Chrysalis
Cover: "Copy Cat," serigraph by Rita McCaslin

Rita McCaslin
"Copy Cat, Part II"
serigraph
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>silver print photograph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Accardo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ceramic sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Williams</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>polyester resin sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Sonifrank</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>woodcut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy Smith</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>intaglio print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy A. Tompkins</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Becht</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Becht</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>intaglio print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Phillips</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>silver print photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Accardo</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Mount</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Black</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>mixed media gatefold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Phillips</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>intaglio print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Becht</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda J. Sheldon</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbie Giles</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>silver print photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Accardo</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>silver print photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Becht</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>embossed linoleum print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Plummer</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>sterling silver chalice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James L. Flory</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>bronze sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim White</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>acrylic painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Pascal</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>pencil drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Phillips</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>lithograph print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Phillips</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>lithograph print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Pascal</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>mixed media Xerox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literature

Barbara Hall  1  On Brushing Hair in the Ladies’ Room
M. J. Tucker  6  Rap
Mike Hewitt   6  Feet
Phoef Sutton  7  Silence
Leslie Staiko  9  a typical day
Wayne Motley  9  A Poem of Prosody
Charles Martin 14  Travel
Barbara Hall  14  For Jennifer
Mark T. McMullen  15  Garden at Nightfall
John Kaufman  16  I Will Swing
Lori Magai    17  Race Memory
Meredith Gould 21  Apartment Street Apartment Street
Mark T. McMullen  22  My Imagination as a Child
John Kaufman  29  Summer on Mulberry Street
Wayne Motley  34  Widowed
Charles Martin 34  Autumn Thoughts
Phoef Sutton  35  Jenny Has Always Wanted a Piano
Alison E. MacDonald 37  Nevertheless
Barbara Hall  37  Promise Me
John Kaufman  42  Eleven/One/Eighty-One
Dean Honeycutt 43  Necking on the Carousel
Lori Magai    45  Liebfraumilch
Kathy Campbell 50  Impressions of Emptiness
Carolyn A. Haykin 50  Zero
Mark T. McMullen 51  Gen
Steven Palkovitz 52  pipe dream
Phoef Sutton  54  Taulard’s Cave
On Brushing Hair in the Ladies' Room

What wonders Keats could have done with this
If only he were here to see
These two faces daring to compete
In one reflection.
What glorious phrases he would have produced
For youth that never plans to stay.
There one stands with worlds ahead
To gaze at flawless infant skin
And one who has had her chance and watched
The greenness overripe and wither—
Stands here and tries to pretend it
Really matters which strand of hair goes where.
It's cruel the way youth deceives and taunts,
Runs when we admire it most...
Keats had it figured years ago
But he was a mere dejected poet—
What could he know.

—Barbara Hall
Isaac Williams
“Blue Ridge in Decay”
ceramic sculpture
Janet Sonifrank
"Translucent Form"
polyester resin sculpture
Peggy Smith
"Carpet Tack"
woodcut
Feet
They Stomp;  
-Heavy Boots-  
On Crisp Concrete,  
Crunch Glass  
And Click Heels:  
Sharply.

softly  
we linger on soft moss  
and easy herbs  
barefoot

—Mike Hewitt

Rap

Sunlight seeping  
Through boarded windows  
Sending sharp rays  
Off bits of glass

A man on the corner  
Hands deep in pockets  
Lifts a bottle  
And dies a little more

Cry, baby  
As your stomach growls  
My baby  
Listening to the wind howl

Walking in the night  
Streetlight’s glare  
Wondering when I might  
Split this scene

Of lust and greed  
Red lights flashing  
Long Caddys passing  
And money unseen

Pick-up game off the alley  
Crowd smoking  
Rip digs Sally  
And everybody’s toking

Talk some trash  
Roll the dice  
Spend my cash  
Don’t think twice

Fall into sleep  
Jokers playing games  
Thought it was deep  
Damn shame.

—M. J. Tucker
Silence

There was, Bernard thought, as he severed the cord of his telephone, entirely too much noise. It pounded in the streets below and drove insistently up the stairs and through the very door of his apartment. He sometimes thought that he should go far away to some quiet place, but even there he would not be free from his own noise.

He learned that the night before when he said "How are you" to Mrs. Brubaker. It had been no more than a traditional reply to a traditional greeting, but it had shaken and reverberated like a handball in his skull. His reaction confused him and he climbed into his bed to study it.

"Why so shocked by your own voice?" he asked himself and began to laugh. "Because you hadn't used it before, Bernard." The words "How are you Mrs. Brubaker" were all that he had uttered that day.

And why not? Had he seen anything at work or in the streets worthy of comment? Anything that would have justified his adding another bit of sound to that already loathesomely audible city?

He felt a flush of pride. A month or so before, this would not have been possible. Some foolish conversationalists crowding around the water cooler discussing, in urgent terms, the latest film or sporting event would surely have turned to him and asked, "What do you think of this, Bernie?" and he'd have had to look up from his adding and pretend interest, or answer truthfully that he did not think the subject worthy of discussion, in which case the others would turn away, looking shocked or offended. Perhaps it was because he had been more than usually honest in such situations that they had finally come to leave him alone and allow him his silence.

