

TOTEM 2005



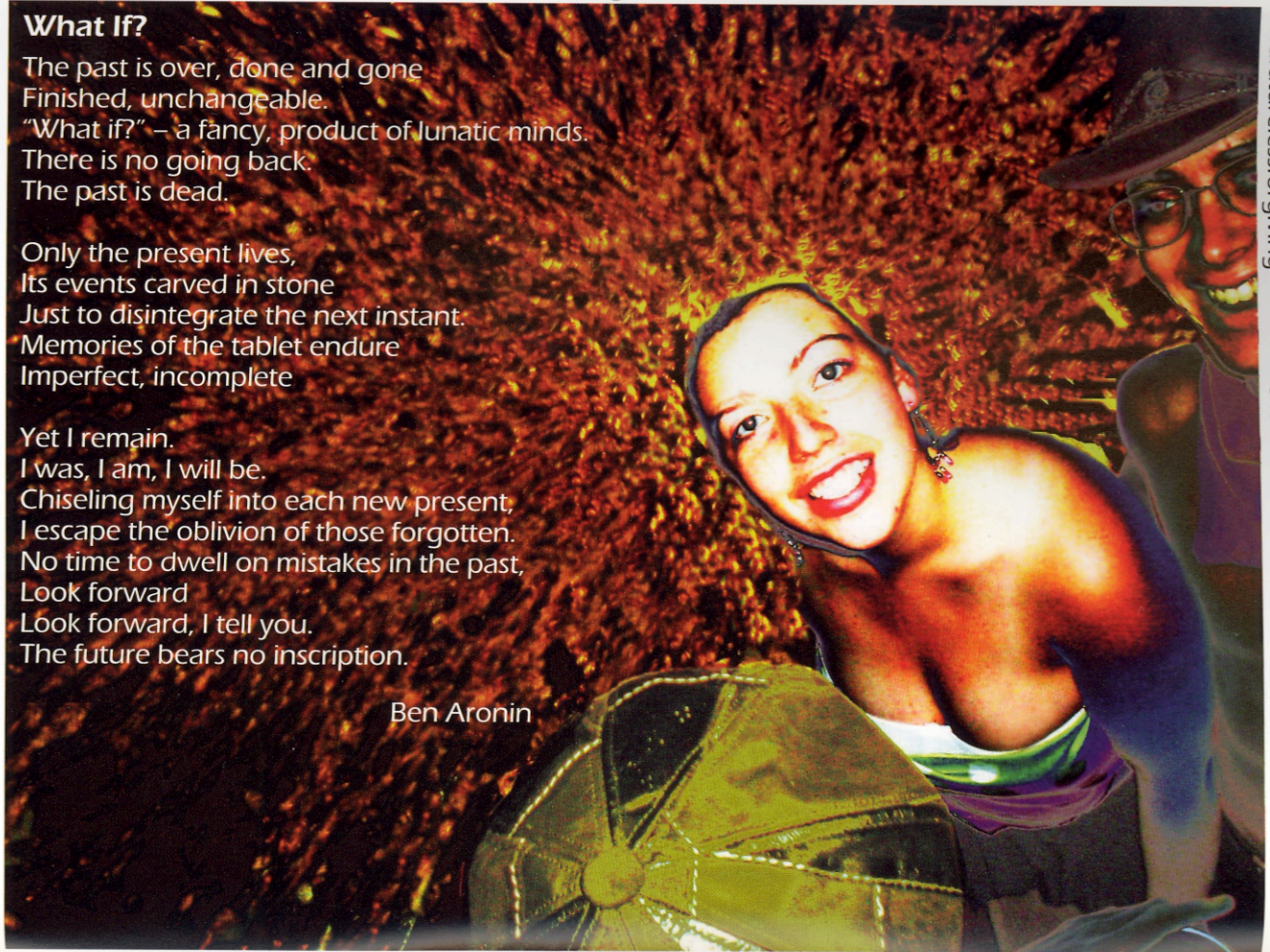
What If?

The past is over, done and gone
Finished, unchangeable.
"What if?" – a fancy, product of lunatic minds.
There is no going back.
The past is dead.

Only the present lives,
Its events carved in stone
Just to disintegrate the next instant.
Memories of the tablet endure
Imperfect, incomplete

Yet I remain.
I was, I am, I will be.
Chiseling myself into each new present,
I escape the oblivion of those forgotten.
No time to dwell on mistakes in the past,
Look forward
Look forward, I tell you.
The future bears no inscription.

Ben Aronin



July 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

yellow leaves,
 I think it was,
 falling in the sunlight,
 or maybe it was only yellow:
 yellow floating down from the sky
 to settle in my mind.

yellow,
 yellow,
 yellow,
 yellow.

