FALL 1994
Volume XXXIII Number 1

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Editor: Tammy Wolfe
Assistant Editor: Gigi Danko

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ICON is the student-run student-operated literary magazine of Kent State University Trumbull Campus. ICON is published twice yearly: at the end of Fall and Spring semesters.

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Direct all correspondence to ICON, c/o Dr. Robert Brown, Faculty Advisor, English Department, Kent State University Trumbull Campus, 4314 Mahoning Avenue NW, Warren, OH 44483.

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RON BOOK

Bad-Assed Preacher Man’s Sunday Sermon

Sunday’s pounding boredom breathes hard       as we bend over stools.
Bullshit, babes, and booze                   better here than there.
Behind us the barn door opens                 a sweaty, black preacher man
steps slowly into the cool,                  singing, from his church to ours.
A bad-assed preacher man with shiny shoes     slurping loudly.
We tip our caps and don’t say nigger
too loudly, so he’ll hear our beating white hearts.
Our pageant booms again when the portal opens again.
A loony-eyed fuck leaps through and leers into the foul air,
"I wanna buy all you guys a beer especially that one."
The bad-assed preacher man beams and fingers his brim.
To the new king, the buyer of beers, we are beggars.
Drowning, dying, forgotten until death steps in.
Three cracks, three shots Quiet . . . Three holes.
The bad-assed preacher man falls no more current, no charge.
Blood and Bud across wooden planks.
Bad-assed preacher man lies
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Three cracks, three shots
Quiet . . . Three holes.
The bad-assed preacher man falls
no more current, no charge.
Blood and Bud across wooden planks.
   Bad-assed preacher man lies
one foot flung across
    one foot bent under.
The bad-assed shape, bent
    under the boot of the loony,
who brings his beer
    to his lips, sucks, then belches.

Ron Book

Reading with My Grandpa

Across a yellow and pink-striped plastic lawn chair, he spits blood.
Clotted red cream spat onto the ground.
Food for the universe.

Yellow-stained fingers grab his shallow chest and squeeze hard.
His spongy gizzard heaves like an old bevel across red coals,
    and
his breath clamors.
A garage vacuum sucking in the faint shards of his life.

A living photograph from Auschwitz frozen against a pale blue sky,
    who writhes like an earthworm held in a small hand after a rain.
His frail body contorts, a herky-jerky movement of symphonic spasm
    and distorted electricity.

He calls, his stinking voice ripping through the still air, and I bring a small glass smeared with his mucous—his disease—to his lips.
He lunges, slurping the milky water, then falls limply in his throne.
A lost god, sleeping, who forgets his pain.

I go back to my book.
Ron Book

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A Question of Faith

Religion, to me, is a long and winding maze, one that I have puzzled on for many endless days.

Is there really a Heaven above, where Angels dwell, a Satan, a Lucifer, an Inferno known as Hell?

Which Cult should I follow to ensure a Heavenly Fate, the Baptists, the Catholics, which carries the most weight?

Which version of the Bible is really the best, what Banner will be carried at Armageddon’s final Test?

Oral Roberts and Jimmy Swaggert say money is the Key, Disneyland’s expensive, how could Heaven be free?

If I don’t attend Church will His Wrath be Swift and Sure, and if I go and get deathly ill, will He deliver a cure?

Was Religion there at Waco so very, very wrong, that our Government had to play the Executioner’s Song?

They say the bloodiest of battles are always Holy Wars, no one can recruit more fanatics than the Lion when He roars.

Yes, Religion is a winding maze, it has everyone confused, I’m sure whoever’s God’s the One, it’s keeping Him amused.

