age wins freedom. Won't pull my strings  
no more. Confides in spots their eyes missed,  
but energy and flesh won't exaggerate touch.  
Finger to finger locking arm in arm without luck  
behind back retreats; efforts scratch, swelling,  
cannot even give myself that

much pleasure. A kink in the neck  
tilts the room, turning focus  
to a vivid future, luminous and fun,  
a promise of love envisioned  
in a corner of this empty hotel room  
they made for her and you and me. Green  
litters retired kicking feet, stomping stages,  
like palms scattered at Jesus' feet.

Bent photographs shatter, splinter,  
as memory allows them  
to put my face in everything.

Having sold feminism cheap for the boys to bootleg  
down Purgatory's street, in vain I continue to squeeze thighs,  
preserve my own collection.

Freedom was never hooked. Freedom was just chillin'  
outside the cracked window, gettin' a preview,  
bettin' on which blade next  
will suggest eternal sleep. Sleep. Sleep—  
hushed in squeaking chest drawers,  
bold and shiny, among bottled sweat of self—  
sops up what little charm shook off on show,  
rolls it in Adam leaves, and Freedom  
receives my secondhand smoke like a greedy old man.

Freedom ain't no fool! Waitin' for the candles  
to burn out behind crooked blinds  
to an empty home, 35 bucks a night,  
chained across the country, stalking me  
to refill my dream, fuel those pumping legs,  
but Freedom spent his last shot on another girl.

Freedom ain't ever alone! Man or woman, no one,  
no self waits. Hitches ride with those who stop  
to catch breath, clutching breast, heart  
still pink and happy, swaying hips  
young and healthy. In love  
with self today the girls are.

Time won't let me go there.  
Boss boy won't let me play.  
Freedom warned me pain was beauty.

My fingers her trace his apparition,  
this voice escaping my body—  
"But this beauty is painful"—  
collapses. I let Freedom get away.  
I let the silhouette rearrange.

# The Guttertongue Tragedy

by Robbie Pieschke

When you're driving drunk, every car in your rearview is a cop, and the streets are longer than seasons, but you see all the leaves fall to the earth in slow seconds before you remember to watch the road again, while your skin beads sweat from sore pores.

Home, she yells at you because she can smell it on your breath and she can see it in your stride. Then she leaves you outside.

So it's back to the bar, because that's where you sing, but every time you stand, you land. Sometimes in the gutter. This particular time it's literally in the gutter. The bum outside the bar, with the unwashed beard and breath that smells like unwashed beard, says, with pity, "It looks like you're going to have a case of the *guttertongue* tomorrow." Then he laughs under his breath, under a newspaper. A flood of *sweepings from the butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood* washes over your face while it rains, and you say, just before passing out, "I thought you said it'd never rain like this again," to whoever is listening.

And in your dream, you can't decide whether you want her there with you in the gutter or if you'd rather her walk by one more time. Either way, she does walk by, and in the glance that she gives you, you explain everything. But she says, "I can't grow your wings for you again."

And there you sleep.

Then you're warmed by the sun and warned by a police officer that if she catches you out here again in the gutter, she'll clip your wings, got that? But she means it metaphorically. Still, her warning resonates deep within the pale skin, saggy black baggy eyes. And your *guttertongue* extends *deep within the soul*, as they say. You can feel it creep from your mouth to wherever your soul is.

And, of course, there's a rainbow and a dove. The dove perches on your shoulder and whispers in your ear, "You've still some left in you. See the end of this road?" it asks. "From here it looks like the tip of a triangle, and right now you seem to be more of a square. So good luck with trying to fit in a triangle, square." Then it sees another dove, a lady dove, and flies off to make baby doves.

You walk back down the street, trying to reach the tip of the triangle, like the dove said, but sometimes it never happens. Again.