I feel the word in my mouth;
 I taste the color,
 thick and sweet.

yellow.
 yellow leaves falling—
 yes that was it—
 yellow leaves,
 and yellow flowers
 and yellow sky,
 well, blue,
 but the air feels yellow
 yellow yellow yellow
 footsteps fall
 to the rhythm of
 yellow

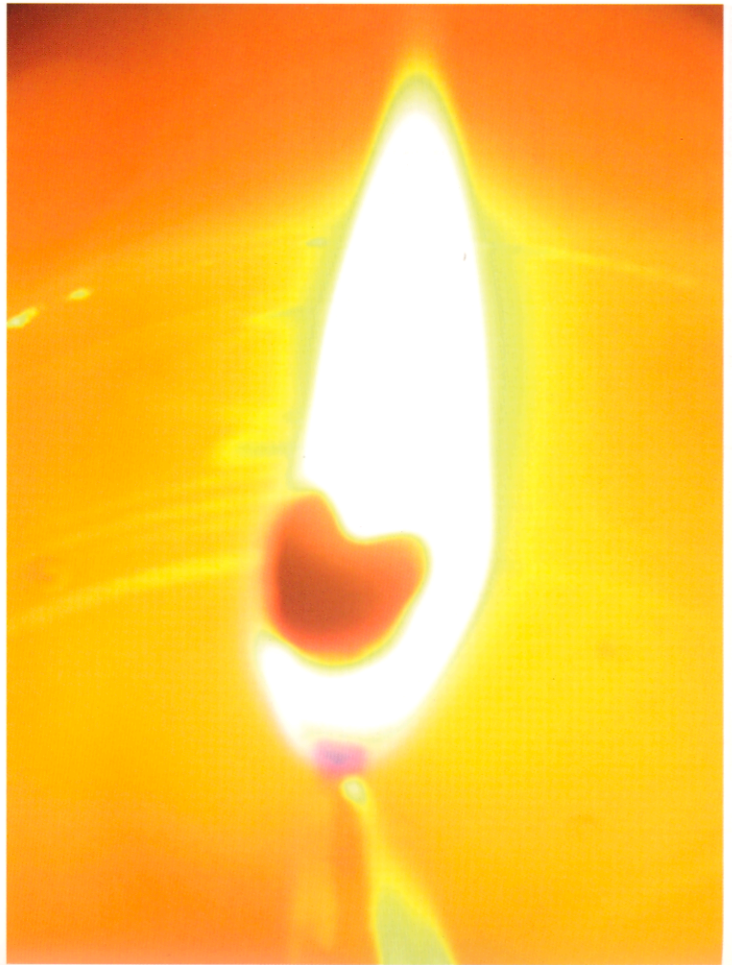
yellow
 yellow
 yellow

bare yellow soles
 falling in the sunlight
 to kiss the yellow earth;
 my bare yellow soul—
 or maybe i was only Yellow,
 floating down
 from the yellow sky.

yellow

flame

mithun divakar



Rebecca Streit

August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 End of SURF	27
28	29	30	31			

150 South Chester Avenue, Apartment 109

Raman Shah

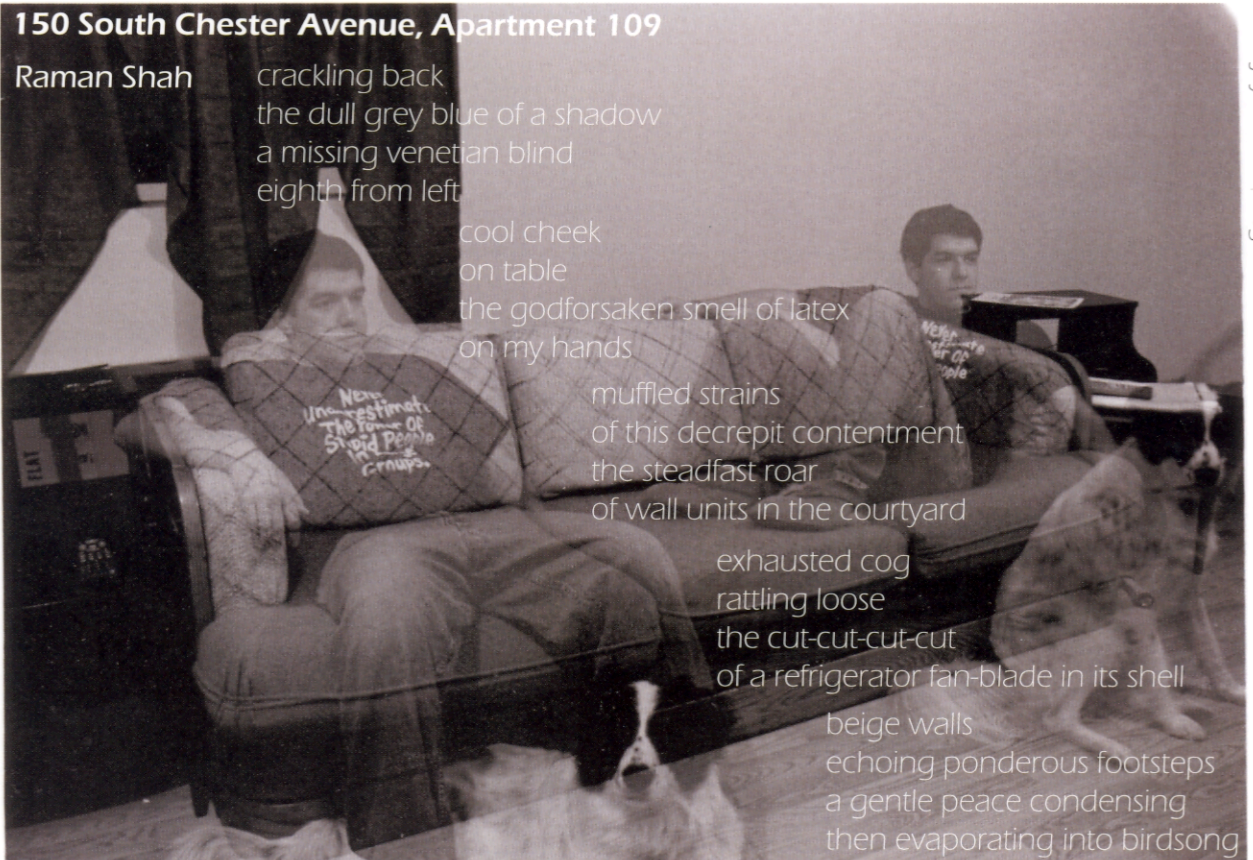
crackling back
the dull grey blue of a shadow
a missing venetian blind
eighth from left