Now it irritated him that he'd spoken to Mrs. Brubaker. Had he really cared how she was? Of course not. And he would have felt such a satisfied irony if he'd been able to fall asleep and think, "I live and work in one of the largest cities in the world and yet have successfully avoided verbal communication for twenty-four hours."

When he woke up the next morning, it was with a purpose. The subway ride was easy, as he'd guessed it would be. At work he wore his most dour expression in order to discourage traditional greetings, but his heart still increased its beat as he passed the most loquacious of the secretaries. She said nothing and it puzzled him until he remembered making a remark she had found insulting a few days before.

"Some people are just unnaturally sensitive," he thought as he turned on his machine and began to add.

Upon returning home that evening he merely waved to Mrs. Brubaker. He laughed as he locked the door behind him, feeling as though he'd just played a marvelous joke on the city around him.

Then the phone rang.

He turned the bell down, covered his head with a pillow, shoved the phone under the bed, but it was no use - his socialization had been too thorough. He lifted the receiver and uttered the damned word "Hello."

Of course it was a wrong number. It was then that he cut the cord, fell into a deep depression and went to bed.

The next days were Saturday and Sunday and they were very easy. Too easy to afford him any satisfaction, since all he had to do was remain in his room. Going out for meals proved of mild interest until he realized that he need only point at the menu for the waitress to be satisfied.

But Monday was a different matter. Monday was a challenge and one that he, in his own opinion, handled with skill and poise. At 1:01 the man who sat on the third desk down from him on the right asked Bernard what he thought of the man who sat on the fifth desk up from him two rows to the left, and Bernard had replied with a facial expression so apt and so succinct that the man had simply laughed and walked away, expecting no further comment. Climbing into bed that night, Bernard felt fulfilled.
Tuesday was less eventful, but for the fact that people seemed to be looking at him more than usual. And this might partially have been due to his own imagination since, he had to admit, he was prone to a touch of paranoia now and then.

On Wednesday came the real trial. He had lain awake the night before and thought, “Four days,” and noted that four and three were seven and that seven days made a week. A week. “Now that,” he thought, “would be something.”

He was still thinking that halfway through the fifth day when the loquacious one asked him how he was. He smiled and shrugged noncomittally, but still she followed him to the water cooler and again asked him how he was. This time he rocked his hand back and forth as he shrugged, but she asked again. He hurried to his desk, turned on his machine and began to add, noting as he did that people definitely were looking at him.

At three o’clock Mr. Wilhite called Bernard into his office and asked him how he was. Bernard had to weigh his priorities very carefully before not answering. At three-thirty Bernard was dismissed both from Mr. Wilhite’s office and his employment and was free to go home where the silence was easy.

Too easy in fact, which was why he changed his goal from one week to two. He began to go out much more often than before and, to increase the challenge, proscribed not only words, but all nonverbal vocalizations as well. He went to baseball games and did not cheer. He went to movies and did not laugh. He went to peep shows and did not moan.

The two weeks passed quickly, as did the third. On the thirty-first day of what Bernard now termed his First Month of Silence, he went for a walk in the park to retreat from the sounds of traffic. A pity he hadn’t been able to get rid of all those other noises as well, but at least no one could accuse him of not doing his own personal best.

He would speak again someday, but he didn’t know when that day would be. It would be the day he found a thing deserving of words; a thing that needed his sound.

It was not here. Nothing would be added to the squirrels if he spoke of them, or to the birds. He watched two lovers on a park bench. “What would my words do to change them?” he asked himself. “Nothing.”

“I hear the word in his mind and felt a chill. He wondered why the word should frighten him. It was only a word. And what was a word, after all, but mere sound?

It was then that he realized the futility of all he had been attempting, for he heard the word “nothing” with his mind’s ear, just as he had heard all the other thoughts he’d had this month. And they sounded as clearly as any other noise. There had been no silence.

He thought curses at himself and heard the curses plainly. What could he do? Move away to some place where there was no speech and force himself to think without words? What would such thoughts be like? Would they flow over him like colors, he wondered, or would they be altogether different from anything he had felt?

In a second he knew, for something came out of a bush near him and grabbed his arm and pulled him into the undergrowth and he was aware of all this without a word forming in his mind. He was aware also of a metallic click and of something which felt hot, but which was most probably cold, slicing into his side and moving up, of hands digging into his pockets and pulling things free, and finally of the hands letting him go and allowing him to sink to the ground.

And the first words his mind formed were, “I have been killed.”

He began to pull himself by his fingers to where the couple had been sitting. They were walking away now. There wasn’t much time. He pushed himself up and opened his mouth to yell.

He caught himself just in time. There he was, about to spoil a full month’s work on a whim. “A Full Month of Silence,” he thought with satisfaction.

But the satisfaction was short-lived when he remembered how empty the silence was, and when he thought of all the months and of all the years he had wasted with words. His goal suddenly seemed ludicrous and insignificant. A day, a week, a month of silence, what difference did it make? But an eternity, he thought with a smile, now that would be something.