# Bear Is Driving

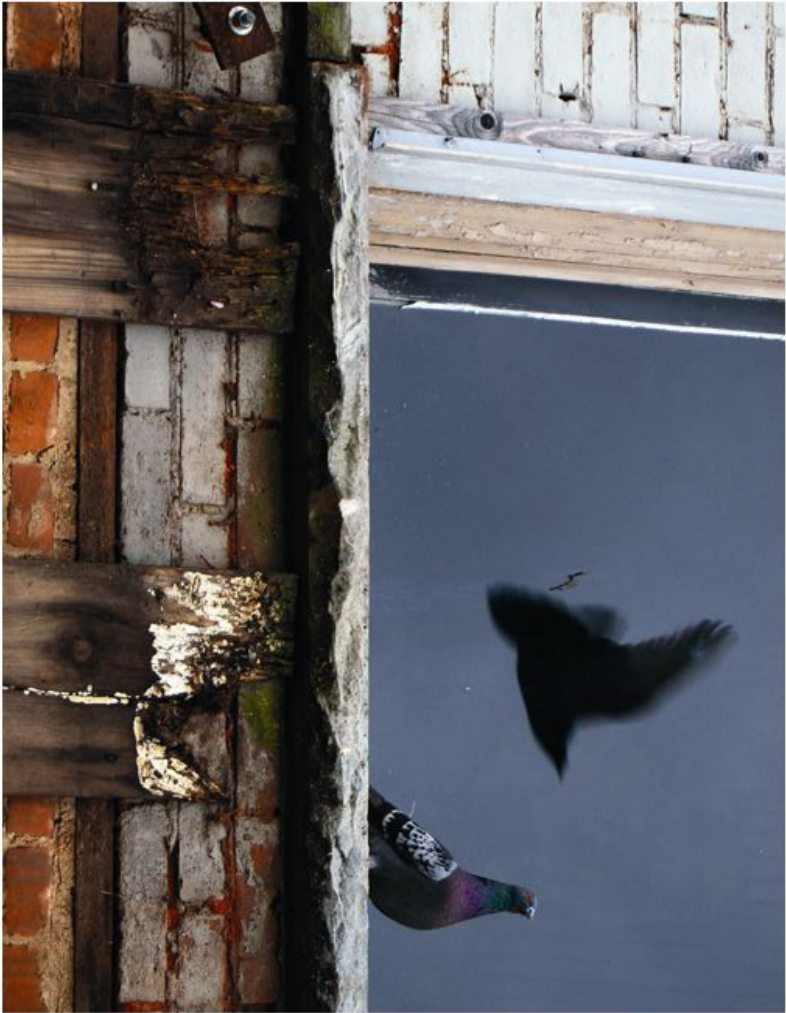
by David Eudosio Smith



*Adobe Photoshop*

# Reflections on Flight

by Hillary Darling



Color Photography

# Desired

by Chris Giroux

Crimson-edged and top-heavy,  
the peonies seek sunlight,  
lifting their swaying crowns,  
hot-pinked and over-perfumed,  
like the headdresses of Vegas showgirls  
who balance, beckon, tease  
aging peddlers of too-big teeth, too-wide smiles, horse-like laughs;  
like these salesmen bulging in brown polyester,  
we yearn, yearly, for these delicate beauties,  
to bathe in their scent,  
before rains, both hard and soft,  
leave them drooping,  
their petals, browning and bruised,  
falling in their shadows.





I may have escorted you downtown  
for ten years,  
but my free hand  
was the only noose available for you to hold on to,  
to lift you up,

again.

# Apollo-Six

by Robert Darabos



Linocut

# Hello, Littlefoot

by Storm Ainsley

Many people have forgotten the world behind the couch. There are more dreams still about the cracks in the cushions, where many still shove their toes while watching movies, too intent to realize what memories they might be losing with their toenails and their change, or slips of paper with phone numbers on them, ones they must never have meant to call.

The couches themselves have long been collectors of antiques, and some of these things do end up in the world behind the couch. Pawned off for another year spent in our living rooms, where we do much more dying than living, often on these same couches. Some people stick to the floor, realizing its lesser skills at draining. Spill something on the carpet, it's just going to soak back into socks, stain them slowly red.

"...and God made green food, and He made us on the last day before He rested, but the story doesn't say, 'dinosaurs,' and we both know you exist, Littlefoot. Plus, we're in the Great Valley, and the Valley's for dinosaurs, so there's definitely dinosaurs in my story.

"Well, I guess then there were people. And they ate the fruit from the good and bad tree. I guess they weren't s'posed to know what they were, but that doesn't make sense 'cause they knew it was bad to eat from the tree, and they just wanted to know more about everything, so they ate it."

She doesn't always get to the Great Valley in the same way, this little girl. She doesn't look for the rock that looks like a longneck. She just goes down the stairs, headfirst just like Littlefoot, whenever Mommy isn't looking. Mommy doesn't know it, but sometimes she's Sharp Tooth too. And maybe that's why this little girl went to look for the scissors and brought them down the brown-carpeted stairs, squishing silently so Sharp Tooth would never know, and headed to the Great Valley. She jumped from the bottom of the mountain across the red lava-tiled floor to near safety: a sandy, rocky, carpet beach. Now it's only the path, the arm of the chair, to climb and choose the correct couch-cushion rock to pass through the entrance. Finally to fresh rolling hills of stuffing poking through in waterfalls, rivulet wrinkles, and clover.

"Hello, Littlefoot.

"Do you know why we came to the Great Valley, Littlefoot?"

"It wasn't just because there were Sharp Teeth. Sometimes

we had to walk a really long time before there was green food. Sometimes the water wasn't safe. Even the Sharp Teeth were dying. There wasn't enough anymore.

"How did we know there was going to be a Great Valley?"

"I really don't know, Littlefoot."

"If we leave the valley we can always get back..."

"Maybe."

Scissors on fur, brown fluff. Short straight grooves. A pause in her humming.

"Littlefoot, we left the Sharp Teeth to die outside the wall."

"Mommy, did you ever?"

She's grown to dread, grown to expect to burn on staked questions, wondering how many of her own "what if"s and "can I"s and "why"s her own mother must've hated, 25, 35 years ago. Somewhere, before, it seems there was less weight. Maybe it was before her own little girl had almost caught her too many times at unanswerable things.

"Mommy, did you ever cut your initials into their fur?"

"No, honey." Lines in her ankles highlighted behind her eyes, slowly staining her socks red and brown. The top bedside drawer she keeps closed and locked, scattered remnants of sharper toys.

Sometimes she thinks a cut Achilles wouldn't be too bad, but then she thinks of bending over chair backs, retrieving toys to drop back in the box, kneeling down to scrub the space between the stove and the wall. None of these tasks would be improved by a limp.

"Mommy, are you okay?"

"Yes, honey. I'm just thinking about washing the kitchen floor. My socks are sticking to it again."

"Do you need any help?"

A sigh, thinking of the help she could offer, the ocean the kitchen floor would become.

"You could help me by picking up your toys. Especially any you might've left behind the couch."

"But Littlefoot and me are still playing there. It's the only place Sharp Teeth can't come."

"Are you pretending the dog is Sharp Tooth again?"

"Mo-om-my. It's not pretend. Sandy chews on bones and spits them back out, just like Sharp Tooth."

"Just pick up the ones you're not using then, okay?"

Pick up the limbs you're not using, Saran-Wrap them for

freshness, stick them in the freezer. Five minutes in the microwave on defrost later, nothing to worry about. Just as good as if they were fresh cut.