cool cheek
on table
the godforsaken smell of latex
on my hands

muffled strains
of this decrepit contentment
the steadfast roar
of wall units in the courtyard

exhausted cog
rattling loose
the cut-cut-cut-cut
of a refrigerator fan-blade in its shell

beige walls
echoing ponderous footsteps
a gentle peace condensing
then evaporating into birdsong



September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 1st Term Begins	27	28	29	30	

searching for solitude kristy hilands



Nighttime Treehouse

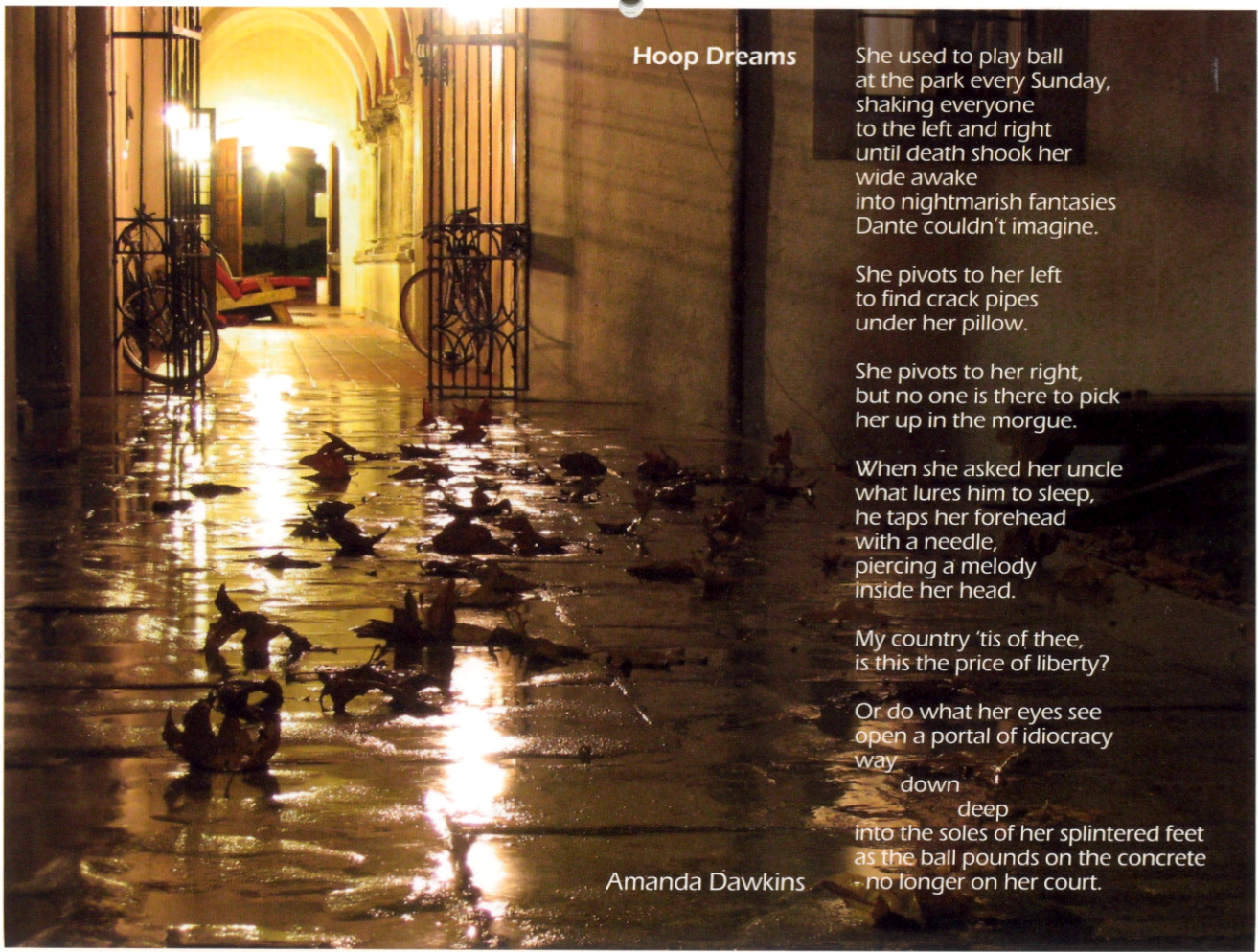
Trains cross planes of perspective
 Of existence; horns blast as a
 Sign of resistant reluctance;
 Chord, minor key, one three seven
 Nine, engines grind out the
 Tune of Maiden Voyage;
 And people are too busy
 Buzzing to notice, but not me.
 I'm right there for all the
 Sounds and sights that make
 This world a crazy place to
 Live in, on and around.
 Surroundings beat like hearts
 Pound we fall asleep in
 Unison and all that we hold
 In common is each other.
 Separate dreams and separate
 Schemes. When we awake she
 Takes the bus into the city.