Bayou Boogie

Obsidian water slow dances past the cypress trees, veiled Grandmas, their gnarled and twisted limbs draped in Spanish moss, mourning their ante-bellum past. Old man perched on a rickety clapboard dock, teeth yellow as dandelions, grinning like a Jackass with a mouth full of barbed wire, crazier than an outhouse rat. Cottonmouth moccasin traces hieroglyphics as it undulates across the water’s page. Two Negras in an ancient canoe, bayou gladiators, Spartacus and Cassius, poaching alligator hides. Darkness falls like a drunk on a unicycle, quickly and with no saving grace. The aura of the sun is exiled by a charcoal sky, night birds cry as they fly across the moon.
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LYNN GERBER

Earned

Some say:
we earned our scars
and should not be
embarrassed by them

Yet
I use layers of chiffon
and long curly tresses
to hide mine

They are not
marks of courage
they are ugly-puffed
jagged-purple-things

Of gas-light
mind-jobs
hand-jobs
mouth-jobs

I have no
clean knife wounds
no dare-devil mementos
no heroic gashes
only victim craters

That slug
thrive on buds
That leech
sucked young petals
That aphid

LYNN GERBER

stunted growth

Left a flower shell
with no guts
but plenty amputee
phantom pain
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Jornada

A single boat
passes as you sit on the bridge.
Another two days
and it might all have worked.
You can't remember
the last time you had a cigarette
or tore the sky
with pincers.
A cat leaps onto your knee,
then bounds off the way it came.

My Homo Problem

For EJK

I

From a high stoop by the Stonewall
the fags would call to me
& my lady, "Lend us yr boy-
friend for a while, Sweetie."

"Sweetie" would squeeze my arm, appease
the jeering boys in the band
with her smile while I just shrugged
& swallowed my bile.

That was before the old Stonewall
came tumbling down & brought
the dawn of liberation, before
the plague that dare not mute
its name came to decimate
the gay nation. Since then
the punks from Jersey cruise my Village
street, stereos blaring,

beer cans in hand, & shout, "Fuck you,
faggot!" & flip me the finger
out the window as their parents' car peels rubber.
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Since then, riding the rush-hour Q-33, I've heard a big
dude snarl while looming over me,
"I smell a friggin' fag,"

& I looked--tentatively--
for whom he meant, then up
to meet a hateful face glare straight
on down at me.

Today that snarl-word "faggot" chills
me like that other slur
with six letters & a gg
in the center, but banned

at home, though my father thought it
virile to sneer at "queers";
& now I revile the view that real
men have to hate homos.

II

But can I forget being eight,
in Naples, Maine, & Ray,
my father's boyhood friend, took me
out in his Model-A

& laid his hand high on my thigh
& squeezed & sighed,
"You're such a nice boy, such a nice
boy, such a nice . . . ," & my

heart flying to my throat I shrunk
against the door & gaped
as out of breath I prayed that ride
would end, "Please, God, real quick."

Can I neglect the pomaded
salesman who pulled his Ford
up to the curb at Doc's corner
when I was twelve, offered

me five bucks if only I'd go
for a ride beside him
a while, & my bowels went slack,
my head began to swim,

& the knee-jerk gentlemanly
me said, "No thanks, sir," yet
the young hood in me thought, "Get lost,
you motherfucking fruit!"

Then there's the loon in Loew's men's room,
Main St., White Plains, sidling
near us teens as we tried to void
our bladders yet avoid

his fervid, furtive peering at
our gear, till Eddie peed
all over him & Bobby shoved
his face into the drain.

First year at Brown my Resident
Fellow, Mr. Slocum,
standing in loco parentis
G. HELD

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First year at Brown my Resident
Fellow, Mr. Slocum,
standing in loco parentis
poored preprandial port,

listened sympathetically
to my tale of being torn
by Joan’s “Dear John,” then took me
downtown to see a flick

& in the dark theater slid
his arm around my neck & bid
to draw me to his shoulder;
my soul turned colder than

that night of awkward words as we
trudged uphill to the college
chilled with the knowledge that something
between us had been killed.

