ICON
The Literary and Art Magazine
is student produced at Kent State University Trumbull Campus. ICON is published twice yearly at the end of Fall and Spring semesters.

Poetry, Fiction, and Nonfiction:
We accept all forms, themes, styles, and genres of 1000 words or less; however, we limit the number of submissions to six (poetry) and three (fiction and nonfiction) per author per issue. Submissions should be typed (no dot matrix or handwritten submissions will be considered). Fiction and nonfiction should be submitted in standard, double-spaced format. Send submissions to ICON, KSU-TC, 4314 Mahoning Ave., N.W., Warren, OH 44483. Enclose a SASE (disposable submissions preferred). Pays one copy.

Artwork and Photography:
Submit samples (copies, not originals) in black and white only. High quality photocopies accepted. Finely detailed work cannot be included, as the detail is lost when shrunk. Best artwork submitted gets cover. Pays one copy.

Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest:
Annual award of $100 for the best poem. Submit 2 poems to Dr. Gary Ciuba at ICON’s mailing address c/o Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest prior to March 1. The winning poem is published in ICON. (Sorry, the contest is not open to Kent State University students.)

Subscriptions:
ICON is available free of charge to Kent State University Trumbull Campus students, staff, and faculty. Those off campus may purchase individual copies of ICON for $3.00, or subscribe for $6.00/year (2 issues).

This issue of ICON was printed by The Ultimate Printing Company, 6090 Mahoning Ave., N.W., Warren, Ohio 44481.

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et al.: ICON Spring 1996

ICON
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**Contributors' Notes** ................................................................. inside back cover
Like Photos the Dead Woman Forgot to Date

we are lost in time, losing our history.
Last night I lost Poros. In my dream
we were walking back to our budget villa.
One instant, the path was whole before us.
I could have closed my eyes and named for you
the open-air taverna just ahead
and the military school where boys practice
for when their navy drills will really matter.
I could describe the cemetery gates
where the widow entered with a priest
to move the bones of last year's burial,
a rehearsal for this year's internment
and blessing, the ones that really count.
I could have pointed out the rising curve
of the road we took on rented Vespas,
sputtering up to Poseidon's temple
where Demosthenes fled, eluding capture
long enough to choose poison instead.
Near which fallen pillar did his future
catch his present and become our past?

Yes, one moment, the path ahead was whole;
the next, I knew nothing but a panic
to hurry before the island dissolved--
image by image and patch by patch--
to hurry before our villa vanished,
taking its rows of roses in caked dirt,
our balcony where we drank retsina
to sounds of the small dock across the road
batted all night like a toy, wooden mouse
of an Aegean domestic as a cat.
Scene by scene I relinquish our history,
dissolved in the acid hiss of deceit.
I lose the places we meant to revisit
once we did something right--like learning
a little of the local language.
How terrible is this suspicion
the rehearsal is the only event.

A few years before my grandmother died,
she announced The Great Uncluttering.
My task was to empty the Cousins' Trunk.
I expected the torn, faded costumes,
the hand puppets with musty rubber heads--
but not all those score pads to games long lost,
their broken pieces now turning up
in archeological digs of the new
towheaded generation squatting
in the backyard, out former holding.
Those score sheets--we played their games to bits,
but saved the pads for when it would matter,
for the day when we would really play games.
Who taught us this? to hunker on the fringe
of a future that never quite arrives?

Yesterday a woman I've never met
told me on the phone about the struggle
to keep her son from killing himself.
She needed her rabbi who was tied up.
"Why," she said, "am I telling this to you,
a stranger?" "You are telling me," I said,
"because I am a stranger." And because,
I told myself, I'm scratch paper. She hung up
and I held the receiver a long time,
willing her to phone the rabbi--now.

Otherwise, nothing matters until too late,
until something you did not practice for,
perhaps the chance unearthing of broken bits
from forgotten games, wrings the calendar
dry of numbers you meant to drink one day.
Even if you get around to learning
a little of the local language,
it's too late for Poros, for those places
where your heart can never again bear
to sputter its dented, worn-out Vespa
up a steep hill to the temple's ruins.
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Fragments from the Burnt Notebooks of O. Fleming

1a
... (jokes) i.e. the one about the real estate agent in Mingo, Fla ...

3
I have since corrected this view as quoted in Mayfield's monograph (1985) on flamingo dream studies, from "cocks rampant" to "cocks heraldic." Today that observation would read, "Incredibly, all adult male flamingos have the same recurrent dream; that of being designated Cocks Heraldic on the weathervanes of Mars."

3c
In Flamingo, storyteller and philosopher are synonymous terms, but in degree. Both tell tales, but the philosopher tells the tallest tales.

3d
Flamingo feathers are compressed thoughts about themselves as a species. The sum of flamingo culture (i.e. history and literature) is recorded in the spina, barbules, and vanes of each flamingo's feathery mass.

7
...a joke to us with significant details missing and no punchline, i.e. "Hidden and alert like the pit of an exotic fruit."

18b
Klerb is correct in stating that all flamingo jokes are self-referential (i.e. the one about the real estate agent in Mingo, Fla.), but he then goes on to cite the Bird Club Story as an example - which, texturally, cannot be flamingo in origin.

18c
...vulnerability of flamingo studies - the naïvete, errors, inconsistencies, bias, and outright conscious falsehood. See O. Fleming in FS, Fall, 1987, "The Flamingos of Hialeah."

18d
...from migratory Chants - the Beloved as the Far-fetched, and the Seeker as the Far-fetcher. Farfetcher is often used as a variant of Flamingo In the Meta Sudans, Beak-cusp Barbule IX.

19
Flamingos refer to themselves, to their species, as Flamingo. The odds against humans actually hitting on this term are astronomical, but it did happen. Flamingo culture celebrates this as a Splendid Event, since it gives them special status in the bird world. The robin name, we are told, is Cree, and eagle, Sonshiker.

