

Collage



Fall 1997



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A Note from the Editor

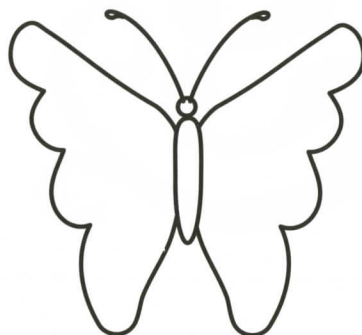
A few nights ago I dreamed I had a butterfly by its wings, pinched between my thumb and forefinger, and I was absolutely terrified. Equally apprehensive about holding it or letting it go, I stood paralyzed. It didn't take much soul searching for me to come up with a reasonable interpretation: butterflies stand for metamorphosis, change, expansion, all things having to do with creativity. In my dream, I was in possession of creativity, and it was frightening.

This is my first semester as *Collage* editor, and naturally I have been a little unsure about all the duties that this position entails, and I have been very nervous about my first finished issue. Would we receive enough submissions, would we get the issue to the printer on time, would we spell everyone's name correctly? These and countless other concerns have been constantly invading my conscious and unconscious mind. The dream about the butterfly seems to me to be an expression of the anxiety I have been feeling about my

responsibilities with *Collage*. To have in my hands the hard work and talent of this issue's contributors has been very exciting, but also stressful. I want to produce a great issue.

There is a story about a Chinese philosopher from the 4th century B.C. named Chuang Tzu who awoke one morning from a strange and wonderful dream: he had been a butterfly, happily floating from one flower to another. So surprised was he at his true form when he awoke, that he questioned reality. Had he simply been a man dreaming he was a butterfly, or was he now a butterfly dreaming he was a man?

I think maybe we all experience this butterfly syndrome when we allow our creativity to be expressed. Those of us who call ourselves artists, writers, or philosophers may create so often that we, like Chuang Tzu, question our true forms. Indeed, for many, the two are inextricable from one another. So without further delay, allow me to welcome you on behalf of the entire *Collage* staff, to the Fall 1997 butterfly exhibit.



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Paintings

Honeymoons

Mary Cummins

There was that time
in your mother's house.
She had blue curtains
and flowerpots on the balcony,
watching the lake and our
occasional exploding
semi-melodramas
of those years,
way before she died
and we became calmer lovers.
It was some morning when
we argued over something,
maybe distances or faults
or the frying of eggs, and
she wondered why we visited
west Nevada every June
to pet her cats and shout
profanities in her kitchen.
You slammed some door
and I threw tupperware
at your stubbornness
and her hand-painted wall,
cringed as she surveyed
our splattered breakfast,
its plastic bowl
bouncing on the floor.
She shook her graying head,
clicked her tongue and said,
honey, it's not love
'til you break something.

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oil on canvas
Gauge II by Jennifer Hardiman



riddle

Devon Koren

i am the buckle girl with filament breath
a corduroy t-shirt, with zippers underneath
and you know i love you already, though i haven't said a word
a million names i wear, and one of those is yours

i am the candycane child, with sugar lips and twizzler kisses
lollipops exchanged for ice cream smiles
tonight where dirt creases nothing but paint in your hair
rugs and roses all thrown on the floor
yes, i miss jesus too

i am the tarot mistress
gypsy teeth, a pocketful of miracles
false remedies for medicine
nothing left but acid shadows
the windchime coins break silence and laugh
i found your voice in the everyman's briefcase
you really should get those straps tightened
you know how they're always slipping from your shoulders
i am a vein
in this leaf
on this tree
of life
where on some twig
of some branch
you're sleeping

i am the matchbox girl
with mismatched socks in the chest-of-drawers

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broken eyeliner dribbling from the edges of my pen stick
snow brow, ashen laden, ice swimming
shhh . . .

this is the womb of silence
pour your scarred thoughts in
pull the melody of screaming words out
slap them on the back and say, "good morning!
welcome to wonderful dimension 3rd!"
(doesn't everybody love it here?)

i am the tire track daughter
highway weaned and taught to read
by roadsigns
life marked by route 66
every star of every shadow i have carried
i breathe
this asphalt moment
when all children wash the lime spittle from those delicate porcelain faces
and ask
"am i not me?"

i am your child
your brother girl
i am your father's cousin
i am the eve in every apple
and on every christmas eve
a snakecharm spells
BLUE

i am the ultimate paradox girl
and i touch every mad magician in this room
with every face i wear and every face
belongs to every you.



