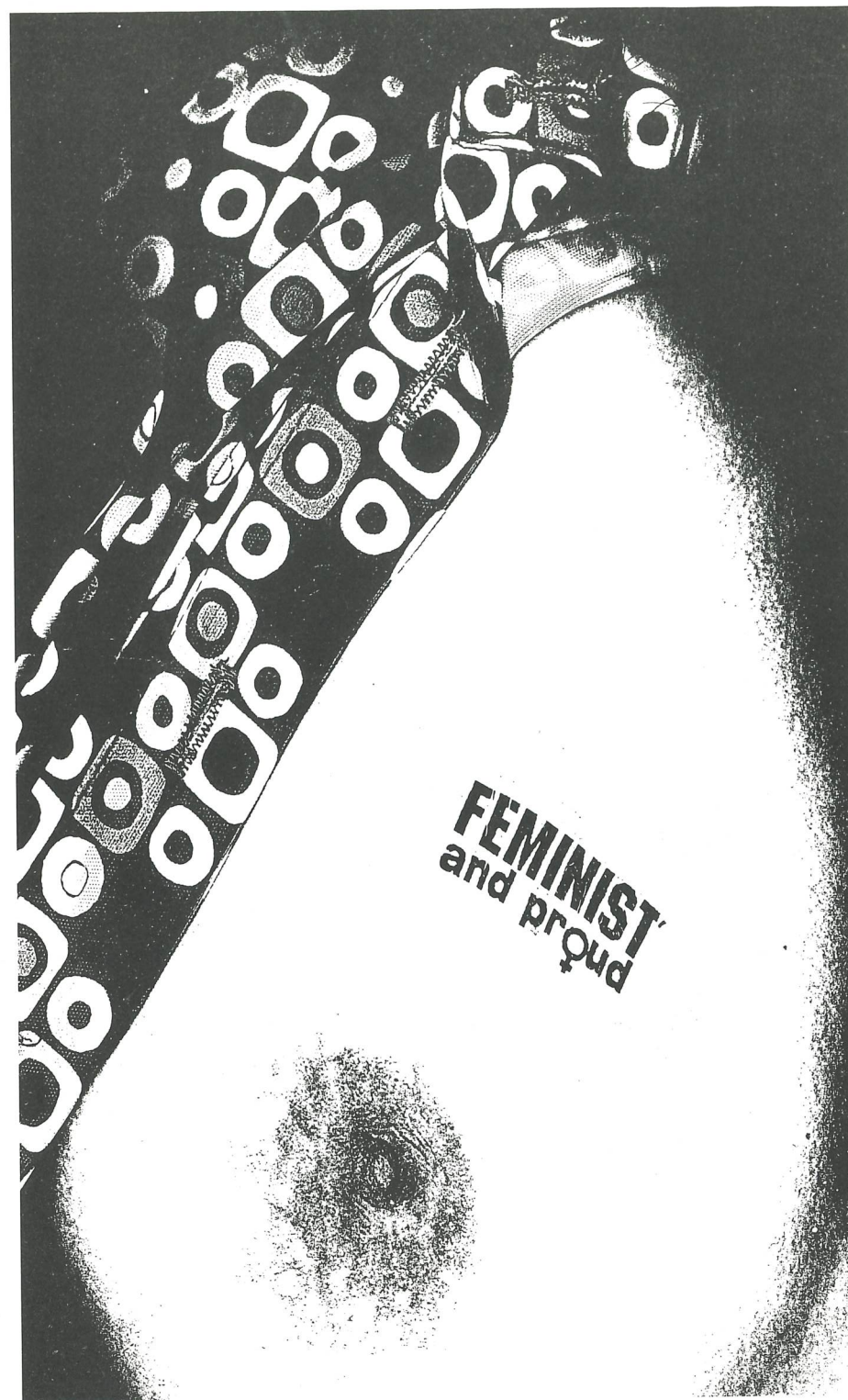




Queen's Feminist Review

Editors: Jocelyn Heisel
Martha Hinton
Carolyn Johanson
Sarah Lake
Leyla Mahdavian
tanis rideout
Eric Singer
Shireen Sondhi
Courtney Thompson

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Please address all correspondence and submissions to:

Queen's Feminist Review
c/o AMS Social Issues Commission
John Deutch University Centre
Queen's University
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We would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who stepped up to the mic during our coffee-house, the many contributors whose work does not appear within these pages, and Naomi Brunemeyer for their help and support.

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Editors' Note

Although this year began somewhat tumultuously, we quickly discovered that differences in opinion can and should be a strength. Our variety made this year's Board unique and indicative of the changing face of feminism. Feminism is after all a continuing debate, with voices and ideas that reflect increasingly diverse perspectives. We have tried to present some of these perspectives in this volume of feminist art.

Many long Sundays were spent trying to decide how best to present the multitudes of artistic and emotional interpretations so openly given to our consideration. Thank-you for submitting. We truly enjoyed the experience.

1999 Editorial Board

Untitled

I shine in the glow
of the women
around me
I revel in
their touch
I pick up my pen
and my hand
s i n g s

Jocelyn Heisel

Hot Pink and Transparent

It has been turned over thousands of times.
 My mind has chewed it slowly, restlessly.
 It has been digested, then swallowed,
 but somehow it keeps coming back:
 this feeling,
 a pulp, a déjà vu
 that comes and goes.

Some days it's thicker,
 and on those blue days
 it's hard to shake off the ugly coat,
 the sticky sludge
 that weighs down on my body.
 It's hard to stretch the skin on my face into a smile
 and to say *who cares*.

Who cares if you got splashed by a big puddle;
 of dust and little pieces of garbage as the bus screeched away.
 Who cares if you wanted to strip off the layers
 throw them down and run around
 hugging people.
 I want to let them feel me:
 this hot pink skin
 the curves of my breasts exposed, no longer hidden.
 I want to scream, I want to yell
 I'm special too.

At the same time, I want to crawl into a desk
 a stinky, old desk
 and talk to chewing gum
 and sunflower shells
 all day.
 Could they see me in my entirety?
 in wonderful simplicity?

I have been floating through the daily trenches of human existence
 and my brain once softly sputtering has begun to bubble.
 I'm left here half naked
 grinning angrily,
 the hot fire of upheaval quickly spreading in my belly.

Alexandra Samur

Her existence

(. . . a cloudless day, a fireless pillar at night.
 Unveiled to stars, it is shoe soles kissing pavement, kicking it,
 the sound of soundlessness.
 It is a hollowed room,
 an empty womb,
 the tick of a grandfather clocking mercilessly.
 A misty lake dawn, a loon, a song,
 A dog's lick, a twisted resurrection.)