Adam and Eve, innocent and naked, as innocent as one can be, naked. Quarreling over the sweetest fruit and whether or not to share. Learned of murder when, in their battle, the apple flew far from their naked squabbling...

—*Your dick's too small, maybe this apple will help it grow.*

*This apple is bigger than your tits and tastier, too.—*

...and smashed into the head of a serpent sunning on a nearby rock.

—*Look what we've done.*

*I've done nothing.—*

Knowing then that someday they'd go still too, understanding instantly they could be rid of each other but that they didn't want to be alone.

They turned to what to do with the body. What to do with this limp coil? What would they want done to their own still form? And they couldn't feel safe throwing the serpent in the river, similar as they may be. What strange and gruesome things might happen to a body tossed out so carelessly into depths they'd never seen? But they wanted it out of their sight, wanted not to think of how still it was, decided if they put it in the ground it would be safe. It wouldn't be carried to who knows where: maybe the serpent, if it knew it was dead, could rest.

So by the river where it still lay, smashed and bloodied, they began scraping at the ground with rocks, scraping and scraping to move the soil.

Then rock struck rock. Spitting orange in flakes that sparked flesh.

They were frightened. Maybe the serpent was angry. Angry, its body still lay on the rock. They vowed to work faster and faster to keep its anger at bay. But the sparking orange kept shooting away, rock striking rock striking rock, until finally it took root in the grass where the serpent once slid. They ran, frightened of the orange leaping anger of the serpent, ran from their trees and fruit they deemed bad for beginning it all.

Behind them, paradise burned.

But maybe here is one little girl, crawling down the stairs with her Littlefoot after Mommy's door is shut, who doesn't want to grow up to be a Sharp Tooth. Maybe she doesn't mind clean socks at the same

time as muddy hands and wants to keep all the treasures she's hidden in the cushions.

Maybe she can make it over the lava every time, never has to fall in.

"I'm sorry about the scissors, Littlefoot," she whispers, curling in between the lumps of stuffing around Littlefoot to keep him warm.

"Can we just say that a Sharp Tooth got you because you were protecting me while I was asleep until I could wake up and get away?"

"'Cause if you don't like the ending to a story, Littlefoot, all you have to do is change it."

# On Falling Out of Something (You Were Never In)

by Blair Giesken

the bean crops passed in neatened rows  
in perfect time,  
like the spokes of a bicycle.

you drove us home in a ragged shirt,  
mustard and thin  
in every right place.

hair swept the misstitched seam at your neck  
and stood up from your arms  
in disoriented strands.

for the first time,  
there was nothing left to say.

# Sisters

by A. A. Nadeer



Black & White Photography



# Kicking Up Old Memories

by Britt Barnett

I looked around the room.  
All those faces  
in papier-mâché  
danced to the hands  
of the clock.  
I searched everyone's mouth  
for the answer—  
learned to read lips.  
I read the wrong directions.

I collapse—here  
in the rain,  
beneath covers;  
I lap at scar tissue,  
suck on old wounds.  
I missed the right words.

I've tried to  
catch up for  
seconds, weeks, months,  
years—I wait  
here,  
with knobby knees,  
tugging at my skirt,  
so you won't see  
me remember.

# Dusk Finds Us

by Rachel Wooley

We slip through the trees like the wind,  
winding down a narrow dirt trail,  
following the songs of crickets and locusts  
to where the sky is blackest.

You lead me to a meadow  
where we stop to look at the stars,  
but I notice, gazing up, you  
looking at me—  
we never touch,  
but the air is warm between us.

# a amerigoth

by Libby Booth



Acrylic on Corkboard

Fall 2008

Cardinal Sins 43

# Sanctuary Bloom

by Storm Ainsley



Color Photography

# Internet Meme

by Jacob Ferrier

Explosion of yellow daisy petals around a single stamen.

Shrapnel pollen spreading  
(directed by wind // bees and birds)  
to hungry mouths and hands.

A grasping stigma receives,  
understands,  
participates,  
throws its own outward to waiting flowers  
(a sunrise on a green sky),  
until all is made golden

for a while.

# Junkie

by Anna Daugherty

Miss California *should* be the object of my desire, all ammonia-blonde hair and C-average, business-major smile. She leans out the drive-thru window, the golden arches stretching suggestively over a shit-brown uniform. But this girl is merely a vessel; muscles strain neatly under electric-tan skin, supporting the bulk of my cholesterol-laden feast, my drug of choice.

The bag, blotched with tempting brown sweat stains, threatens to purge its contents onto the pavement, an avalanche of supple, glistening double cheeseburgers and sugary-sweet apple pies. I reach for the bag, the skin of my arms hanging limp and useless, puckered with tales of indulgence. I can almost taste fries so salty they might have been boiled in tears, when I notice bright young eyes scoping out the backseat of my mid-sized sedan. She nosily surveys a growing mountain of used and tossed wrappers still crusted with dried white mayo, the sideways towers of phallic Slurpee cups laid to waste by a ravenous carnal appetite. A flicker of disgust sweeps over her West Coast features.

The bounty dips between us, as if to make its final swan dive onto the blacktop below. Snatching the precious bag from her finely manicured fingers, I plop the forbidden sack of caloric bliss onto my sprawling lap and speed away with my conquest, fast as a heart attack.

