

RAINY DAY

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RAINY DAY

Volume XXXIV, Issue No.1

Winter 2006

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Submission Guidelines:

We only accept e-mail submissions. Send all submissions to the editor (ejs55@cornell.edu). You must include the submission as an attachment, preferably a ".doc" file. Please make sure all the formatting is correct. The subject in the e-mail must be "RAINY DAY SUBMISSION." Also include within the document your name and contact information. We accept multiple submissions. Send all inquiries about joining the staff to the editor. Further information, as well as back issues, can be found at our website: www.rso.cornell.edu/rainyday/.

THE PROBLEM WITH EATING

Harriet Antczak

Perhaps what I have been craving
Shoes that remind me of funerals: tap tap clack clack
Don't be petty now, remember to share with your sister.

It'll be ages before they discover the body: head almost sawed off, curled inside
trash can with a warning: don't mess with Mara Salvatrucha.
At least in Honduras they admit to the problem. (This is why we write)

Of alarmed faces felled one after the other after seventy more.
Alarming how quickly one can lose touch with
names
A few pictures
Softly falling – the cut up credit cards
Don't forget to call home.

He calmly lit his cigarette while hosing her down.
It was about survival of the fittest.

Running from stone to stone "I win"

Big girl who does the dishes.
And the casual strolling of parents
Little girl with large eyes closed to everything but
Big sister and birthdays;
Kind of like dirt.
Kind of like eating icecream with maple syrup (try it sometime).

Perhaps what I have been craving is (your beautiful body)
Shut locked
It's almost 4 o'clock and where is your daughter?
Is she eating somewhere? Hiding in the garage with those damned girlscoot cookies?

I always knew she'd get fat.

FAT FAT FAT FAT
And not just a fat cat. (abstain please)

Bulging thighs and muscular arms that no longer fit in shirts. Take her shopping.
“you’re letting yourself go a bit”
poke in my belly
Mother knows best.

MOTHER knows best. Father watches.
Father winks when sister yells, sister holds together
Sistersistersister
In the Sistine chapel. An apple a day keeps the sister away.
NO FAIR she can’t have

What is Mine.

He gently held back her hair before slamming her head into the wall.

Tap tap clack clack blond and tall and just like your father.
(warn the museum goers!) that they are just lying about all that evolution stuff.
(I am the resurrection and the life...)

swinging from a cross (Just like that)
“That’s just the neatest thing” and baby opossums crawling in the pipes.
hands almost hitting the table, almost
and thumb jerking backwards
“Let me tell you!”

(Let me tell you)
If every time my heart breaks, I am supposed to write a poem,
I will soon be running out of words.

APARTMENT, 11:40 PM

Barrie Kreinik

I finish a chapter and set the book on top of the bedside table
with the pencil I always use
to note thoughts in the margins.
As I rearrange the beige-encased pillows,
the bedside lamp flickers and the bulb, with a flourish, dies out.

I lay my cheek on the pillow's sheeted surface
and I'm surprised to find that it's warm
and smells of shampoo.

With a moment of thought I know
that the heat and the scent have been left by my hair
where it pressed down under the weight of my reading head -
but for the first half second,
I think my mother has just got up and left
after lying beside me til she thought
I'd fallen asleep,
not knowing I'd always turn over with a sigh
and press my face to the warm pillow next to mine
so I'd dream she was still there.

ABOUT THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

Linda Louie

“In the rooms, the women come and go, talking of Michelangelo...”

It was almost six and he was not in a good creative space. He was on his seventh consecutive beginning, none of them more than a page long, none of them what he was looking for. The last two had both mentioned explosions and a death within the first paragraph. They called this “seizing,” and he was working very hard to suppress the signs: darting eyes, pounding headache, frustrated typing that grew increasingly louder than was necessary. Sometimes it happened to someone who had hit upon a gold mine of a concept, a gem of a line, and other times it meant you were a sad sack who couldn’t hack it. The spasms were the same either way. Fortunately, his cellmates were processing away too busily to take notice; Sandrine had been typing nonstop since lunch, and he would guess she had topped twenty pages by now. It was the cameras he had to worry about, so he kept his head down and his fingers moving.

“Hope is the thing with feathers...”

They really ought to separate the Poets and the Proseers, he typed, and then quickly deleted it. Any sentence that remained on the screen for more than thirty seconds was automatically transmitted to the Main Database that tracked every Creator’s productivity. Metacommentary on the writing process was severely frowned upon,¹ as were the spastic *l;kwermvex ;jflwrojoiw3es* which were another sign of seizing.

Having used up his store of plotlines on the previous seven false starts, he fiddled a bit with the Scene Simulator. He typed in “Maine: coastal tourist town,” and set the protagonist’s Prestige Level to Very Low. It suggested a community college creative writing instructor, and offered him 3-D graphics of possible physical specifications.

While his hands began something he hoped would turn into a short story (*It was two in the morning when Derek finally got up. They had gone to bed with their backs to each other for the first time in thirteen years, and he had found it impossible to sleep.*), he allowed himself to glance to his right side, where he could see Meredith fiddling with the Scene Simulator. She clicked and dragged a male figure into the kitchen and had him undress a female figure wearing ruffled pink hoopskirts. The screen made a suggestion, probably having to do with the historical inaccuracy of the man’s blue jeans. It was too outrageous an anachronism to be accidental; He speculated that she was dealing with some kind of neo-Wellsian time travel allegory, something about the twenty-second century’s rape of the nineteenth. Meredith had been struggling lately, although she was as prolific as ever. Really, Sandrine was the superstar of their cell.

¹ Please observe the irony of this footnote.

“Please resume creation! Please resume creation!”

Damn. Strike one. He pressed Enter a few times to make the blinking red ALERT go away. Now he had attracted attention to himself, and there was no chance to start again. He was stuck with this piece of realist bullshit.

On any other night he would have had to extract himself from Miranda’s encircling arms (her “anaconda grip,” he had affectionately called it); tonight he simply sat up. She kept herself completely still, even when he looked at her from across the room. Her breaths were deep and even. She might have been faking it. Who knew? Who cared?

That satisfied them, apparently, and his headset returned to its incessant Great Works recording. The poetry hour was over and it had moved on to Fitzgerald:

“If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him...”

Derek shuffled into his lime-green beach sandals, grabbed the key from the table, and slipped out the bedroom door.

The adjoining living room of the beach house was tiny; Derek could have crossed it with four large steps, if the room weren’t overstuffed with an impressive collection of nautical knickknacks and other unrelated kitsch. Something white caught the corner of his eye. For a moment he was seized by irrational fears of ghosts—apparitions of drowned children, sailors and fishermen claimed by the sea.

He had no idea what was going to happen. It was a dead-end story, and the transformation was going to have to be painful, personal, and internal. Like pulling teeth. He typed faster. Visible on the bottom left-hand corner of his screen, the Word Count was still 500 below quota. He typed in short one-syllable words, beginning to sweat. This day had been dangerously unproductive.

Derek liberated the bottle of red wine from the mini-fridge and popped the cork. If the first threat of divorce in a thirteen-year marriage wasn’t a special occasion, what was? He sat down on the hammock, which seemed to be intended in lieu of a couch, with the bottle of wine in one hand and his composition notebook in the other.

Without warning, his screen shut off, as did Sandrine’s to his left and Meredith’s to his right, as did all four hundred computers in the Creation Room. Along with the three hundred ninety-nine other Creators, he took off his headset and stretched. Their computers were set up along the motionless assembly line of what had once been a pre-prepared salad factory. During the late twentieth century, Farm Fresh Meals had made its home here, the pre-prepared salads just one part of a healthful, homestyle meal prepared by machines and illegal immigrants. Sometimes it gave him the chills to think that a temp had once stood where he was sitting, perhaps pressing the buttons of an industrial, fossil-fueled carrot shredder. Even though such assembly lines had long been obsolete, he was glad his Talent Assessment had removed him from the unskilled labor cesspool—at least for as long as he could meet his quota.

“How’d it go?” Meredith asked Sandrine, talking past him.

“Not bad. My scene was having some trouble with structure, but I showed it

who was boss.”

“You’re still working on that novel?”

“Yeah, well... lucky break, I guess.”

Novel permits were rare these days, ever since the literature embargo against the European Union had been passed in the fall. There was still a high black-market demand for short stories and inspirational poems, but novels had to go through legal channels and thus were few and far-between. All proposals had to be checked against the Idea Database and presented to the Director herself, and they rarely passed muster. If Sandrine’s first few chapters were approved, she’d probably be moved to a private Creation Station. Once, he’d been paired with Sandrine for peer criticism day and had gotten to read her first few pages. They were original, all right. Surreal and haunting and beautiful, liberated, unselfconscious.

“Where do you get it from?” he’d asked her finally, unable to think of a criticism. “Is it from an Inspiration Wall or what? I think I might detect a Woolf influence, but I’m not sure.”

All she said was, “Oh God, do you still listen to that Great Works bullshit? I unplugged mine a long time ago.”

The main doors at the back of the Room opened and people began to move toward them. Sandrine, Meredith, and the rest of their row shuffled patiently forward, anticipating dinner. It was never anything particularly exciting, and sometimes he wished that he could literally eat his words, like in a children’s book he’d read once. *Mashed potatoes. Chocolate ice cream.* And voila.

He swallowed his sleep aid with a glass of spring water and attached the suction cups to his temples. Tonight, nothing on the flat-screen walls of his Inspiration Cubicle particularly caught his eye. The cubicle was just barely large enough for the twin bed that would rise out of the floor as soon as he had logged fifteen Inspiration Minutes. As usual, the Symbol Wall was the most eye-catching, and tonight it displayed slow-motion explosions of red and gold that might be interpreted as fireworks or supernovas. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see the Grand Canyon on the Landscape Wall. He sat down facing away from the Object Wall, which was zooming in on a moldy chunk of cheese, which the caption identified as *Unrefrigerated Wheel Of Brie, Day Three*. Although he was usually fascinated by the Objects, exotic pictures of things he had never seen or held (the previous night, a shrimp fork), tonight he skipped directly to his favorite part of the room. The Character Wall showed a friendly-looking black-haired woman choosing between soaps at the grocery store. At the bottom was *Sandra, Twenty-one, Painter*. You were supposed to spend at least fifteen minutes each night forming a story using each of the four elements. Tonight he didn’t feel like it, and the suction cups recorded and filed his laziness. Strike two.