Tracy Riley

Cactus Girl

I'm a cactus girl
 I grow spikes
 to keep my tender flesh
 to myself
 don't want no wild animals
 chewin' on my green

I'm a cactus girl
 with a big mouth
 curse words are my spikes
 I swear at hungry coyotes
 comin' for my green

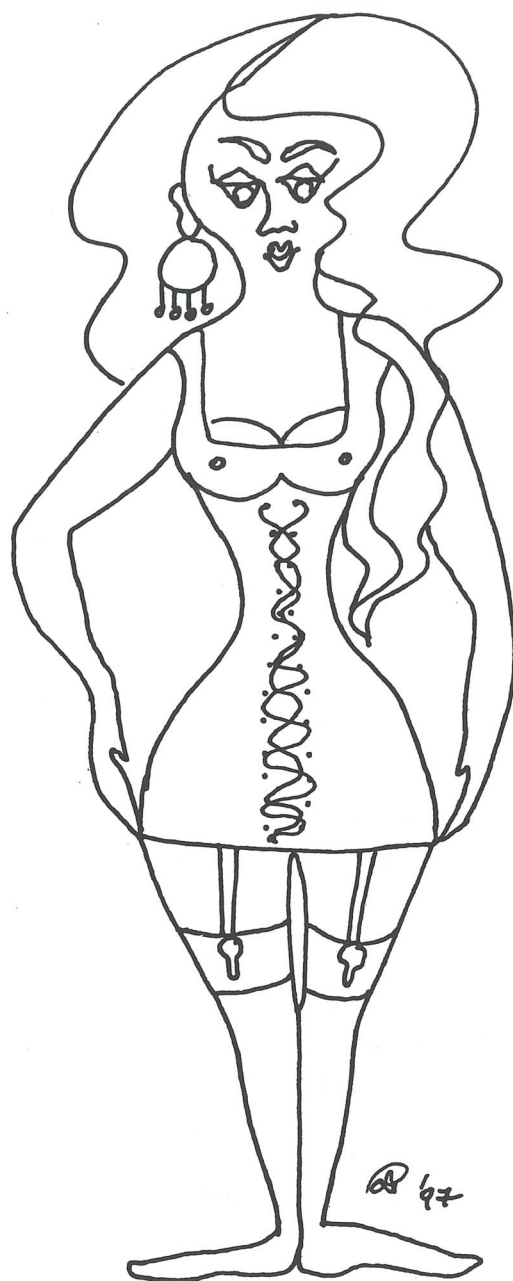
I'm a cactus girl
 blowin' smoke rings
 in the desert
 driving off the beasts
 comin' for my green

I'm a cactus girl
 with lots of fat spikes
 nobody likes a fat cactus
 I got lots of space

I'm a cactus girl
 I have lots of spikes
 I'm a cussin'
 smokin'
 fat spine
 cactus
 stay away from my green.

Trish Dale

Hourglass



Alice Terry

My Grandmother's Grapes

It has been so long since Caroline last came to stay with us. Rita said that when I was younger, too young to understand the words but old enough to fear the sounds, she was with us. She came all the way from her house at Guindy just to help her mother – me. Of course I didn't know her then. She was the silent and invisible figure in a memory I couldn't remember, the figure that taught me to join my hands together to pray before I could even think about a God. Our twenty-two years apart had been sealed by silence, and though this was no stranger standing in front of me, shuffling about the house in brightly coloured sweats and thick socks, it seemed at first that the only thing Caroline and I could share was our silence. Silence came more naturally than words. Words left things out. Silence contained everything.

Caroline carries silence about her in everything she does. It pronounces her every movement, her standing up and sitting down, her opening up a book to read, her silent prayer before an evening meal – making each action an event of importance. One has to listen carefully, even when she isn't speaking. I listen to her tread on the stairs, cautious but with clear intention, like a little mouse with a mighty purpose. My Caroline. I want to be fully conscious this time. I want to know what is mine.

"Caroline is beautiful." I tell Rita. She smiles because she agrees, and because it means that she is beautiful too. Beauty matters to me. I look for it, and I see it first in their shiny skin, and in their lovely smiles and eyes. But the other day I saw Caroline brushing and braiding her long, thin hair. Right over middle, under left. Her fingers moved rapidly, like tiny machines, and when she had finished, she snatched the braid abruptly and coiled it into a bun. She did all this without even looking in a mirror. She rarely uses one. Afterwards, she spent a good ten minutes meticulously cleaning her hair brush.

Some afternoons we sit around the kitchen table and drink tea. Rita's hair is white near the crown of her head. Whiter than when I last saw her. I tell her that she should dye her hair to keep up with her young-looking

face, but she brushes my suggestion aside, joking that at her age, low maintenance is really no maintenance, and besides, people tell her that with her patches of white and silver and black, she reminds them of Indira Gandhi. Caroline is sitting silently on the kitchen bench, her arms stretched onto the table, and her hands encircling the only mug that she will drink from. Her eyes move back and forth between Rita and me, and she looks as though she is thinking about what to say.

"Indira Gandhi was shot dead.", she adds. A curious moment of silence. I look up at Rita, and she bursts out laughing. She runs her hands through my loose and tangled hair and her eyes look old and young at once.

"I remember when I knocked my two front teeth out, skipping on the terrace." Rita said. "Even after the dentist had replaced them, I tried not to show them. I wished I had broken a leg or an arm, anything but my front teeth." She laughs again. Her laughter lightens everything, and sometimes when she laughs, I feel older than her.

"For so long you didn't smile freely." Caroline chuckles. "You thought people would see it was false. But I kept telling you it was never false."

At night I watch Caroline take out her smile and soak it. She removes the plastic pink gums and the row of yellowy brown teeth and places them carefully, as though they were living, on the ledge of the sink. Then she bends over and begins to gargle hoarsely. Through the toothpaste marks on the mirror, I can see her reflection. Her face is scrunched together from the effort of cleaning thoroughly, and her eyes close tightly every time she spits out. Looking at her in this way, I see her differently. I wonder what happens to beauty when you can't count on your hair or your skin, or even your own teeth? Rita tells me that sometimes beauty is hidden. Maybe it moves further and further inside, further within, on its way to the core of a thing. Caroline finishes her gargling and wipes her face with the towel I brought for her. She looks up and smiles at me. It is a loving and mischievous, toothless smile. I am struck by her beauty.

Caroline's silence has a way of making her words seem more important. Sometimes she draws me aside to tell me something. I try to listen carefully, but I don't pretend to grasp the significance of her sometimes random revelations. She tells me that cleaning the brush is just as important as brushing your hair, that there is a time for everything, and

that you must never marry a man because he looks good in a picture. Her words are weighted with experience, and the casual certainty with which she speaks sometimes bothers me, perhaps because the only thing that I feel certain about is the fact that I am rarely certain of anything. I struggle to make sense of her advice, blushing at how filthy my hair brush gets, wondering how you know when it's time for one thing and not another, and vowing that there will be no pictures, because I will never have an arranged marriage.

Caroline never talks about love as something that one falls into. The very idea of falling probably terrifies her. A fall could mean broken bones, and for her, broken bones would take so long to heal. Once when I was falling, Rita told me something that Caroline had once told her.

"Baba, you make the bed that you lie in." she said.

"Making a bed is like making a grave, don't you think?"

"Don't talk smarter than you are." she snapped. "Grave or bed, you must lie in it. You have to be responsible."

"Don't talk to me if you're only going to repeat someone else's advice. How can you possibly know? You never fell into anything!"

It's true that she was repeating Caroline's advice, but experience had made it her advice too. Rita fell right into marriage, and she never fell out.

"How can you be so practical? You talk about the whole thing like it's some kind of business deal!" I cried with all the theatrical conviction of a teenager.

"Love is an investment." Caroline tells me, as she shuffles the contents of her purse, in search of something. She is always losing things in her purse. I watch as she pulls out tissue, envelopes, a hankie, a plastic spoon. Finally she pulls out a booklet, and I catch the title before she shows it to me. "Choosing Your Life Partner" it says.

