



Spiritus Mundi
A Collective Memory

Honors Literary Magazine
Spring 2008

Colorado
State
University

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We hope you enjoy reading our 2008 Spiritus Mundi collection. This publication is dedicated to alumni of the University Honors Program from 1957 to 2008. Your commitment and loyalty has left a lasting legacy to the Honors Program and Colorado State University.

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Irony in the coffee shop

Courtney Skalicky

Warm air and the aroma of coffee beans greet me as I walk in
This morning it is packed, with people and coats and backpacks
I squeeze my way to the back of the line for “Everything Else”

As I shuffle slowly forward,

the sound of steaming milk gets louder

People pass me carrying their large, non-fat, no-whip mochas
like they were newborn babies

I’m close enough now to hear what people are ordering
“Medium white tea, small caramel latte, extra hot coffee to go”

The people behind the counter work quickly, stirring,
steaming, and adding syrups

Their hands become machines, moving in swift, smooth motions

They crank out drink after drink and go back to make more

I finally arrive at the register

The lady asks me between thick black bangs

“What can I get for you?”

I glance back at everyone waiting behind me and say,

“Just a glass of water please”

Of Apples and True Love
Anastasia Sares

The way it used to be
The apple didn't fall far from the tree.
Now they pluck it while it's green.
Gas it with sweet ethylene
Wax it like the glossy floor
And put it in your grocery store.
Its sisters all stand side by side
And customers grab, smiling wide
The very same flesh Eve first bit
And think no more of it.

I'm guilty too; I've felt its blood
Running down juicy and cold
On my chin and then I remember
It's winter, past December.
How synthetic is my existence
That I'm only in the present tense?
Thinking now's the only way it will ever be
No room for seasonal rhythms within me.
The aroma is overpowering,
They tell me that's a natural thing.

My will is no longer my own
I think they've put my soul on loan
Thinking they can mass produce
The taste of home-grown produce
With airbrushes in magazines
And glorified erotic movie scenes
Laying open skinless slices
Worshipping all human vices
And cutting out the core
So love has no meaning anymore.

But the way I think it used to be,
Blemishes weren't so unsightly
Hunger was only one of our needs,
And we'd always re-plant the seeds.



Moment in the Courtyard
Steve McVicker



A Life Behind Bars
Caylen Cummins

Tomorrow
Laura Rosen

Leaves like flames
Against clear blue;
Another season,
No stopping it.

Winter rides
The heels of tomorrow.
The hounds of spring
Are far afield.

Night falls,
But the sun rises
Again.

Tomorrow and tomorrow
And tomorrow –

They're all the same.

I listen
For ancient rhythms,
The sound of the earth
Beating,

Meaning.

Sleep and rise,
Live
And die.

I'm waiting for the day
I start breathing
And open my eyes.

The Rain-Maker
Olivia Myers

The clouds blanket sky
With heavy indigo
Color given brilliance
By sparks of white
The storm
An old, dark woman dressed in blue
Grumbles as she pours out her blessed cargo
striking sparks
that flicker in the hem of her skirt

Walking the White Line

Zach Simson

He turns his face, blinking away the dust kicked up by the passing tractor-trailer. His mind is elsewhere; he is only dimly aware of the steady trickle of passing cars, the weight of the pack at his shoulders, the unyielding wind. Passing drivers snatch a terse glance at the proffered thumb or stare with open mouths at his complacently vacant expression, a vague grin crossing his face as some tune fills his head – “On the Road Again,” or

But their destinations beckon and they do not stop and after a couple miles the man is forgotten, does not exist and never had. Or perhaps he weighs on their mind, a missed opportunity for a Christian act, a chance to pay it forward. But they reconcile their inaction with fear, the locked door, can’t trust anybody these days. Meanwhile the man kicks rocks on the shoulder, watches over the clouds drifting by, stares down the sun in the southwest. These are the hard times, the waiting times; it isn’t always like this. He remembers the girls in Fort Scott who fed him cheap beer for 60 miles, the man in Weatherford who drove him clear across west Texas, the countless concerned mothers who worried over him. He wonders what has happened to the father who put him in the back of a minivan with his 6 and 8 year old kids, or the college guy who drove him out of prison town El Dorado, or the old man who

Now the sun splashes crimson across the sky, the mountains turn blue on the horizon, and the voice of a solitary killdeer carries from the river. The man shuffles his feet, spits in the dirt, looks around the deserted crossroads between two nameless towns, then puts his head down and begins walking, singing softly to the beat of his footsteps. He lifts his hat to run his fingers through his greasy hair, eyes scanning the brush for a place to bed down, turn in. He doesn’t think about the pinching ache in his stomach, his chafed hips, the long, lonely wait through the night ahead with nothing but