III

No, I can’t forget, but I can
forgive those desperate
closeted men yearning to break
out, burning, unhappily,

for me. And I don’t need
to be bloodied by some
gaybasher who sees straight as bent
or lose a friend to AIDS

before I stand with that outcast
clan. Now, like JFK
poured preprandial port,
listened sympathetically
to my tale of being torn
by Joan’s "Dear John," then took me
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THADDEUS A. WESTON

Packard Electric

The air hums within these walls
Through the lattice of steel girders and plumbing
Over the mirror of waxed concrete aisles
Above the whine
   and the whine
   and the whine of fluorescent lights
The air hums

I follow the music
Trail the yellow safety-lines
Painted to keep me
Out of the jaws of a punch-press
Off the path of electric carts driven
   by cigar-gnawing fat men

Yellow safety-lines painted to keep me

On my way I pass a lifer and nod hello
He hates me
He thinks I'm a young punk, and he's right
I can
   out work him
   out think him
   out fight him
   out fuck him
I can, and I do

I slide my feet and scuff the high-gloss yellow stripe
Rubber soles squeal a note of defilement
I drone in search of the pitch, find it,
   and walk in purring harmony

with breathing, sheet-metal vents
The air hums, having no need for words

Sweet Tooth

I've had enough of my cotton-candy baby. I've had my fill. I thought

I needed her dim neon glow
in my blind night, thought I wanted
the twist and blur of her fun-house mirrors
to dull my barbed reality, but

no matter
how much of her I consumed
she left me undernourished,
wanting more.

She was searching
for an escape, so she melted

in my mouth, but her empty
sugar kiss swelled my tongue,
and riddled my bite
with cavities.
THADDEUS A. WESTON

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in my mouth, but her empty
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and riddled my bite
with cavities.
She Was

She was the kind of
girl who, if you
told her she was
beautiful, behaved
as if you’d given her
an awkward gift,
inappropriate or
overpriced, one she
wasn’t sure she wanted
or knew what to do
with. If you said you
loved her, it was like
putting her in debt.
She was afraid she could
never pay back what she
believed she owed you.

But she was beautiful,
and I did love her, and
made the mistake of
telling her. That’s
how I found out what
kind of girl she was.
ALAN JEFFRIES

She Was

She was the kind of
girl who, if you
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as if you’d given her
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how I found out what
kind of girl she was.

RACHEL MATHIS

Complaint to a Muse

You float me smoothly, easily
in feathery lines of ink,
Guide me fervently to your pool
then there idly let me sink.

You enclose my hand and lead me to
that place of nevermore
Where I may, uninhibited,
release and be your whore.

Once in your grasp, you hold me tight
releasing me from sanity
So that I may sustain at once
my malnourished vanity.
Procrastination

My feet on the lounge,
Coffee mug in my hand,
I write out my tasks,
Then cast them aside.

Dishes shout "wash me!"
Kids fight for the tuna.
I should cook and clean,
But Cleveland's on the forty!

The moon smiles serenely,
Pulling the shade on the weekend.
Sighing, I flip off the light,
And fall into my unmade bed.

Good Housekeeping

Cobwebs cling to all four corners,
Petrified pizza perches on the table.
Empty beer bottles border the sofa.
Popcorn and peanuts pepper the floor.
Black ants barter for bits of the bounty.
Crud crusted dishes cram the sink--
To be soaked and scoured and served on again.
Cookbooks and coupons line the counter,
Ready and waiting to be read or redeemed.
Dirty laundry lies limp in the hamper,
To be washed and worn and washed again.
Bedspread and blanket fall from the bed.
Some women work wonders,
With colors and curtains and crafts,
But I close the door of my disheveled domain,
And race off to school with Shakespeare and Shelley.
**Procrastination**

My feet on the lounge,
Coffee mug in my hand,
I write out my tasks,
Then cast them aside.

Dishes shout "wash me!"
Kids fight for the tuna.
I should cook and clean,
But Cleveland’s on the forty!