"This is going to be interesting" I think to myself. She holds it up to me, but first she tells me a story. She had ordered away for this book for me, and that when she got it, she lost it in her apartment. (It was probably in her purse). After a day of futile searching, she prayed that if it was God's will that I should have this book now, she would find it.

"I found it that very night!" she says, and proudly places it in my hands. I take it, not knowing whether to thank her or to thank God, and

not sure whether I laughed or winced my "Thank you." I can't reject a gift, especially one from Caroline.

"See, when I was like you, we never had the choices that you do. Decisions were made, and whether we agreed or not, we had to make the best of things. I know you are not like me. You're free. You have the freedom to make your own choices, in everything that you do, but does that freedom makes your life any easier than mine? We are not so different. We are both bound by choices."

"Yes, I guess so." I want to say more, but I can only feel something. Somewhere, in the silence of the room, it came gradually and rose instantly, like the crest of a giant wave, before the crash. A sudden sense of responsibility. The weight of her choices, and of mine. I look down at the book in my hands.

"Listen, thanks for thinking about me." I say, my voice betraying a feeling of uneasiness. "I'll let you go to sleep now. Good night, Caroline."

"Good night."

The last thing I remember before going to sleep that night, or perhaps it was part of a dream, was a little girl. She was sitting at a train station and the rush hour crowd was swarming in front of her, behind her, all around her. She was crying in the middle of the platform, scared by the heat of closely pressed bodies, and the commotion of breathing and yelling. It was hard for her to separate one sound from the other, or distinguish between a sea of brown faces. She was looking all around, pressing her eyes into the crowd, waiting for the face that would recognize hers. Occasionally her eyes would open wide, and her tiny mouth would smile, and she'd stretch her arms out, up towards the folds of a sari, or the hem of a dress.

* * * *

"Do you know what the queen said today?" Caroline asks me in the morning.

"No I don't. What did the queen say today?" I ask back, wondering when the queen had ever said anything that remotely pertained to my life.

"She said that the old can learn from the young, that the young can sometimes be wiser than us". She points to an article in the paper.

"So what have you learned from me?" I ask jokingly.

"I said the queen said it. That doesn't mean that it applies to me!" she laughs.

My Caroline. She jokes with serious eyes, and then her shoulders shake with laughter.

I remember the last night that she was with us. I was sitting in my room, writing. I got hungry and went down to the fridge to fix a snack. It was pretty empty because Rita doesn't buy a lot when she's on her own. But there was a container full of red grapes. I snatched it quickly and went back upstairs. I was writing about Caroline, writing about the way she moved, the way she talked, the way it felt to know someone again, for the first time. From time to time I'd crunch a grape seed and I'd lose my train of thought. The seeds were as bitter as the grapes were sweet, and I'd keep stopping to spit them out. I have the bad habit, so Rita says, of spitting the grape seeds back into the same bowl of grapes.

Twenty two years wasn't enough to break it. I knew from that first silence that even in our wordless greeting, our vast worlds of difference were knit together in the sinews of some strong and invisible web. Right over middle, under left. She braided her hair like Rita braided mine. I must have eaten half the container because when I looked up, there were more seeds than grapes. Just then Rita came in. "What are you munching on?" she asked.

"Oh, just some grapes." I answered.

"What grapes? Not the one's in the fridge, I hope?"

"Of course. Why, aren't they ours?"

"They're Caroline's. You know she can only eat certain sweet things! She brought them especially so that she could snack on them. She'll be cross. Quickly, put them back."

"But they're half finished." I said, surrendering the container. I hoped Caroline wouldn't be as upset as Rita seemed to think. I wasn't sure. Rita knew her much better than me. She took the remaining grapes downstairs and I could hear her explaining to Caroline. I went back to my writing.

There are things that bind us together even when we don't know we're bound. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

I heard her slow tread on the stairs. She knocked lightly on the door.

"Come in" I said. She held the container of grapes in her hand.

"You like grapes?"

"I'm so sorry. They were so good. I didn't mean . . ."

"Just like me." she said, smiling. "You can have them all. I'll leave them for you."

She turned to go and then looked back.

"Just one thing."

"Anything." I said affectionately.

"If you don't mind, could I at least have the container back?"

