Letters from the Editors

This makes me think of this one time Lizzy and I had one of many trips to the antique shop, Charisma 7. Chittered, stuffed like a prize turkey, nearly bursting at the seams, that little shop had such an energy. A vibrancy. It was living, had lived, and its possessions had been lived in. I envied it. Each item, glistening in its dusty splendor, its antique, vintage, lived glow. I wanted to feel what it was like to have lived that way. To remember AND to forget. Who had worn those filmy, lacey shirts with worn ruffles, limp to the touch? Where had the faded, patched up bag been? Whose ears had those lace, pink pearls touched? And then I thought - what a great idea for the magazine! Our life is one of remembering, forgetting, and then being reborn. It's antique. It's vintage. And so are our thoughts.

Heather Luciano

antique (an-lik)

adj.
1. Belonging to, made in, or typical of an earlier period.
2. Of or belonging to ancient times, especially of, from, or characteristic of ancient Greece or Rome.
4. An object having special value because of its age, especially a domestic item or piece of furniture or handcraft esteemed for its history, beauty, or period of origin.

Sarah Heffern
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## Poetry & Prose

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*FEATURED POET: Joel Schneier*
Stones in the River

We sat among the rocks
on the riverbank.
We watched the stones,
the sticks,
the branches,
the leaves,
we had plunked
into the river.
We watched them spin
in the surge and the swell of the brimming river
that swirled through the valley that swept away the silt
of ages swimming in the rampant currents
and flowed into the distance like moonlight in a mirror,
like a silver stallion in a silver dream,
the river ripping the green fabric of the valley with its
gushing rage and tumult and tidal force,
we watched our stones barrelling brightly through the water.

We wondered if our rocks would ever find

the sea.

Maya Cantu
Flying High

I'm on-point like Marco's widow's peak
Flying high, and I always grab the window seat
Leaning my face against the glass
If we crash I'll be a bloody messy mass
But what a view
Ephemeral and endless — Jesus, what a blue
I've fallen deep in love with a tarheel hue
Guarded by a few brave clouds
These passengers are like red carpet crowds
Gawking at A-list celebrity myths
A freed genie, the monster from Loch Ness
Three wicked witches and a perfect Pegasus
Threaded from the imagination
Sewn together with white wisps
Acting out fantasies while these headphones hiss.

(My walkman's metropolitan
World-weary and well-traveled
He went all the way to Germany
Blasting freestyle battles.

When I stood at the fallen Wall
He played The Beatles — Let It Be
I grabbed a stone for sake of memory
A few years later, I forget about it all.

Whatever the weather, I'm back in the saddle
Riding this winged horse up North
Away from native shores, without a set course
All I know is that we're straying from the Star:
I don't want people looking for me
When they don't even know where they are.

Evan Allgood
Playgrounding

The old swing creaks,
breaking the silence of the shadows.
I wrap my hands around the rusty chains
and send myself up, up, up
into the open air of a warm July night.

Opening my mouth to breathe in the darkness,
I taste the thick heat of summer,
tempered by the moisture of a forgotten rainfall.
It is an atmosphere that is open, and dark,
and ours at midnight.

Gravity kicks in and I glide back to earth.
First come the empty streets and sleepy neighborhoods,
then the fence, the field, and my discarded shoes.
And at last I see my friends, clamoring like toddlers
to be the first one down the slide.

In a few hours, the sun will come up
and return this place to its rightful owners.
And we will trade in the blur of a merry-go-round
for the dizzying spin of our grown-up lives.
But we don’t care about that right now.

Tonight, we are kings and queens of the playground.

Kaiti Kitts
Kim Haymes
Wit

Waving Icarus’ tiresome
wings in the
whimsied Impetuous tempest.
Why is there
Woe? If two
wrongs indeed take
winding impasses to
weathered infallibilities, today
won’t invite terror.
Wrinkled in time.
Wanting improper temptations.
Waiting indeed! Trying
wholly, I tumble.
Wrangled in tethers.
Wrought incomplete thoughts.
Whosoever it traps
will inevitably tire.

Deanna Yuille
Ghazal

I pass by a highway rest-stop littered with caravans, parcels and bicycles strapped down by ropes and red ribbons to birthday presents I open alone, watching the candles burn down low to bloodstain reds against white icing, snow that reflects its own pristine image of the world, capturing the wornout red texture of this home’s neglect. now my hands a perfectly imprinted silhouette against a summer-streaked windowpane, red outlines of arteries highlighted like a revolving prism by the silent Lee setting sun of purples, pinks, and reds.

