An abstract painting of several jellyfish. The bell-shaped tops are rendered in vibrant reds and oranges, with some showing purple and blue undertones. The tentacles are depicted with thin, dark, wispy lines against a background of swirling yellows, blues, and whites, suggesting a dynamic, underwater environment.

Northern Lights Arts Journal 2015



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Marinette

A Campus of the University of Wisconsin Colleges

Austin Maddix is a sophomore at UW-Marquette. He is from a small town in Northeastern Wisconsin. Next fall he plans on attending UW-Green Bay to get his bachelors degree in business administration with an emphasis on management, with a possible English minor.

Marcy Pearson is a freshman at UW-Marquette. She enjoys singing, writing, being silly, and tweeting the funny things Dr. Learst says. Though she isn't sure where she'll transfer, she knows it will be an adventure toward the great perhaps.

Mikayla Reed is currently a freshman at UW-Marquette. She enjoys reading, writing, and listening to music in her spare time.

Regina Russ is a freshman at UW-Marquette. She enjoys long walks off short piers and sinking slowly into madness. Her quote to live by: "The voices may not be real but they have some great ideas."

Taylor Seefeldt is currently a sophomore at UW-Marquette with the intention of transferring to UW-Green Bay as an English major. She has lived in the Marinette area for most of her life. She enjoys attending concerts in Milwaukee and Chicago and loves to write in her spare time.

Carrie Shippers's poems have appeared in Connecticut Review, Crab Orchard Review, Hayden's Ferry Review, New England Review, North American Review, Prairie Schooner, The Southern Review, and other journals. She is the author of two chapbooks, *Ghost-Writing* (Pudding House, 2007) and *Rescue Conditions* (Slipstream, 2008), and a full-length collection, *Ordinary Mourning* (ABZ, 2010). She is an Assistant Professor of English at UW-Marshfield.

Mercy Smith is a pseudonym for a UW student.

John Thornberry has acting, directing, design, stage management and writing credits in New York City (Broadway, Off-Broadway and Off-Off), as well as in regional and community theatres around the United States. He has been published previously in the *Louisville Thinker* and in *Northern Lights Arts Journal*, and his plays have been produced in New York, Colorado, and Kentucky. He lives with his wife Rebecca in Marinette, Wisconsin, and is an adjunct communication/theatre arts and English instructor at UW-Marquette.

Kendra Voelz is a freshman at UW-Marshfield/Wood County. She will be transferring to a four-year university in a year and majoring in anthropology.

Rachel Wentland is a freshman at UW-Marquette and hopes to one day attend UW-LaCrosse for anthropology. She spends most of her free time painting and drawing pictures.

Northern Lights

2015 arts journal

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From the Editor...

I am incredibly proud to share with you this year's *Northern Lights Arts Journal*. The visual art and creative writing included here offers a broad glimpse at the spectacular creative engagements of our students, community members, and staff. The talent showcased is remarkable, and I feel very proud of this year's journal. I would like to especially thank the hard-working committee of Tara DaPra, Jennifer Flatt, Meghan Flynn, Deven Huc, Tricia Hurley, Allen Learst and Marcy Pearson. As editor, I deeply value commitment and work that went into making this publication happen.

Dr. Amy Reddinger

Contributors

Darwin Adams	Marcy Pearson
Chelsey Conigliaro	Deiter Reed
Roberta Fabiani	Mikayla Reed
Katie Falk	Regina Russ
Meghan Flynn	Taylor Seefeldt
Deven Huc	Carrie Shippers
Daniel Kondzela	Mercy Smith
Jim LaMalfa	John Thornberry
Jueun Lee	Kendra Voelz
Minji Lee	Rachel Wentland
Austin Maddix	

TO VIEW NORTHERN LIGHTS ONLINE, VISIT:

<http://www.marquette.uw.edu/student-life/fine-arts/northern-lights/index.html>

Cover art: Méduse by Deven Huc

Northern Lights is funded by the UW-Marquette Student Government.

Contributors

Darwin Adams is a continuing education student at UW-Marquette. After retirement from United Parcel Service he pursued a life-long interest in Civil War history at Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He lives in Menominee, Michigan.

Chelsea Conigliaro is a student at UW-Marquette.

Roberta Fabiani (MFA, BA) lives and writes in Rochester, WI. She is a Senior Lecturer at UW-Rock County.

Katie Falk is a sophomore at UW-Marquette. She enjoys performing with Theatre on the Bay and singing with the West Shore Chorale. In her free time, she loves drawing and writing.

Meghan Flynn is the art instructor at UW-Marquette. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Washington State University in Pullman, WA, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Iowa State University in Ames, IA. Her work has been included in various regional and national juried exhibitions across the United States, most notably Manifest Gallery in Cincinnati, OH; University of North Carolina in Asheville, and Collective Visions Gallery in Bremerton, WA.

Deven Huc is a UW-Marquette student. His goal is to become an art major. Most people describe him as happy and outgoing but with a dark, sarcastic side.

Daniel Kondzela is a sophomore at UW-Marathon County. Born and raised in Wausau, Wisconsin, he hopes to become an English major at UW-Madison in the near future. He doesn't do anything except read and play video games with his friends.

James LaMalfa, Professor Emeritus, taught for 44 years at UW-Marquette, retiring in December 2013. He has exhibited across the United States and commissioned several pieces of public art in Northeastern Wisconsin and Menominee, Michigan. He is a member and secretary of the Menominee Area Arts Council and is co-founder of the *Northern Lights Arts Journal*.

Jueun Lee is an international exchange student from Seoul, South Korea. She is a sophomore in Sookmyung Woman's University in South Korea, and she is majoring in family resource management. She will have a dual major, including business administration. She would like to work in administration at an airport after she graduates college.

Minji Lee is a junior at the University of Minnesota and her major is communication studies. She is an international student from South Korea. She drew the picture included here when she was a sophomore at UW-Marquette.

Travel
by Minji Lee



Of Lofty Lessons

by Deiter Reed

I turn worn pages for hours
on end, grasping yellowed vellum
entries by their dog-eared corners—
on the hunt for elusive knowledge
lost amongst the faded tomes.

This was the place where secrets
came to quietly die; but I,
courting Jana, have come
to bring this fair mistress,
clad in the deepest shadows,
into the vibrant light,
unconcealed for all those
who desire to gaze upon
her form in all its glory.

Oh Janus, how I wish
that you had better protected
your wife from prying eyes—
eyes that sought only
to pry back the veil
and marvel at the wonder
behind the enigmatic shroud.

Some things are not meant
to be seen or shared complacently;
like the dark, too much light
can blind the beholder.