Michelle Andrews

tree song

let me rest at your side, press my face against your breast

breathe the silence

memorize your loving embrace

my pain and rage burn deeper

fall apart in your arms

tears saturate your clothing, dampen your skin

die in your securing embrace

exhausted, sleep there

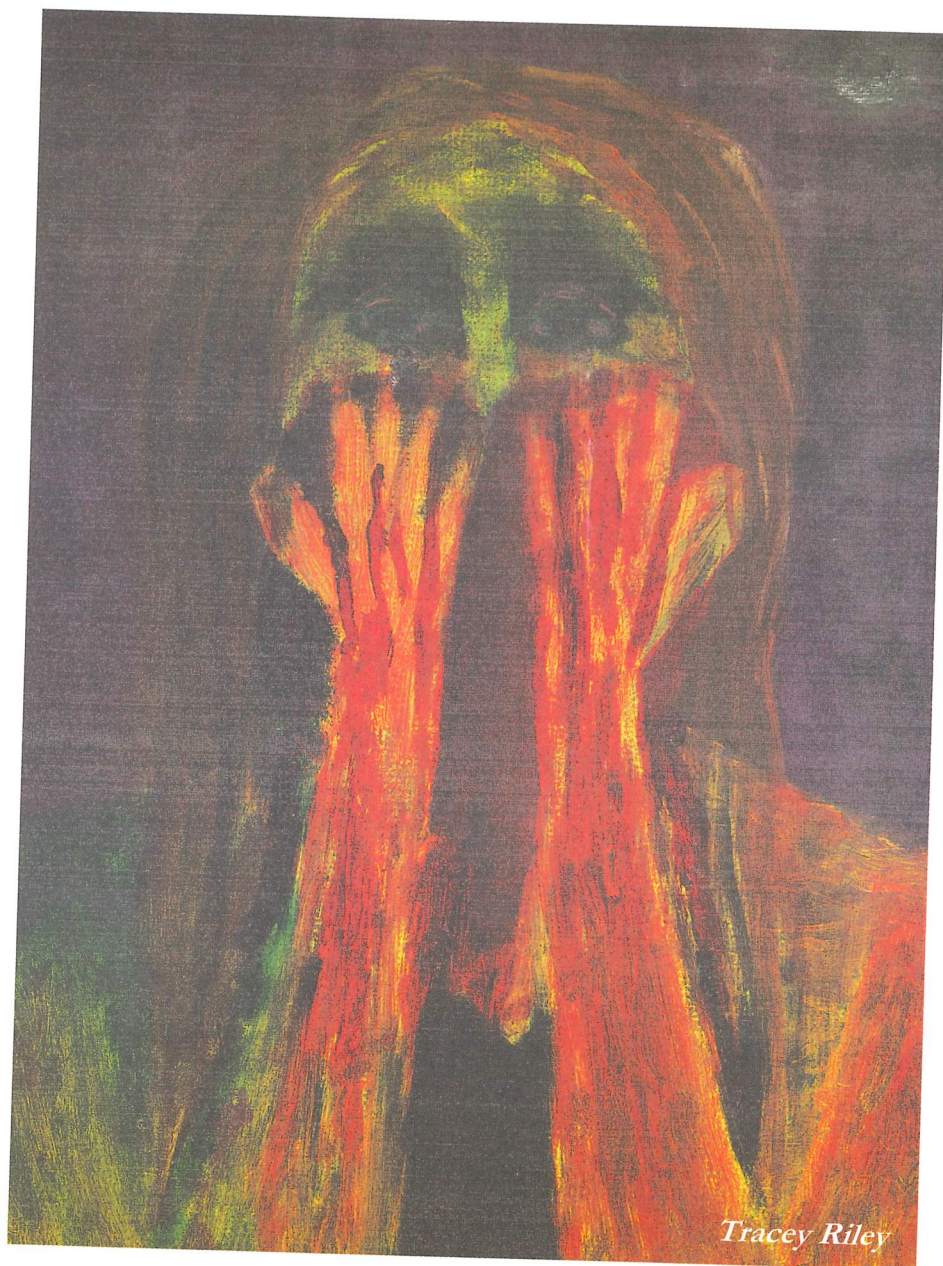
restored, awake there

alive

i am not mad

Tracy Riley

A Heart Retrieved



Tracey Riley

Motherly Love



Donna-Marie Romero

Letter to a Childhood Girlfriend

for Ceilidh

Dear Kate,

I was wondering whether you remember
how we used to hold those Virtue Matches,
where Virtue was Suffering,
and each took her turn,
and both kept quiet score?

Well I suppose we both took it too far.

So now you are there and I'm here,
and we're waltzing with our respective demons,
and neither is sure who's ahead.

I am writing you now to cry Mercy.

Amanda Heale

Unspoken to Catherine

Lee

Our mother's maiden name,
Your middle name,
Catherine Lee

She understood you
When no one else could.

Crying when you left,
Crying when you returned,
Patiently loving you,

While the rest of us stood around sermonizing.

Ever since we were little,
You wouldn't let me define you.

I tried and the more I did, the more you resisted.
That has always been your way.

And mine has always been to analyze
What you wanted kept
Wrapped up and hidden.

Like the Christmas Santa got our stockings mixed up
And I opened yours
You were angry
Didn't want what was meant for me
So then I opened mine too.

Alexandra

After *Something Alexander*, I think a friend of our mother's,
My middle name,
Christine Alexandra

Your treasure chest harbored your secrets in neatly,
 Controlled little packages
 Until something ravaged them,
 Blazing through,
 Leaving no remnants of the artifacts of your life.

I watch how carefully you are re-building that safe space
 A bunch of treasure chests, new and fresh, but still locked
 I remember how I coveted your room,
 But when you moved out of it,
 It was only four walls.

*I have always been jealous of your beauty
 Secretly proud when people would, at a distance
 Mistake us for one another.*

You'd probably bawl me out
 For putting this is writing

I'm doing it anyway

Because even though you say you could walk away from it,
 I want to celebrate your life

*I feel I want to sing
 I feel I want dance
 You make me happy Cathy Cathy*

I knew by the time that I was learning to write
 You were too amazing for words
 Shyness personified
 But in my way, I tried to capture you on paper.

I still haven't learned.

Christine Tyrrell

Flirt Not!

she's got the kind of steady face
 that's good for playing poker
 so it doesn't appeal
 to prettyface men

her arched eyebrows
 spell censure while
 her batting eyelashes
 are not comehithers
 but dust-clearing tics

a slight curving smile
 doesn't beckon strangers
 but hides
 her secret dreams

and a full-mouth smile
 baring all teeth
 makes her the Cheshire cat
 grinning at all the flirts
 working their faces so hard
 to catch the prettyface men.

Trish Dale

He and She

Long ago, there once was a he and a she
 and they met
 He liked annoying her, he found her reaction humorous
 She saw him as a quiet mystery, a challenge
 They evolved into careless friends.
 After awhile, she started seeing him as valuable
 She kissed him He kissed back
 She threw him into a whirlwind of romance
 He saw it as a good change
 She clung to him poetically
 He kept a realistic distance
 She felt hurt, he asked "Why?"
 She didn't know exactly, so she told him gibberish that was true
 and she left.
 Then she hopped on a plane, and really left
 He moved on and forgot her
 She thought about him almost every day
 She went home with hopes as high as heaven
 He was glad to see her
 As they talked, she searched for love in his eyes
 But there was none.
 So she hardened her heart and hated him
 She hated him with that sore heart
 And he was unaware of the change
 Because he was indifferent to her presence.
 She held back tears
 And he never knew.
 So she left, looking behind her every step
 He smiled and said goodbye.
 Her friends patiently told her to get over it
 And she will.
 And she has.

Carol Liao

Temple

I'm sitting in church
 writing about men and bodies
 and the pastor just said sex
 and I forgot that my body was a temple of God.
 But it doesn't matter that I forgot.

Carol Liao

Late Morning

raspberries fell
 because the leaves were turned
 arms became feet
 hair became ankles
 legs
 toes separated on a kitchen floor
 and her hair became a brush
 that was used on the counter
 and still she felt
 a line across her chest
 from his elbow the night before

Carol Liao

for E.

She sits in a wheelchair
mending a broken hip
a fractured soul, ingests
Dilantin and Vitamin D
in these aging, surreal
days of survival

On Sundays, I curl her hair,
gather her treasures into a
vinyl purse, as she chooses
her best dress and pearls
arthritic hands open the Book,
a head bows in compliance

The rest of the week passes
slowly, one meal at a time
though she still craves
chocolate, she is given a
sorbital fruit drop and
monitored for choking

Window watcher, she waits for
the kitty with white boots,
looks out onto the world
from behind the latched sill,
amuses pedestrians with her
confused profanity

There's a picture of her
hanging on the bedroom wall,
next to the portable commode
where she shifts in full view,
she was dressed as an angel
for All Hallow's Eve

The photo made the local
paper, lifestyles section
the black on white chatty smile,
a tiara and starry wand made
from industrial-sized foil,
my angel, fallen

I imagine him, alive, with
eyeglasses polished
inspecting the blurred print
over a cup of coffee, a faint
smile tracing the rim of
cracked china
Oh father, her father,
Are you in heaven?

She still dreams of him
at night, curses his ugly name
a flurry of memories and
motion invade, as she bangs
against the steel framed bed,
sometimes, she even seizures

It is this monster, I wish to
kill, as I stroke her temples,
kiss her pruned cheek,
whispering you are safe now,
you are safe, as if to a child,
God dammit, let her sleep

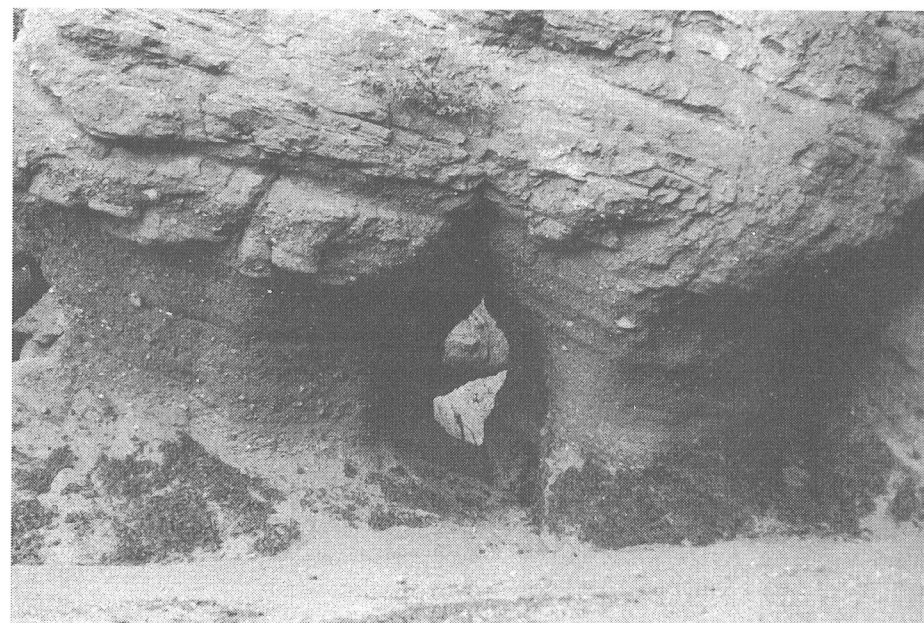
Until the wakening sound of mew
is heard beyond the pane,
and a gentle familiar peers in,
to honour,
my angel, rising.