The moon smiles serenely,
Pulling the shade on the weekend.
Sighing, I flip off the light,
And fall into my unmade bed.

---

**Good Housekeeping**

Cobwebs cling to all four corners,
Petrified pizza perches on the table.
Empty beer bottles border the sofa.
Popcorn and peanuts pepper the floor.
Black ants barter for bits of the bounty.
Crud crusted dishes cram the sink—
To be soaked and scoured and served on again.
Cookbooks and coupons line the counter,
Ready and waiting to be read or redeemed.
Dirty laundry lies limp in the hamper,
To be washed and worn and washed again.
Bedspread and blanket fall from the bed.
Some women work wonders,
With colors and curtains and crafts,
But I close the door of my disheveled domain,
And race off to school with Shakespeare and Shelley.
TRUMBULL COUNTY HAIKU

Early morning sun
comes through the window streaming
to the open book.

- Jennifer Patrick

No truth wakens fresh
The wheels chained to ill music
Police guards to God

- John Bond

The King’s court stands tall
A spade clubs a diamond’s heart
Just a deck of cards

- Erin Larsen

Street lamp’s silver ray
shines; a lonely soul afraid
of the night’s embrace.

- Deanna Popovich

Trees sway in the wind.
Strong root, yet yield under strain.
Yielding men break not.

- Robert A. Middleton

Sunshine after rain
Turning droplets into jewels
A rainbow is born

- Claris Lawrence

TRUMBULL COUNTY HAIKU

Cars screech to a stop.
Everyone stares. Amazing
what one dog can do.

- Theresa Brookover

Waves smash against rocks
as the black sky fills with light.
the storm rolls on through.

- Chris E. Hernon

A whistling wind
Beckons the call of the dead;
As ravens take wing.

- Brad Stanislaw

Screams through the great fire
Like a raging man forcing
Himself upon her.

- Rachel Joe

The crack whore awakes
To harsh sunlight—broke, needy
in rat’s company

- Tammy Wolfe

Dragon’s mouth smouldered
the village burned to the ground
An awful hot day

- Alicia Metz
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Grocery Shopping in Hell

I’ve been here for eons, and the worst of it is I can’t remember how I fucking got here. It’s hotter ’n hell, ya know? And back by the butcher counter ’n the fish counter always stinks cuz everything’s always rotten. I mean really rotten, with worms crawlin’ out of it n’ flies buzzin’ all ’round. Some days during the fire ball storms it gets really bad n’ I can’t even stand to be in that part of the store, so I stay pretty much over around the bakery and watch the bread mold.

God, my feet hurt. I mean, like I say, I’ve been walkin’ round this place for so long I can’t remember, but it seems like I can never find what I need, or it’s torn open an’ those big black beetles are crawlin’ all through it, or some such shit as that.

My toes fell off a few decades ago, but it don’t bother me much anymore; still bleeds like hell though, and the beetles git all over what’s left of my feet and crawl up my legs. It’s really the shits, but you learn to live things in the God-forsaken grocery store.

Well, so anyway, I’m walkin’ around leavin’ bloody footprints all over the place, but really just mindin’ my own business when I walk past this freezer door and it like flies open and this giant frozen squid tries to pull me in. Well, I duck, you know, and kind of slide away from it, but it grabs this fat woman in pink spandex and tries to pull her in with it. But it can’t get her hips through the door, so it keeps trying, banging her into the door frame. She’s choking cuz its got her around the neck, and she’s waving her arms and her black plastic-form glasses are pushed all funny on her face, and the crowd gathered around is yelling all at once at this little geeky manager to do something.

Well this geek is standing there trying to look all official, you know, and finally he snorts a little and huffs over to me and yells, “What did you do to that squid?”

“LIKE I’D DO NUTHIN’!” I yell, now the crowd started to beat on the thing to try to make it drop the woman, an’ the door frame of the freezer’s bending where she’s been’ smacked into it, an’ all of a sudden PLOP! she breaks through and her n’ the squid disappear into all this frost and ice fog.

