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Eastern Kentucky University, English Department

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AURORA


A U R O R A

1993

Patrons

*Harold Blythe
Michael Bright
Harry Brown
Robert Burkhart
Deborah Core
Tricia Davis
Marjorie Farris
Andrew Harnack
Dominick Hart
Donald Mortland*

*Walter Nelson
Lucinda Peck
Bonnie Plummer
Peter Remaley
Barbara Sowders
George Strange
William Sutton
Charles Sweet
Isabell White
Robert Witt*




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I Dream in Color
response to Lisa Denney, Aurora '91

Connie Meredith

I dream in color,
giggling,
feeding
open beaks
of pink infants
drooling
in beribboned baskets.

I stroll
through the damp green
in gym clothes,
humming softly
through 64 crayons
in a box.
I want to eat them,
but they,
mere wax,
coloring flesh magenta,
leave me on the page,

a tattooed character
visitor
from remembered
fairytale
once heard, now read
with baby mine
with warm wrapped arms.

Waiting for Candace

Connie Meredith

Our last day apart
storms thunder
runways head for
shelter.

*The placid lake
swirls dark
below the dock.*

Between aortic fire drills
I beam and shiver
because soon is imminent.

Dinner features rack of fear,
irrational, but solid unpleasant
underarm odor.

Pablum movie credits
roll, lights fade,
conclude three antacid evening

dreading a nightstand's bad dream
pre-dawn BRRRINGGGING.

The Awk

Connie Meredith

The dreaded awk
lives sideways
on Marginal Road,
raises her eyebrows at
flashing green lights,
points out pot holes
where alignment problems start,
insists the shoulder
accommodate riders or strollers.
She looks both ways,
comes to full stops,
always clicks a turn signal
and alerts us to radar traps.
She chews foliage into debris
because drivers can't follow maps
when road signs are overgrown.
"It's a grammatical jungle out there"
she writes and underlines her name
three times.

February 1993

Elizabeth Bowling

Salty emotion on my face. . .
Dried by sunshine,
Wiped clean by a stained handkerchief--
My father's.
Black patent tears,
By me,
Tracked over memorial sod.
Stopped under-cover
Of yet another open tent . . .
And I am tired,
But I dare not sleep.
For one in our shadowed group sleeps for all.
Snug and cold
Beneath the blanket of his country:
His father will not fold it
 (he is napping by his son)
His mother will not take it
 (she spent Christmas with her husband)
So all is left to another wise,
His brother--
A fellow soldier and the tri-corner fold,
With a single kiss
Laid in her hands,
Leaving no patent leather quick enough
For the decorated survivor.

The Sara Ward Tragedy

Lori Houghton

"How nice of you to attend," I thought bitterly. How nice of you to arrive alone, so that you and my husband might easily fondle each other without the hindrance of a male companion.

My heart iced solid and then shattered. Its frozen splinters journeyed with lightening speed through my body and pricked my every raw nerve while I watched Devon from under the heavily carved ballroom entrance at the rear of the cold, marble foyer. Damn you both! You, especially, Devon, are an eager Judas. I seethed as he rushed to the side of Miss Steadman, our aged but efficient housekeeper, as she took Brigid's hooded black cape from her elegantly bared shoulders.

"Devon. . .Dahling. . .How handsome you look in that divinely Shakespearean costume! No. . .don't tell me. You are a perfect Richard II!"

"Ah, Miss Quickly," he bowed lowly and dramatically, "you do know your Shakespeare. And, of course. . .your kings!"

"Devon, my dear, you are the true King in my staged world of pseudo-kings," Brigid exclaimed in a soft voice which swelled with sexual innuendo. "Indeed, you are King of my England."

"And you...his Queen of Hearts!" I raged inwardly as the storm thundered its own disgust in the night, outside the forbidding granite-gray walls of the mansion. The darkly, soignee stage actress brushed aside her cape and a frowning Miss

Steadman to lean towards my overly eager husband and bestow blood-red lipstick upon the corner of his devilishly grinning mouth.