The bed rose out of the floor, with him on top of it. Although he was supposed

to go directly to sleep at this point, he found himself thinking of his story. Poor Derek didn't know it yet, but his wife was picking fights with him because she was having an affair with her skydiving instructor. He could feel himself drifting, with the powerful inducement of the sleep aid, and pictured his dreams traveling through wires to yet another computer, which would sort and distribute them to other Creators on other Inspiration Walls. For the thousandth time, he wished that his dreams were interesting enough to make him a Muse, one of the nine Creators whose dreams had proved so fruitful that they were kept asleep around the clock. As he sank into dreams, he recalled the Queen of Hearts telling Alice that they were all part of the King's dream. *What if I'm just someone's inspiration wall...* he thought, amused.

When Derek awoke, he immediately thought to compare his skull to a birdcage, and his headache to one of those pigeons on amphetamines. Only after this morning metaphor did he realize he was back in bed with the telltale stink of wine on his breath. His hair was greasy and probably sticking straight up. If he didn't know his dreams to be as boring as his waking life, he might have thought he was still asleep; the entire wall facing him depicted a smiling lobster nestled in a bunch of poorly shaded grapes. All four walls of the bedroom of their rented beach house were decorated with murals by the same eccentric painter, juxtapositions of standard Maine marine imagery and high art. The bedroom was tiny, with the bed rising out of the middle like an island, and the overall effect of the room was unusual to say the least.

Over the bed was a lighthouse guiding a pear into harbor. This morning, as he turned and stretched and wondered how he'd made it back to bed, he noticed that behind it the pear was towing a good-sized rainbow carp, just barely visible below the surface of the water. The North wall (beyond which was the Atlantic) depicted, rather tastefully, a woman in ornate nineteenth-century dress, ruffled pink hoop skirts and all. She was clutching the stiffened tendrils of a gigantic jellyfish, which floated over her head like a parasol. Upon first seeing the room, Miranda had made a gagging noise and fallen dramatically on the bed, clutching her heart. An artist, she declared, could not live in such an environment, even for a kitschy getaway weekend. When Derek had mentioned that the whole thing was pretty original, she threw a shoe at him.

"Oh, Derek, don't be ridiculous. You wouldn't know original if it was riding you piggyback."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Never mind. Forget it."

"No, tell me. I thought you said you liked my first draft."

"Come on, that's not what I was talking about."

"Do you think it's original?"

“Well, I mean, nothing’s completely new, right? I don’t know what they teach English majors, but that’s art criticism 101, honey. Most things are ugly and everything beautiful’s already been done. Now are we getting in those waves or what?”

He would have thought that in the course of their thirteen-year marriage, the fact that he was a no-talent hack might have come up sooner. The rotating craws of the Lobster Time clock informed him that it was eight-thirty, and he wondered if Miranda was awake yet. Some holiday this was turning out to be. As he reached for his shirt at the foot of the bed, Derek noticed a mess of scribbling in one corner of the lobster mural that looked like it might be a signature. Try as he might, though, he couldn’t resolve it into any letters he knew. Derek wondered if the muralist was the Sandra of Sandra’s Beach Houses, and whether she wore overalls and had a crooked smile and kept her dark hair up with a pencil.

He stood up, the draft still in his hand, and looked out the window. There was nobody out this early, and no sign of Miranda. The sky was cloudy and seemed to threaten a storm: bad news if they were planning fireworks for the evening. Out of curiosity, he eased open the bedroom door, quietly at first and then letting it slam against the wall when he realized the next room was empty. She’d probably gone for a jog.

Sitting alone at the bar of the Five ‘N’ Diner, Derek realized that from an objective standpoint he was a pretty sad sack. Without meaning to—it was an honest-to-god accident—he’d brought his manuscript with him, and it was keeping him company as he worked his way through his John Hancock-sized portion of the “Independence Breakfast.” Miranda might think he wasn’t original, but at least he had never created a character as dull as himself. A Nick without a Gatsby. The waitress had brought him the Yellow Pages, and he was looking for a local skydiving place. Miranda had taken it up recently, and he thought maybe they could do it together. Although if he were frank with himself, he knew he would never really jump out of a plane. He’d seize up.

“Mind if I sit?” The girl who stood at the seat his manuscript had been saving smiled crookedly. She looked young, maybe eighteen, hard to tell. Her hair was black and glossy, and a pencil held it in a messy bun. For a moment, Derek couldn’t speak. Then:

“Oh—oh, yes, please. Excuse me.” He took his draft from the seat and held it to his chest, but he couldn’t stop staring. By the time the woman had ordered the “I Cannot Tell A Pie,” he’d managed to return his attention to his red, white, and blue pancakes. She stirred her coffee.

“So are you a writer?” she asked, at the same time he blurted out, “Do you paint murals?” They both laughed awkwardly. He started to speak at the same time she did, and they laughed again. His syrup was running into his eggs.

“You first,” he said.

“Oh, I just noticed those papers on the seat, and you’re holding them like a baby, so I wondered.”

“Ah—yes—well.” He put the draft in his lap. “It’s not anything. Well yes, it is a manuscript, it’s a first draft of a novel, that’s what I meant it to be, but actually it’s nothing.”

The waiter brought her pie, and she speared a gooey cherry and used it to point at him. “Looks like something to me. What’s it about?”

“Oh, well...” Derek hated this question. At least one of his smart-aleck students would ask every year, always during class, usually after he had deconstructed their story and written “Cliché—where’s the spark?” in the margins. He always told them he would answer when they could sum up the Bible in one sentence.

“The greatest story ever told.”

“What?” There wasn’t supposed to be a right answer.

“If I wrote something, and someone asked me what it was about, I’d say, ‘The greatest story ever told.’ Because if you write *about* the greatest story ever told, you don’t have to write it. Right? Really, though, what is it about?” She swallowed a bite of pie.

His hangover was worse than he thought. Now the pigeon was really flapping around. “I don’t know... it’s kind of a sci-fi futuristic meta-thing, kind of autobiographical, I’m sure it’s already been done... do you paint murals?” For some reason he was sure she was the one.

She nodded until she was done swallowing. “Yeah, I do them for Sandra’s beach houses.” Leaning in confidentially, she added, “I’m Sandra. Don’t tell.”

“How do you do it?” he asked.

“What?” She rested her chin in her hand, looking at him seriously.

“How do you think of things that are completely new? What possessed you to paint a lighthouse guiding a pear into harbor? Where do you get these ideas? Who are your influences?”

She shrugged. “If you think about what’s already been done, you’ll never do anything. If you think about what makes sense, you’ll never do anything. You’re the creator. The world is whatever you say it is. I say there’s a huge pear docking in the Scarborough Harbor.” Derek looked out the window, and he thought he saw it. It bobbed gently with the rise and fall of the water, tied by its stem to the pier. Then he blinked again, and it was just a fishing boat, just your average fishing boat and nothing more. But on the sidewalk outside, waving at him, was Miranda. She was wearing her jogging clothes and holding up a large lobster. She gestured for him to come out.

“Well, I hope you have a great morning,” he said, standing. She looked surprised. In fact, hadn’t someone told him that there was a dark-haired painter who did all of Sandra’s crazy murals? He felt sure that someone had. “It was nice to meet you,” he said. He left some money on the counter and hurried outside, anxious to tell Miranda

about the strange effects of his hangover. It wasn't until later, when the two of them were watching fireworks on the beach, that he realized he'd left his manuscript back at the diner, resting on his seat.

“To sleep, perchance, to dream...”

Just before the whistle blew signaling the end of the day, he finished his story. He was disappointed in the ending, as always: Derek sitting on the beach with his arms around Miranda, watching the Fourth of July fireworks (it hadn't rained after all). There had been a moment, near the middle of the story, when he had thought—but no. He was pushing the limits of metacommentary as it was, but that was more a matter of etiquette than a real regulation. As long as he reached his quota, nothing else mattered. The previous night, though, he had dreamed an alternate ending. It was brilliant. He could almost picture the final scene without putting it in the Simulator: Derek, alone in the dark and utter vacuum of Nothingness and Original Beginning: Derek and a clean slate, with no words predetermined and no possibility of cliché: Derek the Creator, with the whole world fresh and new before him

“Like a patient etherised upon a table...”

The bell rang and his monitor shut off. His story was swept off to wherever stories went, with its sensible original ending. Derek stood and began the slow shuffle forward, anticipating dinner.

Works Referenced:

The Bible

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

“Hope is the Thing with Feathers” by Emily Dickinson

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock by T.S. Eliot

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

“The Greatest Story Ever Told” by Linda Louie

WANTED! A CLOWN INCOGNITO

Aamir Aziz

Beware of the feats of a veteran clown incognito
 Who is a myopic judge and underfed humped gambler
 Convention, foresight, love and reason are whose cosmetic hues.
 He is a royal merchant whose ship capsized along the shore
 He is a serpent, a thief, an alligator and a sage behind single visage
 His gadgets have varied standards
 Builds shrines for the dead and spoils the living
 Lacks sight and pretends insight
 With a storm in his head, his manifesto is the same
 Behold his hurried acceptance of crushing defeat
 The authorities look at their brainchild aghast
 A diseased, incorrigible and humble puppet of sand
 A self-mocking savage, a lip-tight icon
 A drowning carcass, an exhausted hound.
 Vain glorious idolater, blind to the apex threads.
 Wages war and signs the armistice in the same breath
 A spoiled child, whose morals vary across the frontiers.
 A mysterious vase, a beauty without truth
 Toppled numerous gods for his personal throne
 His infinite prophetic flights bear true witness to his godly genius
 But his doglike ambush attacks on the left over, deny this claim.
 A Stone, who has set ablaze his credentials of innocence
 He is a poor mercenary pawn and a chessman simultaneously.
 Such a notorious and familiar stranger he is and still at large.
 May he be residing in your heart, arrest him and undress him.