# Thompson's Gazelle

by Robert Darabos



Linocut

# Bellowing

by Matthew Falk

Our town depends upon a pair  
of monstrous mechanical bellows.  
Mounted high on a column,  
Janus-faced, leering,  
they open and close  
as if worked by unseen hands.  
Their accordion membranes  
contract and expand,  
flapping like wings  
of giant slow-moving bats.  
The bellows' breath  
blows backwards and forwards,  
sweeping citizens up and down the streets  
like old newspapers or dry leaves.  
No one wants to stay here  
under such conditions.  
Only we remain who must  
maintain the apparatus.  
We, the bellows-keepers, live  
in a cluster at the base of the column.  
From a distance we look like  
fungal sporophores  
sprouting from a sick tree.  
Every day we climb to the top  
to clear away the debris  
that clogs the intake nozzles:  
stones, bicycles, houses, cars,  
dishwashers, plastic bags,  
rats, pigeons, and poems.



# Synopsis: A Fairy Tale, Part 2

by Dennis Rogers



Adobe Photoshop

# Mercy

by A. A. Nadeer



*Adobe Photoshop*

# Provider

by Tyler Germain

I told you I was hungry, and you started crying. I'd never seen you cry before—at least, not like that. Eyes dripping, nose running, body shaking. You told me jobs were hard to come by anymore. I didn't know what that meant; I was eight. You didn't know what we would do for money. I gave you seven cents from my pocket. You kept crying. I wondered why you were so thirsty, why you were clinging to the bottle of brown liquid, why you didn't even sit up in bed to take a drink. You just swept the bottle up from its hanging position off the edge of the bed, drank, and flung it down, all in one motion, like a kid on a swingset, suspended momentarily atop your lips before swinging back toward the ground. Some of it splashed on my shirt. "Take some medicine, honey," you said. "Go to sleep." But I wasn't sick and I wasn't sleepy—it was only five o'clock. I went to the living room, sat on the couch. It was hard. Not the cushions, but the cloth. Hard like the way fabric feels when milk or jam or spaghetti sauce (but probably all three) dries on it. I kept sitting, kept watching cartoons. You kept crying. I wished that you would stop; I wanted you to get out of bed. I was still hungry.

# From an Au Gres Lighthouse

by Blair Giesken

the air was the saltiest kiss—  
the breath from the center  
of something sour and wrong.

there was you,  
but only in your half-moon,  
half-formed way.  
here, but never really at all—  
particles.

we lay on the loose boards of the lighthouse dock  
that poked us in ways  
and dampened our clothes  
with their wet, knotted backs;

cried and smiled  
at how we could both get to that place—  
the one where you wonder what there would be  
if there were nothing at all.

# Portland Head

by Adam Baudoux



Black & White Photography

# This Morning

by Shiloh Slaughter

I am no longer an I, but stable, still, and closed,  
fragmented across time,  
each thought a piece unfinished.

Skip to the end; another morning begins.

We are wearing the same clothes  
I wore last night.  
Apart, we eat half the plate,  
sip half a glass of wine,  
confess half our sins,  
and drop out of school the third semester.

We don't call you back.  
We wait.  
I will call again.

I has been here before,  
but that is not me.

When I bleeds, you feel it.  
When you bleed, no one cares.  
When we bleed,  
men hold I in their arms,  
but no one feels it.

We are not I.  
We are stable, still, and closed.  
We stand idle, never uniting.

I am no longer an I,  
but a part of that holy one.  
Our truths are true,  
impartial,  
but true.  
My ear hears the winds across calendars and continents,  
where the other makes all the love,  
but my ears hear not the birds outside my window.  
They are not mine.  
They belong to I.

My heart is cold;  
the other one burns.  
The fire I feeds is not my own.  
When will it be my birth?  
When will it be my turn?

This morning you cry,  
because your lover called me last night,  
and I may have answered,  
but I am no longer I,  
and when I am,  
that is the biggest lie.

# Apples

by Lorena Nowakowski

On a plain day:

horizontal strips stack neatly on his knee.

On a cheery day:

delicious coiled ribbons dangle from our lips.

On an arduous day:

red or green hunks litter the ground.

And on a Sunday:

he'll toss the core to the chickens.



# Leftovers

by Britt Barnett

Brunch at an all-you-can-eat buffet. You two were tasting each other's food. Little rusted Honda violently rocking. Sitting in the front, I don't move my seat up to help. Four hands pushing a cardboard box of wedding photos. My mind still reeling from her hugging me beside the table. *Crusted tomato soup bowl and plastic grilled cheese remnants. Her hair smells like apple shampoo.* Not really sure what the protocol is for these things, I pull away before you can tap on my window. Framed photos screech glass when I turn corners. Plastic freezer bags slide, camping trips and Halloween parties, back and forth. Purple box with gold letters of proofs, white teeth and gown. My hair stylist suggests I Google it. I laugh and ask if you can really do that. She flips the blow dryer on, and I can't hear what she says. By the time she gets to unsnapping my cape, she's telling me there's a dumpster round back. I imagine it filled with hair, the cardboard box dropped between shades of blonde and brunette. I drive around, listening to paper and glass shift and scream with each movement.

# Haiti

by Adam Baudoux



Black & White Photography

# Snow in October

by Kalum Meyers

*For Stephanie*

She brought the snow on her back  
from Chicago.  
She had wanted to get away,  
but even here  
snow flutters and flinches.  
She doesn't believe in luck,  
so she prepared:  
pulling longjohns and mittens,  
snowcaps and scarves,  
skis and tools to build an igloo  
from a clutch purse.  
It's the Michigan in me, she confessed;  
I can't undo my childhood.

The snow doesn't think of such things, she says;  
it's homogenized, though every snow crystal is different—  
snow sits uninterrupted  
from here to the vast shadows of Canada  
and further.  
Why the Eskimos  
—or Inuits, she says, interrupting herself—  
have seven words for snow  
is beyond me,  
but they must be a very sad people.