Everyone just stares for a while, and then the geek clears his throat and says, “Well, uh, this was all an, uh publicity, uh, thingamajig to, promote our new squid fillets." Then he smiles this cheesy, bulgy-eyed smile and say, “So fresh you’ll think it’s still alive.”

Well, no one believes this, and he knows it, but after awhile everyone just grumbles and goes back to their shopping. The geek looks at me n’ shuns n’ turns around n’ slings off back to wherever it is managers go to.

I really hate grocery shopping. I really, really do; it seems like stuff like this is always happenin’, the management just doesn’t give a damn. But what can I do? It’s their ball game, n’ I just shop here.

So I get up ’n head over to the deli for some blood pudding. On the way I think I’ll stop n’ get a sample of those new brimstone-baked spicy hot bagels.
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ROBERT A. MIDDLETON

Overnight

Night has fallen—the dark over my heart.
Bitterness that will not escape from me.

The clock—ticking . . . ticking . . . shivering
my body like a cold wind.
Lying in the midnight hour with the thoughts
of my mind in anguish.

The weight on my chest—that relentless
weight!
I gasp, then expel my worries in a scream.
The scream—so painful.

My eyes—flowing with tears as a spoiled
child’s.

I awake to the light and dew of morning.
The ticking, now not as cold. The weight
not as heavy. The tears dried like the
sun-persuaded dew.

CARA HORNYAK

A Break in Reality

dark descended on the moonless night
fantasized mirages came into sight

in a hazy land of mist
    where mountains hide
    and dark thoughts thrive
i became engulfed by heat and steam
my world feels like a dream
perspiration slides down my face
once again i’ve fallen into that "lost" place
i hold under my breath, a terror filled scream
i’ve become submerged in dismal decay
deep depression courses through my veins
muddled thoughts show all my pains
hope and love seem far away

shadows sweep in around
choking out my life
pounding me into the dank underground
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MICHAEL S. GLASER

Wrinkling

for John McKernan

(waiting for a meeting that is obviously not taking place here)

It's fifteen minutes after it was supposed to have begun, and I am the only one here.

I decide: God must have wanted me to have this time by the banks of the river

the wind and tidal flow wrinkling
the water's skin . . .

Choose between flow and wrinkles,
flow and wrinkles, I think--

choose flow, plant my body on the slope
of this grassy hill, look out at the water,

am just settling in when the chairman rounds the corner, says, "Hi!" then,

"We the only ones here? Are we locked out?"
and runs off to get the key from security.

I remain, watching the river,
but it is not the same, not the same.

K. S. HARDY

My Father's Death

His work was gone
Taken from him early,
Not having reached bench mark.
One night a wire thin artery
Short circuited, exploded, leaked.
Next morning he could not
Make a fist of his right hand.

No longer could he crawl
Over the cast iron monsters
Fixing, tightening bolts,
Repairing machines
That made the motors
That drove the world.
In retirement I often saw
Him looking at his hands,
Skin returning to soft,
Grease fading from the lines,
His meaning becoming pale.
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Pops

Pops was a clammer and fisherman by trade. He could be seen daily with his brownish hip boots rolled down, buckets and clamming forks at his sides. His routine seldom varied. He’d climb into his old Ford pickup, rusted by the sea air, and be off to the clam beds for the day. If you looked at Pops, you’d see an old man with a shaggy grey beard and unruly hair covered by a black wool hat. He walked with a stoop from his years of digging clams. Wrapped around him was a battered, navy-blue overcoat making him look like the old man of the sea. Clenched between his teeth was the inevitable cigar butt.

I never did know Pops’ real name. We kids just called him Pops. When I say we kids, I’m talking about six young boys living in the orphanage across the street from Pops’ house. He was our closest neighbor in the small New England town where I was raised.