smooth stars orgasm . . .

smooth stars orgasm tearing orgasm slow sad orgasm
 pride orgasm
 whorl cadence orgasm thin clenching orgasm
 self-scarred orgasm self-owned orgasm
 laughing orgasm
 pale orgasm blues orgasm round orgasm
 only breath orgasm
 long time coming orgasm
 my blood orgasm crying orgasm your blood orgasm
 fuck you orgasm
 rank splintered orgasm masochistic orgasm
 standing orgasm buckling orgasm
 finger orgasm tongue fuck orgasm fear orgasm
 hate you orgasm rainbow orgasm
 menstrual pain orgasm honey orgasm sweet sweet fist orgasm
 holding hair orgasm holding ass orgasm
 eyes wide numb orgasm
 dripping orgasm sucking orgasm singing orgasm
 hiplip biting orgasm

Sarah B. Wiseman

Vulva



Maya Hammer

She does not eat mushrooms.

It comes out at the worst possible time:
Cocktails for my cousin's second wedding.
Just as patriarchal conformity has settled
Once again; as triumphant canapés
Circle the room on dishes
Held by fragrant manicured hands
And a thread of my gown
Is unravelling in my fingers.

No thank you, you say, I don't eat mushrooms.
And a grumble rolls gently through the reception
The groom struts off irritated,
The bride tries to smile, benignly disappointed,
While her mother approaches from her vantage point
Behind the wedding cake
With pursed complexion and telling eyebrows,
Recognising that you are clearly not
Part of the family.

But my dear, she remarks, weary and confident
These are Champignons Blancs
From France,
Quite a different kind of mushroom altogether.
Which is true and has to be acknowledged
And a sigh of pity relaxes the gathering
And the only thing absent is a round of that cricketing applause
Mixing the perfunctory and polite in
Perfect proportion.

And of course you agree, equally confident
If not quite so weary. But add just for the record:
I have never found a mushroom I could stand.
And a Stir has now been created. Listeners gasp,

Anecdotes being told across the hall slow and fade away,
As the eye of civilisation is turned upon us.
And I desperately want the altercation to end
Because I am a coward and not good in Situations,
But distemper already murmurs about the room.

But surely there are some kinds of mushrooms
That she is not adverse to.
Isn't that a form of prejudice? And the pursuit begins:
There are simply too many kinds of mushrooms to refuse them all
And A good mushroom can never be resisted.
Momentum building, the bustle spreading
Another one who doesn't like mushrooms?

It is an epidemic, it wasn't like this during the war,
But not much is, and more's the pity.
And can't we do anything to convince her?
Was it the schooling? Probably.
It's American popular music's influence.
Such a pity for such a charming girl. But
You never know who it will be next.

The veterans bristling at you in their corner
She must be some kind of communist.
Their wives shaking their heads sadly
Perhaps it is a phase. It is most likely a phase.
But the soldiers are resolved in their distemper
It is an act of perverse selfishness
The women unable to argue:
Certainly their parents will be mortified.

The older children, distracted from pursuing
Drunkenness at the punch bowls,
Are enthusiastically impressed: *That's cool, they say,*
I mean it's weird, but it's really cool.
While the younger ones hide behind their parents,
Gripping bashfully onto trouser legs,
Or hiding in the soft comfort of gowns.

And I feel myself weakening under all this scrutiny,
 Fearing that I will be swept away.
 And the bride's mother is relentless
 Holding you sternly by the wrist.
My dear I will find you a mushroom to die for
 she declares, turning to the congregation with
 A pearl of wisdom poised: *It is all in the breeding.*

So the Grande Dame is ready to drag you around the room
 And introduce you to every softened stuffed
 Pampered and diced mushroom available
 All elegantly turned out and ready for your consumption,
 While I step to your side so angry I could cry,
 And needing your protection.
 But you are steady as a rock, narrowing your eyes,
 Declaring loudly and deliberately
You can stuff your mushrooms
You can bloody stuff them

Then turning to me and nodding
 Regal and beautiful and furious
 And me offering myself to you at that moment
 Entering your safe haven, because it is time to leave.
 And then we exit the hall,
 You so tall and so beautiful,
 And me blushing with pride and tears
 As I follow in your elegant wake:
 Two women together
 Resisting the tastes of society,
 And refusing to eat mushrooms.

Joshua Lyons

"doghouse"

4 am and i woke you up snoring on my back
 so you shook me and bloody climbed out of bed
 and opened the backdoor to shout barbaric at the black puppy
 howling out the night in frozen snow and shriveled moonlight

in bed again you shook me and said stop snoring
 but the howls and snores ignored you so you bloody
 climbed out of bed and did a very strange thing

(not half as strange though
 as that summer day you were
 sick in bed with fever and
 managed to get up and go down to the
 cellar and load the 22
 and shoot and kill all sixteen of
 my guinea hens because you said
 you'd heard enough of their racket)

4:20 am and you just went out slammed the door and
 hauled the head off the snowman our boys made after school
 hauled it off and rolled it around and around until it got bigger

and bigger

and bigger

and bigger

toward the doghouse.

Alice Terry

a long line poem, "What About Me?"

what about me, dad – why can't i go fishing with you and buddy? hey guys, can i play on your team? why not? i want to – i want to stay out late at night and hang with those italian boys smoke and tell jokes with those thin italian boys with soft red cigarette packs rolled in their t-shirt sleeve muscle tight black jeans and whistle on the corner of main and maple or ride slippery horses hold the reins at sunset on locust avenue in the table over there you can see out my bedroom window at dusk hazy with smoke and steam and night stirring johnny out there circling and circling under the wishing star and moon riding midnight all alone, round and around sometimes johnny and i get a team together and throw his football back and forth, back and forth, but we can't play the game he plays the game somewhere else where girls don't i once threw a basketball against the post office wall in what they call broad daylight for an hour i once played baseball, held a bat, but wasn't any good at it i was better at skipping rope holding the rope and churning double dutch chanting blondie and dagwood went downtown/blondie bought an evening gown/(someone) bought a pair of shows/and dagwood bought the evening news/and THIS IS WHAT IT SAID/ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, a hundred/HOT PEPPER up against the wall under the huge and narrow school windows on the little slab of black asphalt that circled the old school like a collar around a neck like a choke chain for girls we skipped and sang and i was also good at ballet (god, I loved ballet) after school on thursdays in my black leotard and tights and smooth pink capezio slippers with the white elastic strap to hold them on and mrs middleton playing piano and mrs shaynee telling us what to do with our legs and our backs keep them straight and our bellies hold them in hold your chin up girls, point, extend, breathe, rest and rest now kick first then turn can you hear the rhythm? and one and two and three and four now kick and turn yes and yes (smacking the map pointer on her pale pink thigh) and kick and turn thank you mrs middleton it's time for the second group beginners intermediates and my group my group that had to wait for two whole hours in tights and

