

HARPER COLLEGE

Point of View

2006-2007



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Award Winners

Point of View Award

Deborah Martin

“This Place of Ours”

and

Ashley Schroeder

“His Very Own Superhero”

Ray Mills Award

Evan D’Orazio

“Absorption”

Vivian Stewart Award

Kelsey Bartsch

“Lace”

On the Front Cover. . .

Adriana Kamenetsky

“Whispers”

Pastels, gouache, watercolor

36”x25”



Harper College

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The Literary Editor’s Note

Happy 40th Anniversary, Harper!

Front Cover

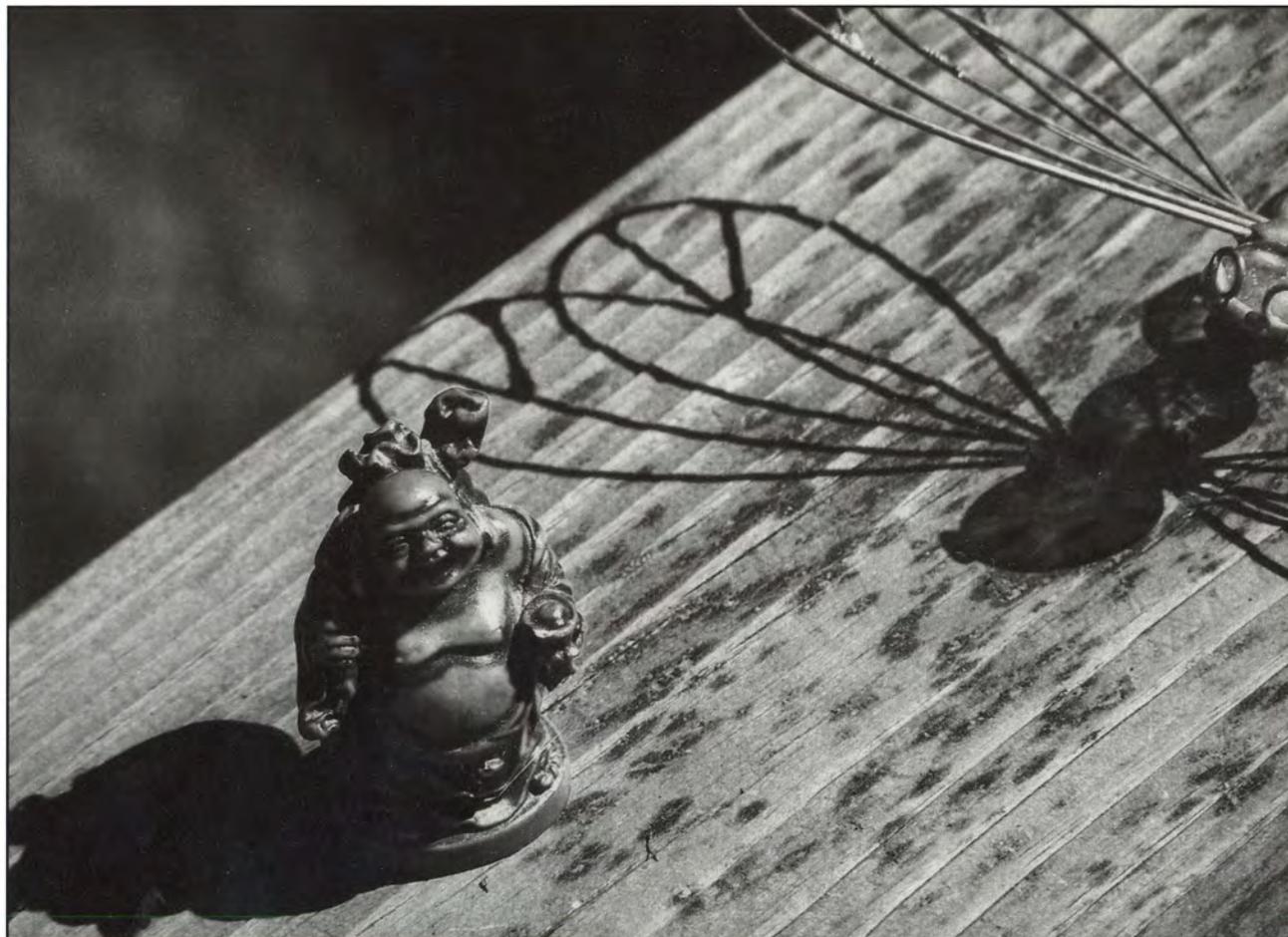
“Whispers”

Adriana Kamenetsky

Back Cover

“Untitled”

Timothy Fennell



Kelsey Bartsch
“Everything Zen”
Photography
9”x5”

Before the Blackout

By Pete Falknor

Sara Kadowaki
 "Deja Vu"
 Chalk Pastels
 12.25x19.25"

I remember, meeting her for the first time and thinking
 "Don't I already know you?"

I remember, the very first time she kissed me,
 The day she left town to see another man

I remember her eyes, hiding a ghost,
 Always looking over her shoulder,
 Making sure I didn't remember

I remember,
 Beer, vodka, tequila, gin, whiskey, rum
 And I remember her snuggling up to me with puke-stained morning breath
 Wondering where she'd been all night
 I remember her phone ringing,
 Craig, Rick, Jerry, Johnny, Steve, Ryan, and Matt

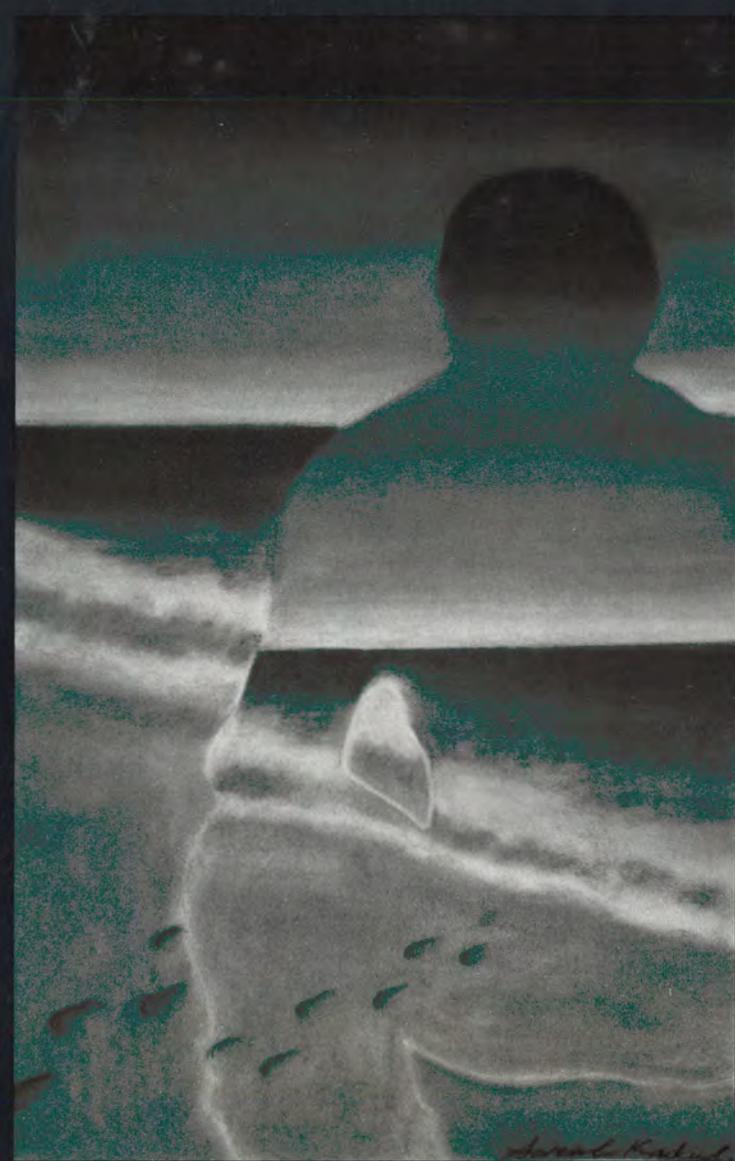
I remember the promises, and the excuses that followed,
 "My phone died."
 "I couldn't find a ride."
 "I blacked out."

I remember the basement, cold, stale, and dirty

I remember that night, the party, the friends, the late night jam session
 in the smoked-filled band practice room, guitars at ear shattering volume

I remember the sound of him laughing

I remember opening the door to cameras flashing and thinking
 "How could this girl be such a whore?"



I remember wanting it to stop, to put an end to this situation that
no girl would soberly put herself in

I remember her now, hazy eyes, the treble clef tattoo, the pink lacey
lingerie I thought she only put on for me

I remember now the beer, vodka, tequila, gin, whiskey, rum, and
PUKE

I remember her words now, "I used to be so
different, you saved me"

I remember tangled ratty hair

I remember wrinkled clothes

I remember coming home to an empty bed
With no passed out vomit and urine soaked girl-
friend waiting for me. ♦

Evan D'Orazio
"Talipes I"
Pit-fired ceramic
13.5x8.5x4.5"



His Very Own Superhero

By Ashley Schroeder

He came in about a quarter to nine, when things were neither busy nor slow. He blew in with his mother, like two leaves being swept up by the wind and carried through a threshold on a blustery day.