Lee Francis
Blue

The sky today was outlandishly blue—
It was the kind of blue that washes over everything
And scoops it clean.
The kind of blue that might be referred to as angel’s eyes
Or fairy’s tears,
Or the kind of sky that seems to have displaced itself
From the middle of Kansas—
A wholesome, corned sky
Without a cloud to sour its thick pristine cream.

But what of those days when the sky and my spirit
Are not one,
And my thoughts are boiling black
And I want to fling them up onto that maddening dome?
Those days of squalls and rabid gulls
Stabbing into the sea?
Then I only see the sky
Through a dust-bowl veil
And horizons are besieged by blue.

Days like this feel as if some husk has been peeled off—
Sprayed down until they gleam
Like a postcard of a cottage by the sea,
With little harbor lights springing up and smiling.

I love days of mirror skies that merge horizons,
Lands and seas,
Cerulean vastnesses
Plashing the world.
I love those days and skies
When the breeze is a luscious on my skin.
I love days as blue as Kansas afternoon,
Slick and cool as a colt.

Maya Cantu
Catching Jesse’s Dreams

Chrisi Mohn
I’ll Fly Away

Light right out of here.
Go home,
home to tumble hills
cracked open as a smile.

Each mile adds its note.
The moon
low slung, silver,
traces through the trees.
Somewhere there a river
long and sleeping blue
winds to the heart of it.
The deep warm humming.
The slow song
calling
calling
calling.

eyet...

The houses modest brick,
street by street asleep.
Save for those who wake
hearing
a wind at the door,
the chattering of dried leaves,
no more.

The streets snake
a dozen different ways
to the same place.
A midnight square bright lit but
strangely bare.

Here
no cradle eyes or southern speech.
No bell ringing out the hour.

Only words scratched in stone.
Old songs,
good songs, about

flying away.

Matt Pollard
The Mask, the Soul, and the Face

I lost my soul one day in
New Mexico, in Santa Fe.
I walked through the crusty,
wooden threshold of a store
into an abyss of faces staring
at me, gawking at the mask
I was wearing as a face.
I could hear my soul hiding
behind my mask, curling into
a ball and whimpering, and I swiftly
exchanged it for one of the faces.
The face still hangs on my wall
staring at me, asking
day after day why I
traded a soul for a face . . .
I never tell if they’re the same.

Joel Schneier
Nightmares

Chrisi Mohn
Talking to Amber at Waffle House

Mallory Griffith

capped the conversation with coffee/cream and sugar for you at four in the morning it all moves full circle toward scattered snippets and half-pressed illusions with consequence covered we smoothed each situation and we
and all of this was only so that
i could write you a poem
that started like this one did.
it was waiting for its words
to come in the mail;
to be fed to it,
and so it ended up being
just another jumbled bit
of my intellect.
you certainly don’t need
to hear that,
not after all this time.
i was going to make this personal.
something over the phone.
that’s the best I can do
because i don’t have the guts

or the one last resolve
to do something stupid
in the name of this poem.
i was going to end with
exactly what I always meant
to say.

Enough were exhausted with
time but somehow just a few
words may have slipped off
the tongue,
finding their way into
a proper file or drawer.
all of this
was only so that
i could write you.
I know that you LOVE
to torment me like this
but YOU know better.

Clayton Dingle
Tantalizing Tresses

It's about curls and blond
and that's all you see

She bounds
down uneasy stairs and
the strands are free
from the hang

It's a dazzle of gold
and an untamed mane

She smiles
thumbing through knots
the strands are free
from the cling

It's about curls and blond
and that's all you see

Susan Fessenden
Cabaret

Gillian Ginter
Watching Through the Window

He pulls his car out of my driveway hesitating on the accelerator, his head shifting from left mirror to right mirror, blinking, struggling to keep the steering wheel in his grasp. I didn’t even look at him when I walked him to his car and he mumbled something to me, his voice shaky. I hurried back inside, unsure how to say anything to him, oddly aware of my perfume. Now, I stand against the window, my hand pressed against it, aching with invisible sweat, breathing through a hole in my neck, my perfume smelling of a wretched, oblong shape expanding in the top of my mouth. My sister stands behind me, asks who that was, and I can only mumble something that latches onto the window against the back of my hand, piercing skin, crushing bone.

