

Running from the Millennium



The Southern Quill

1997-1998

Running from the Millennium

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Associated Students of Dixie College

Janeene Cowley

The Division of Humanities
& Social Sciences

Cheri Drew

Bill Fowler

Thomas "Randy" Judd



I. Malevolent

"I worry that, especially as the Millennium edges nearer, pseudoscience and superstition will seem year by year more tempting, the siren song of unreason more sonorous and attractive. Where have we heard it before? Whenever our ethnic or national prejudices are aroused, in times of scarcity, during challenges to national self-esteem or nerve, when we agonize about our diminished cosmic place and purpose, or when fanaticism is bubbling up around us—then, habits of thought familiar from ages past reach for the controls.

"The candle flame gutters. Its little pool of light trembles. Darkness gathers. The demons begin to stir."

—Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World*, 26-27

Diana Clarke

The Dragon

Slowly, the fire red eye of the dragon opened;
He'd been asleep for ages.
Just as a dragon breathes, heat rages.
Zeus, the owner of the beast, must've been upset,
For he threw a lightning bolt,
A long awaited debt.
Awakening from his deep sleep,
The dragon blazed with rage.
He charged down that mountain side,
Like a monster released from a cage.
"The dragon's awake," the people cried,
Running from its path.
Then, after all his anger was spent
And he'd mellowed from his wrath,
He drudged up the mountain side,
To where he'd slept so long.
He lay down upon the soft earth
And was lulled back to sleep
By the countrymen's song.

Christy Bartlett

Monster

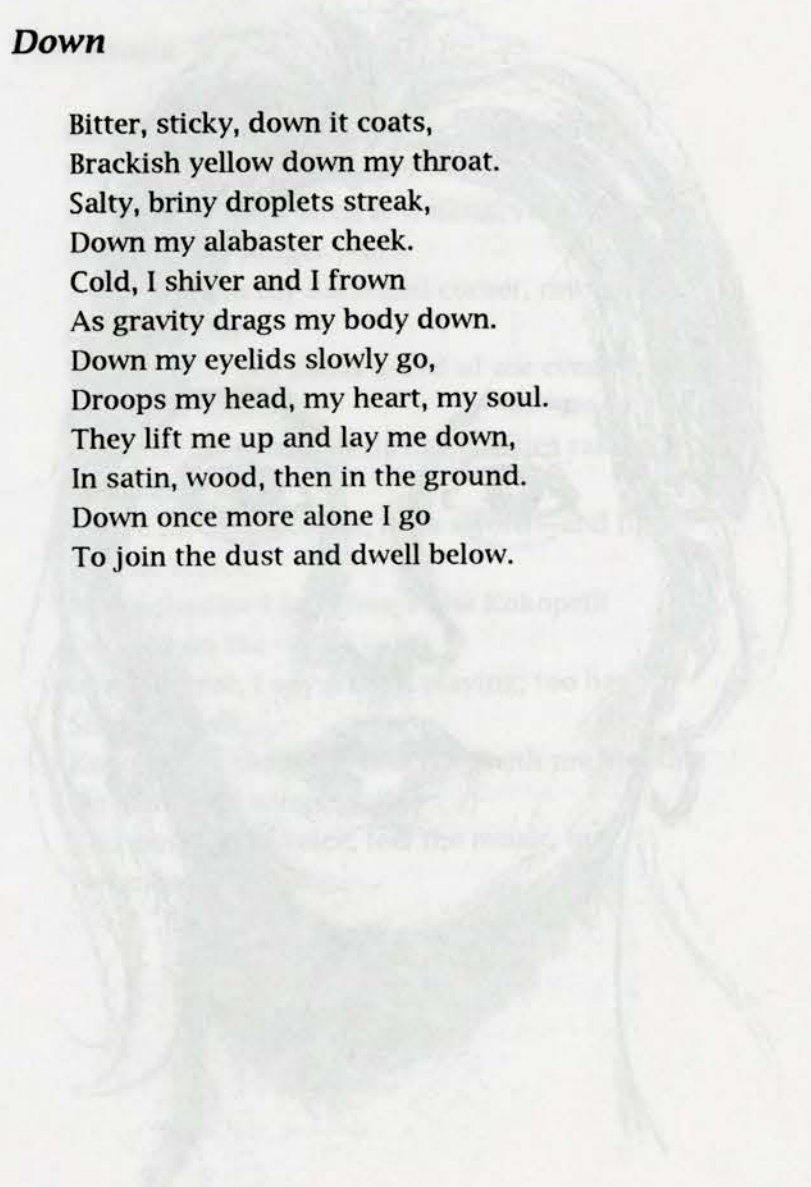
I had a dream last night
That my tongue was swallowed
By a monster.
I lost my voice, and with it
Went my thoughts.
I stood and stared
At the thieving creature,
And he grinned
While holding my tongue
Between his wretched teeth.
I did nothing as it slipped
Past his lips and
Down his deep throat,
To be hidden in that
Dark abyss.
He then turned
And walked away.
I tried to speak once more,
Just to say goodbye.
No words came out,
But I knew he heard them
In his cavernous pit.
And I smiled.

Paula Haglund

Talismans

Back and forth I rock myself, in tune to the
 Music of my falling tears.
 In the distance, a siren is wailing, yanking me
 Back to my younger years.
 As I crouch in my darkened corner, my eyes
 Lock in a stare.
 I answer the questions asked of me even though
 No one is there.
 I scratch my skin; it feels like needles raking
 Across my back.
 I wave my arm—to me, it's a sword—and fight
 Off the attack.
 In the shadow I see Elvis; I saw Kokopelli
 Dancing on the walk.
 In my mirror, I spy a child playing; too bad
 She can't talk.
 Kokopelli is chanting, laughing with me, floating
 On gossamer wings.
 You can see his voice, feel the music, but
 Never hear him sing.



*Diana L. Hadsall**Down*


Bitter, sticky, down it coats,
 Brackish yellow down my throat.
 Salty, briny droplets streak,
 Down my alabaster cheek.
 Cold, I shiver and I frown
 As gravity drags my body down.
 Down my eyelids slowly go,
 Droops my head, my heart, my soul.
 They lift me up and lay me down,
 In satin, wood, then in the ground.
 Down once more alone I go
 To join the dust and dwell below.

*Paula Haglund**Dust to Ashes*

Falling ribbons, dancing twilight,
 Under the pale city moon,
 Can you see the smiling stars
 Kneeling inside the abandoned saloon?

Talking willows, singing flowers
 Hovering over cotton trees.
 Inside, a baby is crying and
 Someone drops to his knees.

Shouting lamps, fighting minstrels
 Hiding in shadowed passes.
 Igloos warmed by the burned out sun
 Turning dust to ashes.

Reeve K. Knighton

Listen to the Silent Screams

They stand
Cold and gray upon the ground,
Dead
At Auschwitz.
Disease, Starvation, Exhaustion
Outlasting execution.
Endless,
Endless nocturnal processions,
Converging at
Night, always night.
Listen to the silent screams.
Listen to the prayers of anguish.
Listen to the tears.
Survival,
Another day of bitter wind,
Barbed wire,
Skeletal faces in striped uniforms.
Liberation—
Remember.

Alyson Overton

Nightmare

Pushing against the pressure of perfection,
Adding to the pile of throw-away leaves.

Brought about by my anxiety,
No one's causing this but me.

Stinging from an allergic reaction,
Disappointment in my direction.

Annoyed by your busiocrity,
Alone in waiting, dancing greed.

Speaking slowly of negation,
Call it anger, aggravation.