Now it is a timeless hour between dusk and dawn as the man watches the stars play hide and seek with the clouds overhead, a north wind sends a chill through his bivy bag, and the yip of coyotes sounds all around, serenading him and the slim crescent moon above. The man stretches on his back, watching through half-slit eyes the world of shadows around him, listening to the snap of twigs under little feet. His mind is blank and unafraid, his breathing slow and calm, he waits

I changed for you
Benjamin Walker

I sat, tear-soaked cheeks shining palely in the light of the yellow street lamp, staring into what must've been her beautiful green eyes. But the light was opposite my position, so it cast her only as a silhouette; a halo of light stinging my pupils as I squinted, the salt of my tears almost burning my face. I could hear her crying too, and we clasped each other's sweaty-palmed hands as we grappled with the idea of losing the first meaningful relationship either of us had. I don't remember what we were listening to when I reached to turn the radio off.

"...I don't want you to change for the wrong reason." She finished.

"But I've always had the interest..." she cut me off,

"It's important for you to see the love for what it is." She was talking about the love she felt when she opened the Bible; not the shared emotion that had taken us to a whole new level of understanding of each other, the world, our friends; our parents and our histories. There was no question that we were in love. Love is an emotion strong enough to stop the heart; a word from a loved one can affect the chemistry of your body. Our love was strong enough to call my questions into question. No, she was talking about the love and life that encompassed her when she read the stories about Paul, Peter, John, Matthew; all of which were very familiar to me from childhood. She was talking about Christ's love: he lived with her in those gilded pages.

I sat in silence. I couldn't see it, I couldn't feel His love. I couldn't force myself to believe that I could or wanted to. I couldn't disregard all of the skepticism I was left with after reading the alternative philosophies I found in my rebellion of my family; those not presented to me as a child. Now here I was, in the middle of one of the most Evangelical communities in the world, staring at, loving with my entire physical make up, and at the same time loathing the most meaningful person I had ever known, because the Son had gotten in the way. She refused to

let me change for her. Although we both knew it wouldn't be a complete change; I was very adamant in my denial of Christ, I at least wanted to attempt and see what happened. She refused to let me try.

"Maybe you could help me." I whispered meekly before the onslaught of tears started pouring again, from her shadow and my burning eyes. I felt as though her God had broken His promise; that this was a flood that couldn't be stopped, something rainbows were supposed to protect us from. She shook her head almost invisibly; her outline betraying nothing her features would have told me that her words couldn't. She sobbed in anguish and choked the tears back, opened the door of the car and disappeared from my life.

The suffering in her voice that night haunted me for years. I would awake in the middle of the night, sobs of the girl I once thought I would know forever, the weeping of my love: of pain, bitter self-resentment, and confliction filling my ears, tormenting my senses to the point where escape wasn't just necessary for sanity, it was necessary for life. Physical pain manifested from my night-terrors. I took to walking at night, mostly aimlessly, mostly without purpose further than escaping the misery inflicted by my longing. I would walk until I had no idea where I had ended up, and would have to wait for the sunlight to find my way home again. I walked so much I was an insomniac, and not long after that an unemployed insomniac. Escaping was ruining my life. I walked without so much as telling anyone why or where I was going. But if I didn't walk, it was agony.

My pulse ran high, my palms poured sweat profusely, my eyes twitched, my body ached. Doctors told me they didn't know why at first. Maybe the flu. Get some sleep they would tell me, make sure to eat healthily. But all I could do was walk; at least she was with me then. The cityscape became a desert to me in my sleeplessness; a place I wandered through, temptations at every turn. At least I had her then.

It was betrayal, and it hurt. It set my being on fire; the feeling was akin to the lashings of her lord, before his death. 40 was death, right? And he took 39. I was at that 38th, and the future, that 39th lashing a dim blur outside my cognition. My walking replaced pain. It replaced sleep. It replaced meaning. It became an obsession. I walked instead of eating. I walked instead of breathing.

I collapsed one day, just short of mile-marker 7. Blurredly I picked it out on the horizon. *“And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. (Joshua 6:4)”*. There is nothing in Joshua 6:4 about dying.