'My husband.' When had that allusion become a pathetic pen-name in our marriage? Only ten years ago, I, at the age of seventeen, had needed Devon as sorely as a newborn needs nourishment. He, eleven years my senior and a highly respected, well-established London physician, had delivered me from my nightmarish existence of sleeping pills and emotional breakdowns. My loneliness had been palatable. I tasted it daily as one would taste good wine before ordering. Now, I was certain that his earlier devotion to me was surreptitiously spurred onward by the vast estate I had inherited soon after our vows were exchanged. Sadly, the phrase 'my husband' never accurately described Dr. Devon Ward.

"Yes Mum. . .Will you be needin' your wrap, mum?" I heard Miss Steadman rasp bluntly to Brigid, breaking my husband from her sizzling spell. "The ol' mansion, she's cold . . .and you are a bit bare up top, mum."

"Really, Miss Steadman!" Devon silenced her with his fiendish glare. "I doubt that Miss Quickly, or should I say," he transformed from fiend to seraphim as his gaze fell once again upon Brigid, "Morgan Le Fay, would desire to cover such a beautiful costume procured, no doubt, at the most infamous costume shop in England --the London theater-- with a drab black cloak. Brigid, darling, I had no idea that Winston would allow you

to display offstage the costume of the character you are now portraying on-stage!"

"What little bit of a costume there is," mumbled Miss Steadman.

Brigid, ignoring the persistent insults as coming from one who was beneath her now, if not at birth, favored Devon with yet another bloody kiss for his astuteness.

"You're right of course, Devon. . . on all three counts." They strolled slowly, arm in arm through the shadows of the primeval foyer, intent on only each other, as Miss Steadman heaved shut the ornately carved wooden double-doors against the lashing rain pellets which the unusually strong coastal storm pummelled at the Cornwall manor.

"I am Morgan Le Fay. And, Winston, godsend that he is, agreed to let me use my costume --after endless entreatments-- for this offstage engagement. Lastly, my darling, I feel no need for my wrap. . ." she smiled suggestively up into his hypnotic gaze. "It is far too warm in Beechwood Manor for such outer wear."

I laughed loudly. Hysterically. My dying echo ricocheted from off the icy granite of the manor's walls and returned shrilly to my ears. Their heads turned in unison to face me as I stood beneath the stunning black archway, embedded with heavy, grinning, winged dogs and shining, darkly demented cherubim alike, which served to separate the granite grayness of the foyer from the dimly lit blackness of the massive ballroom.

Strange. Every detail my eyes flitted across screeched of ugliness. In my early days here as a

small child, Beechwood Manor had never ruminated such ugliness. Indeed, I had grown to love the old English estate which dated back to the 15th century. My grandfather, Malcolm Wiltshire, had purchased the ancient Cornwall coastal mansion in 1954, christened the manor for the giant gray beech trees which lined the twisting, serpentine drive of the estate, and installed modern plumbing and electrical systems a few years later.

My parents and I had been very happy here until. . .until. . .until that horrifying night. I shuddered. The memory of that evening. . .twenty years ago this very night . . . when mother had . . . That dizzying flood of memories crashed into my consciousness like the icy Channel waters that smashed against the jagged, rocky teeth of the cliffs below the manor.

"Sara Wiltshire!" Brigid exclaimed. Abruptly, my horrifying reverie of the past ended, ushering in real horrors of the present, as she, Quickly, approached me with false delight, intentionally eschewing my married name of over ten years.

"You look stunning -- as always." She kissed me fleetingly on my cheek, and I wondered distantly if she had saved any red residue of that bloody lip paint for me . . . or was that oozing excess bestowed upon my husband, alone.

"I do so apologize, Sara, my dear, for my shamefully late arrival -- but, what with the horrid storm and all . . . Well, I'm sure you've heard from the other guests what a perfectly beastly night out it is for a masquerade ball!"

"Please, Brigid," I replied with more steadiness than I felt, "don't apologize. Aren't London stage actresses noted for their tardiness . . . among other things?"

