



## The Laureate

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*the* Laureate  
literary journal

The Laureate's mission is to allow undergraduate students at Western Michigan University a place in which to publish their works of fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and other creative works. The Laureate strives to be a professional and engaging journal that appeals to all.

Prior to now, there has been no professional journal at Western in which undergraduate students could publish their work. When I first came to Western I was very surprised by this fact and after three years, I finally decided to do something about it. This inaugural issue is a compilation of several students' hard work as we learned what goes into creating a literary journal. The journal is also a product of the great amount of talent from Western students throughout various programs. Both parties deserve much praise for their outstanding work and achievement.

It is my hope that The Laureate will continue to thrive in years to come. I hope that it becomes a well-known and well-regarded journal throughout the university and that students choosing Western will aspire to have their works published in it. It is my honour to present the first of those students and their work. None of which would have been possible without the support of the Lee Honors College. Not only have they provided financial support, but at every step along the way, the faculty and administrators have done nothing but encourage this project and show full faith in our ability to do a great job.

The Laureate has been a pleasure for me to work on and a learning experience as well. Thank you to everyone who helped me see this project to fruition. It was something I started on my own, but was never alone in making a reality. Congratulations to us all.

Jill Winkler  
Editor-in-chief

*the*  
*Laureate*  
*literary journal*

2002

Wings spread wide across the sky,  
holy arms of strength embrace;  
Bathe me in glory from the halo  
of the crystal goddess, angel Cipro.

I crawl behind you, who is as the son,  
touch your hem when I am unclean;  
Rescue me from being laid below,  
Sweet, compassionate angel Cipro.

Though I may walk the rubble of Babylon,  
and breathe the vapors of my brethren,  
I need never fear the deathblow  
when I walk with lovely Cipro.

The angel eye pierces, it breeds roses,  
Her pure breath, her home so clean;  
Priest of Hippocrates, keep the gate closed,  
only the elect shall taste of Cipro.

Goats left, lambs right, behold Cipro's might  
Her calm gesture directs our future,  
Soon forever silence in the ghetto  
for want of the love of kind angel Cipro.

## Black N Blues Choruses 94-96

James Hoffman

Where's walt whitman?  
He's welcomed allen ginsberg into  
    heavens gates  
burroughs only second behind him—  
up to relive life w/ kerouac  
    cassidy, hunke, & williams—  
even shakespeare appears  
    at heavens stained glass faces  
    to welcome muhammeden angels  
    that can no longer howl—  
too late—  
the last beat poets  
are returning to lowell as ghosts  
& new york city jersey beds are  
    empty  
cigarettes unsmoked  
wine left undrunk  
ashes only dust in wind—  
rimbaud & chris ide sit on a heavenly cloud  
feet dangling over sky  
waiting for antler  
  
ferlinghetti  
waits, publishing odes of  
    obscene beautiful verse—  
anne waldman still writes forwards for CDs  
    told ginsberg—don't sing, READ  
    like 1967 all over again  
cope publishes ginsbergian sunflowers  
    & locomotives in soft homage—  
eliot katz purrs from within  
    the golden manuscript like the lion for real—

dylan can no longer tour w/ allen  
at his side  
young york boys can no longer  
feel his kiss  
or his hand on their thighs—  
the buddhist lion no longer blocks  
the gates of new york

now retired to heavenly bliss  
past lamas & dakinis  
right up to the hand of God  
that cradles him naked—  
endless poets in street corner  
coffee bars  
read howl in local public libraries,  
smoke hashish,  
reading kaddish to holy mothers  
gone grave overnight  
in asylums everywhere—  
young boys sit weeping at the  
passing of an icon that wasn't even theirs  
but everyone's—  
they fight over ashes, scattered in the  
winds of timeless eternity,  
coating the brooklyn bridge  
w/ bohemian influence haiku—

beat poet prosody  
lost in the night of sacred  
kings of may

-on the road, casablanca, ontario-

# Concerto in E-Minor

Lindsey Cherry

I could have said my hand is a map.  
An old, unfading scar marks the place  
where I live. I could not find my way  
home except to follow the dark river that  
leads to the Bay.

I could have said my cousin is  
a guide through Montana. He can not  
use his hand as a map. His veins do not  
flow from the same source as the river.  
A black bear squats by the bank, dusting  
his claw through the silt, spearing fish  
with ease, and my cousin casts a rod  
while the fly paints a shimmer on the surface.

Or that I saw smoke from the fire before  
I fell in love. I have never been in love.  
But I saw sparks fly upwards  
making their own constellations in the summer sky.

And that the wind is lost.  
When he finds his mother, he will be still.  
Tonight I listen outside my window and wonder  
if his mother is as pretty as mine, no,  
if she is angry sometimes.