20d
...i.e. to a philosopher no tale is too tall to tell. Klerb confuses this with "telltale" which is not a flamingo concept.

22
Flamingo sensibility is particularly $\nabla < \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit$ (wounded?) by the Britannica's description of their dwellings as "truncated cones of marl and mud piled a few inches up in a shallow lagoon."

22a
\[ \exists \forall \in \phi \notin \Delta \ldots \]. Randall again misunderstands flamingo humor, a fault embedded in the 'storyteller' exegesis. In the joke, "the one about the real estate agent in Mingo, Fla." it is, and is not, mere word play (which includes the self-referential) that tickles the flamingo funny bone, but the humor implicit in the phrase, "the one about." One, or any unit of measure, to a flamingo equals lunacy. And Mingo, Fla., existing only in self-referential wordplay, could not support the concept of real estate agents laying claim to or selling plots of themselves. Thus, the joke is entire unto itself as "The one about the real estate agent in Mingo, Fla," with no preface, punchline, or explication. To a flamingo, the line is a complex treatise on the essential absurdity of any symbolic representation of Reality, other than the joke itself, or the tallest tale.
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...as for instance, "for what it's worth." Flamingos prefaced every utterance with "For what it's worth," and then, over eons compressed to a hiss which became increasingly inaudible. Now it is visually experienced as a barbule that never again need be "said." Flamingos, in effect, read each other like books. Flock of Britannicas swarming together. Whole libraries in flight.

38a
...and (flamingos) have no conception of measurement, hence they have no science. It is useless to tell a flamingo that it migrates thousands of miles since distance is realized in feathers read or metaphors appreciated. Something like, but not nearly, the way Cheyenne measured distance by how many moons it took to travel from place to place.

39
Flamingos tell the tallest tales. They are the philosophers of the bird world. "But," a wing-tip vane reads, "it takes an artist to make a tale believable, which is why Plato is more compelling, say, than Aristotle."

39a
...the passage cited from Holy Scripture, In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh, to explain their species as Illuminated Manuscripts.

62c
FLAMENCO - "so you know it's from our mating dance and not from the ritual movements of Andalusian gypsies." - Accordia Spina XX.
Frank Polite

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The Art World Today.
Modernism and Post-Modernism.

The task of defining artistic movements has most often fallen upon the academic community rather than the artists themselves. This is to say that not a great deal of artistic movements are very conscious of their place in art history. However, the modernist era has redefined that belief. After the 1913 Armory Show in New York, the watershed event of the modernism movement*, the art world became aware of the self-defining movement of painters, writers, and architects that would soon follow.

Out of this era would come such household names as Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso, and Frank Lloyd Wright. This movement continually called attention to itself and believed that it was leading a new renaissance in art.

However, after World War II, the modernist movement lost its wind and the art world moved into its current position of the post-modernist era. The generators of the modernist movement, spurred by the loss of innocence felt in World War II, the turbulence of the Cold War, and the search for a soul to the art world, set the limits of commercial success. This search grows increasingly difficult as the numbers of television viewers increase and the number of gallery viewers decrease. The arts also find themselves in jeopardy as the government begins to move away from federal funding and towards private competition. All of these obstacles make finding a definition for the era we live in increasingly difficult.

*For the purposes of theater history the modernist era began in the mid-1880’s with the works of Strindberg, Ibsen, and Chekhov among others.

Jim Canacci

Shelley's Bride

The creature awoke in a heap of discarded corpses. Its first breath, filled with the stench of carrion and decay, escaped its cold, pale lips. The creature, a golem, was sewn together from the mismatched features of the deceased with twine and wire.

Its pale, listless arm—a prima donna silenced by the fever—hung to its side like a rag while its olive chest—a midwife blamed for a death in childbirth—swelled like a bloated spider. Its head—the mistress who lost hers when she met the wife—lollled over its shoulder. It was difficult to stand. Its legs—the right, a miner buried by her work, the left, a cat burglar from Paris who lost her step, and feminine—were slightly uneven.

Hairless, helpless, naked—the golem feebly attempted to free itself from the lifeless bodies. It could not move its legs. Lacking a left arm, it was some time before it clawed itself from the others. Its womb of death and decay was its reality. Crawling free from the lifeless cage, the golem found solid ground at the foot of a hill of shattered stones.

The sun that loomed over the gruesome heap stung its sensitive eyes—the left, the opaque globe of a widow who joined her love, the right, the sky blue orb of a young wife drowned for infidelity. Raising its arm to shield its eyes from brilliance the golem toppled to the soft, cold earth.

What was it? Why did it move while others lay lifeless? Was it damned? This all seemed unnatural.

The golem could smell its flesh rotting in the afternoon sun but felt no pain, not even an itch. Somehow it could operate its body but felt no sensation.

Why was it discarded? Who was its creator? It tried to weep, but could not feel to cry; it tried to call out, but found no voice. What sort of hell was this?

The day passed...
The Art World Today.  
Modernism and Post-Modernism.

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*For the purposes of theater history the modernist era began in the mid 1880's with the works of Strindberg, Ibsen, and Chekhov among others.

Shelley's Bride

The creature awoke in a heap of discarded corpses. Its first breath, filled with the stench of carrion and decay, escaped its cold, pale lips. The creature, a golem, was sewn together from the mismatched features of the deceased with twine and wire.

Its pale, listless arm—a prima donna silenced by the fever—hung to its side like a rag while its olive chest—a midwife blamed for a death in childbirth—swelled like a bloated spider. Its head—the mistress who lost hers when she met the wife—lollled over its shoulder. It was difficult to stand. Its legs—the right, a miner buried by her work, the left, a cat burglar from Paris who lost her step, aquiline and feminine—were slightly uneven.