Joel Schneier
Just Yesterday

Just yesterday
we were snuggled on the couch
Settled on your tummy,
we slept
In our dreams
princesses and ponies linger
as we wrapped our little fists
around your finger
Just yesterday
we danced together
Now we felt the princess shine
We wore fancy party dresses
that floated in air
A dance with your dad
nothing else to compare
Just yesterday
we were right by your side
Time has pulled us apart
But through time
one thing will remain
Our little girl love is always the same

Susan Fessenden
My Childhood Summers

Always making sure we had
Too much.

And as the summer night spread,
Licking its way
To my doorstep
I knew

There'd be flashlight tag
And mosquito bites
And
That syrupy stillness
That only comes when the moon
Is pleased with the weather

And decides to make itself content.

Emily Wyatt
Please, This light show has
Been overdone and we are ready to leave.
Leave, leaves like the orange and bouncing fingers of infant
trees. Some are brown. Lucky, lucky brown with their inability to see.
Clearly, Through me. Forget the heavy sighs that seep from the edges of
fair-weather eyes. Seep, seep, see them soak into you like a tomb of treasured breezes
fleeing the mother sky that takes residence in an unwilling cry. Reap the gold from the
Ground I was too frightened to sow. Make you rich with my hesitation.
A cottony cushion of pretty moments play me
Like a prison harmonica.

Jessica Conlon
"It’s only after we’ve lost everything, that we’re free to do anything”¹

I could sit here
all my life
on the cushion
of this chair
feeling
my crimson lips
pull further and further
back until they
snap off

like a rubber band,
leaving my body
in a death rattle
that will sound like
Now, I am free;
unaware
I was as good
as dead
all the while.

Joel Schneier

¹ From Fight Club, by Chuck Palahniuk
The Low-Down on High-Fives

Imagine that you’ve just tread the treacherous trek from ISAT to Moody (a fitting name for your final destination). You catch sight of a good friend or an attractive stranger and want to say hi, but fear you may collapse from lack of oxygen. Sounds hopeless, right? Wrong. Do yourself and everyone around you a favor: save your breath and enthusiastically slap hands with someone you may or may not know.

Thus we beheld the high-five.

The high-five is the El Camino of greetings: the epitome of class, the pinnacle of sophistication. There is no better way to say — at a borderline obnoxious volume — that you have a fully functioning upper body and are not afraid to use it. It’s the body language equivalent of shouting, “Look out world, I am a ten-fingered force to be reckoned with!” You will be met with oodles of oohs and awe-filled ahs, and rightfully so.

The brilliance of the high-five lies in its simplicity. There is no need for a “What’s up?” or “How are you?” If you hear the crack of hand meeting hand, it is safe to assume that self-esteem is what’s up, and both parties are doing at least pretty good, if not unbelievably good.

Part of the reason high-fivers are always so happy is because they know that they are the envy of all their peers. Look around after a solid high-five and you might catch a spectator or two staring wistfully down at their own hands, which remain lame and useless. Drink it in, for you are a demigod among men.

Imagine a second scenario: You recently went to UREC for the first time in years and feel like showing off the goods. Well, you’re in luck. Oftentimes a high-five is achieved by forming the arm into a flawless L shape, perfect for placing those Adonis-like arms on display. Members of the opposite sex will literally drop trou and scribble their phone numbers into your back with a branding iron. It happens every single time and — speaking from experience — never gets old.

Unfortunately, there’s a lot of misinformation flying around about this sweet interaction. A friend of a friend swears he knows somebody that got clubfoot from high-fiving. I’m no doctor, but that seems unlikely. The worst that will happen is your hand will sting for a little while. It will sting with companionship, and you will be left with a red rash of rapport. Rub all you want, but that rash — like your rapport — will not soon fade.

There you have it. The high-five. A simple applause in response to a job extremely well done. You are alive, successfully walking, maybe drinking expensive coffee or wearing a hat. Whatever it is, you are doing it well, and you are important.

Now get out there, slap some skin and show ‘em what you’re made of.

Evan Allgood
Raze it red,
Violets r bloo,
When I grow up,
I wanta bee like yoo.

Raze it riddish and thronee and pritee.
Violets r bloo but I never saw a violet.
My street is skaree
and dirlee two.