I find it relaxing to listen to Bach  
and think of others who understand him too.  
Mozart makes me smarter, and E.D. wrote me  
in her poem about light. Pleading,  
Virtue; never leave her.

I could have said my life is simple,  
and I play the violin.

*They look as if they've been made of blown glass.  
Fingers pulled to long perfection,*

*Playing with a blade of grass.  
Twirling, twisting, searching for the right pattern;*

*Like tiny, busy, purple-sided clams,  
wiggling back into their sand-cover.*

*I want to ask those fingers, "What are you looking for? What is the  
right shape?" Do they know?*

*"I told them this afternoon, but they weren't listening to me.  
Later they will say I am lying."*

## Easter falls on sunday and he carves the ham

Sean Hoen

From the kitchen there is sweating and slicing.

They call him grandpa and he carves hams and meats for the holidays. His knife is large and ugly and used, a scratched softwood handle leading to the blade. Like words, and language, and bred love, his knife changes form and purpose when it is in his hand. They call him grandpa and his hand wraps around the wood and exposes the blade. In the kitchen he eats the first tethers of meat and fat. He speaks with poorly malted liquor in his stomach, and the excess of his daughter's fleshy waistline makes him sick and angry, and he slices the meat and feels the knife in his hand.

In the sitting room men eat salted nuts and slurp beer and coke with rums, and with tiny red stirring straws they toy with ice and swirl the liquids of their glasses, to control something anything something they play with ices and liquors and let the poisons bind in their bellies. A few drink coffee by law, but dream of rum and wait for hot pork. And they speak of competitions, and men in uniforms, cars and lawns, ham and meats, and the smells of gravy, and the color of the walls. And the television always shows Lawrence Welk, always a Christian, but makes no sound as the meat is trimmed. And their words are thinner and are then nothing. And one of them coughs at his coke and rum, and another pours a greasy handful of salty nuts into his throat, and the knife cuts the meats thinly and articulately, and the smell of pork stains every nook of the room but no one says a word that is more than a word.

At the piano the aunts play stiff artless sing songs. Fat women with cheap shoes and foul sprays on their necks and wrists. Women with sorrowed smiles and clumpy legs. With bad dry hair and failed diets and coupons. They can feel the elastics of their underpants dig and cut into their fats as they bend for a kiss-and-hug. And the blindest child is nominated to a sing song along; and he sings of christ and words he doesn't understand and words he makes up, and there's no difference. And the fat women laugh, and pound white and black, with meaningless silver squeezing their pudgy fingers tight. And soon the meat will be hot in their waters and none will say a thing, but grin.

In the basement there are other generations and bystanders. Young men and girls with fresher bruises and a hate of pork. They hate and don't know what to call it. They hate and don't know why. And hate because they don't know why. And hate because it hurts to not know why. And they're never told why but they look to a confusing god, and that god is opaque and their hate is larger than it because their fear is empty. And another slice of steamy meat falls juicy from the knife; a boy cousin grazes the inner leg and soft pink cotton of a girl cousin, and he aches in a way that god doesn't permit, and he aches because god taught him not to. In the basement they know no better, and denying denial is a covenant. And the smell of meat and sound of bad sing songs has something to do with love; it must have something to do with love. And a cousin smashes toys, and another sneaks with a cigarette, and another has a sin slinking in her womb, and another has deep

pockets and strokes himself secretly as the young girls in homely pink-laced dresses are too young to sit cross legged. And the sing songs and pork and stench and coke-and-rum-words make the house warm and foul, as all wait.

The men in the sitting room clack their liquored ice faster with their straws and salivate for the cuts. And the women know that everything is fine because the songs are comfortable. And they call him grandpa as his knife saws at the fats, as he suckles the fats and juices from his fingers; a few strings of dying hair swivel across his scalp skin. And he cleans his blade and looks from the kitchen window and through the backyard, but can't recall any single or particular cut; only that there is a fresh stack of new meat and that his knife is hot and honored. With pink flesh under his nails and liquor in his love. Dinner is served, he barks. And they shuffle to the kitchen, rolling their bellies, and pork stench their speech. Waiting and sweating in lines, with plates and wide eyes and smaller knives. Smiling because meat and feeding are familiar, smiling because it's easy.

Lying in the back of the suburban  
I stare out the top of the window at  
The dancing telephone lines  
And I feel the movement of  
The muggy Colorado air through me  
And I see it as a white line through my chest,  
Like a florescent light bulb,  
And I feel clean.

Standing on the base of the mountain, I  
Trip over loose and ancient stones, sending  
Them rolling over themselves, twisting  
My ankles over small mistakes.