Hairless, helpless, naked—the golem feebly attempted to free itself from the lifeless bodies. It could not move its legs. Lacking a left arm, it was some time before it clawed itself from the others. Its womb of death and decay was its reality. Crawling free from the lifeless cage, the golem found solid ground at the foot of a hill of shattered stones.

The sun that loomed over the gruesome heap stung its sensitive eyes—the left, the opaque globe of a widow who joined her love, the right, the sky blue orb of a young wife drowned for infidelity. Raising its arm to shield its eyes from brilliance the golem toppled to the soft, cold earth.

What was it? Why did it move while others lay lifeless? Was it damned? This all seemed unnatural.

The golem could smell its flesh rotting in the afternoon sun but felt no pain, not even an itch. Somehow it could operate its body but felt no sensation.

Why was it discarded? Who was its creator? It tried to weep, but could not feel to cry; it tried to call out, but found no voice. What sort of hell was this?

The day passed...
Dracula Sestina

My dearest Lucy, --
I have married the love of my life.
Jonathan firmly answered, "I will," yet blood
loss leaves him weak with fatigue. His pale, white
face is nourished by the sisters who bring Jonathan envelopes
of tea and hot poultice. As I type, an eerie fog rises
whose swirling black tendrils are smooth like velvet.

Lucy Westenra's Diary--
Sleep sweeps over my eyes like a velvet
curtain draped about the bed of my life.
I feel my moonlight skin rise
and taste the lineage in his blood
as his hand from swarthy strokes envelopes
me like a silhouette of pinks and white.

Personal Journal--
Beneath the Carpathians' snowy white
peaks, I am the prisoner within the velvet-
capped castle on the cliff where three envelopes
measure the span of a man's life.
Was I mad or weak from loss of blood
when I saw the weird women like three sick stars rise?

TELEGRAM:
MY GOOD FRIEND JOHN, I RISE
WITH THE SUN FOR LONDON STOP WHITE
COMPLEXION OF PATIENT AND BLOOD
LOSS SOUND INTERESTING STOP MAY HER VELVETY
SKIN REGAIN ITS YOUTH STOP YOUR FRIEND FOR LIFE,
ABRAHAM VON HELSING STOP
P.S. CRUCIFIX FOR LUCY IN ENVELOPE

Dr. Seward's Diary--
I received the envelope
post haste, and soon after sunrise,
Dr. Von Helsing, my master and life-
long friend, arrived. His hands are white
wonders of science softened by the velvet
gloves of his faith. His forte is blood.

Absinthe Drinker

Gentle drinker
born to endless night
standing
alone in the alleys, unaware of your
obscure surrounding's
surreal texture and style,
hiding behind a porcelain
mask with a rose tucked behind
one ear.
You remove yourself from the fire
light, concealing yourself in taffeta
shadows quite unlike the spirit of the silhouette of
the Eiffel Tower showing off its points
in the Paris skyline, and you walk
through them as a traveler
walks past the three street lamps.

The bridge between your images
spans the century,
perhaps two,
a riches to rags story
from the single street lamp
corner you were familiar to
like the black cat lace
stockings beneath the evening
dress you wore.
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patient Renfield--
    "... the Master's specialty is blood,
but unlike the doctor, I do not need an envelope
to know He is near. I hear His velvet
spider steps up the wall. He rises
with the setting sun from His crypt like a wight
that starves for blood, and for Him I take lives ... "

In the deadly mist, blood red eyes rise
while shadows envelope the porcelain white
frame with twin velvet tears where into darkness ebbs her life.

Your friend,
Dracula

Absinthe Drinker

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standing
alone in the alleys, unaware of your
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Joe Dudley

Dialog w/Cathy

"This is reality we're talking about here."

(This, after scanning recent world events in the evening newspaper.)

"No shit."

(Mountains of coupons were scattered everywhere, packaged up and mailed off like a chain letter at exorbitant postal rates by some loony old man that nobody knew.)

"I am an artist," I said, meaning it. "I have no intention of sitting idly by and just watching people melt around me. Or maybe we won't melt; maybe we'll all develop ridges from the radiation waves and walk around looking like flipping Ruffles Brand potato chips. And grow two heads."

(Actually, this was Abe's idea, developed while he was musing on the effects of radiation on Gumby and Pokey.)

"There's an ant crawling across the ceiling."

(There was.)

"The ants are always bad in the spring."

(Puff puff. Cigarette smoke tinted the air a purple-gray, making vision difficult in the living room of 1362 Belle St. S.E.)

"And my foreman's a crazy man."

"Life is like that sometimes," I said "in civilized society."

(The fabric of the universe was starting to shift.)

"Do you know what it's like to have a computer tell you that something you've spent three days on doesn't exist? It does something funny to your head."

(Maybe her foreman had a computer to deal with.)

"Did you ever think that maybe super-market checkers turn into bag ladies when they go home at night?"

(This seemed appropriate, considering the growing piles of coupons on the coffee table, which silently demanded attention and $.20 off of the industrial-size bottle of Stay-Puff fabric softener.)

Joe Dudley

"Do you think God uses Stay-Puff on the fabric of the universe? (She balked.) "No, listen--think of it. A cosmos w/no static cling, that won't stick to your nylons."

(Bark bark. This was Blossom, out of the open window, having spotted a cat or a child or something else she wanted to eat.)

"There's another ant on the wall. I thought it was a nail hole, but it started moving." (She took off her shoe.) "Here, my little mobile nail hole--" (Swat.)

"It's a bad 50s B-movie: "Invasion of the Mobile Nail Holes."

"It's a curse. Next come frogs in the bread bowl."

(The last was one of the curses placed on Egypt before Moses was allowed to lead the children of Israel between the two halves of the Red Sea and on to the promised land, according to the Living Bible, which--we agreed--didn't pack the same punch as the King James version, parts of which scholars believe to have been penned by Shakespeare.)

"I haven't found any coupons for ant traps."