Brigid laughed gaily. "Oh, dahling! Sweet Sara . . . I do love your wondrous humor. It is so very rare for you to simply be lighthearted. That must mean you're feeling a spot better than when last I saw you at Devon's office." She leaned closer to me and added meaningfully, "But really Sara -- you should add a bit more rouge to those lovely cheekbones of yours. That black costume makes you appear positively deathly white!"

"Deathly white," I repeated slowly, quietly. "Thank you, Brigid. If I decide to take your advice, I'll borrow some of your rouge. I'm sure you'll have enough for us both."

"I'll wager it's all on her bloody cheeks," breathed Miss Steadman from the front foyer as she flung Brigid's cloak into the adjoining cloak room.

"Sara, my love," Devon interjected. "Doesn't Brigid look divine as Morgan Le Fay?" his eyes roamed almost hungrily over her bare shoulders and half exposed breasts that stretched the black and silver-trimmed plunging costume bodice to its limits. Her long straight blue-black hair cascaded luxuriantly in a sweeping curtain down to her lithe waist and was also intertwined with silver threads. A silky black exotic band crowned her flowing ethereal costume. From its center, a teardrop-shaped crystal glittered and swung seductively on her forehead accenting seductively dark pools of chestnut-brown eyes framed by thick

black arches. She smelled of flowers. White lilies, I thought. Her sickly sweet perfume still clung like a clammy death grip to my gown which Brigid had lightly brushed earlier. I paled at the raw sexuality she exuded, and I understood why the London stage, as well as my own husband, clamored for such beauty.

"Yes, Devon," I admitted grudgingly. "Brigid makes a beautiful Morgan le Fay. Oh . . . truly Brigid," I added sharply, "I can't imagine anyone more suited for the role . . . not even in the days of King Arthur himself."

A dark look crept over Brigid's lovely face replacing the deceiving look of affection animating it only seconds ago. Devon's face mirrored the same indignation. Perhaps, I had gone too far. But, candidly . . . Brigid was, indeed, the most beautiful witch I had ever seen. That 'compliment' was simply the only way to describe the woman that I knew, although, had yet to prove, was sleeping with my husband.

"Now, Devon -- do take Brigid into the ballroom and let her mix with the other guests. The orchestra is playing a magnificent waltz and I am sure that you both wish to dance. I must confer with Miss Steadman on some serving arrangements . . . so if you will excuse me" I brushed blindly between them and darted quickly into the coat-room situated directly off the foyer to seek the sanctuary of Miss Steadman.

"Hullo, mum," Miss Steadman greeted me with cheer I found impossible to reciprocate. Her old, arthritically distorted fingers busily hung coats

on the archaic metal hooks scrolling along the wall. I noted that Miss Quickly's cloak lay rumpled and wadded in the thickly ornate oaken chair where, undoubtedly, Miss Steadman had intentionally flung it earlier. I plucked it roughly from the seat and slung it viciously across the room.

Miss Steadman never missed one coat to turn and witness my tirade. "She's a sly wot, that 'un ees, Mum! You best b'careful, mum, and trust'n your ol' Miss Steadman." She turned slowly and purposely placed one deformed hand on her broadly spreading hips. "Stay clear of that Quick'n," she spat.

"I wish, Eliza, that you would bless Dr. Ward with that same advice," I exhaled heavily as I collapsed into the uncomfortable oaken chair.

"Don't you worry nun, mum. He loves you . . . he just missus his bawdy Londun stage days. That paint'd hostess'll be gone from his arm aft'onight!"

"He . . . does . . . not . . . love . . . me, Eliza," I enunciated slowly with lowered eyes, as if informing a relative of a loved one's passing. "He never did."

"Pshaw!" Eliza spat. "He worships the air you breathe, Mum. You jist don't know it, luv, due to your sick spells. The Doctor, he's fine. It's that sorc'ress female -- now, you do well to eye that woman."

"I have eyed her quite enough for one night, thank you, Eliza." Eliza Steadman was a woman wise beyond her sixty years, but she was dead wrong about Devon. I know my own husband.