Up on the tundra the air is colder  
Sharper, and I lie on my back and watch  
The storms roll over.  
The clouds are closer, and I'm the first  
To feel the rain.

# Fingerprints

Michael Monje

1.

I like short poetry.  
Beautiful, isn't it?

2.

Haiku always short.  
Never any room to move.  
Then it is over.

10.

Ten doesn't come after two.  
Mommy says so.

3.

Three comes after two.

4.

The priest is an alcoholic,  
What does your father do?  
The nuns dyke out in the dark,  
Is your mother superior?

5.

Sexual Identity Crisis.  
Does it make me sound important?  
impotent?

6.

Don't read this.

7.

Ditto.

8.

Ever read e. e. cummings?

9.

Ten fingers. Ten fingerprints.

11.

Unnatural mutation.  
Is that me?

now on the road  
hobos passing in traincar boxcar  
amazement  
on the way Boston, New York, Cleveland  
or ever West—  
young men on the run from law & lawyers  
& law enforcement—  
a thousand houses in passing  
filled w/ sleeping children  
& fathers who wake for work  
5 a.m.  
to feed hungry young mouths—  
mountains lead valleys to end of  
interstate  
newer rivers & branching forests  
through campsites  
to ever rising steel concrete metropolis—  
the endless look of pavement  
lining forever forward to  
rising horizon—  
  
the boy smiling in the rear view mirror

## Man's Best Friend

Christy Mroczek

There is a young boy who is probably seven or eight years old who walks by my house everyday. Today is especially cold, and he pulls his red stocking hat tight over his dark, wavy hair. He wears a blue jacket that doesn't look quite warm enough for the freezing snow. The screaming and yelling coming from his own door doesn't seem to affect him. I can hear two voices crying and yelling profanities at each other along with other crashing noises. He walks down the street dutifully and proud that he is out all alone without his mother or father. He walks slowly,

occasionally tugging on the leash that he carries.

I remember when he would walk past smiling, but he doesn't smile as much anymore. The boy's face is determined and downcast as he trudges through the snow, dragging the leash behind him. I can't quite see what he is leading, but he calls to it every so often. He doesn't reply to his mother when she screams at him to come back into the house. The boy stops walking and turns towards the end of the leash. He speaks into the air, but I can't hear what he says, and he moves his hand back and forth as if he is caressing something. It seems that his unseen friend has responded because

the young boy smiles and embraces the air. He takes a cookie from his pocket and waves it into the air and tosses it up. The boy picks up the cookie as soon as it hits the ground and tosses it again. This time he smiles when it hits the ground and pats his little pet again.

He sits on the sidewalk bench petting the air and talking. People walk by and stare at him and he reaches for his leash as if to hold back something from attacking the strangers.

He ignores more screaming from his mother to come inside as he sits alone on the bench. Maybe he can't hear her, but how can he not? A man drives by in an old and

neglected truck and commands the boy to get in. You don't want me to have to get out and put you in. "Okay, Dad," the numbed boy says. He jumps in the truck and cringes, putting his hands up in front of his face. He leaves his leash on the bench. It is too late when he realizes he doesn't have it. I watch him cry as he looks back out of the window.

The flakes of snow sting my face as I walk towards the bench. The boy's invisible pet sits curled up on the bench, lonely and shivering. I pick up the leash and go back inside my house. Maybe I will see the boy tomorrow.

We're walking through dry dirt, smells  
of sagebrush hard upon my  
nostrils, caught up in the dust  
swept up by the horse's  
hooves in front of me. Creamy  
brown in colour and texture,  
his rump sways indecisively  
from side to side. The warm  
creature between my own legs  
molds my spine into his  
rhythm. The rhythm similar  
to that of a small child sobbing  
against a shoulder, a steady  
shudder and shift against me,  
jerking occasionally, catching a

hoof on a rock. It took awhile  
to actually cry after they told me  
about the accident. I was  
only eight and had been colouring  
splendidly whirling lines at  
my safe and comfortable dining room  
table, when my dad, framed in the doorway,  
hung up the red phone in the kitchen  
and told me Molly Roe was dead.  
The beat of my heart, a slight pause  
at my drawing, and my reply of a simple  
nod, struggling through peanut butter  
in my mind to recall a face, the girlfriend  
who this was. Being pulled into my  
mother's soft shoulder, oblivious to  
the tears blurring the magenta, the periwinkle on  
my paper, a cavern growing exponentially  
within my chest, pushing my heart

into quick gallops, as quick as our  
gallops had been that past Labor Day  
weekend throughout the length of  
her ranch-style house, flying through  
halls as wild horses, racing out to cross  
the creek complacently cutting the  
property lines; leaving in our dust other  
guests, lengthy adult conversations,  
and the many plastic horses in her  
collection that worked fine only on days  
less perfect than this. Her body silent  
now in front of me, fingers meshed  
into perfect prayer, worn string  
friendship bracelets encircling one  
wrist – minus the one I had been too  
shy to give. How could she have been  
so injured by that other car but still  
look like this? The hand holding mine  
pulls me away, my stomach ill after  
swallowing so much of my own senseless  
saliva and snot. “God must have needed  
another angel”, an elderly woman soothes.  
The dark green shirt of my father sticks to  
my face, I want to be behind the drawn curtain  
with the family members saying good-bye  
drilling holes in my heart, draining my strength.