I can't tell her  
she brings the winter with her,  
so instead we blame it on the sky,  
guilty and grey;  
its potential to swallow fault is limitless.  
We leave each other laughing  
with a promise that she'll be back in summer,  
with snow in her eyes, in July.

# Through Produce

by Robbie Pieschke

An old man screams to hear himself speak, several aisles down as she treads through produce, that it's raining the hardest he's ever seen, and she agrees. With one hand she pushes a stroller, and with the other she pulls an almost empty shopping cart. All wheels squeak through their cycle and return to their beginning. Assuming there is such a thing. She sometimes thinks so and smiles down at the baby with sympathy. A can of mushrooms rolls back and forth inside the shopping cart, colliding with the sides, and the baby blinks each time, while white beams of fluorescent light flood the Farmington Hills Marketplace. Over the loudspeakers, a life insurance advertisement on the radio asks, "Are you in good hands?"

Kristen's heavy, brown, outstretched hair pulls away from her face and falls down past her flannel jacket, over her shoulder, like barley tied with thick brown twine, and rides her back somberly. And just beyond the deepest bags hide weary eyes that, when fully open, shine the brightest gray. And when they are fully open, boys half her age think in poetry. But they hardly ever are anymore.

"I haven't seen it rain like this in years!" screams the man again when he and his aide squeeze by. The aide smiles a big lip-gloss smile at Kristen and exaggerates the same smile at the baby, while the man continues to look behind his feet, out the window at the storm. *Actually, I've never seen it rain like this either*, she thinks, as she watches her reflection in the window down the aisle pull an onion from the shelf in the rain.

She lets it fall to the cart, which sometimes looks like a cage to her, and walks toward a kiosk where a woman holds up a plum to the light on the other side. Her bright gray hair shines. Necklaces hang over her white, fitted blouse. Straight back, straight legs. She rests the two handles of a shopping basket on her forearm and puts the plum back, searching through the rest of them for one without a blemish. Dark rouge lipstick. Long white fingernails rest against her clean black skin. A zodiac tattoo barely visible just above her neckline.

"You ain't ha'e to be a psychic to know it's goin' to flood," says the woman without looking up from her plum.

"Oh? How can you tell?" says Kristen.

"Well, it's already floodin' in the parkin' lot, and plus," says the woman, "I use to be psychic."

"What, you're not anymore?"

"Not professionally. But I guess I can't really tell that I'm not

anymore, now that I think 'bout it. It seems like it's all just startin' to fade."

"Yeah, that's called aging." She smiles with a certain sense of sympathy and a seed of conviction. "How can you tell it's fading?"

"It sounds odd, I know. I don't really understand it myself." The woman smiles without looking back at Kristen, as if she were talking to the plums all along. There is a small silence while they sift through the fruits and vegetables. "Anyway," says the woman, "it's goin' to flood."

She finally looks up at Kristen and, with the slightest of wrinkles, smiles just as the lights in the grocery store flicker. The two women, along with the other twenty or so customers throughout, look up to the ceiling in unison, and, like a sputtering engine finally dying, the electricity of the Farmington Hills Marketplace goes out.

For a moment it is motionless in the Marketplace. The sound of darkness on the tips of every tongue, hushed only by the few streetlights still lit outside and the occasional bolt of lightning. A loud voice from the front of the darkness—wherever that may be—yells, "Everybody stay calm and walk towards the café. We'll be lighting some candles and serving bottles of water there until the storm passes and the electricity comes back on." It's as if a curse is lifted from the silence when voices erupt in an indistinguishable murmur, soft as the hue of the streetlights, and the occasional cough is like thunder. Kristen sits down at a small circular table, opens a bottle of water, and pulls the baby from the stroller to her lap.

"It really is goin' to flood. I was just guessin' earlier." The woman stands beside Kristen, and, through the wall of windows in the tiny Marketplace Café, they both watch the rain fall. The smell of espresso squeezes between the customers gathering to wait out the storm. "Can I sit?"

"Yeah, absolutely. This is Lindsey."

"Hey, Lindsey! You're a beautiful-lookin' baby, so far's I can tell anyway," she says, with her hand on Lindsey's forehead as if inspecting the baby, with a smile. "I'm Angela."

"Kristen."

As the rain falls harder, the darkness seems to mask all inhibition in the Farmington Hills Marketplace. One boy, with a bandana and a gray cut-off shirt, sitting against the counter in the café, yells out, "Han' check! Let's see your hands e'r'body!" Laughing to himself, he kisses his girlfriend hard on the cheek. His hand high on her naked thigh. She blushes in fake modesty. The old man yells, "I haven't seen it rain like this in years!" And suddenly, they're all related. The

storm is a dinner table, and the customers of the Farmington Hills Marketplace are gathered around it in obligated communion. Their personalities pollute the café with conversations that can not only be heard but also seen and felt in the darkness of the Marketplace.

“So you really could see the future then?” asks Kristen.

“I thought I could, at one point. But for that last year, I started doubtin’ it, ya know? Maybe I could, maybe I couldn’t,” says Angela.

“I don’t really believe in that sort of thing.”

“Shoot, I know ya don’t. It don’t take a psychic to know that either, honey! But what sort of thing do you believe in?” she says. “That’s the question.”

“I don’t know what I believe in. Free will, I guess.”

“Free will, huh?”

“Yeah, but sometimes free will is fucked up.”

“I suppose it is.” She looks down at her purse and over at the baby.

“My husband loved someone else, and sometimes I just, I just feel like God’s cursed humanity with free will. I feel helpless and without control of the whole thing.”

“That’s exactly how I felt when one of my clients wrote in and complained that I read his future wrong. We had this disclaimer that said it’s all for entertainment only, ya know, but I took it more serious than that. I really believed that I could see their futures, all of them. I really believed,” she says. “But I guess, if I really could have, I would have seen my own future and not gone into that line of work!”