LOVE

Naomi Tarle

Pink steak on paper plates

Flaking picket fence necklaces

Five minutes from home and a five-year limit

Laced and scurrying in crates

Pigeons choking on hard candy

Rented sun

HINDRANCE

Naomi Tarle

I am my own steamed glasses
I am my own stuffed muffler
My own pierced canvas
Fractured mirror
Decayed fruit
Ravenous dogs
Stealthy crabgrass
Diesel breath

I fling slices of freckled skin
One two three four this time
Against the swirling doors
Large and small

I'm not Alice

I won't go through

PALAZZO VENIER DEI LEONI

Erika Brown

in the bright bluing twilight that happens in Venice
 within the courtyard of Peggy Guggenheim
a dusty veil of violets swooped upon the autumn sky

through the deepening light, I saw Giacometti's walking woman
 pinched out of bronze with reverential pink fingers
 and deserted to the battery of patina

interviewed, he admitted that he saw her standing in the shadows one night
 greyeyed on a balcony, staring at the sea or
 at a party, listening with a drink in her hand or
 home, coming through the hall with her thick brown hair in a bun

 everdistant, silhouette hips and long slender arms
a figure eclipsed by every angle and melting into the soaking dusk

and I began to spread over the brick gardenwalls
 and into the night of lights and ghosts

NIGHT WATCH

Allen McGill

Nearly midnight; silent behind the glass barrier between me and the world below, I watch the lava flow dwindle to swift-moving sparks, limning parallel river drives heading south, tunnel-swallowed where they meet.

Illuminated webs spread erratically between, moving at the whims of amber and green. Spastic jolts and halts, anticipatory edging across painted grid lines. Revolving jewels top black and whites in a race across town.

A trio of garlanded bridges spans the eastern river, motionless but for a lone bus speeding across. Beyond a building spire, rising from an isolated speck of island in the harbor, a beam-lit statue holds a glowing torch.

Rooftops black as pits. Lights appear, then die as cleaners move from floor to floor, office to office. Reflected light in facing windows, from my aerie – too far away to see myself.

An aircraft passes, invisible but for its wing-lights against the matte-black sky. Imagined engine roar reaches my ear, as does the police car's wail, an ambulance's siren. Only a fluorescent's hum.

The city eases into the early hours, barely slowing to recoup its energy. As if in respect for those asleep, or dying. Stars hide, unable to compete with the glare of neon. Midnight; I leave to stroll the empty streets.

THE SKIPPERS

Robert Allen

A few pebbles were dislodged by his foot, and skittered across the shale. John stopped near the edge and watched them disappear into the void. He judged the drop to be something over one hundred and fifty feet, though it had seemed much more. The sun was setting over Taughannock Falls, behind the red ridge of trees up the river. It was after six o'clock and getting cold.

He wondered where Minden was – if he had found his way to the lake. Minden, he remembered, had that impulse inside of him that drew him to the shores of lakes, especially glacial ones littered with flat stones. Minden's huge eyes had lit strangely when he had first mentioned them, just as they had when he had picked him up in Canandaigua, a lone hitchhiker in a poncho and mauve cowboy hat. Lank, ungainly, scarcely able to fold his legs beneath the dash of the VW bus, Minden had talked for the whole trip about lakes, and places he'd been, and what kind of stones he expected to find around the Finger Lakes. He hadn't seemed to mind being bent double for an hour.

When they stopped at the lookout about a quarter of a mile above the falls, Minden had jackknifed out of the cab and ambled down the slope towards the lake.

The sun was right behind the trees now. The trunks stood out black against it. It was getting darker.

It was cold and blustery, and Mid-November. Jake and The Saint were having a picnic, because Jake came from Hough and had never had one.

"Autumn Sabat," The Saint said, laughing, spreading the groundsheet on the rocky beach. The Saint was drifting along on some roaring, slow-motion wave, at least he thought he was. He had been up for twelve hours. He felt like a surfboard.

They had a small fire going by the time the sun had fallen behind the hills, and they sat and smoked English Ovals, watching some dude in cowboy hat and poncho a hundred yards or so down the lake. He was skipping stones.

"Flat ones," said The Saint.

"What?"

"He's skipping flat stones. That's all there is on this lake. It's a skipper's mecca."

"They don't have flat stones in Hough."

The Saint drifted out for a bit.

“Far out,” Jake said.

“Hey,” The Saint said in a loud voice. He was staring fixedly along the shoreline.

“What?”

“That cat down there skipping stones . . .”

“Yeah?”

“. . . just skipped a park bench.”

“Far out.”

“Ain’t you chopped that wood yet?”

“Nope.”

Mrs. Fitkin sighed very loudly. “You know I want a fire tonight. The Darcies are coming over, and they’re bringing their son-in-law, you know, the one from New Brunswick who married little Ellie.”

“She still in school?”

“Now, look, Hank,” said Mrs. Fitkin belligerently, “you know how little Ellie likes a fire.”

“Little Ellie isn’t coming.”

“That’s not the point. Now finish chopping. I’ve made a pot of coffee, only don’t drink it all. You know how little Ellie loves my fresh coffee.”

Her husband did not move, but continued to stare at the red sky across the lake. Venus was in the sky tonight, hanging above Hutchinson’s old willow on the island. “Little Ellie isn’t coming,” he finally said.

“That’s not the point. Now, you know —”

Mrs. Fitkin stepped back with a sharp indrawn yelp as a small boulder came planing across the surface of the lake, crashed through the young poplars they had planted back in ’52, then disappeared through the flimsy frame wall of the kitchen. “The coffee,” shrieked Mrs. Fitkin. “It’ll be ruined! What about little Ellie?”

“Little Ellie isn’t coming,” her husband said stoically. Nevertheless, he was somewhat taken aback.

He found it impossible to enjoy the sunset anymore. Instead, he anxiously scanned the lake for more boulders. There were none. It was quickly growing dark, and Mr. Fitkin got up and walked inside, having seen nothing but an upturned park bench floating forlornly with the wind south towards Ithaca.

How long was that skinny guy going to skip rocks?

John rubbed his elbows, then decided to walk down and find out what Minden was up to. He’d had enough of trees and waterfalls.

It would be good to see Nancy again. He remembered that her flat was decorated with brass rubbings and Van Eyck prints, and that she snored when she slept on her back. He had been away for a long time.

He looked at his watch. It was nearly six-thirty.

There was a tremendous crash from the direction of the lake, and a sudden orange glow that was a lot like the sunset. He thought he'd better go and check.

Damnit, he was going to sleep with Nancy tonight, even if that stone-skipping freak had to spend the night under a park bench.

The Tompkins County sheriff heard the roar too, and was almost blinded by the orange flash. He was making out with Carol Stern in the back seat of the patrol car, and was just getting somewhere. Carol Stern was only sixteen years old, and a vision out of *Sex Adventurers* magazine which the sheriff subscribed to, and the sheriff, in his vague linear fashion, came to the conclusion that this once in a lifetime chance had gone up in the air along with whatever it was that had caused the loud thud and the orange flash. He came close to laughing as he fumbled with the silver buttons of his uniform.

"You got something caught in your throat?" Carol wanted to know. She licked her lips petulantly.

The sheriff licked his lips too. "Get out, you bitch!" he shouted to Carol, "or I'll have you in Juvenile Court."

"You can have me here," Carol said brightly.

That was too much for the sheriff. He gaped at her. She was falling forward in a dreamlike way, spreading out like one of those Giant Hybrid Zinnias he cultivated out behind the garage. Large. Coarse. Excessive.

Beautiful . . .

The sheriff rolled his eyes and buttoned his jacket. He checked out his revolver, and straightened his tie. "Goddamnit!" he screamed. "Goddamnit!"

Carol, like the sunflower still, began to close, doing things up; retreating; getting smaller; drying out; no longer beautiful. That's it . . .

"Get out," he said in an ice-calm voice. "One of those pinko fag college kids just blew something up."

Carol got out.

Mrs. Fitkin ran out of the house. "Quick," she called to her husband. "Something just crashed in the lake – a plane maybe, you know how low they fly these days with the airport right across the way. And us with the Darcies coming too."

“Prob'ly a shooting star,” Mr. Fitkin observed. Nevertheless, he trotted out after her.

“Look,” said Mrs. Fitkin. “It’s over at the park, seems like.”

There was something burning, giving the lake a rose orange sheen for several hundred yards around. It was difficult to tell what it was.

“Come on,” said Mr. Fitkin. “We’d better get over there and check. Could be them Martians.” He glanced sideways at his wife who was nervously chewing her lower lip.

“Call the Darcies and put them off,” he said.

They went back into the house, bundled into coats, then ran down the wooden steps to the boathouse, just in time to see another boulder, silhouetted in the remainder of the sunset, come skipping in the stately fashion across Lake Cayuga. It sank before it reached them, and the waves it caused made the boat knock gently against the dock.

He found Minden standing on the shore with a large flat stone in his right hand.

“Hello, John,” Minden said in a detached sort of way. He was staring out at some burning wreckage in the lake. Each of his eyes was about two inches across. They caught the glare of his fire, and seemed to dance around in his head.

“What’s that?”

“A plane.”

“What?”