The true nature of a secret
is existential in this duality
of both light and darkness.

A Bright Future

by Darwin Adams

Everyone agreed, William had a bright future. (Please don't call him Bill, his name is William.) At his high school commencement ceremony (where William carried a lofty 4.0 grade point average, of course, and was a superb example to those less gifted than he), the homecoming king and star wide receiver extolled classmates to strive for excellence, much as he had done. The world would be their oyster, if only they followed his prescription for success: dedicated work ethics, selfless community service, and a well-balanced extra-curricular agenda. It didn't hurt to be polite (especially to movers and shakers) and pay assiduous attention to personal grooming (provided the gene pool allowed you to be one of the beautiful people). With a big, wide grin, the short, bespectacled principal in a wrinkled brown suit shook William's hand and predicted at the assemblage that their tall, dark, and handsome valedictorian would be a valued asset at whichever university was lucky enough to land such a model of sterling matriculation. The audience cheered lustily (except for those bottom-feeders who only stumbled through school for four years and achieved sub 3.0 GPAs).

In college, William was as successful as he had been in high school. Certainly, the unanimously selected fraternity president rationalized, no professor had ever experienced a student as perspicacious as he. Majoring in business with an emphasis on finance and minoring in both accounting and economics, William knocked out a 3.95 grade point average (that creative writing professor who gave him a B, and ruined his bid for a perfect 4.0 GPA, obviously didn't understand what a genius he was and how ludicrous a teacher she was) and premiered on the job market with high expectations. Bolstered with outstanding credentials, established corporations and progressive up-and-coming firms would certainly be involved in dogfights, frantically bidding for the privilege of buttressing their strategic marketing think-tanks by securing William.

It didn't quite work out that way, not just yet. A downturn in the economy, or some nefarious force beyond anyone's control, conspired to temporarily tamp down William's corporate debut. Regardless, without a doubt, he was a brilliant mind waiting to be uncovered and he had the qualifications, in the form of a newly minted diploma, to prove it. All that was required was to shop around his scholastic pedigree (which had put him into \$57,000 of student loan debt) and this precocious whiz-kid would be discovered by some fortunate firm.

As it turned out, Mr. D's Rooster Lounge was the lucky company (the only company to proffer an offer) to gobble him up. Granted, he was over-qualified for his position as food preparation facilitator and assistant quality control manager (please don't call him a cook), but William figured he was just between careers, and as he viewed it, Mr. D's (which had been in business for 34 years) desperately needed his talents. How Mr. D had sent three kids through college and lived in a comfortable home, all from a business built from the ground up, defied logic. They (Mr. D and the staff of 11 full-timers and 12 part-timers)

Meteor Shower

by Taylor Seefeldt

I sit on the door of our family van with the window rolled down, my arm resting on the cool, metal roof, my head tilted up toward the night sky. It is silent but for the sounds of Morrissey's *Viva Hate* drifting softly from the speakers, the constant hum of a cricket's chirp, and the occasional call of a spring peeper. It is just before midnight and we are parked out in the country with the headlights off, eagerly awaiting the Camelopardalid meteor shower. It's predicted to have a rate of one hundred to one thousand meteors per hour and the sky overhead is impossibly clear. Every star visible to the naked eye seems to hover just above us as our eyes scan the sky for any sign of a meteor.

It's as Morrissey sings, "Come, Armageddon, come," that I see my very first meteor. It's just a flash across the dark night sky, but it's there and a smile paints my face. I don't mind that the cool night air is now making me shiver and I don't mind that it's after midnight now or that this probably isn't a typical teenager's idea of a fun Saturday night. All I care about is that I'm alive and that, for the first time in a long time, I'm happy about it.

I had never been taught about the various theories of how the universe was created. It was something I wondered about but had never really pursued. I never gave much thought to the skies or the entities they contained, but I found I had a deep interest in the way our solar system, and the universe as a whole, worked. When I found out about the upcoming Camelopardalid meteor shower, I was determined to see it, having never seen a meteor (what I had always called a shooting star) before.

I slide back into the van to sit back on the passenger seat, leaning back against the door with my head out the window, still staring up at the sky. I am able to pick out a few constellations along with Polaris, the north star, and I smile again. There is something about the intangibility of the sky that fascinates me. My eyes are wide with fascination for the world above me. Waiting for more meteors to fall, he and I talk of nothing in particular in quiet voices with the music turned down low. Sometimes we just sit in silence and listen to the spring peepers call to one another.

He calls out in excitement when he sees a meteor and we both scan the sky for more. We sit and we wait and the slow passage of time doesn't bother either of us. We don't feel obligated to fill the silence – the woods of northeastern Wisconsin do that for us. The hiss of long grass as it rubs together, the rustle of dead leaves on the forest floor when a small animal crosses, and the distant hoot of an owl provide our soundtrack as Morrissey's final lyrics fade out.

As we wait for more meteors, he reaches over and takes my small, smooth hand in his rough, larger one. It seems as though the sky will stay dark now, with no hint of celestial entities on the horizon. We stay that way, hand-in-hand, until our eyes are heavy from tiredness and our backs ache from the cramped positions we've been in for two hours.

We leave just before two in the morning, pulling out onto the road, and our movement and noise feels out of place. We drive home with the windows down and I let the wind blow my short hair into a tangled mess.



Tranquility
by Jueun Lee



did everything wrong. If Mr. D (his actual name was James Davidson, but you can call him Jim) had consulted textbooks and prevalent business theory taught at any respectable top-flight institution of elevated learning, he'd have realized what a troglodyte he was. William proposed many cutting-edge ideas; if only that cheapskate of a boss would invest thousands of dollars that he didn't have to improve marketability and customer satisfaction. Poor fool, Mr. D didn't comprehend that he was catering to the wrong crowd. He had geared the neighborhood business towards an older demographic. If he'd just update to a trendier, sophisticated consumer, William informed him, a gold mine of profits would result. For all William's efforts, Mr. D must have felt threatened and intellectually overwhelmed by the young pace-setter's expertise, because he let him go. Mr. D claimed William had grouched to employees (and customers) what an operational buffoonery the Rooster Lounge was. Too bad, losing William was Davidson's loss.

For the time being, finding himself financially embarrassed, William moved back in with his parents. It would only be for a month...or two...maybe three; he'd see how it would go. Once his dazzling (some said it was sparkling) resume was distributed, offers would surge forth from eager employers. After all, especially now that he had experience "in the field," his impeccable qualifications for a lucrative position in top management were irresistible.

