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English Journal is an online journal that allows students and faculty to share creative writing and literary critical work even as it is being revised, presented, and completed. Submissions to *English Journal* may be emailed to the editors at any time. The website, accessible through GunnNet and through Outlook (Public Folders→All Public Folders→ClassNewsGroups), is dedicated to enhancing interest in and discussion of writing among all members of The Gunnery community. The print issues contain as much of the online journal as possible. The editors for 2004-2005 have been John Alter, Nick Benson, Young Jin Choi, and Joe Clapis. Our thanks for technical and material support go to Eileen Aguirre and Maggie Noel. Readers of the pdf file will note that several captions allude to images that have been removed; this is for copyright reasons. We hope to be able to reinsert them in the future. – *The editors*

A Poem for Teddy

You never appreciate the things you have,
Until they're gone and away from you
You now miss what you had,
And reminisce on what you didn't do.

He never had an enemy,
Never had a bad thing to say
He was a friend to many,
And charmed you in various ways.

I remember his smile,
His laugh I still hear
Misleading myself in dreams,
Yet but so ever clear.

You never appreciate the things you have,
Until they're gone and away from you
You now miss what you had,
And reminisce on what you didn't do.

(Danielle McDonald, 2008)

Hello

Hello.

What the hell am I doing here?

Lost in translation

I don't understand

or maybe you've lost your tongue

Hello.

I don't recognize this place.

Wondering where I've gone

Turn back now

or stay on the run

Hello.

I miss you dear.

Still confused

Quit hoping god damn it

Just know

Goodbye

why should I bother?

I'm leaving now

this time for good

No going back

Too Far Gone

I'm going home again

Only problem is

I've forgotten where I'm from

I push aside my foolishness

Leaving's all I can do

Is there anywhere I can go?

Thinking won't solve anything

I think I'll take a break

Waiting is everything

Thank god I'm patient

(David Smith, 2007)

The same old story

Once upon a time
The world was more beautiful than one could imagine
Music was performed
Poetry was read aloud
People danced, people sang
No politics, no complicated mind games
Heaven was not invented yet

And all too suddenly everything changed
No more laughter, only tears
Will the good times ever come back again?
Spending ten years to sharpen a sword
A young man should use it to kill
All the blissful memories drove him forward
To win back the glory that used to belong to his ancestors

He was getting old he did not realize
Time enhanced his pain and left more lines in his hands
There were too many stories he tried not to recall
Even though the sword had become bloody and blunt
Good days eventually came but were different
Once again people danced, people sang
What was history no one cared
Leaving the old hero sitting in the shade
Poetry was read aloud, music was performed, again
With a smile on his face and some tears
He wanted to cry but it was too late
Weariness had wrung his eyes dry
The sun glared at him, his tears vaporized
Heaven was invented but then destroyed
On his last day
He buried his sword and prayed that no one would ever have to use it again

(The author, Kuan-Hua alias Fred Huang, 2005, notes that the Chinese 十年磨劍 = spending ten years to sharpen a sword. Kuan-Hua was a Litchfield Country finalist for the IMPAC/CSU Prize in Poetry this spring.)

Where are we?.... Let's get Oriented.

When I think of Orient, the first thing that comes to mind is that catchy hymnal 'We Three Kings'. For all of you slackers that didn't show up at this past season's Christmas pageant, let me refresh your memory as to how the lyrics ring. I will **bold** the words that I feel are important.

We three kings of **Orient** are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

O star of wonder, **star of light**,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still **proceeding**,
Guide us to thy **perfect light**.

I find it interesting that the kings of the East are following a star, which they say is beaming 'perfect' light over the West. Oh, that's right, a western bishop wrote the lyrics. But what is the East without the West? Aren't they opposing cultures that define each other? Does Said say that the Orient(East) is everything the Occident(West) is not (or vice versa)? He first begins his essay by describing the Orient as an integral contrast to Europe. Is that not a yin-yangish Oriental way of defining at the East?

Said's main focus is on defining Orientalism though, which he states is a distribution of awareness, elaboration of distinction, intention to understand an 'alternative' world, and finally and apparently most importantly a discourse existing in political, intellectual, cultural, and moral power. Why does Said feel that a discourse of power is the most important aspect of defining Orientalism? 'Discourse of Power' seems like an indirect phrase for 'War' to me.

Said wants to take the Orient far away from Orientalism, basing it on the distinction between the East and West. The East and West were man-made, along with their histories, cultures etc.. Orientalism was not fated; it was created. Was it created by the East/West, and if so, which one created it?