“I hit it. With a rock. I was skipping them.” He recoiled his boy wrist, sent the rock skimming a few inches above the surface of the water. It skipped in perfect little arcs about a dozen times before disappearing into the shadow of the opposite shore. Everything was extraordinarily quiet. Just the lapping of the water on the pebbles, and the faint hiss of the fire. It was almost out.

“That’s pretty good,” John said. It was about all he could think of saying.

“I always was good,” Minden said. “I just about quit doing everything else but this. Yes, sir, this gives me self-respect. And dignity, there’s dignity to it, too. You know—”

He beamed a smile at John, and his eyes went on dancing.

“You know, it’s about the only occupation left that isn’t tainted. The only unselfish thing left, the only thing that does any good . . . you know . . . ? The whole world’s a bastard, but when I skip stones, I know I’m doing what’s right . . . everything back into the sea . . . I’ve skipped stones all over the world. This is the first time I’ve skipped stones on this lake, though. What’s it called?”

“Cayuga, but—”

“My father always wanted me to be a doctor like he was, only when I was a kid,

I fell down the basement stairs and busted my head. Having no head is good for skipping stones. It's natural. Ever see automatic writing? It's like that with me. Involuntary. It's what he wants me to do."

"What who wants you to do?"

"My father. I can't heal people because I broke my head – so many to heal too. "Yeah . . . that's what I do, skip things. Want to try one? It's easy. You'll feel better."

"Yeah?" John bent and picked up a small stone. He hadn't wanted to. Something else was working his body.

"A lot better," said Minden.

"What about the people in the plane?"

"Were there people in that plane? They shouldn't ought to fly. It's not natural. It's not safe." Minden took off his poncho and his cowboy hat, put them carefully down beside him. Then he picked up an oil drum, and skipped it halfway across the lake. It thudded hollowly against the lake surface every time it hit, and roughened the water a bit. "It's all in the wrist," Minden said.

The sheriff and Mr. and Mrs. Fitkin arrived at the park just about simultaneously. The sheriff got out of his car and came wobbling down to the beach.

"What's going on here?"

He pulled out his ticket book.

"I just knocked a plane down," Minden said gravely. He pointed towards the blazing wreckage. "That one. It was an accident. I skipped a stone too high. I think it's the waves – you can't control the skip quite so much when it's wavy."

"Listen, kid, any smart-ass talk and I'll—"

"You want my name and address?"

"The sheriff pondered this for a moment, then took out a pencil, attached to his Sam Browne by a fine silver chain.

"Alright," he said, "name?"

"Minden Sils."

"Address?"

"Of no fixed."

"You see that plane go down?"

"I told you," Minden said. "I knocked it down. Hit it just to the front of the port wing. Bet I almost took the pilot's armchair out from under him."

The sheriff was taking everything down, licking the pencil every now and again. "Pilots don't sit in armchairs," he said, when he had finished writing.

"Sorry," said Minden. "Take that off the record."

"No armchair . . ." The sheriff carefully erased 'armchair,' and wrote

ponderously 'seat.'

Then he stood looking at Minden doubtfully.

"Watch," Minden said to him. He picked up a large flat piece of shale and skimmed it over the water. On the third skip it hit a small wave and caromed straight up and out of sight. "See? And that thing must have weighted five pounds."

"Yeah," said the sheriff. "Yeah . . ."

John took Minden by the arm. "Come on, let's get back to the bus."

"You ain't goin' anywhere just yet, kid," the sheriff said. He drew his service revolver, the one with his initials carved on the butt. He thought about those initials as he drew. He always did.

It happened almost too rapidly for John to see, and much too rapidly for him to react. One second the sheriff was brandishing an ugly blue revolver in Minden's face, and the next he was bouncing across the lake, arms flailing mightily.

"Eight times," Minden said, when the sheriff had finally sunk from sight. "It's all those badges. They act like hydroplanes."

Mr. and Mrs. Fitkin were crouched down behind a park bench.

"It's all in the wrist," Minden told them. Mrs. Fitkin peered out from between the slats. She seemed about to say something.

"You can skip round ones almost as good as you can flat ones," Minden said for her benefit.

"Come on," said John, clutching Minden's arm again. "Let's get the hell back to the bus before the whole goddamned force gets here."

"Let 'em come," Minden crooned. "There's not one of them I can't skip."

The Saint was spread-eagled on the grass. "See that?"

"What?" asked Jake.

"Know what Hopalong Cassidy's doing now?"

"What?"

"Skipping seagulls."

"We didn't have no seagulls in Hough."

"Well, that dude's skipping them."

"Far out."

"It's a specialty of mine," Minden was saying. "Just like my dad was a chiropractor. I don't just skip anything. I discriminate."

"Yeah," said John.

"Yeah. I really dig skipping cops. There's something marvelous about the way

the glitter when they spin. There's beauty in cops, at least there is when I skip 'em."

He turned to face John, a slight frown on his face. "Do you really care for me? Love me for what I am, I mean, not because I skip rocks so good?"

They looked at each other. Something hung between them like a sparkling thread. The light from the wreck made it flame.

"Of course . . . I . . ."

"You see, it's got to be that way, or we're not on the same side. You've got to love me for me alone! Damn it, you've got to."

He burst into tears.

John held his arm tightly for a long time. It was dark. He held it until Minden stopped crying.

Minden went on: "I was skipping stones in Clevedon once – that's in England, on the Bristol Channel, and I met this girl. She took me in and fed me, and just last week, I got a letter from her."

He pulled out a piece of cardboard, and waved it in John's face. He looked like he was guiding a plane in to land.

"She said she'd always loved me. I'd skip anything for that girl. I'd tear out my heart and skip that." He began to cry again, drawing great swallows of air into his thin chest, shaking his hair over his face. Then, like an immense crane fly, he stumbled towards the VW bus.

"Christ," said the Saint reverently.

"What's that?"

"That freak in the cowboy threads just skipped a VW bus. You think it's a contest or something?"

"Far out. How many times did he skip it?"

"Five," said the Saint. "I think so anyway."

"That's about two more than you can skip a Chevy," Jake said.

"Far fuckin' out."

They both lapsed into quiet, and smoked cigarettes.

When John reached Minden, the searchlights were already creeping up the shore towards them. Someone was using a loud-hailer that produced a lot of static.

They stood in the temporary protection of the cliff. Minden had skipped three Ithaca patrolmen and a special deputy from Trumansburg.

"Look," said John, "why don't we just head up into the trees. We can lose them in the hills. I know a guy with a farm near here."

“No.” Minden said in a small firm voice. “I’ve got to make them understand. Damn! It’s all I can do, is skip things. It’s natural. If everybody learned how to put their wrists into the thing instead of their heads, the world would be a lot better off, wouldn’t it?”

He seemed to want an answer.

All of a sudden, the hazy pictures coalesced in John’s mind. He could see the ending.

“Yeah,” he said. He touched Minden’s right arm. It was like touching a generator.

“That’s where it’s channeled,” said Minden.

“Go on, man. Skip the whole fucking bunch of them!”

Minden stood up, a beatific smile on his face. He managed to skip three more cops and Mr. and Mrs. Fitken before crumpling up in a burst of semi-automatic rifle fire from the cover of some picnic tables.

“That’s for the Sheriff, you crumb,” someone sang out.

John lit a cigarette.

Three weeks later the first snow fell. Jake and the Saint were sitting in *The Dragon* drinking coffee.

Jake finished the sports pages of *The Time*, then sat back for a smoke.

He exhaled.

“Remember that guy who was skipping park benches down on the lake that time?”

“Sure,” said the Saint.

“Remember how he got shot?”

“Sure,” said the Saint. “They buried him in that old graveyard by Cascadilla.”

“Well, it says here in *The Time* that some cat in Kuala Lumpur skipped the Minister of Transportation out into the Malayan Straits.”

“How many times?”

“Five times,” Jake told him.

“Far out.”

“Every Sunday,” said Nancy. “Every Sunday it’s the same. You come out here and skip stones.”

“Yeah,” John said. “I can skip round ones now. And square ones. And pieces of driftwood. And Seagulls. It’s natural. It’s what he wants me to do.”

“Christ, who? You never tell me who!”

“Minden.”

“What?”

“Yeah. He’s starting in Kaula Lampur, and I’m starting in Taughannock Falls State Park, and between the two of us, we’re gonna skip every goddammed bastard in this goddammed bastard world head over heels into the sea, baby, and then everyone who’s left is gonna get his head busted up on the stairs – we’ll have clinics to do it – and spend the rest of his life skipping things into the sea.”

Nancy laughed. “You’re crazy,” she said. “Screw you! I’m going home.”

With an almost unfollowable fluid motion of his right arm, John skipped Nancy about three hundred feet out over Lake Cayuga. *Six times*, he said to himself. *It’s all in the wrist.*

The sun was going down, just as it had that first night. The trees were bare and snow-covered though. It was beautiful.

John walked to the highway and began to hitch.

Five minutes later he was picked up by a Volvo station-wagon with Michigan plates.

It was cold. He wanted to be warm again.

“Where you going, son?”

“Lake Placid.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“Get in.”

“Far out.”

As the car picked up speed, John had a vision of dozens of snow-clad Adirondack hills skipping off over Lake Placid, and the waters closing in over everything. It was like dirty laundry going into a bag.

Pretty soon there would be nothing left but the skippers.

God it was cold!

Then they’d skip each other lazily out into the sea, and go down warm together.

ON RETURNING IN SPRING

Laura Goetz

He says he saw black robins on the other side of the world and I realize
That I don't believe him.
I don't believe in the other side of the world.

What did he dig with his fingers?
Fresh outline in inked dirt,
Carefully penned comic hero poised before the question of his survival,
Hands calloused as if he lived gripping wood,

No longer the deep cup molded by the contours of the female body,
Stalk of weed and stripe of cloth worked into soft mud,
The mud carried in her bill,
Slight luster of the egg when laid, grown glossy with incubation.