Razez for die
Violence make bloo
Your in a beter place
Why can’t I bee with yoo?

Repetitive metallic clang breaks
the stillness of the smooth withering night.
A steel wave roars
with unknowing ecstasy by
the crumbling apartment complexes.
The grimy fire escape bridges
shadowed alley, a mountain’s valley,
and charred sky, God’s thunder-burned sky.
Staccato beats rip
through the way
to the renewal of weeping sun.
horse and knight falling down
children scramble out of play
their king falling down.
God above
his sheep below
bitter weeps bless the air as down down, he looks from the fire stairs at his only son.

Steam blankets ascend as sacred linens, passing father’s peaceful place, where within both peace and turmoil, life and death, lay.

Here in the middle lays father, in sleep drunken with aspirations to wake up

Greg Thompson
People always said she had an infectious laughter.
It tinkled
Then roared
Then splattered into a full echo
And shined out of her

She loved daisies
Like the sun, looking up at it when you aren’t supposed to
So yellow and outlined with gleaming white whipping cream
And you know you aren’t supposed to
But you can’t help but peak up at its beauty

Yeah that was her.

And wrapped in all that warmth
Was a soul so full
You thought it was almost out of
This world

And in fact it was.

And then
There was that cold overly-lacquered lookin’ wood,
reflecting the daisies that sadly lay on top of it
Shouldn’t have been allowed to reflect that beauty,
not that whipping cream and yellow sunshine
Shouldn’t have been allowed to hide the beauty that laid within that casket

Hiding the world from that laughter,
It tinkled
Then roared
Then splattered into a full echo
And shined out of her

“Not fair.”

“Never is.”
Indifference

"Infuriated" was the word she used to describe why she was leaving, why she was collecting everything of hers around the house and balling it up in her arms and packing it all into her car. While she walked viciously from room to room I sat quietly on the family room couch with my right leg folded onto the other, observing her rampage, smiling in bliss, feeling at ease, and this only amplified her anger so her words were incoherent and every move sloppy, accentuating the comfort of the couch.

Joel Schneier
A soft sound smothered my soul
as it escaped your mouth;
your tongue licking the insides, the vowels,
the outsides, the letters sharp and desirous, wanting
more than what they could handle.

Your eyes leaped and touched
the ceilings of Time and Life and Truth,
or what can be thought of it,
as the word, “Love”
danced in the air, hanging
and twirling by invisible strings
connected all the way
up to the stars.

A star thirty-five times
the size of our own sun exploded
and vanished, leaving a small green spot
on the astronomer’s retina

when your lips closed and my heart pounded,
like a slowly revving motor,
humming peacefully and excitedly
with the discovery
that acceleration
can be shared.

\(^1\) stanza taken from Kooser poem, “After Years”

Heather Luciano
The Size and the Shape

If words could fly, then I'd live by the echoes in their wake, watching the size and the shape put lives at stake because of the words I make.

Joel Schneier
All of my Thoughts Go to the Windowpane

The specks of reflections
reflect nothing but meditations,

And I’d give anything
if they’d give at all.

In the instant I form them, each of my thoughts turns to dust, and sticks and stretches on my window and darkens my room. The glass has slowly become buried under years of growing up; as a little girl, the nights made me sick, so I didn’t mind. But some days I can’t even see the sky. And on mornings like this, 5am mornings, I clear a circle of dust just fat enough to see a branch and a bit of blue. I love reassuring myself that the sun is indeed rising, whether I see it or not. My favorite time of morning is when the sky matches my eyes in a bright blue-green stain, and it makes me think they’re made of the same stuff, the same swirling pool of hot thick liquid blue. And in the moment my nightmares convince me I’m seeing a single giant eye staring into me, I might fall back onto my bed and let the window collect my thoughts in handfuls.

My mom comes in and tells me to stop thinking so much. Soon I’ll completely clog the window and then I’ll never see the sky. I start to laugh until I notice her brown eyes know more than my blue. I ask her, Why isn’t your window dirty like mine? And as we watch, another flake of dust grows from my glass. She looks at me unhappily, disappointed that I’ll be as sorry as she was. Go back to sleep, she whispers. I wonder if she knows I can’t; I wonder if she’s becoming as terrified as I am. At this the window grows more dust, and I scream at it to shut up.