Pops would return from the clam beds at the same time every day. We boys would be waiting for him and run across the street and help him unload his catch of the day.

Pops lived in a one-story, shack-like house. It was faded white with peeling paint, the big green shutters aged by the elements. He lived in this house by himself; his only real companion was an old beagle dog named Butch. The dog only had three-and-a-half legs, but was always at Pop’s side. He was a friendly enough dog, but very protective of his master.

We’d help Pops unload his truck, taking everything down to the basement. The basement itself looked like something out of the Smithsonian Institution. Upon entering it through the storm doors, we were assaulted by the harsh odor of fish and the sea. It took time to adjust to the repulsive smell. Straight ahead against the back wall was a row of rusted freezers. On the left wall was a long, stainless steel sink attached to a metal table cluttered with an assortment of broken clam shells, dried seaweed, and fishnet bags. On the right wall was a crudely built table made from milk crates and plywood, plywood warped from the years. On top of this crude table were more milk crates stacked neatly, forming a number of cubbyholes.

In the very center of the basement, next to an ancient pothbelly stove, was a little work area where Pops spent most of his evenings. He’d sit in an old, wooden, straight-backed chair, dumping bag after bag of clams on the floor and, like a skilled surgeon, open every clam. He put the shells into a bucket on his right, and the clams into a green gallon can to his left. Pops would sit there for hours listening to country music and would occasionally mumble something to Butch at his side.

The rest of the basement was littered with a collection of artifacts from the old man’s many years. Everywhere you looked, hanging from the rafters, tucked into corners, and just thrown about, you’d find old fishing rods, rubber boots, rusted buckets and clamming forks with missing teeth, raincoats, old chains and hundreds of fishhooks of all shapes and sizes. Faded photographs were tacked up throughout the basement. They were mostly of people holding giant fish or of old fishing boats. An occasional centerfold could be seen. This basement was the old man’s world.

Once Pops finished with his daily tasks, he’d come back outside and sit under an old maple tree on a milk crate and watch us kids play. The old man’s yard was a playground for us kids. It was filled with treasures from the past: an assortment of old boats, anchors, fishnets, and tarps. For hours we’d play pirates, hide-and-seek, and an assortment of games kids play. The old man would just sit there and watch, chuckling from time to time. When we’d tire from our games, we’d go sit around Pops and he’d tell us stories from his many years as a fisherman.

A few years later the old man didn’t return home and the police came by and ran us kids out of his yard. I ran back to the orphanage and one of the nuns told me that Pops was in heaven
JOHN CARVALHO

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A few years later the old man didn’t return home and the police came by and ran us kids out of his yard. I ran back to the orphanage and one of the nuns told me that Pops was in heaven.
watching over me. I was later to find out at the old man’s funeral that he was well loved and respected. He was deeply involved with the Red Cross and Goodwill charities. He also supplied a couple local restaurants with fresh fish daily. One of the nuns later told me that Pops had died of old age and loneliness. He had no children and his wife of thirty years had passed on five years earlier. He left his little house and meager belongings to the orphanage.

Butch came to live with us at the orphanage but would never stay there. He could always be found in the old man’s basement lying on his rug next to the old man’s chair. We found Butch there one morning, having died of loneliness.

JOHN WING

The Leaving

This is the leaving:
The spider-webbed bag
dragged out and stuffed
in the short afternoon,
zippers whistling, and she stands
fingering the socks left behind
in the drawer. She is almost two,
and she knows this
is the leaving.

She asks questions
about everything, the same
questions, and understands none
of my answers, satisfied
by sound. She climbs
upon the bed to watch
the counting of underwear,
the filling of each little net,
and she knows.

We stand at winter’s
sunset, talking of colours
and skies. Black clouds advance
like a fearless army.
She looks in my eyes.
Rain softly begins. Daddy
has to go away tomorrow.
Her face says
there is no need.