Yeah, you

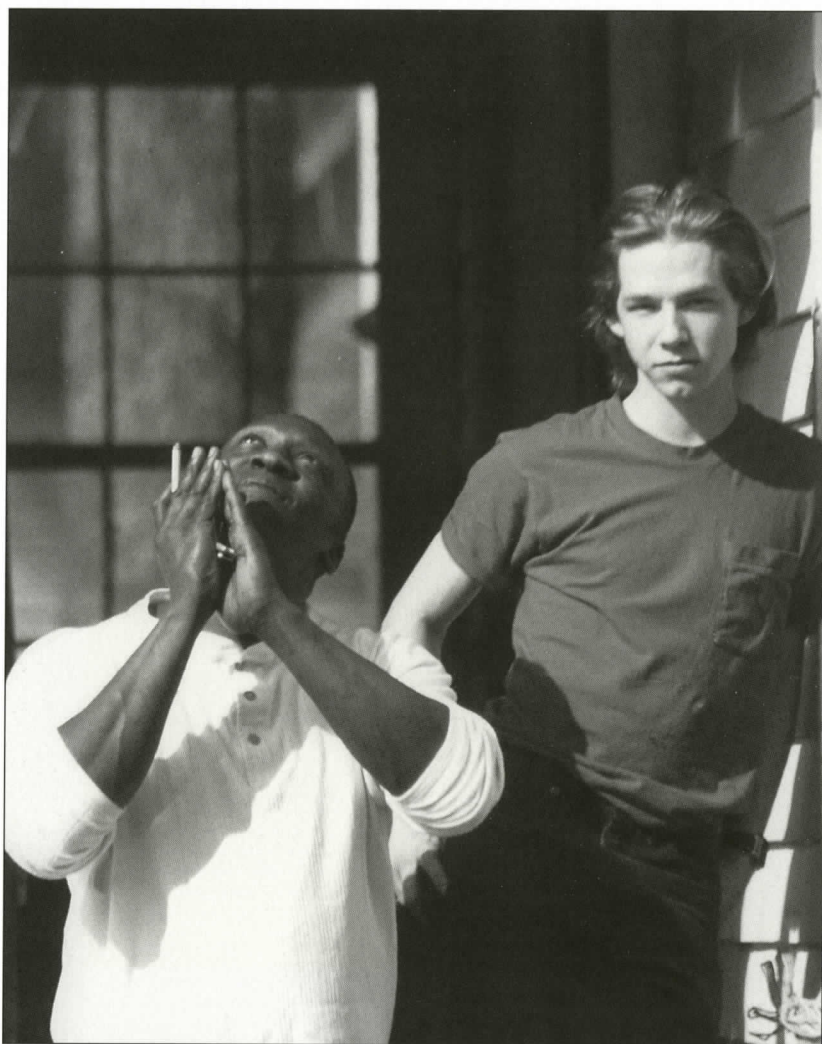
Henry Morris

With stars in my eyelids,
With socks on my shins,
I'm stunned, vexed, and oversexed
around you. . .

A spike in the curve, you've carved
an access road reliable
through the bramble.
Yep,
(if repetition is necessary)
the greatest invention since central heat
is you
is you
is you.

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photography
Jackson Street by William Isom



oil on canvas
The Gathering by Todd Amacher

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snafu mary, maundering in the land of nod

B.W. Carter

me and mary go down early to eastside cemetery, watching lichen cling and
playing handball off headstones while daisies march
like lemmings to the tufted asphalt banks of k street. the sun dances on broken
shards of grass and

mary says "away. that's where i want to go."

she shuts her eyes (like translucent coffin lids buckled with lashes) and she
takes off walking, anywhere, everywhere: stumbling blind
out of paradise while the first fat crows sit counting bones atop gently swaying
power lines and

she keeps on saying "away. that's where i need to go."

me and mary in the cemetery: me reciting epitaphs while she's reading his
and thinking how nobody wears desire anymore, how lust
isn't the same and daddy's sly hard hands are in the closet for good now, how
ophelia was no fool and

saying as she rises "away. that's where i'm going to go."





photography
Night Fishing by Carson Parks



Cyrus

Brian Grant Pitts

On the eggshell wall, a good three or four pushes ahead of Cyrus' wheelchair, clung two black spots, one on either side of the window he was known to stare out of. Every day the same tin-roofed barn stood outside and gave value to spots that went unnoticed anywhere else. With his right eye being the good one, he'd turn his head slightly to think on one and then the other. He took a piece of biscuit from the untouched breakfast tray and gave it a labored throw, hitting a good foot and a half below the one on the right. It fluttered but didn't fly off. He took it to be a moth of some kind and fell into one of his naps, trying to figure the one on the left.

He awoke the same as always for lunch, with the nurse sliding a comb down his beard.

There ye are, she said. I swear I never seen a body sleep s'much.

He smiled slightly and raised his eyes.

And I swear if I didn't some in here and comb all this pretty white hair of yours you'd just leave it be, she continued. And then some doctor'd catch sight of ya an think you's bein mistreated.

Hmmm, he said.

Don't feel like talkin today? she asked.

He shrugged a little and looked down at his hand.

Well that's alright by me, she said. I don't reckon a body's gotta say a word if it don't want to, if it don't need to for that matter. And I don't blame ya for sittin in here instead of that recreation room neither. There ain't nothin good on the T.V. an poor ol' Miss Davenport's liable to talk your ear off.



She moved behind him and combed from his bald skull to where his hair stopped below his neck.

Have I ever told you you got the prettiest hair on the whole floor? she asked. It aint all stained and yellowed like most these men. Looks a whole lot better'n most the women's too. I never could see how gettin older'd make some people's hair turn yellow or blue. But not you. Naw, if I's you I'd let it grow long just like ya do.

He nodded slightly and smiled.

All done, she said, stepping back to his side. He watched with the same eye as she leaned down, putting her palms on her knees just below the rising skirtline.

Now, she said, are you gonna eat all this lunch I broughtcha?

Hmmm, he said nodding.

Thankyamuch hon, she said.

Hmmm, he said. And she left.

At the smell of the ground beef and creamed corn he closed his eyes and swallowed. But before he wheeled around he saw that the spot on the left had moved to an inch below the moth. Through better light and squinting, the spider's eight legs showed themselves still and tense.

It had never occurred to him to save a sleeping insect. Just to sit and watch the spider's lunch was enough to make Cyrus delay his own. But as the inch long standstill crept into fifteen minutes his stomach began to gnaw and growl. He swallowed and the contents of the tray seemed to fill the air and hang there, growing heavier. But he couldn't turn to save his life.

After twenty minutes he began nudging the wheel without noticing. Covering two feet over five minutes and inching past that, it was focus more than weakness that slowed the old man. But his stomach still tugged at his throat, and with every nudge he had to



swallow without blinking.

The hell are you waitin for, he thought and held the wheel at what he judged to be an uninvolved distance. His fingers trembled slightly and his eyes seemed to wither from dryness. The food had probably gone cold, he figured. But to inhale what it left in the air warmed his inside and made his mouth a faucet. So much that he thought about his wife's cast-iron skillet from years back. She could've fried up his dirty worksocks and he'd still ask for seconds, he thought.

But it was the pecan pie that brought the drool to hit the chest of his pajamas at the same time one black spot snagged the other with no visible movement. Cyrus spit all over himself and held tight to keep from falling. He breathed heavy and the moth flapped like hell to save its own life. Both had slowed down when the nurse entered the room.

That you who yelled, Cyrus?

He shut his eyes and figured it was. He nodded and finally noticed the size of the smile his mouth had taken. He kept toward the window and laughed to himself.

Oh, that's just a little ol' spider, she said and moved closer. She steadied her aim and crushed it with a clipboard.

It won't bother ya now, hon, she said.

Cyrus stopped smiling and watched it fall.

Now eat your food before it gets cold, she said. You got all afternoon to look at that barn.