Rocking me, my dad holds me to his  
warm body; his legs plod methodically  
beneath me and the dry expanse of desert  
lengthens in my sight, ripples of hot air,  
my dry throat, tongue sticking to  
the palate of my mouth thick and salty.

## Laundromat on Sunday

Anne Hawkinson

The boom-pa boom-pa of Mexican music  
The parking lot packed with plates from Texas  
The trucks with naked lady silhouettes

Inside black-eyed children patter  
they know the rules, they behave  
cheerfully

Dads sit with babies  
or help moms stuff, haul, stuff  
or maybe just stop by to visit

Groups of girl-less gauchos  
snakeskin cowboy boots  
they do laundry together,  
always looking around...

The middle class white woman  
alone  
hauls it all herself  
tries to squeeze in the folding line  
The slick folding tables  
an engine block  
the well oiled pistons of brown hands  
men and women  
up and down  
folding, folding

Hovering above the landing strip,  
I am waiting to be received.  
It is 5 a.m. and the island is  
so black I cannot see where the  
sea sloshes over the edge of land, only  
tiny sects of confetti light,  
scattered, jumping and waving  
out of the dark.  
I prepare myself for descent,  
for the moment those tiny wheels will shock the pavement,  
when I will feel my bones jar and realize  
the amazement of where I've been  
floating, beatified, thousands of feet above anything,  
and the amazement of where I am.  
Soon I feel the fall and hum,  
coming, coming  
entire cabin holding their breath,  
but always it only knicks the ground  
and I exhale and smile.  
The neon airport sign is blinking and buzzing red,  
like I've landed at a cheap motel.  
And I'm begging it not to be America with an accent, expecting  
more than a stamp in my passport.  
After customs I step outside, daylight has switched on,  
and the green is blinding and crayon perfect.

*Light and darkness intertwine,  
And neither lasts forever I know,  
But I grow weak trying to love you,  
Old trying to change you,  
Tired trying to alter me—  
My expectations. . .  
To meet you.*

*Safely you sit in your comfort zone,  
Your security blanket of me  
Wrapped around your shoulders,  
Forever keeping out the harshness—  
The cold, the alone—  
While I sit  
Needing to run towards the sun,  
Towards life,  
But waiting again on you.*

*How good are you really. . . at seduction?  
Will you seduce my life away  
With words, words, words,  
Looks and touches, pretense and procrastination?*

*Row.  
Row your boat  
Row Row Row your boat.*

*You're dying in this stream.  
Slowly slowly slowly but surely  
You're dying in this stream.*

*Row.  
Row your boat.  
Row Row Row your boat.*

*Before you drown  
Before this river wipes away your city  
The city of your dreams*

*I can't let your hand go  
Even as your head goes under  
And do you know what that means?*

*My arms are tired*

*My head is weary  
I can barely see-  
Embrace your demons... I need you now.  
Are you not tired, yet, of merely floating?  
In this mud and muck and shit and cowardice?*

*Must you take me down with you?  
Must you make me drown with you?  
I know where you are going,  
And I know I can't follow you there.  
My life is this way, can't you see?*

*Come with me.*

## Speculations

Jason Fitzpatrick

After installing a new piece of sculpture in the Lee Honors College Lounge, the College held a poetry competition, asking students to write something inspired by the experience of the new work of art. From among the many delightful submissions, Jason Fitzpatrick's poem "Speculations" has been chosen as the winner. Jason sat in the LHC lounge one evening as a bright sun was setting, and he observed the changing rainbows that swept across the room and the people in it. As a prize, Jason will receive a small piece of sculpture by Chicago artist Joseph Burlini, who created "Rainbow Machine."

The only way to  
understand something  
is to sit perfectly still, praying,  
watching, and hoping it doesn't move.  
If the wind blows, if someone sneezes,  
if a volley of coughing begins  
the moment is gone, and one  
must begin to understand again.

What about the young man,  
a six foot sweater-clad giant  
somehow curled into an armchair?  
Does he realize he is sleeping through  
the most beautiful moment of his day?  
The moment when the evening sun  
refracts off the abstraction of another artist's hand—  
he's missing how angelic he looks,  
face relaxed in sleep, painted  
colorful and peaceful....