leotards and slippers watching the little girls all the girls all girls and listen to the rhythm and numbers just like skipping rope but with more grace (extend extend, gleeside-gleeside-a-sombly) for eight years right into those toe shoes and lambs wool and that torture that made my feet bleed and my arch wasn't very deep and i was getting past it too big and bulky for nureyev to hold onto by grade six i tried basketball but got cut from the team although they let me keep score hold the clipboard instead of the ball because i wasn't aggressive in any way probably from all that ballet but i could always swim and hold my breath better and better every summer in the dark lake early in the morning freezing and shivering in northern waters i learned strokes and kicks and jumps and dives and endurance earned badges to sew on my one piece suit and went as far as you can go all the way to the races and the bronze medallion but i wanted to join the rowing team, the crew and pull the oars and slide my body back and forth and move that skinny boat like a bullet on water i stopped wishing for a horse i wanted to grow up and do more than read novels and nancy drew and young female journalist romances and keep house and look after my sisters and brother like waiting in line i just wanted my turn choose me me me me choose me what about me? and even now when you need a free hand and think of me and turn to me or ignore me i'm asking you who you think i am ? really who do you think i am? and what about me here holding onto things like your beer and dinner plate your kids and their routines holding you up holding you down holding the phone holding the fort when i never had this in mind from the start.

Alice Terry

consumer

when i was young and plump
 i used to dream about saving the girl
 i'd swing from a vine just like on tee vee
 snatching her from the terrorists
 offering my manly
 monosyllabic comforts

but it was hannah who picked
 me up from the gutter
 licked me clean like a mother cat
 lapping life into her young
 hannah who vomited from the
 taste of it
 but loved me still

so i tried to be the hero
 when the perfume adds came on
 and she cursed her body
 in the skinny full-length mirror
 i came up from behind and put my arms
 around her like tarzan would
 bought her what i thought she wanted

and when i woke up mornings
 i'd stroke her back and tremble at the
 grate on bones where they
 pushed at the skin

but when she dropped to ninety-five
 i played the turncoat and
 doctors put a vine down her throat
 they told me

in a general hospital kind of way
 that hannah is a palindrome
 a word consuming itself

in my dreams when i swung
 with her body in my arms
 she bit me and fell free
 floated up with the breeze
 whispering
 it isn't half as glamorous
 saving the girl from herself

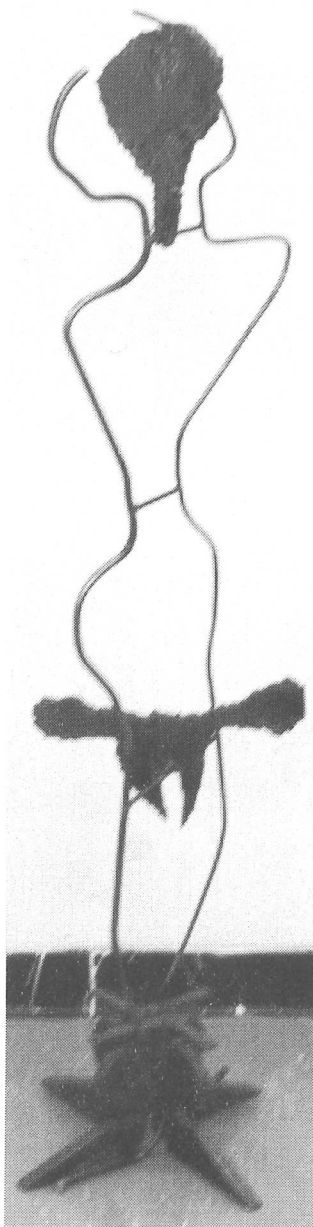
but my dreams were wrong
 turns out that
 you can feel pretty heavy
 being light as a feather

the straps are gone and
 hannah's still here
 getting it together
 somewhere
 I should know but
 even tarzan would have spooked if
 jane had pulled that kind of
 disappearing act

i told her i'd stand by her
 she told me she wanted to fly
 now we're both eating our words

Robert McGill

role model



Donna-Marie Romero

Identity

This morning
I get up
I ask
Who am I?
A Mrs. Lee?
I'm middle-aged, you know.

Henry laughs,
"You still keep your maiden name.
(My maiden name happens to be Lee.)
Chantel and Francine,
2 co-workers
in my college,
still keep their maiden names
after they married."

I laugh,
"Right.
This reminds me of
the 2 sisters on Whig-standard.
They run a tea-room
in Bath.
I don't know
they are sisters.
The have different names.
One
has her husband's.
The other, being divorced,
switches back to her father's."

Henry says,
 "Carol Cooke,
 Adrienne Clarkson."
 Carol and Adrienne are from Hong Kong.
 They married husbands from Canada.
 After they divorced,
 they still keep their husbands' names.

Henry says,
 "Chan Fong An-san."
 She is the Hong Kong Chief Secretary.
 Like every Chinese woman
 she adds
 her husband's name
 in front of
 her father's.
 Her public school friends can still trace her.

May Chan

La chose

A la table on a parlé
 Of Quebec politics
 of his wife and children
 of Arab women and their lives

Il déteste le pays
 where women wear the veil
 where they are seen as property
 and kept behind high walls

Il m'a aidé à découvrir
 what I have always observed
 his language
 spoke the words well

C'est déplorable que
 in gobal terms
 Arab women
 have come to be seen as

La chose.

Sara Gross

Neckline

Beauty is
 Looking for
 The light
 Inside
 And I can see it
 Not in her body
 And not through
 The windows
 It's exposed to
 Us all
 Not in her naked
 Self
 And not through
 The design of
 Degas
 But through the
 Line
 So easy to cross
 But stretched out
 For not only me
 To see that
 Beauty

Azin Morad Hassel

Forever

That crooked smile
 Only top teeth
 That auburn hair
 That smells so good
 And feels so
 Soft skin
 With dimpled cheeks
 That stumbled walk
 On stick legs
 That matched those
 Thin arms and that
 Smooth waist
 That sweet breath . . .
 . . . makes you all so coarse
 And not who I love
 Not who I miss
 And not who I am
 Because she is me
 And I am her
 And she is gone
 And I didn't go
 Even though she asked
 And now I'm alone
 I still love her
 Because she cried
 For us
 While we loved
 Each other
 That night
 Forever

Azin Morad Hassel

Real Butches Don't

Have you ever

Been taken aback by a womyn you just met?

Exchanged that all-knowing glance, and not known what was going to come next?

Given her your phone number, and then swallowed your heart every time the phone rang?

Gotten a friend to call you just to double check your answering machine, so that you didn't miss her call while you were throwing in a load of darks?

Dove across the living room to get to the phone, and answered it trying not to sound anxious or short of breath?

Give up all hopes that she would call, gone out, only to come home and find that she did?

Practiced or rehearsed your tone of voice/what you were going to say to her, while working up the guts to return her call?

Been so excited about going for coffee with her, that it took two days to pick out a pair of torn jeans, and a T-shirt?