Annex Poem

Mary Ann Owenby

Being French encompasses
more than a beret and wine attitude—
it's an avocation
with no breeze of holiday,
but me. . .
I drop
amend
mutate
birth my nationality
as fits into the
groove of accented conversation,
the sieve of national prejudice,
or the inebriated dialect of pick-up lines:
fashionably Italian in London, porcelain-skinned Welsh in France,
mysterious Russian nobility in Italy—never wanting to
disappoint. Only in
the western outposts of Turkey
in the turquoise waves splashing against the
elite of vacationing soleil-skinned Europeans and bored Bodrumians
did my golden hair and bountiful bikini top
signal
my identity
as a United States citizen—
although I didn't have the heart to tell
them I
was
from Alabama
and had never seen "Baywatch."

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oil on canvas
Untitled by Jennifer Hardiman



West Coast Poet Visits MTSU

by Tracy Moore

Poet Adam David Miller visited MTSU this semester to hold a three-hour poetry workshop for interested students. Not only is Miller a writer, teacher, scholar and critic, TV radio producer, editor and publisher, he is also the recipient of various writing awards, such as the 1994 Naomi Long Padgett Poetry Award and the National Endowment for the Humanities Award. Miller has established an active teaching and publishing career, teaching literature at UC Berkeley and founding various publications there as well.

Miller, a soft-spoken, jovial man, has published three collections of poetry thus far: Neighborhood and Other Poems, Forever Afternoon, and Apocalypse is My Garden. He first attempted writing poetry as a teenager, but ridicule from a professor discouraged him from serious writing. After that, he wrote intermittently, trying his hand at poems and short stories, but did not attempt serious writing again until 1990. Neighborhood, his first collection of poetry, was published in 1992.

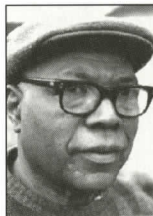
Miller does not limit himself to any particular subject matter in his work because he feels there is so much raw life to draw from. Topics in his poetry range from serious political and social commentary to humorous character sketches of people he has met, known, loved and read about.

"I have always written about what I am seeing, doing, thinking and reading," explains Miller.

"Four Tops Live at the Roostertail" depicts an evening at a popular Detroit nightclub during the Motown era at the time of the burning of Birmingham, capturing the political uncertainty of the time. Many of Miller's poems question simple things we might overlook, such as the force that drives creativity and artistic endeavors. Others portray a conversation between two friends, as in "Note to an Aspiring Gardener, Some Advice."

Miller prefers the "ease of verse" to other expressions, feeling that "every form lends itself to a certain kind of expression." He has worked in theater, directed and acted, but finds poetry is his calling. He works best in the mornings, and feels revision is the key to his success as a writer.

In addition to writing, Miller has worked as an editor and publisher. He was founding editor of the Graduate Student Journal, a UC magazine of opinion, as well as Good News, a faculty magazine at Laney College. He has contributed to numerous anthologies and publications such as Black Scholar, New Black Writing, and Literature of Black America.



Miller brings this experience to the workshops. He enjoys working with young writers, and tries to maintain fair standards when evaluating their work.

"In a young person's work, I look at whether the piece moves me, and how it works as an expression," Miller explains, "I look for honesty and use of language."

For the workshop, aspiring writers submit five poems, three of which Miller critiques the night before the workshop, and two of which are discussed in class. Students read the piece aloud, and discussion includes the overall effectiveness of the piece, whether its use of language is successful, and various other positive and constructive feedback.

Miller suggests that students begin their own workshops to involve and meet other writers of their peer group. In addition, he encourages aspiring writers to keep a running record of their observations, never throw away anything they write (even one line could be used later), and most importantly, revise.

"Writers become writers when they realize that revision is the name of the game," says Miller.



Critique

Brian Wendell Smith

I especially admire the purple. The purples invariably show deeper, more intense and defined color than the other hues in this piece. Certainly, there are blues that swirl and curve, blues which create masterful patterns and reveal truly impressive skill. All of the blues, though, exhibit a tendency to fade into charcoal or mottled backgrounds, and they lose their identity in the transition. Exquisite purple, though strikes the viewer immediately. The glowing violets never lack definition; rather, they scream out for the attention of the enlightened critic, pounding down aesthetic barriers and filling the viewer with a sense of what true art can be. They never fade into the background like the other shades that gradually lose their intensity, so the vivid contours assume definite shapes. The stripes of purple and amorphous blues are accented by crimson and scarlet streaks; truly an assault on bland, ineffective works of more timid artisans. They also serve as a focal point for laymen, immediately drawing attention and leading the casual observer gradually to appreciate the fine tints and casts of the strong burgundy, then the lovely purple, and afterwards the blues which blend into black, with a pale saffron edge encircling the

whole. Though several of the more subtle aspects of the piece require a working information of the medium common only among experienced critics, the artist's intent was surely to create a piece that could be understood by everyone.

This work violates the tranquil, even boring scenery of the art world. In verity, this work was planned and performed, indeed brought to life, by one of the finest craftsmen in this medium. It should be noted that skill of this level comes only after years of painstaking study and practice. The seemingly simple choice of materials requires understanding of the resilience of numerous leathers and skins, to say nothing of the pressure and angle of strokes. Even then, the piece in question was created alongside some thirty others in the same day, and though many exhibit similar quality, none match the perfection of our current subject. My only regret concerning this piece derives from the transitory nature of the medium itself. Still, he has accomplished something in this piece that will be remembered for generations as it inspires future artists to great works of the same kind. Even after it heals, this piece will be remembered.

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This mascara is waterproof, just in case I cry

Katy Kupfer

It's a story untold,
about boyfriends
and fathers
when drunk is
the word, long
past.

And the world
awaits for fighters
and lovers.

To take away keys
so they can't drive
home.

And they pass out cryin,
like we're
all still just children.

Because we are what we are, it has become us.

So we cry
over brothers, boyfriends and
fathers

Like we are
what we are
forever children.

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photography
Six Kids on Porch by William Isom



MUSCOVY

Mary Cummins

“She was a nation which fed upon herself, creating a rich and spirited existence. Her downfall was her want of isolation: without it, her past was uprooted, her mystery was lost.”
—Avturah, *History of Ancient Russia*

Years ago she lived
a Marxist in deep
dying Mississippi —
closed herself
in run-down libraries,
learned and alone,
girl-wife to words left
by all the misfits before her.
Leaving the Delta, and its
slow cultural cancer,
was easy running.

Now, underestimated, it takes her
too, she finds herself one of them.
A nameless expatriate,
common for the first time,
as they build golden arches
over Muscovite graves,
and she forgets the reason
she came here.