"Hah!" I laughed loudly without mirth. Ironically, the only thing that I do know about Devon is that he is sleeping with that London stage whore. Eliza must think that I am insane. But I am not insane! Why can't everyone see what lurks underneath that handsome shell? He has drugged me, ignored me, tortured me with such loneliness as is indefinable with mere words, and flaunted this wicked she-devil before my face. "He is evil incarnate," I thought encompassingly as I sat curled in the monstrous oak chair rocking softly back and forth staring intensely into empty space.

"Mum, I'll be seein' to the servers, now. Will you be comin'?" Her old creased leather face worried; her bright blue eyes implored.

"I'll be along," I muttered.

Eliza hesitated. Then, defeated as to how she should gain my immediate company, she shuffled silently past my chair towards the door. I watched her gray head exit in the massive full length mirror which leered at me from across the room. It stood waiting, watching, wondering: "What will she do?" I could almost hear it whisper. "What can she do?" My breath hissed through parted lips as I rose slowly. Without realizing, I had held it expectantly while I steadily rocked, as if rationing my oxygen could somehow bring me comfort.

The mirror, heavily carved with dark cherry leaves and vines, was eerily magnificent. Oval in shape, it faced me on two legs at a slant, and the vines grew wildly across its front. So much so, that many intruded upon the glass surface and these

vines created minute individual mirrors along the oval's wooden frame where wood meets glass. We faced each other. And its truthful stare bluntly voiced in silence what I despised to see.

"How strange a woman -- she's attractive but gloomy. Her long sensual curves are enhanced by her mother's beaded black gown which clings to her shape. That face -- flawlessly pale with chiseled cheekbones (also, too pale). And her lips are full, but with permanently down-turned corners. Those almond-shaped eyes are too widely set and are black onyx, like a shiny coal nugget when it mirrors and reflects. A wild black cloud of hair falls madly about her angular face. All this beauty, but, yet not beautiful . . . because of that sad, lost look in the murky midnight of her eyes."

I touched my cheek lightly as the mirror spoke to me. The stranger who returned my stare asked, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the . . . palest of them all?" I laughed shrilly and hysterically at its pathetic answer.

"Enough!" I screamed as I covered my head with my arms as if fending off demons. Tell me no more truths. I must save my sanity to finish this nightmarish evening.

* * * * *

He was tall and imperially thin. How handsome he was as he mingle about the vastness of the sparsely furnished ballroom. Where was she? No! I mustn't think of her bewitching beauty and her clinging . . . her clutching at Devon's elbow.

Dangerously handsome. His dark brown hair is slick and seek to his head. When they are alone does she rumple its sleekness wildly with her fingertips? He is graying at the temples, but this only adds to his elegant air of confidence that comes with age. Ah . . . he's speaking to Judge Harlyn. Didn't recognize him with that fantastic wig and top hat. Little pudgy man . . . He looks like a round, ripe apple with a black stem on top. Devon speaks so dramatically, always gesturing. Probably owing to that extensive theater background as a young man exploring London's stage. Alas! . . . Here buzzes our Queen Bee, now! Funny. He never mentioned she was his favorite exploration -- or exploitation-- of those stage years. Look at that eyebrow. It's always twitching when the doctor engages in intense conversation . . . or, when he makes love. Honestly, I barely recall. Devon says my condition is much too fragile for us to share a bedroom. That sleeping arrangement began so soon after we were married -- a few years or so -- that I can't recall if it is that particular eyebrow that twitches when he No matter. I'm sure Brigid knows. Maybe I'll ask. Just to bring her attention that we do share one thing in common . . . a twitching brow.

Oh, my Devon . . . after the accident you were my hope. I gazed in my mirror as I wove pictures and forms of reality and saw you riding past Shalot. You, Devon . . . shining, jingling, and . . . singing. Now, the mirror cracks. And the curse is that I have a lovely face. Once my lover, now you are nemesis to my every thought. I

wonder, Devon my darling, do you sing to Quickly, now?

