

Totem
2008 - 2009



Separation, silk painting, Gina Gage

At the Poppy Fields

Anonymous

I went to the hill
where the poppies were blooming,
and stood atop a rock,
arms spread wide,
to listen to the wind.

and I heard her cold tongues
drill through my shirt, and skin
and burn my flesh
my eyes closed, overwhelmed, as I imagined
the pollen that she bore and the stories that she knew,
her word for me alone

I stood there, and
I strained and yearned and dreamed of
shamans and spirits and almost just almost I believed
I heard her speak of the lovely new moon, and the
thousand beating hearts she had brushed by

but then I fell,
my upper lip sticky with mucus,
ears red and hardened past pain,
and I knew that wind is just trying to move from there to
there and all these flowers and rocks and rattlesnakes are
just in the way, and I am no different.



Phoenix, acrylic, Sarah Howell, photographed by Nathan Crook

Ancient and Evanescence

Anonymous

Under rain in the desert,
You shaded my hands.
Mists cleared by winds,
You harnessed in twilight.
Beneath the leaves,
On a moonless night,
Your ancient eyes beheld me.

Sight is evanescent,
But rocks are eternal.
Patterns in pebbles,
Spell our scarce moments.
Eerie and wrong,
Overlooking the sands,
Our ghosts now entwine.

You are wiser than mountains,
You have hunted the jungles.
You have plunged in frozen seas,
I have but read by the window.
If I were you, I could breathe worlds.
Your words light fires,
But mine bewitch no one.

Yet you loved them.
Yet I never wrote you.
I poured dry, bitter soil,
Into our fertile moments.
And for ages onward,
I hid my hands behind my back,
And you pretended not to notice.

But my silence lit lightning,
And I felt your worlds tremble.
You led me to doorways,
At once I fled guideless.
A harsh, thankless vine,
I swallowed your radiance,
Shattering seeds of absolution.

Now in my winter,
I finally wonder.
Would you welcome me now,
After monsoons and thunder?
With archaic resins,
We could paint futures,
No oracle could fathom.

Yet transience seems safer,
In Trafalmadorian peaks.
We can persist in memory,
An unparalleled bloom.
Why plant uncertain springs,
When we can outlive autumns,
Interwoven in remembrance.



The Dark Knight, acrylic, Fei Yang



Untitled: Pope Valley, March 2005, digital photography, Katherine Breeden

Mulled Wine

Karen Wang

The sunrise brought news and light.
I took the day to think it over -
a stroll through the apple orchard, long overdue,
perhaps extended to the vineyards.

Love knows no age, but grapes
are painfully aware of the season.
The headlines screamed irate inhumanity;
flies swarm over the decay of decency.

Picking my way delicately among the lines,
I let the sun burn through the fog in my mind.
Heat and spice, naivete and innocence
vaporized, and dispersed with the wind.

With a hot dog in one hand (comfort food)
and a ginger ale in the other, I consider
good food, good drink, good spirits.
Viables for life's happiness, paths to choose.

Meddlers and matchmakers;
camaraderie among friends pitted against
bitter jealousies and misunderstandings.
The sun sets at my back - shadows lengthen and distort.

The missing orb settles in my stomach,
swirling thoughts stir in my heart - hope
reignited, faith returned, love resonant.
I drink in the warmth, waiting for...

Vacuous Hall

Csilla Felsen

Cheap crimson and black—morbid.
No, just cheap
Like the wine,
Wine like water,
Whining about lack of water.
Morbid thirst.
Thirst for light, thirst for bright;
None in sight.
Just dreariness.

Screeching, grating, anxious music
Skips

A
Beat;
Cheap CDs
Like the wine.
Loud noises drown out the music,
Drown it in darkness,
Emptiness.

Still a harsh, empty, wooden floor.
Dragging feet
Grate against the mahogany.
Tossing legs in the air,
Striking the vacuum
Like a box of matches.
Flame disappears before it comes to life.
Hollywood style dancing,
Hollowed out
Nothingness.

Sour, stinking whispers of breath.
Heavy breathing, thick, stale
Like the wine
Sweat sticking from one to the other
Slips down eyelids
Striking the floor,
Crumpled floor, folding and buckling
Under a red, red heat
Resounding in a loud boom
Stifled before it reaches the ears.
Utter Hopelessness.

A Los Angeles New Year

Ty Volkoff

-For Sara

Happy New Year!
The sun puts its chest out over Sierra Madre,
You should put your chest out too.

Hollywood,
Fifth,
Olympic,
Slauson,

Figueroa,
Sunset,
Vine
Old roads for a New Year.

Roxy,
Whiskey,
Staples Center

Long Beach,
Downtown,
You know better.
Old places for a New Year.

New Year starts with an old morning.
A cold chicken and a slice of frozen pizza.
Your resolution won't satiate you, will it?
The city has no resolution at all
So the city eats you.

Death,
Divorce,
Take your losses.

Celebrate,
Smile,
Hold your crosses.
Old prayers for a New Year.



The Final Sprint, digital photography, Garrett Drayna

Fall in California

Daniel Walter Rowlands

There is a falsehood in the endless green,
a lie of life's eternal victory:
for Samhain comes despite the leaves of green
and seasons turn among the stars above.

I feel the days are growing shorter now,
I feel the coming of the winter's night:
and though no autumn breezes chill the air,
I cannot help but feel the winter's breath.

Though warm and cloudless march the autumn days,
I know the year is waning fast at home:
I see the autumn colors that aren't here,
I feel the autumn winds that do not blow.

Each year in autumn ages, days grow short
'til Yuletide brings the new year's birth again:
and I must keep the autumn in my heart
for here the summer never seems to die.

There is a falsehood in the endless green,
a lie of life's eternal victory:
for Samhain comes despite the leaves of green
and seasons turn among the stars above.

Desire

Paula Hines Lonergan

And the country was beautiful
The leaves turned aside to greet me
Somehow all I could see was your smile
I spoke with you only in my mind
And told you of the sunny day
You spoke to me in your same taunt way
Yet I still wanted to care
The dew woke me up in the morning
The clouds carried away my pain
After the rain
The earth was clean and
I was alive, still
Waiting for you.