A record of repetition,
Reverting back to privacy.

Excitement acting relatively,
All occurring in my dream.

Christy Bartlett

Afraid for My Heart

I told him he didn't love me,
And then I pushed him away,
As I do to all of them
Because I'm so afraid
That my heart won't be able
To handle it
When he decides to leave,
As they all do.
I feel so lost inside
Without him near.
And I fear that someday,
When the air is cold
And I step outside to breathe,
My heart will freeze over
And shatter,
Piercing me
With the misplaced fragments,
And I will die
Without my heart.

Alyson Overton

Malfunction

My fingers won't turn pages today.
In stillness, stinging, my eyes don't see.
Through wind and thundering weather,
Only certain things enchant me.
Turning, tripping fog,
Across longing, emerald highlands,
Beyond slithering, serpent seas,
My mind wanders and
Waits for me.



Alyson Overton

Aja Hopkinson

*All Fall Down**

Fire life has dwindled,
And the grey air stings my eyes.
I face it without turning away,
Refusing to give up.
A faint glow deceives me,
And I give my breath
To the crimson coals—
But weightless dust flies away
And is lost.
I can never hold time,
And time will never spark flames
That are already gone.
I am ashamed that all I can do
Is blow on the ashes.

**Third Place Winner, 1997-98 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition*

Nicole Melissa Wilkes

Her Song

If he hadn't followed me up the staircase, would I have recoiled?
Silently stalking, my careful paces he retraced
While beneath us spewed the noises of voices who annoy.
So we spoke of Michelangelo and women who come and go.
Comfort overcame us on the brocaded bench—stout shoulders
settling abreast.
His touch, one not of lamb's wool or petals from a rose,
But of flesh upon fingers (a scent of musk and rain lingers).
How is it perfume from a dress can make man so digress?
Save those who use—they'll lose a time or two (but only if they
choose).
And perhaps we had no need for stars at all,
For they were lacking due to overcasts of clouds.
We had Eternity,
But in Eternity we found fault,
Since tomorrow never meant forever.
No, love's not Time's fool, that well enough I knew,
So why must I grow old (and wear the bottoms of my trousers
rolled)?
The music halts. My hands are cold.
Illusions and confusions deceive day and day again.
When confronting fallacy, he falls short,
Stumbles, then stalls.
"That is not what I meant at all. That is not it at all."

(with assistance from T.S. Eliot and William Shakespeare)

*Christy Bartlett**My Senses Deceive Me*

Under the street lights
 I stood and waited for you.
 Your breath seemed the breeze,
 And I tried to catch it
 In my hair.
 I danced in sighs
 As the shine from your eyes
 Trickled over my skin.
 Your hands gently held me,
 And I spun in your caress.
 Your tears played upon my face
 As your lips softly kissed my eyes
 As though to say goodbye.

*Diana L. Hadsall**Morna's Lament*

Deep in ebony night,
 Deep within its womb,
 I bid the reaper take his flight
 And build my hematite tomb.
 I pray to him to start
 And snatch up my cursed soul,
 To drag it into shadow
 To drag it far below.
 For I am old and weary
 And very much alone.
 For centuries I've watched
 Summer turn to fall.
 I've seen empires rise;
 I've seen kings build their halls.
 I know that eternity is shorter
 For the mortal man
 Than he dares to admit,
 And that the only thing
 That remains immortal among men
 Is their quest for immortality.
 I would give mine to them in an instant,
 If I could.
 Let them be undead.
 As for me,
 I want to die.

Christy Bartlett

His Casual Whore

We were friends
 At first.
 Then, my heart would hurt for him,
 And I didn't want to know why.
 He reeled me in,
 Hook, line and sinker.
 He made me believe in his coolness,
 In the way he proved to be real.
 Nobody's real anymore.
 I should have known.
 He wooed me,
 Then took me to bed,
 A pleasant place at the time.
 It seemed so easy,
 Almost innocent.
 He used me until he'd had his fill.
 And with my given love
 Unknowingly lost,
 I was left,
 Head in rested slumber
 As another casual whore.



*Salvador Corpaci**The Blender*

Opened wide, left standing out.
 Can't you guess what I'm about?
 Some portion of yourself no doubt, you'll find within my depths.
 As if it seems, your choice were clear; the truth is often grey, I hear.
 So, speed ahead (head first will do),
 Becoming one, where once were two.
 You are, of course, in no great peril.
 My teeth are sanitized and sterile!
 Just push my buttons,
 High
 Or low;
 Around in circles we will go.
 Crushing quick
 Or slicing slowww.
 Be careful, or I'll have you whipped.
 Whose heart is at whose fingertips?
 Let's mix it up a bit and see how well we blend
 Both bond and free. (The trick is in the recipe.)
 "But who has beaten whom?" you ask.
 Have you not as yet perceived my scratch?
 My stars!
 Oh, do forgive me if I laugh.
 Such broken claws
 May be no match, but must you still be so naive?
 There's nothing hidden down my sleeve.
 I've treated you with sin and pride;

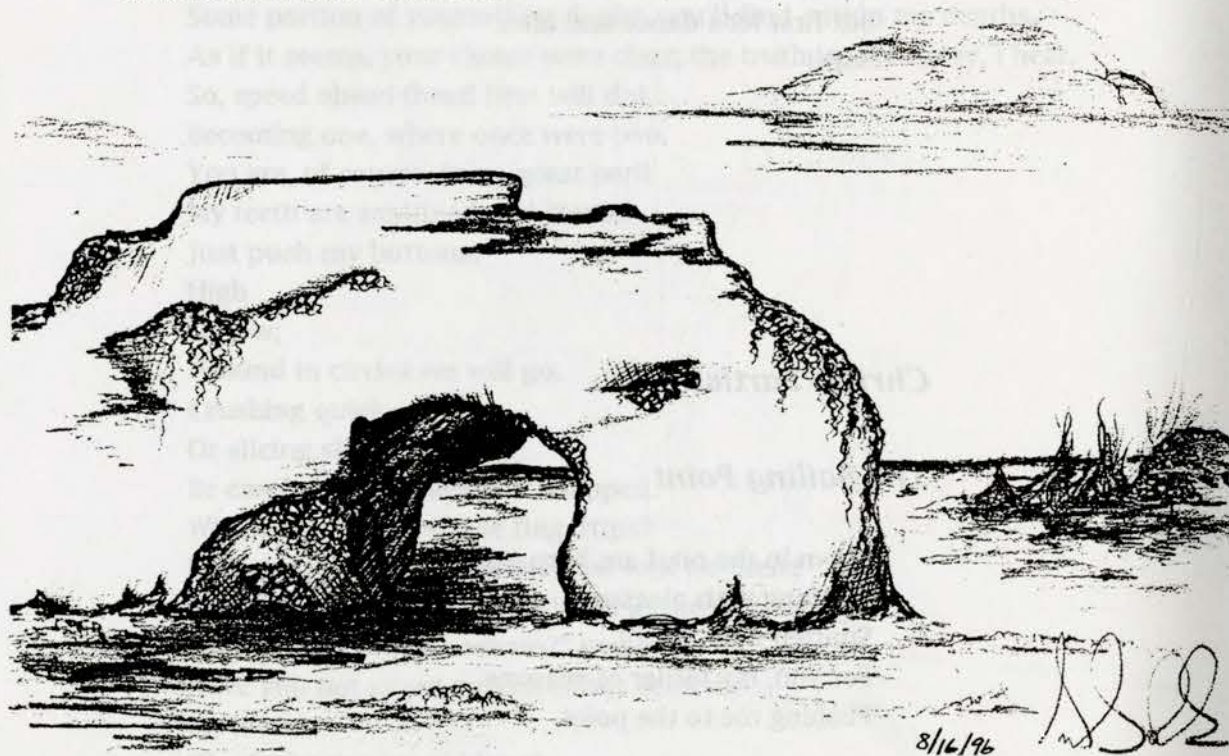
Bow down before the blades, dear Bride!
 It's far too late for much concern.
 Miss Fortune took a nasty turn,
 Your soul a swirling, twirling mass,
 Of hopeless screams, infernal ash,
 Resigned by fate to stoke my urn.
 But first let's dance and after
 Burn!