As I continued to spy on them -- the perfect beautiful couple, laughing, entertaining, making love before me in my own home -- I nearly burst with envy. They moved closer to my shadowed corner, and I understood. I realized that he wanted rid of me, so that his life -- both his and Brigid's -- could begin unhindered. The strong pills that he insisted I swallow to relax me, calm me; and those horrid, cruel suggestions about Mother's accident, the suggestions that horribly worsened my already dreadful nightmares; his flamboyant affair he flaunted without conscience before my weeping heart All of these things began soon after we were wed. I realized, now, that he was trying to drive me insane, and Brigid was his willing wicked accomplice. The reward for their evil efforts? Each other. And this estate, my family's home. the thunder cracked loudly in the ensuing storm as my blind eyes were unveiled from the darkness which had been their refuge.

My jaw set. Somehow I must prevent him from fulfilling this diabolical scheme. My mind, now at least, was sharper this night for I had carefully held under my tongue the two bitter pills which Devon forced upon me earlier. Satisfied with my obedience, he left me. And I spat their mind-poisoning lethargic effects into my empty crystal water glass which I slipped into the drawer of my oak bed table, locking it securely. Miss Steadman would never find it there.

"Sara, darling, where have you been hiding?" Devon startled me from my secretive thoughts as he invaded my corner of shadows. "The party is going marvelously well, considering that the damnable storm dampened its start a bit." He peered worriedly at my tense face. "Are you ill, love? Would you like to lie down?"

I forced the tension from my face and body and steadily returned the gaze of those hypnotic cobalt blue eyes.

"Really Devon . . . I'm quite alright. I simply wanted a moment to myself . . . to replace the memories of . . . the past with the gaiety of this evening. You were right, as usual, darling. This ball is wonderfully therapeutic." I smiled sweet innocence into his eyes. Brigid, herself, would have envied the ability and the ease with which I played my role.

"I am happy, Sara, that at last you agree, but I do wish that you had chosen another gown for this evening. You look ravishing, my darling . . . but selecting one of your mother's ball gowns for this evening -- after all, this is the . . . anniversary of her tragedy -- well . . . don't you think, my sweet, it's a bit morbid?"

I shivered inwardly at the silver-tongued way in which he avoided mentioning Mother's death. I must be guarded. Devon was a master manipulator who exuded such endearing false concern, I could be tricked easily from seeing the truth.

"Nonsense, my love. I consider wearing Mother's gown therapeutic, as well. Mother would have wanted it, I'm sure. So I beg of you, stop

worrying! I insist that you stop coddling me and enjoy yourself. I am perfectly fine, and this is supposed to be a festive occasion. Now promise me -- no more worries!"

Devon hesitated. Then, accepting my smiling coyness as true lightheartedness, he laughed loudly and with relief, squeezing me to his lean body. "I love you, Sara."

His statement startled me. Another trick . . . his voice oozing with sincerity. I mustn't believe!

"I love you, my darling," he repeated, "and the amazing progress you have made since we first met. Our lives won't be the same after tonight, my love. I promise. We will have the normal problems of married couples and all the joyous happiness we've been denied up until now, as well. This event . . . this ball, has worked miracles in your recovery."

He kissed me passionately. I wondered if he could taste the bitterness that lingered on my tongue from those tainted pills. Did he picture Brigid's beautiful face to inspire his passion that so easily well? He released me reluctantly and snaked his arm around my slim waist, guiding me towards the center of the ballroom where his true love engaged animatedly in some intense point with Judge Harlyn. Brigid, her lovely back bared to our approach, was never aware of our presence.

"I tell you Judge . . . that was the rumor on the London state. Poor thing was made as a hatter. She didn't fall accidentally from these cliffs below Beechwood house -- she flung herself! Twenty

years ago this very night. She'd been mad for years and Sara's father shouldered her illness . . . then shattered like a crystal goblet after her suicide. That's what killed the old chap, darling! A broken heart. If you ask me, Judge, I think insanity runs in families. Poor Devon . . . he --"

"Brigid!" Devon's seething anger silenced her horrible ramblings as she whirled to face him, aghast.