She’s been preparing me for tragedy since I was ten. Once I turn eighteen, the sky will be completely gone. Two days, and adulthood will slice my heart in specific grids, and there’ll be so much thought at the instant I wake up, that the window will finally be a solid slab of soft sierra brown. Even now there is something pushing-pulsing through the woodwork that wants the angel-me to soar through the circle on the glass, and leave the rest of me stuck solid in myself, and for a life of perfect maturity I’ll be without heart. We learn that somehow, all we need are minds.
The last day of seventeen, I tear up my diary. I rip every page; every day. I try to destroy every year that I have grown, and I scream and I shake all over. I never once asked to get older. My breath suddenly catches full and I stop, unable to exhale. Fight a nightmare and it gets stronger, fight a fate and it flies up faster. I lean my head against the windowpane and cry myself to sleep.

In the morning I awaken with brown eyes.

Mary Crook
Breathing

It's the equivalent of a needle skipping on a record.
Skip to: her 40th birthday. Mom, Dad, Brother, Husband, Child, placed around the dinner table. Eat, drink, be merry.

Skip to: her mom's funeral. Dad, Brother, Husband, Child, Child's companion, Family (extended); breathing with the California coast. Cry, breathe, deposit remains, breathe.

Skip to: her college graduation, age 23. Mom, Dad, Brother, inspiring a future of empty promises. Promote, sell, subsidize.

Skip to: Chanukah, age 36. Family (immediate), flickering and shadowing walls with laughter and lavender memories. Give, receive, give, receive.

Skip to: the birth of her first child. Husband, regretting lust. Learn to live with breathing consequences.

Skip to: her first alcoholic drink, age 15. Friends, drip drip dripping pressure and condescension. Take a shot.

Skip to: her wedding, age 32. Husband, Family (immediate), Family (extended), Husband's family (immediate), Husband's family (extended), Friends, sweating in the crook of Florida's arms. Toast, dance, omit flaws.

Skip to: her 16th birthday. Family (immediate), Sister, Friends, sweetening her ego. Scream surprise, break speed limits by 18 miles per hour; mortality is a myth.

Skip to: her death, age 89. Family (immediate), wringing tissues, flowing eyes.
Release, relief at leaving behind a life well lived.
Skip to: her sister's funeral. Family (immediate), Family (extended), cursing God. Numb, practicing denial.
Skip to: her first chemotherapy session, age 26. Family (immediate), praying to God. Nervous, perfecting denial.
Skip to: her first gallery opening, age 31. Family (immediate), Boyfriend, Friends, scrutinizing brush strokes and genius undiscovered, searching for twelve thousand words. Gasp, cringe, love, hate.
Skip to: her final swimming lesson, age 8. Mom, Brother, Sister, feigning velvet congratulations. Sink, swim.
Skip to: her brother's high school graduation. Mom, Dad, Family (extended), Brother's friends, spotlighting his talent, his incredible Darwinian stock. Eclipsed.
Skip to: the loss of her virginity, age 17. Boyfriend, fumbling with his Guns and Roses t-shirt. Sour, spoiled.
Skip to: her dad's funeral: Brother, Family (extended), Husband, Child, Child's companion. Child's child (boy), staring into the impossibly deep plot. Rue, rinse, repeat.
Skip to: her husband's funeral. Child, Child's companion, Child's child (boy), Child's child (girl), Husband's family (immediate), Husband's family (extended), repeating the routine. Grieve to the unconventional beat of sobs.
Skip to: tonight, age 27. Crying herself to sleep, alone. Just breathe.
Skip to: skip to: skip... to... skip... sk... s.......................
Remember when our life was a measured life?

Where We Were

Together we drove.
Through Parsons, placements, predilections-
You, to say, I’ll see there.
Me, to say I’ll tag along.

Mallory Griffith

You were my Dean Meriady.
With hard, deeper, Dylan-gray, green eyes.
(Eyes that gleamed like summer mercury)
(Eyes that seemed to thresh themselves)

And shared all the horizon wandering
Where we were, where we were going.

Mallory Griffith
Everyday
Have you ever been walking,
And glanced at someone just as they look
at you,
Then you both look away
Embarrassed
Like you’ve been caught staring?

Jeff Kusterbeck
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Send submissions to one of the two addresses below. Include a cover page with your name, phone number or e-mail, a list of the works submitted with clearly labeled titles. If you have specific questions and concerns about submitting artwork or photography, please write us, and we'll get you in touch with the corresponding editor.

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