Droplet Archipelago, digital photography, Leslie Tong



Parting, oil pastel, Christina Theodoris

On airborne travel

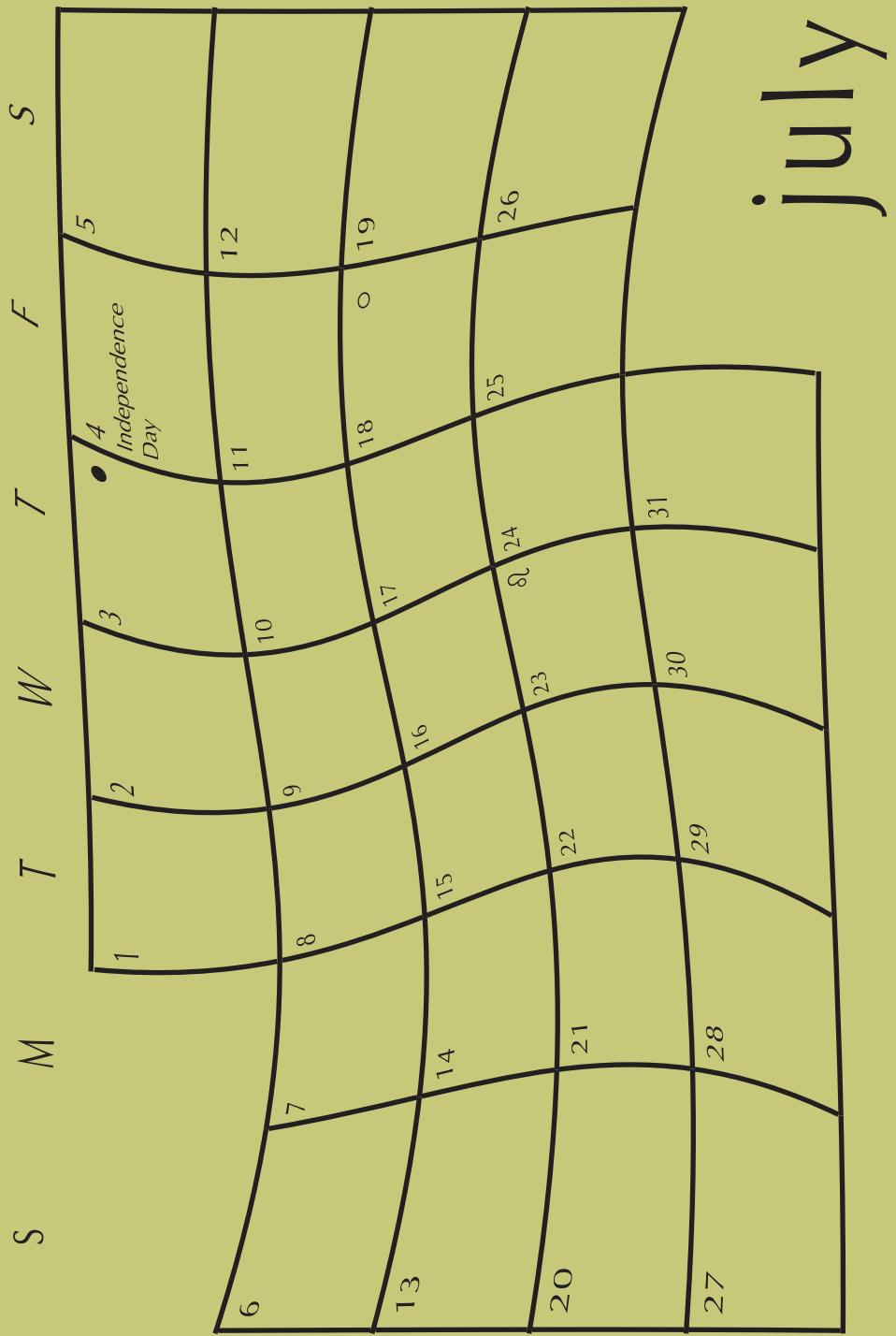
Anonymous

To ascend in an airplane, gleaming insect, and see the Earth
from arm's length in its gravitational embrace--
its clear pale deserts, thick-furred forests,
intricate meaningless wrinkles of the sea--
is,
breathless and warm with legs still entwined,
to raise yourself onto your hands, lift up just a little, pull back your head,
and see, and realise once again

how lovely and beloved is the face
that you have been kissing
all this time.