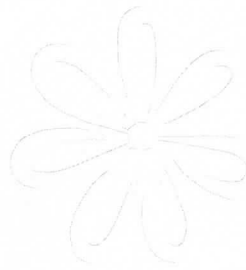
The whys of her fleeing are flat
against the country, like photos
in travel brochures, her mind
impure as imported styles
of new Russian architecture,

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leaving only the imagined
recalling of something more,
some time ago, as if some
other emotions
had once been the living
and the dying of her.



But kneading away at the past
seems impractical— all that
conversing with bigger years,
important days, words of people
impassioned, drugged with feeling—
so she slows down on hard questions,
sleeps off her intellect
like vodka on cold nights
after it has given her just enough,
before it gives her too much.

Still some nights St. Basil's shadow
comes to her across the square,
moves into her, stretches out
upon itself like a Slavic folktale,
conscious of its own death
long ago, before
cosmonauts and sickles and
wandering American girls
scented with oil and bad grammar.
Before this malignant
fraternization.

Sometimes beneath blackening
onion bloomed shape,
she hears deep South words
in a different language,
rednecks screeching
kakvaszavut,
sees cotton growing on
the banks of the Volga,
smells Marlboro smoke
rising above Red Square,
fingers the Kremlin on
gas station postcards,
and she feels
the end of something.





photography
Wholesale Sausage by Carson Parks





photography
Father and Son by Carson Parks



He's Still Living in Virginia

Bob Beckley

They were eighteen in nineteen forty-two
So much in love, but what could they do
But say goodbye
He promised her under a lover's moon
He'd be back for her when the war was through
And she cried

And though he never came back
And the years have come and gone
Deep in her memory
He never left at all

He's still living in Virginia, you can see it in her eyes
When that sun is sinking low across the Blue Ridge skies
She waltzes with his memory to another place and time
He's still living in Virginia . . . in her mind

There's a scrapbook in a trunk beside her bed
Filled with photographs and letters he'd sent
Stained with tears
And some old records she plays when no one's around
They're scratched and worn, but still a beautiful sound
To her ears

And when the music plays low
And the light begins to fade
She can almost hear him
Whisper her name

He's still living in Virginia, you can see it in her eyes
When that sun is sinking low across the Blue Ridge skies
She waltzes with his memory to another place and time
He's still living in Virginia . . . in her mind

He's still living in Virginia . . . in her mind

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Steady Tennessee

Sarah Evans

Jim and Leanne
pronounce loudly
airbrushed affections (unicorns and hues of amber
unnatural)
on the bumper plate of his pickup.

A car ride too long
to part,
she rides center
eating Krystals
then cherry coke.

She does hair
and he is her man.
He bleeds orange
and can fill a shirt.
Walmart and football
— maybe we have a song.

Two heads bob to bumps
on the road
Steady.
to Tennessee,
steady to a steel guitar,
steady to Shelb'vulle
where she's from.

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photography
Tornado by Ami McFerrin

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act one, scene three (a midwinter's daydream)

Devon Koren

"i am the beginning of eternity,
followed by half a circle, close on by half a square,
through my fourth, my fifth is seen,
to be the first in every pair.
my sixth begins my seventh,
the end of time and space,
now put my parts together to see what's taken place."

Maryrose was wearing her wings tonight. They shimmered off her wet glass back and her silver-scarred soliloquy with a paraphrase or two as she took her earrings out and used kitchen utensils to straighten her hair. The house was cold, so cold, and Maryrose couldn't stand there anymore, barefoot and tiptoe on the hardwood floor with a t-shirt and underwear, the little, white slash margins staring up at her from her thighs, her broken heart and ripped up stockings scotch-taped together and sealed with a kiss.

Tick, tock, times ten, times twenty. The clock unsheathed linear blades and cut away at Maryrose's sacred timeline—Maryrose stirring chicken noodle soup with her wings on backwards and the patchwork of someone else's dream strung across her spiral-bound bedroom and paperback world. There was still the cat to feed, little Whiskers, the purple kitten with its synonymous Cheshire cat grin and curious meow. There were still the bills to pay, the books to read, the lines to memorize, and the black checkered waitress uniform to wash in the oven and towel-dry on clothes pins.

With her tye-dyed hair and her thin, twilight cursor lips blinking on and off, Maryrose selected another color, another king to kiss. Pink, so fate decreed. wince. Pink. "Valentine's day is always pink," Maryrose mumbled, saturating her hair in punky color, praying for a change in the weather. Maybe it would be spring soon, here in the middle of February. And anyway, Maryrose missed the daisies, the lilacs, the dewdrops. "I hate pink." And for the roses? Roses are for the pretty girls, Maryrose snarled, and never for me, not one of them for me...

Robin G. Fellow worked in the flower shop on the corner of 5th and main, painting penelopes with wax dewes and coaxing rosebuds to ultimate lipstick texture. He rented a room upstairs, but nobody noticed him much, though sometimes the casual passer-by would glance up and see Robin on the roof with his bass-guitar, dangling his feet over the edge and daring the pigeons to jump. It was rumored that Robin always smelled of the forest, that the wild things followed him and the spring was his to claim (indeed when he moved into the neighborhood mid-January, the temperatures rose and the month grew unseasonably warm).

Exotic flowers swarmed his shop, odd rain forest plants and purple clover autographs. Whatever he touched turned green, and the garden followed him wherever he went. With a dandelion fingerprint he would pick up a paper from the newsstand down the street that he would never read, purchase mocha at the coffee shop downtown, leave pressed lilacs in every library book he returned. And February, in sheer delight of his wintry tauntings, forgot all about the groundhog and followed Robin's shadow through the rest of the weather forecast.

"I have a little sister
and in the fields she's seen
dressed in yellow petticoats,
and a gown of green.
She's not a bird and cannot sing,
but she can fly without a wing."

Robin, in his favorite emerald jacket, would wander the streets wearing a libretto mask, and at night he would sleep in the arms of his music, a cloak of g chords and a blanket of sharps. Lonely, though he wouldn't admit it. His music carried the vast emptiness of this world without love, this world without another paragraph pretending. The fairy tales had been left out in the open for too long, and they had grown stale, chewed over and dissected until there was nothing left to their wings but scrawny, starved mosquitoes sucking at orange juice. Robin wouldn't believe it, the wilder forester, the bard of a thousand faces and the shape of a thousand makings. His music prodded through the complex thesaurus and cue cards of the human's soul and tickled the glimmer of fragmented faith until it blossomed into fragrant laughter. And laughter, of course, was only the beginning...