After two months of unemployment, Wentworth Logistics Incorporated decided to "take a flier" on William and hire the blue-eyed, self-confident young man with the perfect white teeth. William accepted the position of statistical account auditor/delinquent resolution manager (please don't call him a clerk). Relegated to share an office with eight other clerks, uh, I mean associates, William soon realized that his enormous potential was not being exploited. The mundane, monotonous duties were far beneath his training. He had even shared a simulated corporate decision tree (a project that earned an A+ from his professor) with Mr. Robert Davidson (you can call him Bob). Bob seemed unimpressed, neglecting to see the visionary aspects of William's school projects. After three months of this soul-stealing indignity, William decided to tell (demand, actually) Bob that unless compensated with a salary and private office commensurate with his education, the company risked losing the young phenom's services. Bob evaluated the risk, and decided to let William pursue other opportunities. Officially, his skill set, Bob tactfully explained, did not match up with corporate objectives.

Two months later, friends saw William sitting at a bar, at eleven o'clock in the morning on a Wednesday, contemplating a half-consumed whiskey and sour. They almost didn't recognize him because of the grizzled stubble of beard and the faded jeans with holes in the knees. When asked what his future portends, William patiently explained to these rubes that he'd wait for the unemployment to run out and then enroll at the university to pursue a master's degree and then a doctorate, provided he'd be approved for student loans. One friend (or should I say, rube) commented that if he had been over-qualified before, he would now most definitely guarantee it. Oh, he wouldn't return to the private sector, he snapped. Once he got his doctorate in business he'd secure a job as a professor and teach it. William had a bright future.





Veins

by Kendra Voelz

Growing up I learned that what I was experiencing wasn't normal. What my father was doing was something known as abuse. I also learned that it was about exerting power over someone you deemed smaller, weaker, to establish dominance you felt entitled to but had never experienced, that it gave you the control you had always felt you deserved. I was told to pity him for his insecurities and to forgive his unforgivable deeds. To not do so would only be a detriment to me and my mental state. It was explained to me like this: I would essentially be giving myself poison to try and kill my enemy. They told me that to not forgive my abuser was to give myself poison and hope that it hurt him. I struggled with this a lot in my teen years because I just couldn't bring myself to forgive him fully for everything he had done.

What sort of person did that make me? Was my biggest fear becoming a reality? Was I really just like him?

"Maybe none of this is about control." These words from the character Offred had a massive impact on me. A lot of the things in Atwood's *Gilead* had me remembering my father, and how I had been told to believe that the abuse was all about control and an exercise of power. For me, my father was the government of Gilead and he misused the control I had given him as his daughter. He exercised this control in ways that made me never question the situation. Any thought of fighting back was removed by him at the first sign of rebellion. The fear of speaking out resides so strongly within me still that I am afraid he will read this and know it's me and the consequences I will face because of that realization, even if it is made by my immediate family. So, if it's not about control and power, what else could it be about?

"Maybe it's about who can do what to whom and be forgiven for it. Never tell me it amounts to the same thing."

A simple passage from Atwood's novel had changed my life in a single, unexpected moment. I don't know that I can accurately describe the feeling that followed this epiphany, and if you already understand it then I can't apologize to you enough. It was like I had been carrying a fifty-pound backpack for the vast majority of my life, and then suddenly it disappeared like the flame of a blown-out candle.

I had never considered the difference between having control and being forgiven. There was no reason for me to have thought this concept existed, and the idea of it caused me to stare at that line for who knows how long. I must have spent hours analyzing these two measly sentences, trying to understand them and unlock the deep philosophical meaning that they held within them. I have had a horrible time dealing with what has happened to me via my father, and the other people who have wronged me to similar degrees, but this simple sentence did something that years of therapy had failed to do. In some off-the-wall way, it's helping me cope.

I understand now, because of this quote, that I don't have to forgive him for what he did. It wasn't about power; it was because he could do it and know that he would be forgiven. By extension, he knew he would get away with it because I would forgive my father simply because he's my father.

I have a right to be angry and hurt.

I have the right to withhold my forgiveness from him.

Or maybe, like Offred, I'm just seeking a way to survive.



Withholding Forgiveness

by Mercy Smith

When I was a little girl, I would make up stories about my father to cope with his random absences. All sorts of explanations would weave through my mind: he was on tour with his famous rock 'n' roll band, a Bond-like spy on a dangerous mission halfway around the world, a lawyer working on a case so important that he couldn't risk any distractions, working on a pit crew for NASCAR, promoting his latest hit movie, etc. There had to be some valid reason for a father to leave his daughter for extensive periods of time, be it two weeks or two years. There would be no word from him for an unpredictable amount of time, and then he would waltz back in through the door like nothing was wrong, with some horrible excuse.

While reading Margret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, I noticed that Offred does something similar to help her cope while being separated from her husband. She is raped under the mask of religion and necessity, witnesses the brutal executions of supposed criminals that may or may not be guilty, and lives in a constant state of fear, all of which is endorsed by the tyrannical dictatorship that surrounds her. If that's not traumatic then I don't know what could be.

"Here's what I believe" is the opening Offred gives before she explains three different possibilities for where her husband was during this time of trauma and stress before concluding that she understands they "can't all be true." "This is also a belief of mine. This also may be untrue." This is a method she uses to cope that catches my attention and is both realistic and relatable, and I know that because I've used it to cope with some of the traumas I have faced in my past.

This isn't the only mechanism she uses to cope, and it certainly wasn't mine. After informing us of something that happens she says, "I made that up. It didn't happen that way." Then she tells us another version of events that happened but also takes that back with "It didn't happen that way either" and then she finally admits, in that same paragraph, "I'm not sure how it happened; not entirely." To this day, when I think back about what happened between my father and me I doubt the accuracy of the memory I have constructed in my head. I would tell myself that my tone was disrespectful, but maybe it really wasn't.

I fabricated argument after argument to justify the fact that I almost lost a hand to some hot oil – the truth was that there wasn't an argument; my crime was making a sandwich so I could eat lunch with my older siblings. See, my father had decided I didn't need lunch that day because of how "disgustingly huge" my six-year-old body was. Not-so-fun fact: I blame events like this for why I was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa. The tales I would weave to make sense of what was happening never consisted of the whole truth; traumatic events like the ones that Offred, even if she is a fictional character, and I experienced have a funny way of messing with the memory of what actually happened to make coping easier, or even to help process what happened.

Offred doubts herself, because of this and the reality she's in: "Maybe I'm crazy and this is some new kind of therapy." There were plenty of times where I wasn't sure that I had properly understood what was happening and I did my best to rationalize it. "This is how fathers normally punish their daughters." "I'm just overreacting." In my mind this was my fault, so I would tell myself whatever I could to reinforce the belief. The most painful one to remember was, "If I were a better daughter he wouldn't hate me so much." Or I would simply deny certain events happened. There are, years later, things that occurred that I can't admit really happened.