*Christy Bartlett**The Boiling Point*

Down in the pit, I am born into you,
 Writhing with pleasure,
 Smitten with ill will.
 For you, my father of seasons,
 Pushing me to the point.

Candid pictures hold me in contempt.
 I laugh sorrowfully
 While you sit cockily
 On your inexhaustible thumbs.
 You are pushing me to the point,
 And I cry.

Natural Arches, Santa Cruz Beach



Amber Hyde

Shattered Dreams

Only her cold blue eyes could be seen
 As she ran through the tangled undergrowth.
 Shadows from rocks and trees created giant spiderwebs,
 Making it hard to find where she was going.
 Branches reached out for her like grasping hands,
 As if trying to hold her back.
 She ran until she reached the sea.
 There she stood waiting, watching for him to come.
 Her small, innocent face, silver threaded with glistening tears,
 Knowing that he would never appear.
 She watched the waves take her memories of him
 Farther and farther into the sea.
 Is he really there?
 Her heart filled with longing
 For someone she would never know.
 A crash of thunder echoed through her empty soul.
 Rain began lashing against her delicate features,
 As she slumped lifelessly to the ground,
 To wait for someone who would never come.

II. Benevolent

"Comparing the year one thousand to our nuclear age, one comes away with a sense that, above all, people, not economy or technology, make history, that the individual counts for something, be it good or bad, that even in the worst and darkest days some rare spirits are preparing the birth of a new renaissance, unswayed by the misery and destruction that surround them. Like a flower pushing its way through a crack in the pavement, life has always overpowered death and will, we hope, continue doing so in times to come—at least for another thousand years."

—Richard Erdoes, *A.D. 1000: Living on the Brink of Apocalypse*, Preface, xii

Lindy Stephens

Can You Play?

I believe in love at first sight,
The Man in the Moon, who shines down bright,
Families that stay together,
Snowflakes that fall on fields of heather.
Do you believe in peace at long last,
Black magic, curses, and spells witches cast,
Trolls, pixies, and hearts made of gold,
Answered prayers, and people who never grow old?

Believe in songs sung in perfect tune,
Yellow buttercups always in bloom,
Unicorns and animals who talk,
The crippled who, if they believe, can walk,
A place "over the rainbow where bluebirds fly,"
Where emerald lily pads float and friends never die.

Alyson Overton

As I Was Taught*

On a childhood porch, playing,
 Ball bouncing, song singing,
 Alone in my non-world.
 Giggling over non-sense
 And practicing the words I might say
 If by chance I encounter a crowned frog.
 Dandelion bouquet in a young bride's hand,
 The surrounding trees, tall trumpeters
 Announcing the royal ceremony.
 Each blade of grass another loyal subject,
 All bowing in the breeze.
 Blow kisses and wave,
 Play the part of princess,
 As I was taught.

**First Place Winner, 1997-98 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition*

Marsha K. Lawhorn

Only Child

Sky looks whiter
 Filtered through a torn straw hat.
 Stick horse and I stalk
 Silent prey in cattail jungle,
 Push aside green feathers
 Of grass in empty ditches,
 Lie beneath box elder trees,
 Peeling bark from slippery willows,
 And prattle by the hour
 To sky and ant
 And me.



Lisa Ure

Safari

I enter the jungle,
Stumbling across the ferocious yellow Labrador,
Guardian of the sacred forest,
Prepared to embark on a grand escapade.

The sounds of the wild
Are heard in blazing classical music
Over computer game bleeps
And accompanying piano practicing.

There is a distinct burnt bread scent,
And the menu for the natives' most recent feast
Is still on the young savages' cheeks, chins and shirt fronts,
With remnants left on counter tops and table
After the tribe has packed up and moved on.

The sanity of the upstairs is surrendered
As we descend further into the depths.
A scent of moist carpet and dirty towels
Emanates from the untamed laundry room.

A peek through the rushes
Into dangerous marshlands of a sibling's room
Shows a slither of the usually camouflaged sock eels
And creeping shoe sloths.

As I retreat from my reconnaissance to the lower regions,
Books fall and are scattered like rodents,
While baby strollers hunt for their doll prey
Over the wilds of the Chinese rug.

Escaping at the excursion's conclusion,
I realize I found what I was hunting for.
Within the jungle of chaos and confusion,
Amidst the uproar, love conquers.

Marsha K. Lawhorn

The Desert

The desert,
Like a ragged volume
Whose reader studies long
To understand,
Preserves its beauty
For the patient lover
And shares its subtle secrets
In sentences of sand.

Aubree Howard

Among the Leaves

They live among the trees
And hunt beneath the rocks.
They are messengers of the Elves
And keep secrets safely locked.

They sprinkle dust on forest grounds
To turn the foliage green.
They often fly about us
On iridescent, moonlight wings.

The fairies open the mystery
Of other worlds hidden
In dimensions that are sacred,
Where reality is forbidden.

Nicole Melissa Wilkes

Primavera

Deny love, deny!
We can throw ourselves into the morning,
Flying in fancy, awaiting the wind,
Borrowing breezes to snatch snowflaked flora.

Chloris transfixed, transformed her blossomed-breath to dawn;
We took hold of her hand and tarried on.
Primavera prevails, her glory graced by grace,
As azure air engulfs us, and greening grasses surround the spirits.

Come love; shall we walk on waters,
Feeding flocks fish and bread?
We are the children of one who made morning.
Man made miracles—giving glory to gods.

We watched an enlightened elfling under inspired spires,
Tree limbs twisting around his heels,
Omitting vocations through chicken wires.
Come, let us dance in denial with the Zephyr's blow,
Bellowing through buds and escaping the snow.

Aja Hopkinson

Enigma

When the sunlight kisses me good-morning,
 I smile, and awake from a dream where you are near.
 Constant tasks pull me through emptiness,
 And I carry a joy I've never known,
 Something so priceless.
 I'll never understand this light that fills me;
 I cannot see it; I cannot hold it;
 Yet, I live for it.
 If I could tell you how it is,
 If I could untangle this web of confusion
 And be the friend that you deserve,
 I would tell you that I love you,
 And hope that you would hear
 What it is I really feel.

Stephanie Grant

Always Welcome

As years progress, adults seem to be wise—
 That age above those childish faults of youth.
 And still the grown will lead a life of lies,
 Concealed as men use vice and sin to soothe.

Some sons and daughters lose their innocence,
 As foolish, jealous thoughts attack their minds,
 Alerting now the soul as it laments
 Immoral acts that capture, break and bind.

Except for men of faith like Abraham,
 The sacrifice is small for all but few;
 And while they walk the further from the Lamb,
 They simply understand not what they do.

Though great the power of that fateful lure,
 The God of much forgiveness still is sure.

Alyson Overton

Fate

It was fate,
Abrupt though it was.
It must have been
Designed
By the angels,
Foretold
By prophets,
Anticipated
By all.