I wonder if she knows this,  
the blond on the brown cowskin couch  
with hips untamed by child bearing.  
I wonder if she knows her silence  
the way she stares so intently in study,  
is preserving my ability to understand.

I took my cross off in the shower  
to scrub myself clean enough  
to feel comfortable putting it back on.  
When a draft comes through the room,  
the cross sways just enough,  
as water drips down its leg.

# The Long Winter

Diana Fox

They have no idea,  
my A.A.R.P. youngsters. I  
rest in my chair, my head  
resting . . . my eyes  
resting . . . on the ceiling  
seeing the pictures

of my past.  
Fall was a lovely season. I  
miss my wife's laughter, the  
lech that I was, and how we let  
the kids think we were old. Old  
enough to know better, young enough to  
enjoy. It didn't matter . . . the barn, backseat,  
backyard, their driveways. Oh, to be  
60 again . . .

. . . When did the sun get  
low? Dinner time. It can  
wait.

They have no idea. The morning  
paper still on the porch. It can  
wait.

My hands are numb,  
my feet so slow, and  
my eyes losing their soul.

A trip anymore takes  
planning and thought. The  
remote across the room. It can  
wait.

The sun disappears  
behind the dark clouds.  
Where'd they come from? It's  
been a long winter, and I . . .  
can't wait.

Trickle  
is a fitting description,  
like a drop of water that  
hits  
the back of your neck and  
the shudder that follows.  
At first.  
And later, the trickle from a hole;  
a loss, a leaving,  
slowly.  
I try to purge myself of things  
that make you real.  
Your pictures are everywhere and you are  
portrait-smile-birthday happy,  
laughing and vital,  
so alive you could never be anything else.

Vibrant.  
We are children.  
We are indestructible.  
We try to plug the hole with  
consolances and condolences,  
but are left with one less than whole.  
Part of me is made up of you  
maybe a lung or kidney,  
something unnoticeably there but  
essential, dependent, composed of lifetimes.  
You're on the front page of the paper today,  
and the newsprint rubs off on my fingers.  
I am marked.

## Grandmother

Anne Hawkinson

I learned about being Japanese from visiting my grandmother. She didn't live far away, just across town, on the North Side. We would take the Dan Ryan expressway to her house. But really, the Dan Ryan took us to another world.

My grandparent's house was so close to the expressway that we could see it as we approached, before we got off at the exit and doubled back at the International House of Pancakes. Although my grandparent's house was on display for a constant stream of traffic, I don't think anyone noticed it. It was as if my grandparents had purposely chosen the most small, gray and obscure house in the most noisy and public location to prove their invisibility in America. My grandparent's house was a secret only our family knew about. That's

how it seemed when I was young. When I was very little, I thought my grandparent's house was a Japanese house. The fact that we were in Chicago, not Japan, didn't matter, of course, since we had obviously experienced some magical leap in space on the expressway. And since the house was invisible from the outside, why, anything could be contained within.

The smell of Japan was the smell of that house. Incense, lacquered wood, shoyu and rice vinegar mingled with my grandfather's tobacco in the dark smoky living room. My grandfather sat silently puffing his pipe on the ratty brown couch, his English forgotten in old age. Pine incense came from a small shrine in the corner of the room, where Japanese characters on a tiny box inconspicuously honored my deceased uncle. The incense seeped into the American furniture and floated into my grandparent's bedroom, where I once saw my grandmother, through door ajar, sleeping straight and still as a corpse on the wooden platform bed. Even her pillow was made of wood, covered with an embroidered cloth.

My tiny grandmother shuffled into the smoky room with a smile and soft exclamations. "Harro Ang, Harro Cheurya!" "Harro Rucy, Harro Jong!" My grandfather, when he was young and in love with America, had given my mother, Lucy, a name that my grandmother could never pronounce. My mother had grown into her name well, with a broad, flashing smile and a quick swing to her walk. When she had children she gave them names from a world of crisp curtains and white picket fences. But now our names on my grandmother's tongue were transformed to blend in with the surroundings, and we let them become Japanese.

My grandmother ushered us into her kitchen, where the Japanese smell was even stronger, despite the American appliances. My grandmother's formica kitchen table was large and rectangular. It sat heavily in the center of the space, taking up way too much room. This custom of "kitchen table" was not Japanese. My grandmother skittered around the large foreign table where her daughter and grandchildren comfortably sat. She steeped green tea and served it to us in small round cups without handles. The kind she liked best had puffed rice mixed in with the tea leaves. My grandmother let my sister and I poke our fingers in the tea jar and pull out rice puffs while the tea was brewing. She would ask if we were hungry: "Ang, Cheurya, you wanga snack-u?" She offered us flat papery-thin sheets of nori seaweed, toasted over the gas burner of the stove. The nutty, salty smell of the roasted seaweed and the sharp green tea filled the kitchen as my mother and grandmother talked, their Japanese softening the hard table.