Their laughs trail off into a synchronized silence among the other customers. Outside, the rain dances like a twirling toddler impressing her aunts and uncles of the Farmington Hills Marketplace. They watch on, surprisingly impressed (it’s all unintentional, though: she’s never actually had lessons).

Kristen breaks the silence. “Angela,” she says, “will you tell me my future?”

“Oh, darlin’, I couldn’t do that. I told ya, I can’t really see the future. Probably never could.”

“Well, I know, but just to pass the time.” Kristen’s bright gray eyes open wide, and her heart pounds like the army of rain attacking the Marketplace roof. “I’d love to know your best guess.”

They try to look like they’re minding their own business, but other customers listen in and watch the two ladies, as Angela pulls her cell phone out of her purse in anxiousness. Her chest full of breath and her shaky arms are unaware that most of the café is watching.

"You've evidence of the Creator's plan in your hands, child," she says and pulls Kristen's hand under the light of her cell phone, spreading out her fingers. "Your thumb. How far back can ya stretch it?" she asks and pulls.

"Ouch ouch ouch!"

"Baby, sometimes ya gotta pull to see how hard you can push."

"What does that mean?"

"Your thumb don't stretch very far, which means that you got thick skin and a hard head. But your Mount of Venus, here at the bottom hill of your thumb, is large, which means that you're capable of a lotta love. You must be very passionate," she says. "Shoot, ya musta kicked *him* out."

Some of the customers laugh, and Angela looks up at everybody watching, her face painted with fulfillment, and an honest smile emerges. Kristen too.

"I'm gonna close my eyes, and you tell me if ya see anythin'."

She holds Kristen's palm open, facing up, and tightly closes her eyes. Then they wait.

After a few moments, some customers turn their attention back to the flooded parking lot, where the rainwater makes the car tires look flat against the new-puddle pavement. Others go back to fiddling fingers and feet tapping.

"What should I be seeing?" asks Kristen.

"You'll know when ya see it," says Angela, eyes still closed. "I hope."

More moments pass of nothingness. Few customers still watch as the women hold hands, the old man and his aide among them.

"Anything?" asks Angela.

"I don't see anything. It's just going to appear in my palm, right?" Kristen stares at her palm without blinking.

"Yeah. Maybe I ain't doin' it right."

"Couple more minutes?" asks Kristen.

"Yeah. A couple more minutes," says Angela, closing her eyes even tighter so that the edges of her eyes wrinkle. Her nose crinkles. The old man suddenly starts screaming and pointing fervently at Kristen's hand.

"Fire! Fire! Look out! Fire!" he screams. "Her hand is on fire!"

All hearts pound faster, and all the eyes of the Farmington Hills Marketplace beam toward Kristen's hand. But nobody else, including Kristen and Angela, sees the fire except the old man. His aide is telling him, in her own words, that he's crazy. She puts her arm around him

and starts walking him around the café, trying to calm him, but he continues to scream, "Fire!" Everybody watches on.

Hoping to see fire, Kristen blinks and glances down at her hand again. Nothing. She hopes that perhaps there is a burn mark or some sign of supernatural confirmation. But nothing. She thinks, *maybe if I believe, I'll feel the fire in my hand.*

Nothing.

Disappointed, she looks down at her baby, curious of her inheritance. But then she looks back up at Angela, still holding her hand and squeezing her eyes shut tightly. There is no fire in her hand and probably never will be, but her heart is warmed by someone caring enough to close her eyes so tight. So she lies.

"Wait a minute, I see something. There is smoke coming from my hand!"

The boy with the bandana says, "Yeah, I totes see it too, man!" (But he probably doesn't see it.)

Angela, with wide-open eyes, stares down at Kristen's hand and forces herself to believe that there is indeed fire coming from her hand: *I believe in the fire. I believe in the fire. I believe in the fire. I believe in the fire. I believe in fire. I believe in fire. I believe.*

"I believe in the fire," she says aloud and looks at Kristen with an unspoken understanding that the fire is more of a metaphor, and she catches her breath. *Maybe knowing the future and being in love are, too.*

The crowd will calm, and it will still be raining, but there they feel like family packed in the Farmington Hills Marketplace Café. And they're waiting there in the café until the lights come back on.



# Ol' Times

by Adam Baudoux



Color Photography

# Vacation 296

by Libby Booth & Joel Lewis



Acrylic on Corkboard

# Title: You Can Do / It / 's Just 25 Lines

by Alan J. Dore

- 1 First line goes here. Write a  
Word  
Or two. [jDon't stop!]  
Breathe: In. Out.
- 5 One fifth done (crack open another: was Hemingway a poet?);  
Just nineteen (19?!) more lines to go. . . .

- These tossed terms  
Are simple pieces ("sim-pul pē-sez") in  
Delightfully Dashing Dickinsonian Dreams—
- 10 If only Death would kindly stop for me—  
Fingers, just press pulchritude  
As thoughts dart-scuttling  
Racing-hodgepodge-hurry-scurry.

- Inspiration of the Day is  
Your sick self-interest:
- 15 Let that motive be your Muse [God  
Enjammit!] to write a poem assigned  
Like a math problem ( $2 + 2 = \underline{\quad}$ ).

- You bare/bear your soul ( $\infty \div 2 = \text{no sol.}$ ) to  
Get your grade. [B-, Not enough sensory detail here.]  
Well, let's be a whit like witty Whitman here,  
Sing our songs, and contain our effing multitudes.  
*L'art pour l'art*, this piece of Po[o]e,  
But that, right there,
- 25 That's twenty-five! (Even atheists thank the LORD.)