(She poured iced tea mixed w/tropical fruit juices from a glass lemonade pitcher. The pitcher had yellow lemon halves painted around its outside, which at first glance I thought were real lemons floating in the amber liquid. She thought they were flowers. In that house, perception was an individualized game where you made up your own rules.)

"It's the moon," I said.

(The iced tea/juice concoction was sloshing back and forth crazily in its glass pitcher, having been returned to its resting place--a spot on the coffee table as yet devoid of coupons. The lemons/flowers never moved, giving the impression that some weird gravitational event was taking place which only painted lemons/flowers and bastardized iced tea could experience.)

"The moon-mother," I said, "mistress of movement to all waters."

(Considering the moon, along w/ants and coupons, she looked at me and was strangely silent.)
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et al.: ICON Spring 1996

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Ripping Cupid 's Wings

Turning to metal
I am

beside myself with lying
lying beside you. I

can hear the warning
of these winter trees
cloaked in ice and clacking
S.O.S. as if this

parting were foretold.
Clenched with cold

we both sleep curled
like fists. You know

we must agree to
rise and leave this

frozen room and walk
with dignity down

that final aisle with
no shared wish

beyond dismembering this
butterfly of love

we lured once from
its radiant cocoon.
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that final aisle with
no shared wish

beyond dismembering this
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we lured once from
its radiant cocoon.
Rue St. Germain

She’s as lost to you
as innocence in the Latin
Quarter where sin,
sticky and sweet as incense
rolls into every pore
of your defenseless skin.

Desire hovers over you
the way she used to.
Tireless you search a city
that turns stone eyes
toward you. You walk
along the Seine barely

able to resist: its silence
is the breath held before
her kiss. Knowing this

you wander back to where
love left you as if to
the scene of some crime.

Every fruit and flower stall
calls her name in colors
wild and blue as brandy set
 aflame. Through every
fragrant avenue her shadow
chases and eludes you.

Jim Perkins

The Art of Being Cleveland

In Cleveland we have a saying,
“If you don’t like our weather,
wait a minute.”
We have always been
an area of change,
dramatic...rapid...
flamboyant change,
rain to sun to snow to hail,
all in one day.
Flaming river to teeming, streaming
boardwalks full of
proud rib-eating, Indy-racing,
baseball-smacking
Rock & Rollers
wearing bulleyed T-shirts
of David Letterman
past proudly posted pictures
of our hometown, homespun,
made in Cleveland,
original successes:
James A. Garfield, Martin Mull,
Bob Hope, Arsenio Hall, J.D. Rockefeller,
and Madonna.
Well, maybe not Madonna,
but wait a minute.

Jim Perkins

Just Between Us

I still remember well, that day.
You and I were sitting,
our elbows on the kitchen table,
the top worn to a friendly red.
Its legs and ours,
crossed comfortably
underneath and between,
as you whispered to me
that you knew a secret code,
and did I want to learn it too.
She's as lost to you as innocence in the Latin Quarter where sin,
sticky and sweet as incense rolls into every pore of your defenseless skin.
Desire hovers over you the way she used to.
Tireless you search a city that turns stone eyes toward you. You walk along the Seine barely able to resist: its silence is the breath held before her kiss. Knowing this you wander back to where love left you as if to the scene of some crime.

Every fruit and flower stall calls her name in colors wild and blue as brandy set aflame. Through every fragrant avenue her shadow chases and eludes you.

In Cleveland we have a saying, "If you don't like our weather, wait a minute."
We have always been an area of change, dramatic . . . rapid . . . flamboyant change, rain to sun to snow to hail, all in one day.
Flaming river to teeming, streaming boardwalks full of proud rib-eating, Indy-racing, baseball-smacking Rock & Rollers wearing bullseyed T-shirts of David Letterman past proudly posted pictures of our hometown, homespun, made in Cleveland, original successes:
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Well, maybe not Madonna, but wait a minute.

I still remember well, that day.
You and I were sitting, our elbows on the kitchen table, the top worn to a friendly red.
Its legs and ours, crossed comfortably underneath and between, as you whispered to me that you knew a secret code, and did I want to learn it too.
Jim Perkins

You said it was like a game,
it would be fun.
I never enjoyed myself more
than I did that summer.
I turned twelve
as you taught me
how each hand shape
meant a different letter,
and we practiced,
sharing,
and making words with our hands.
Our own secret language,
"Just between us," you said.

But I remember too well, another day.
I had turned sixteen
just that morning,
and I was sitting
in the kitchen with you,
as had become our habit.
I sat uncomfortably on the floor
beneath the hard red table,
crosslegged,
trying not to share the air,
so thickly textured
with stale beer and once-eaten food,
as I redipped a cool cloth,
to wipe away the spittle
from the corner of your mouth.

You lay, where
once again,
legs too loose to walk,
had dumped you ...
in my lap.
Your lips,
too loose to talk,
had failed you
time, and time again.
but, I watched
as your stiff fingers
secret spelled,

J-U-S-T  B-E-T-W-E-E-N  U-S.

J. Patrick Kelly

The Needle

We are shoplifting your fall wardrobe.
I am talking to the clerk about her fingernails
while you stuff blouses in your purse
and pull your sweatshirt over a wool sweater
from some wrecked northern island.

In the parking lot our car won't start,
and you see the police blocking the exit
with the clerk whose fingernails,
at this distance, cannot be seen.

I try to push the car to kick start it,
but there is no momentum, and now
the police notice us so we run down
the street to the hill where our house is.

The inside is rotten with debris and decay,
and I see for the first time how we live.
When a shard of glass slices my face,
I dab at the blood with your dirty clothes,
and it's the fragrance of them I remember
all the years I'm in prison.

When I return, the couple who owns our house
has cleaned it till the walls gleam,
and the garbage has been replaced with
antiques and children's toys.
You have married the owner of the shop
whose clothes we stole.