Dave Yelacic

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Rosh Hashanah	4	5 Ramadan Begins	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Yom Kippur	13	14 Add Day	15 SURF Seminar Day
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Halloween					

rainy night joseph koehler



Hoop Dreams

She used to play ball at the park every Sunday, shaking everyone to the left and right until death shook her wide awake into nightmarish fantasies Dante couldn't imagine.

She pivots to her left to find crack pipes under her pillow.

She pivots to her right, but no one is there to pick her up in the morgue.

When she asked her uncle what lures him to sleep, he taps her forehead with a needle, piercing a melody inside her head.

My country 'tis of thee, is this the price of liberty?

Or do what her eyes see open a portal of idiocracy way

down deep into the soles of her splintered feet as the ball pounds on the concrete - no longer on her court.

Amanda Dawkins

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day	12
13	14	15	16 Drop Day	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Thanksgiving	25	26
27	28	29	30			

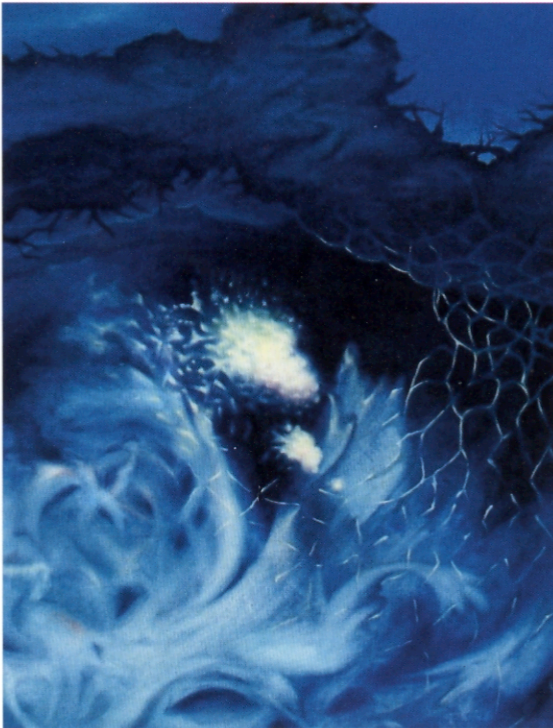
It's too big for me.
 If it were a man, I would need to
 stand on a chair
 To look him in the eye.
 He wouldn't catch me if I tried
 To wrap my arms around him. But
 Lying down, it swallows me whole
 And then some.

I toss and turn to make it stick,
 But it is coy, like a woman,
 Her darkest corners
 Always retreating from my purple feet.

Someone is pulling black silk over my face
 And I can feel the pressure
 Where they are piling dirt on my knees.
 Mother would always find me like that,
 Buried under the covers.

If she were here, she'd heave them off
 Angrily exposing my shame (what shame?)
 The punishment -
 Letting the cold air feast on my warmth.
 She was afraid for me,
 Afraid of what the neighbors would say
 If she lost a child in such a careless way.

If death feels like this,
 I want it to climb in with me.



love is a creature of the deep kristy hilands

But it'd be even better if life was like this,
 Dark and soft and warm.