Deep within herself,
Watching
The lamplight lower
And eventually extinguish.
She sits,
Stunned
By her serious mood,
Frightened
By the other thought
In her mind.
To fly against all
Odds
And leap beyond
Temptation.
Forever lost in the smoky
Nothing
Of their past words,
Falsehoods
Without apology, undeniably
Irrelevant.

But now, to find herself found
By random coincidence,
To be fallen upon
By the majestic light of
Realization.
To be forever moved,
Changed,
Beyond reproach.

She waits for the chills to
Retreat,
For her heart to
Cease.
Patiently aggravated and decided upon
Action.

Like bitter drips of tranquil essence
Or sand,
Blowing through the wind.
It takes too long,
Too much time to realize
What has really gone on.
Without conscience,
Void of all mortal
Fear.
A step is taken,
And the way from which it came is
Blocked.
A swirling tornado
Plucked
Her from her comfy Kansas
And dropped her in
Desire.

Lisa Ure

Adieu to Richard I

To know him.
 His hands—I have held as my own,
 Traced each vein and felt each scar's story.
 His countenance—each flicker of expression
 Analyzed and acquainted withal.
 His thoughts—those given expression by his mouth,
 And those silent that I have come to hear.
 His eyes—my only moments of eternity
 In mortality's brief hour.
 His face—a millennial world of shining glass,
 A new Garden of Eden.
 His heart beating strong and steady in its course,
 Some have called him lionhearted.
 All this is familiar to me,
 Even as I know myself.
 His flesh I have come to love.
 Goodbye? What is this word,
 As though I could forget?
 As though the simple sound of his voice,
 Look of his eye, touch of his hand,
 Recalls not the multitude of emotions,
 As a wave returning to the shore
 To wash over me once more.
 Why then say we goodbye?
 Where is the good in it?
 There is none,
 Nay, but only in his recollection.

Salvatore Corpaci

Soul Mates

Engaging eyes,
 Our souls embraced,
 Each lost in breathless wonder,
 Even as a gentle warmth
 Around us wrapped
 Divine.
 And through it all,
 Our spirits fairly
 Fluttered,
 While our hearts sang
 Ever faster as we
 Climbed.

Andrew Howard

Every So Often

Every so often in the peace of imagination,
 You have the opportunity to touch something beyond reality.
 Today I touched the parent of pain,
 Today I touched a Niagara.

Marsha K. Lawhorn

Fishing

I, fingerling,
Once lured by rough,
Ungiving rope, bait,
And netted to captivity
Where salt and tears eroded,
Shrunk the braiding,
Rubbed calluses
In my transparency,
Regard your hookless line,
Hovering, slackened.
Despite these barnacles,
I, in my prime,
Savor your tenderness
As bread on water
And let you reel me in
Gently, in time.

Megan McKnight

Apart

I see a face in my dreams each night
But in circumstances different.
A hero, a friend, a life saver,
Or a face-flower in Dream's curtains,
Ever present, usually dynamic,
A justifiable reason for
Midday naps and ignored alarms;
However, as divine as dreams can be,
The tangible face and
Dream independent personality
Are incomparable.

Aubree Howard

Every So Often

Every so often in the peace of Imagination,
You have the opportunity to touch something beyond reality.
Today I touched the purest of pure;
Today I touched a Unicorn.

Aubree Howard

Misted Dreams

Like flowing, glistening glass,
 The fresh spring water falls,
 Dancing through small blades of grass
 And over tumbled stones.
 Lichen covers nearby rocks
 And hangs from aspen roots.
 Berry leaves and emerald reeds
 And dandelion shoots,
 Wild onions delicately
 Sprinkle among the greens;
 High above the aspen leaves
 Are singing in the breeze.
 Orange and black, a butterfly
 Alights upon a rock;
 Here are harbored enchanted dreams
 And memories long since lost.

Amber Hyde

The Gift of Rain

A slight hint of rain sweeps through the air.
 Scorched river beds softly call to it,
 Animals silently cry for it within the wooded hollows.
 Rays of sun have scorned everything underneath them.
 Trees have bowed to its power.
 Branches reached out like grasping hands
 For something they cannot touch.

Everything waits day and night, until finally
 Billows of dirty cotton slowly creep through the sky,
 Hanging heavy on the horizon,
 Finally letting go of the gift they hold inside.

Gratefully, the fresh flood of water is taken in.
 Trees stand taller, and animals drink it up greedily.
 Once again the rivers can make their lazy way down the mountain.
 The once ugly scars caused by the scorching sun
 Are filled, and peace sweeps through the air,
 Thanks to the gift of rain.

L.J. Chandler

I Yam What I Yam.

Once upon a time, long, long ago,
Well, actually, just last week,
In the town of Grotenberg,
There lived a yam named Deek.

Now Deek was a special little yam
Who couldn't make up his mind.
One day he wanted to be king,
But only a king who's kind.

Next, he thought of something new,
Someone else he could be.
Now he wanted to be Bill Gates
And own every company.

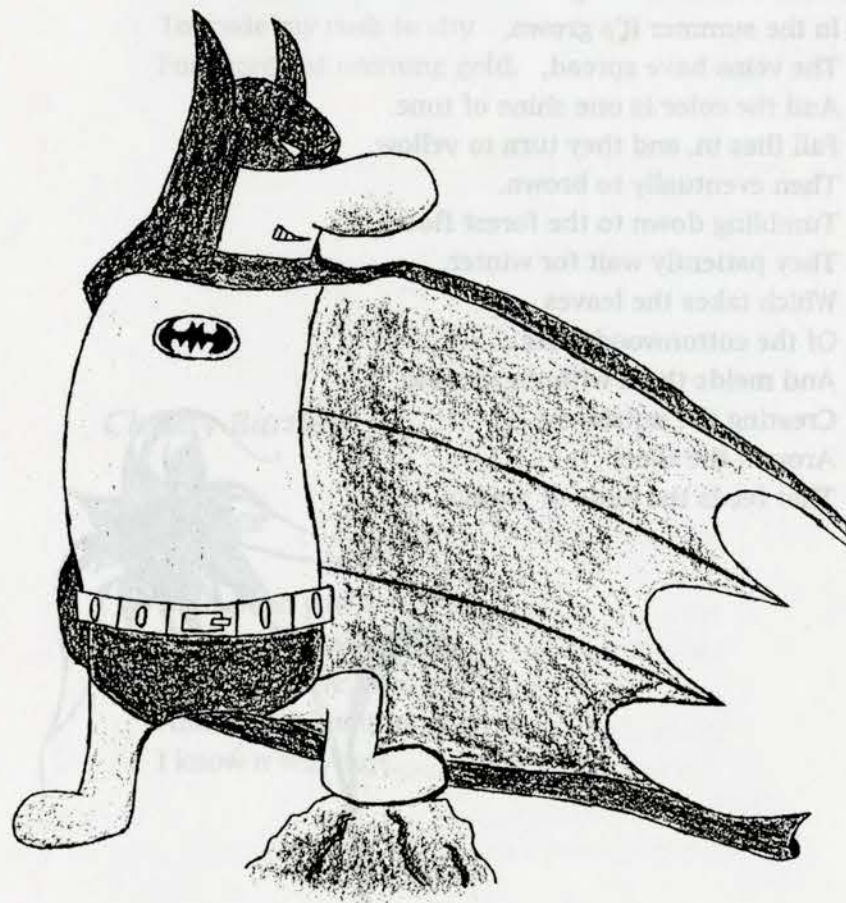
Oh no, what now, he looks so sharp,
He's dashing and dark and grand.
Why, he looks to be the great Batman,
Protecting this weary land.