The couple graciously allows me access
to the room where we were ruined.
Behind the baseboard in the corner
is the needle. It is corroded and dusty,
but I smile, for it will do,
it will do.
Jim Perkins

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it would be fun.
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Stuart Arotsky

A Teachable Moment

Kathy of the unmarked smile
The scars of passage are so few
Behind the long crinkled curtain of hair
With thick brown brows
A gaze which will not be denied
And a tongue thirsty for every thought

Who will color
Your blue skies dark
For living always paints on
some blacker colors
To help you better know sunshine

And your sweet talent
For kneeling beside a child
whose face is steaming with water
Such is a gift, no hand can teach

Within my box of thought
Are starships in flights
Between the sheets and voids
Where black holes gobble like eternal mouths
And galaxies live and die
more like dust grains than magic

Dear, naked of wounds
There are so many lessons for you
But some leave you empty
and others are only questions
but you already hold the best answer
my lonely life has ever found
how to love a child

Debra Flannery

Hands of Love, Voices of Eternity: A Legacy

I was surrounded by feminine voices echoing tall tales, laughter, and book readings. These women, and my memory of them, have become stepping stones I have traveled to bridge the waters to adulthood. To explain these women, and their influence on me, I remember their hands and their story telling...

I remember how my Mom's hands callused and chafed from cleaning, doing dishes, and feeding chickens, would become lotioned and smooth, red nail polish touched up, come sun set. From leather to silk, it seemed, as they unwittingly rubbed my shoulders or smoothed my hair. Long, dark pillars with crimson plumage that played patty-cake and crazy eights with me.

My Grandma, whose porcelain hands would turn sienna as we foraged in the adjacent woods, produced sassafras roots, hickory nuts and mushrooms. These very hands that I watched wring a chicken's neck with ease and play the piano gracefully every Sunday at church. Hands that my small fingers often traveled as I sat on the bench next to her. Hands that cut switches and wiped tears, that lifted in the morning to praise God and folded nightly in prayer.

Aunt Neddy had hands that kneaded bread, picked dandelion greens and black berries, husked corn and dealt cards. These hands moved as she spoke, conveying gestures her face lacked. Nails never polished, they needed no adornment other than the onyx and diamond ring on her left ring finger.

Aunt Pudgie's hands could often be found securely wrapped around a warm beer bottle, much to grandma's dismay! This happened only on the back porch. Beer was not permitted in the house. These hands offered balms, hard candies, and tickles. They were also at ease holding a paint brush, hatchet, plow or rake.

My sister's hands were often clenched in rage. I was Lynn's never ending shadow, as well as her biggest challenge to learning patience. When I told a boy about the crush she had on him, she chased me around the yard, almost hanging herself on the clothes line that I had run under. Whenever her transistor radio came up missing, it could be found in the outhouse, attached to my ear!

Back then, the evenings were a cornucopia of life, filled up and brimming over. They were designed to enhance the senses and replenish the weary after the drudgery of the day. The days were filled with hard laborious work on that small farm in Salalville, Ohio. Mornings began the race against time; chickens to feed, fields to plant
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or harvest, water to draw from the pump, woods to clear and
scavenge, bread to bake, and meals and canning to prepare. Ah,
but the evenings . . .

These had many constants; low lights in the front room, the
scent of White Linen talc mingled with sassafras, and light bread
and the swish-swish of slippers and long bath robes as they made
their way to the pot-bellied stove. This was where they handed out wisdom like
Caster oil. This was where bobbie pins twirled hair, spittoons were
permanent fixtures, and backsides were scratched without reservation.
This was the pulse of the farm where they lived, laughed, and licked
their wounds.

The teapot whistled and cups were passed around. We sipped
tea that took on pink hues as cream was added.

"Lena, read my tea leaves," Aunt Neddy grinned a toothless
smile.

"Well, Nell, looks like a tall, dark man's a comin' to claim his
own!" A gold tooth glistened as she spoke.

It was time! I moved closer, crossing my legs. As I waited, I
rubbed Mom's ankles in anticipation. Mom, balancing a saucer on her
stomach, repositioned herself. I remember thinking how beautiful
Mom's legs were and how high her ankles, all puffed up and cracked,
looked in comparison. She was seven months pregnant and the farm
work was taking its toll. Grandma, Aunt Neddy, and Aunt Pudgie
would swarm around her offering advice, condolences and food. Lynn,
my older sister, would do the heavier chores as Mom's midsection
expanded. I rubbed her ankles.

"Well, you know, Claude James," leaning forward for full
effect, "that's Jessie's relation, and I was playin' poker when this skinny
guy comes in sayin' he had lots of money and wants to set in. We
oblige him and he says his name is Dino and he wants to leave
Steubenville and make it big in Hollywood! Anyways, it's the last hand
and it's me and him, low hole. I raise him and he takes off his pinkie
ring and throws it in the kitty!" Showing the ring adorning her left ring
finger she exclaims, "Seems to me, we've been engaged pret'tnear 22
years now . . . me and Dean Martin!"

Grandma is next, reaching for her spittoon to expectorate her
snuff, she begins . . .

"The house stood darkened by the hills behind it. The trees
was bare and swaying. . ."
Debra Flannery

or harvest, water to draw from the pump, woods to clear and scavenge, bread to bake, and meals and canning to prepare. Ah, but the evenings . . .

These had many constants; low lights in the front room, the scent of White Linen talc mingled with sassafras, and light bread and the swish-swish of slippers and long bath robes as they made their way to the pot-bellied stove. This was where they handed out wisdom like Caster oil. This was where bobbie pins twirled hair, spittoons were permanent fixtures, and backsides were scratched without reservation. This was the pulse of the farm where they lived, laughed, and licked their wounds.

The teapot whistled and cups were passed around. We sipped tea that took on pink hues as cream was added.

"Lena, read my tea leaves," Aunt Neddy grinned a toothless smile.

"Well, Nell, looks like a tall, dark man’s a comin’ to claim his own!" A gold tooth glistened as she spoke.