(Greta Murphy, 2005)

Suddenly, from a height of thousands of centuries, the first stone of an avalanche came tumbling down: it was my heart. This man, who was my equal, murdered me for love. For this is what they call love, and they are right. When love is too great it becomes futile: it can no longer be put to use and not even the person loved has the capacity for so much love. I became as bemused as any child when I realized that even in love we must be sensible and show restraint. Our emotional life, alas, is extremely bourgeois. It is better to feel pain than nothing at all though and there are certain people who can never even feel depressed, and have no idea what they are missing. Depression can be very relieving and believe me, life must have a sting otherwise one is not really living. We must believe in having our hearts broken as a part of life. It stems from cruelty. But also love.

Contrary to the popular belief of “perfect” people, always being happy; exceptional human beings are more exposed to the dangers of pain and heartache than ordinary people. Pleasure brings so much pain that one almost prefers familiar sorrow to unaccustomed pleasure. True happiness cannot be explained or understood. It is best compared to the beginnings of some irretrievable disaster. Happiness, too, can be painful and all of it provoked by handsome men; also known as donkeys. .(Don"key), n.; 1. A stupid or obstinate fellow; an ass. Synonyms: Obstinate, headstrong, stiff-necked, bullheaded, pigheaded, mulish, dogged, and pertinacious.) The fool however, is so endearing that some astute men even try to pass for fools. Do not, under any circumstances, mistake a donkey as a fool, your heart will be wrecked.

- from *Selected Cronicas*, by Clarice Lispector

(These excerpts from the writings of the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector were arranged by Ashley Meyers, 2007)

I Wonder

I wonder why the woman who birthed me always knows best
I wonder if it's possible that she overcomes the test
Am I the end result?
Never showing any flaws.
Was that the point?

I wonder
Do I just think I'm right and she's wrong
Is society the alarm clock that wakes me up every morning
Telling me that I have to "say my prayers at night or go to hell"
I wonder how it can be that her telling me
that it's in writing that I have to respect her
is actually true!

I wonder how if this is true for me
Then every single little baby, to be, is under a strict bond to listen to their mother.
Well what happens if the mother isn't... a mother.
I wonder how something can seem so concrete and yet abstract.
Do you ever tell an adjective that it has to respect the noun that it's modifying. No,
no you do NoT.
It didn't ask to be there, for all you know it might be related to some adverb at the end
of a sentence that has ten thousand characters, who got paid to sleep with some
preposition from page nine – that put it up for adoption because, well,
the adverb felt it was better for all parties.

I wonder again how it can say in some
slab that you have to respect who brought you into this world
even though I hear the same principle, every day,
that respect is earned and not given.
I can't justify why.
And so, I wonder.

(Zack Dugow, 2005, was a Litchfield Country finalist for the IMPAC/CSU Prize in Poetry this spring.)

Toast

There are many things I love in life; beating up hippies, scuba diving, and even my 'masculine' relationship with James Esterich. But few things in life have given me the soul-shaking satisfaction that my lifelong mistress has. So now, a toast: To the love of my life, sweet nectar of the gods; to the upper when you're down, and the downer when you're up; to the friend of the down-trodden, and the anesthetic of the strong. To the ambrosia of the gods and the libation of the common man; here's to the good times past, and the better ones in the future; to the energy of a thousand Atlases that lies at the bottom of every pitcher; to the power to quench an endless draught; to the golden pure taste as it enters your mouth; here's to the answer that lies at the bottom of a bottle, so I keep on drinking; here's to the cause of, and solution to, all of life's problems; here's to the solace that only a delicious beverage can bring; here's to the thing that allows ol' Frankie Sinatra to sing like a king; here's to what turns bathroom relief into a religious experience; here's to my friend, my lover, and my lifelong never let down, never desert, never leave and never complain, always listen and never turn away, the only thing that keeps a man sane; here's to my pal: crystal clear water.

(Altan Sadik-Khan, 2006)

BOY

This boy I know
As sexy as can be,
His smile is just so And
His voice so strong and deep.

He charmed me from the start
I was hooked on fast,
A special place in my heart
His love will always last.

His aroma is sexy
And he always smells good,
Yeah he goes to The Gunnery
But you can tell he's from the hood.

Whenever I see him
I smile from ear to ear,
And I scream when I hear him
Because I know he's near.

I want him so bad
Almost everyone can see,
My heart is the locket
And only he holds the key.