I broke from his embrace roughly, then, stumbling, fled like a fox before the drooling fangs of the hound. My thoughts whirled and raced wildly as I reached the prison doors of the mansion. I heaved open the great doors, and the storm's lashing rain greeted my wracking sobs. The fury of the wind sucked away my breath. On instinct I ran to the treacherous footpath I knew so well leading to the rocky overhang below the manor house. Within seconds I was drenched to my very soul and, pausing halfway down the path, I hesitated only moments to catch my heaving breath. turning, I glimpsed the mansion behind me. Lightning sliced through the black sky, lending the slippery-wet, gray granite of the mansion a lifelike gleam for endless seconds. The howling wind bent the old beech tree limbs, snapping and cracking them with its violent force. At a distance, the fort-like abode appeared almost triangular in shape, with two impressive round turrets at each corner. Thousands of huge dark-gray granite blocks comprised the walls. Each scrolling, ornamental pillar, as well as the enormous mastiffs that stood guard at the top of each towering turret, were hand-carved from that

same dark-gray granite. The only color visible on the gloomy estate was as ominous as the gray it defined. The blood-red tile roof sprawled, languishing over every eave and gable of the cold, granite monstrosity.

My heart rose into my throat nearly choking off my breath as I watched Devon rush from the refuge of the mansion's rain lashed doorway into the storm's full fury. From my fairly distant vantage point, half-blind from the rain and gusting wind, I stiffened in panic as he turned towards the footpath. Suddenly, Brigid appeared in the doorway. Although the howling wind had jerked the syllables of my name from Devon's lips leaving them to mouth soundlessly in the distance, that same cruel wind carried to my ears the haunting shrillness of Brigid's laughter as she watched Devon's pursuit of madness from the mansion's doors. Her voice lilted upwards, slightly distorted by the same whipping gusts of wind which acted as hated messengers to my unbelieving ears. Despite the deafening storm and my own wracking sobs, I could hear her amusement echo . . . she was laughing at me!

I whirled and fled from that haunting sound. Already, Devon had reached the start of the footpath, but my breathless sprint from the house had left me ahead of him a distance of several hundred feet. I scrambled and raced over the twisting, curving path until my eyes stung from the whipping wind and salty sea spray. The briny odor of the ocean tingled in my nostrils. At the end of the slightly inclining trail, I collapsed in an

exhausted heap and stared down into the pounding waves that beat against the jagged, rocky coast below. Those rocks . . . they were death's treacherous teeth which had so tragically severed the thread of my mother's life. I wondered dismally if Devon had that same fate planned for me. Would he throw me from this cliff to the rocky waves below so that he might have both Brigid and Beechwood Manor in exchange for my death? I sobbed tears of frustration and heart shattering pain into the already drenched earth. "No!" I shouted over the pounding surf below. "No! . . . No! . . . No! . . . I'll kill you before I allow her to take you! . . . I'll kill you . . ." I screamed, pulling myself erect. Muddy and drenched, I watched as wave after wave crashed and broke against the cliff on which I stood, while the furious wind threatened to fulfill Devon's deadly scheme for him by pushing me closer to the cliff's edge.

"Sara . . . Sarraaaa . . ." Devon's voice reached above the wind to ring dully in my ears. "Pleeeaaase . . . Sarraaa . . . Come back . . ."

A heavy weight settled in my mind as the solution for ending my torture which had caged me like a wild animal for years slowly dawned like a glowing sunrise. I would kill him . . . push him from this same cliff . . . which Mother had tumbled from twenty years ago. I must do it . . . to safeguard my own sanity! I won't allow Devon and Brigid to drive me insane and steal my home . . . my very life from me! I can't let that happen. I must protect myself . . . I must kill this man whose

deceit gnaws at my heart, lungs, mind like a terminal disease I will entice him much too closely to the cliff's edge. Somehow, when he lunges for me in the attempt to push me to my death, I must maneuver nimbly away. I'll be behind him as he tries to regain his balance . . . and then I will strike out in my defense! I will push Devon to the same horrible fate he undoubtedly intends for me . . . death in the savage jaws of the rock surf below.