Perseverance

by Mikayla Reed

Some people refuse to go out
into cold air under a gray sky
fearing they'll get nothing but frostbite

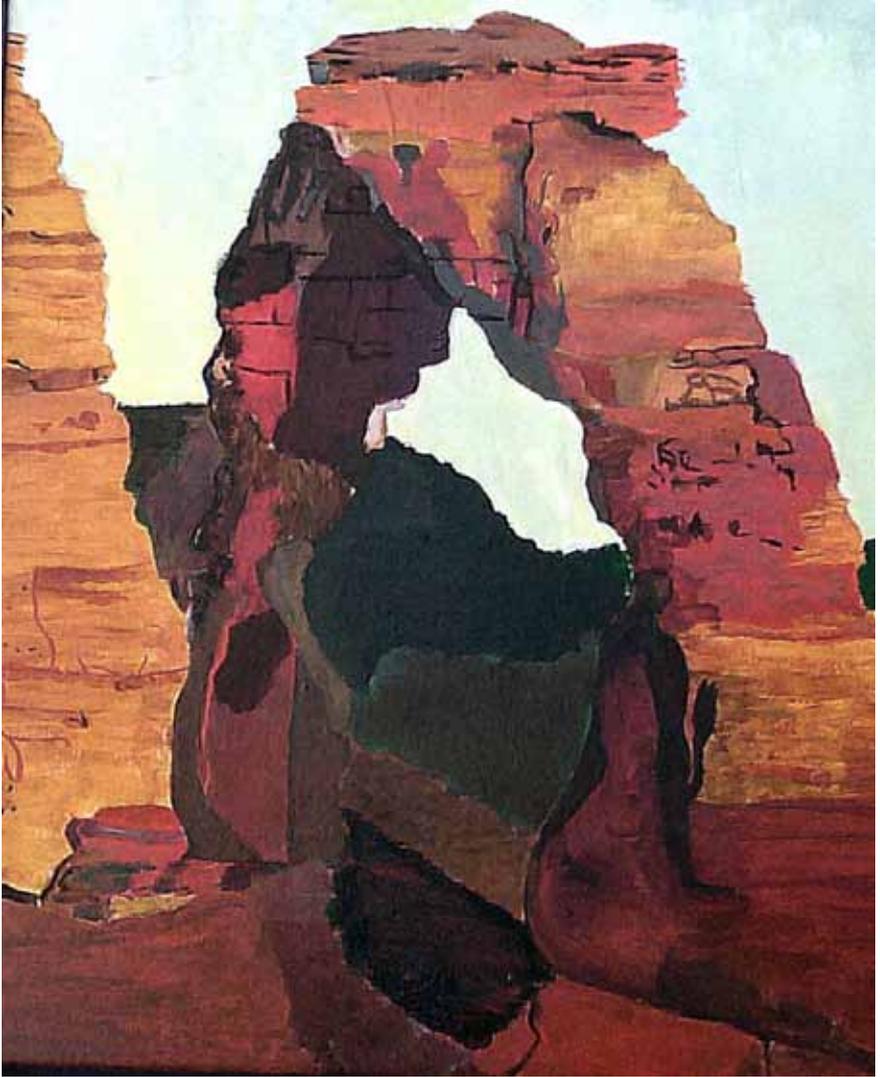
and that heavy snows will fall and
cover them over, a glittering
blanket made of fiberglass, but

I step out into it anyway
and watch the sharp teeth hanging from the
open mouth of the garage salivate.

I walk underneath them, unflinching
as a truck splashes past, near enough to
rattle them like dangerous wind chimes

in the sudden warm breeze that follows.
Geese fly overhead in their formations,
reaching the end of their arduous

journey and settling gratefully into a
nearby meadow. The sun begins to shine through
and I continue down the slushy road,
determined to beat the biting wind.



The Canyon
by Rachel Wentland



Cheesehead
by Meghan Flynn

know many answers but after I a while I convinced even myself I knew what I was talking about.

Dead pine needles stacked on top of one another, an explosion of crossed lines. Standing guard around the clearing were tall red and white pines, now stripped bare of their foliage. In the center, about the size of my old room, was a collapsed pile of stones, dusted with the orange of the woods. Looking at the wreck of what once was my home I couldn't help but shiver. A cold spike hit the base of my spine and traveled upwards through my body, hitting the base of my tongue and coming out my mouth in a sharp whimper. My son pulled on the hem of my jacket and asked if I were okay.

I looked down at him and smiled. "Sure, I'm great."

The two of us turned our back on the ruin and left the woods. The cold air carried the sounds of our footsteps for miles.



Talk of the Town

by Roberta Fabiani

this is the Midwest
and yes everything happens here
just at a slower pace
or hidden well in the cornfields the pastures
in basements and the walk-in closets

we had a dead body
raped and sliced
found not far from the road
out by the edge of town
with a Hefty garbage bag
wrapped around her teenage neck

in this town where everyone
knows everything and everybody
nobody knew who she was
and heard nothing

the sheriff just couldn't quit
even after the community of strangers and leaders
buried her as one of their own
complete with flowers and a blank headstone
flyers with her picture
went posted throughout the state
even the TV ran the dead end case

somebody somewhere
knows this girl
heard her laughter maybe her screams
and just isn't talking
everyone has a history
even those left dead

this is the Midwest
and everything happens here
just at a slower pace
or hidden well in the cornfields the pastures
in basements and walk-in closets

Love Poem to Ric Flair

by Carrie Shippers

After watching Celebrity Wife Swap, 6/30/13

Ric, I need to apologize for all the time I've spent disliking you for the bragging you did in your book, how silly I think you look, 40 years after your debut, strutting around the ring with your platinum hair and trademarked Wooo, \$8,000 robes. There's no denying you're a legend—the signature chop and leglock, feuds you fed for years, 24 world championships and double induction into the Hall of Fame. But when I learned your enemies called you Dick Flair, I totally agreed.

Watching you on reality TV, I wasn't surprised by the expensive dinners, jewelry, limos, endless rounds of drinks you downed and bought the house. But I also saw how hard you have to work to live up to your myth, how you still put on a show despite being semi-retired. At the end, your friends begged you to be yourself and not your character, figure out who likes you when your wallet's closed, who takes advantage of your fame and tender nature. I watched you choke on tears and pride, insist that you were paying back your fans' support.