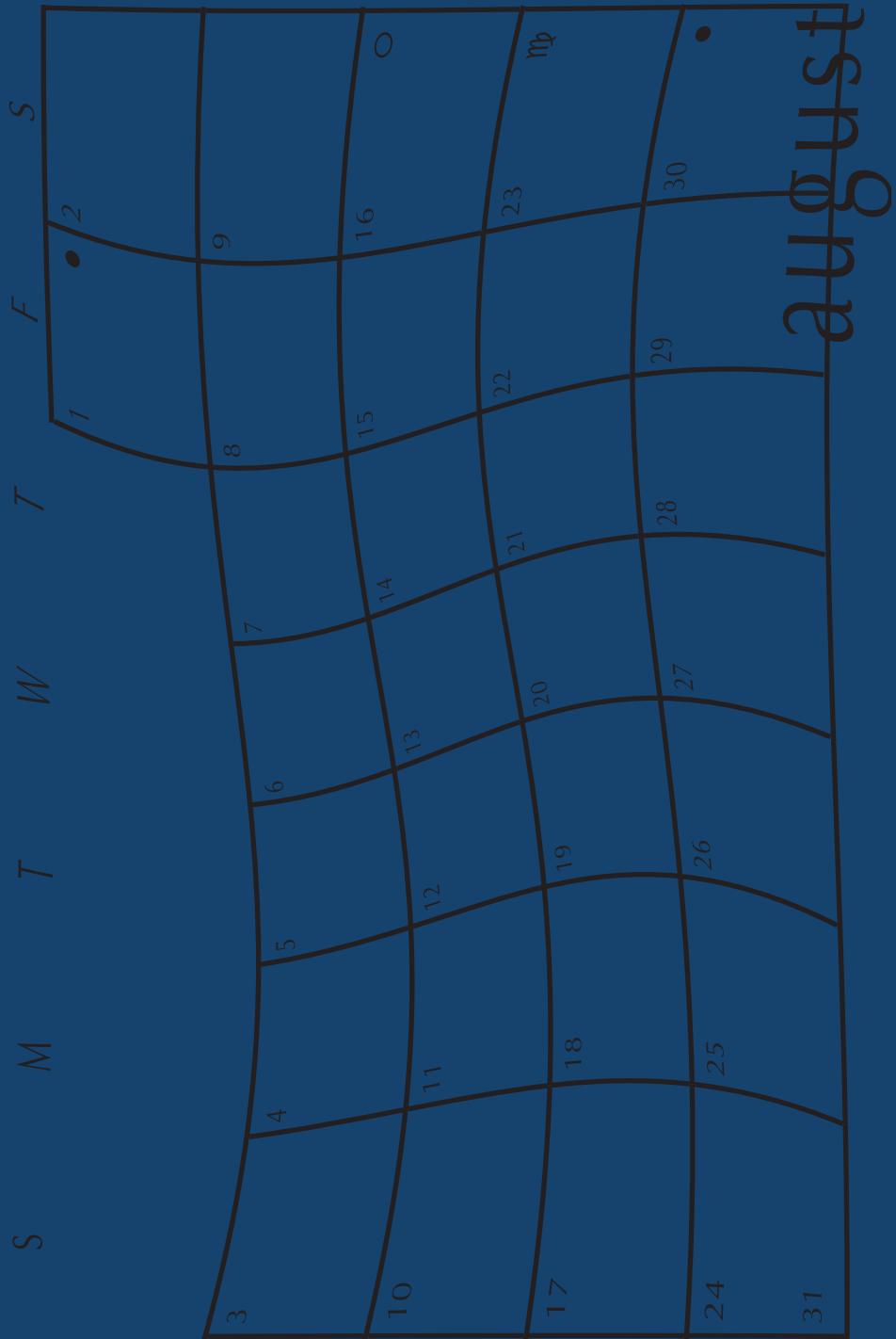


Spot on Stiltwalker, digital photography, Kimberley Ho





FunkTemple, digital photography, Andy Chung



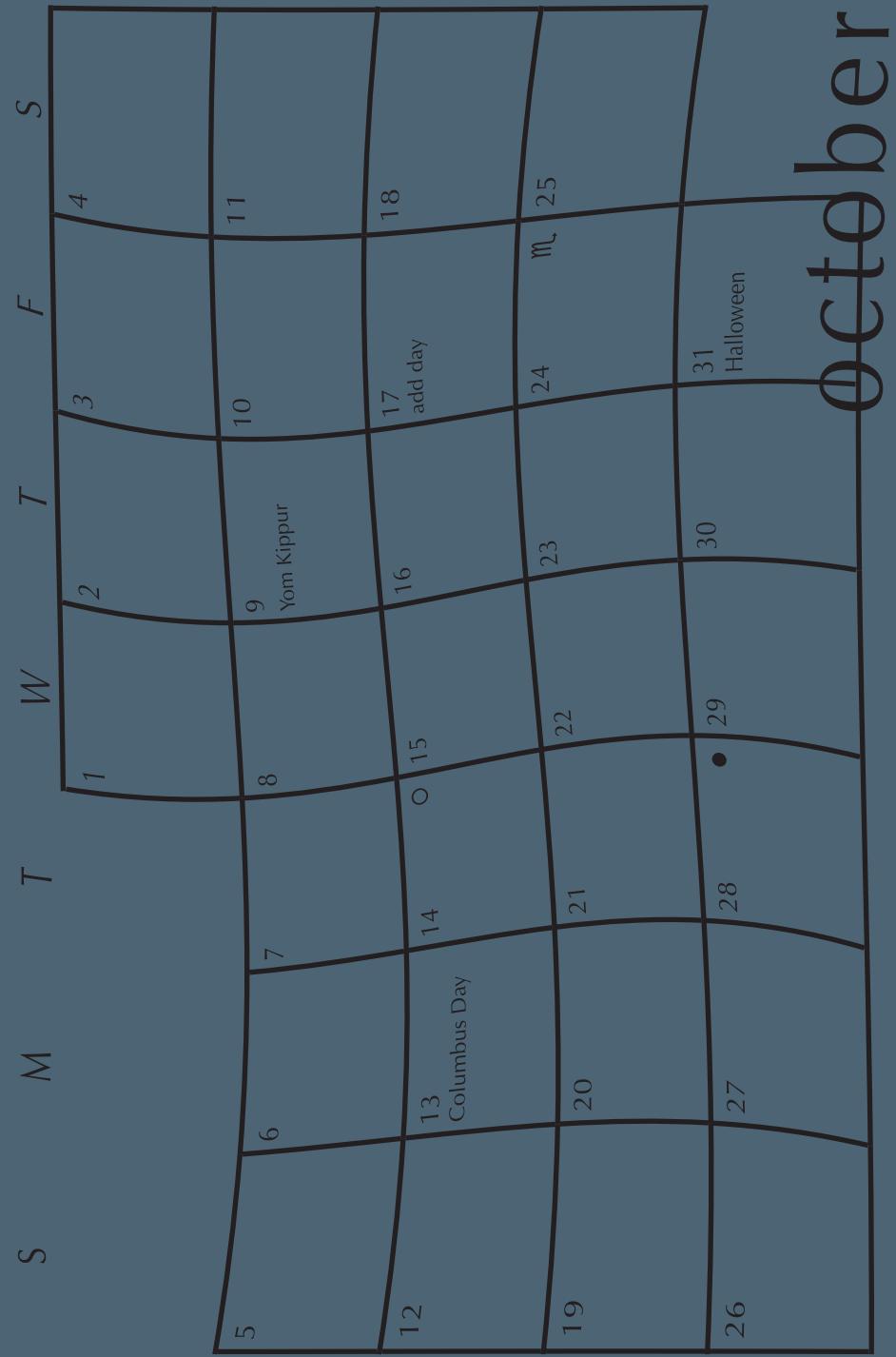


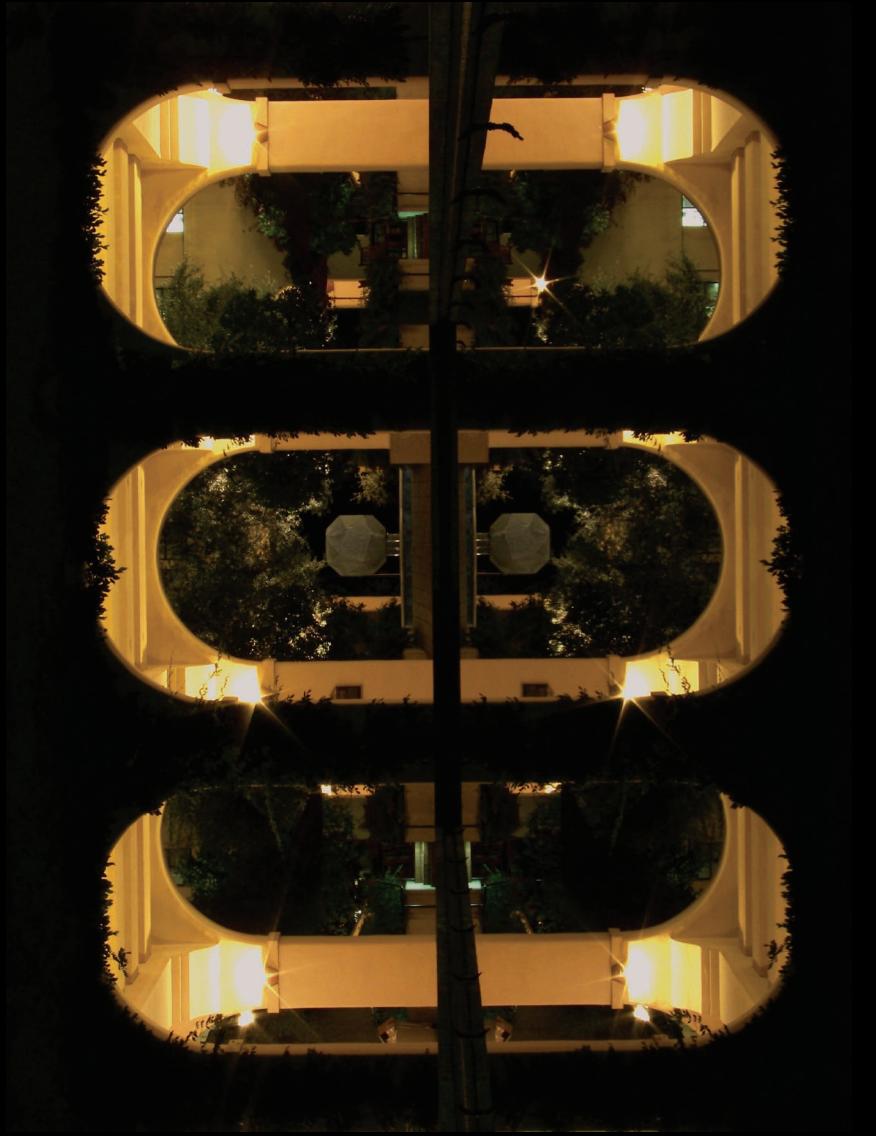
Contrasts in Balcony View, digital photography, Dongkook Lim