That night she awakens
loudly and will not yield.
JOHN CARVALHO

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That night she awakens
loudly and will not yield.
JOHN WING

Her arms coil around
my neck, holding me hard.

She knows it is very late.
She knows that morning
will come too fast if she sleeps.
This is the leaving.
She knows this.

DORA MULLER

Black Pearls

Two black pearls lost in a clear lake.
Full of questions and mixed-feelings.
They run in deep water with the same agility
that birds carry across the sky.
I am never too tired to jump in the lake,
like a stone slow I sink.
I am a survivor who takes the last breath.
Before I am able to scream for help,
I am suffocated grass after a flood.
Help me, for your dark eyes,
I am not a permanent winner.

To my six-year old son's black eyes.
JOHN WING

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my neck, holding me hard.

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To my six-year old son’s black eyes.
My Nurse's Hands

The long, slender fingers
of this nurse's hands
are tender, gentle, and caring
but also firm and strong
they palpate many pulses
as the days progress
and draw up medications into a syringe
so carefully
to help ease the pain of
cancer, surgery, or broken bones
these hands are
rough and dry and cracked
from many washings with harsh soaps
but clean
so very clean
this nurse's hands are always cold
or so it seems
as they hold a dying patient's hands
or comfort loved one crying out their grief
these hands, my hands
have held the hands of many
frightened, sick or dying strangers
who did not want to be alone at their death
and have comforted many of their
crying and grieving loved ones
they don't care who these strangers are
if they are rich or poor, black or white,
short or tall, fat or thin
these hands just want
to comfort them in some slight way
to make it just a bit easier to take
and someday,

many years from now,
I pray that another caring nurse's hands
will be able to do the same
slight comforting service
for me and my loved ones
in our hour of need
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and someday.
LLOYD SCATES

You Ignore Me, Like You Always Do

When I speak the truth, you always sneer, you frown your face
as though I'm not here.
I always listen, unlike you, you ignore me, like you always do.
Can you hear the clamor, the sound of pain? The endless oppression, it's a sad refrain.
When I ask if you hear, you never do, you ignore me, like you always do.

I think the thoughts that manifest, articulate with speech, so where's the test?
It lies in the heart that never rests.

Pray the day that's coming soon, can't you hear me speak to you? No you don't, you never do
you ignore me, like you always do.

City streets obscure the sounds, babies crying, homeless dying,
jackhammers breaking ground,
many more are prison bound, when I ask if you hear,
you never do, you ignore me like you always do.

When will the madness ever end?
Will I ever be able to smile again?
When I ask these questions, not even a clue;
Coming from you, it's nothing new, 'cause you ignore me, like you always do.

CHRIS HERNON

The End of the Beginning

A lilac-scented, steaming bath warms me, relaxes me.
I close my eyes, drifting into a netherland where no boundaries lie.
White light flashes.
Jolts of electricity fill the pores of my body.
My eyes spring open, protruding from their sockets.
Drak, the cat, watches as black stands on end.
White lights fade to shadows.
Scenes flash before my eyes.
Goblins, demons, and warlocks carry out the curse that makes them walk in hell.
Scenes slow.
I watch enthralled as new ones appear.
The whirlpool of pictures stops.
Night time.
Fog rolls across a desolate cobblestone lane.
A storefront door opens.
An English woman steps onto the stones, clad in a long, black, veil of a coat.
She moves swiftly, checking the shadows and searching for a slaver.
A tall, dark man watches; his long, flowing cape conceals him from her.
I want to warn her, but no words escape my tightened throat.
He grasps her, sucking her into the mouth of the alley.
His yellow eyes glare as he stares into hers.
She utters not a sound.
He frees her neck of the coat, sinking pointed teeth into ivory flesh.
Her eyes become vacant marbles, void of life.
Dark man turns my way laughing a lunatic's laugh, displaying blood-stained teeth as he evaporates into space.
LLOYD SCATES

You Ignore Me, Like You Always Do

When I speak the truth, you always sneer, you frown your face
as though I'm not here.
I always listen, unlike you, you ignore me, like you always do.
Can you hear the clamor, the sound of pain? The endless oppression, it's a sad refrain.
When I ask if you hear, you never do, you ignore me, like you always do.