(Danielle McDonald, 2008)

On a Frosty Night

Drifted off a midnight sled
As it flew through the frosty sky
My brain wandered with the moon
And I questioned things alive and dead
As I questioned in my head
But soon with time the man did tell
My mind would pick itself
Up since it fell
And lift itself
Into some calm understanding

Pale Death Road Lights

See those lights up ahead
They light my way
See the wandering dead?
Goodbye is all I say
For that is my road
My road that lights shall shine
In a pale sense of light
Do I fright?
No not I, only for my family lost
And loved ones dear, so near and crushed
Tears gushed
As I was sent on my way
Down the road of death
A cool breeze in the air
So I'll walk
I'll join that ghastly parade
And fade away I suppose
As the road goes on to forever
Where the road ends,
No man knows

How Quick Time Is

So fast is my time
Is yours as fast as mine?
Because my grip is lost
From the reins
Each pump through my veins
Seconds pass
Gone fast
I miss the days
Old ways faded away
Memories remain
But are they the same?
Never to return is that moment
Did you enjoy it?
And how sad now that you've got
Hindsight to see the lot
And cry for what you were
Knowing what you will be
And knowing where the end is
Only when you've seen it
You realize how quick time is

Moon Dog

Young relentless moon dog
Restless as the wind
Blowing in the morning fog
And sucking out the putrid
 Barking at evil's tree
 Never letting it be
 Around where I can see
 Pure eye's can see
 The hate flowing from black tree
As the moon dog howl
Moon dog scowl
 Growl that evil gone
 And keep the blood off my lawn
Green green freshly cut
No need for red juice gut
 'cause I've turned my eyes
 which means it ain't there
I got my moon dog
 Why the hell should I care

(Nathan Elston, 2006)

For every pleasure

For every pleasure exacts its pain
But must it be that others have their pleasure and I this pain?
I am always sore
Even when what I have seen isn't here anymore
And I have been many places
I am still just a number
We are names with no faces
You could say that nothing's lost
What's another life?

I'm still searching for my salvation
But I think it's already gone

My life was over the day he began
A void created so large I couldn't stand
To live another day remembering
To ever see his face
Again I see the horrors
The blood
Gushing
Mixed with tears
Dripping
A season of pain
Hues of only black and blue
As a never ending chapter unravels
Not knowing what he'll do
I endure one sickening blow at a

Time stands still
The moment replays
I see it as clear as yesterday

I wish they could see, I wish I could show them now
The bruises, the cuts
The pain you caused me

How you hurt me
Have you forgotten?

I haven't

Silently she sits

Silently she sits
Almost too quiet

The weight it pulls her earthward
The hard wooden bench is all that supports her

The noise of teammates fades in and out of her consciousness
Like the faint sound of a radio, barely audible

Then black... There is nothing

A voice, but it fades
A hand against her leg,
But she does not wake

She feels ashamed and struggles up
Stumbling nearly falling across crimson carpet her vision is blurred with black
Then Tile... A *smack*... she falls
Again she hears the voices come, they are faint
Still too ashamed, she repeats the learned words of her fading consciousness
I'm ok... I'm ok....
She closes her eyes trying to return the now familiar black

Gradually and grudgingly she drifts to the time when this black became home
The time in which she met the safety of nothingness
And learned the emptiness of the dark
The time in which she lost all innocence any child could own
To the man who built and controlled the house where she'd grown

Waking up to almost a dream, once again she sees the tile
She lies facing skyward
Unclothed from waist down
He stands over her
Menace and furious threat in his eyes, burning through her young soul
.....much too young

She hides in the black until a faint light shines in through the glass above
The only light to be shown upon such an event until...

Snap she is back on the floor where she had fallen before
Drawn back by the pain in her gut, a shortness of breath ... her reality
She is propped up on a wall, fighting for each breath

It only hurts when I breathe she thinks to herself
Again, silence
Too quiet for life

The breaths are few and rasp
They sound like the brakes of an old train

It is then that the shaking starts...
Once...
A shake from her shoulder
Twice...
From one to the other
As a chill chases down her spine
One,
One,
One,
Vertebrae at a time

One leg goes limp
And then the other
Giving in...

The gravity of the situation hits
And adrenaline pumps within her...
shaking becomes violent

Stirring her reluctantly awake
The stimulus flows hurriedly through her veins
Like the swift water of a rivulet

Sweat begins to bead off of her face and on her neck
Each drop filled with disgrace...
(These flashbacks never allow her to forget)

(Elena Seirup, 2006)

1.