It was time! I moved closer, crossing my legs. As I waited, I rubbed Mom’s ankles in anticipation. Mom, balancing a saucer on her stomach, repositioned herself. I remember thinking how beautiful Mom’s legs were and how alien her ankles, all puffed up and cracked, looked in comparison. She was seven months pregnant and the farm work was taking its toll. Grandma, Aunt Neddy, and Aunt Pudgie would swarm around her offering advice, condolences and food. Lynn, my older sister, would do the heavier chores as Mom’s midsection expanded. I rubbed her ankles.

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"The house stood darkened by the hills behind it. The trees was bare and swaying. . . ."
Charles Owen Lawson

Shadow

The half-Siamese cat --
my only intimate --
and gray-haired, blue-eyed, like me --
Sleeps at the foot of my bed.
Then it awakens and gnaws at my pen
as I write, blurring some of the letters.
It rubs its chin against my notebook,
purring loudly now,
growling like a dog,
braying like a goat,
sniffing my forearm, my hands --
anything to get in my way,
to claim its time... (Now
it's picking at my stocking feet
with its twin vampire tiger teeth)
claiming, as I say, it's time --

It finally leaves. I
am at ease at last. I
begin to write again, slowly,
then more rapidly.
Something growls, I frown, look up.
The cat.
Back.

Charles Owen Lawson

Ice Age

The worst part
the most dazzling
is the shards of light
reflected off the ice.
It is impossible to walk
to press on
I have to stop and clear my eyes
though there is nothing to see.
The glacier is forever,
all that's between the horizon
and me.
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The glacier is forever,
all that's between the horizon
and me.
Occasionally there are objects
of a sort
a tune beamed off a frozen berg
an old organ grinder waltz
a horseless carousel
circles within circles
and --
the tundra endless frozen strand.

I have no compass
north could be south
east could be west
front and back become reversed
things
of a sort
appear and disappear
like flashing red blips off water towers
guiding pilots in the night.
A dog's face (toy or real?)
and vaguely familiar
tantalizing from
so long ago . . .

A wind-up motorboat
quaintly familiar
pursrs across the still, white lake
a moment or so ahead or behind
diminishing into the dimming light.

A street sign now
green with black letters
the name
confusingly familiar
yet
When I turn to check
the sign has turned white
the name has turned white
and blended chameleon-like
into the ice and snow.

My strength is fading now
the light is blinding white
the space expands
expands

I pray for night.

On Looking Through a Glass, Darkly

Chain smoking home from work, again,
no matches, got to keep 'em going
feed fire end to end (never can keep
track of my sure-fire never-fall
initials engraved Zippo)
stoplight at Fifth and Edison
caught me yesterday and
today and tomorrow I squint
through frosty blue sunlight
at the red light as it sneers
from its electric life-giving cables maybe
I should complain to the City
Dear Sirs this light steals
forty-five seconds of my valuable time
every day don't you think a bit
cruel and unusual?

I see the blind man coming down Edison
on his regular afternoon walk
never felt sorry before, rather
marveled at his skilled cane tapping
on the concrete security of the side-
walk feeling for the soft grass edges
he knows where he's going
and how to get there

But the deep snow that came
last night blending sidewalk and grass
and mocking clumps of ice
deludes his worthless cane floundering
toward the ice-glazed wrought iron
gate, finally finding haven behind faceless
red brick

Light greens, gas pedal, slide sideways
but straighten okay good thing
had snow tires put on last week
but curses, cigarette out, no lighter
no matches, jam the unit one back
into its crumpled pack never mind
be home soon having company
play some cards talk some
then off to bed do a crossword
helps enrich my vocabulary
helps sleep come
Charles Owen Lawson

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Enoch R. Fannin

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Yvonne V. Sapla

To the Bastard Who Stole Your Bicycle

During the summer of your seventh grade, the Cuban boys chose your bike the fastest. You painted it with the only paint you had: old cans of house paint from the garage below the apartment your family and you were living in, quite miserably. Everyone knew you parked in the alley of the blue one-story building Uncle Pete named La Iberia Bodega years earlier. He was the first Puerto Rican to open a grocery store in Miami’s Little Havana. So much happened in that alley. You and your cousins unpacked soda cases, burlap bags of arroz y frijoles, trucks of multiplying fruits and vegetables. You lugged in cold carcasses of pigs and pathetic chickens through the side entry, down a hall, into the walk-in freezer. (You did not like to stay for long. One day Uncle Pete, under his usual pretense of drunkenness, held you against the freezer door. You bit his hand. He did not expect that. From then on, he was meek, chomped his cigar, his eyes looking past you through smudged bifocals. As a girl, you did not grasp how theft alters a woman’s life.)

Saturday after you organized and stacked the return-deposit bottles and received pay from your uncle, in cash right from the register, you turned the corner and found nothing but a blank wall, hideous and blue without the brown shape of your bike. Because you bought it for five dollars at a police auction of unclaimed goods, your uncle said you were making a big deal de nada, what you are tempted to say to him later when he’s terminal. But your little brother cried. It was his hand-me-down. Together, you searched for it, yet knew it was lost. And no matter how many years pass you conjure up the thief and imagine him tumbling from the bike gracelessly into unending darkness to disappear, disappear, disappear.

Yvonne V. Sapla

Overheard in the Exile’s Garden

He is sure there is no end to the guaranteed grandeur and in no hurry to set me free from the masters who lie parallel under tonight’s moon.

I have heard the music sleepwalk through his house.

I have watched the sleepwalkers dreaming of their final rest under the eucalyptus trees.

Why are not my lids full of sleep? Once, I knew him too well.

He touched my breasts.

He listened to the forlorn beat of my angry heart.

In it he heard the plaintive cries of my true history.

He slept secure in my grove.

Now one of his wives sings to the children.