Still, I can repeat the words he says,
Intelligent songs to keep a distance
Kind lines to keep peace,
The sprite red that understands a darker thing.

It was always known
That if he rode up like that,
New car and cowboy hat
Something would vanish as her cry in fall.

If only shadows on worn leather did what they should,
Explain in their smoke and bereavement,
Trampled tarnish and hope for rebirth,
Coffee as color with too much cream.

I mean, he downs the stuff like warm water,
Smooth as stars of the milk group,
Blood well tanned but turned further.
This is what happens when you're not looking.

You forget pictures on the wall and the name of the stove,

Building facades leading back to that car,
The look on a face saying farewell, goodbye, stay where you are,
A song and warning and a mourning Tut Tut.

I don't believe in the other side of the world,
Certainly not black robins.
From the tilted hat that veils his eyes,
Only creeping red of the weary, he says.

Would he believe a calendar to say this frost is a still July,
That this short heat has time for holidays?
Shocked by the season, brought on an airplane,
the blaze of spring in the robin's breast.

He may yet dig through the earth with his fingers.
Seasons have symmetry, may he be so cyclic.
May he return in a shudder of skin,
Seeing the robin's red.

DU LUKTER SOM BLOMSTER (YOU SMELL LIKE FLOWERS)

Laura Goetz

1. *seremoni*

the pastor says she's no good with the language
 this verse her mother taught her at the kitchen table
 but it sounds right to me brings me memories as pictures
 transmitted halfdream and she's more of a friend to the dead
 than me or my brother giggling back pew at the mad
 strength of diphthongs taken to say *he's in better hands now*

2. *the overdressed*

we're thumping bass in our parents car
 passing sheep my mother *awws* a lamb bleats
 country mountain dream guy in the mortuary hut arms
 transversing hip checked the door untucked
 shirt a purple banner in the breeze
 we in suede and silk leave for him the unburied

3. *paradis: a painting by the deceased*

anyman watercolor barns and brown
 this is how i miss him my cousin once removed by lung cancer
 his branches wave like seaweed in the air a rolling cage
 sky to smog and back black the windows shadows blue

4. *sigarett?*

my grandma *mett bestemor* still the cigarette candy bowl
 for old tolerants of *lutefisk* cod soaked in lye their children
 remember with noses scrunched some things i never knew:
 christ on dying spent time in hell
 because she's a gossip we left the church
 it's good to be here even with all the weeping

TO THE SHOPLIFTER I MET IN THE MAKEUP AISLE

Laura Goetz

i saw you with the blush in your hand, your cheeks already flushed like roses opening to the terror of the idea that it might not work this time. i saw you by the magazines, garden of lush distraction, covergirls popping out with hands on hips, saw you browsing the greeting cards, the insulting ones, where you picked the box apart in your pocket and pushed it behind a few yellow envelopes, and i can see how, for you, it's like stealing bread. the paint has set into your skin like a tight pair of jeans. it would be like not having clothing. everyone has clothing. i wanted to tell you how i tried it myself, got to the register and pulled it from my pocket saying WAIT, hold on, i forgot this. i forgot to pay for this.

MUSEUM EXHIBIT, RAINY DAY

Laura Goetz

Someone took the rag doll
That you picked at in your sleep,
Laid her flat in a glass case.

Little bog people,
Maybe four thousand years,
Were preserved where their lives ended:
In the quiet of the unfit marshes,
At the starker rips in their burlap skin,
And at the terror in their animal teeth.

Would they ever know
That violence would outlast their slick twisted trumpets,
The bronze that spoke of dreams and dread
In lives of survival?

They knew it had a place before anyone picked up a hammer,
Pressed its weight around metal and
Pounded out history with stomach thuds,
With hands as fine as the nature
That forged the bog's silver statue,
And every stubble of a face pressed to the ground.
The folded chin, a slumbering calm,
As if he imagined relief with the sunrise.

THE WOLF-MEN FROM THE PLANET PENIS

Ron Maimon

“My name is Stanley, and I will be your tour guide for the afternoon.”

Stanley wiped his glasses from the clinging Penis mist.

“How do you do?”

A crowd of twenty women looked blankly at him through Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses.

“I hope you’ve all got your attire ready,”

By attire, he meant knee high leather boots, shoulder high leather gloves, Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses, a raincoat, and a whistle that hung from a chain along the neck.

The women nodded in unison. Their multicolored hair bobbed in concert over a uniform field of false plastic noses and false black moustaches.

“As you all know, it is not safe to enter the woods.” He said, “You must stick to the trail. The trail is protected by invisible fence.”

He pointed to the yellow lines painted on either side of the narrow dirt path, leading away from the habitation dome, a white bubble which housed the launching pad. On both sides was a forest of alien trees.

“Remember, I don’t want any of you to have to use your whistle.” He pointed at the whistle hanging from his neck.

The women shook their heads in unison.

“The wolf-men who live on this planet are highly intelligent and extremely dangerous. Their strongest instinct is to mate. They mate with the wolf-women, sedentary creatures with enormous jaws, whom they feel an irresistible instinct to pursue. They pursue her in packs of thirty or more.”

“When they find the wolf-woman, the pack will restrain her with their grabbing paws and their trapping jaws. The leader of the pack will mate with the woman. As soon as he is done, she will break free from even the strongest restraint, and she will bite off the leader’s head.”

He made a biting gesture, and put on a fierce face. The women shrunk back in terror.

“Then she will consume his still warm body,” he said.

The women gasped.

“The wolf-man must mate,” he said, “but his instinct is repressed, since he knows the terrible consequences of his actions. But, at some point, desire overcomes self-preservation.” He paused for dramatic effect.

Two women fidgeted.

“Then he will sacrifice his life for his lust,” he said.

More of the women fidgeted.

“So imagine what they would do if a helpless Earth woman, a helpless Earth woman like you, who has no clenching teeth, who has no protection at all from their trapping jaws and grabbing paws, who will not consume their still warm bodies to nourish her eggs, imagine what they will do to you if they catch you.”

“And if you leave this trail and enter the forest, they will catch you.” He concluded.

The woman turned to look at each other through their glasses, and closed their raincoats tight in unison. He could see many of them shifting in their knee high leather boots, shifting their weight from one foot to the other.

He walked away from the habitation dome, and the women followed him double file behind, huddled in pairs for protection. As they walked on the narrow path, the women glanced nervously from side to side. The shrubs were thick and it was impossible to see very far in the Penis mist.

“I know that you’ve all paid a lot of money to see the shrubs and trees of the planet Penis, and aren’t they worth every penny? As you can see, they come in three basic shapes: a cone, a box, and a tube. The tube shrubs are what give the planet its name. Their shape is said to be vaguely reminiscent of the male sexual organ.”

The women peered down to study the shrub he was pointing to. It was by the side of the road, and it made a cylindrical frame about three feet high, capped by a spherical bulb. One of the women coughed.

“NO TALKING!”

The women shrank back.

“No woman must ever be caught talking on the planet penis, as the men on the planet have exquisitely sensitive hearing.”

He picked up a pencil and a stack of post-it notes.

“If you have something to say, use your post-it notes. They are in your left raincoat pocket.”

The woman who coughed pulled out a pencil and scribbled a message on a post-it note. She then passed it to the woman in front of her, who passed it to the woman in front, until it reached Stanley.

He read it aloud: “Who named the planet?”

“That is a very interesting question. This planet was named by the intrepid space explorer Captain Helga Conquest, who spent half her career exploring this solar system. She landed her flying saucer in the woods and spent about half an hour exploring the planet surface. According to her ship’s computer, she returned to the ship slightly disheveled but in high spirits. She then decided to name the planet after the cylindrical shrub that grows so commonly here.”

They walked further away from the clearing that housed the habitation dome. As the shrubs closed on the bubble, two of the women shrunk together and began

to whisper. Immediately a ferocious howl sounded from the distant horizon.

O O w w w w O W o o o o w w w w w w O O w w w w w w O O w w w w w w w w w w
w w O O w w w w w w w w w w O O w w O O O O w w w w.

“My god, they must’ve heard us or smelled us. Don’t worry, ladies. You are safe as long as you stay inside the yellow barriers of the invisible fence.”

The women walked on, now single file. Stanley pointed out the details of the shrubbery.

A post-it note passed down the crowd to Stanley.

He read it aloud.

“Bathroom break. Please go on ahead. I will catch up.”

“Well, yes, that’s right. If you need to pee, there’s nothing to do but stay behind. I see no reason to pass up a note. Just stay where you are and we will go ahead. If you don’t catch up with us, we can always find you on the return leg of the trip.”

Another note percolated forward.

“How long before we turn back?” Stanley turned and pointed to his watch.

“Usually we go out about an hour, spend an extra half an hour at the Penis fountains, and come back an hour later, so altogether you have about two and a half hours.”

All the women fidgeted.

Stanley walked forward, giving a lecture on the flying balloon life on the planet.

Another note passed forward, and then another. He read them quietly.

“Need to rest, no need to wait, go on ahead.”

“What an interesting shrub. I will stay and study it.”

He looked behind him and saw a woman waving with one hand and pointing to a cube shrub with the other.

One by one, in intervals of one and a half minutes each, the women left. Twenty five minutes later, only one woman was walking beside Stanley, a single woman, with blonde bobbed hair, and wearing the Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses although they fit badly on her trim face. She was staring intently at him, as he described the three-way mating habits of the pronged Penis worm.

He walked on ahead, but she continued to stare at him and look from side to side. The woods started to rustle quietly, behind the yellow painted invisible fence, in the shrubs obscured by the thick mist.

He turned to her, exasperated.

“Don’t you find any of the shrubbery fascinating?” he asked.

She shook her head.

“Don’t you want to stay behind?” he asked.

She paused. Then she shook her head.

“Why not?”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“Nobody has ever come out this far. This is as much lecture as I have prepared.”

She paused and blushed. He could see her turning red underneath the Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses. She pulled out a post-it note and scribbled, then she handed the note to him.