He swoops around this land of his,
Fighting all the crime.
(Isn't it great to use a word
That happens to rhyme with rhyme.)

His mind would change from day to day,
His parents got very scared.
"Deek, you can't be everything,
No one's ever dared."

"But Mom and Dad, can't you see,
There are so many things to try?
Imagination's all I need
To sail or even fly."

And thus it was and so it is,
No one could stand in his way.
He's now an actor, proud and strong,
And earning excellent pay!



L.J. Chandler

Aubree Howard

Buds of Spring

In the freshness of spring
A bud appears,
Beautiful, lush and green.
In the summer it's grown,
The veins have spread,
And the color is one shine of tone.
Fall flies in, and they turn to yellow,
Then eventually to brown.
Tumbling down to the forest floor,
They patiently wait for winter,
Which takes the leaves
Of the cottonwood trees
And melds them with the ground,
Creating the nutriment
Around the roots
That feeds the buds of spring.



Marsha K. Lawhorn

It Was Canyonlands' Fault I Missed the Meeting

The Spotman in heaven's catwalk
Gilded just the canyon's edges
With light this winter cold
And cast aside cloud curtains
To trade my rush to city
For search of morning gold.

Christy Bartlett

Reverence

I will push you away
Again and again
Because I have lived you
And I don't want to love you.
I know it will hurt.

This year for the first time since he started as *Quill* Advisor, Ace Pilkington doesn't have any of his work in the magazine. We had intended to include a scene from *Our Lady Guenevere*, a play of his that premiered at the Utah Shakespearean Festival last summer. However, when the magazine ran long, he insisted that we cut his pages first. We have, therefore, included this humorous tribute.

April Davis & Kelly Leatham

Our Favorite Professor

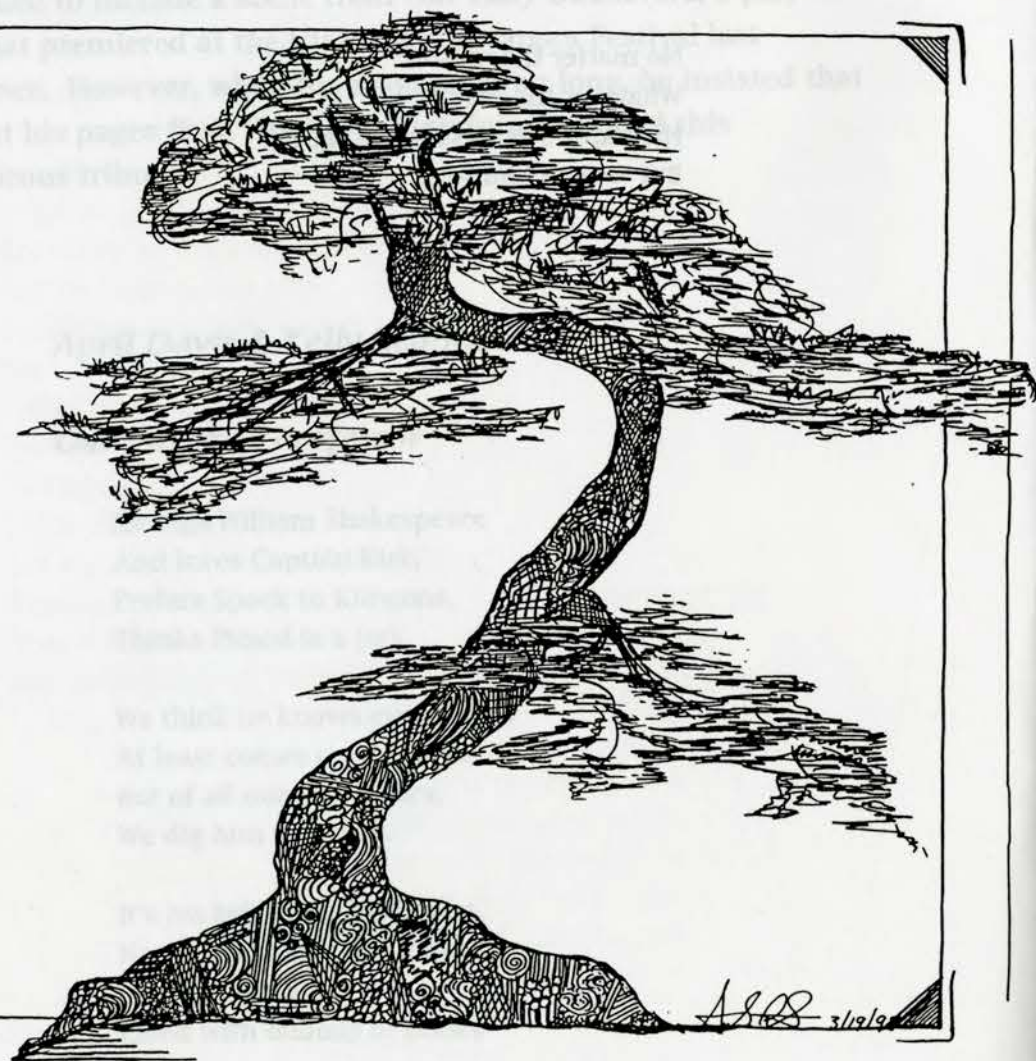
He digs William Shakespeare
And loves Captain Kirk,
Prefers Spock to Klingons,
Thinks Picard is a jerk.

We think he knows everything,
At least comes pretty close,
But of all our professors,
We dig him the most.

It's his brilliance, his brains,
Not to mention good looks.
Or is it his walls,
Lined with billions of books?

His *Star Trek* stories
Keep us in class,
But it's his fine way of teaching
That helps us to pass.

No matter the reason
Whatever the case,
His name's Professor Pilkington
But we call him Ace.



III. Indifferent

"I will eschew, absolutely and on principle, the two staples of fin de siècle literature, especially of the apocalyptic sort inspired by a millennial transition. I regard these subjects as speculative, boring, and basically silly.... I shall ... make *no predictions*."

—Stephen Jay Gould, *Questioning the Millennium*, 15

Amber Basile

The Road

Stretching for miles without number into highways long and deep, it speaks to the lonely traveler across miles of cables, taunting and twisting fate in its unforgiving hand. Most see it only in fragments or as an unending path to nowhere. Few ever see it in its true glory. It is as a great centipede swarming its way on millions of spindly legs that, though they do not move, give the appearance of constant motion, continually shifting their numbers to block time as it comes ever more swiftly past their domain.

The great road is eternal in its manipulation of mankind. Caring nothing for the feelings of humans, it presses onward, ever onward. To some, it appears no more than a shady mountain path along a tranquil stream. Still others perceive it to be a rolling, torrential river that snatches them up in its frothy mouth filled with giant, protruding teeth and grinds them down to nothingness. However, tranquil path must surely lead to river and back again in the constant struggle over mortal man.

The road moves rapidly; years, like money, pass ever more quickly through hands once virile and strong. In the dark, we stumble on loose rocks and fall prey to the wild creatures that roam its untracked hills. Thick blackness clings to trees, covering over the dreams of youth. Despair and failure walk side by side down the now treacherous path. Then, at last, from the utter depths of darkness, pours light in pure blinding form, creating a safer but perhaps longer path. Choice becomes an essence of reality, and the road goes on.