They are learning a heartless melody of prolonged absence and flights to foreign lands.

I choose to cross the ocean.

Before remaining in this land of people who live yet are dead, I choose to be banished, to patiently await the kiss of a killing sun.

I beg him to spit on this burnt earth.

I will await the puff of its first flower.

I beg him to spit on me. Give me something of the life he has tasted.
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Postmodern Goddess

Because she is not pretty
and does not care whether she impresses,
bad reputation follows

in the confident shapes of soldiers
who think a logical girl
should emigrate with them

to an ancient city
where she would not look odd
carrying a shield and spear.

A distrust of passion
is the origin of her stance.
How she strives

to give all men fair warning.
They misunderstand her ideology.
When she passes their tents,

they laugh like wild horses
at her threat of turning them to stone.
Her vital stare paralyzes

the limbs they will no longer
wrap around delirious girls.
Their unfortunate hands

hold fast to their weapons
before turning on each other.
Let the earth call her murderer,

warrior, but never deceiver.
Premeditation is a harsh word
for what she must do to survive.
Yvonne V. Sapla

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Robert Cooperman

John Reynolds, Dying, Remembers John Keats

"Friend of Keats" - carved on Reynolds' Headstone

The Isle of Wight's my final way-station: consumption perched upon my chest, hissing, "Move, and pain will rip you like a pikestaff."
John came here to compose *Endymion*, joyous as Homer to pound out the rhymes that leapt from his quill like mountain goats dancing from ledge to ledge with never a false step.
So, it's a treasured place for me to die and brood upon my daughter; so small, I had hoped Death might neglect her, but He overlooks no one.

If only I had possessed John's courage, and not slunk off from Poetry to Law - a calling I had as much aptitude for as a pig for preaching.
I lost myself in labyrinths of Chancery: unholy spawn of Greed and Procedure.

Just as well I've no strength to look out my window. I'd see a wall dead as the crypts of Inns of Court, not the open sea John described in letters whose yellowed pages I make my wife read, and see him, face rosy as youth's hope.

Dear friend, I pray we meet again:
in the Library of Paradise you'll compose odes praising angel and imp with equal delight, to make the seraphs laugh and rage, my daughter clap tiny hands for joy.
But what if there's only damp ground, dreamless sleep? My headstone must suffice: to tell men I lived and died, and was friend to immortal John Keats.

Robert Cooperman

Labho

"You know how,"
my father would ask,
"guys used to tear apart phone books on Ed Sullivan?" I'd nod, his willing straight-man.

"It was all a trick.
First, they'd stick them in an oven for a few hours and when the glue weakened and the pages crumbled, they'd play strong man. But Labho ripped them for real."

A monster with a chocolate heart he was ready to melt for any sad story: a perfect rose in his eyes to lift the spirits of a sobbing girl, and God help the brute who had made her cry.

He died young, though my father never told a tale of heroism in war or saving a baby from a burning building; something tiny but irresistible dug his grave - a betrayal, to my father, that a man so huge could succumb to the devil-seed exploding inside him.
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Branley Allan Branson

The Coming of Spring

If, in some many fingered night, small child, your cries
Ring out, do not be deceived by my care--
I may be the one who wins all your garments,
And they are vastly unsuited for what lies
Carcass-like, pale in the cavernous yawn
Of a thousand and sixty-eight deep, bitter sighs.
So let the sun rise, let the stream-head torment
Its turbid waters through the circuit; your prayer
Excludes me from the bone-ridden defile
Of lost mountains. Consider yourself foretold:
If, in some many fingered night, small child
We fall into a whipping sea of cold,
Gray sky, and the wind has it through our defense
Before we close it out. All winters are like that.

Jeff Swan

HAIKU

Sunflowers waver
honey bees have a hard time
with the jesting wind.

Gerard Donnelly-Smith

The Smiling Moon
September 28, 8:45 p.m.

First Quarter

With her beret cropped half-way down a waxy brow,
the moon smiled to soon be full of heavy nights,
then, tangled shadows between my eyes
and curved darkness held this possibility:

Fullness

Sleeping's difficult with her insistent circling,
so I step from shadow space to space, pacing
as she circles, smiling bare headed, moving
over the line drawn between our desires.

Third Quarter

She has cocked her hat over her closed eye,
smiling cynically, conveying dissatisfaction
with calendars that mark her time,
with days inconstant and imprecise.

Darkness

Nothing new about this empty night, nothing.
These stars, bright again from absence, not new.
Depth, distance and darkness, nothing new.
Not new, but always known, like her returning.
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Gerard Donnelly-Smith

The Shadow's Moon
after Federico Garcia Lorca

Moon of one thousand faces, and only one mirror,
turn off that light and let me keep
the window curtain drawn,
keep from drawing and erasing;
the differences we've drawn.

Moon with your horn empty, and esophagus full,
open the corset of your breast,
unclasp the darker skin
undo each string tied
across our unstrung flesh.

Moon so mythically heavy,
pooled below my confidence,
my darker-self swells,
like a tide,
slides beside you again,
recharts the uncharted shore.

Gerard Donnelly-Smith

thumbing through a shelf of unread poets

under a dust of ages, unfamiliar names
remain unfamiliar on a shelf of unread poets
and with no reason to perform an autopsy on what
remains within, I brush my thumb along the spines
as gently as I brush my thumb along my lover's back
then pressing to my lips the blackened skin
repeat the names who few have ever read,
those who still remain unread.

Gary Leising

Suburban Rabbits

I hear the construction off
A quarter or half mile away.
Those sounds over there are what told
The rabbits they couldn't stay

Hidden in the woods. So now they
Wander into my garden, then
Have their fill of my beans and peas,
Ignoring the empty pie tin

Clanging on the pole it's tied to
And the barking, leaping dog who's
Pulled his chain taut in his passion.
And if I come outside to shoo

Them off they'll wait and keep eating
Until I get three, maybe four
Yards away before they decide
To run off to help my neighbor

Get the clover out of his yard.
He just sits there eating, maybe
Thinking about where he will go
As he searches for his safety.