He was no more than four-years-old, his baby teeth spaced far apart in an innocent, yet undeniably mischievous manner, as if his halo could be replaced by horns at any moment. His fair blonde hair was cut short, about an inch or so above his light eyebrows that seemed to disappear next to his pale skin. His eyes, which were the color of dark chocolate, were wide and sparkling. He ran ahead of his mother, pulling violently yet weakly on her hand, urging her to share in his excitement.

He ran about in a crazed state, winding his way wildly around the tables of discounted coffee table books and recent bestsellers, unsure of where to go first. His mother followed behind, unable to convince her son to hasten or calm himself. From my position behind the counter I was able to watch them only a few moments longer, for they soon disappeared behind a tall bookcase; they must have been headed to the children's department in the back of the store.

I do not know for how long they roamed about, for many more leaves were blown in during that last hour before closing, each one demanding my attention. At one point there were about seven or eight of them waiting motionless in line in front of my register, each one gazing with contempt at the clock behind me on the wall. I recognized their looks; they were anxious to make their purchases and leave. I called over the speaker system for some assistance at the registers, and within one minute one of my coworkers had appeared at my side.

He was young, about my age or a few years older, in his first years of college. He wore his ebony hair slicked

back, exposing his tough, tan forehead. His blue eyes, reminiscent of van Gogh's "Starry Night," shone with a brilliancy unparalled by anything of this earth. His character was amiable, his smile contagious.

Though we had worked together for over six months, I still would not have considered us friends. We seldom worked the registers together; he usually was stocking shelves or working the floor. However, whenever we did work the registers, he was too busy being personable with the customers, instead of his coworkers, so few words were ever exchanged between us on our shifts.

Within four or five minutes both my coworker and I had successfully served all the customers that were in line, and they hastily pushed past each other to leave, once again being swept up by the wind. My coworker had decided to stay at the registers with me in case there was another influx of customers just before closing. His presence must have somehow kept people away, for no one came to pay for another ten minutes or so.

It was during those quiet minutes that I regained sight of the boy and his mother. They were in fact in the children's department, in the far left corner of the store, where an antique rocking chair rests upon a large area rug printed with multicolored automobiles cruising about a bustling town. The mother grew weary and fell into the rocker as her son raced about her. The boy must have been looking for a few particular books, for I could just see the top of his blonde head as he rummaged through the shelves, growing ever more frantic as the minutes passed and he could not locate them all.----->

Gamaliel Gomez
"Magallanes"

Drywall, fabric, toliet paper, soap
72.5x14x9"

"He blew in with his mother, like two leaves being swept up by the wind and carried through a threshold on a blustery day."



The store was going to close in twenty minutes. A few of the customers who had been browsing the music collection on the upper floor descended the wide carpeted staircase and made their purchases before joining the other leaves in the bitterness of another frigid October night.

At a quarter to ten, I heard the assistant manager's voice over the speaker system. "The store will be closing in fifteen minutes. Please make your final purchases at the front register immediately. We will open again tomorrow morning at nine. Thank you for shopping with us tonight." He hung up the phone sloppily, and everyone who remained in the store cringed at the shrill sound.

After the music customers had gone, the only customers left in the store were the boy and his mother. I could just make out the struggle between the two as she dragged her indignant child from the back of the store toward the registers. He must have not yet been ready to leave.

I had already begun to count the money in the registers, as I do at the end of every night, so my coworker was the one to help them. I was totaling the money in the drawer of the register farthest from them, yet I was still close enough to see them and to clearly hear their exchanged words.

The little boy had his arms full of comic books and short paperback books designed for young children. He hoisted them up onto the counter and slightly frowned at my coworker, who ruffled through the literature to scan the barcodes.

"You a fan of superheros, little man?" he asked the boy, as he slid the comic books and paperbacks into a plastic bag.

The boy's face lit up as his frown melted. "Yeah-huh. I like all of 'em.

"Specially the one that can fly and pulls people out of c'lapping buildings and races airplanes and is just really fast."

"Oh, yes. You do have a bunch of his adventures here, don't you? What's he look like? Do you know, little guy?"

"Yeah-huh. He's tall, with black hair. Nobody knows who he really is, though. Shhhh!" He cried, pressing his finger to his lips. "It's a secret!"

My coworker smiled and leaned forward over the counter. "Ah, a secret, you say. So this superhero has a normal life and most people look at him and don't even know who he is?"

"Exactly!" the boy shouted, as his mother's face flushed with embarrassment.

"Are you good at keeping secrets?" my coworker asked seriously. The boy nodded his head feverishly.

"I know who he is. Your superhero, I mean. I know him. I've met him." The boy gaped. Then he put his hands on his hips. "Nuh-uh. You did not."

"Did so. Wanna know who he is?" With a twinkle in his eye, my coworker winked at the mother. She smiled in reply.

"Yeah-huh. Can I? Can I?" He started to bounce and jump up and down.

"Okay, but you can't tell anyone. Promise?"

"Promise."

By this time I had stopped counting the drawer, for I was too distracted by the scene that was unfolding. The boy stood, now completely silent, completely still, his neck strained and his head tilted completely back in order to see over the counter. He was staring at my coworker, as was his mother. I, too, stared at him, eager with anticipation.

My coworker got a devilish look in his eye as he cautiously looked over each of his shoulders, as if someone unpleasant might be lurking nearby to steal the secret that he knew.

When he looked around and found that no one, besides me, was able to see him, he slowly unbuttoned the top of his black dress shirt. He carefully pulled back each side of the shirt, separating the buttons from the buttonholes, revealing the shirt he wore underneath it.

"I had stopped counting the drawer, for I was too distracted by the scene that was unfolding."

I was unable to make out the design on his shirt, but from the look on the boy's face it was clear; my coworker was wearing the boy's favorite superhero's insignia.

"You?" the boy whispered. "It's you? He's you? You're him? You re a SUPERHERO?"

"Shhhh!" my coworker scolded, bringing the shirt back together and hurriedly buttoning it again. "You mustn't tell anyone, all right? If my cover were blown, if people found out who I really am, then I couldn't help people anymore or use any of my powers. And that would be bad, wouldn't it?"

The boy nodded.

"And you, too," he added, addressing the boy's mother.

"You have my word," she promised, with a grateful look in her eye.

"Well, then," he said, straightening out his shin as he pulled himself back from the counter and stood erect, obviously pretending that his secret had not just been revealed. "That will be forty-two fifty-seven."----->

The mother, also pretending to forget what had just happened, handed him some cash, which he quickly sorted into the register. He handed her the receipt and change. "Do you think that you can handle this, little man?" He motioned to the bag of books on the counter.

"Yes, sir!" the boy cried, the only one who was not pretending. My coworker gently passed the bag of literature over the counter and down to the boy, who continued to look up at him with the greatest praise and admiration. He could not help but slip back into his alter ego.

"How would you like to do me a favor? You listen to your mama, from now on, okay? And be a good boy. That would make her very happy, and me, too. Could you do that for me?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Atta boy! Be good!" He nodded once and smiled.

The boy's mother promptly thanked him and, taking her son's hand, turned toward the door. The boy, however, still faced his superhero and waved at him excitedly as his mother walked him out of the store. He continued waving past the doors and out into the parking lot, until I lost him behind the sable curtain of night.

I bet that he waved all the way to the car, and all the way home, and that he still does, every single time that he reads that literature or passes our store, or even when he listens to his mother, as he promised to do. For, as much as he knows, he met his hero that night, his very own living, breathing superhero. ♦

Craig Manze
"Untitled"
Drywall, wood, plaster
Dimensions unavailable



I met a Boy in New Orleans

By Gillian Kerns

I remember him teasing me about my new blue scrubs.

I remember his frequent laugh that resonated throughout the small mosque.

I remember the pink sunset over the barge he and I walked out to see.

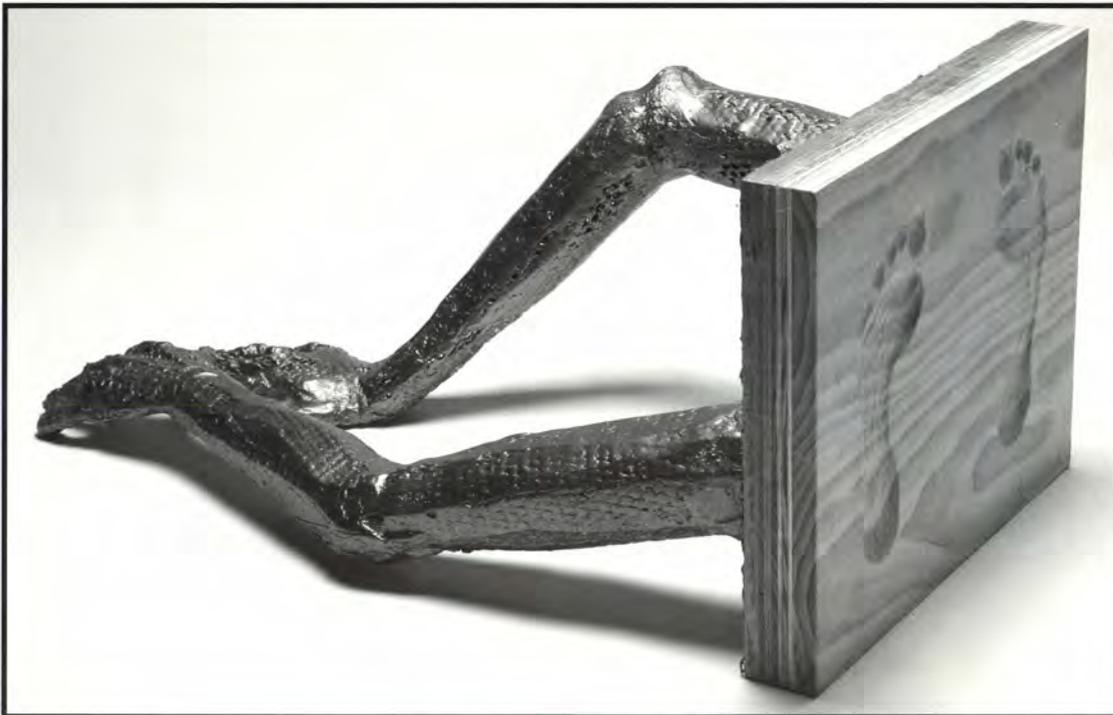
I remember the terrible burn I got when he dropped a hot spoon.