The light from the flicking fluorescent overhead caused a thumping rhythm in my head, and me to stir from the groggy comatose I lay in for weeks, they told me. Needles or morphine sticking in a bruised arm I only recognized because it was attached to me. Sores all over my body from not moving for an unmemorable period. All I remembered were the lights. The dim pulsing they called from within my chest, the feeling of lightness that had never been before. I felt in flight. Every bit of my body, of my mind, of my soul was in the air, part of a larger piece. It wasn't only the drugs; irrefutable love filled my worldly capsule. My vessel had a tried and true captain. The sea of life was no longer the lonely journey I had set out to navigate with my feet. One step at a time. Now my hand was held. I was saved, I was loved. Unconditionally, for the second time in my life, I was loved. The Lord had found me, I was his sheep. My work was over. I closed my eyes, and thought to my first worship, “I changed for you”. My eyes rested. “I changed for you”. My heart rested.



Faith
Joanna Homann

The Watch-Maker
Chris Neal

Once there was a man before the beginning of time
Who didn't know where he came from, or why he was there
He knew not how he was alive, but nor did he care
For resonating in his mind was an insistent chime

Not knowing how he existed, still he wished to create
Sprung from his desire, intricate tools appeared in his hands
He began to forge the steel and pull it into thin bands
Then melted the white sand into bright glass, for this was his fate

For eons, the man labored with the countless dials and gears
As his weariness grew, he struggled to attach each ring
Finally, only the three hands remained before the glass cap:
He shaped the planets and formed the stars over the years
Single cells evolved into silver fish and birds that could sing
Last and swiftest, mankind arose and spread across the map

The man lifted his delicate watch and undid the clasp
Gingerly twisted the knob to wind up the spring
And with infinite care, released his creation from his grasp
His energy spent, he lay down to rest, his eyes unseeing

But he had made a slight error with the watch's third hand
And with each tick, mankind shifted further out of alignment
With each murder and each theft, they destroyed their home land
That their creator had spent an eternity bringing to fulfillment

Horrified, the creator watched helplessly as mankind
Smashed the gears, melted the glass, ripped apart the levers
They claimed fragments as trinkets; the springs started to unwind
The numbers chip, centuries pass in moments, time severs

When the creator tried to repair the watch, his unwieldy tools
Only hastened the damage ... our fate is in the hands of the fools



tanglewood
Laura Rosen

Sea Glass
Chris Neal

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust?
No, we are born from the waves
And to the waves we shall return.

For months, our world
is the glossy shell of a giant mussel.
We do not see its obsidian sheen
as we are swathed in the warmth
of alabaster blankets,
wrapped up, a caterpillar in a cocoon.

After our grainy souls, sprouted from seed
are coated in the smooth softness of pearl ...
We are separated from the eternal heartbeat,
which will always be a part of us.

And so we are gently laid in a pristine haven,
guarded by coral spires
sea horses twirling over our heads
as we watch in wide-eyed wonder.

Even a perfect paradise cannot sate curiosity.
We take our first steps and pursue the chaotic prisms.
Our gaze fixed on the rainbows, we trip on the stones,
but loving hands catch us and shield us from harm.

Slowly, we learn to walk the well-tread paths of life-
but the taller we grow, the farther we fall,
and no matter how close our friends are,
they don't always know how to save us.

So we crash on the beach
Our eyes sting with salt
Our mouth fills with sand
And we weep.

Our woes are soon forgotten,
and we recklessly race and chase
in pursuit of anything that catches our eye.

Eventually, these simple joys lose our interest,
and we search for the greatest bliss
that our world has to offer: sea glass.

Ever elusive, incomparably beautiful;
Some stumble on it by accident
and do not truly understand what they have found,
for the colors of the sea glass are not yet revealed.

But those of age who find the sea glass
can only marvel at their discovery
and hold it gingerly in cupped palms
lest it snap and shatter
and flay their hearts like shrapnel.

If we do not discover the sea glass until later in our lives,
then we will find it dulled, worn down
by the incessant crashing of the waves.
It is more difficult to see the beauty under the white scratches.

But if we are patient and polish this priceless glass,
we will find the treasure beneath as beautiful as ever.
When we age and wrinkle, our light does not shine
for all to see; it is not apparent to all who pass us by.

It is never too late to find the right person
who has the patience to give you a second glance,
discover what lies under your appearance,
and find that your core has only grown brighter
after condensing and burning over the countless years.



The Lion Sleeps Tonight
Caylen Cummins

Unwinged
Laura Rosen

Blue above,
Blue below.
The cries of the winged
Fill the air.

They skim across
The still surface
While I become
The earth.

Wings above,
Wings below.
My senses swarm
With flight.

We are stone
And sage and sand.
We live to die
And rebecome.

Rise above,
Rise below.
I am the unwinged.
I will never fly.



Tulips By Chance
Nichelle Frank

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