Ric, because of you I know that even if I hate my opponent in real life, in the ring I have to take some bumps and make sure we get over. I know what it means to take a hard-way shot, have stroke and draw heat, get potatoes and give a receipt. I've learned how hard it is to fill free time you've never had before, to worry that your audience might disappear and take you with it.

Ric, I'm sorry I fell so hard for your gimmick I forgot that underneath the belts and feathers you might be scared, lonely, real. I know the world champion gets the tab to show that he has class, but if you run out of money, you should look me up, let me buy the drinks and pay attention to your stories, even ones where you act like a jerk. Ric, I'm ready to confess: if my heart was a territory, I'd book you every show.

wall of silence around it. Plates of bedrock groaned like Atlas deep beneath the soil, bearing the weight of my world. The forest, the ring of stones, the leafy cot, and me.

When I turned fourteen, I constructed a small hut based on the outline I had planned so many years prior. Day after day I hauled out an axe, twine, and a shovel and worked until sundown. The four corners of the structure were the trunk of a tree I had chopped down and divided. I dug post holes deep enough to gain traction on the pillars and wedged them into the earth. The finished walls were a messy assortment of stone and branches, stacked together and slathered with mud. Across the top of the structure I wove a roof of green branches from the nearby pines, layering pine needles over that in an effort to protect from rain. By the end of that summer my hands were callused, my shins scarred from several close calls with the axe, and the hut stood, ugly and sturdy. It had a primitive aura about it, a sense of barbarism that could only be produced with bare hands.

The next few years my friend and I would meet at the shack after school and trade pulls from the whiskey bottles we had stolen from our fathers. The taste was awful and I'm fairly certain neither of us were fond of being drunk but we felt good breaking a law. By evening we would be drunk and loud, complaining about school, our families, and our classmates. The two of us spent our summer days there, cooking canned food over campfires and shooting at the empty cans afterward. We slept on beds of leaves and dirt, indifferent to how haggard we looked each morning. Outside the hut, our backs against the rough wall, we would try to rinse the lingering taste of hard liquor from our mouths. We'd watch the tree line until our water bottles were empty. The air was crisp in the mornings and carried any sound for miles, so we sat in silence.

I moved away from home the day I turned eighteen, same as my brother. I left my room as it was, taking no more than a few changes of clothes and some of my father's twenties. The sun wasn't quite up when I packed my things; my father was asleep in front of a muted infomercial. He hadn't moved for eighteen years, likely longer. I eased the door shut, so the flimsy wood didn't slap against the jamb.

Thirteen years later the house stood, but barely. It slumped to the right, a weak and old beast in its twilight hours. The windows were fogged with dust and spiderwebs of cracks, the glass blocking more sunlight than the curtains inside. The roof peeled up, the shingles cracked in the sun. Orange pine needles dug their way into the tar of the roof, baring the vulnerable wood to the elements. No doubt mold and rot reigned inside the old building. My son sat atop my shoulders, gripping my hair like a rider guiding a horse's reins.

"Let's knock on the door."

"There's no one home. It's not safe to live in."

I set him down beside me and led him through the tall grass around to the back of the house. Taller shoots stretched up to his elbows, and he swatted them away with his free hand. Closer to the treeline young saplings stood watch over the grass, slowly retaking territory that was stolen from them so many years ago.

"You used to live here?" he asked.

"Yeah, this is where I grew up. Pretty, isn't it?"

He wrinkled his nose. "It looks old."

The two of us walked down the trail I had grown so accustomed to. The bushes and branches, which skirted the edges of the gravel in my youth, had grown rampantly, so thick in some areas they covered the trail entirely. The two of us tired quickly and sat on the side of the trail for lunch. He asked me questions through mouthfuls of ham sandwich, like why leaves were green, what caused wind, how deer spoke with one another. I didn't

This Way

by Daniel Kondzela

I was nine and I was in the woods. White and red cedars stood sentry around me, their roots crawling a short ways into the clearing. Out of reach overhead were the branches of the trees, weaving together and whispering to one another in the breezes that failed to reach the forest floor. Intermittently, a leaf would fall through the green air and land nearby and taunt me. You're small, they would say. You're alone.

I shut my eyes to them. I buried my head between my knees, tears staining the dirt beneath me. All I could hear was the rushing blood pumping through my ears, turning my face crimson with fear and frustration.

I rocked myself there for many hours. I was no more than a small mound covered in a torn and stale sweatshirt, cigarette smoke woven into the cotton.

When I lifted my head again the woods were dark. A waxing moon sat above the treeline but its light was choked in the grasping canopy. The trunks of the cedars, earthy brown and a vibrant orange in the daylight, were now no more than gray stripes against a black space. I stood, wiping the dirt and dried leaves from my pants, and started home.

I arrived at my back door hours later, my knees and elbows scraped and my clothing torn where it caught on outstretched branches. Inside the house the alien voices of late night talk show hosts stretched around each corner; the fuzzy blue light their monologues sat on rested over the kitchen like a blanket. I snuck a water bottle from the refrigerator and ran to my room before the compressor clicked on.

That was the first day of the summer.

It was weeks before I returned to the clearing, the cuts and scrapes of my first trip scaring me off. I spent my days behind a closed door, reading the backlog editions of *Uncanny X-Men* my brother left behind when he moved out. He kept his most prized possessions, comics included, in cardboard boxes stashed beneath dirty Iron Maiden t-shirts in his closet. I was never allowed to touch them, a rule I learned after a hard strike to my forehead. One morning I woke up and my brother was gone, the only thing missing being a stack of CDs and some twenty dollar bills. The first thing I did that day, even before shaking my parents awake, was take the comics out of his closet. The second thing I did was spit on his pillow. That was two years earlier, when I was seven. The adventures of Wolverine and Professor X had long since lost their excitement, but the colors and fight scenes still captivated me.

The voices of my mother and father woke me the morning I decided to go back into the woods. I stowed a ham sandwich and water bottle into my Power Rangers backpack and left out the back door, guiding the screen-door shut, so the flimsy wood didn't clap into the jamb. Halfway across the yard I heard my fathers voice spike in the house behind me. Afraid I'd been spotted, I ran to the treeline, and once again back into the forest. My fear of being caught carried me down the ATV trails quickly, and I ran until my lungs flapped in my chest like damp rags. The plastic straps of my backpack had cut into my shoulders and rib cage, turning my skin red with irritation and blood. Bile roiled up my throat and marred the dirt trail, splashing mud and puke against my shins. I walked the rest of the way slowly; the acidity in my throat made tears well in my eyes.