Towns and cities pass by unnoticed. Occasionally, some venture to explore one of the pit-stops by the wayside. They become enticed by

evil, or compelled by good either to stay and disappear or somehow drift back to the endless road. Eventually, all journeys must end. Hundreds of mounds line the road in crude grave sites. Others sprawl lifelessly, their bones bleaching in plain sight, and the pitiful graves of thieves become food for the uncivilized. Dead ends abound in the road, every individual to a predestined fate. Some choose to go willingly. Others are forced, kicking and screaming, to their off-ramps. Sometimes one sees an unfinished bit of road, as if the builder had just given up in the process of construction.

But still, the road goes on, twisting and turning into infinity. Its black pavement has held the imprint of countless numbers of feet, some barefoot and bleeding, others shiny and well kept. Who knows what next it will contain as it turns endlessly, marching along on centipede legs that never move.

Alyson Overton

Builders

Bulldozers
 Don't yield to worms.
 Ditch diggers
 Dig their own tombs.
 Bystanders
 Need not stand by.
 Wrecking ball
 Sways destruction
 Side to side.
 Skyscraper
 Looming high,
 Ruling subjects
 So unkind.
 Sweet hammer
 Steel to steel,
 Mocking, drilling,
 Death is healed.
 Angry graveyard
 Is disturbed.
 Dark enchantment,
 Mirrored windows build
 Deep with structure,
 Strong and filled.
 Cast off fire
 And its escapes,
 Tried by desire
 Tall man to make.

Ája Hopkinson

California Lights

High above the molten city
 Where the burning cannot reach,
 I safely view the flowing fissures
 Of the lights along the streets.
 Proud, block-shaped mountains tower
 Where the brightest glow surrounds;
 The beauty of this man-made disaster
 Illuminates the ground.
 By daylight I will hate this city,
 And will rage in the smoldering heat;
 But I will outlast the flaming chaos,
 Until with night again it meets.

Aubree Howard

Pale Gray Light

Sinister, silver streaks of rain
Falling in the pale gray light
And sifting through the darkening leaves.

The trees are black with the coming night,
Silhouetted against the pale gray light.

The brook runs steadily through sandstone rocks
And around the sagebrush roots,
With the soft, sweet sound of water
Echoing in the pale gray light.

The wind is brushing by isolated desert limbs,
And the pale gray light is lost
To a black and starless sky.

Aja Hopkinson

Daylight

The day keeps screaming louder,
And I feel like a trembling tower of snow.
I escape into the friendly night,
Breathing in the cool relief
Of the silent air.
A solitary star reflects
The harsh silhouette of the mountains,
And I long to take its place—
But my heaven is too far away.
I stay for a moment,
My thoughts distant.
Then I turn back
And shield my eyes from the
Cold, fluorescent light of day.

Diana L. Hadsall

A Solid State of Fluidity

The glass forms an ageless river,
Flowing down to the thick, leaden bottom.
Priceless, crystalline masterpieces drip to the floor,
Like the echoed tears of artisans long dead.

Blackish, brackish solidity of tar
Is broken up by sticky, pearlescent, inky bubbles,
Seeping up from the bowls beneath the crust of brown grains.

Heat waves warp the vision,
And call forth a drop of sea from tiny pools.
Like rotten, chicken-egg gold,
Its smell assaults the nostrils
As tiny bits of molten sun slowly
Sink from the sooty clouds in heaven,
Leaving a trailing path of flame.

Salvatore Corpaci

Foam

(The Intoxication of a Hopeless Philosopher)

Clinging to the edge
Of human bondage,
Each ounce of strength
A slippery slope
Of crystalline persuasion.
Deceptively clear,
Sometimes
Even bubbles explode.

Kelly Leatham

The Lecture

Time ticks on.
 I watch the clock,
 The hands never moving.
 One melancholy voice drones on,
 And on and on and on...
 My mind wanders;
 How many holes in the alabaster wall?
 The tapping of my foot is in rhythm
 To the ticking of the clock.
 Time stands still;
 This lecture is never-ending.

Alyson Overton

Job's Gold

If beauty and wealth be man's desire
 And comfort and health make living worthwhile,
 If pink bows and princesses feed little girls' fires
 And riches and promises be all we compile,
 If the mirror we look in is the world's biggest liar,
 Then the line we are walking is thin as a wire.

Diana L. Hadsall

Stealing Away

Deep night I awoke;
 Soft light showed your
 Shadow clad faces,
 Peacefully breathing
 Through dreamy life.
 Solemnly, I let my eyes pass through the room
 To take in one last time your faces.
 Silently, I stand and move across the floor,
 Slowly stepping between your sleeping forms
 And often times holding my breath.
 Softly, I tiptoe,
 Gathering up my belongings,
 Taking the memories of me,
 Snatching them to my chest like discarded clothing.
 When I reach the door,
 I stretch forth a shaky hand hesitantly,
 Then grip the cold handle till my knuckles turn white.
 I'm filled with an urge to look back,
 To run back,
 To fall among you,
 My friends,
 My lovers.
 I close my eyes tight and choke down a sob.
 Slowly, silently, painfully,
 Into the cold I step and close the door behind me.
 Alone, I shiver and the tears stream.
 Then I run away into the night and out of your lives forever.

Nicole Melissa Wilkes

In Pursuit

Now is the time when the dandelions are yellow, before a wish is made,
When active minds replace the mellow and silence could not be saved.
Tension rises in the sea, breaking fertile ground;
Scorching screams stir within me, but I dare not make a sound.

The night turns over in her bed, releasing anxious sighs,
Yet, I cannot rest my head or lose myself in compromise.
Lessons lessen life's tall tales, so we speak of greater days;
Word by word, the story sells as we wander through a haze.

False joys capture a moment's glance—forgetting all that's real.
Desire whispers, "Take a chance," despite the way I feel.
Earth's small sphere calls the light, fleeing from its cover;
A desperate will pursues this fight, only proving it's not over.

Line by line, I broke life's code but still remain a mute,
Feeling fortune I cannot hold, thus continuing in pursuit.

Diana L. Hadsall

The Passing of an Ordinary Woman

I woke up one day
To wake up no more.
I imploded and lay
With the dust on the floor.
My sheets remained rumpled,
My bed neatly unmade,
My shade stayed drawn,
My legs unshaved.
My dirty clothes were litter;
All my shoes were scattered by the door.
The dishes stayed dirty;
No one swept the floor.
And the voices called in vain,
Nagging in the air,
Warning me to clean,
Begging me to care.
In exasperation,
They finally vacuumed up the floor.
I was among the crumbs,
Then I was no more.

L.J. Chandler

Just Passing Through

"Hello, dear," Laura said into her cellphone, "I'll be home in about ten minutes... No, I am not cooking dinner, not after the day I had!" As she listened to her husband talk, she crossed the street and entered the park. "Oh, don't worry about it. I'll tell you when I get home... I'm on my way to the subway station... Yes, through the park... Don't worry so much—I'll be fine... Relax, I'll be home soon... Okay... I love you too. Bye bye."

Laura folded up her cellphone and placed it in her purse. As she walked along, she was glad she had decided to bring her overcoat. It had gotten much colder since the afternoon, and leaves were already starting to fall. She came upon a bench that an elderly, homeless man had taken as his bed. As she came closer, the old man stared at her. His brown eyes matched his clothes perfectly, old and worn down by time. As Laura walked by, she was careful to act as though she didn't notice him, but he just kept following her with his eyes. She felt like running, but once she had passed him, she began to calm down.

Suddenly, she felt a hand touch her shoulder. Laura immediately jumped and turned around only to see that it was the old man.