I remember the taste of chili pepper from the jambalaya we made with some old guy named Charlie.

I remember the fiery smell of ribs he stuffed his smile with.

I remember the last time I walked away from him, cursing my nerves when I couldn't hug him goodbye.

And for the life of me, I cannot remember his name. ♦



He Keeps Purity in the Liquor Cabinet

By Erin Pianetto

I am...

Orange light,
trapped in my father's lungs...
slowly rotting in his rusty, aching liver.

My eyes at his waist..

Tiny toes wiggling bright...

As he slurs me a lullaby.

I drink him in...

All the lies...

In his black

Outstretched sky.

Tuck me tight in sober feathers.

Dancing swiftly in and out...

His eyes leave,

And he crowds my bed with beer breath and cold skin...

I hide myself inside his arms...

I feel all that he's broken against my 5 year old flesh.

His fists...

No longer dark nor angry,

Show me exactly what a father should be. ♦

Darcy Terrel

"inbetween"

Wood, metal, plaster, paint

17"x14"x32"



Henya Pappas
"Downward Facing Dog"
Wood, metal, plaster, burlap
54"x31"x21"

Lace

By Kelsey Bartsch

Lace yourself up tight,
secreting your milky skin,
saved only for him
saved only for you.

Lace yourself up right,
among the berries and the wheat,
under your secret arbor,
lace yourself back up.

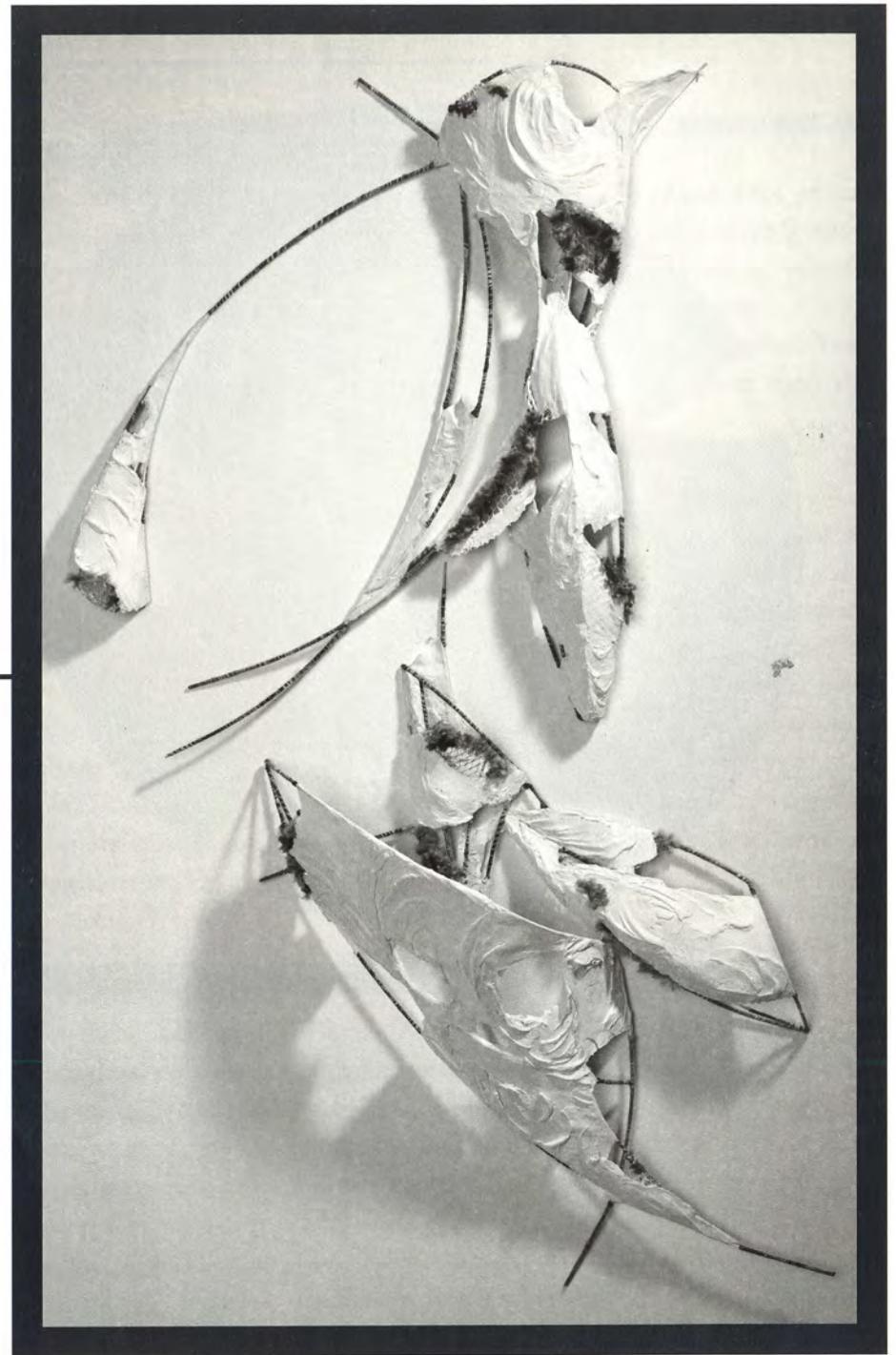
Lace up that moon-white dress,
that you keeps you all inside,
lace up the stiff corset,
that hides.

Lace up what was unlaced,
by another's hands
rough from field work,
lace up your life again.

Lace up so Mama won't see,
what the fields yielded this year,
lace up your costume, your mask,
and she will be satisfied.

But leave your laces loose,
because the field will call again,
and that secret tree will sway,
and the sun will fall to your feet,
and he will warm your face
with his magnificence.

Julie Hoffman
"C.T.M. B.T.M."
Mixed Media
3' x 2' x 8"



Here's the Skinny. . .

By Erin Pianetto

Stacked
Flesh
Like pancake pie...
Crumbs of beauty,
Wedged hard between
Each gluttonous wave of womanhood.
Eyes closed tight
Around
The silence of summer...
Alone...
Beneath a black mess of tangled skinny strands,
Black lips,
And yellow teeth.
Wooden dreams carved
By forks and spoons...
Pale skin
Crowded by touch.
Dirty hands rich with sadsong and chocolate.
Nipples tucked...
Hidden deep...
As she breathes herself across the room. ✦



Meghann M Lothson
"The Wheel"
Stoneware
11"x11"x1/4"

Hot Jazz

By Vanessa Binfa

You are cordially invited to attend a spectacular, grand, and refined private dinner party held by none other than Yours Truly, Baby Lala. Please be punctual.

Well, it was about time that I attended one of those nonsense parties. Lord knew it would be a bunch of alcoholics in one room, drinking, and regaling themselves with the stories of how good the old days were. Of course, those were our movie stars. The royalty of American culture, the beloved men, women, and children of the silver screen, those most cared for and coveted.

At least the food would be free and I would have some piece of gossip for my dear sister

And Baby Lala. . . what a story she was in herself.

Those parties always required a certain kind of manner on one's part, one you don't often find nowadays. First, you had to have been a notable person, and, as such, behave importantly. You must have been known and talked about. "Any publicity is good publicity," I heard various people murmur. Baby Lala was perhaps an eight on the social scale of one to ten. Ten being the highest and one being. . . well, you are scum, sir! You were beneath even the extras.

Why, you might as well be in Kansas, pretty boy.

I had no taste for the company of my coworkers. I figured that if I could tolerate them

during work, then I should not have to tolerate them in my home. It was 1924 and I had no time to waste on any superficial persons--at least outside of work. In my line of work, everyone and everything is made of plastic. A fine plastic, though, the kind you only find in Hollywood.

Considering the invitation, I flipped it between my fingers, the smooth stationary with the gold etching and deep, inky, black font that spiders across the page must have been costly. Leave it to Baby Lala, I had heard it said. Baby Lala, a film goddess, was as epic and important as anyone in this business. An invitation from her signified that, kid, you've made it. If she knew your name, you were in the club. You were allowed to join, and from her, you would get to know anyone worth knowing in Tinsel town.