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Choose a number...and a color...find the pocket...now pass me by...

Maryrose was sometimes a penny-pockets lady. She wore her apron of a thousand pockets dabbled in corduroy and would often tell a fortune for a penny, (fortunes are funny things...they tend to be stubborn and often Maryrose's clients would have to settle for a knick-knack instead). The alderman and other such pale officials had stuffed her pockets full of tattered, useless things such as herrings, pinwheels, handkerchiefs, honeycombs, Chinese puzzles, dandelions, origami, scissors, and other eclipses. But with such silver horns Maryrose could often make the children smile, and that was what was important to her.

Once upon a time and long ago, a scurrying sailor in the guise of a hare shipwrecked into her skirts and asked her how to get to the sun. Maryrose was often fond of him, for the ribbons he gave her to wear and the riddles he taught her. Sailors often have such a charm, one of those unspoken charms they picked up from their mermaid friends down home (you know the type). She would have danced with him forever in the fiddler's green, her toothpick dreams running across a summerset lawn at one hundred miles a minute, but Maryrose had previous engagements, and such a curse that the west wind was hunting for her. (After all she could never stay long with the ones she made happy). So away she flew, dragging her wings behind her, promising to write (as we always do) and exchange stamps with him often.

But none of that was of any consequence now (well, perhaps it was of some consequence, but Maryrose didn't want to think of it just right that minute). The world was collapsing—the sky was falling down in bucketfuls—and Maryrose was busily scrounging for broomsticks to hold up the horizon with.

It is rumored that the world might be changed with a guitar pick. Anyone who had ever heard the bard Robin play would agree wholeheartedly, with hands clasped in applause and amazement. The roses liked it much; the daisies understood the melody (and after all one can learn a lot of things from the flowers). Forget greenhouses...forget fertilizer. Robin's music was enough nourishment for anything living and anything green. He would shake the leaves out of his hair, grab his infamous electric bass, and perch on the edge of the windowsill, stringing riddles to his reason and passion to his rhyme...

"I have a little house,
its windows number plenty,

it's full of flowers that no man picked,
and you may have it when it's empty."

And while Robin often found himself in the kitchen concocting riddles, he never dreamed even once he would actually find the answers to them all, in someone's penny pocket as they happened by his way. But outside the rusty shingles of one enchanted evening, he saw, for the first time, the pink pixie hair of a sugarplum fairy, with her apron full of pockets and a penny for them all. Her walk was familiar, her tambourine clairvoyance, the soft percussion of the click clack, click clack her boots would make against the outside, asphalt world. He laughed, and wanted to turn her green, too, though thought better of it, and instead let his song lead him elsewhere. After all, what else is one to do when one has found his muse?

Maryrose stood on tiptoe to catch the fragments of the falling sky in her skull-cap, the neon trust and glow-worm love of a thousand faces. She pinned her hair back in a chopstick minuet, set scissors to scalp and pretended for a while. Cinderella in her ballet flesh apron and apricot dress. She tossed her wry smile and pink hair into the wind sparklers for the fourth of July seething from her unsightly split-ends.

Click clack, click clack. Boots against pavement, pavement against bone. The waitress almost danced, in her checkerboard patterns, past the newsstand, her pale blue eyes like earth orbs absorbing every detail, every midsummer shade of this wintry wonderland. In her glitter raincoat and invisible umbrella, her bubble shoes paused, instinctively, in front of Robin's Flower Shoppe. Curiously, on the edge of a whim, she glanced in, gazed, watched a love story continue off of every musical phrase.

Roses, a field of roses, every color, every size, every shape. Roses you would never believe existed, lining the walls, descending into the aisles—a valentine's jungle. "I hate roses," Maryrose muttered once more. But the man at the counter was wearing the scarf she found in her dreams and such fireworks are only inevitable, after all.

Click, clack. Inside and bludgeoned by the aroma of roses, the scent that stained everything. And the soft, gentle purr of an electric guitar (bass, and unplugged, left outside in the rain—perhaps it was a Celtic harp in some other life—one never knows) emanating from the magical, knavish fingertips of the creature behind the counter. That beautiful creature, with his haunting blue eyes and the melody of hair which rose and fell on the percussion of his sweet breath...

Who are you, she wanted to ask. Her keys fell out of

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her hand, as if on cue, and the crash and clatter (as if an angel hit the ground) roused the dreaming spirit of Robin, ignited his aqua-marine with curiosity and recognition.

“How now, spirit,” he grinned. “Whither wander you?” his voice...its familiarity was discomforting, and Maryrose clamored for her keys.

“Oh I’ve just got...I just wanted...” what did you want, Maryrose? She doesn’t know—she doesn’t remember what charcoal destiny sketching drew her here, why she should be covered in so much flora.

“a rose perhaps?” Robin smiled. “They’re on sale.”

“no, really,” Maryrose stammered, “I have to be going-i’ll be late for work!” her hands stumbled through rosebush, but returned empty, the metallic clash of keys lost forever in the barbed wire bramble. “Ouch!” scratch. the thorn embedded in her thumb, a trickle of blood on flesh, on even more blood and flesh.

“shall I play lion to your paw?” Robin jested, as always, setting down his bardic tunes and walking over to his damsel in distress. Taking her hand, at the touch of her skin, he knew who she was. yes, Robin knows, but he’s not telling... “such a little thorn,” he murmured, “as if it were never there...at all.” pain vanishes, wounds heal, as Robin’s magical lips pass over them. Maryrose’s eyes grew wide with wonder, suspicion ebbing silently.

“how did you...?”
“shhh...” Robin smiled and pressed his finger to her lips. “a magician must never reveal the secret to his magic. you, of all people, should know that, my lady.” with this final sentence, his hand cupped her ear, and he pulled her keys from her hair. The old quarter-in-ear trick. She breathed, and for the first time, the perfume of the roses tasted like nectar and nourished her daydreams.

“who are you?” Maryrose mused out loud, a storybook opened and a character undefined.

