

Legacy



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Winter Issue 2010

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2009 WTAMU
English, Philosophy, and Modern Languages
National Poetry Month Contest

Student Winner

Looking Out the Window on the Way to Work
by Lynn Barringer

I saw your congregation this morning,
Gathered on the reflection of the sky,
At peace they rest in the wisdom of generations.

The Elders, ever vigilant, shelter the poor in their arms.
They wait for you unmoved, year after year.
At peace they wait in the wisdom of generations.

Your sanctuary, built atom by atom, sustains and reflects
And breathes the cadence of your presence.
At peace it speaks of wisdom for generations.

2009 WTAMU
English, Philosophy, and Modern Languages
National Poetry Month Contest

Faculty/Staff Winner

Orange rondeau
by David Craig, Ph.D.

You can't rhyme an orange, what a thicket!
Your memory fails, no stimulus will prick it,
consult your weighty books when the words escape,
and read Augustan poets, ripe to ape,
you'll find a distaff rhyme, that's the ticket. . .

That golden globe is such a sticky wicket,
the crumpled paper flutters when you flick it,
and worse, your muse is drooling, mouth agape:
You can't rhyme an orange.

The word's too round and pithy, why'd you pick it?
The weaseling of mandarins won't trick it.
Your fruited line is awful, and there's no escape,
you wail and cry, "I should have used a grape!"
The taste is sweet, yet poets never lick it:
You can't rhyme an orange.



Artwork by Johnathan Wayne

The Pessimist's View of the University

by Lesandra Botello

I walk up the steps that feel hard beneath my feet.

I guess all steps feel like this

I hadn't noticed until this moment,
until these steps.

The fog takes its cue, taps the podium, and directs the clouds to
move in steady.

The rain begins to fall over everything and everyone.

It just made me feel so cold.

My professors first introduce themselves as doctors, then as
teachers.

They then talk about how many Ph. Ds they have, and how long it
took them to write their dissertation
(a lot and a really long time).

I stare at the sidewalk, dejectedly.

My eyes graze over the word, "Bitch" forever etched into the
cement of the sidewalk.

It only justifies my hatred.

I stand in the shadow of the main building and scowl at the
stairways.

I look at the stricken beasts, their rage no longer fierce but
forever reigned.

I still fear them.

I fear becoming them.

The Optimist's View of the University 2 years later...

by Lesandra Botello

What can I say?

In the fall, I fell for your sunlight-leaved trees.
When those leaves took their last peaceful sigh,
spreading their gold onto the grounds,
I felt like I was walkin' on sunshine.
Wah oh.

In the winter, I couldn't deny that those lights sparkling in the
well-groomed bushes made me feel warm inside.

The free refills of coffee helped, too.

(I know they aren't *technically* free, but they are if you're fast).

In the summer, I was displeased to learn that my grammar class
was situated above a meat laboratory, but the smell of carcasses
never wafted our way.

Or maybe the grammar overpowered it.

Whatever the case...

grammar | was \ fun , I thought.

I shouldn't have feared being stifled.

I learned that the wild-flamed passion that accompanies
doctorates is infectious.

I'm glad they shared the fire.

Today, I was walking

head down again, but less dejected,

and I saw "Deep down, we are all butterflies" etched into the
sidewalk.

Probably the work of some crazed entomologist...

But I think he meant well.

I think we all do.

Fire in My Sky Puts Fire in My Soul



Artwork by Katie Lawson

Hunting Louisiana

by Paul R. Scanlin

A thorny morning
 bramble-gray sunrise
 thicket of clouds
 steps like squirrels step
 long, slow around low limbs,
Not to be heard.

Lie down gently twig leaf and vine,
Let me pass quietly
 into these river woods.

One Time at Coffee

by Johnathan Wayne

Every sip seemed to linger
Upon your lips as you spoke
Your decaf was an elixir
Revealing truths which
You openly shared
As every syllable and
The overflowing ashtray
Became a smoky memory
Filled with silent moments
As angels flew overhead
Disturbing our conversation



Artwork by Jessica Shogren

Gretta

by Laura Wylie

Gretta was gorgeous and far from plain,
but lately her life is quite mundane.
Alone she lives in a three story house
with eighteen blouses and one white mouse.
Her dishes unused and home always clean;
Gretta is lonely as she's ever been.
Friends, now old, never come by,
and this injustice makes Gretta cry.
She misses the days of simple fun
when life was easy and she was young.
But time goes on and Gretta's cries
cause the blue to fade from her eyes.
And Gretta's lips, once rosy red,
are now lightened with words never said.

Lonesomeness destroyed Gretta's hope,
and one sad day she found a rope.
Gretta dangled while none were clued,
but unlike most she never turned blue.
Hanging high, there she stayed,
until one day a child did play.
And play she did for hours on end,
but Gretta could never know this friend.
When done, the child put Gretta down,
a tiny doll with faded red frown.



Artwork by Frankie Rene Sanchez

Split

by Joseph Westley Ammons

I don't like you.