It said: “Improvise.”

“Improvise,” Stanley thought.

Well, he did. He told her about his life.

“I can tell you about myself.”

She scribbled. He read. “Please.”

“I came to Penis to be a tour guide after I finished school. I studied to be a dental assistant and I did all right in school, but I was working for lousy pay, and the dentistry was a bore. I started to see myself turning into my parents.”

“Also, I caught myself inspecting everyone else’s teeth.”

She giggled, and he reflexively checked her teeth. She put her hand to her mouth.

She passed a post-it note to him. He read it.

“My name is Bianca.”

“How do you do, Bianca?” he said, and he smiled at her. They walked along the path more slowly now, and he told her more stories. His travels, his artistic aspirations, and what he planned to do when he saved up enough money.

After a few more notes, her pencil dulled. He passed her a sharpener from his pocket, and she whittled the tip to a sharp point, dropping pencil shavings on the path.

She then wrote a note with the brand new point in crisp lines on the yellow pad. He read it.

“I think you’re cute,” it said.

He swallowed, and looked around. She was pulling her finger along the top of her raincoat, and he could see the cleave of her breast. He still couldn’t see her face, covered as it was by the Groucho Marx nose and the Groucho Marx glasses.

“What do you look like?” Stanley asked her.

She spoke for the first time:

“I would show you, but you would get upset.”

The forest around them erupted in a chorus of howls like a flying saucer at takeoff.

They reached Penis fountain after another hour's walk, with her small hand holding his hand, and her eyes were locked to his. Stanley could see the outline of her breast inside her raincoat, and from her eyes he could tell she was a beautiful woman.

"You're a beautiful woman," he told her.

"Thank you," she said, and the howling in the forest intensified.

"Why did you come to the planet Penis?" he asked.

"I got tired of the men on Earth," she said.

He cocked his head.

"They're so weak minded," she said. He started to turn away.

She touched his cheek.

"They aren't strong like you," she said.

She held him close to her.

"They aren't men," she said.

He looked down at her eyelashes fluttering, and he took off her Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses. She was an extraordinarily beautiful woman, with a small pert nose, and fleshy lips, and hypnotizing eyes that waved and laughed at him like ocean waves.

"They're sheep," she said.

Stanley turned to her and put his hand on her chest.

"You dog," she said.

Stanley began to sweat. He slowly uncovered the top of her chest by sliding his hand underneath her raincoat. It peeled back slowly, until he could almost see her breast. Then she took his hand, and put it so that it covered her breast entirely and his palm touched her nipple. The cries of a wolf-man somewhere nearby in the forest changed from howls into yips, the yip-yip-yip of a wolf-man mad with sexual agony.

She slid Stanley's hands between her legs, so he felt her vulva, which was moist. Then she put her hand between his legs, and he stiffened at her touch, and she smiled wickedly, holding Stanley in her hand. He wanted her very much. He pulled her toward him, but she pushed him away.

"You're not like them. Right?"

"What?" he asked.

"You're not like those half-beasts in the woods."

"I'm not like those half-beasts in the woods, no."

"You wouldn't hurt me."

"I would never hurt you," he said.

He paused.

"I love you," he said.

Her entire face warmed, and her smile extended euphorically from one side of her face to another.

"Then come into the woods with me," she said.

"It's against regulation," Stanley said.

"What are you afraid of?" she asked.

"I'm not worried about me. I'm worried for you."

She licked her lips, and put Stanley's hand against her vulva, which was now very excited.

"Don't you worry about me. I'm a big girl." She bent him down and kissed him.

"I can take care of myself," she said.

"And you," she said and kissed him again.

"I've never met a woman like you," Stanley told her. She smiled radiantly, her mouth a perfect triangle.

"But I can't come into the woods with you," he said.

She bent down on her knees and unzipped his pants. She unwrapped his penis and she put it in her mouth. She swayed back and forth slowly for a minute, until he groaned. Then she stopped and stood up. He folded his penis back into his pants.

"I love you," he told her. His eyes filled with desire.

"Then come on," she said, and she led him by the hand.

He stepped to the yellow line, which she crossed, and he looked at it. He gingerly put his foot on the other side then stopped, short of breath.

"You're not going to back out now?" she asked him.

She pushed his hand deep into her vulva. Stanley swallowed, and put his other foot across the barrier. Then they were across.

"See, it's not so bad is it?"

"I guess not," he said.

"But they don't know we're across yet," he added.

Her eyes glazed over and he felt the pulse in her arm quicken.

She led him through the cubical shrubbery, past two cylinders and a pyramid. He saw the pronged Penis worms slithering away from their footsteps on the forest floor and entering the wet ground below. One of the Penis worms lifted its forked body at them, and waved its heads in a sinusoidal pattern, pushing them closer then further apart. They passed a human hand sized paw print in the ground. There were more prints, leading through a half-cleared path in the woods to a small area which was fully cleared of shrubs and trees.

They stepped through until they were right by the clearing, where the paw-prints were dense, and Bianca stopped with Stanley under a tree at the very edge.

"Hold me," she said. "I'm afraid."

Stanley held her near, and put his hand on her hip. He turned her to kiss, but her eyes burned and body shook so much and her smile twisted so perversely that he

thought better of it.

“What do you think they’ll do now?” she asked, her voice cracking.

“I don’t know,” he said. “Let’s go back.”

“No,” she said plaintively. “No. Just a few more feet.” She pulled him after her into the clearing, and her body and his entered the circle of trees.

Stanley was immediately ripped away from her as if by a tidal wave, by four ferocious grabbing paws and he felt clenching teeth sinking into the flesh of his arm. The clenching teeth sank so that they just held, but did not pierce the skin, and immediately, a pack of wolf-men descended from the trees above, pinning Bianca’s arms and legs with trapping jaws, and grabbing at her coat with their grabbing paws. Stanley was forced to the ground by the trapping jaws, his head was twisted by the grabbing paws so that he was looking at Bianca, and her body was shorn of its raincoat, and she screamed.

It was a scream of unadulterated naked desire.

Stanley looked at her face, her eyes glazed with a drugged glow, as the maned leader of the pack moved over to her prone body. The jaws of the wolf-men held Bianca’s arms pinned to the ground, and her legs pinned in the air, their teeth clenched on the leather of her gloves and the leather on her legs. Stanley noted the wolf-men’s retracting teeth, and reflexively admired the precise delicacy with which they extended and retracted from the jaw. Bianca’s raincoat was held aloft in the paws of a wolf-man standing upright. The standing wolf man yip-yip-yipped, and shook and bowed his body deeply before the maned leader of the pack, who growled at him then turned his piercing red eyes on Bianca. She gasped and exhaled a sigh of anticipation.

Then her sigh became a moan, and the moan turned into a broken whisper, which broke because her breath stopped short as the wolf-leader bent his head to take in the odor of her vulva.

She looked down at him, her arms immobilized by the trapping jaws and her legs immobilized by the grabbing paws of four separate wolf-men, all of whom averted their red eyes from the leader.

The leader then stood up to reveal his penis.

His penis was red and enormous, and throbbed in the night air. Drops of lubrication dripped from its tipped end.

He stood only for a moment, and he plunged his penis into her, and her scream again pierced the heavy air. Then she stopped screaming, and started moaning and the moans came in time with the thrusts.

The wolf-man grunted with ferocious pleasure, and began to slowly work his way inside and out of her quivering body. Stanley saw her shake her head back and forth. Then the wolf man put his grabbing paw on her vulva, and put his trapping jaw on her bare breast, and kneaded her breast with his clenching teeth gently, and massaged her vulva with his grabbing paw.

The wolf-man who was holding Stanley's head became so excited, his penis lifted up and ejaculated. Stanley felt drops of semen raining down on his face. Then the other wolf man holding down his arms ejaculated, and he felt drops of semen stain his shirt and neck. The two men clenching his legs immobile then switched from their jaws to their paws, and looked at their leader mounting Bianca, and then they turned around and involuntarily ejaculated over Stanley's groin and legs. Then the wolf-men at his head recovered, and again put his paw on Stanley's head which turned so he was looking at Bianca.

Bianca was looking back at him, watching the semen run down his face, and the wolf-man inside her was close to orgasm. She looked into Stanley's eyes and her drugged eyes smiled at him. She mouthed an O, then her body, massaged by the grabbing paws and stimulated by the clenching teeth of the maned leader, buckled into orgasm, and her head shook. The leader collapsed upon her with a heartbreaking howl of pleasure, and his red eyes glazed with contentment.

The wolf-men grabbing Bianca and Stanley let go with their jaws and their paws, and dropped on all four. They crawled up the trees with the same ease that they walked on level ground. Bianca lay in the arms of the wolf leader for five minutes. Then he too rose up and walked away from her and ascended into the canopy.

Bianca rolled to her side and lifted on her hands and knees. She gathered her raincoat and crawled carefully toward Stanley. When she was by his side, she pulled out tissues from her right raincoat pocket. She wiped the semen off his mouth, and from around his face and neck. Then she wiped it off his torso and waist. Then she cleaned his legs. Finally she cleaned his shoulder and nestled in the nook of his arms and closed her eyes.

Stanley turned her over and kissed her. Then he lay on top of her and moved to unzip his pants. He pressed his penis against her nude body.

"You've got to be kidding," she said.

He paused, and looked down at her exposed vulva.

She looked at him disapprovingly. "I'm done."

She shook her head, touched her vulva and winced.

Stanley crawled off of her, and let her nestle back in his arm.

She said, "Wake me up in twenty minutes," and fell asleep in the crook of his arm smiling. Stanley looked at her sleeping form and shook with complete, paralyzed, devotional love, a love like he had never felt before, a love that he could never feel again.

Twenty minutes passed, and Bianca opened her eyes. They stood up together and she draped her raincoat on her naked body. Stanley still shook with adrenaline

and his testicles ached. He didn't dare close his eyes because he was afraid of the images that would project on his closed eyelids like a newsreel.