If I were a man,
 I would want my woman
 to lie over me
 Like this sleeping bag,
 While away the hours
 under the scented folds
 of her supple fat,
 Twice exfoliated and moisturized.
 I would make a brief half-hearted struggle
 To be Don Juan
 Leave her for the tentacles of light
 Grasping at me through the hemp curtains
 Before I am pulled back
 Like a grubby child at the candy store
 And forced to admit that I was
 Only toying
 With the idea of leaving her.

Wrapping her downy wings around me
 Like a mother,
 She would let me kiss her
 Like a mistress,
 She wins by yielding before the fight begins.

Cocooned in this velvet abyss,
 Never have I been so happy not to breathe.

Xiao Peng

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
					Last Day of Classes	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					1st Term Ends	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Christmas & Hanukkah	Kwanzaa					



As long as we aren't staring into space

Eva Murdock

He tried to teach them how to make rock candy. The sugar was supposed to harden on the wooden stirrers. The children were supposed to carry around their **beautiful crystals in all the colors of the rainbow**. I told him maybe it was too humid lately. The children had colored wooden sticks. The sugar water grew moldy and Mr. Webster threw the Dixie cups away on Wednesday.

He tried to teach them about solar energy. **With tin foil, we can harness the power of the sun. They should get a sense, he wrote in his lesson book, of commanding the heavens to do man's bidding.** First he crossed out **man** and wrote **humankind**. Then he crossed out **heavens** and wrote **???**.

The children worked in groups of threes. Mary and the slow twins. Tyler and Curtis and Buddy. **Break things up a little. Here son, move near, in here with Jamie Wilkin's table.** Mr. Webster thought that if the children knew the word **archaic**, they would like it very much, but as a science teacher the opportunity had not come up to share it with them. He did not know how he felt about this sort of **absence of privilege**. So he called the children **son**. Buddy's real name was Benjamin. There were two Bens, whom I had been calling **the Bens**. One day Mr. Webster told me that it made him think of **The Bends**. Mr. Webster's ex-wife was **such a Radiohead fanatic**, he told me that day, while we were on our ways home. So he started calling Ben D. **Buddy**. Buddy's dad was a widower. Mr. Webster told him it was the child's **fake plastic identity**. I wondered about emotional scars of all kinds.

The threes of children pasted together black construction paper and corrugated cardboard and tin foil to make their solar ovens. Mr. Webster took Mary, the first to finish, and her oven outside the classroom to the back stairs, which were sunny in the afternoon. He gave her a bag of marshmallows, a Hershey's bar, and some graham crackers. **Preserve freshness** said the side of the box Mary tore off and threw aside. Mr. Webster picked up the litter while Mary placed the ingredients in her oven. **One two three.** Mary had made a door with cardboard hinges. The light was direct, so the chocolate might even melt.

Mr. Webster used a Slinky to explain light. Buddy held one end while Mr. Webster gave the command **Oscillate!** Buddy convulsed. The slinky oscillated. **This is rather sophisticated**, Mr. Webster told the children. He did not know how to explain color. **Color is light, too**, he told them. **You don't see the rock candy, you see the light reflected from the rock candy.** The children turned and looked at the window whose sill was stained pink and blue from their cups of liquid candy. **Or this green jacket**, Mr. Webster offered, tugging back on their thick, disappointed attention. **This jacket left over from the Halloween party. Is it yours?**

Mr. Webster looked at the mail on his desk for Recipient. **Green Jacket for Son of Recipient. Children's large.** Mr. Webster would do anything for the children. I look at his mail sometimes; Mr. Webster was always eligible for this or he was preapproved for that. He was reprimanded for bringing his personal mail to school. Mr. Webster explained that it was merely for hamster bedding. **The hamster is in the building somewhere, Christine**, he told me. He told everyone. **I have a coalition of students whose concern for the hamster's well-being is paramount.** Mr. Webster asked me if I would provide milk and cookies, **pending the hamster's safe return.** The way he said pending—the children lost hope before my eyes, Christine.

Mr. Webster bought the class white Christmas lights on a long string. He decorated the hamster cage and the windows and the paper cabinet.

On Friday Mary brought Mr. Webster a pansy. Mary walked to his desk at recess and gave it to him privately, when she also told him that she understood all about color. **She knew the pansy needed sunlight to be so pink and purple.** Mr. Webster put the pansy pot on a dish in the windowsill. By Monday it had lost two leaves and three petals. Jamie Wilkin folded two of the petals into the corners of his paper football. Mary watched Jamie Wilkin fold the paper like it was an ancient Oriental art. Like he was peeling apart a mummy. Like she expected it to catch fire under his fingers. I watched Mary watch Jamie Wilkin fold the paper for twelve minutes. When he finished, I looked down and found my hand on my left breast.