I look over at him to ask
Why he would let me get so near;
He looks up as if to answer,
"I hurt more from hunger than fear."
Gerard Donnelly-Smith

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*after Federico García Lorca*

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George Held

**Summer Turns**

After weeks of swelter
heat breaks
humidity dips

the breeze stiffens
with sea scent
Roadsides brim

with Queen Anne's lace
and goldenrod
Monarchs arrive

Apples turn
from toys into
serious fruit

The sun's slant
heightens color
deepeens shade

and I want words
for the well-being
the tilt toward fall brings

George Held

**Guardian**

(*Cinquain*)

Catcher
in the rye, save
the kids from lustful goats;
let them frisk without risk. No more
abuse.

Keith Cullison

Scintillating, Sensational, Scantily Clad Fantasies;
Fantastic Displays of Oral Discourse;
Amazing, Attitude: A Natural APHRODISIAC;
Instantaneous, Panoramic Combustion
of a previously wartorn soul

Unbelievable, Unexpected Explosion;
Terrifying, Terrific TRUTH;
Spontaneous, Stupendous, Surreal;
Wondrously Wooed
back to health

Thank You
I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING TOMORROW'S dawn.
George Held

Summer Turns

After weeks of swelter
heat breaks
humidity dips
the breeze stiffens
with sea scent
Roadsides brim

with Queen Anne's lace
and goldenrod
Monarchs arrive

Apples turn
from toys into
serious fruit

The sun's slant
heightens color
deepens shade

and I want words
for the well-being
the tilt toward fall brings

George Held

Guardian
(Cinquain)

Catcher
in the rye, save
the kids from lustful goats;
let them frisk without risk. No more
abuse.

Keith Cullison

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Thank You
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Jerome Wyant

Damask Rose

If you are a purveyor of true beauty,  
Gouge out your mercantile eyes.  
Blindness is better  
Trouble not the gilded boardwalks of Cannes,  
For disappointments breed there like flies.  
Not will the Riviera with its streams  
Of sultry flesh satisfy.  
There, there is chimera only.  
Go nowhere you are expected,  
Where everything is waiting for you.  
No, be incognito. Wear a disguise.  
Thrust yourself into the heart of a throbbing city.  
Find a simple street and follow it,  
Like an artery to a destination  
You cannot know beforehand,  
But will somehow divine when you arrive.  
It may be a ramshackle house  
With weeds sprouting around it.  
Paint peeling from its sides.  
No curtains,  
Save in one upstairs room.  
She will be there,  
A damask rose,  
Without a solitary flaw.  
Behind the soiled curtains,  
Waiting. Peering at you,  
As if she knew you were coming.
Jerome Wyant

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Lynn Lifshin

Jackson Garden, Union College, Schenectady

3 hundred years
ago the most beautiful girl
in the mohawk
erver valley died
on a warm sept
night alice
alice with a
father who would
not let her date
met the lover
along the mohawk
one night the
father followed
the girl found
her lover's arm
around her shot
the man dragged
the screaming
girl behind him
people heard
her cry burned
the father at
the stake the
girl kept look
ing for her man
moaned stumbled
into hans kilgrott
a stream behind
the garden it was
midnight the
mob close behind
tied her to a
tree and burned
her to ashes
now she runs thru
the garden with
her hand over
her face still
looking for him

Contributors' Notes...

Carolyn Moore is the Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest co-winner, who, after teaching many years at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California has returned to her home state of Oregon to write full time. Frank Polite is the other co-winner of the Hart Crane Memorial Prize and is from Youngstown, Ohio. Stuart Arotsky is a former day care teacher who lobbies for Public Access Television and is pursuing his Masters Degree at the University of New Haven, Connecticut. Branley Allan Branson is an educator at Eastern Kentucky University. Jim Canacci is a professor of English at KSU-TC and Youngstown State University. Robert Cooperman is a poet and educator from Pikesville, Maryland as well as a frequent ICON contributor. Keith Cullison is a sophomore secondary education major at KSU-TC and says he is "not a poet, but a snapperhead in love." Joe Dudley is the English Coordinator in the Trumbull Campus Skill Center, a science fiction writer and poet. He describes himself as the Andy Warhol of photocopier machines.

Enoch Fannin is a native of southwest Ohio who works in the System Operating Department of the Dayton Power and Light Company. Debra Flannery is a freshman sociology major who received the Virginia Perryman Award for her essay "Hands of Love, Voices of Eternity." George Held teaches English and creative writing at Queens College, C.U.N.Y., and co-edits The Ledge Poetry & Fiction Magazine. Craig Housenick is a theatre student at Susquehena University. Lisa Kellner worked in restaurant management for 20 years before she became a nursing student at KSU-TC. J. Patrick Kelly is a poet from Cincinnati, Ohio. Charles Owen Lawson teaches English and Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Gary Leising is a poet from Columbia, South Carolina. Lynn Lifshin is a poet from Virginia whose work has appeared in many publications. Jason Milner is a theatre student at Susquehena University. Dianne Moffett is a student at KSU-TC. Jim Perkins is a poet from Cleveland, Ohio. John Popadak II is the library assistant at KSU-TC specializing in periodicals. He plays at the copier machine when bored. Yvonne V. Sapio has published two collections of poetry, one novel, Valentino's Hair, and was recognized in Best American Poetry, 1989. Gerard Donnelly-Smith is a professor of English at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington. B. A. St. Andrews teaches humanities at a medical university in Syracuse, New York and has appeared in various literary publications. Jeff Swan writes poetry and raises his two children in Yakima, Washington. Mel Truckenbrod is a theatre student at Susquehena University. Jerome Wyant is an English Instructor at the College of St. Joseph in Vermont.
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father followed
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