They walked back to the yellow outlined penis fountains, where Bianca picked up her Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses from the fountain's side and put them on her face. Her beautiful nose was now covered by a plastic Groucho Marx nose.

Then she clenched her raincoat tight over her body and tied the sash, and hobbled forward in a slightly bow-legged gait along the path back along the way they came. Stanley walked behind her silently, his hand shaking.

"We'll see the other women soon," he said.

"I know."

He put his shaking hand on her shoulder.

"I love you," he said.

She turned to look at his pleading eyes. "I know," she said.

"Take me with you," he said.

"I don't know," she said.

"Please, take me back with you. Take me back to Earth." She turned to him.

"I love you," he said. "I love you so much," he said, looking at the ground.

"I can't live without you," he said.

"I can't take you with me, Stanley," she said.

They walked in silence, and after half an hour's walk, they saw a woman lying by the side of the path, her body covering the yellow line of the invisible fence. Her arm covered her eyes, her mouth twisted open in a contented sleep. Her raincoat and hair were slightly disheveled.

Bianca bent down and woke up the sleeping woman, and she startled, confused, and looked at her with slight embarrassment through the Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses. She stood up, and filed behind Bianca, who filed behind Stanley and didn't hold his shaking hand.

Then they came across another woman, slightly disheveled, with her head resting on her knees by the side of the road. She stood up and joined the precession.

They continued, and they passed, in one and a half minute intervals, each of the woman that they had left behind by the side of the path in turn, each one prone and slightly disheveled. Each one joined the precession at its end.

Then the path turned slightly, and they saw the habitation dome rise in front of them through the mist like a big white egg.

Stanley did not say a word on the way back. He did not enjoin them to visit the refreshment bar for a complementary cocktail and a cigarette. He did not go over the procedures for flying saucer embarkment and descent. He did not distribute the progesterone tablets. He did not invite the women to visit again, nor did he collect their ticket stubs.

The women, for their part, did not pass forward a single post-it note.

When they reached the habitation dome, the women all went inside, leaving

only Bianca who stood at Stanley's side. She took off her nose-and-glasses.

"I had a great time," she said.

"Please don't leave me," he said.

"I will always remember the moments I had with you. They will play forever like a motion picture in my mind," she said.

"Please don't go," he said, dropping on his knees.

She bent over and kissed his forehead, and ran her fingers through his hair. She turned around and Stanley saw her walk inside the habitation dome, and heard the click of the airlock door closing behind her. He put his head in his hands and crouched down, and didn't move. He waited until he heard the sound of the flying saucer lifting into the foggy sky. Stanley stayed crouched on his knees, shaking in the Penis mist, until the sound of the saucer faded above, then he collapsed on his stomach and buried his face in the Penis dirt.

THE CARTOGRAPHER

Dave Golland

There he sat, with rolled up sleeves;
the cartographer of the human mind.

Behind his enamel-keyed typewriter,
beneath his slack, striped tie and Panama hat,
he laid out his excursions.

He worked amid a wilderness of finished scrolls
depicting wrinkled boundaries
and the domains of ancient empires.

He was on his nightly third ashtray
and that's why they hired him;
his diligence and skill were unsurpassed.

A pen watched from behind his ear
as he etched lines of longitude
across the expectant parchment.

Meanwhile, the outside world lit up his face
between inch-thick bands of shadow.

His fingers traced the elaborate contours
of a flowering compass rose.

The ceiling fan was keeping time
as he carefully placed
X's where all the treasures were buried.

They paid him well to chart
the locales of his subconscious
and the shapes of his consummate experience.

These were not your typical diagrams;
a rare few needles could direct you

in their cardinal directions.

But when she hiked her high heels through his door,
and her perfume traversed its way across the room...

When she strode in,
he got lost.

(SO) ALLEN AND WALT MEET IN THIS BAR.

Jonathan Papas

I.

I dream of naked white boys
playing basketball-
these age seven savages run flat-footed to
the basket,
their middle class values hanging off
of them
like long black shocks of pubic hair
scraping the ground.
they move with no grace, rather with lead
(like the metal)
of foot, a loping tilting jilt, punctuated by periodic
squalls of Plant and Page-
the run of young adults whose knee caps
have been bashed out
by the aluminum baseball bats of unqualified
commercial love.
the shortest one, his bare ass a luminous maxi-pad,
wears bright red air jordans.
as he launches towards the basket, the logos
on his feet seem to swarm
and come loose and funnel around his legs, a tornado
of triangular angels.
as he begins his rapid descent two feet below
the net,
his logos fail him and stop humming, becoming little
white men, false silhouettes
plastered on bright red sneakers. they leave him
as he falls, cheap and broken.
the other boys keep playing around him, sporting their
genitals like bowling trophies. I do not know
why they are naked- they are young enfranchised and
white, filled with foam from cheap beer
and I love them, their white slit maxi-pad asses trotting
on hot blacktop,

and I love them, their translucent sweat smelling of old curly fries and baking powder. I love them because they leave the taste of rough cotton and gatorade stuck on the roof of my mouth.

Ia.

hey old man kitty
 kitty kitty kitty
 you gonna get us in some trouble huh?
 you gonna sit under the barstool,
 hissing and pawing good walt's leg
 over there, screeching for some milk,
 a rat, a hand to tickle your ancient tomcat'd cock?
 gonna wail and scratch my leg like
 razorblades whittling fingers?
 gonna circle around my chair clockwise
 ohm mani padme hum oh mommy paid my hunk
 of tan'd ass muscles, crying as he pulled up
 his pants and pulled the oak door shut with eye-water?
 old bastard, the scent of hundreds of feral kitty clits
 stays locked up in your nose with worms and mites, but
 all you want is yeoman walt's leg to hump into submission-
 every piece of feline ass there has ever been wants your
 eye-patch'd snaggletooth'd seed inside her, but you just
 want walt's long brown hat fingers stroking your belly
 and curling innocently away from your curved buddha-lingum.
 just want some milk, some creamy emptiness to
 punctuate your pleased purrs, skin dancing slowly and
 awkwardly around furry nethers. but I will pray to
 your half hidden nipples, peeking out from
 your singed orange fur, and I will feel a jive in my ass.

Ib.

I am confused- did Walt Whitman know of basketball, or am I getting this all mixed up with a poem by Sherman Alexie, who wrote a lovely Robert Johnson book *reservation blues*. I wish Whitman had at least known about real ass-stomping spiritual blues, or something at least about gin covered sawdust floors, rather than knowing all about boys near clear blue lakes.

What would Walt think of his state, overrun by Sherman's liquor stores and "no sovereign nation, no (Indian) reservation?" Would the father of anglo-american poetry give an ass-stomping to the higher ups or would he go down into his sawdust-covered basement, stand on a chair, look down at the lakes of words on his floor and hang his head in shame, never getting to see 3-on-3 basketball?

I think Allen (if he could) would take Walt to a fancy reservation-only restaurant (the kind he would go to before giving an ass-stomping and suck off to a beautiful boy with a straight-as-sawdust spine) and give him oceans of vodka, lakes of raspberry schnapps, until walt's bladder was the size of a basketball. Then Allen would take him home to lie on top of books about buddha and Sherman

tanks. Allen would ask him if he ever wanted to give an ass-stomping to another man, and Walt would cringe, because the sawdust beauty of Allen's shrugged off words would shine like a lake covered in midday sun, too warm and bright for sitting on the basketball court and absorbing warmth. But the words would push through like Sherman's march through Georgia, burning without reservation.

Allen would want to fly around the anglo father of American poetry like sawdust shards caught in a vacuum, he would want to be the lake that Whitman writes about, that he makes love to with naked basketball-sized toes. Whitman wants to leave and get away from his Sherman tanks and giant linga, he wishes he had never gotten the reservation to that fucking restaurant, he wants to give the bartender an ass-stomping of the most profound kind. He dreams of eye-blue lakes as Allen slumbers next to him, and he is there, basketball in hand, playing against bare-chested kid TV mascots from the Sherman theatre, yellow parrot heads on top of bodies from the Turning Stone reservation casino, their lanky dealer bodies getting an ass-stomping from walt, his long gray beard machining their offence into sawdust.

The lake was his court, and although he never read *reservation blues* you could tell that his basketball money honey would cause quite an ass-stomping to his brother, who still sees Sherman in his spinning dead mind, burning Atlanta into sawdust.

Ic.

In a bed two men envelop each other in cloud,
two men reaching out into the air with old
and wrinkled hands, consciously picking
out every last bit, moving it around to where
they think it ought to be.

the one with the long white beard
lays on his side cupping the one with salt and pepper
chin hair with a hooked elbow. they do not
say a word.

salt and pepper, curled up in white beard,
rubs his gout ridden fingers, his stomach sticking
out above his ribcage, skinny buddha, coke
bottle glasses perched on his nose.

white beard's right arm is dead, pins
and needles, and his grassy thick arm hair
looks like shoots springing out of the ground
of salt and pepper's sun tanned skin.

they are many in one bed, clouds and delicate
shifting on soft sheets. they can lay here all day,
until the sky turns autumn cream and blue, arms
going numb and stomach hairs teased by a cold autumn draft,
golden cloud puffs swimming in and out through the open window.

Id.

back in the bar, before any of this might happen,
allen looks at walt, and walt looks at allen,
and the cat rubs against the barstool
and the Italian white trash in the parking lot play some pickup basketball,
moving with wraith-like dignity from hoop to hoop,
sweat bleeding depression from their souls,
jimi hendrix playing on their iPods
and they are not white or jewish
or black Buddhist, they are the form and grace of
bodies moving together, sweet music filling the dead air space,
and the couple next door hold each other's hands,
watching "It's a Wonderful Life" with their fingertips,

so close together, that if you looked in from the outside, you'd swear their hands
can't
be any closer than their eyelashes, and
back in the bar, the poets raise their glasses and toast
to the new year, three months away.