Birds of a feather
Flock together
I know not whether
She broke the tether
Life is art
Taken to heart
For just one hour
Of extraordinary power
Tell me when
Next to tune in
Guilty as sin
But never again.

2.

Unwit
Get lit
Time to say
“Live another freaking day”
Got to try
Cannot die
End the reign of the unwit
-
Unwit
Holy shit
Over the top
Can’t stop
We are the world
The flag’s unfurled
End the reign of the unwit
-
Unwit
Such a twit
Go up yours
Too many blurs
From this gun
It was done
Over is the reign of the unwit

3.

What the hell is going on?
I can't think straight
Never to be another one
A new love to create

But I hate
I don't really know
Life is fate
Where to go

Got to lay low
Gone is my world
The heart is my foe
My sails are furled

My mind twirled
Can't stop
can't stop
please no more

(Sam Taylor, 2007)

A Certain Blue Night

I.

On those strange days I
Find myself walking a blue night
That I've never seen before.
Under the dark and thin trees
People with different faces are walking
Towards me in muted silences. Passing
The narrow culs-de-sacs, piercing
Through each other like damp airy mists,

I call them intuitions; all
Movements come to a sudden halt, and
The street is engulfed by
An undisturbed stillness. I have to
Watch out for these instants, when everything
Gets sucked into a colossal
Invisible black hole, but the next
Moment like orbiting electrons
In a complete vacuum,
People in black trench coats are walking
Down the street like
Nothing has ever happened.

A little vibration in action
Is nothing to fuss about.
I watch it carefully.

A few lads are sitting
On a sandpit. One of the lads
rubs his face nervously
With his filthy fingers.
Air is a blue glass bottle, but as soon as
The dark comes, it will become transparent.
And how many empty
Narrow corridors it bears within it!
Hey man, somebody whispers slowly,
How empty and meaningless our lives are,
How many inevitable laws this
World is hiding from us!
I turn my head towards him, but the
Feeling always comes
Concretely a moment later.
The quickest intuition is never quick enough.
There is nobody out there.

II.

How many irrevocable decisions do
People make in the shortest silence?
I nod my head in agreement.
Passing under the cold trees that
Are bending their round knees, or
Between the black skyscrapers that are
About to shatter their glasses to the street,
People are walking
Towards me in muted murmurs.
Some are wearing stiff felt hats.
How strange, piercing
Through each other like damp airy mists,
I call them habits. Again, all
movements come to a sudden halt, and
The street is engulfed by
An undisturbed stillness.
But rest assured, my dear sensation! Like
Nothing has ever happened,
People in black trench coats are walking
Down the street again,

On a certain transparent night,

To protect themselves from all the untold mysteries,
Like nothing has ever happened.

(“Tony Tsai” / Young Jin Choi, 2005)

Turner Told Me

Turner told me that he used to be a gymnast. Turner told me that he could do a backflip. Turner told me that he builds generators every day after work until dinner. Turner told me that he put his five year old daughter to work building generators with him. Turner told me that he didn't remember when his daughter's birthday is but he knows that she is five. Turner told me that when he would go out to the clubs he would give all the girls his cell number and he told them that his name was Snacks. Turner told me that magnets are the most precious resource in the entire world and that he collects them and he would never throw one away but one time he crushed one up into dust and put it into a cup of water and drank the water in hopes to gain special powers. Turner told me that he was going to use all of his magnets in conjunction with waterpower in order to build a super-generator that would provide the entire United States of America with free power and once he gave everyone free power they would love him and he would become the President. Turner told me that he was building a sword with special powers in our boss's workshop in order to ward off the ninjas. Turner told me that someday an old Chinese man would descend from a helicopter and wage a war on the human race. Turner told me that this would be the eventual apocalypse. Turner told me that the ensuing war would be the war of all wars and would be a battle of the human race versus the ninja race. Turner told me that if he mixed every single fruit and vegetable in the entire world into an elixir and he drank the elixir then he will never die. Turner told me that he was going to make this elixir and then hide out in the woods until the Great Ninja War was over and then he was going to come out with his sword and butcher the Ninja race and the old Chinese man who was the leader and Turner would be the last creature alive. This one time when nobody was paying attention to Turner he climbed on top of the truck's tailgate and said "Hey everybody," and did the most amazing backflip we had ever seen.