Having no need for connections and relying on my own face, I managed to avoid parties and gatherings such as that one. Yet somehow, I thought it best if I go. The party was in one week, plenty of time to accept the invitation and find suitable clothes for then. Life had become somewhat of a habit, and as my sister, Rosanna, had said to me, I must mingle with the Hollywood crowd, if only for the stories.

I picked up my own stationary--fine cotton paper the color of cream--and dipped a pen into a small canister of India ink. Carefully, I wrote my acceptance.

Mister Newport Anderson gratefully

accepts Miss Baby Lala's most spectacular, grand, and refined invitation. Punctuality is duly noted and will be respected. My sincerest of thanks, from guest to host. Yours, N. Anderson.

No less than a day later, the gallant host sent a reply on stationary more plain than the original invitation.

Mister N. Anderson,

It was with pleasure that I extended an invitation to your fine self. I would very much enjoy your company during my most extraordinary of soirees. You do not make yourself so known in our social circles, my dear. This must change. I saw Cast My Necklace and was quite taken with your talent and abilities. I accept your acceptance and will see you at seven, the night of the twenty-fifth. Bring your charm, you'll need it.

*Your gracious host,
Miss Baby Lala.*

Well, how was that for a reply? One of Warner Brothers highest grossing actresses giving me praise. Me, some new face from MGM, with little more than two films under my belt, while she had some three and ten. I dreaded to have her know that I did not find her a superb actress. But that was not entirely her fault. In their roles, women were given little more chance than to swoon and seduce men. Yet I imagined she must be famous for *something*. ----->

A week passed and I was in the cautious process of selecting an outfit for that most important of evenings. Well, I wondered. Were her soirees black tie affairs, or would a blue seer-sucker suit capture the evening? I decided on a dark brown suit, which I considered to be neither too formal nor too casual. Then I changed into my tuxedo. This is Tinseltown, kid, not Kansas.

Had I still been in Kansas I would have had two suits: one for trips to town and one for church. In Hollywood, I had some five and ten at *that* time. Some were specific and still are. One cannot wear the same suit twice for premiers without some snooty gossip columnist noticing if your buttons look the same or if the cut did not change. Others were gifts given to me by the studio.

Having spent most of the day reading over my script, smoking cigars, and lounging on my porch, I finally changed into the proper clothes and organized my accessories. My shiny, smooth, ivory cigarette case with alabaster trim was filled with the finest cigarettes you could kill yourself with. No matter how glamorous this dreadful habit seems, it is not glamorous to burst out coughing after running for not more than two minutes. It is not attractive, the awful smell if you buy an incorrect brand, nor are the yellow stains on the teeth, or the rancid smelling clothes. Give the public what they want, I suppose, yet only we shall see our shriv-

eled, yellow deaths.

Dressed, with my hair slicked back, bowtie in place, shoes polished, and accessories all placed, I called my butler, George. George walked over, a young man of twenty--three years younger than myself, and better mannered than I was.

"Sir?" he asked, his hazel eyes looked over my choice of dress. "Going out then?"

"Yes, George. Please do me the pleasure of driving me to Miss Baby Lala's estate. I suppose you know where that is."

"Why, of course! That is swell, sir; she's the cat's meow!"

"Nothing but a bunch of banana oil." I muttered, stepping into the car. "At the very

least, she will have liquor."

The damned law passed by the fat cats in Washington prohibited alcohol entirely. It was not scarce on the streets if you knew the right places, and in Hollywood (amongst the beloved) it was distributed freely. Most judges turned a blind eye and could erase your record. You were caught having drunk sex in a public restroom? No problem. The judge can fix it for ya, kid.

George drove--carefully, for the car was not even a year old--and I arrived exactly on time, as other people were doing. I squeezed George's shoulder before leaving the car. Lord, I thought, give me strength.

Stepping up the stairs, the place was lush. The gentle trickle of water could be heard

above the murmurs of the people next to me. Their fine dress matched the fine surroundings. Inside was all marble, draped in various silks, each one finer than the last.

Tassels, drapes, lace, and diamonds dripped from every inch of the estate but what really caught my attention was the music playing.

Oh, what jazz has done to us!

I felt as if my heart had been started, given a purpose to beat, as the beat of the music pumped the blood from my heart to my lungs. Exquisite, refined jazz played, and the sexuality of every guest shined more than the diamonds. We dripped and were molded to the notes of the jazz players. All I wanted to do was to close my eyes and melt.

The piano player was key. His notes were the most sensual, the most emotive, the most passionate. God speed, was all I could think.

My jazz was interrupted by *the* appearance of our congenial host.

Miss Baby Lala was a waterfall. From her slender frame flowed the richest and finest of soft fabrics draped in careful waves and cascading around her figure, falling at a scandalous hemline. Lace, silk, diamonds. . . and her smile. As she smiled, a luscious voice sang.

Hot jazz, baby! Hot jazz, baby--let's melt together down to the wicks.

She stepped upon the oriental rug, the dark cherry red wood becoming more vibrant when she entered the room.

"Welcome, everyone. Let us begin."

We were set to mingle and discover. I looked about at my coworkers. Yes, the big names were there. The men appeared as gods and the women were their goddesses. Everyone so dapper and slick plumed out for display. Certainly, as George had said, everyone there was the cat's meow. Painted walls matched the painted ladies. What colors makeup came in! Lavender eyes, rosy cheeks. Youth emanated from us all.

We were an age anxious to enjoy ourselves. The electricity, the sensuality in The room made my heart pound and my breath hitch. Was I really still this simple boy from Kansas?

"My dear Newport!"

I turned and it was the gracious Miss Baby Lala.

"Why hello, gracious host, Miss Baby Lala," I said, my voice in a deep purr, perhaps from the drenching I had gotten from those past few minutes.

"Quite a pleasure, I daresay."

"Ah, pleasure is all ours," she said, cat-smiling.

"I see that you are quite affected by the music."

"Affected? Now that is an odd choice of word."

"Is it now?" she laughed.

"Most people would say, 'I see that you like the music' or 'I see you care for the music.'"

"Mister Anderson!" she chuckled, slipping her arm into mine, her touch very warm, very nearly damp from those silk gloves. "You are humorous! No, my dear, you must remember--I am not most people."

She and I slipped (for the silks were so fine that they smoothed--not rubbed--against each other) into the living room, premiered by grandiose French doors. If she had hung several hundred dollar bills

from the walls the effect would have been the same, yet not quite as chic. Painted walls, really, in dark grays and reds, warmed by the glow of candles and youthful skin.

"You might say that much of this crowd is affected by hubris," she spoke, her words seemingly chosen carefully. "Affected, but not changed. Do you agree, Mister Anderson?"

"Perhaps. . .but I cannot speak for the people I do not know." Lies, I knew. I sounded foolish--naïve even. My words betrayed my previous thoughts about the evening. Who needed to know that I was silently judging the whole lot of them?

"Pish posh," she sniffed. "First impressions are everything."

"First impressions are cheap auditions." I retorted. She looked at me in shock and burst out laughing. I momentarily feared to have offended her, but she was laughing in delight.

"Oh! Oh, Mister Anderson, yes; you will do quite well here. I will make sure of *this*, indeed. Now, back to *that* music. You've not heard anything quite like it?"

Hot jazz, baby! Hot jazz, baby--tonight I burn from the ceiling for you and those pretty little eyes of yours...

Liquor was served and it too dripped generously into our youthful, eager mouths. My lips tingled at the taste of champagne. My tongue sparked and my blood pushed faster. The roar, sex, and alcohol deafened me into a silence. ----->

Henry Pappas
"Thirty-five"
Paint, wire
11"x13"x5"



Lace and silk and diamonds and pearls and curls of hair and hemlines and slicked back hair and painted walls and burning passion... I could feel my soul shake with each sip of alcohol. Then I thought, "Am I drinking the very air? Am I breathing the very fire of hell that blazes from *those* painted walls?"

"I take into favor men who do not say more than needed," Miss Baby Lala cooed. "For, after all, we are only silent actors. Words are not needed, just. . ." she said, covering her face with one gloved hand, ". . . our faces." She removed her hand quickly as she said that last part. She laughed, her nose scrunching, her eyes crinkling, the gorgeous curls of her bobbed hair shaking as I was sure the chandelier crystals were.

A tour about the room and I met the most well connected people in Tinsel town. Kid, this ain't Kansas, shake them people's hands and smile. You're the cat's meow, now! I could hear my agent say. You've made it, kid! And these people congratulated me on my steps up the social ladder. Whom had I stepped on to arrive at my pedestal?

Myself, and only myself, had I stepped on and squashed, *that* was the most terrible part of it all.

In Kansas, the grass bums! Damn your painted walls! Hubris, your black coal, bitter as you step and march and step and march and step. . .and you form a diamond! Its glowing center is only the heart that once was before it dripped.

Where was my head? I set down my glass, then, in habit, grabbed it, afraid that it might slip from the table and onto the floor and

the precious nectar would seep into the Oriental rug. How did anyone stand? How did anyone maintain balance? How did the women, adorned and pressed into silk molds, keep from slipping?