Have you ever gone to the café an hour early to make sure you wouldn't be late, and found her already there too?

No?

Me neither Because Real Butches Don't.

Phoenix Wright

for her joy, exposed . . .

autism an (dis)ability a challenge a knowing
a knowing too much stimulus stimulus

i remember her at the day camp seventeen with the long body jeans red sweater saggily around her brown hair knatty eyes darting darting at walls pictures picking them up putting them down when her hand is placed there by someone else walls pictures picking them up putting them down her few words but moans and laughs

i remember her eyes glazed her motions quiet sitting clothing stifling her hand sometimes moving fingers pressing down against her jeans zipper stimulation smothered and us trying to enthuse the rest of the campers to sing stupid songs 'bringing home a baby bumblebee won't my mommy be so proud of me' while she's sitting silenced eyes to us unseeing us maybe remembering maybe wanting and not having not having clothing stifling

i remember her in the changeroom for the pool the commotion of getting all the campers out of clothes into bathing suits her laugh her joy in her nakedness her hand moving hand moving to her dark triangle of hair flesh beneath my eyes glancing there glancing away there away as her worker pulls her hand away says 'that's bad' and tries to entice her into her pink bathing suit stretched to sliding over her shoulders and falling away once and twice once its on each time her hand quickly strong moves through her curls barely to clut her laugh in my ears as i change my body clothed then naked quickly glancing there away covered to be submerged in the wetness of the pool knowing that each time her grasping fingers want curl her laugh shifts to slight scream as her hands are pulled away again and again until her worker ties her suit into a knot at the back to keep it from sliding from her shoulders to keep it from exposing her joy her joy

Sarah B. Wiseman

History

morphine *n.* the principal alkaloid of opium, a bitter white crystalline base, a habit-forming narcotic widely used for the relief of pain and as a sedative.

i.

My grandmother asked me to fetch her a knife from the kitchen to put under her pillow while she slept.

"What for?"

She looked me fiercely in the eye.

"Because your parents are trying to kill me."

ii.

When I was fourteen my mom and dad went to see a Mae West movie marathon in Toronto.

I stayed home and vacuumed dirt
from a potted fern
I kicked over.

My grandmother held a pocket mirror to her face and applied lipstick from her bed.

She had just moved in that spring
with all her equipment
arranged carefully in our
living room
like artifacts
of someone already dead.
Later we played cards and she sang.

It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.
Do wa do wa do wa do wa.

iii.

My mother ran away when she was sixteen to live in a swampy apartment with her boyfriend on the fringes of Montreal.

One picture remains
etched with white fold lines,
him smoking hand-rolled cigarettes and
her chewing Thrills
on a corduroy couch.

She lived there until the landlord
kicked her out for paying rent
with a cheque from a closed account
and for the night they
accidentally melted the knife
right to the stove element.

When she arrived back home
my grandmother –
the stuff of legends –
ignored her for three and a half months.

iv.

All that talk, just talk.

v.

Ann moved in when her thigh bones
crackled like aluminum foil
and when everyone started talking about Duty.

I caught my mother one evening
sobbing into my father's shoulders
a pan of bacon burning on the stove
splattering the back of his
pressed white shirt with grease.

It'll only be for a few months, he said.
 The girls will help out.
 And I don't think she's still walking.
 By springtime this'll be over.

vi.

Hatred is being in junior high
 and having your mother break
 open your diary with a shrimp fork.
 It is when she drives the
 yellow volkswagen
 to the dance where
 you are wearing new
 hip huggers
 and a shirt that reveals a tan brown stomach
 and drags you out by the ear
 for what you wrote
 October 14, 1965.

Hatred drips like clotting cream over your eyes.

vii.

This is my aunt taking me out for my bat mitzvah to a fancy dinner.

This is my self conscious squirming in a new dress
 and the mellowed light making her face
 a bit more orange.

This is for when she tells me, after peach schnapps,
 that my grandmother
 used to throw fireplace logs at them for talking back.

That my grandmother
 gave her a hairline fracture after she pierced her own ears
 with an ice cube
 and sewing needle.

That my grandmother is being eaten
 alive by a cancer in her bones

chewing through the marrow
 and spitting on her spine.

it's the most painful kind there is, you know.

I shiver and she raises her glass
 to toast.

viii.

it don't mean a thing
 and little histories come
 to find their resting place

if it ain't got that swing
 or learn how to stop.

ix.

This is how the police report reads:

February 4, 1994

Ann Smythe,
 71,

suffering from bone cancer and tumors on the brain

left her daughter's house where she was residing and walked,
 barefoot, to a neighbouring house where she informed
 Mrs. Holmes, a resident
 that a murder attempt
 had been made on her life
 by her son-in-law.

Mrs. Holmes then contacted the police who arrived
 to find Ms. Smythe seated at the kitchen table.

Ms. Smythe was apparently having paranoid reactions to the substantial
 quantities
 of morphine being administered
 to control the pain associated
 with her condition.

Upon her daughter's arrival at Mrs. Holmes' residence, Ann withdrew the allegations and complained of being tired.

No charges were laid and Ms. Smythe was returned to her daughter's house.

x.

my mother and I sit smoking cigarettes at breakfast
both agreeing it's a filthy habit but what the hell

My grandmother has left her nightgown
on the ironing board for my mother to wash.

it is ruined
thick stripes
mud and grass

we're both thinking of her pulling her tiny, bent body through the rain,
scratching the blue cotton fabric along the sidewalk
bawling the whole way in agony.

and watching my mother
I inhale slowly,
sucking the marrow
until my lungs burn.

Andréa Feddersen

Coloured Night

Outside my window,
depending on the time of night,
Whether it rains,
or the newness of snow.
Can be seen,
between dreams.

An array of colours,
that rival the palate
of any painter,
of paint store,
or photograph,
of sunlit shore.

I've seen it pale lilac
with the trees superimposed;
haled in white,
on angled pools of moonlit flora,
silently sleeping on my floor.

I've seen it deepest peach.
A colour so like a smell,
it fills the room wit imagined aroma.
I smell it
before I open my eyes.

I've seen it so densely blue.
 So dense,
 that the shadows of branches,
 and tops of chimneys,
 are ill defined.
 Yet they hang on the wall,
 like heavy paintings.

Outside my window,
 depending on the time of the year,
 and the formations of clouds,
 and the effect of the lake.
 the angels remember me.