When I arrived I pushed rocks from the trail into a rough rectangle shape, about the size of my room. I piled leaves in the corner where my bed would be, lay down, and fell asleep. Bugs wove between the leaves beneath me and in the closely knit foliage of the branches overhead. Twigs snapped beneath hooves and paws, the sound sticking into the

Details

by John Thornberry

1

Will Burton picks up his pen,
a Faber Castell Uni-Ball Micro
Deluxe in its slim black casing
with its silver clip
smudged by his fingerprints,
with its cap notched horizontally
six times across.

Cheap variations exist,
marked by larger thicker caps,
marked by fewer thicker notches;
Caveat emptor: The Uni-Ball ripoffs
never write as smoothly
and ideas stop flowing
when the ink skips.

2

They are ninety miles outside of home.
To his left, Celina's legs
sheathed in a sophisticated
thrill of silk
flood his peripheral vision:
With precise transience,
their smoky sine curves
stop his breath.
he knows there to be
Above these mathematic ebonyes
a gallery of sensuous mother-of-pearl
on intermittent display,
a tumbling thicket
of meticulous ringlets
with insinuations of perfume,
the aromatic burn
of sandalwood embers.

1a

Will taps the tip of the Uni-Ball
into his left thigh,
absently fumbling
with a dagger point.
Today, concerning that day,
details,
as they always have been, perhaps
as they may always remain,
details

2a

It is so easy
to drift
down from her supple boundary
of distressed leather,
to meld cleanly into tightly-woven
charcoal and flesh.

It is so easy
to plunge
from the summit of her bent knee
like an Acapulco diver,
down the sheer convex face
of Celina's thin calf,
to break the shadow between
the arch of her small foot
and the distended side
of her stiletto pump,
to remain on that pool's
rapidly shifting bottom
until the impulse to breathe
becomes a swelling mandate,
then to wing back to the ceiling
of that shoe-cavern.

1b

elude him,
looming unfocused and loose.
Will sees that day in pieces,
shot and then scattered,
his memory mercifully smeared
like a petroleum jelly-irised lens
sprinkled with grit.

2b

Celina's feet rest apart,
one pivoting firmly on its gold spike
over the Honda's accelerator,
the other unintentionally syncopating
beneath the clutch pedal
against the stereo's palmed drums.
Will dwells over the slight
parting of Celina's thighs
as he runs light fingers
across her abdomen.
Celina plucks his fingertips
momentarily away,

then fills his right hand
with the weighty cream
of her round right breast.
“I want you, Celina.”
Will slides forward over
the vinyl passenger seat,
higher onto his hips,
“I want you, Celina—
“I want you, Celina,”
so he can chant his litany
of adoration and mutual hands,
so he may moan cajole intone it
into her waiting ear.
Celina’s slender fingers grasp him,
“Oh—Will,”
and her short glossy nails catch
the greenish-yellow
heavy weather light swirling ahead,
as she squeezes, finding and finding
the rhythm of the radio drum

and stops.

“Oh, Will, I love you,
but I’ll wreck the car.
“It’ll be good to be home,”
Celina smiles,
naughty and flushed with wonder.
Will smiles,
naughty and flushed with wonder:
“It’ll be very good to be home.
“I love you, Celina.”

3

IMAGE:

fleeting whispers
about him
he knows why they
staring
when they believe
he does not see them
staring

2c

Men fall—
Will falls—
in love with realities first,

though abstracts come quickly after.
He doesn’t dare speak for women,
certainly not for Cel,
but men fall in love deeply,
quaffing it in huge draughts
like dry river bed earth luxuriating
in unexpected curtains of rain.

1c

Occasionally, one
will respond to his searching,
allow him to cradle it
and hold it to his face.
These, in their cinematic clarity,
slime chilly slug trail
up his cheek like gelid rouge,
lick between his shoulder blades
like a cat’s tongue
dipped in liquid nitrogen.

3b

IMAGE:

the odor of burned apple tobacco
lingering
on saccharine breath that is too close
to Will’s mouth close too close too close
TOO CLOSE TOO

2d

They are eighty-odd miles
outside of home, turning eastbound
onto 3101 from U.S. 60,
when the Honda’s gunmetal blue hood
takes on the warning green cast
of the sky ahead.
The vanishing point of the horizon
becomes an anchor,
a spray nozzle screaming out
wild spinning pavement under their tires,
spewing faded pea-green holiday
streamers glowing like lichen—
a capricious black hole
whose distant Charybdisian mouth
draws them inexorably forward,
but crazily maintains an event horizon
of untouched trees and farmhouses.



Captain Rogers
by Katie Falk

were both too stunned to say anything. I did a 180 degree turn and headed back to Twin County Airport.

I taxied to my parking spot and Father Patrick and I shook hands. “Hmm,” he mused reflectively, “maybe that wasn’t exactly what Chuck had in mind but we can’t do it over, so amen and fare thee well.”

What can one say after such an experience? As I drove home, I tossed my lucky cap in the back seat of my car and thought, “Well and well, indeed. Chuck loved flying and now he will fly for eternity as part of an aircraft’s tail cone.”

Maybe there’s some justice in that. Perhaps he and his son are chuckling over that airborne last rite somewhere in that big airport lounge in the sky. I guess in the final analysis, being scattered to the four winds rather than stuck in the ground or on someone’s fireplace mantel isn’t the worst fate. I know I would rather go that way, lucky cap in hand, than end up in a mausoleum or vault somewhere underground.

“Free as the air,” as they say.



For a moment
they share the dizziness
of plummeting
simultaneously into out of
the rifled barrel of a hurricane.

3a

IMAGE:

Father London
after eleven o'clock Mass
swallowing the thimbleful
of remaining Communion wine
(How does that stuff taste?
Will wonders
shrugging out of the red
floor-length cassock)

IMAGE:

Father London
with a black-sleeved arm wrapped
around Will's neck
around Teddy's neck
their disembodied heads sticking out

IMAGE:

Teddy rolling his eyes
when Father London tells them both
to put a hand inside his pockets—
Teddy's right hand
Will's left
wondering
what could be moving in there

2e

They measure home now
in minutes instead of miles.