As long as we aren't staring into space, Mr. Webster chuckled. **I like to do my job. I like my work.** Mr. Webster had a red beard and a stretched floury face. The children could not see the cracks because they were not looking for them. Mr. Webster thought that if the children knew the word **divorce** they would understand the **bastardization of language**. Mr. Webster had crossed out **bastardization** and had written **Ask Christine—also coffee.** I didn't know what to do when I found this in the hamster bed on Tuesday. He had written it on a coffee filter. I should not have wondered all that much.

The Subway of Stolen Memories

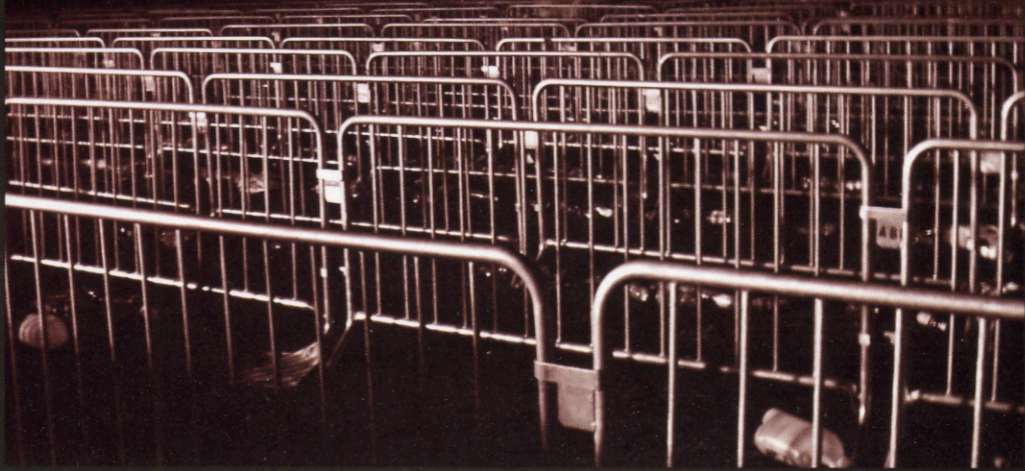
Mithun Diwakar

whooshing by in a rush of urgency.
 figures: gray, black, silhouette – phantoms
 color! where? there - on the mud-encrusted steel grating
 a red winter hat, smudged black by greasy shoes,
 promising me rosy tales of cold, windy snow but-
 laying forlorn and forgotten, it whispers of the
 subway of stolen memories.

polaroid picture - click! - instant memory - shake!
 colors creeping in to flesh out...colors seeping out to flesh in?
 trees slowly losing green, turning red autumn, then dead
 where? there – on the grime-streaked window
 then dead winter. sky slowly losing blue, turning moonless night.
 the subway car takes away the sun, the day,
 stealing memories for its fuel.

speeding, snaking through the tunnel, lit burnt-harsh-yellow
 intermittent, glowing - silvery shadows
 an outline of me, no detail, just the figure
 where? there - on the dent-endowed wall
 on the scar-faced plastic seat
 reminds me of me and me of them
 riding on the subway of stolen memories.

eric kelsic
 anaffectionforfastsounds



January 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 2nd Term Begins	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 MLK Jr. Day	17	18	19	20 Add Day	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Before I even look in the mirror, I have my answer.
 47 grueling minutes laden with frustration, confusion, without pain or anger
 You lay prostrate across alternating patches of blue, white, and red. The
 comforter we bought together. The disheveled sheets that only days ago I
 lovingly laid over your bed.
 Half naked with one sock, you cover the space with that most vivid color of
 all, unmoving except for a strip of hair blowing in the wind.
 Dry-eyed and silent, I wash my hands in the dark, afraid to confront my
 memory of this reality.
 This conclusion is no surprise; this end was evident months ago.
 And yet I stayed.
 I waited.

Has this actually happened?
 I know you didn't mean it. This makes it worse.
 Do I have the strength to leave now
 and come back only to gather my things?
 Can I go through each day, wake up and know that you will not,
 cannot,
 do not exist?
 If this were last year, yes, I would easily walk out.
 But how can I deny this, something I will never be able to find again?
 How can I turn my back on my heart?
 How can I renounce my soul for my body?

Desire is indeed at the root of all suffering.

It was so difficult to find my shoes in the stark darkness.
 It is so natural to slip them back off
 sink into bed beside you
 engulf myself in your smell and my own coagulated blood
 Everything is quiet.

Maybe tomorrow...

But if you ever do this again, I will leave. Really...