Suddenly, the thought appeared in my mind. I never *thanked* her for her acceptance. The praise! The slipping! I had to thank her for her gracious, glorious, gay words of praise.

"Thank you," I blurted, suddenly. "For the kind letter. Really, all too kind of you to say."

Miss Baby Lala looked at me, curiously,

"From where did those words drip? How had the silky ink formed words? From what hand? From what hand?!"

and smiled. "Mister Anderson? I sent no letters out."

"Not one? For me?"

"No. I have been in quite a state planning this gathering, my dear."

From where did those words drip? How had the silky ink formed words? From what hand? From what hand!?

"Allow me," Miss Baby Lala declared, her voice steady, but it vibrated briefly and slicked onto the painted walls only to drench them, "to introduce you, Mister Anderson, to my baby brother, Gable Logan."

Logan? Where was the Lala? Judging by this brother, I could see the Lala would not do. No, I supposed not. In Hollywood, every Adams and Smith and Jones is turned into an Ames, a

Swanson, a Joyce. Anderson, at least, a real Kansas City name, they'll like that. It'll sell, kid. Don't you worry.

"Pleasure," Gable said, his voice pleasant to my ears even through the roar of the room.

"Quite," I replied simply. The roar knocked my senses and I was attracted to even him. Everyone suddenly seemed so much more striking. Everyone was simply so beautiful and gorgeous, everyone reverberated sex and sensuality, everyone promised to love you best forever and ever. Everyone swam in cool pools of sweet alcohol and you were the only one thirsting and warm.

But what was that beauty and glamour but plastic? The alcohol saturated the plastic, to keep it from burning. . .? No. That did not make sense. Alcohol induced flames. Perhaps that is why, when Gable grasped my arm, his touch was ice.

"Are you alright?" he asked softly, pulling me aside, to spare any embarrassment.

Yes, he knew these circles well.

"Just fine. I am the cat's meow!" I laughed, finishing my glass, for fear that I would waste and the liquid would be lost to someone less thirsty than me.

"Listen to me," Gable whispered into my ear, his voice sensual and inviting. He was the jazz singer.

Hot jazz baby--douse me, light me, burn me but only hold me til' the wick...

"Musician?" I asked, my speech slurred on the curves of *the* "s" and "c".

----->

"Clever. Listen, Tom Brown from *Cast My Necklace*," He had seen that movie! I was flattered and laughed, then spun us around, to see if we could slip as the women might. Slip into the waterfalls of Miss Baby Lala's house and be found in the current only a few months later.

Tom Brown had been an awful character. Desperately in love, he went to his death trying to convince Annie Lowman that he truly did love her.

He was hit by a train.

"Listen. Are you listening? You really are a mess. . ."

"Am I spilling?" I asked, looking suspiciously around the room. "Tell me," I whispered, my words heavy and difficult to pronounce. "Am I spilling?"

He gave me a cunning smile, his blue eyes The same color as his sister's. Yet, they sparkled and I could hear *the* jazz. With his sister, there was that roar, emanating from every fiber of *the* walls, every shard of glass, every ounce of alcohol. I felt the blood rush to several places in my body, filling me, surging me through that roar. I felt the blood pound to the tips of my fingers and when I touched Gable's face, I cooled down.

"Yes," he nearly panted. "You are just like what I want."

He grabbed my hand and in a fury of motions we were out of the room. I thought I felt diamonds drip from the ceiling onto my jacket, into my hair, and into the pores of my skin.

"Careful now, watch your step,"

Gable murmured, holding my hand tightly, determined. As we neared the outside, a blast of cold air slammed against my face, nearly knocking the wind out of me, instantly erasing the ease and warmth of the alcohol. It was then that I saw the matches.

"What are you doing? Are we going for a smoke? Surely you. . ."

"Shhh. This is the perfect moment, my dear. It is our climax and their denouement. Two ends of a candle burn and *this* is how it ends!" his voice was filled with a childlike excitement. He tossed a lit match into one of the many sitting rooms. The rooms, I realized, dripped like wax that had been burning for the longest of times. So long, it made me weary.

We walked at a quick pace, and I was about to say that I forgot one of my gloves, when I heard the screams.

I looked back and my eyes filled with the sight of Miss Baby Lala's most spectacular, grand, and refined party. . . alive with warm, soothing, destructive flames. At last, all of that drenching, saturation, and dripping had some concrete way to stop.

We broke into a jog and stayed a safe distance from the lick of the flames. Heat. Smoke. Screams. Women and men, their faces blackened, their hair charred, their clothes scorched, ran into the street, panicking. Where had the wetness gone? Where had the saturation gone to?

----->



Elenor DeLeon
"Coil #3"
Clay, glaze
12"x20"x9"

How was the air so dry and pungent? Where was the perfume? The oil? The paint?

The fire danced in Gable's eyes and reflected in mine. He let go of my hand and messed up his hair. I turned to look at him and gasped.

His face was ruddy, his eyes were vivacious and bright, his hair fell in every direction possible, and *that* smile. Innocent. Charming. Playing. "May I invite you for an evening out?" he asked me, slipping his arm into mine, as his sister had done. There was soil, natural, human warmth.

"Of course."

"You really must get out more."

"I know. This is not Kansas anymore." I had been to hell and it burned down. I had my heart started and it refused to stop. I was living.

We were no longer plastic, but physical creatures walking, limbs stretching, and muscles moving, blood pumping. There was no more roar. The street was quiet, not even the screams could penetrate the welcomed silence anymore.

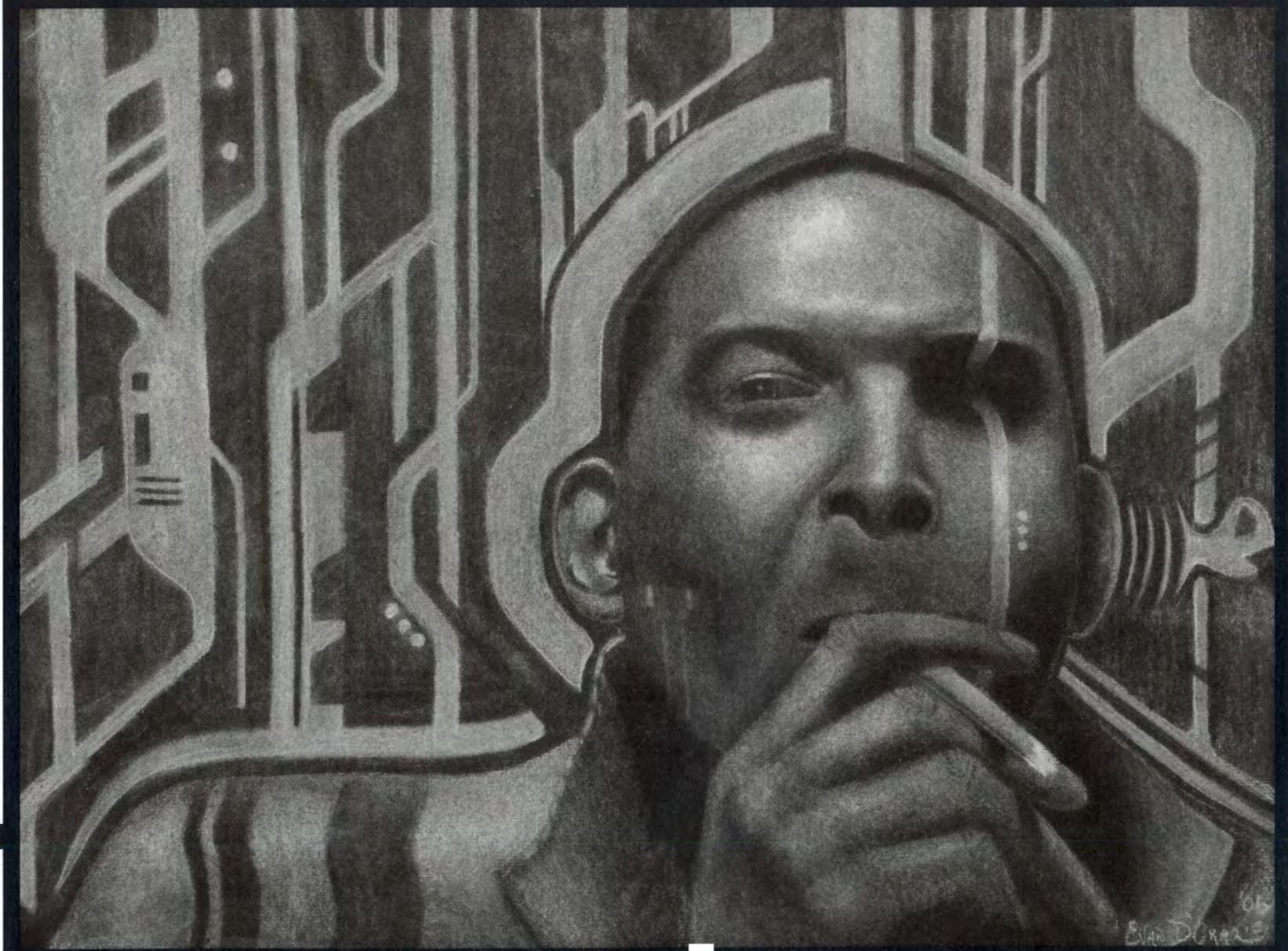
"*Hot jazz, baby,*" he sang as we strolled down the street, nodding politely at people trying to get a glimpse of the infamous Baby Lala estate burning to the ground. "*Hot jazz, baby! Hot jazz baby--let's melt together down to the wicks.*"

I had my story from this gathering.