3d

IMAGE:

Will flattening his young cheek
against the shadowy plaster
on the stairs
news from the television
oboes screaming from the back of his head
his heart surf-crashing over his sternum

IMAGE:

CLOSE TOO CLOSE TOO CLOSE

inside a greasy telescope
eyeglasses looming larger and larger and
CLOSE TOO CLOSE TOO CLOSE
larger at the small end

IMAGE:

standing over an open toilet
floating over sea-green linoleum
with a black-sleeved arm
wrapped around Will's neck

IMAGE:

CONTACT
(Please Dad im sorry
hold me
dont TOUCH me
Please Daddy)

IMAGE:

Sister Ruth saying,
Father London would like to talk
with you, Will,
in the cafeteria

2f

Celina arcs the Honda southwest
away from the thumping bones
of the Indiana highway

3c

IMAGE:

running to the rectory
on an errand for Sister Judith
out of class!
outside!

somehow

Father London's house and garage
seem closer together than usual

IMAGE:

his father
Demanding
to know why Will is up at this hour
oboes SCREAMING!
from the back of Will's head
(Father London
kissed
me)

his heart surf-crashing over his sternum

(He made me
He made me
He made me)

IMAGE:

another's hand has grafted itself
on to Will's arm:

it is dead to him
it must be moved
under another's power
it holds a man's penis
it is dead to him
it must be moved

under another's power
it holds fleshy purple softness
it squeezes at another's word

IMAGE:

milky strands in the toilet water
Will's eyes burn with water
unable to see

anything but sea-green linoleum

IMAGE:

RUNNING!!!
out of the rectory
around the corner
Right! into Teddy

IMAGE:

Bernard,

leaning over three guys at lunch
the day after:

Jesus, Will, why's everybody
making such a big deal over you
for, anyway?

Everybody acts like
you're the only one
it ever happened to

IMAGE:

but you don't have to go
if you don't want to,
Sister Ruth says

IMAGE:

examination of a collar
a white square between
black walls burning his retinas
(i dont know Father
i dont know why
i didnt tell you

to stop

if i didnt want you to)

black sleeves with dead hands
growing out of them

IMAGE:

the pores
under his father's steel-ice eyes
filled to their brims with tears
deep apologetic grooves
carved out by rapid waters

2g

and onto the suspended ribs
of the river bridge,

into the cerise sunset
that makes the water run
like fired glass.

She places a warm hand on Will's knee. The
air around Will shudders,
pebbling his skin under his suit.

1d

Today, concerning that day,
details,
as they always have,
as they always will,
details have branded him.

2h

For a moment

Will is eight months old and

For a moment

the slamming shock
at finding himself on the ground
shoves aside

the exhilarating surprise
of walking on his own and

he does not know
whether or not he should cry

1e

But he is whole.
And there is Celina.



Ashes to Ashes...

by James LaMalfa

Dust to dust.

The general public thinks of aircraft pilots from what they see in Hollywood movies, Leonardo da Caprio as a stunningly handsome con man in *Catch Me If You Can*, dressed to the nines in airline blue, charming his way onto flights, posing as a pilot or first officer. In fact, real pilots come in all complexions: trim, sloppy, neat, casual, well organized, or disorganized. In spite of such a complexity of types, they share some commonalities. One is a belief in luck and how to get and keep it. So we carry a lucky rabbit's foot, a St. Christopher's medal, a lucky bandana, a favorite key that seemed to help get us out of a bad scrape, and so on. For me it was a lucky baseball cap, which also kept the sun out of my eyes and said "Piper Pilot" on the side.

And so, several years ago, I grabbed my lucky cap, keys and spare battery-powered radio and headed for Twin County Airport to honor an old friend's last wish, to have his ashes scattered over the Bay of Green Bay. Chuck was old enough to be my father and he loved flying, which amounted to a passion. However, he never took that final step and committed to actually learn how, win his wings and fly. He was deeply patriotic and solemn; his only son had been killed in Viet Nam. We often talked after church about aviation and what it is like to fly and I offered to take him up. The Bay of Green Bay and the land on either side is beautiful in any weather fit to fly in, even on cloudy days. Somehow we never connected to the point of actually flying together.

He was in his late seventies and not doing well with a heart condition that eventually killed him. I talked to his wife after his funeral. He had been cremated.

"Jim, Chuck had one last wish. You know how he loved airplanes. He wanted to have his ashes scattered over the Bay from your airplane. Will you do it?"

Of course I said yes. Our priest, Father Patrick, agreed to meet me at the airport the following weekend for the disposition of Chuck's ashes. The weather was perfect, a clear blue sky, not too windy, so I preflighted my aircraft and topped the tanks. Father Patrick arrived at the airport with a bronze vase. Chuck's ashes were inside. He had never performed an in-flight last rite so this was a new experience for both of us. I helped the priest into the right seat after climbing behind the yoke.

"Clear," I yelled and turned the key. My little Piper's engine caught and we taxied to runway 32, more or less north. I broadcast in the blind my position and where we intended to fly.

As we climbed out at 500 feet per minute, Father Patrick looked a bit uneasy, but he was nothing if not game. I leveled out over Seagull Bar and we headed due east toward Door County. At around 3000 feet I trimmed the aircraft to fly as slow as I could, full flaps, and hauled back on the yoke. We were straight and level at about 65 miles an hour, as slow as I dared fly without stalling.

"Okay, Father Patrick," I said into the mic. We were both wearing headsets. "Let's humor Chuck's last wish."

Father Patrick crossed himself, opened a Bible, and began to recite the rite for the dead. He took the cover off the bronze vase and held it near the small window I had installed in my aircraft's door, about the size of paperback book. I used it for aerial photography so I didn't have to open the whole door with the subsequent blast of air.

As the priest spoke the familiar phrase, "Ashes to ashes..." and removed the vase's cover, the slip stream sucked Chuck's ashes out of the container and they streamed along the side of the aircraft. Most were carried back to the tail where they ended up inside the rear of the aircraft. Perhaps some actually landed in the Bay of Green Bay. We

That mother is far gone.

I find myself in my room staring at the ceiling as I lie flat on my bed, counting the tiles, all eighteen of them, and later move to try and find pictures in the nooks, holes, cracks and crevices. Sagittarius, the centaur, the archer, half-man half-horse. The constellation based on the centaur Chiron, who mentored Achilles in archery. I look closer and see the centaur shooting a great arrow at a tribe of weak and defenseless stick-like Indians. They race over to the next tile, hoping to find shelter from the human-beast, but alas, he fires another arrow, this time with a flame engulfing the stone tip. The tribe is sent to ashes as the centaur flees, searching for its next victim.

It's then that I realize my eyes are closed. I open them and rescan the ceiling, searching for the great Centaur—Indian war, but it escapes my eyes. I look closer and realize there's an entire galaxy above me, waiting to be discovered. Black holes, solar-flares, and auroras dance above me as I lie still and watch.



So time is not the enemy.
It is the root.
The root sprouts.
The sprout grows.
Leaves unfurl.
Buds bloom.
Pollen is released.
The pollen that is the thought spreads.
It changes.
It causes change.
Change whose limits are unknown.