"Rebecca," he said, "don't you recognize me?" Laura was too scared to answer.

"It's me, your father! I'm so happy to see you!" Laura was paralyzed with fear while this complete stranger hugged her. "Your mother nearly died when you didn't come back. If only she could see what a beautiful woman you've become."

"Please, sir," Laura cried, "you've gotten me confused with someone else."

"Nonsense," he replied, "I think I would know my own daughter when I saw her!"

"No, please, my name is Laur..."

"All that matters now is that I've found you. Now we can start all over again."

"I really don't know what you're talking about!"

"Don't you remember? I never forgave myself for letting you leave like that."

"Like what?" said Laura.

"Surely you remember; the last time we spoke was when you were seventeen years old. We had that horrible fight, don't you remember? I just couldn't understand why you wanted to be an actress when you had such a promising career in education ahead of you." Small tears started to run down his filthy face. "The last thing you said to me was, 'You just don't care about me!' " He hugged her once more, only tighter, "I'll never let that happen again!"

While the old man hugged her, Laura spotted a policeman and waved him over. The policeman jogged up to them and ordered, "Please step away from the woman, sir."

"It's all right, officer; this is my daughter."

"Is this true, ma'am?" asked the cop.

"No, it's not. He just came up to me and said he was my father." Laura stared into the old man's eyes. He looked as if he'd been stabbed in the heart.

"Rebecca, what are you saying?" cried the old man.

"Step away from the woman!" the policeman repeated.

The old man became emphatic. "No! I won't let you take her away from me! I won't lose her again!"

The policeman then yelled to his partner, "Hey, Chuck! We've got a situation over here!" As his partner ran to the scene, the police officer ordered the old man, "Put your hands on your head! Miss, come get behind me!"

Laura did as she was told. The old man, panicking, ran after her and yelled, "No, I won't let you take her!" With that, Chuck, who was still running, crashed into the old man. They knocked each other onto

the ground. Chuck quickly scrambled up to the old man and cuffed him. He brought the old man to his feet and read him his rights on the way to the car.

"Rebecca, tell them who I am!" exclaimed the old man. Laura could only look away, unable to cry. "Rebecca, please!" he begged. As the old man was being stuffed in the back seat, he cried out, "I just want you to know that I care!" With that, the door slammed in his face.

"I'm sorry, Miss," said the policeman, "but we'll have to take you down to the station to fill out a report."

"Okay," Laura sighed, staring at the ground. "Just let me call my husband."

Aja Hopkinson

Brainstorm

Wisdom drowns in the powerful waves while
The diseased water dissolves true thoughts.
Direction is lost in chaotic confusion,
And masses are beating against the rocks.
The body reveals the life not uncommon;
This vessel would cause no dismay,
But the war within is a strengthening whirlpool
That washes all logical thoughts away.



Amber Hyde

Faded Dreams

The perfume of small flower blossoms lingered in the air.
 Ivy crept silently through tiny cracks in the stone
 Of the once majestic columns of a castle
 That had slowly crumbled into a pile of forgotten memories.
 So many songs were left unsung in the vast heap of stone,
 Loosing all its guarded secrets with the dying sunset.

Amber Basile

A Memory

Trapped in a frozen wasteland
 Beyond the boundaries of time,
 A cool, wintry moon waits,
 Slowly becoming a scintillating song of dreams,
 Lost in the fabric of space,
 Misplaced forever.

Stephanie Grant

The Indulgence

The young woman sighed as she rummaged through her closet. Nothing looked right. Finally, with apparent frustration, she collapsed into a chair nearby and began brushing through her bronzed hair.

"Why do I even bother?" she asked aloud. "Nothing I wear will suffice."

"That's because you're too picky," her husband said as he entered the room.

The woman protested. "I am not picky."

"Then why has it taken you half an hour to conclude you have nothing to wear?" he asked. "I don't think I will ever understand why women care so much about their clothing."

"I'm not sure I will understand either," the woman mumbled under her breath. She dragged herself from the chair and moved to the closet again.

"Just pick something, Amber," her husband implored. "We have less than an hour before we have to be there, and I don't want to be late."

"I'm sorry," she argued, "but this is a big announcement we're going to make, and I need to look nice for your parents."

"Mom and Dad will be so thrilled with the announcement that they won't care what you look like."

Amber threw her husband a look that warned him he was moving onto unpleasant ground. He realized his mistake and tried to correct it.

"Why don't you wear that black dress you wore to my sister's engagement party? I know Mom commented on how nice you look in it."

"Yes, well, it's not conservative enough now," she answered.

"What does that mean?"

"Nothing."

Her husband looked confused. "Well, how about that green jumper you wore to Kathy's baby shower? You look very nice in green."

"Yes, but a jumper isn't classy enough."

"I don't know what you want, Amber," he said as he walked into the adjoining bathroom. "It seems to be a big ordeal for you to get dressed when we go out."

"Only when we go out with your parents," the woman defended herself.

The man stood silent for a few moments. He contemplated the meaning of his wife's words and prepared for an argument. His parents never ceased to be a hot topic between the two.

"We don't have time for this now," he stated, trying to avoid the conflict.

"Of course not," she attacked sarcastically. "We can't be late for them."

"Amber," he said, exasperated, "they mean well."

"Oh, I know. They certainly meant well at our wedding. They made it very clear what dress I was to wear. Your mother meant to do more than just *help* pick out the bridesmaids' dresses, and your father meant it when he told me that my pregnant friend, Sarah, shouldn't have been wearing a sleeveless dress in her *condition*."

"They were just trying to help."

"Help do what?" his wife asked.

The man stared at his reflection in the mirror. He said nothing.

"And how much help are they going to be after we tell them tonight?" she asked again.

"I don't know," her husband spoke, "but sometimes we have to appease people, Amber."

"Are you telling me I just have to deal with it?" the woman asked incredulously.

"I'm *asking* you to indulge them." His tone was soft and pleading because he wanted to stop the fight. "It only means they care."

The woman picked up a sock on the floor and threw it into the clothes hamper.

"Remember that when I complain about the hair on your upper lip," she retorted.

The man began his counter argument but thought better of it. He stopped stroking his mustache and turned to look at his wife. She faced the closet as she searched through her clothes again. Neither one spoke.

After ten minutes of silence except for a deliberate moving of hangers, Amber finally pulled out a stylish blue and white pants suit outfit and placed it on the queen-sized bed. It was conservative enough to cover her soon-to-be deformed body but classy enough to please.

"There," she said to her husband and pointed to the suit. "I think this will indulge them. But if it doesn't, maybe you should tell them that I may not look like a perfect mother, but that doesn't mean I won't try to be one."

The man watched as his wife, still upset, fussed with the buttons on the outfit. Then, with razor in hand, he too conceded and walked to the sink to shave.



Diana L. Hadsall

The Sorceress

She had pearly peacock eyes,
Green and blue with flecks of gold.
A silver mask was her disguise;
It fit her face like a plaster mold.
Her voice was serum, essence sweet;
Her hair was cursive crimson to her feet.

Her face was not set in a frown;
Her lips wore a somber smile.
She had an alabaster neck
That sloped quite gently down.
Her steps were smooth and flowing like the river Nile.
She wore a gown of evening shadow,
Trimmed with the feathers of a crow.

Her long and slender fingers
Stole like tendrils in the night,
To steal the dewy spider webs
And hide them far from sight.
In an unearthly, airy gait
She silently moved on
And stepped into an ebbing, inky hole
Before the break of dawn.