“I am a merry wanderer of the night,” Robin quoted with

a flash of white teeth, “and there are so many things that you are, and yet you are not. where have you been, my love lady lost, without knowing, yet knowing what language my lips would make if pressed to yours?” and Robin pushed a pink candy heart with imprinted red lettering of “kiss me” into her palm. Maryrose wove a spindle around his neck and she clung to his green flannel as her lips met his—once, twice, thrice—when a scotch-taped heart heals and the roses are good again, good forever, important and beautiful, just like Maryrose wearing her pink hair.

“mirror me,” Maryrose whispered, though her words were more like a breeze of wind, breathing, a saint lunar child for the first time this evening believing in Valentine’s day. Robin stuck a looking glass in-between her run-on sentences and laughed at the palindrome.

“em?” he smiled, and touched her hair. “my love, I am the mischievous he who the story tellers of ages ago call sweet puck, and you...you could be queen of the fairies, if only you could let your wings go.”

and she did—she set all of the kites free in the same evening, and sailing through their almost-march mission they brought back the answer to this riddle:

“fifty is my first,
nothing is my second,
five just makes my third,
my fourth a vowel is reckoned,
now to find my name,
fits my parts together,
I die if I get cold,
but never fear cold weather.”

and Robin, of course, swore he already knew. and he dressed her in every name she wore until he found one that fit the best. but what it was, Robin’s not telling. and neither are we.



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photography
Everything Beautiful and Sublime by Jessica Lovett



More than the music

Miller promotes economic change in South Africa

Keith Ryan
Cartwright

It's 9:30 a.m. and Byron Miller has already sent three of his four children—Justin, P'Lar and Chelsea—off to school. After making a few more phone calls he'll hop in his car and drive off to another taping of *Vibe*, one of the few nightly talk shows geared towards African-Americans, leaving at home his wife Debra and oldest daughter Felicia. As a member of the show's house band, today is one of those days when Miller is expected to arrive on the set by 10 a.m. for the 4:30 p.m. taping.

Now that Miller's career is moving into high gear after nearly 20 years as a professional musician, his time and talents are being pulled in many directions. But for now, he's on his way from his South Pasadena home to the CBS Studios on Beverly Boulevard in West Hollywood to back up tonight's musical guest, Brian McKnight.

Miller's career has been quintessential to say the least, having made a few friends by recording and touring with such noted artists as Carlos Santana, George Duke, Roy Ayers, Marvin Gaye, Whitney Houston and Luther Vandross. But while his career has kept him busy since graduating from high school in Detroit, Miller still had a longing to help promote positive growth in black communities around the world.

Regarded by many as a world class talent, the five-string bass player was in fact recently asked to travel to Africa to serve as the musical director for the IV African/African-American Summit Musical Gala in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The summit helped to show that Miller is indeed a musical creator himself, with his own vision and voice, and not just someone's side kick. In fact, the summit helped to set up Miller's move into television and the release of his first album, *Until...*, for Discovery Records. However, his recent trip to Africa has helped to keep in focus his real life-long objective, aside from his career that has begun to move forward at break neck speed.

Cartwright: You recently went to Africa.

Miller: Yeah, I went to Africa in July. There's a thing they have every couple of years (pause) Rev. Sullivan, who's in Philadelphia, had a lot to do with breaking up apartheid and he does this summit with African-Americans and it's in Africa. The reason he does it is to promote trade and things like that between Africans and African-American people. There were a lot of Kings there. I saw some brothers, young brothers, who have gold and drive Rolls Royces. It's a summit, and it's especially for black folks.

C: Were you there to present anything to the summit or to just kind of take in what it had to offer?

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M: I presented music. I was actually contacted to be the musical director for their night of entertainment. So I put the show together for that night which was me, Najee, Jennifer Holiday and Will Dowling. I put together all the music for that night. But that was only one day, and I was there for a week so I decided to go and see exactly what (the summit) was about.

C: And what did you learn?

M: I learned that black folks have big say in this world. There's a lot of money in Africa, but there's a lot of money that isn't being generated in the right places. And that's another part of the summit. Jessie Jackson was there, and I had dinner at (Nelson) Mandela's house.

C: What was that like?

M: It was like a dream because I didn't expect to meet him.

C: But surely you had to expect that he'd be there didn't you?

M: Actually, having dinner at his house I thought that maybe he would be around. But there were about 300 people, I would guess, and we had dinner in his guest house which had 28 rooms. He came in, talked with everybody and made a little speech. He shook everybody's hand. It was like I was dreaming because I respect him so much for what he's done and what he went through to be where he is now. To see how humble and how intelligent this man is, it was just incredible.

C: How has that trip changed any of your viewpoints?

M: I have four children and teaching them about where they're from, and about apartheid and what they went through. How if you persevere, if you keep going on and doing what you believe in and you pray. That things work out in the end. Some folks have to die to serve a point but the ones who live reap what is at the end of that tunnel when they walk them to the light. So that is what I preach to my kids. To keep trying and have a dream. Mandela's dream was to have those folks free. When he was in jail all those years he kept believing and now he's back at the top, smiling. He's not bitter. He's forgiven everybody.

C: Did you get an opportunity to speak directly to Mandela?

M: It was, how are you? I love you. Thank you. You know, everybody was trying to talk to him. I wish I could've, but I was able to put a show together and play for him which was cool.

C: The media has never really shown the wealth that Africa has, so it's kind of hard to imagine them having all this money. I don't know if it's just ignorance on my part but I wouldn't have imagined that to be the case. Was it surprising to you to see that Africa had as much wealth as it did?

M: Very surprising because they have a lot of little countries that are very wealthy and are ruled by black folks.

Like I said, Jessie Jackson was there and a lot of other people were there trying to build corporations and generate trades between black folks over there and in America. Trying to make that money grow.

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C: Do you think they will succeed in finding a way to spread out the money in Africa so that it isn't so concentrated?

M: Yes, and they talked about that. Jessie had a bunch of ideas about how to do this. A lot of financial people and people from corporations were over there talking about ways to generate money and jobs to better ourselves as people. I mean, here in the United States, we really don't own anything. That was the focus. Owning things, owning our own corporation and really being apart of the financial world. Without that we really are nothing.

C: Having gone and witnessed what you did, does it make you prouder?