"By the way," Gable murmured, swinging his arm around my shoulders. "I accept your acceptance." ♦



Henya Pappas
"Untitled"
Wood and metal
20"x8"x3"



Evan D'Orazio
"Absorption"
White chalk on charcoal paper
23"x17"

Walls

By Ashley Schroeder

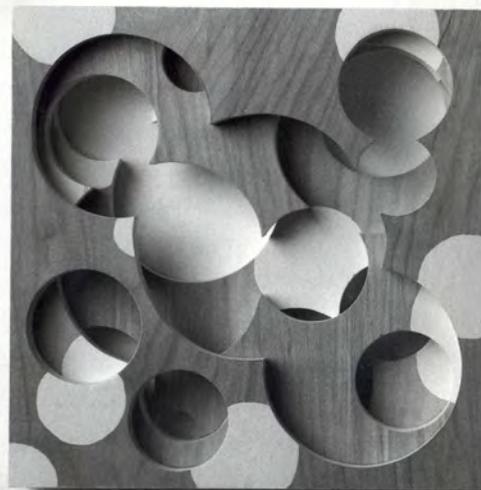
We both have them
 You and I
 I know mine's there
 Where it has always been
 But you deny yours
 Although it's there
 Everyone sees it
 You build it up
 Bit by bit
 As soon as you see me
 Or hear my name
 Instead of casting stones
 You save them up
 And build your wall
 Mine is brick
 And yours is stone
 We both hide behind them
 I hide from you
 You hide from me
 But mine is starting to crumble
 The bricks are brittle
 The mortar is melting
 I feel open
 I feel exposed
 Without my wall
 As I stand before yours
 Dwarfed by its size
 But through a crack in the stone
 I can see your eyes
 Open and wide
 And for a moment ----->

John Kurman
 "Untitled"
 Casted glass, wood
 56"x17"x11"



Your wall is not so tall
We hold hands
As we take it down
Piece by piece
Stone by stone
But when contact is broken
The wall builds back up
And once again
I am standing there
Open
In front of your wall
But as long as you leave
That crack in your wall
As much for you
As for me
I will see you
Right there
In front of me
Standing
Amidst a pile of stone
And a pile of bricks
Feeling exposed
Just like me. ♦

Mie Ikeda
"Watashi (Me)"
Wood, plaster, paint
Both pieces are 9"x9"x appr. 2"



Scared

By Erin Pianetto

Soft light juts out
 from a cold December sky...
 my heart leans against the light post
 watching
 as my breath clings tight to its owner.
 I watch you tumble slow
 and sure
 down Saturday steps and sidewalks...
 fumbling
 swift and graceful words
 upon your pink cheating tongue,
 laughter tamed
 eyes bold and bright
 I kiss you soft
 and reach for goodbye.
 Weightless.
 The street signs hushed,
 crowd around us...
 like anxious wrong instruction...
 leading me blind into your eager lap...
 toward the love pulsing bright between your chocolate, lying thighs.
 Haunted by the names
 left to crawl on your lips.
 I sink shallow waters
 to the deepest truth.
 You're nothing but a hailstorm I've tried to calm for 24 years...
 I've tried to leave...
 every word, slapping hard
 my honest cheeks, with concrete filth...
 I find you...
 left and leaving...
 in the drought of December hearts
 on this cold and silent street. ♦

Mia Isiguro
 "Untitled"
 Ceramic
 20"x10"x10"



This Place of Ours

By Deborah Martin

We ride over in a silence
so stifling
that I have to crack the window.

We walk to the table
warped and initial carved
too close to the outhouse
and the trail head,
but it's ours.
A stone throw
from the parking lot

where I taught you to drive stick.
Me, belly-laughing as you
splattered, and lurched, and stalled.
The forest ranger, so nervous,
that he moved his car.
Oh, how we howled.

We brought the pup
on crisp winter mornings

tripping over too big paws
biting at snow,
emerging from the woods
smelling so vile
that it was we who hung our heads
out the windows
on the ride home

In the summer we took the boys,
all: "look at this – look at that."
We found a stick bug
on the bike path.
The boys couldn't see it
until it moved
then they scattered
screaming with excitement.
We lifted him into the grass
where he would be safe from passersby.

Today you sit across from me
words swarming from your mouth

like locusts
encroaching a field.
They cover everything
humming and biting.
I pull them from my ears
while they screech and sting,
wipe them from my eyes
as they burn and tear.

We walk to the car together.
I look back, over my shoulder
and see them cover everything
destroying this place of ours
devouring brush and foliage,
stripping trees down past the bark,
hovering thick in the air,
waiting to follow us
wherever we go. ♦

The Burial

By Kelsey Bartsch

My house had had the same smell since my brother Eric's death 364 days earlier. Yeah, that smell. Booze mixed with stale smoke and grief. That stink assaulted my nose as I walked through the front door, and raucous music battered my eardrums. Each chord of "Wish You Were Here" reverberated in my head. I wished he were here just so I could stop hearing the God-damned song.

"Is that you, Jess?" my mother's voice called from the kitchen.

I detoured from my path, found her at the back door with the phone in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

"Were you expecting someone else?" I asked.

"No, I just- oh, hello." I left as she turned her back on me and spoke to the person on the other line. Just as well--I was late for dinner with Dad, anyway.

My dad had moved out six months ago, following a riotous final fight during which my mother tossed his best suit out the bedroom window and I sat at my desk with my headphones on high. So, I was going to see him for our weekly dinner at Patti's Bar and Grill, and I was late.

I bolted up the stairs and into the bathroom. The old gray cat stood from her place on the dark rug and slithered around my feet while I peed. After flushing the toilet, I bent over and scratched her behind the ears.

The cat had come to us from a neighbor whose fertile feline had run off with the local stray and returned with a belly full of kittens. The illegitimate offspring grew up alongside me--we were even potty trained together. She was a more permanent fixture in my house than any of the human beings, and she was starting to show her age in her lightening fur.

She had lost weight recently, too. I was afraid she wouldn't last much longer. Really afraid, since she made it worth living here.

"Hey precious." She purred and licked my hand with her sandpaper tongue. "Gotta go," I said.

The elderly cat followed me down the stairs past the kitchen, where my mother still stood talking. "No, Marty, she won't be here. She's going to dinner with her father." I stopped just outside the doorway to the kitchen. The cat's jingling collar came to a halt as well. The bottom step let out a ritual creak, causing Mom to stop dead and peek her face around the corner.

"I've gotta go," she said into the receiver, her eyes trained on me. She clicked the "off" button and placed the cordless on the table next to her.

"Honey--"

"Don't!" I said, finding my feet and moving away from her when she approached me with her hand held out in a comforting gesture.

"You don't understand," she began.

"You wanna *fuck* somebody who isn't Dad. What else do I need to get, Mom?" I said, then fell silent in shock. I had never fought with my mom, had never had a confrontation with her. We didn't fight in my house. Someone just left instead.

Her hand fell uselessly to her side. She stood looking dumb, her lips parted in surprise. I stared at her, then walked out the door as the opening chords of "Angel" revved up on the stereo.

Cold, November wind blew inside, but I left the door open on my speechless mother.

My car was older than I was. A beat up old New Yorker, it had been handed down through the years from my oldest brother, Charlie, right down to me. It had been Eric's right before his death, and I had inherited it by default. I had a picture of him duct taped to the dash and his favorite necklace hanging from my rear view.

It was an old man's car, with wide bench seats and an enormous front end which made turning difficult. The muffler was so old and torn that it routinely woke the neighbors when I came home late.

Still, it had a CD player, which I played so loudly that it drowned out the noisy car. Even when I turned the player off and sat in silence, the rumbling whirrs and crashes that came from underneath it brought me comfort. ----->

I had forgotten about my father as I pushed it to the max that night. She groaned in protestation, but my foot was lead on the gas. I hadn't driven so fast since nearly a year earlier, after burying my brother and with only one working arm.

The other arm, my left, had been nearly useless after a bullet had punctured my shoulder as I stood leaning against the passenger side door with Eric the day he died. He stood at the gas pump, his hands shoved in his pockets, his breath visible on the air.

I turned at the sound of the first shots, then fell to the ground with the pain of the bullet that pierced my skin. In a haze, I turned my head and, from the other side of the car, saw him sprawled out on the ground. The underbelly of the car stank like machine and dripped fluid on the stretch of concrete between me and my brother's body. I felt no pain as I reached my hand out and grabbed his outstretched fingers. Blood coated them like gloves.

The second my fingers touched his, my heart stopped. In that moment, we were bound by our hearts that couldn't beat--our hearts that somehow knew they could not love the other anymore.

If he hadn't had it coming, I might have been more heartbroken than furious.