- 26 [Not to bother you, sir, I'm just curious,  
27 but *What*  
28 *Do you*  
29 *Think about*  
30 *Extra credit? And W.W.J.D.?*

Warmly, Kindly, Indignantly yours,  
A Lover of All Things Waxed Poetic



# Biographies

Renee Adler is a senior pursuing a bachelor of fine arts with a concentration in graphic design. She is a sucker for art, skunks, music, and grilled cheese. She was a cat in a former life.

Storm Ainsley is best known among her gas station coterie.

Britt Barnett is an atheist who enjoys long walks by the sea and corduroy pants.

Peter Brian Barry can ride his bike with no handlebars.

Adam Baudoux is inspired and motivated by his faith in Jesus Christ. He started Baudoux Photography in June 2007. His website is [www.baudouxphotography.com](http://www.baudouxphotography.com).

Angela Bauer is a fourth-year student who can't wait to finish. As demonstrated by her degree choices, she likes to do the unthinkable: write. When she's not on campus, you can find her working in a Wonderland that leaves her singing Christmas carols in every season.

Holly Bird did a search about herself at *Wikipedia.org*. Here is what it said about her: "Holly is a genus\*.... [Holly is] simple\*\*...[but] mildly toxic.... However...[Holly is] apparently...highly decorative...[and] ornamental.... Holly is smooth\*\*\*.... Holly is [my] given name...."

\* This must be a misspelling—they certainly meant "genius."

\*\* Simple means "low-maintenance."

\*\*\* Smooth means "thumbs-up Fonzie-like cool."

"Holly." *Wikipedia*. 15 July 2007. 31 Oct. 2008. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holly>.

Libby Booth is very close to graduating with an art degree from SVSU and is pretty excited about it. She enjoys art in all its forms, especially—but not limited to—when it's positive and/or involves the community or her tree frog named Biscuit. She plans to continue doing exciting things in the future but does not wish to be the victim of an alien abduction.

Jill Bourbina has three great passions in life: duct tape, tap dancing, and Gene Kelly...but not necessarily in that order!

Josh Crummer sows seeds of confusion, pain, and terror wherever he goes. Because of this, he hopes to run for political office, just to see if the “negative times negative equals positive” thing works out.

Robert Darabos is a fine arts major with an emphasis in printmaking. Upon graduation (hopefully next year), he plans on moving to New York or Chicago to continue his education and open an art gallery.

Hillary Darling, a creative writing sophomore, enjoys writing and photography. She does both as a reporter for *The Tri County Citizen*. She also writes for *The Valley Vanguard* and still finds time to plan her wedding to her sweetheart of three years.

Anna Daugherty is a self-described nerd who enjoys writing, reading, and singing for a Beatles cover band. She is pursuing a degree in professional and technical writing.

Alan J. Dore loves Alternative Breaks, reveres Veronica Mars, savors his peanut butter by the spoonful, admires Joshua Radin, loathes high-fructose corn syrup, considers proposing to J. K. Rowling, and knows that God’s love for you eclipses the wildest estimation. He lives with his family, to whom he owes his everything.

Noah Essenmacher is an English and chemistry major. When he is not battling the forces of evil and illiteracy, he can usually be found brewing a fresh pot of coffee. He admires God for His creativity and sense of humor.

Matthew Falk will write for food. His work has recently been rejected by *Apple Valley Review*, *Barn Owl Review*, *Chimaera*, *Coconut Poetry*, *Flash Fiction Online*, *FlatManCrooked*, and *Gargoyle Magazine*.

Jacob Ferrier is now fiction.

Tyler Germain keeps it party.

Blair Giesken is a fourth-year creative writing major and professional and technical writing minor.

Chris Giroux is not a pseudonym.

Amelia Glebocki never abbreviates “et cetera.” Her favorite holiday is your birthday. She drinks coffee by the pot. Her fictional heroes include Elphaba Thropp and Stargirl. She takes in a lot of vitamin C to prevent the scurvy.

Ashton Jurek is a savvy diabetic who is addicted to Diet Pepsi, playing Taylor guitars (even though she only owns one), and her heroic husband, Erick.

Kim Latuszek loves her parents, her sister, her friends, and all her Phi Sigma Sigma sisters because they made her who she is today. It is these people who taught her the beauty, joy, love, and excitement of life. That being said, she is an education major with plenty of optimism and patience.

Annie Lemon is a senior planning to graduate in May with a creative writing degree. She is an active member of His House Christian Fellowship on campus and thanks God for the gifts with which He has blessed her. She strives to use them every day for His glory.

Dr. Joel Lewis is an Instructor of History at SVSU who specializes in transnational and comparative history. Outside of teaching, Dr. Lewis’ main passions in life are family, friends, art, books, music, poetry, politics, religion, and a pet frog named Biscuit.

Kirsten McIlvenna is on staff for the first time and consequently doesn’t really know what to say. Yet she plans to stay on staff, have a blast, and have a more creative bio next time!

Amanda Merrill is proud to be a carbon-based life form.

Kalum Meyers is a super-senior here at SVSU, studying creative writing. He’s the brother of fellow poet Shiloh Slaughter. He is not Thomas Pynchon.

A. A. Nadeer has an associate degree in marketing and business administration from Saudi Arabia. He is working toward a BFA in design with a minor in art, focusing on photography. “I came from another land where the sun is always blind; I carry my mother’s will to be a human kind.” This is dedicated to his sisters Nada and Manal.

Lorena Nowakowski is NOT a self-professed “writer” but likes to entertain random bursts of creativity. Her ultimate goal will be achieved when she does something to change the world!