CARD POEMS

Matthew Lowenstein

I.

Deep in the woods
I dropped a card
The Three of Elevens
From a deck that was missing
All of the Twelves.
Now on my own
Deep in my thoughts
And caught in the middle
Of a tiresome book
The deck is still full
Of Wonderjacks, Threes
And all of the Twelves.

II.

The Ace of Jacks
Is an unlucky card
Like the Suicide King
Who takes his own place
When he cuts off his head,
But the Four of Diamonds
Will bring you good luck
In the night full of Spades
When the Jackal of Nightmares
Creeps into your bed.

UNTITLED

Alan Weber

long lined hole
with vague sheath
fervent Eskimos
on an Ice Bear Jag
Have trampled all the
Sylphion seeds
from Arkabama to
a banjo on her knee
And jet Jesuits
Don their sleek fox gloves
To feel the snake's tongue prickle
Swollen under brambles

REDEEMING RAIN

Annie Wong

The sun had baked the ground hard and strong, so that when the rains finally came the waters ran in rushing torrents through the ravines, the floods mocking in their very abundance the bleached-white bones that went clattering downstream. Fat droplets burred, disturbing air bubbles that had sought shelter 'neath thick, low leaves. The waters rose yet higher. Creatures scurried for cover as the clouds grumbled overhead. The rain ran warm off hot roofs, gradually ceasing to hiss in protest as it hit black metal. It became increasingly difficult to see. No longer was the rain a welcome relief from relentless heat, a baptism into some kind of new life -

No.

We had prayed for rain from a God who, time after time, had been cruelly silent. And slowly - imperceptibly at first but soon it became unmistakable - the waters had come in response. As they rose, those who had fought the drought and lived on only despair wondered whether life-saving water had come, finally, to finish us off...

Okay. So it wasn't going to rain after all. So, in the meantime, the heat wasn't that bad. And it wasn't the Wild West or the Oregon Trail, or any of that other romantic adventuring-or-other you fall into before *ennui* crusades in and knocks you flat. (Or was it *joie d'être*? I never could get those two straight.) But even the most die-hard of the camp directors admitted it was abnormally hot, such that the air hit you when you set foot outside. *Former swamps were now ominous beds of sun-cracked hell; one by one, the starved buffalo keeled over. Ol' Bill and me kept alive by wringing dew out of birds' feathers and peeling fish off the ground that'd done shriveled up before they'd knowed they was thirsty. It ain't no lie, I tell yer. We know because we were there...*

resting mid-day at Camp Anoki, in a mysteriously stale-smelling but shady enclosure fondly known as the veritable "Anoki Armpit." This week, in addition to its usual allure as local watering hole, the 'Pit proudly showed off its latest acquisition: puddles that came with their very own tadpoles. Or rather, Sunday's rainstorm that came with its very own stork. Little Ryan had asked, entranced, "Tadpoles! Where did they all come from?"

"Out of the sky," I deadpanned. But no matter their origin, tadpoles are compelling. The kids would pause at the 'Pit when they could and gape at the frogs-to-be with a quiet calm I'd only seen in half-asleep bodies at breakfast. Truth be told, I, as their counselor, was even a little jealous. What did those tiny, bug-eyed tadpoles have by way of fascination and command that I didn't? Flagella, I guess.

Day after day, stop we did. We looked. We gaped. They flagellated. *The angry sun beat its unceasing revenge. Resentful of Man's worship of water, it resolved that Man could*

praise whatever force on Earth, as long as the sun's heat, alone, was feared... Day after day we watched as the water level plummeted. The miniature ocean receded into little lakes, which turned into puddles. Finally, the tadpoles bumped helplessly, exiled in old footprints, little rivulets, a forgotten paper cup.

"Look! There must be a b'jillion of them," piped a voice up front. At that age, you can't really tell whether it was a girl or a boy speaking.

"But not for long. See how the tadpoles over here are all small and dried up?" said a self-assured youngster, to a chorus of various "Ewww" sounds. Then, matter-of-factly and without the slightest hint of emotion, someone observed: "They ran out of water." The dozen or so of them let the last statement sink in for a while before each giving a reverent squirt-salute of the water bottle into the vicinity of the tiny departed. *We waited for salvation, a resurrection, that did not come that day.*

"Of course it didn't work," I heard.

"Maybe it takes a while, you know?" said another.

"Let's go – I give up. When's dinner?" rejoined a third.

"Can we pick flowers?" yet another asked. *Consider the lilies of the field... they toil not, neither do they spin...* I wondered where tadpoles figured into the equation and, later that night, dreamt of pale yellow flowers blooming with a tadpole in each dew-filled center.

The sun had baked the ground hard and strong, so that when the rains finally came in the night the waters ran in rushing torrents, moving silently over camp, the incoming storm silent enough that the swish of running water roused none of the people fast asleep in bed. Fat droplets burbled, disturbing sleepy tadpoles out of their stupor and leaving shining bubbles of air on the puddle beds. The waters rose yet higher. Creatures scurried for cover as the clouds mumbled overhead. The baptizing rain ran warm off hot roofs, gradually ceasing to hiss in protest as it hit black metal. God who, time after time, had been cruelly silent, had slowly – imperceptibly at first but soon it became unmistakable – responded after all, as if to say: *You see? They sow not. Neither do they reap. Yet I send rain all the same in my own time.* Yes. In the morning we realized that even tadpoles are redeemed. Redeeming rain – where did it come from? Out of the sky, of course.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

[Editor's note] **Robert Allen** published “Cop Skippers” in the second issue of *Rainy Day* in 1970. The Alumni office informed us that there were at least a dozen Robert Allens attending Cornell in 1970, and that we could take our pick. A google search of “Robert Allen” yields 50,800,000 results.

Harriet Antczak ('05) is a native of Ithaca, NY. She studied English and History at Cornell, and is looking forward to launching a teaching career in June. She has two dogs, Ellie and Zoey, and is passionate about Hungarian poetry.

Aamir Aziz is a local of Pakistan, 22 years old, working as a lecturer in English and getting ready to leave for the Netherlands in January 2006 for his PhD in English literature from Leiden University. He has more than a dozen international poetry and prose publications.

Erika Brown is an English major concentrating in contemporary writing and poetics. She enjoys art, theater, and traveling and does them often and in varying capacities. She's also deeply invested in sustainability. After graduating, she plans on learning Spanish and eventually going back to school.

Laura Goetz, the English major one, was born in The Carousel Capitol of the World, some say on one of those princess benches that only the lame kids ride, but no one likes a rumor mill. She may sing for you if you approach cautiously.

Dave Golland would call himself a writer by hobby. He gets his inspiration from the music he listens to, the movies he watches, and things he learns in class and outside. He has learned that strawberries and peaches taste good in the summer, and everyone has much more to say than what is being said. If he had one wish, he would wish people took the time to listen to each other and share more, and for it to be summer with peaches and strawberries. Also, he is a sophomore studying Computer Science in the Engineering school.

Barrie Kreinik is a junior majoring in theatre and English. When not writing poetry, she can be found performing in productions at the Schwartz Center and serving as assistant editor-in-chief of *Ink* Magazine and treasurer of StudPubs. A selection of her poems was recently published in Connecticut's *Artis* Magazine.

Linda Louie is creating a Language Policy major through the College Scholar Program, with concentrations in Metaphysics and Applied Whimsy (don't tell her grandfather). She comes from Tucson, Arizona, where she raised herself on an unhealthy literary diet

of Vonnegut, modernist poets, and Animorphs; the side effects become more obvious each day.

Matthew Lowenstein, foppish gadabout, incorrigible rogue, intends to receive his diploma in May of 2006. This rascally mountebank can be seen as a dandy carousing about the town of Ithaca, engaging in all manners of scandal and intrigue, and corrupting the virtue of unsuspecting ladies. It is a veritable scandal that the authorities suffer such impious profligacy to operate freely and in plain sight of honest citizens!

Ron Maimon is the author of such beloved classics as “The Computational Theory of Biological Function I — The Kinematics of Molecular Trees” and “Diagrammatic Notation and Computational Structure of Gene Networks.” When not single-handedly giving birth to the field of theoretical biology, he tries to finish his PhD thesis at Cornell University, from whose physics department he is exiled for the compound sin of originality and competence. His fiction story “The Mechanical Man” appeared in *Rainy Day* in 2004. “The Wolf-Men of the Planet Penis” is his first attempt at memoir.

Originally from NYC, **Allen McGill** lives, writes, acts and directs theatre in Mexico. His published work has appeared in: *NY Times*, *The Writer*, *Newsday*, *Literary Potpourri*, *Poetry Midwest*, *Modern Haiku*, *World Haiku Review*, many others. He was an invited guest at the First World Poetry Festival in Taiwan 2005, haibun editor for *Simply Haiku*, and two of his plays have been professionally produced in Sacramento and L.A.

Jonathan Papas is a Junior English major at Cornell. He is a fan of percolation. Likes: Jazz, *Rainy Day*. Dislikes: Eating his peas, *The Quad*.

Naomi Tarle was born in Santa Monica, CA on October 26, 1980. She is a senior at the University of California, Los Angeles and will be graduating in spring 2006. She will receive a BA and is majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She intends to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing. This is the first publication of her poetry.

Alan S. Weber teaches writing in the English Department at Cornell University. His publications include *19th Century Science* (2000) and *Because It's There* (2003). His poetry has appeared in desk drawers and under stacks of books.

Annie Wong is a sophomore college scholar in the arts school. During a momentary mental lapse, this canoe-phobic, bike-wrecking, spider-saving Southerner did, in fact, work as a summer camp counselor. The kids had a great time, but Annie is still recovering from the ordeal.

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www.rso.cornell.edu/rainyday/

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