Nightfall, Corel Painter, Deborah Jiang

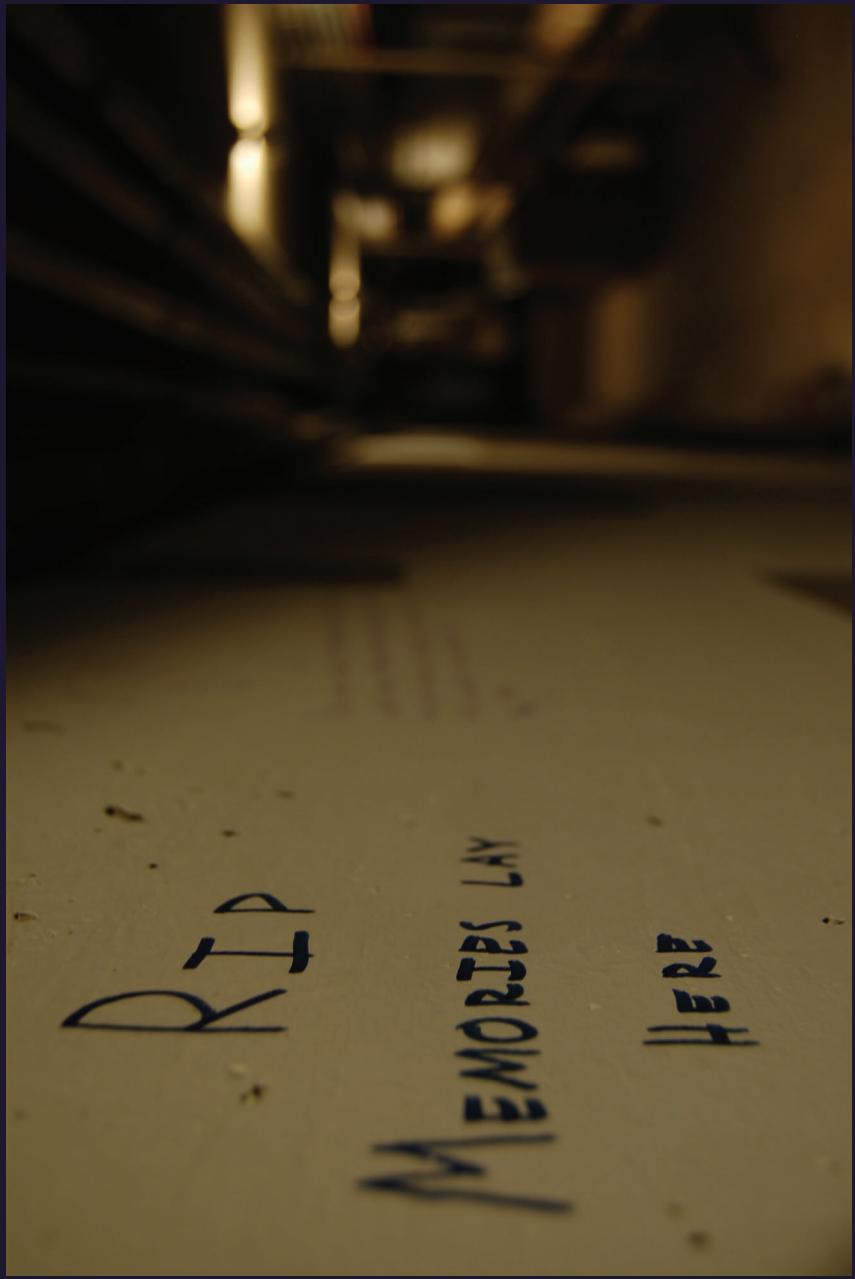




Reflected World, digital photography, Tatyana Shatova

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2 Daylight Savings Time ends	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 drop day	20	21	22
23 x	24	25	26	27 Thanksgiving	28	29
30						