(Jarrod Smith, 2005)

Afternoon Saunter

We left from Mr. Alter's Class
A saunter for to seek
With slippity slides and naked men
Who dance zanily in the rain
With grassy green gardens and little ponds
You better watch out 'cuz here we come
Crazy kids with green thumbity thumbs
We shall Saunter on all day all night
We'll have an afternoon delight
My motto is that saunters are "tight"
So strap on your saunterly boots
The bands will play their flutity flutes
You and I will be so cool
Let's saunter to the four corners of school

(Andrew Ouellet, 2006)

Come one, Come all

Ladies and Gentlemen, right this way!
Step up right here for the show of the day!
Children are free but adults must pay
Come one come all, to the show of the day!

We have lions and tigers and bears, oh my!
We have enough peacocks to cover the sky!
There is popcorn and peanuts and hotdogs to buy
Come one come all, and watch these things fly!

Men on a wire and clowns in a car!
Watch this guy stuff himself into a jar!
And the man-nonized cannon, see it go far
Come one come all, and be awed by the star!

Rings made of fire and monkeys that dance!
Elephant paintings and man-eating plants!
Make sure you stop by if you have a chance
Come one come all, see knights fight via lance!

One may now guess that this poem's of a zoo
A circus perhaps, and a festival too
But let me assure you, they're not what they seem
It's just that nothing else was on my TV.

(Joe Clapis, 2006)

O Chocolate Bunny

O Chocolate Bunny, you tease me too much. Sitting there in your golden wrapper, looking at me, calling out, “You know you want to eat me.” “But there’s other food here to eat,” I protest thoughtfully. I could just make popcorn. I have Oreos. A Ramen noodle soup. Left-over Chinese. Tostitos. I am stronger than the bunny. I am supreme. Even the bunny cannot convince me otherwise. No one can tell me what to eat or when. And to prove it, I shall eat the bunny’s head, and save the rest for later.

O Headless Chocolate Bunny, you look miserable. “You can’t leave me like this,” the rest of you cries. Alas, I am now sick of chocolate. Again, I am not to be persuaded to eat when someone orders me to. I thirst. I drink, therefore, and let you suffer in your incapacitated state as punishment for your totalitarian ways...

(Jamie Nichols, 2005)

Love is Love

people are compelled to define what they feel
one of these strange things is Love
many feel it is body chemistry
lack of Love is what causes them to be lonely
nobody can decide what Love is
but let it ride
it is glorious and Love is Love

I am in love

I am in love
You don't know how good it feels
Unless you are in love too
Are you in love?
She loves me back
You have no idea how good it feels
Unless she loves you too
Does she love you?
She has jealous exes
You have no idea how crappy that is
Unless yours has jealous exes too
Does she?
I love her any way

(Stephen Roberts, 2006)

Like a rock

There was a lone hiker
Trekking through one of the deep forests of India
He was completely alone
No one to guide him, accompany him, or love him
Just his liquor to occasionally numb his senses
Just the place he was trying to reach, drawing him forward, and
There was a giant hand in back of him pushing and pushing
Gabir was his name

On one of the usual uneventful days of his pilgrimage,
Gabir was laboring up a gigantic mountain to reach the other side
Because on that other side the land was lush and the water was fresh
And that's where Mecca was
But as he reached the halfway point of this gigantic rock edifice
A wind picked up and water started to fall
He frantically looked around for a place to hide from the growing ominous elements
The place he found was dark and dingy but he didn't mind at all
Gabir decided to journey farther into the cave away from the biting wind
At the end of the cave he came upon a tunnel
Only high enough for a short person and only wide enough for a thin person
Gabir was both short and thin
And that's partly what helped his journey through hell to begin.

As Gabir entered the tunnel, he started feel the ground shaking and saw the walls began
to sway
All of a sudden the ground opened up beneath him and he fell
Gabir fell like a rock
He fell for an extremely long time
In fact Gabir is still falling
And will continue to fall for the rest of eternity
That was Gabir's fate
To fall for a really long time
The reason for this excruciatingly boring punishment
Is that Gabir killed a man by pushing him off a cliff years before his journey to Mecca
The man plummeted to his death
But Gabir on the other hand was not falling to his death, he was to fall forever
And the master of the underground would keep him alive,
For eternity
To fulfill his punishment.

*(Ben Metcalf, 2007, was a Litchfield Country finalist for the IMPAC/CSU Prize in Poetry
this spring.)*

Struggle

Clear crystal, clear water
Shining tauntingly above your head
Smiling as you reach, stretch, reach
To break free of its endless prison
Like an enemy waiting for you to break, to submit?
No. Break through the golden surface,
so it may push, drown, push you back down again.
But now you've done it once,
Or so you think.
Your memories and dreams are a blur, gone, blur
And you reach down for support, but find none.
You question your reality, existence, reality
As you look back up at the watery gate
And know you can succeed, fail,
Fail.