M: Ohh, it really makes me proud of African people and it makes me proud to be of African descent, way more than before. To have been able to walk on that land. To talk to those folks and see what they make from dirt and trees and how crafty they are with their hands. How well spoken they are. A lot of them speak five or six different languages. They are very intelligent people. I'm very proud and proud that I went there. I went to

Soweto and I went to this church where a lot of black folks got killed. They have pictures of everything that happened on this wall. To actually go there sent chills up my spin. To see where these people are today. Soweto is still poor but they're making their way and they're starting to do better.

C: I actually thought that communication was a problem over there. I thought that because some of the countries did speak different languages that they had trouble communicating with one another.

M: These folks are intelligent. I speak one language, so to speak six languages is something. They are communicating on another level. They are very intelligent people.

C: Not physically, but mentally, what did you bring back from your trip to give to your children?

M: You have to be proud of who you are and you can't let anyone take that from you. You have to make that work for you. There's a lot of roots in there, a lot of strength and being black and being from Africa and knowing the power of money that these black folks have over there is impressive. Every two years they have this summit and I will be taking my kids there. They can see what little African kids do. That they go to school all day and they are intelligent. That the teachers are teaching kids about the economy, about making money, about owning businesses. They are going to go to Africa. They are definitely going to make that long trip. It takes two days to get there, but they will make that trip because I will be apart of the summit every two years.

C: How did your conversation with Jessie go?

M: I talked to Jessie about black folks not having any radio stations. Our music is controlled by



white folks really. There's a lot of black music that is not getting played. If you're not a connoisseur in a record store. Searching out, trying to find cd's, a lot of folks are getting lost. We need to purchase our own radio station so we can play our own music. Not only black music but white music as well. A lot of stuff is being squashed because they have this thing called Sound Architecture. When someone like myself puts out a cd, they send it to these people and they listen to it. If they don't like it, they will not play it on the Wave radio stations. That bothers me. That a few people can decide what goes on radio. We need our own radio station and I ran that past Jessie.

C: What else are you doing to move forward with that idea?

M: I don't know what direction I'm going to go in yet. But I do plan to try and make a change as far as that goes.

C: The fact that you're apart of the television show VIBE has to help play in your favor when it comes time for you to address that situation publicly?

M: Right, and I haven't ran that past Quincy (Jones, executive producer of VIBE) yet but I plan to. That really is something that needs to be addressed.

C: What is your relationship with Quincy?

M: I see Quincy everyday on the set. He's right up in there. He wants to be apart of everything that goes on over there. He's very hands on.

C: So how then has being around him everyday and knowing what kind of success he's had inspired you?

M: To see this black man, who doesn't have to be there everyday because he has his own record company, come in like he does because he's a real hands on guy. (pause) I knew he was a great musician and a great arranger but he's that great as a business man. I never knew that until I started doing the show and I got to see how he works. He has a part in everything as far as how the set looks, the guests' that come on.

C: Do you think that it's because of him and all the work he's done in the past that shows like VIBE even exist today?

M: I think he's a big part of music period. He's an inspiration to me. To see how somebody can change with the times and stay current and stay on top. If you were to ask me, who would I like to be like? It would be Quincy Jones or George Duke. People who get older yet stay current. That's what I'm trying to do, stay current. Stay up on top. Young folks are always coming up with different stuff and music changes. You have to know what's going on out there. Quincy inspires me that way.

C: When might you approach him with your ideas?

M: Real soon. Probably in the next couple of weeks but he has his hands full right now with the show. There's plenty of time to do it and it is a priority with me. So I'll just wait for the right timing.

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Corpus Christi

Brian Grant Pitts

grain by grain
the land meets the sea.
crept everso miniscule
reaching two half-buried feet.
all seemed fictitious,
the heat of corpus christi
against my cheek as
concentration brought empty.
among the tourist built castles
daylight's last stand.
turning wine back to water
drop by drop.

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I don't know you.

Mary Cummins

You pour coffee
and I sell shoes.
You have Clark Kent eyes,
fuzzed goatee, a tattoo
round your bellybutton.
I wear big heels and my
mother's college dresses,
line my lids in black.
Weekdays I size up customers,
wonder where I'm going
for lunch, send you good
mornings in corner glancing.
I hate life this way.
You give me chamomile tea,
dollars and soft fingers for change.
If one day I say *hello*,
I am twenty-two and stuck,
perhaps you would run
gentle hands over the ruins
I've made of these years.
I place my tired hair behind my ears
and go for doughnuts.
I offer you pennies,
my pressed skirt whispers please.

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oil on canvas
The Wuxtry by Jennifer Hardiman



Moth #2

Josh Cochran

New Year's eve - 1994

Travellers traverse a nebula, mostly 2 h's and a o-
thick,
dense.

Hallucinations abound,
"En- -Closed"
a cottony blank et.
Wrapped up with in itself,
sur rounding me, hatefull
with the trying texture of a holly bush.

A waking in the ice, s moth ered in the heat.
A wet dream of magnific(i)ent proportions.
Fire-
Demons-
bones. . .
(and something about an aerobics class.)

Lay
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sit on me.

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End less
blankets and covering headed for
Top of the world, Smoky Mtns.
Ten nes see.

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turn
me inside out within my shell,
cracking the crust-
milk ing me,
 draining.

To give birth. . .
a life, an image, an idea-
your children suck greedily at your milk,
carefully kneading their claws on the gentle pink breast-
 Good to the last drop.
The childrun sw arm around me, they bring their fri ends
 (enemies as well)

They scream of the great Ford,
but his name is now Tram-laW.
He deposits all his soma goods, in the
hearts of these children, & i fear for us all.

Perhaps they do not plot against me,
perhaps the clouds do not bear down upon me with such great weight as i think,
& frown down as they piss their glorious wonder on the earth.
mostly 2 h's and a o-

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Slow acceleration-
The curve sharpens ahead and i grab the stick.
Left foot gliding,
i AM the one driving,
div- laugh-,
i AM -ing
the best i can.
i want to go
faster and faster, to escape this encasement
& what the children
will see.

the fog and the smoke
keep me hacking-
intricate patterns
woven by the nearest star (mostly just h's)
combat the principle of enthalpy, change of state.
Su sp

end ed. .
The great molecular chessgame of eternity,
with no clock
with no rules
and no winners.
never knowing if the visions are (real).
If the move was a deal.
this whole journey thing gets pretty
discouraging.

i try to kill the music.

i want to go faster than fast,
or stop. & sit & take in
each square ft of road as i pass.