The Kiss  
Lindsey Cherry

*I would like to tell you about Gustav's Kiss,  
the horizons of lips, and one woman wearing  
a daffodil dress, I bought because yellow  
is my favorite color and it hangs nicely on the wall,  
but I can't stop thinking about the affair  
between Goethe and my sister  
and how he spelled the word girl  
and    hips    hips    hips  
how I'm crying to become a poet and sometimes  
think of the days  
when my mother made us stand in front of the door  
and recite E.D. and I hated those days  
but still remember the verse  
and wonder what bird is singing still*

## Only Poetry (Promises)

Rachel Heliste

I slip silently into the  
warmth  
of your bed, under the  
thick green quilt.  
Your legs, arms tangle  
around my body  
as we try to maneuver into  
comfort  
on your twin size mattress  
but instead, get lost inside midnight  
kisses  
and 3 a.m. promises of forever.  
I was drunk on the soft sound of your voice  
and forgot, as you whispered poetry  
in my ear, that it was only poetry.  
So, when we awoke to the angry buzz  
of your alarm, as the morning leaked in  
through the cracks of your shutters,  
I was hung-over and in love, lingering  
on pretenses of forever, forgetting  
in this relationship with a pre-set expiration date,  
forever only meant three months  
with just your lips waiting under mine, hungry  
for the passion that keeps us up nights  
'til dawn tears the sheets off your bed  
leaving our bodies exposed to the cold.

The devil dropped down and smiled  
Sean Hoen

Have you heard, the devil came in  
to town, with his wide eyed  
men manning planes

He soared into the heart of  
the civilized  
and showed them that evil  
still burns near them  
with rare but great explosions

He came into town and bent  
towers,  
disappearing into flames and  
vapors  
As skyward things collapsed and  
other things died,  
he reminded them that his smile  
still smiles, and is cunning and  
stealthy

In the moment, his is a flame that  
is too huge and hot to understand or shout at,  
but in longer time  
it will be written, as it is always  
written,  
atrocities will be again a thing on a page,  
or screen,  
and the struggles of energies will  
continue,  
as men breathe and things are built,  
he will smile  
and be cunning, and find new and more clever  
ways to throw his balance  
on the civilized, who want more than all  
to give the smile  
a face

Come to; see re-creation of life bounce off walls in a room half-covered with photographs. See shoes on your feet at the end of the bed, clothes on your back frayed and soiled, light in your eyes through the cracks in the blind. (Sunlight has the obscure essence no other light can capture, pure energy. When you are hit in the morning there's no chance... What doesn't come from the sun, kinetically speaking?)

This morning, you have woken up from the sun and although you have the stomach ache you start every day with, you have learned how ignorance can lead to bliss in the end (you realize you used to experience this (in a different sense) every day, but were unaware of it) and you notice, instead of the stomach ache, the specific pattern that is lit up on the wall as the sun comes through the slots between the blinds. These lines are not parallel with the floor and you notice this too.

Thinking about old times... One picture you look at on the wall, from an old time. Is that right? How does time work again? You confuse the three dimensions of the room as incorrectly composing a fourth on the wall, held by a mirror, reflecting the wall of photographs.

—Wait!—                      Is that mirror of time reflecting light from the sun too?  
—Bang!—                      Ok, that's all here...you are obviously a child of light, a child of time.

Wake up, the quilt covering legs, a shirt, the torso. The fan in the south wall blows a steady current over the quilt covering the legs. One hand is next to the fan and when the fist clenched unfurls and the air current falls between the openings of the fingers, the air enters the hand and your eyes are open

and noticing everything; like there's that wall of photographs. Around your room some furniture, wooden, orderly, but too cramped to leave much room for... standing, walking, dancing, exercise...

Maybe light from the sun as well. It seems to flow through the room, but double up on itself before it has time to disperse correctly. This leaves an uneasy feeling in the room when standing up, although the energy evens out by the time it gets to the area next to the walls. Excellent for sleeping, reading, listening.