(Ronnie Balceda, 2007)

Walking I notice
The Gunnery and things I
look at but never

truly see, I look
and notice a dance upon
rock in the chaos

a garden that greets
and welcomes all who come near
into a green bliss

across the way the
children are at play on a
yellow sunny day

(Desiree Biron, 2006)

Elegy

Ice. Snow. Cold. Frost.
Breath hanging heavily in the air.
A skipped beat, and I'm wondering where you are.

Flash forward two weeks.
Just after Christmas- life to death.
Your funeral, I can't even cry- what a failure.

Was it me or the icy roads that killed you?
Why did I make you come over?
Where did I go wrong?

Last words come back to me,
My last regretful words:
I'll see you soon.

Never again.
Not even a last kiss.
Never another word, no I love you.

(The author, Mark Wertheim, graduated from The Gunnery in 2003 and is now at Roger Williams University.)

and you?

...and the yellow hair of the earth is parted by the sleepy tractor comb
barbed wire fills in the gap
hard for neighbors to lean over to share a smoke
or more
button up our shirts, our disguises, and lock the top one
with a combination we don't even know
paint our faces, our lips, our eyeballs and hair
-stage makeup -now you're ready to mingle
and hear how beautiful your eyes and hairs are
before you wake up and find it's melted off
you end up being what neither of you thought you were
I don't think this is going to work
after a desperate attempt to find something
a night of searching with tongues and touches
sweaty skin and thoughts hurriedly placed in the wash
you failed.

(The author, Katie Stones, graduated from The Gunnery in 2003, and is now at Hamilton College.)

The Chicken

At advisor lunch, amid the golden foods, I saw a chicken lying dead.
Dead lay he; my senses shook,
and mind outshot our naked frailty.
There lowly in the vigorous kitchen
His form began its senseless change,
And made my senses waver dim
Seeing nature ferocious in him.
Inspecting close his half-cooked might
And seething grease of his being,
Half with loathing, half with a strange love, I poked him with an angry fork.
The fever arose, became a flame
And Vigour circumscribed the skies,
Immense energy in the sun,
And through my frame a sunless trembling.
My fork had done nor good nor harm.
Then stood I silent in the dining hall
Watching the object, as before;
And kept my reverence for knowledge
Trying for control, to be still,
To quell the passion of the blood;
Until I had bent down on my knees
Praying for joy in the sight of decay.
And so I left; and I returned
To dinner strict of eye, to see
The sap added, forming a chicken noodle soup, But the bony sodden hulk remained.
But the hunger had lost its meaning,
And in intellectual chains
I lost both love and loathing,
Mured up in the wall of wisdom.
Another advisor lunch took the fields again Massive and burning, full of life, But when I
chanced upon the spot There was only a little flesh left, And blood spilling in the sunlight
Beautiful as architecture; I watched them like a geometer, And lifted an eating fork from
the table.
It has been four years, now.
There is always a platter of chicken.
I stood there in the whirling dining hall, My hand capped a withered stomach, And
thought of China and of Greece, Of Alexander in his tent; Of Montaigne in his tower, Of
Saint Theresa in her wild lament.

("Tony Tsai" / Young Jin Choi, 2005)

it is 11:00 and i am the only person in the world who is not asleep. so i come back to you, or rather, you come back to me. you wander back like a starving dog. though i have neglected you, for so long i have turned my back on you. 11:03 brings loneliness, 11:03 brings sadness, the kind of sadness that only one as blessed as i could feel. i have no reason to be empty. I have overflowed to the point of emptiness, and yet here i am at 11:04, words pouring out of my empty soul. the world looks strange through these eyes. these are not my eyes. these are not my words.