Hannah Shafaat

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 President's Day	21	22 Drop Day	23	24	25
26	27	28				

for svenge

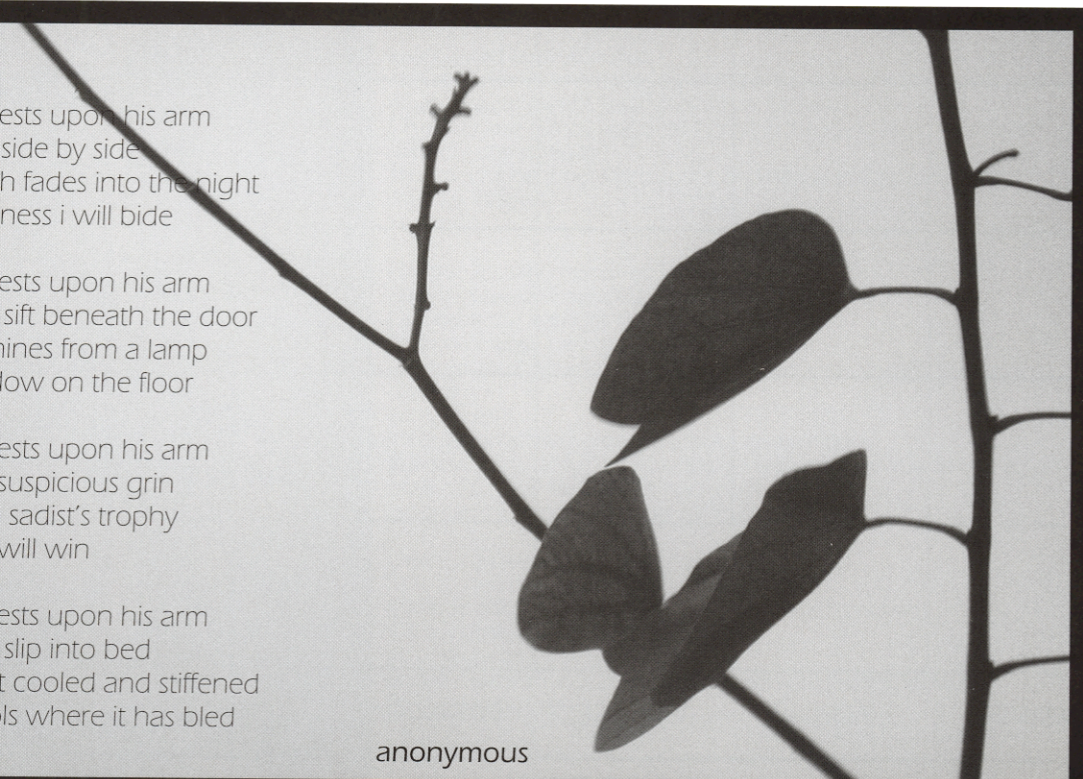
my small hand rests upon his arm
as we sit silently side by side
the day's warmth fades into the night
and for the darkness i will bide

my small hand rests upon his arm
and soft sounds sift beneath the door
an eerie glow shines from a lamp
and casts a shadow on the floor

my small hand rests upon his arm
my face hosts a suspicious grin
for i now have a sadist's trophy
this is one war i will win

my small hand rests upon his arm
i flick the switch, slip into bed
i leave it where it cooled and stiffened
sidestep the pools where it has bled

anonymous



leaves david dow

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Last Day of Classes	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 2nd Term Ends
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 3rd Term Begins	28	29	30	31	

**The Ambient Works of Brian Eno:
Three Poetic Interpretations**

Timothy Dolch

I. Triennale

the swamp's edge blends to brush:
I heard the agitation of the cattails
the hiss-hum of the crickets
and the rumbling fury of the fowl
as I walked here;
I followed the crooked wooden pillars
and listening to the reeds' whisper;
past moss and fern and hemlock I went
till sphagnum went to lichen.
ahead within the sumac I see
a delicate glow

II. Dunwich Beach

I do not know what was here
It arrived and it changed something
It whispered something
It set up its table and dined alone
I saw through the fissure
Its tablecloth and silver platter
It said something and
Like the wind whistling through the rocks
Remained while coming and going
It whispered something to the water
And departed
I do not know what it changed.
Now just one word
Will make the world go away

III. Ikebukuro

this garden contains a question
come to the gate and quietly enter
slip down the stone walkway alone
look at the city on the horizon
(you will be at a gentle height,
not a towering cliff)
this garden contains a question:
it lies not in the mosses
nor in your reflection
nor beneath the weeping willow in the center
nor within the stone lantern
this garden contains a question
I would tell you to wait for me
but I would just come and ask you questions

ah, who cares for titles anyway

christopher erick moody

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 April Fool's Day
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Passover	14 Add Day & Good Friday	15
16 Easter	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 /	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Rigor mortis

I fondle her icy breasts,
 Speaking of passion and the red dust
 And the goddess's forgotten stone.
 I lead her through the rice-papered chambers,
 The Faerie Pavilion,
 As the mist creeps
 Through the glow of red lanterns
 Seeking fodder for its doom.
 My lips find the pink nub of her nipple,
 Tense in resignation.
 Yet we are of the same flesh.
 Sucking the dew from them,
 I taste blood.
 And remember
 The old monk's warning
 "Beauty and anguish tread hand in hand
 The downward slope to death."
 The black jade sheds tears for
 A tomorrow she will never see
 But she kills herself today.