On your bookshelf you have a book on modernity or maybe not! Perhaps it is free jazz or no, Hawking! Bunyan or Jung or Faulkner? No! There are no books, however there seem to be some floating ideas there, lined up like bars of a cage. You can see how they are so silent, hovering in modesty like a child prodigy made to perform against its will. (The most clever child, of course, realizes what will is, and chooses to let the audience entertain itself, thus enclosing the child in a rather pleasant cage of drama. Only it must never become involved, for what happens when the dots of line between actor and audience are decimated and spread thin throughout the room? People cease to believe they know what is happening. Must they, at this point, pretend to understand? The air becomes slightly denser, it is a bit harder to breathe. More coughing in the audience. The child also becomes confused and he forgets he has a will, concentrating instead on the troubles of others. Forgetting how he performs, he must pretend to remember. What an awful situation, ending only in accidental dishonesty and false sympathy.)

The both of you are standing up now, and there's little area in this room for such an absurd action. It necessitates the state of being face to face, and for such giant creatures in this space you look at your faces and into the eyes. In the background, one sees the wall of photographs, one sees the mirror and reflection—but the foreground is where attention gathers. The light from the

sun comes in right between the faces. The eyes are deep, both eyes are deep, but at the same time it seems like whether you could see through the eyes straight through to the back of the head, or into the eyes but stopping at the mass of pink tissue, this is momentarily irrelevant. All attention is centered in those circles, those two circles on the surface of each eyeball. You wonder if maybe the design should have been with the two circles next to each other, touching, instead of one inside of the other.

“Coffee and a bagel, as per usual?”

“Simple, effective, nourishing, but in an absolutely minimal sense.”

“Oh you and yr minimalism!”

*“Repetition is also a form of change.”*

*“The passion for destruction is also a creative passion.”*

Bagel shop and coffee shop share a parking lot, share a customer base, share a system of commerce, share a common goal of making money. They please you, it is pleasing to see effort in the eyes of those who work. Their effort (if it is sincere) in their eyes is a form of pleasure for them as well. They inhabit their world, and their goal in their game is the successful happiness of those they serve. But indeed, a game? Perhaps, you think, you should get your bagel and your coffee and play solitaire all day and all night and all life. Is it selfish, to play games with your self, to succeed in games with your self? But there's no time for that now, you have walked into the glass door of the bagel shop and must open it to avoid further injury and embarrassment to your team. They need you.

In the coffee shop, you sit at a square table upon which you set your coffee and your bagel and the ashtray you plan on using while smoking one hand-rolled cigarette. (You will smoke this cigarette because you know that it is possible to savor the taste of a cigarette, experience what sensations the cigarette has to give you, outside of nicotine and addiction. You roll the tobacco, you feel the tobacco, the particular texture as you pull apart the moist light-brown strands and encapsulate them to form a cylinder. You feel the dry paper against your lips and the smoke in your mouth is a sensation you have experienced so many times you have discovered every subtle facet of its taste. A unique joy comes in knowing that in a way, you are the creator, the builder of this object you take so much pleasure in. (In a moment you realize the matter comprising this cylinder will soon be all but nothing and you briefly draw a parallel to the collapse of the universe.))

Now you have these things: bagel, coffee, cigarette—and the business is finished for the moment. You move on to something new.

You are sitting in a chair at a table and then you sense your insides filling up. You are unsure as to what is happening, but you know you may explode soon. It seems natural, but super-natural. Currently, you are not bloated in the sense of being weighted down, but instead experience a sensation similar to that experienced right before you had sex for the first time. Now imagine it, you do, you feel the explosion there, but deep inside waiting to happen, a different feeling than when it is happening. Happening takes a moment, but the anticipation of course lasts for several moments, over a duration. Unless of course, we speak of happening... oh shit, that's right, that feeling. You stop thinking and get up in a rush to go get rid of the feeling, it is not completely unpleasurable, but you are sure the release is needed. There's a door across the way through which exists a room you know will be of some help to you.

But in your rush to get out, you do not notice what is happening in the moment you stand up. No one tells you either, because they do not know what it means yet and sit transfixed, trying to give it meaning before they give it words. You run to the room and enter it and maybe through that door you see an early Kentucky morning, rolling backroads covered in a dense mist, a river and a bridge to walk over that river. No, you run to the room and meet a new friend. No, you are there and there are other people there too, discussing metaphysics or geometry and you figure they are high on LSD, although you are not sure. You think about where you are and the times you've been here on LSD and how that goes, all the while completely ignorant of the important events that have occurred on the other side of a door. **It seems to always happen like this, over and over.**

You see you leaving out the door as you sit back down at the table.

Suddenly, you try to communicate and find you can only do so with jagged speech (lacking adjectives and articles, for instance). You can count only odd numbers. You find you can only see one side of what's happening. You go to look at your eyes and find you cannot find them at all. Your mirror image is a faint outline of a body, hardly distinguishable as you.