november



Untitled, digital photography, Matt Glassman

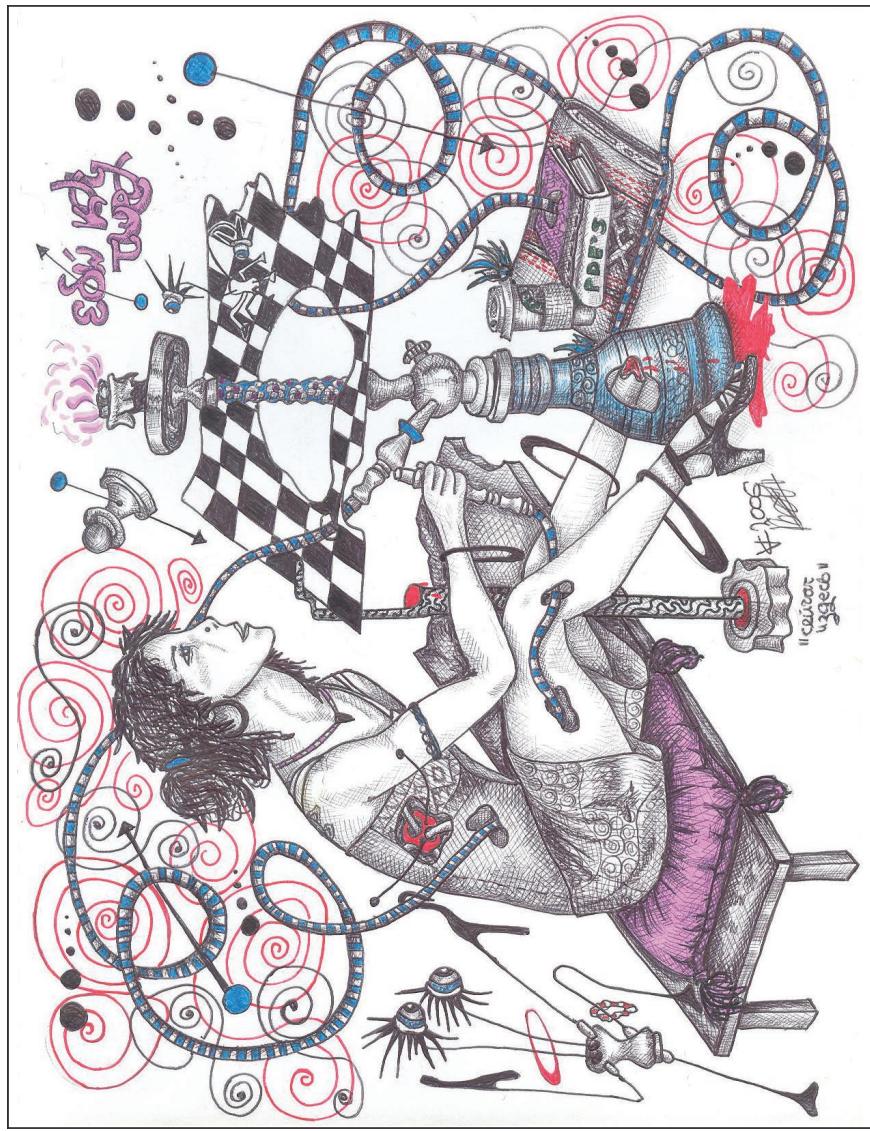
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5 last day of classes	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 fall term ends	○ 13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa	● 27
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve			

december



A Cactus in the Snow, digital photography, Yakov Berchenko-Kogan

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5 winter term begins	6	7	8	9	10
11	○ 12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	~~~ 21	22	23 add day	24
25	26 ●	27	28	29	30	31
						january



Here and Now, pen and marker, Yekaterina Pavlova

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6	7 O
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16 President's Day	17	18	19	20 *	21
22	23	24 Mardi Gras	25 drop day	26 ● Lunar New Year	27	28 february