Robbie Pieschke is optimistic to the point of naiveté and is okay with that. He has appeared in *Cardinal Sins* twice before and appreciates the opportunity to do so again. He’d like to thank his family, his fiancée and her family, and his friends for their undying love and support and high fives.

Samantha Prud’Homme enjoys many things, such as philosophy, photography, euchre, and chasing gnomes with sporks.

Dennis Rogers will be finishing his BFA in graphic design at some point in 2009. Next semester, he is taking Mustache Design and Tin Foil Hat Design. Believe it or not, those are both upper-level courses. And when he’s not creating for the eyeballs, he writes for the ears: he can be heard playing with his band The Vexing Sundown.

Shiloh Slaughter is a creative writing major at SVSU. She has been a freelance writer since high school, beginning as a poet at poetry slams in local venues. In the past four years, she has written two novels; one, entitled *Charyli, Where Love Never Fails*, is published.

David Eudosio Smith is lost in the blinding whiteness of the tundra.

Alex Soares is an international student from Brazil living in Midland, MI, since December 2006. Currently a sophomore, he has not decided his major yet, although international business and accounting are strong options. He loves soccer, and the essentials in his life are faith, family, and friends.

Rachel Wooley is not the smaller Mt. Everest next door, but she does have a fondness for things that are pumpkin flavored or scented.



# A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s

My fondest gratitude goes out to the following folks for their contributions to the continuing success of *Cardinal Sins*: former editors Courtney Farmer, Christi Griffis, and Amanda Conner; Alex Baumgardner, Tim Ashley, and the staff of *The Valley Vanguard* for donating their computer equipment and software, providing ad space, and sharing their office; Tammi Waugh and the staff of the Student Technology Center; Trish Gohm and the Student Life Office; Richard P. Thompson; J. J. Boehm and the PJPC; everyone who participated in the Fall 2008 Slam-O-Rama, including the contestants and the judges, the musical acts DarkFoxDown and CandleNine, and the sound technician, Bryan Hampton; David Eudosio Smith for promotional materials; Brandt Snook; Perry Toyzan and the Graphics Center; Gabe Soto; Linda Farynk, Dean Mary Hedberg, and their staffs for sponsoring the post-publication reception; Anita Dey, John Mauch, and the Reference staff of Zahn Library; Suzette Zimmerman, Emmie Busch, and Jane Anderson; SVSU's Department of English; Melissa Seitz; President Eric Gilbertson; Dr. Donald Bachand; Dr. Vince Samarco for recommending me for the editor position; Chris Giroux for being absolutely indispensable in a million different areas; Samantha Prud'Homme for designing the cover; Pat Latty and Sharon Opheim; all our benefactors; all our contributors; and, of course, the amazing, irreplaceable staff.

Matthew Falk

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# Submission Guidelines

For deadline and drop-off location, visit [www.svsu.edu/cardinalsins](http://www.svsu.edu/cardinalsins).

## Entry Requirements

*All submissions must*

- be accompanied by a completed cover sheet.
- be submitted on a floppy disk or CD in the format specified below. Please do not submit any disk or CD with unnecessary files, e.g., class papers.
- have titles. The file name must be the same as the title of the work.
- not contain any contact information within the entries. This information should only be on the cover sheet.

*All text submissions should*

- be in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, single spaced, with one-inch margins.
- include the title at the top of each page.
- be on a 3.5-inch diskette or CD, in either .rtf or .doc format. Hard copies will not be accepted. Diskettes and CDs will not be returned.

*Poetry should be no longer than 70 lines.*

*Flash fiction should be 1,000 words or fewer.*

*Fiction and creative nonfiction should be between 1,000 and 2,500 words.*

*Artwork/Photography submissions should*

- be 300 dpi or greater, with high contrast and sharp definition.
- be on a diskette or CD, in either .tif or .png format. Hard copies will not be accepted. Diskettes and CDs will not be returned.

*Photos that have been manipulated with a computer program should be submitted as artwork, not photography.*

## Number of Entries

- Submit up to 5 poems, 3 flash fiction pieces, and 2 pieces of fiction or creative nonfiction.
- Submit up to 5 artwork and/or photography pieces.

## Prizes and Judging

- Prizes will be awarded in the following areas: poetry, fiction, flash fiction, creative nonfiction, black & white photography, color photography, black & white artwork, and color artwork.
- The winner in each category will receive \$100 and recognition in the Winter 2009 publication.
- All submissions will be entered into the contest unless otherwise requested.
- Judging is done through blind, anonymous voting by the editorial staff.
- Staff members are excluded from winning an award in any category.

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, do affirm that the personal information given by me is accurate and correct, and that the work attached is solely my own. I understand, accept, and agree to abide by *Cardinal Sins'* requirements governing submissions. I understand that the decisions of the *Cardinal Sins* staff regarding submissions are final. If my work is accepted, I grant permission to *Cardinal Sins* to publish and distribute my work, both in print and on the *Cardinal Sins* web site. I also grant *Cardinal Sins* permission to edit my work. I understand that I will retain all future rights to my work."

Thank you for submitting to *Cardinal Sins*, and good luck.

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**Please print or type.**

Name (as you would have it appear in *Cardinal Sins*):

Preferred Address:

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Social Security # (required to claim prize money): \_\_\_\_\_

# of items in each category:	Titles:
_____ <b>Poetry</b> <i>Limit 5</i>	_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ <b>Flash Fiction</b> <i>Limit 3</i>	_____ _____ _____
_____ <b>Fiction/Essays</b> <i>Limit 2</i>	_____ _____
_____ <b>Artwork/Photography</b> <i>Limit 5 total</i>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Medium _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Black & White _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Medium _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Black & White _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Medium _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Black & White _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Medium _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Black & White