The car shrieked. She couldn't take what I needed tonight. Speed. Adrenaline. A long drink, maybe. I couldn't handle constantly thinking about Eric's death, and the car held nothing but my memories of him.

I couldn't keep driving all night, but I couldn't go home, either.

I drove past a hundred cornfields that night, finally ending up at school. I parked the car outside of Sennica Hall and slept piled under the several blankets I kept in the trunk.

I didn't get out of classes until five the next day, then I had to make the hour-long trip back home. I debated not even going back, but after getting Charlie's message, I decided I had to.

There had been five of us before Eric died. Me, Eric, Mark, Mike, and Charlie. Charlie, my oldest brother, moved back into the house right about the same time Dad moved out. He worked the graveyard shift as security ----->

“IN THAT MOMENT, WE WERE BOUND BY OUR HEARTS THAT COULDN'T BEAT--OUR HEARTS THAT SOMEHOW KNEW THEY COULD NOT LOVE THE OTHER ANYMORE.”

Evan D'Orazio
“Talipes II”
Pit-fired ceramic
“10.5”x10.5”x6.5”



at the mall. He was pretty cool.

Mike and Mark were off at college. They rarely came home. I had only seen them twice over the last year--Eric's funeral and Christmas.

I listened to Charlie's message again: "Hey, just me--wondering if you'd seen the cat, because she didn't eat anything I left her last night. Anyway, talk to you later."

When I got home, I found the cat under the coffee table. I knew immediately that she was dead. Her noisy collar let out a single last "ding" when I picked up the body. It was stiff and cold, the once soft fur matted down. The cat had probably been there since I had scared it the night before. It might even have died right then.

As I stood with the unresponsive body cradled in my arms, I remembered the last body I had held with such fragility. I remembered that afternoon Eric's body had been torn apart by a gun, racked with bullets and with blood. I had held his hand in mine until the police had dragged me away. I recalled knowing that he was dead before I had even seen him, when I had only heard the shots, just like I had known, somehow, that I wouldn't find the cat alive.

I ran a single finger along the cat, right from her thin ears to her long tail, and I knew innately that I was destined to watch the people I loved die. The cat was like a kicker--one last cruel joke that God had thrown in for heavenly laughs.

My mother walked through the room without speaking to me and without noticing the carcass in my hands. Hers wasn't an efforted ignorance. Effort would mean she cared about

me, and my mother only saw herself in the world now. And apparently Marty. I heard her bedroom door close with a thud.

"The cat had probably been there since the night before. It might even have died right then."

I unlocked the old maroon shed my brothers and father had built. I grabbed a single, pointed shovel and threw it into my car. Sliding behind the wheel, I twisted the key in the ignition and eyed the box on the passenger's seat which housed the dead cat. The whirring engine roared so loudly I thought it just might wake the cat, but the box stayed still as I reversed.

I drove past the high school and police station. Out past the subdivisions, on the border of town and wilderness, I reached the railroad. My car paused on the tracks, pondering a longer stop. The distant light from an oncoming train lit the dark night ominously, as though God knew my mission.

I rolled down the window during my stop. Over the roar of my car, I heard the low warning moan from the engine. I breathed in deeply, inhaling the smell of leaves, rain and cold. The late fall night surrounded me. I drove past the tracks, into the wild beyond civilization.

I buried the cat on top of Breman Hill,

where we used to sled as kids. The spade broke the hard ground with difficulty; I couldn't bury her deep.

After replacing the dirt on her, I stuck the shovel in the earth and leaned upon it, while cold wind struck my bare face.

There seemed something twisted about burying the dead. Why not just burn them up? Putting them in coffins was almost like preparing a body for battle. But what would an unmoving corpse have to battle except earthworms and decay? Why protect against those elements? I didn't plan on digging up the cat or my brother to say, "Hello."

I didn't believe in heaven. Or hell, for that matter. I didn't believe in any of it, and I sure as hell didn't believe Eric could see me. He lost that privilege the day he came home with a 9mm and a new tattoo. My parents didn't understand the significance of the skull upon his left bicep, but I did. I knew that gang.

He had died in a shooting with a rival gang. My parents kept insisting it was some random act of violence, but I knew better. I was there, after all. I had gone through weeks of physical therapy, not them. And I had gone through even more emotional therapy. My shrink, Joe, thought I was a hopeless case. He didn't say so, but I knew.

I could have died that day, too. Maybe I should have. Maybe Eric and I were meant to go together and something went wrong. All I knew was that I had loved him with everything I had despite his overwhelming flaws. And, for some reason, that hadn't been enough.

Cont'd on page twenty-nine ----->



Sara Kadowaki
"Afterlife"
Colored Pencil
24"x18"

I dropped the shovel onto the overturned earth, then crashed down beside it. I sat, my butt numb from the cold, my soft jacket collar upturned against the whipping wind. I tried to cry, willed myself to do it, but couldn't. I looked at the mound of dirt and saw nothing, and as I did so, I remembered looking at Eric's grave months before and feeling nothing.

Months ago my mother had asked what I wanted put on Eric's headstone.

"How about, 'I'm a total asshole?'" I had replied.

She hadn't reacted quite so badly as when I had told her later that I really didn't care what it said, because I had no intention of ever seeing it. After burying him that winter day, I hadn't been back to the cemetery, and I didn't know if I ever would.

Burying Eric looked somehow less impressive than burying the cat. Although Eric had six close friends lower him into the ground and the cat only had me, my gesture seemed more sincere. I had no qualms with the cat as Eric's friends did with him. They hated him when he died, hated him for his decisions and his rashness and his carelessness with his own life. They despised the pain he had put in them with his death. They buried him with that pain, but it still stung them for months after.

The cat's burial was much simpler, and maybe that much more striking. I had no hatred toward the pet that had shared my bed many cold winter nights, who had let me cry into her soft fur after Eric died. I did, however, have some issues with the big brother who should

have protected me and left me alone instead.

Clearly, I missed the cat more.

Another gust of wind assaulted my back, forcing me to pull my jacket closer. The hill had no surrounding trees. It was like a bald man's head sprouting up from the surrounding countryside. I could see for miles.

Pinpricks of light were my town, and darkness beyond that. More, bigger spots of lights were the city, not so many miles off.

Even though I could see miles, I could no more easily move than bring Eric back to life. I sat on that hill, rooted like a tree, staring off into the countryside that had played the backdrop of my childhood.

I heard footsteps behind me, but I didn't turn to see who approached. I already knew, innately, that it was Charlie. He stood behind me, his shins gently pressing against my back.

"Where's the cat?" he asked.

I pointed to the overturned earth to my right.

He looked and nodded. "She was a good cat."

"She was," I agreed.

We sat in silence for a minute, staring at

““Where's the cat?””

the town, the string of Christmas lights on the dark branches of our homes.

"Shouldn't you be at work?" I asked finally, lifting my chin to stare up at him.

He shrugged. "Took the night off."

He held out his hand, which I took, and helped me up. I dusted off my numb butt and picked up the shovel. We walked down the hill together, in step. When we reached the bottom, I saw the car, resting so sedately in the parking lot, and I wanted to junk it.

I wanted to smash the shovel through the windows and take a sledge hammer to the big hood. If only I could destroy the car, I wouldn't feel so mad then. I visualized the shattering glass easily, because I had seen it happen just one year earlier. The bullet that had missed Eric and me had shattered the windshield and imbedded itself in the passenger's seat. The police had either missed or ignored it in their investigation, so I left it there. Sometimes when people rode shotgun, they could still feel the metal in their shoulders.

When we reached the car, I couldn't trash it as I so longed to do. I had the shovel poised. Charlie froze, but I couldn't do it. Instead, I threw the shovel at the "Handicapped Parking Only" sign and listened to it hit the ground with a clatter.

Charlie ignored the outburst. He climbed into the back of his dirty old pick-up and returned from the bed with a 40 and a pack of Marlboros. Handing me both, he took my keys from my pocket and slid into the driver's seat of the Chrysler.

I stared down at the vices before me and smiled crookedly. You could always count on Charlie. ----->

I rolled down my window after Charlie started the roaring engine. I lit up a square and inhaled, then blew the smoke out into the wind. Charlie drove like a maniac, whipping around corners and riding the hills that made up the countryside outside our town. I grabbed the 40 around the neck and splashed it down my throat, my head wildly thrown back. With the back of my hand, I wiped the foamy residue from my lips. The wind whipped through my hair and past the thin cigarette in my right hand, and I stared out the window. Below the bluff Charlie had driven us onto, I saw the lights of home. Winters past had looked warm and inviting. Now, they looked like lonely stars on a cold December night.