Let me cut to the quick.

In fact, just give me your quick. And I shall be sure to thoroughly mutilate it, paste the pieces of your quick into a voodoo sculpture, prick your quick with pricks from my lips, then promptly disintegrate the pricked voodoo quick shit.

I really don't like you.

I don't like the way you flick your lipstick-stained cigarette, then twist the butt about six times, every time, until it's out. Until it's really out. Until there's no smoke-signal signifying life. You have to wrench it, don't you?

You.

I don't like your lip-sticked lips. I don't like your stun gun tongue licking your lips six times, overtime, every time, until there's no chance left. No chance the dick at Mickey Six won't lick your lips, lip-sticked or otherwise.

I don't like your toe dangling your stiletto, angling it with subtle, hushed bravado, screaming in a perfectly pianissimo, sumptuously sweet staccato, "I'll take off the rest of this."

I don't like your eyes. The labyrinthine purpose stretching for miles behind them and the minotaur shrieking somewhere in that distance.

The centrifuge spins.
That icy blue wasting boys and girls at intervals.

The quick.

The singularity behind your eyes: It twists me in half.

Yin.

I don't like my favorite dress. The dress you wear, the color of cypress. The one that I'm sure you wore for me beneath the cypress trees where you twirled about, laughing out loud, the smile you wore as bright as sound, as hard as a cloud, as lucid as the deep sea, as special as you and...

Fuck.

You.

And the schmuck that you met down at Flux with all the best drugs. Yeah, you'd know about him wouldn't you? And you can wipe that face right off your face, if the drugs don't do it for you. Quit saying without saying what we both know you're saying, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Yeah. I really, really don't like you.

I don't like your "bang-bang-bangs" cut all Bettie Page. I told you I didn't like Bettie Page. So you Bettie Paged your bangs anyway? It's lame. And it's a shame, but it's working for you - too true - if it gets you screwed.

I don't like your accent; I don't like your every letter, your every emphatic little syllable, becoming a terrible monster licking tongues of fire in my ears. Arda, sempre arda! La misericordia, vi mostro cazzo!

I don't like your perfectly honed balance of loose innuendo, multiple applications of a single intimation. You're just setting the setting in front of you: an orchard where all's free and glee and the only corollary's that you'll always be hungry.

I truly don't like your lies.

So I wrote them down. Your kinetic, frenetic spiderweb of dialectic is trapped in a diagram I fabricated and laminated.

I examine and dissect. You are frozen under my hot lamp.

"Thou canst not leave."

I don't love you.



Artwork by Frankie Rene Sanchez

The Fifth Month

by Bretta A. Kotara

It was a cold January 12th when I found out the baby I was carrying would be a girl. I was riding back to Aunt Louise's house from the hospital in the passenger's seat of George's Jaguar, staring at the sonogram image with a familiar bittersweet feeling. George had been busy campaigning for four months, so today was the first time I'd seen him except for on television and I couldn't decide if I should shout for joy or throw up. I could see him unwrapping a piece of gum out of the corner of my eye. As his jaws clenched, his face became suddenly rugged and strong, though his lips were flawlessly soft and unchapped. He was dressed in a snug navy blue sweater with a matching plaid collared shirt underneath, accompanied with perfectly ironed and pleated khakis. He always dressed perfect, even on days he didn't work. So youthful and handsome, we would look like the perfect couple, no the perfect family. George's curse word, murmured under his breath, caught my attention and snapped me out of my daze.

"What good does that really do?" I asked. "They can't hear you."

He gave me an apathetic look, "It does a lot of good; makes me feel better," he replied. "People shouldn't get on the interstate if they don't know how to drive."

"You should bring that up in your debate tomorrow."

"Funny," he snapped.

I looked back at the image, then at my tummy. “Why do you think I don’t have a bump yet if my baby is six inches long? There’s not a lot of room to hide in there.”

“Beats me,” he answered, his cool blue eyes staring blankly at the road. I hoped the baby would get his eyes. I stared at him, hoping he would turn his head. I remembered the way his eyes would squint and tear up when he laughed really hard. Those same eyes told me I was his forever after we made love, and then turned stern when I begged him to let me spend the night. He always said no and teased me about having a curfew. I fought back the urge to fling myself at him and wondered if he remembered too.

“What do you think of Laura Alisa for a name? I always loved *Little House on the Prairie* and Alisa is your mother’s name, so I thought...”

“It’s the courthouse,” he interrupted, flipping open his phone. I waited, listening to a bunch of political jargon I never understood. After five or so minutes, I realized we were almost at the house so I did my best to look sexy enough to catch his attention. I sat up in my seat so that I could push my chest out a little bit. With my right hand, I hiked my skirt up just enough so he could see my freshly-shaven thighs and I placed my left foot towards the middle of the floor board. Doing my best cool, relaxed look, I gently rubbed my chest with my middle finger and slightly pointed my toes in hopes that he would see the heart-shaped definition of my calf. His eyes stared straight ahead.