(Nolan Titcomb, 2005)

Tully's Mask

Everyday Tully looks around her plain white room looking for that one thing that she knows will make her better again. Tully had a ring, but lost it. Now, this just isn't some ordinary ring. This ring, when worn, gives its possessor a special power; the power to see things that nobody else can see. I don't mean the ring allows you to see spirits and angels and God. I mean you can see inside people. See all their truths, their secrets, everything that they hold within. Tully searched day in and day out for this ring. Tully knows it is not in her plain white room; she knows that she has looked everywhere for her ring; Tully knows that in her plain white room there can only be so many places for a ring to hide. Tully can't leave her plain white room for fear that she may encounter the holder of this magical ring, *even though she already has*. She can't let people see who she really is inside. If they did, they would know all her thoughts, hopes, and dreams. They would see who she really is and they would know her deepest, darkest secrets. Tully knows the man who has her ring; despite this she continues to search her room day in and day out. She doesn't want to believe that he has the ring. She doesn't speak for the reason that if she does, she may reveal something about herself that will make her that much more vulnerable. She doesn't want to give herself away. Every day the man, who is dressed in white, comes in and tries to draw her in. Tully knows his tricks; she's seen them before. Tully stays quiet and occupies herself by continuing to search around her plain white room for her ring, *pretending that the man who has her life in his hands is not standing there*. Tully no longer sees him. She goes on telling herself, as she does every day, that if she doesn't see him, he isn't there....

(Kate Marek, 2005)

Como si

*Como si supieras
Como si querieras
Lo que importante
Haya hombres en los calles
Haya bombones y gritas
En el cielo
Nubes negros
En tus ojos
Miedo
Lo que quiero
No te importa
Lo que alguna persona quiere
No te importa
Que te importa?
no se
nadie sabe
Como si supiera*

As if...

As if you knew
As if you wanted
What is important
There were men in the streets
There were chocolates and screams
In the sky
Black clouds
In your eyes
Fear
That which I want
Not important to you
That which anyone wants
Not important to you
What is important to you
I don't know
No one knows
As if you knew

(Jess Abate, 2005; Rene Magritte, The Domain of Lights)

Collaboration

Peter Blume, Eternal City

Civilization built over the fallen pillars of the previous one
Great monuments used as simple peasant tools
The ruins will mold this new metropolis
But the old ways and stories will still be forgotten
The same mistakes will be made over again
They glare at people in the face, but no one pays any attention
They just continue building

(Justin Anderson, 2005)

Another White Sunday

It was a white Sunday again
Citizens of cities gathered dressed new

Theatrical voice channels you through
Assembled in a box
Wielding high above
A cross
Saw a boy laughing
As preacher preached through,
Tales of untouched women,
Borning babies new,
Themes of kings and wizards
Telling what to do,
Laughing,
A man wearing white
Vowing
If you don't believe in me
"he's gonna kill you"

Words of thunder raining,
From open magic clouds above
Booming
 words of evil,
 wisdom,
 and love,
Beware of what whispers you wish to hear,
He will choose favorites
Wanting you to fear

And with his tool a hole you mine,
And fill it with families, young, dying and blind

So crime has been committed,
And still no clue,
People walk through lumbering,
Pray right past the truth,

Don't fear the darkness beyond the pearly white gates,
Your happiness lies in your fate.

(Nick Pratt, 2006)

Where I'm standing
The sun glides along my face
It hangs over the trees
Like a blanket
The cool wind
Whisks my hair behind my ears
The ground is
Wet and dark
Like the ocean
I'm swimming in an ocean of
Endlessness
This
Is my conspiracy
Devour it.

(Ashley Meyers, 2007)

Alarm Clock Buzz

A sliver in my brain
I am suddenly whooshed away from my dream world
As I find myself now in a hyper aggressive mood
That noise has triggered something deeply programmed into my mind
Something that makes me ready to break small electronic devices at a whim
Without even thinking about the day ahead
I am ready to kill

Relax

I take time every day to relax, to try and forget my woes
I succeed to a degree, but the weight still lingers
It's always there, something that I cannot expose
I attempt to capture it, but it escapes through my fingers

If only I could confront it, I would be free
But instead I have to bury it, and pass another day
I dream of the moment when it fades away –
I dream of that moment of supreme jubilee

I will raise my arms and turn my face to the sky
As this burden finally slips from my shoulders and falls to the ground
From the depths of my chest I will unleash an earth-shaking cry
As a wave of relief washes over me, when my solace is found

That day is so close I can nearly smell it
But until then, I bear my load like a wooden support, about to split

Take a deep breath, and just...

(Justin Anderson, 2005)

Poor baby

If I was as alone as you, poor baby, I wouldn't know what to do. If the sky were as unfriendly to me poor baby, I would have to cry too. If my house were so far away poor baby, I would have learned how to fly. Look at me poor baby, look at me and don't cry. If I was your mother I would not send you on your own. If I was an angel I would comfort you and be unknown. I would swim in the blue green sky and invite you to come. You could drop your bags and we'd eat a wild plum. We'd soar across the cottony clouds and jump from beam to beam. And on the way home we'd be awfully late and we could stop and get ice cream. Poor baby, if I had any say, I wouldn't let you live where you live. I would put you in a castle, you'd be a prince, if that I were able to give. Poor baby, if I saw you do this I would worry you'd get sucked into the mud. Poor baby, if I saw you do this I would worry you'd get washed away in a flood. If it began to rain I would be your umbrella. If only I could get there a little faster fella. But I am afraid and am sorry to say that I cannot save you now, never, not maybe. Too much time has passed, and I think you're long gone now poor baby.