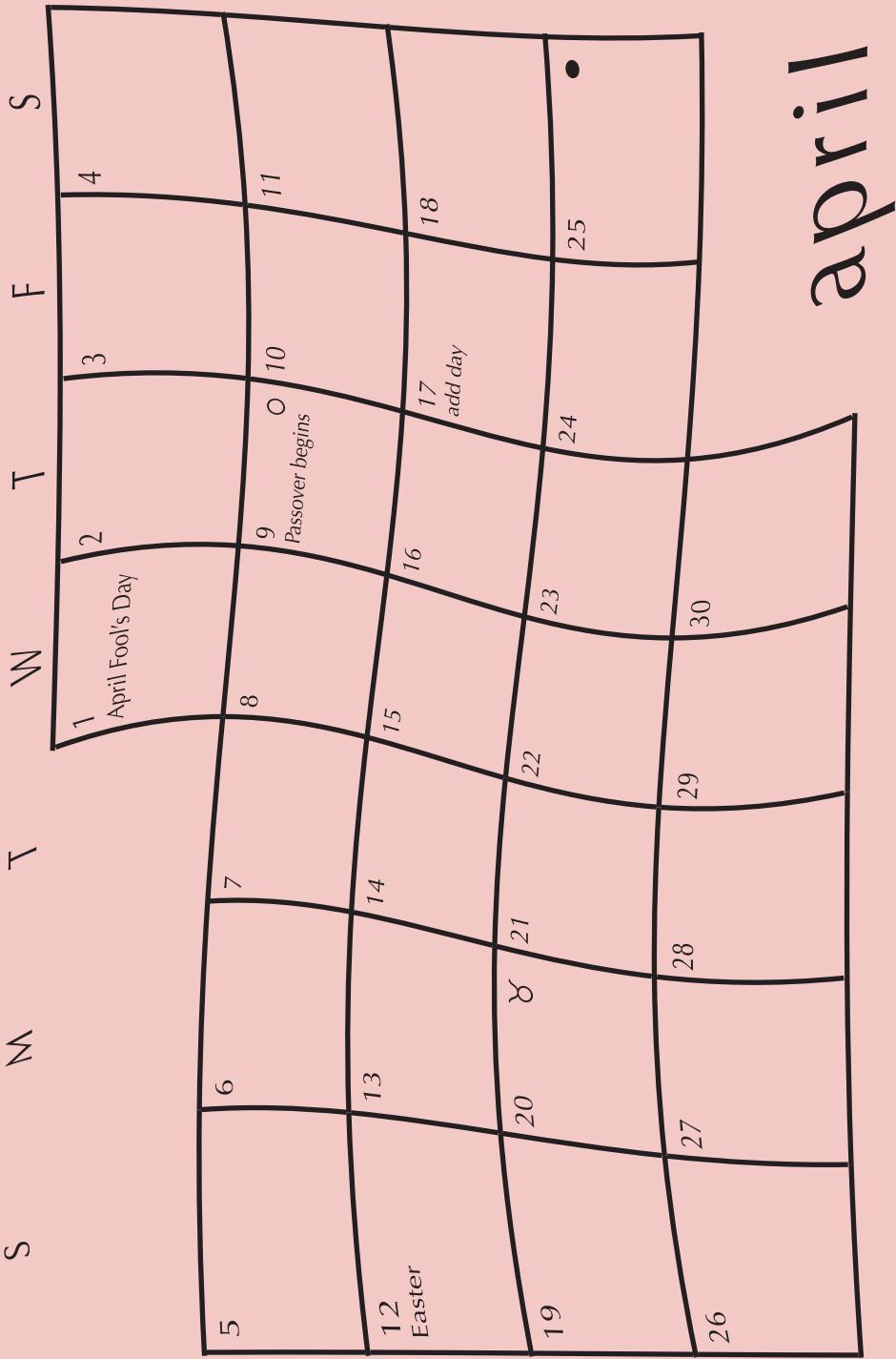


After School Hours, digital photography, Donatela Bellone





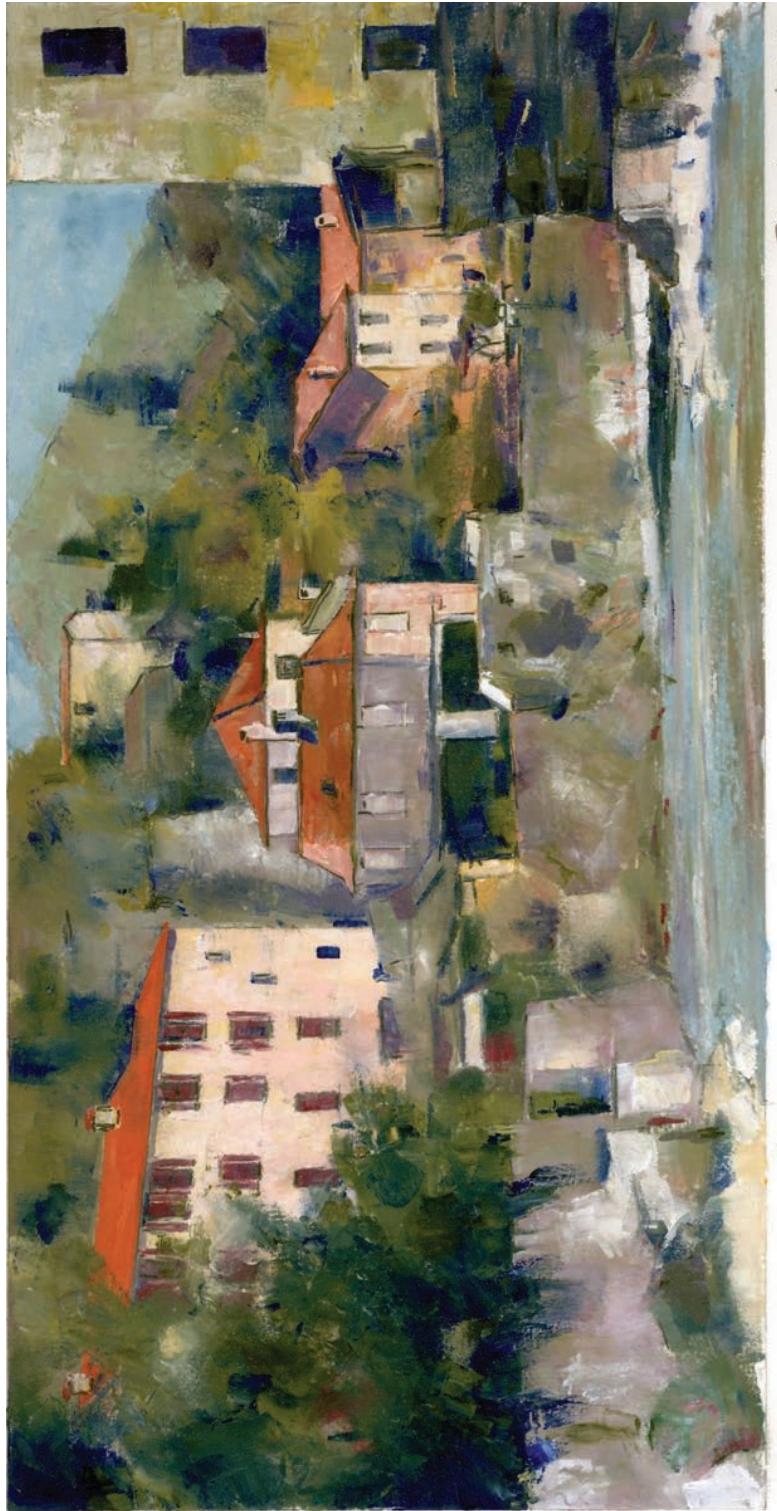
California Poppies, pen and watercolor, Po Ku





Whetting the Verdant Blade, digital photography, Joe Donovan





Hérault River, Cévennes, France

L'Hérault River, Cévennes, France, oil painting, Phil Lindquist

© Lindquist '06



Salamander

Alex Roper

When I was but a little child,
Alive for just five years,
There's one memory I do recall,
With a great fall of tears.

Every night by the flaming hearth,
Within a roaring fire,
A flaming lizard dancing wild,
That never seemed to tire.

To my father's wise face I'd turn,
Tugging on his long robe,
And with a smile he would hark,
The fire his eyes would probe.

"That, son, is a salamander,
a lizard born in flame,
his skin is gold, his touch doth burn,
Salamander is his name."

We'd sit a while, staring oft,
until we went to bed,
and as we left, with true candor,
The coals would fade to red.

But one dark night, within my sleep,
A voice did seem to call,
I tiptoed down the stairs quite soft,
So careful not to fall.

I walked to the cold fire place,
Salamander to meet,
I wanted just a little peep,
Without the searing heat.

But in the coals both cold and dark,
I saw no golden skin,
Where He had danced, I saw a face,
So clearly made by man.

Of pine needles the lizard was made,
And cheap old tacky glue,
All this the young boy did remark,
Somehow his father knew.

He rushed down from his sleeping room,
But the damage was done,
His father saw the smile fade,
And looked at his sad son.

The little trinket sparkling bright,
Lay dead among the flames,
Dark things within the darkness loom,
But have no fiery names.

The father hung his head so low,
And turned to walk away,
But then his robe, a touch so light,
Bidding that he might stay.