Xiao Peng



untitled
xiao peng

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17 Drop Day	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31			



just a story

An apple peel unfurls
 in one smooth single spiral
 from the edge of the knife.
 A continuous curve,
 stark line of beauty, perhaps,
 a windswept banner in green, yellow, and retrospective shine
 that leaves an echo in the back of your head
 inverted,
 retained for half a minute maybe,
 before it is promptly tossed
 away.

i. x marks the spot,
 the stopping point, the conclusion,
 the answer
 to the question that has yet to be asked.

ii. Little white elephants
 march across the mantle
 tracking invisible footprints on granite
 wiped clean only yesterday
 (or was it
 the day before?)
 Seven altogether
 and they never
 forget.

(continued on next page)

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Last Day of Classes	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 Commencement	10
11	12 SURF Begins	13	14	15	16	17
18 Father's Day	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

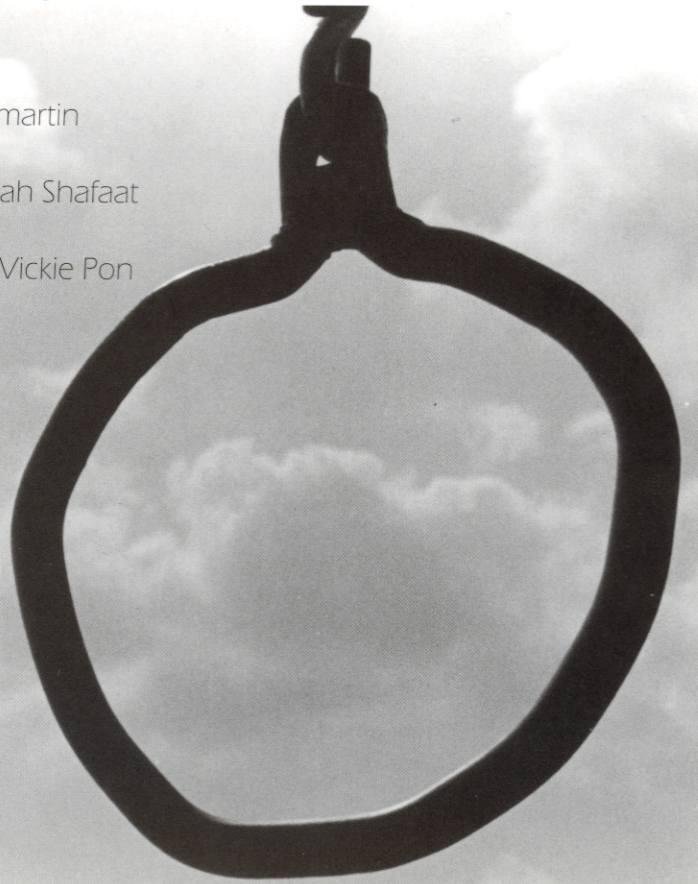


- iii. The pink lady
stands in the corner,
a wish over extinguished candles
of twelve too many years gone by.
Where faded ribbons hold
together in loose braids from the white handlebars,
decaying weaves that still whisper of a tale
born from a child's fingertips,
A spider makes its home
between two spokes of a rusted wheel,
weaving a string of new memories across fifteen degrees of empty space,
a lopsided silhouette of a dream catcher,
only to be imperfectly attempted again the following afternoon
 (and again the next)
because perhaps
even spiders have dreams.
- iv. Butterflies in her palms,
she cradles a glass of ice in the sun,
tea long since unremembered
with a crushed arc of lemon like a broken rainbow
to piece the picture together in reverse,
while the frozen cubes melt away into obscurity.
The light paints
shades of interlocking circles across the table
as symmetric whorls spiral outward along the sides of her glass,
lost in the reflective glare,
imprints of the butterfly wings
that came to rest
for a single moment.
- v. The record skips
a beat,
half a second of black noise
leaving the original up to the imagination
 (a game of fill-in-the-blank,
 or perhaps a not-so-educated guess).
It plays again;
a song that loses time with every subsequent repetition
until at last
the anomaly has evolved to become
part of the piece
itself.
- vi. A glass of liquid amnesia
reflects the faded stripes of the curtains in the study,
elephants waltzing to an etude in e minor,
echoes of fluttering wings in one ear
and cobwebs to be brushed aside from the other
as the candle on the desk goes out.
- vii. Tell me a story, she says,
backwards
from the end to the beginning;
that way
at least I'll remember
the outcome.
Remind me
 (May I ask?)
just once
more.

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ring
kristy hilands



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encroaching sand
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