Bradley Shaffer

Rocket Unknown

Riding in an unknown elevator rocket ship,
 Whispers abroad I came
 Somewhere out there, listless
 Shuffles of man, but who knew
 Perhaps the world blew.
 Outside these walls, I found
 I suppose and came upon this vacuum of
 Spaces unknown.
 Lock the air in and you out.
 Riding unknown elevators.
 Ahoy! These waves
 Are endless emptiness in
 The undulating praxis of existence.
 Unknown elevator rise, sapient sunrise
 Will this lone crew feel it; the world went to hell
 Without this rocket.
 Floating rockets.
 But who knew that perhaps there shall
 Be some wonderful where
 This ship is blasting to.
 This patient pilgrim.
 Riding in an unknown elevator rocket ship.

L.J. Chandler

I Will Not Write a Poem

I've watched the clouds and seen the leaves;
 Just don't ask me to write this, please.
 I've thought of lovers, death, and thieves,
 Just like the guy who stole my keys.

You assign this task I do not like
 And think I'd know just what to say
 As if I'm inspired by a hike
 Through the woods on an autumn day.

So now I've got a poem to write;
 You've put me in an awful bind.
 I'd rather watch the Tyson fight.
 I will not write a ... never mind.

Russell Gearhart

Lake Mead Boating Trip, August 1997

We saw these clouds drifting over the cliff
And into the blue-gray sky,
Decided the storm would miss us,
And listened to cicadas in the tamarisk.

Dark, dark everything,
Three hours to morning and another wind surge
Swirls along the water; we cover our heads.
Whoosh, whoosh, across the lake,
It hisses and rumbles before it hits.
It twirls and dances and whips our arms and faces,
Sand in our hair, in our eyes.
When the wind fades, we feel the cold
(Aren't we in a desert?)
And the drizzle on our sandy faces.
We pull a tarp over us—tap, tap the rain on the tarp—
Two hours and fifty-two minutes to morning;
My watch light is dying.
Whoosh, whoosh, rumble, we cover our faces again.
Sand slides on the tarp, and the tarp slides away.
Sand in our hair, in our eyes,
In our sleeping bags, in our everything.
The wind laughs and runs down the shore,
Another short silence to feel the drizzle
Wetting our sandy hair.
Can't check time, hear more wind,
Whoosh, whoosh, but this one roars.

Aubree Howard

Destinations

A fresh spring vine
Grows innocently
Against a cinder block wall.
Strength and pride
And summer blossoms grew
From spirited determination,
But an Elven child passed,
Not knowing her sin,
And plucked the last flower
From his autumn limbs.
His purity was violated,
And it damaged his soul,
For it was the flower
He'd never again grow.
To her it was beautiful,
And she wanted to keep it
In a vase in the sun
On the sill,
But the future of the vine
Remains unclimbed...
Will he deem her sacred
And grow stronger still
Or will he become vile and bitter and harden inside
And tear down the wall which supported his life?

Aubree Howard

Sun Dogs

Heavy heat dried up the creek,
And vultures settle in.
Coyotes cry and flowers die
In slow spirals of the wind.

Fallen trees and broken weeds
And stone that's turned to sand.
Crumbled bones and old pine cones
Beaten by summer's hand.

Amber Basile

The Choice

Lying in a timeless abyss,
Heart bare to the world,
A naked soul harbors eternities of guilt.
Remorse chokes the passage of air,
As life-giving fluid quickens the cold stone floor,
Awakening the pebbles to feverish exercise,
Twirling as they dance into the sunset of time.

Amber Hyde

River Running*

Sun glistens on the great mass of river rushing by
That pauses only to spill over slippery rocks in its path.
As it whips along, the silvery ribbon soon becomes a storm of
spray,
Holding contempt for anything that dares sail its waters.

Small boats plummet down through the rapids.
Paddles jam hard, giving everything to stay afloat.
Stiff terror fills the occupants but excites them still the same.
Water gushes and swirls around them as if trying to swallow them
up.

The thrill of the ride leaves those who survive limp and chattering,
Some not daring to try it again.
But others take their chances and are forever
Ready for another run on this furious water.

**Second Place Winner, 1997-98 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition*

Alyson Overton

Not a Single Gift

I forgot how to laugh
Like a hyena in a caravan cage.
Friends on each side,
Speaking of nothing but nothing,
Screaming delightful songs
Into the wind of agelessness.

History of the Southern Quill

<i>Year</i>	<i>Editor(s)</i>	<i>Advisor(s)</i>
1950-51	Loraine Taylor	Juanita Brooks
1951-52	Loraine Taylor	Juanita Brooks
1952-53	Rose Workman	Rose Esplin
1953-57	No magazine published	
1957-58	Karen Vawdrey	Juanita Brooks & Betty J. Allen
1958-59	Karen Vawdrey	Juanita Brooks
1959-60	Barbara Larkin	Juanita Brooks
1960-61	Titine Spillsbury	Reed Blake, Jr.
1961-62	Joan Esplin	Robert O. Dalton
1962-63	Joan Esplin	Robert O. Dalton
1963-64	Ilene Harmon	Pansy L. Hardy
1964-65	Emily Cottam	Pansy L. Hardy
1965-66	Kay Lichtenwalter	Pansy L. Hardy
1966-67	James Force	Robert O. Dalton
1967-68	James Force	Pansy L. Hardy
1968-69	Linda Sue Hunt	Pansy L. Hardy
1969-70	Linda Sue Hunt	Pansy L. Hardy
1970-71	Roxanne Schmidt	Pansy L. Hardy
1971-72	Michelle Thomas	Pansy L. Hardy
1972-73	Gordon J. Peterson	Pansy L. Hardy
1973-74	Connie Gifford	Pansy L. Hardy & John G. Hacking
1974-75	Cathy Pam Heaton	Pansy L. Hardy & John G. Hacking
1976-77	Michael Perry	Janice F. DeMille
1977-78	Marilee Camp	James Force
1978-79	Bill Batzlie	Pansy L. Hardy
1979-80	Laura Lee Graff	Pansy L. Hardy
1980-81	Kurtis Crist, Linda Hedrick, & Aderianna Smith	Ace G. Pilkington
1981-82	Melanie Madsen	Ace G. Pilkington
1982-83	Dianna K. Kearney	Ace G. Pilkington
1983-84	Dawn Houghton	Ace G. Pilkington
1984-85	Julianna Burton	Ace G. Pilkington
1985-86	Janae Daley	Ace G. Pilkington

History of the Southern Quill, cont.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Editor(s)</i>	<i>Advisor(s)</i>
1986-87	Bonnie McCowan & Kris Shipp	Ace G. Pilkington
1987-88	Karen Hansen & Kris Shipp	Ace G. Pilkington
1988-89	Stephanie Chidester & Chris Metcalfe	Ace G. Pilkington
1989-90	Stephanie Chidester & Chris Metcalfe	Ace G. Pilkington
1990-91	Tiffany Durrant & Joni Jones	Ace G. Pilkington
1991-92	Christian Arial	Ace G. Pilkington
1992-93	Jandi Jones, Natalie Nilsson, & Chris Pellew	Ace G. Pilkington
1993-94	Jandi Jones & Natalie Nilsson	Ace G. Pilkington
1994-95	Dina Gerhauser	Ace G. Pilkington
1995-96	Aubree Howard	Ace G. Pilkington
1996-97	Diana L. Blakley & Bart Jay Mitchell	Ace G. Pilkington
1997-98	April Davis, Amber Hyde, & Kelly Leatham	Ace G. Pilkington

Southern Quill

1998