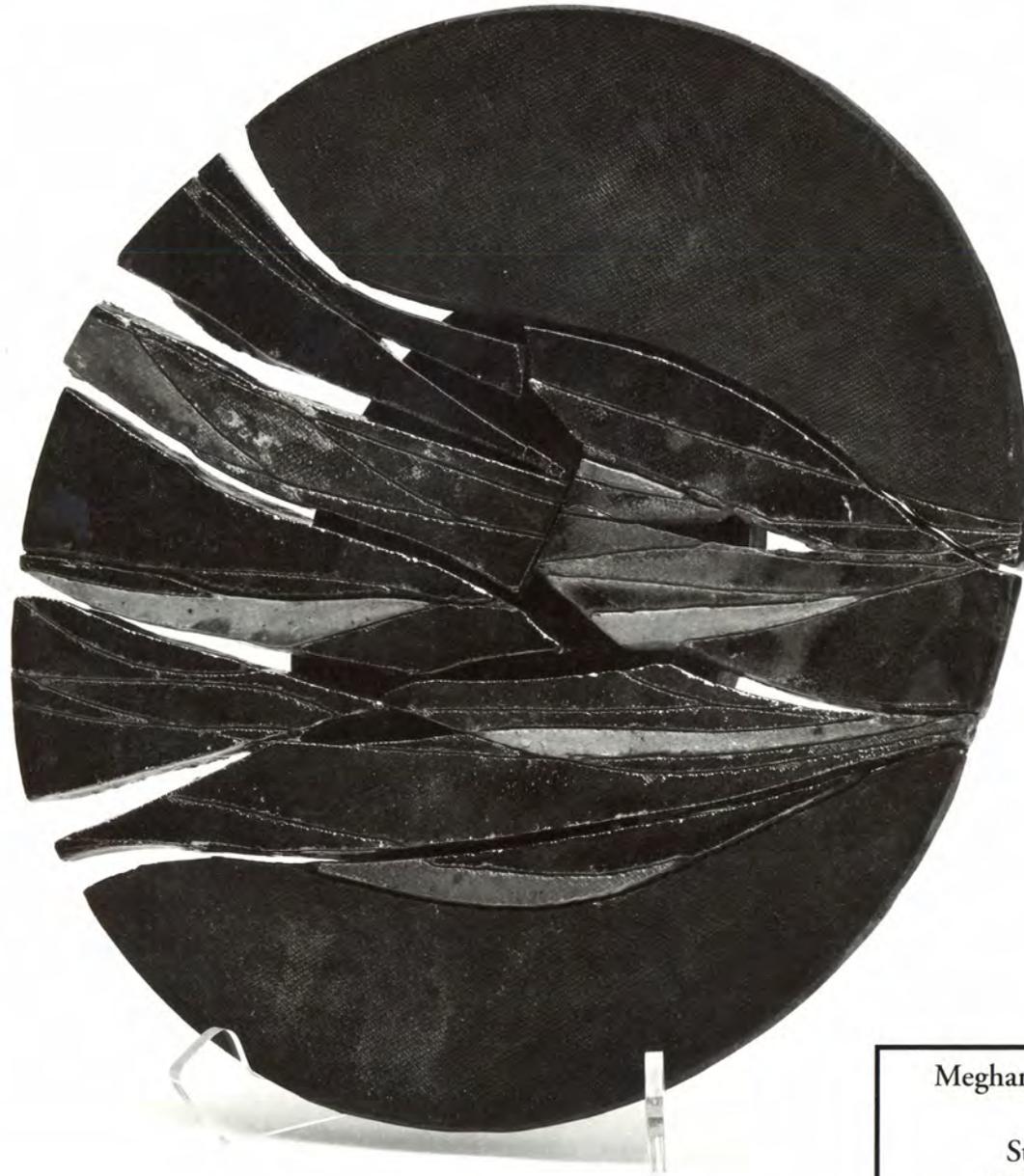
Charlie finally stopped, but the running engine still buzzed. I heard a melody inside it, a wonderful story about a grieving woman. The car didn't play trumpets or flutes, nor did it play the muffler or even the carburetor. It played music deep inside me that reverberated in my gut.

I wanted to roll up the windows of my noisy old car, then let my guilt, my anger, and my pain fill it up until I was swimming in a vat of self-disgust.

Then, I wanted to drown in it. ♦

Meghann M. Lothson
"The Line"
Stoneware
13"x12"x1/4"

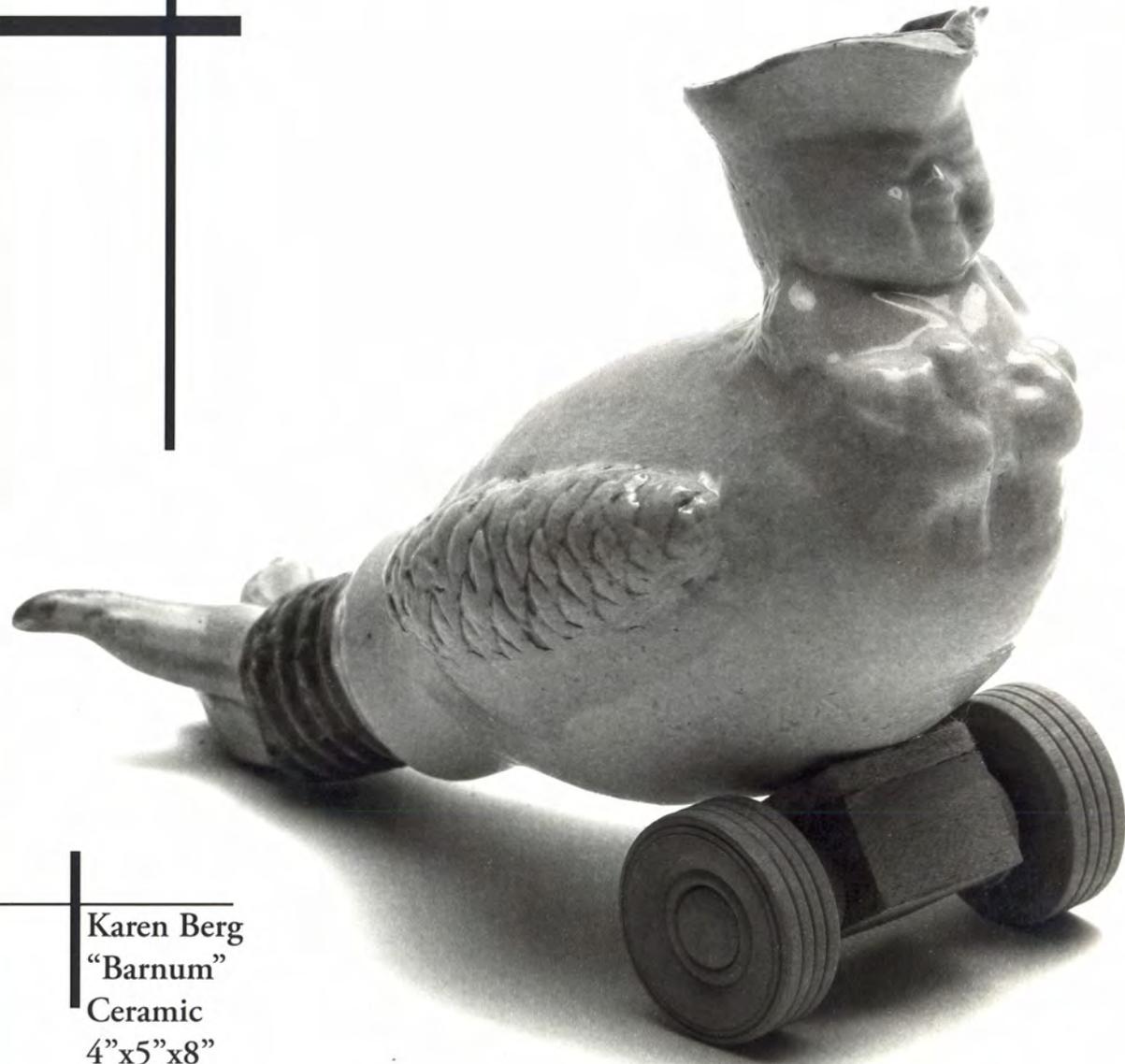




Meghann M Lothson
"Fish"
Stoneware
13"x13"x1/4"

We at the Point of View would like to thank...

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Karen Berg
"Barnum"
Ceramic
4"x5"x8"

The Point of View magazine is a showcase of Harper's incredible talent. As a writer myself, I am so proud to have come from this flourishing artistic community. Harper has worked for more than thirty years to become an outstanding community college, and the Point of View is just a tribute to that effort. I would like to thank everyone who submitted work for this magazine and everyone who made it another great issue. You guys are Harper's heart, what makes it run, and it's thanks to you all that we have the honor of creating this issue.

--Kelsey Bartsch
POV Literary Editor

*Happy 40th Anniversary,
Harper College!!!*

HARPER COLLEGE

What is it?

Point of View

2006-2007

The **Point of View** is Harper's very own literary magazine, a showcasing of Harper's **artistic** and **literary** talent with submissions from **all across** the Harper community. **Everyone** (including faculty members!) is invited to submit to the Point of View and everyone can **enjoy** it. The submissions go to the **two student editors**, who then round up some **student judges** to see who makes it into the magazine and who has to wait for next year. Each year, three **submissions** are chosen for our three **awards**. The Ray Mills award is for the best visual art piece, the Vivian Stewart Award is for the best written piece, and the **Point of View Award** is for the best submission overall, as chosen by our **lovely faculty judges**. So sit back, maybe grab some coffee from **Violet's**, and start enjoying this year's **Point of View!!!**

--

*Sincerely,
Nicole Bodenstein,
POV Art Editor*

Tim Fennell
"Untitled"
Wood and Metal
11"x13.5"x5"