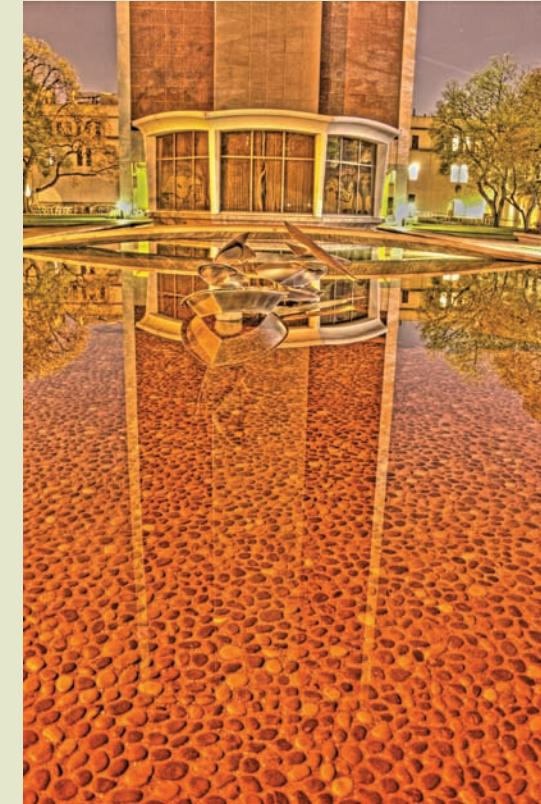
"Father", said I, "there is no friend
within that long dead coal,
But teach me now, all that you know,
To make Him is my goal"

And so they went off then to learn,
Cold reason and hard facts,
Childhood myth must meet its end,
For Science, that is the pact.

But as they left, oblivious,
A gold neck raised his head,
His skin was gold, his touch did burn,
His eyes glowing deep red.

Then had I turned my head a touch,
A miracle I'd seen,
My life, then now, would not be thus,
Having seen the unseen.

But my father then held my glance,
Later, I looked and knew,
Looking in the fire so very much,
'Twas only tacky glue.



AD, digital photography / Adobe Photoshop, Eugeniu Plamadeala

Reflections

Rachel Reddick

My friend, go look into the mirror's gleam
How brighter than the truth the image seems
This parallel, this parody of life
Reflecting only beauty, never strife.
In truth, it is our bias that we see.
The good we watch in mirrors, filled with glee.
The lesser things we never will select.
The darkest dyed give no light to detect.

How strange the shifting mix of shade and light
A trick where right is left and wrong is right.
The mirror ripples, phantom objects twist
Like tendrils or lithe dancers made of mist
Distorted apparitions running free
But only on the surface can we see.
What lies beneath the shadows is not clear
Until a hand is plunged into the mere.



Self Portrait, pen and marker, Yekaterina Pavlova

Metadreams

David Nichols

"Let us not run after a reputation which would escape us, and which, in the present state of things, would never return to us what it would have cost us, even if we had every title to obtain it. What good is it to seek our happiness in someone else's opinion if we can find it within ourselves?"

-Jean Jacques Rousseau, *First Discourse*

When I sleep,
I no longer dream.
I now walk down the lonely aisles
Of my local dream market,
Where the shelves run over
With the beautiful and the horrible
Visions that come to us at night.
I pass by the nightmares on aisle four
(Save those for the masochists)
On my way towards the rows of
Grand ambitions, intellectual triumphs,
Splendid romances, athletic feats,
Creative inspirations, familial reunions,
Second chances, and everlasting friendships.

I pause briefly in each aisle,
Rapaciously pulling
The luminous bottles and jars into my cart.
When the excitement of
Selecting new reveries wears thin
I head toward the checkout line,
Passing the lewd, sexual fantasies on the way
(How embarrassing it would be
To be caught browsing through those).

While purchasing my dreams,
I make small talk with the cashier
And owner of the store.
(What does one say to the man
Who selects, buys, and stocks
All my dreams?
(It's still better than shopping
At some large, corporate
Super-dream market, nonetheless.
(Although maybe its time to start shopping at
Family-owned organic dream farms.))

With my bags in hand,
I leave the store and walk to
The adjacent park,
Take a seat on a wooden park bench,
And briefly enjoy the broad field of grass
Surrounded by tall, tall trees.
I then survey my purchases,
And select one with an appealing title:
"Reunion with Long Lost Love:
Opus 32, No. 2, Third Movement."

I open the bottle
And a calm passes over my senses.
The ethereal contents once encaged in glass
Surround my person.
I feel its light touch on my skin;
I breathe the delicate vapors
Into my mouth and nose;
I let wisps slip into my ears
Over my eyes, and down my tear ducts.
With a sigh, I reflect:

Let he who exists
Through these abstractions
Never die,
For he has never lived.



Through the Good and the Bad, digital photography, Tatyana Shatova

Shelter

Anonymous

Shallow lamps sheltered
Lonely toes
Shifting through sand
Timidly departing
From the faint glow of science
As masts rattled, beckoned, cackled
And sails whipped tidally
Desperately
A lighthouse
Nudging waves of
Darkness, troughs of silence
Until ferries poured storms onto the streets
Stampeding into the forests
And returning wisdom
From shadows stolen



Broken, digital photography, David Koenitzer



Floating Pear, acrylic, Russ Laher

Untitled

Timothy Kwa

It once was said that we were looking up
Above to higher heights and higher ground.
Then ground did grind and halt did fill my cup
Until they all did fade, that sweetest sound.
Creating beauty, majesty, and grace
Without a single worry--THAT I miss.
We worked so well; each fall could not displace
The bonds of unity, so strong in bliss.
Alas, that happy thought must one day fall,
And with it, everything I love so fine.
So I am left with bitterness and gall
For now I lack the things I once called mine.
It once was said we had it all, my friends.
I cry to know it's all now at an end.

Ed and Holiday

Sera Linardi

The postcard read, "I'm moving west. Hope you are well," the jagged script unchanged after fourteen years. The return address was written by the same hand, but with palpable hesitation. Ed did not know Holiday was in Bismarck, ND, but with the exception of New York, any city in the U.S has equal probability of being Holiday's temporary home. Ed calculated mail delivery time in his head, told his wife that he will be picking up take-out for dinner tonight, and went out to buy a postcard.

Ed and Holiday sat on a large rock overlooking a shallow stream, Holiday with his second cigarette hanging loosely on his left hand, smoke circling back to them in the changing breeze.

"It's much nicer after rain," Ed said, "its greener."

Holiday shrugged. "It's okay now."

Ed traced the vein of a leaf plucked earlier in the hike. It was yellow and it protruded straight and even against the mottled surface. He wondered if the tree was healthy. "I like my job now. I'm becoming who I want to be. Right now there are three groups of tenants in Koreatown apartment that are fighting to stay where they are, and I think we've figured out how to make this happen. It's a good thing I handled that case with the reopening of that elementary school in El Paso before this. That was a huge learning curve."