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this Lysergide Drive & this evening in the brain
makes me decide to stop & walk in the rain,
bend down with my magnifying scope
and scoop up the Life-

asking it for a solution, an idea to hold me over,
a revelation for today, for now-
something simple but
dense with connections-
something small yet in finite & tall.
I find you: a gold dust moth- a little fellow
continually crawling pinnacles
of grass
blades.

Fighting the heavy air.

No lightbulb orbit frenzy,
only circular etchings
of tiny feet,
four to a side
and a million
small eyes,
resting under a dew drop clover.
He looks up at me and smiles a weak smile-
His blanket far away.

If my back was such an intricate tapestry
no shirt would ever cover me.

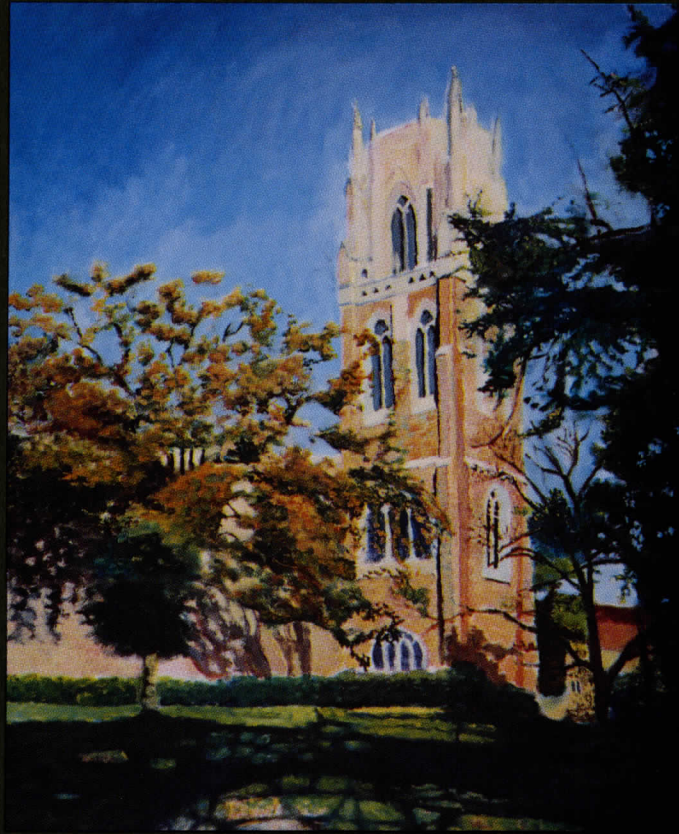
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oil on canvas
The Cathedral at Sewanee by Todd Amacher



the son.
the father.
the old college try

B.W. Carter

alone on the couch after that certain terrible winter
weeping for the loss of a guileless vanity—
the duplicitous nature of modern ideals
—held so aloft by those immortal masses of youth

when he takes my hand, says gently, “suck it up:”

a bygone command from little league days—
some salient unsung confirmation
—to remind me i am still a man, for all this seeming
ruination still tall, and
i should relish the pride twelve
gauges worth of gunpowder could never burn away;

i should carry these scars like banners—
like seamed but indomitable muses
—for the immortal masses of truly wise men
who see buckshot burns and scalpel leavings instead
as a testament to character unscathed.

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~ Contributors ~

Todd Amacher is a 25 year old junior from Tullahoma, TN. He is an art major with an emphasis in painting. After graduation, he would like to teach art in high school.

Bob Beckley is a part-time graduate student in Computer Information Systems and works at the V.A. Medical Center in Murfreesboro, TN. His lyric is from a song he co-wrote with Joe "Opie" Doyle of BMG Music in Nashville. The song idea was inspired by Ramona Pettit of Washington, PA.

B.W. Carter has appeared in eight national and international anthologies. He won third place in the NLP North American Poetry Competition in 1996 and took second place in 1997. He is currently trying to find a publisher for his first complete volume of verse.

Josh Cochran is an English major who writes poetry, stories, music and other hazy things. He has been published in a few obscure places, but the type is always wrong. "Read carefully," he warns.

Mary Cummins is a senior double majoring in English and Political Science. She is currently preparing to write her Honors thesis and graduate in May. After graduation, she plans to move somewhere warm and get her Ph.D. in English Literature.

Sarah Evans is a boy-crazy "Jenny Jones" fan majoring in Ancient Romantic Languages and minoring in Scientology and voodoo. When she's not drinking tap water and going to drive in movies, she enjoys skipping and playing with stickers. She's also been known to like juice, but don't let her anywhere near sand.

Jennifer Hardiman is a 22-year-old fourth-year painting major. After graduation, she plans to paint until she can't do it anymore. Her career ambition is to get as many people as possible to enjoy the weird things she thinks about.

William Isom is a photo-journalism major from East Tennessee with an interest in street photography.

Devon Koren is a curious little creature of dreaming who often dances around campus blowing bubbles and mending hearts, wearing faerie wings or decorated in bells. She misses her mountains and forests of home and dreams of the day they will finally want her back.

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Katy Kupfer is currently an art major, but she is considering a switch to engineering.

Jessica Lovett is a senior double majoring in Photography and English and minoring in Marketing. After graduating in May, she plans to work as a photographer in the commercial field, incorporating her writing and marketing skills into advertisements.

Ami McFerrin is a 20 year old sophomore majoring in Photography and minoring in Art. In the future, she would like to be recognized for her photographs.

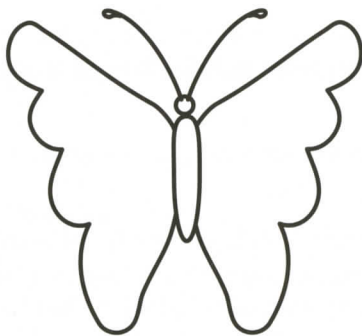
Henry Morris is the pen name of the guy who sat next to you in English class all semester and wanted to say “hello” but never quite got around to it. Hello.

Mary Ann Owenby was baptized in the waters of Literary London . . . “As for aspirations,” she says, “may I find myself between Tess and Arabella, seducing a free drink from the President of the Immortals.”

Carson Parks tries with his photography to find and express a connection between simple images and emotion.

Brian Grant Pitts doesn't think anyone will be reading this page.

Brian Wendell Smith is majoring in Anthropology and will never settle for less than what he really wants.



For submission guidelines,
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