(Emily Patnaude, 2005; photo by Jan Saudek)

52nd Street, Center of the Jazz World, NYC, 1948; Photo by William P. Gottlieb

Where

Phone the club,
Tell them to chill some jack
Because tonight I am coming back
I was there the other night
I had a time
The cocktail waitress I left with was fine
She won my heart with that Soco and lime
I need cigarettes
Do you have 60 cents?
Man prices are up.
So meet me at Tony's
Bring your cronies

Albert Finney in *Alpha Beta* by E.A. Whitehead
Photo by John Haynes

Puff Puff
I inhale the earth
It goes deep inside me
I become filled with wisdom
I hold onto the knowledge as long as I can
Now I exhale
I feel enlightened
I wish it would never leave me

(Brett Kern, 2005)

The things we pick up not even knowing what will happen
The pictures taken of the world trade center 10 days before it happened
The things destroyed in the blink of an eye and you never expect it.
People die, animals die, buildings crumble, feelings fade, memories disintegrate.
Life teaches us to never touch anything without realizing first that it can be taken away.
And what is gold now may one day turn out to be dross
And what is yours now may someday become lost.
And even though it seems like it will last - it won't.
And the finality of it is not to be believed.
But after it is gone, your eyes will blur
And you'll have trouble
Bringing it back into focus.
It will always elude you
And its contours,
Attitudes and shape
Will be replicated
But you thought
It could never be duplicated.
All you want to do
Is run your fingers over it
But you can't,
Because it doesn't
Exist
Any more.
And when you can hold your mind still
And look at it
All you can see is blur
Because that's all it will be
And maybe that's
All it ever
was.

*(Gwen den Breems, 2005; image of Pope Johannes Paul II c/o Printing Studio AG
Kilchberg/Zürich)*

Swaying in the wind
Motionless in the night
Sunning in the day time
Creepy crawlers on me at noon
Changing with the seasons
Green

 Yellow

 Red

 Brown

 Ground

Now I am swept away like the snow on a summer day.
Only to return next year around the same time.

(Dan Mattleman, 2005)

Once I saw a smile in speckled
Banner with small people who still love it
And don't know why. I saw Artists searching
For what life could mean and why we all wake.
Now I see burning bridges between you
And me, musicians telling me how to
Feel on this broken land mass that carries
Me as I watch cars go left and right by
The window in a city too big and
Too easy to fool.

(Paul Henne, 2007)

The sky is falling
Said the little hen
But little did she know
It was a 707

-

A blank sheet of paper
Ruined by the intellect
Of a silicon wafer
It's the poet's best bet

-

Here to the eyes
Gone in the hand
Of what do I speak
Can you understand?

-

What is love
If you're not a believer?
What is sight
If you're not a seer?

(Sam Taylor, 2007)

“We Want The Truth”

Fight back the words
Which aren't meant to be spoken
Scratch at the cloth
So weakly woven
Seek the least sought after
The time will come
Feeding the public
Bare minimum.

Hide the facts so visible
To any human being
Replaced war's death toll
With words of no meaning
Talk shows and comedy
Filling the scene
Keeping it fake
Keeping it clean.

Why doesn't every person know
About our country's deep debt
Or the amount of money we spend
On our brother's lives spent -
In foreign places
It was none of our damn business.

It's impossible at best
Once viewed as an easy task
You made a mess
Stop filling their heads with regret
And ours with sorrow and longing
Do what you know is right
Leave it all alone
You murderer
Let our men go home.

"The seeing spoon"

As you wash the sink of dishes
Forlorn with yellow gloves
You spot a shiny spoon
Among the nasty ones.
Surprised at your good fortune
You pull it out with glee
And go to put it in the drawer
But there's something else you see
The spoon began to shake and shine
With all its spoonly might
Why, it's a seeing spoon!
You declare with much delight
And look a little closer
For this isn't quite a common sight.
You rub it with your fingers
To see that it is true
If this is really a seeing spoon
What's its business with you?

(Allie Early, 2007)