# Uncle john has stained teeth that stink like lies

Sean Hoen

beneath the  
hairlip, before your speaking  
muscles, I'm fixated on the process of your  
jaw, marbled brown and  
bone cream that your lip, pulled back,  
reveals with each sneer or  
cackle, the smooth and viscous of your eating bones tarnished,  
plaqued, and tartared along  
their edges, yellow gum lines receding into film and crust

I imagine your front teeth  
made giant, in a row of 5  
or six, made the size of windows, or  
automobiles

I could then examine your life, the maps of filth  
on your teeth, thirty years of working man's nicotine  
20 of bad liquor, lifetime of guzzled  
skillet grease, and gnawed fats

looking closer, I could catch a glimpse,  
some small piece,  
of every lie that's ever breathed through  
their cracks, I could scrape at your giant teeth and fill my  
hands with orange crust, the dull orange crust of white  
midwestern subdivision satellite tv red blue and sports channel porno catholic  
lawsuit budweiser saint daddy  
lies

if the row of giant teeth were 7 or  
eight long, I might search your fangs for the clit hairs of every  
secretary or housewife you've eaten yourself through,  
I could pick at the crumbs of eucharist, and scratch the words of  
christ  
from your rot

I can smell your teeth,  
the stink fills me, and I breathe the concentrated vapors of the bread  
of life and every sin you've  
whispered, to your daughters  
in their cheap clothes, bellies pregnant from apathetic  
young cock

I smell morning decaf, and white  
meat, I smell your wife's yeast, and the drool that pools  
and slithers when you see boss's  
new sports cars

in the worst of  
hells, I might lick the sour  
spots of your decay, I'd suck your tartar  
and tongue the cavities, be humbled in stench and crust  
5 times a day I'd see my reflection in the foul marble of  
your grin, run my lips along the metals of your fillings

but in our handshake,  
I smile and nod with your every  
emphasis, controlling eyes, to not fix too long  
on any given tooth

I fantasize, briefly, about tearing the bones of  
your smile from your posthumous  
face, about burying your mouth fossils  
perhaps for good luck-  
in the wet cement,  
of the front  
porch, of my first home

Magical eight-ball.  
Answers floating in Parrot Bay,  
me floating—I am poly-gone,  
and I ask no questions.

Condensation from bottle,  
sucked shot by gulping shot,  
lubricates passage to never-ever land.  
I am never coming or going.

Sleep-induced drugging.  
One, two, three (decimal three)  
lined up on mirror from the wall.  
I am sipping on bottled up truths.

Pink velvet contrasts black  
void in-between  
and I wish that I were on a mountain  
with real snow

men  
angels.

*Lucca runs through me  
Like a ghost.  
And I long to be running through days  
Like he is, but instead he runs straight through me  
Towards tomorrow,  
Leaving me in today like a statue.*

*And everyone loves Lucca,  
Who is always running,  
Always flying fast  
And breaking his ankles  
On providence.*

*Even when he crawls I can't keep up.*

*I can't reach him  
If I stand wondering,  
If I stay on my own,  
And I've been alone for too long,  
Afraid to let him look at my eyes.*

*He never stays.  
He's always rushing towards living and always  
Lucca is running, running through my veins.*

*I've been dead for so long.*

*Like a ghost, he goes by  
And all the eyes are blessing Lucca.  
Everyone loves Lucca.*

Whose animal are you?  
To suck the mud  
biologic bag, stomach  
tough enough to hold  
bales of chicken wire.  
Not digesting. Only  
holding on. When you're  
found floating unbelievably  
belly up, like some unfortunate  
Goldie or Gus, you'll be  
hailed in with a crane  
and opened, and out  
will come your stuff:  
rolls of asbestos,  
skeleton of a toy poodle,  
stop sign,  
golf balls, deflated basketballs,  
innumerable stones,  
cans,  
and scores of fish  
hooks, thousands of them,  
caught in a thump of your stomach and  
shined by the acid there.  
They'll look like a jackpot,  
a fortune.  
Someone lucky will get to  
pull the dirty gloves from  
his hands and  
plunge them  
into your guts  
just to fell the glint and glance  
of all that.

Is it me or is the tree drunk?

From up in this willow the water under Charles Bridge seems black.

It's 3:30 in the a.m., what time is it at home? Before I can do the math,  
little waves lap moon beams in the water, like silver chocolate in a mixing  
machine.

The shimmer pulls at me; I lose my footing on the limb.

Yesterday I walked into the Square. An old woman stirred liquid chocolate  
behind a window. Window-shopping is big here.

So are the centuries that pile upon pillars and you can see it, over there-  
the side of an arch too tired to move. What would happen

if I blasted these fourteenth century walls with a high-pressure water hose?

Inches of filth coating running off cobblestone into water. Dripping black.

But it's an urge like wanting to run on my neighbor's drying cement,  
write my name forever in a place where it doesn't belong.

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