He hung up the phone as we pulled up to the front door. As the car was flooded with silence, I tried desperately to think of anything to say but, “Why? What’s wrong? Talk to me!” I

might've spoken up, if he would have only looked at me and if I hadn't already had my answer.

"Good luck on the election. I know you'll win," I managed to say with quivering lips.

With my head down I slowly slid out the door, knowing he wouldn't yell after me. With one last morsel of hope, I prayed he would watch me walk away. His wheels peeled out on the pavement, and I froze on the steps as I watched the black car diminish to a small dot. Wiping a tear from the sonogram, I gazed at my tummy once more – there was a bump after all.

Lottery



Artwork by Sadie Newsome

Understanding Fails

by Davis Willis

The room was filled with the cold, harsh light of fluorescent bulbs. The only break along the antiseptic white walls was a mirror, and below it a sink. The sink was an indistinct industrial model; stainless steel, with nickel-plated fixtures. A small toilet sat in the corner: stainless steel with no walls to ruin the absence of privacy.

The lights buzzed day and night like the inside of some freakish beehive. For the man huddled in the corner, though, words like day and night held no meaning. There was only light and his needs: the need to eat; the need to use the toilet; and the need to please his master, the only visitor to 513's lonely world.

His master named him 513, and to him it was a beautiful name. He had been inside this room for as long as he could remember which was not very long. It was a cell, in truth, but to 513 it was a world. The only one he knew. The level of separation from human contact never occurred to him because, as far as he knew, he had never had much. His master entered from the void as if traveling from another world and this spatial mystery never bothered him.

Above an unassuming piece of the wall, a small green light began to flash. There was no external fixture, but a round, flashing light formed. 513 knew this was a symbol of his Master, his God. He went before the light, and, though no one had ever taught him to, he prostrated himself before the light, his face on the floor and his hands out before him palm down. A portion of the wall rose, and in from the void walked 513's master.

"Hello 13." The abbreviated name always pleased the man on his knees, as a pet name would a child. "Please stand, slowly." 513 rose to his feet straining against his desire to bound with his tongue lolling out of his mouth like a pleased mutt.

“Now, now. Remember our talk? Manners?” 513’s mouth shut painfully on the tip of his tongue before he could get it all the way pulled back into his mouth. His reflexes could not keep up with the desire to please. He could taste the almost metallic tang of his own blood, but showed no discomfort. That talk had been a rough one. It took him hours to grasp the “manners” his master tried to teach him, and days to recover. His Master had it all figured out though, everything he did was done with ease, grace, and an ultimate purpose. Deep down in his most secret thoughts, 513 longed to be just like his Master; or maybe, to be him. There was no hope for that, though. Learning manners, acting and speaking like his master, was impossible. It would take two lifetimes. His thoughts turned dark and stormy with this realization.

“I am trying to turn you into a suitable human specimen. We broke you, and now we will bring you back. You have been here for longer than expected, true, but we will have success.” These words were lost on 513, save one. Broke. He latched onto this word because it was something he knew well. Broke could be fixed. Broke was not hopeless.

“To be a functioning human being, like myself, we need to repair the destroyed parts of your brain. It is barren and needs...re-cultivation. Do you want to be normal? Like me?” 513 nodded till his skull ached. Master gave the slightest nod in return.

“Good. It is so much easier when you are a willing participant. We will begin the training as soon as everything is in order,” and with that he strode back through the void.

With the wall replaced and the light gone, 513 was alone with his thoughts and the process of re-cultivation. Master said he could be like him, but that couldn’t be true. 513 was clumsy and slow, but Master was godlike. *What did he say about the brain? I needed brains? Yes. That was it. I need brains.* 513’s

thoughts blazed anew. Things were clear. Master had said he could be like him, and Master had brains so he would tell 513 how. The something new began to form in his “barren” mind. The simple solution.

Two weeks passed before Master returned to begin the new training. He came in smiling smugly, and had just enough time to notice 513 wasn’t on the floor before him. But he never saw it coming. He was dead before the heralding green light turned to a blinking red. What remained of his face and head – pounded again and again by the room’s sole occupant – lay splattered on the floor,

513 stopped pounding and looked down, seeing the mess for the first time. Disturbed, he scooped the mess into his mouth with a quickness born from desperation. Bits of bone tore the insides of his mouth. His teeth were broken as he desperately chewed on the fragments. *Always chew before you swallow*, his programming told him. He couldn’t stop now; he had to go on. He was close to fixed. It was the only way. Master said it would take brains, so he had to have the perfect brain.

A group of outsiders came through the void, dressed in black with shiny face guards and batons. 513 thought they must be here to welcome him into the pantheon – a group of Others here to witness his ascension. 513 waited for a surge of enlightenment, or some new understanding of his world.

He didn’t understand when the Others began to beat him. He didn’t understand when he fell back dazed and bloody, and, as he slipped into oblivion, his understanding continued to fail him.



Artwork by Johnathan Wayne