"SARA!" He was directly behind me on the cliff only a few feet away. I spun towards the fiend's voice. Soaked and dripping, he faced me as the lightening flashed behind him illuminating the evil in his face. "Sara! Don't do it, darling! I love you PLEASE . . . please let me help you!"

The wind whirled my drenched hair madly about my face. "I don't want your help, you . . . YOU TRAITOR!" I sobbed. "I loved you and you repaid that love with lies and deceptions . . . Your sleeping with that painted London stage whore and plotting with her to drive me insane! But I'll stop you, Devon. I swear . . . I will stop you if it kills me."

"Sara . . . what are you saying? I love you, Sara. With all my heart. Please . . . Please move away from the edge, Sara." He stepped dangerously closer, forcing me to retreat life-menacing steps backward onto the jutting point of rocky overhang.

"Sara, it's true I had an affair with Brigid years ago, but darling that was years before you

and I met in the hospital. I could never love Brigid as I love you, Sara. Now . . . darling . . . move away from the edge . . . I beg you!"

Devon's arms stretched openly towards me and he bent from the waist not in supplication but with a malevolent tension that would spring in seconds. I sensed this moments before he lunged towards me, but his closeness, nevertheless, caught my counter movements off-balance. I stumbled. He grabbed. We struggled only seconds before that weightless moment when the salty air was our only foothold.

* * * * *

Sara and Devon both plunged to their deaths that night one was pushed; the other fell accidentally.

Ghost Life

Scott Tracy

Dragging memories behind me
like a rattling chain
and moaning in the groin
of darkness,

I have died a stranger
too many times
among people I love,

Haunting no one,
not even her.

Southern Sensuality

Scott Tracy

Afterwards,
her hair creeps
across the ridge
of my chest,
alive like Kudzu
stilting the erosion
of some mountain
and smothering a
rusty, hollow car
left for dead on
the side of the road.

Dedicated To Her

Scott Tracy

The syllables drip
white hot
from her lips

Splattering like
wet cement
and stinging my skin

Until ankle deep I am
wading thickly
through her words

Rising slowly around
yet another
stiffening concrete statue

Born To Love

Simm Van Arsdale

Once born is to love,
And desire thereof,
Into life we sail away.
On the mankind sea,
A ship asearch, we
In the Philos tide do sway
To all the rage
Found with age
Of Eros stormy blast.
Yet finding shore,
We search no more:
The Agape harbor at last.

To Conquer the World

Simm Van Arsdale

I'm told that Alexander memorized all Achilles' words while
still a boy;
I read the Avengers, and X-men, and forged report cards.
I can picture him listening, spellbound, as The Philosopher
read, a glint in his eye---
I once fell asleep to an old crone's rambling about Beowulf
(I dreamt of lunch and pretty girls).
I've often wondered how I'd be different had I too been
tutored
at the knee of such a learned man.
I've read Poetics, his Ethics too (both in English), and still
study philosophy,
But I've yet to desire to conquer the world.

Lilies

Simm Van Arsdale

I saw lilies this morning.
Red-orange and buttery yellow,
Glistening from the early morning rain.
I was in a hurry when I caught their melody:
A silent chorus of colorful trumpets.
I paused,
Strove to join their harmony,
And carried their tune the rest of the day.

We Are Led Blindly

Lisa J. Denney

We are led blindly
down pathways
of slivered glass
crystalline icicles
embroider the cliffs
about us.

Frozen winter trees
bare their nakedness
before us
in sympathy.

For they too
have been led blindly
down the pathways
of Spring
to the green meadows
of Summer,
only to rot, die
and then petrify
in the winter cold.

They too have felt
the icy breath of betrayal
blow in their faces,
and the innocence
of the previous season
drip from their branches
like snot
from a Winter child's nose.