Be the enemy.



and her hands are like dry leaves that wither away in the fall. I look at her and can't help but see a once beautiful woman who now I can scarcely look in the eye, knowing that in only one hour's time she'll make her way to her bedroom to smoke her precious plant to ease the pain of adulthood. As her days in this world get shorter, I can't help but think about how I still haven't found a cure for her sickness.

We eat dinner the way you would watch a movie. Silently, with a glance at your cell phone in the boring parts, and a comment when someone says something funny. My mother asks nothing of our days. She doesn't ask if Dani played kickball with Amy today and how her scrape from falling in the last game is healing. She doesn't ask me how my trigonometry test went. She never would. Her silence at the dinner table for years always felt like a challenge to me; if she had nothing to say, I did. Failed attempt after failed attempt of desperately trying to pull words out of her lemon-shaped lips only led me to believe that she was not concerned with our childhood, rather, she cared only about fleeing to her room to fill her lungs with smoke and her thoughts of absolutely nothing but euphoria the moment dinner was over. My mother checks her watch with a glance at her meal as she sighs; time isn't ticking away quickly enough. Without a word she excuses herself from the table.

Dani watches the TV in the living room where ABC Family plays a marathon of *Full House*, and I leave my plate with half a piece of toast-pizza, my stomach reflecting the uncomfortable atmosphere that fills the air. I take everyone's plates to the dishwasher and load it while my mother finds her place on the living room couch, immediately closing her eyes. Dani settles into a nice spot near the unlit fireplace with her blue fleece blanket and leans on the couch, eyes on my mother. It's in that moment that I see my mother do something I've never seen her do before. She reaches her delicate hand toward my sister, gesturing for her to come closer. Dani nuzzles herself into the crook of my mother's wrinkled neck. Dani closes her eyes as my mother gently strokes her hair, and for the first time in a long time, my mother tells her she loves her in a drowsy but sincere voice. My mother hasn't spoken to Dani in days.

Before my mother's sickness, her passion was gardening. She had petunias in every color, tiger-lilies sprouted next to the porch just as the tulips were beginning to wither away. The sunflowers in the backyard near my tree-house bloomed the very last, her favorite of all flowers.

"Sunflowers are brave, Peter," she would say. "They bloom every year, but they always come later than the rest. You know why I think they do that?" she would ask me. "I think they're afraid, Peter. The world is a scary place full of horror and trauma and I don't know anyone who wants to live in it, really." She'd take another drag from her cigarette and blow it out of her nostrils. "But, they come up to see their mother sun and feel her heat on their delicate petals. They grow tall so maybe they can reach up and hold the warmth of her in their hands, but they'll never reach what they truly yearn for, just like us. Not much difference between us, these flowers and I. They get it."

It wasn't until I reached 13 that I knew what she meant by "it." Those warm June days with my mother are the ones I will remember. The way her hair was carried away in the breeze along with the plume of smoke. The way she would lie in the tall grass making snow angels, always preaching about having to soak up the earth before she collapsed underneath us.

Remember the Sunflowers

by Marcy Pearson

"I don't have time for that right now, Peter," my mother says, closing her weary, bloodshot eyes as she lies on the couch in our seven-room trailer. I put my backpack on the kitchen table and search through the fridge for any possible ingredients to make for dinner.

I pull the handle of the fridge and smell leftover lasagna from weeks ago. The foul stench fills my nostrils and burns my eyes as I cling to the counter for support.

Yogurt. Half a carton of milk. A thimble of orange juice Dani always leaves, just in case someone else wanted some. A stick of butter. God-knows-how-old carrots. A block of cheese. Pepperoni. Some spilled pickle juice.

I sigh and wander around the rest of the carpet-covered kitchen hoping that I will find something to eat. Every cupboard is empty or filled with rotting food, until I finally open up the bread box: a new loaf of bread. I rejoice and butter bread to make pizza on toast, a regular meal. My mom used to be a health nut, believe it or not, never letting us have McDonald's and refused to let us buy a bottle of soda for ourselves. "That junk is fattening, and I'm not going to let that happen," she'd say, and here we are, eating pizza on bread for dinner.

"Peter, I need some help with my math homework!" Dani calls from her bedroom down the hall. "It's fractions." She's struggled with fractions since second grade, and I hear they don't get much easier in sixth grade.

"Sure, Dani, after dinner." I drag the cheese across the grater over and over again.

"But Peter, I don't know what the heck a denominator is or why we have to know which one is the least," she yells. God, she's hilarious.

Helping my little sister with her homework has been an after-school tradition for as long as I can remember. My mom graduated high school and married my dad a month later with plans to take classes at the community college in Escanaba, Michigan, only 30 minutes away but ultimately never went. The point is that she can't remember how to do high school algebra let alone simple fractions, but I do.

I gaze over to my mother, who's still lying on the couch, eyes closed and looking a bit too stiff for my comfort. My dark-eyed, dark-lunged mother. I could care for her if the burn of hatred didn't fill my chest. The timer will go off in eight minutes, and it'll take her at least ten to wake up. I meet her at the end of the couch and attempt to wake her.

"Mom," I whisper, jostling her just a bit. "Mom, dinner's going to be ready in a minute." Her eyes steadily widen as her pupils dilate to try and capture as much light as possible.

"I must have dozed off, huh?" she says, still groggy from her nap.

"Yeah, I guess so," I say as I stand up and hold out my hands, gesturing for her to take them. I pull her up the same way she used to pull me up when I was a toddler and lift her to her feet. I take a short minute to inspect her tight, chocolate-brown curls and her wrinkled but still radiant skin. Her cheeks are inspired by strawberries, while her lips look as if they've weathered a desert storm. Her steady breath emits the odor from a cigarette,

A Fall Afternoon

by Austin Maddix

Wrinkles rest like valleys
on the man's forehead.
He stares through his
bifocals watching a leaf
as the wind carries it
across the sidewalk
where it rests against a tall
oak tree. The man grips
the stony park bench with his
withered hands. He leans forward
and grabs his leather wallet
from his back pocket. He works out
a black-and-white photo
of a young woman. He gazes

at the photo feeling its rough edges.
He mouths the word Barbara.
A water droplet forms
in his left eye. It rolls down
the crease next to his nose.
The droplet rests and cools
on the edge of his lip.
It hangs there motionless.
Without warning it falls
to the photo. Before it
can be absorbed by the photo
the man wipes it away.
The man closes his eyes and holds the
photo to his heart.

Irving Shapiro Master Study

by Chelsey Conigliaro