"It's amazing you still care." Holiday said, "It's amazing."

"Do you still write?"

"Here and there, less than I did in college. I couldn't find the space for a long time. But I'm working on a new story now."

A small red-chested bird fluttered above. Ed thought about their shared dorm room many years back, with stacks of yellow mailer folders stuffed with poetry and single spaced short stories, written after classes and between problem sets. The metal clasps will invariably be grotesquely twisted, from Holiday's equally vehement desire to show his work and hide them away. He thought about their marathon rewriting sessions at Denny's. Circular stains from their coffee mugs. Wondering how long it would be before holding Holiday's stories in print. Knowing that it was all conditional on the other Holiday, the one who would not leave their room for days and left fist marks on the wall.

They had hung out four times in two weeks. They were driving back from an auto parts warehouse when Ed decided to invite Holiday to dinner with his family. He expected the long silence that followed.

In the passenger seat Holiday stared at the road ahead, wiped his face with his palm and pressed his hands against his lips. "That sounds nice, Ed.", he finally said, "Thanks."

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

That week there were no calls from Holiday. That was six months ago.

Holiday decided that California did not suit him and had moved somewhere South. During his short time here he had worked as a janitor, a third grip at a movie set, and a fry cook, where he was involved in an unspecified workplace injury. Ed learned this not from his college friend, but from a mutual acquaintance that had run into Holiday at a video store.

At home, Ed could not find the postcard from Bismarck, ND.

To a Girl Who's the Focus of Unbounded Love

Casey Glick

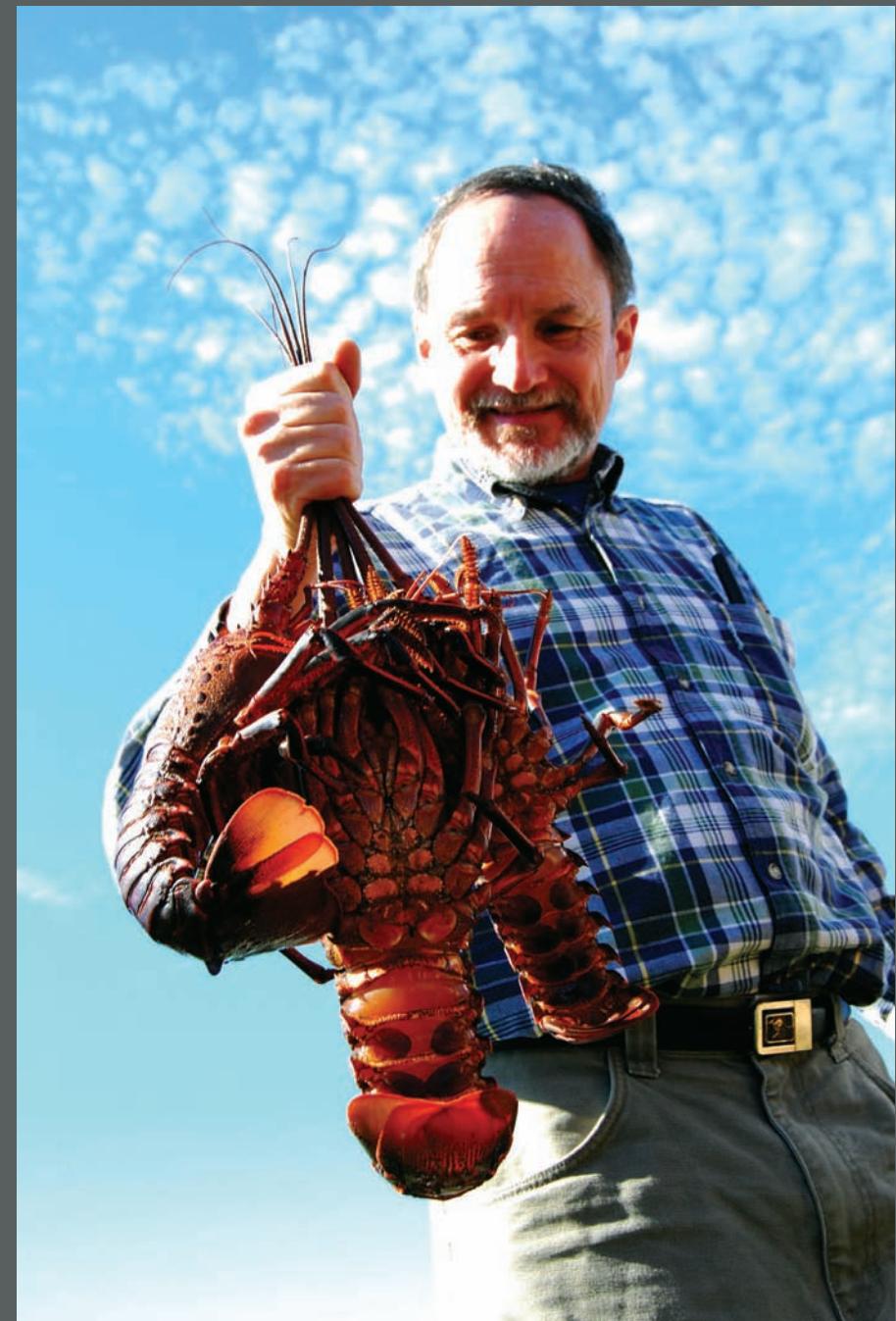
A glimpse of your eyes, so lovely and bright
Shows beauty more wondrous than stars all alight.
You've wealth, nay treasure, astoundingly fair
That needs not induction to prove it is there.

You're heart's pure as ether, distilled thrice and more
Dulling senses and thoughts sans the one I adore.
Your mind, greater still, holds me in its spell,
Sifting brilliance from base like an agarose gel.

Oh, I could map Earth, chart many a land
Finding naught to compare with these riches at hand.
All the vastness of space holds but one precious jewel;
You cannot be polished with laser or tool.

I've found you, my love, but know not the odds
Save undeserved gift from a pantheon of gods.
To find one like you beyond sun, moon, and sky
Needs Lorentzian gamma incalculably high.

My love for you burns like a galaxy of stars
Like a nova creating these elements of ours.
Our souls are entwined like a binary sun;
Like a black hole's attraction, our love makes us one.



A Gift from Baja, digital photography, Laainam Chaipornkaew



Darkhan, digital photography, Gina Gage

Alone

Paula Hines Lonergan

My days are long
perhaps that's only in my mind
I think of you
each and every time
I feel I am alone.

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