Monique Wells

for the named

a watching collects
 'round a piece of patchwork
 a fragment of the Quilt

an epitaph
 calling out the names
 in multi-layered texture

we wear red ribbons
 in support of hope, undying
 and light candles of honour

as local musicians sing
 of universal sorrow and
 building bridges of lovestone

towards a new understanding
 of all bonds, strong-willed
 in the cruel night air

I remember Michael tonight.

working the clouds on a
 maple leaf plane, freedom
 port-of-call

until the Tropic of Cancer
 a damned pathology,
 forced him to sell tickets

behind the terminal counter
to all the travelers
still able to fly

I remember David tonight.

having a beer together
at the end of a shift
in a bar that is no longer

we met on Wellesley Street
just before he was told
and he reopened the salon

to give me a free bang trim
and a bottle of shampoo that
smelled of green apples

I remember Dr. John tonight.

he refused to give my mother
Thalidomide pills in 1963
saving my sister's limbs

allowing Jo to swing from
monkey-bars and turn cartwheels
during a childhood of indifference

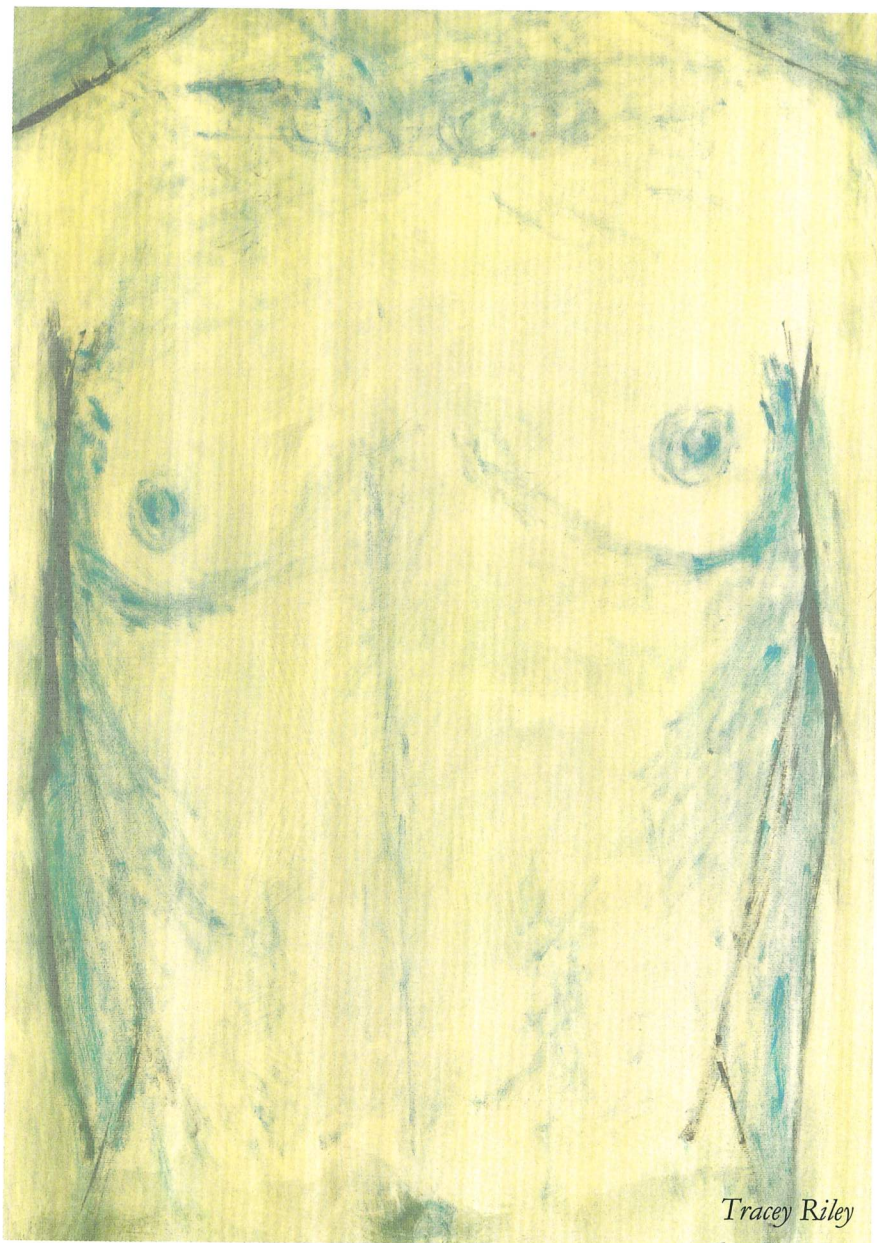
thank for the life-care
I stand beside my sister,
as we wave goodbye

Catherine Lynn Davidson

Pilgrimage/ NYC



The Mask



Tracey Riley

Looking for Self



Julianne Patterson

Word from an Observer

In the cycle of your life, everything worked against you
 Until you began to work against yourself.
 Do not think I did not notice your acts of violence.
 Or hear the sounds created by persistent fingers,
 Digging into the bowels of your throat,
 Ridding your body of unwanted substances
 That worked against your goals.
 To these acts of violence I stood as a witness,
 Observing your pride in a will that said no
 To everything but one grapefruit a day.
 You smiled as skin molded to your bones,
 Everything was as it should be.

Now you are taking up less space in the world,
 In the hope that this will be your salvation.
 It was the flesh that made you vulnerable,
 Now that you are less you are safe,
 No one will notice you anymore.
 You walk with crossed arms,
 Sticking to corners and whispers.
 So far these things have worked,
 So far they have not noticed you,
 So far you have successfully blended,
 But you try not to count your luck.

Vicky Brown

— longing again —

sitting on my bed
 reclining in a hat and fuzzy pants
 high
 getting more high by the minute
 swirls of smoke on the doorknob
 thinking of your arms
 pulling me into your softness
 diving into wet moist flesh
 filling myself in your slippery warmth
 on my bed
 in my hat
 with the smoke
 and the ocean
 and your arms

Jocelyn Heisel

My second encounter with a blue-eyed boy

The night I told him I wanted him he lay on my bed in his yellow t-shirt:
boyish, innocent, giggling.

"I don't know how to deal with you," he sputtered.

He squirmed and was shy and was liking it.

"Why are you grinning at me like that?"

I just did.

And he blinked and his eyes were blue and I was brown and wasn't afraid
to be bright that night. He knew it.

I pinned him down on his ribcage. It was hard.

"You're an animal," he says, "Why do you rape me?"

Hands intertwine.

"I like you. Sue me."

"Are you mad at me?"

No. Just quit being facetious and rub my back

But he doesn't know what facetious means

He is just a little boy learning calculus

"I choose you," I said. Out of all the grinning little white boys.

He laughs and shakes his head, perhaps in awe.

His hand grazed my breast while our blue brown eyes locked

I took his glasses off and touched the pink scar there

He is practically blind without those glasses

But oh how blue and tempting, sucking me in
making me want to crush

what makes him see

what makes him blind

"I'm just a little Asian girl."

Stupid little Asian girl —

Stunned when my head hit the floor

When he called me racist

conceited

narrow-minded

Now he tries to justify

That kind of hurt.

"I'm sorry," he said.

Then I woke up.

Rachelle Vilannera

Bamboo Frame



Rachelle Vilannera

soup

tonight i cooked thought
about women and cooking
and how much easier it is to cook
sitting down
easier on the back
and feet
better for the soup too –
grounding

tonight i cooked and
listened to Elvis Presley with my mother
and wanted to ask her if she knew
Elvis was a thief
or if she cared (like i do, about music rights)
without it developing into an argument while she
chopped onions
washed a measuring cup in tears
tasted the soup
for salt

i didn't ask i sat
on the floor and diced potatoes for the
soup
and sang hound dog with my mother
laughing

Sarah B. Wiseman

Mission Statement:

The Queen's Feminist Review strives to represent the diversity of feminist experience through poetry, prose, and visual art. Our continuing mission is to provide a viable forum for feminist artistic expression within the Queen's and Kingston communities. As feminism changes and grows, so our Review expands to acknowledge the many voices that continue the discussion of feminism. We aim to produce a publication where feminist voices can be heard simultaneously as individual and in unison. Our aspiration is to produce a publication of high artistic quality, thus claiming a place for feminist art in our community.