I think the thoughts that manifest, articulate with speech, so where's the test?
It lies in the heart that never rests.

Pray the day that's coming soon, can't you hear me speak to you? No you don't, you never do you ignore me, like you always do.

City streets obscure the sounds, babies crying, homeless dying,
jackhammers breaking ground,
many more are prison bound, when I ask if you hear, you never do, you ignore me like you always do.

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CHRIS HERNON

a hair dryer hangs on a ledge.

Displays change, blur, and reform.
A blonde-haired man with blocked features sits on a cot.
Bars for doors, for windows baptize the barren room.
Yellow moonlight filters through the bars. He walks to the window, leering out; moonlight caresses his face causing changes within.
Tremblings begin. Arching his back, he releases curdling screams that fill the air as he alters his existence.
Fingers elongate. Razor nails rest at the ends. His face slopes, forming a snout; sharp fangs burst from the roof of his mouth and bristly animal hair encompasses the skin.
His suffering subsides as the transformation ends.
The loup-garou perches, waiting for the meal of flesh that will never come.
A single tear sits on his cheek, slowly sinking into a furry face as he fades away.
The scenes switch again, this one not seen as bright.
A witch's inquisition with a woman warming at the stake.
She spits her curses at those who wait, defying the God who served her this plate.

Flash, a bathtub with a naked woman in it. Why would that be in a dream like this?

A cemetery materializes, cold grey stones litter the lot, disturbed black earth lays on the plots.
The damp night air carries the wails of the dead who walk from the west searching for heads.
Brains they seek from the living ones, as bits of fetid flesh drip from worm-encrusted bones.
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More horrors flash before my eyes.
B-rated horror movies should have never been watched at
five.
The bathtub again. A wet hand gently pushes,
the hair dryer falls in.

Darkness swirls all around; down and down I drop. Orange
flames lick my feet as I stop.
Beelzebub, the God of naught, wants to talk.
Fall, Winter

Fall
Is a very beautiful time of year.
With the colorful leaves
Swirling,
Gliding,
Falling
To the covered ground.
The sight of children
Running,
Leaping,
Falling
Into multicolored piles.
The sad part is that summer is
Disappearing,
Slipping away,
Falling
Into a cold sleepy season . . .
Winter

Contributor’s Notes . . .

John Bond is a former KSUTC student. Ron Book is a junior at KSUTC who majors in Radio and TV Communication. Theresa Brookover is a freshman Computer Technology major. She enjoys sewing in her spare time and has won several ribbons and awards. John Carvalho is a writer from Leavittsburg, Ohio. Joe Dudley is a frequent ICON contributor and the English coordinator at KSUTC’s Skills Center. Lynn Gerber is a poet from Forest Hills, New York. Michael Glaser is a poet from St. Mary’s City, Maryland.

K. S. Hardy writes poetry in Bowling Green, Ohio. G. Held is a poet from Queens College in Flushing, New York. Ken Herlinger is a sophomore Criminal Justice major at KSUTC. Chris Herron is a freshman Plant Science major who lives with eleven cats and three rats. Cara Hornyak enjoys reading and writing. She is a freshman Psychology and English major at KSUTC. Alan Jeffries is a poet from Shadyside, Ohio.

Rachel Joe is a freshman Pre-Med major at KSUTC. She also enjoys art. Erin Larsen is a freshman Business major who likes shooting rifles and role-playing games. Claris Lawrence is a freshman English major who is currently experiencing her mid-life crisis. Rachel Mathis is a freshman English major who has found joy through raising her two children. Alicia Metz is a freshman at KSUTC who likes to talk really fast.

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