—Phoe Sutton
a typical day

hey, maybe i am a little crazy.
who's to say what's sane or
just a hoax?
   take your pick of the avocados
   my dear.
but mind, the calories have
   no respect for the wasp waist
or a true heart.
bad for the digestion you know.
make sure the maid does the
   bathrooms.
harold is coming and god knows he
can always find something
to fuss about.
into the cage with you pet.
mommy is tired and really, it
was her turn to tell the story.
this house is really driving me insane.
   a hoax you say?
   no, not this one.
at least,
harold seems to think
it's real — and he
is a lawyer...

—Leslie Staiko

A Poem of Prosody
(or, Iamb the anapestic ass)

I know a man named lamb, the anapestic ass,
He purchased an ionic foot, down by Troche Pass—
A present for his crippled son whose birthday had
   long past,
But Iamb, in his dactyl way, by means of talking fast,
Made the boy forget the date, said the mail was late,
The duple-dealing postman was responsible
   for this wait;
But all of Iamb's lying mattered not a bit—
A twist of ironic prosody . . . the foot didn't fit!

—Wayne Motley
Tyler Macerak, "Tricky"
Malone, "Ted" McGinnis,
Albert Thomas HUDSON, T.K.
Malo, Tricia Munsy,
Teresa Merceda, Tony
Marano, Tanya Musterspugpoh,
T.H. Craig, "Two-Toe!"
Munber, Tina Myers: Have
gone back to the intersection
Isn't hear very much real!"
Donald Becht
untitled
silver print photograph
Donald Becht
untitled
silver print photograph
Leonard Phillips
"Disc Composition"
intaglio
For Jennifer

I was with him last night
Just a baby himself—
A small child crying for the richness of his life.
I think of you often and wish
You could know him.
I’ve never seen you,
You’re just a four-year-old girl
With a meaningless name
And beautiful if you favor him.
(I hope you have his eyes.)
If you grow up full of laughter and a thirst for life
You have him to thank,
But he will be occupied with a respectable bride
And children with matching names.
Thank him for life
Instead of hating him for weakness—
He is not as unfeeling as it seems,
His story is just as sad as yours.
He gave you life and moved ahead
To have his own.

—Barbara Hall

Travel

In my head tonight,
the back roads are bending dreams
in oncoming car lights
startling my sleep.

—Charles Martin
Garden at Nightfall

a. the house stands to hedges, a white fence.
i snap wood for hours and drop blood on
an incomplete garden, stake up tomato vines
and carrot rows to splinter earth.
i clip newspapers and leaves for a mulch bag. on the stairway
my son prances. he pulls and presses corners of porch
carpet, laughs and coughs — is grazed
in white light, he slows and looks out—
the wilderness becoming cultivation.
then tires of watching and is gone. his

b. pile of stones at the doorway.
my breath clears at this loneliness.
tilling another row
i continue and push—
to choose for my spirit, to raise salvage in
earth bed always over my wanting bones—
ones i've never touched or seen.
i move stones to ends of the garden settling
them. i grub up weeds and trim through my
plowboy notions; enduring searches to
fit in myself, to abridge and cull
tenets of some human sacredness.

b. ersely, i touch plants out of bloom—
who is able to know the final contract
or a fee, yet gospels people are rebounded
with, i try to stay out of.

C. i step beside vegetables. stop.
hoe and pull together wanted humus, the
soils are mulish and between us stink.
i lose sight as the plot darkens, but
press and belly among peppers and
care to sow again.

—Mark T. McMullen
I Will Swing

A Sunday morning
walking in a schoolyard
I am searching for someone I lost here.

Swings — they make them smaller now.
Their innocent idea forsaken to rust.
But I listen for the someone they call to.

I have heard him.

My wish? My wish is my will.
I will sing simple songs and swing.

—John Kaufman
Race Memory

I polish the silver, spoons first—
all drawn to mirror perfection by rouge-covered hands,
then into hot soapy water, rinsed, and laid in rows,
left to right, back to front — then the forks
and, lastly, knives to grace the Christmas table;
this is the way I was taught,
and my mother, and her mother, and so on
past memory.

My grandmother bakes krumkake on antique irons,
and at Christmas we press sandbackels into tin forms,
baking tarts to fill with whipped cream—
it would never be Christmas without them.
My family history is pressed into a recipe box,
remembered in pastries too difficult to make
except once a year.
All other heirlooms are gone...

...the dancing light of a silver-filigree Solje;
mead, golden and cool, in pewter mugs;
the sound that echoes across the Oslofiord
on midsummer night when Christianity steps aside;
dancing flames, swaying dancers —
all in homage to gods
older than creation; homage to the lords of the water,
to azure eyes, hanging shields, masts, oars, and sails;
homage to Elves and Trolls that live in sod hills,
in gray eyries, in snowed mountains...

We who are civilized today remember
the bonfires built to appease the Old Ones;
we long to shock our German neighbors.
Instead we light a single candle
and place it on the windowsill.

Nothing remains now but recipes, teapot,
and three brown photographs of three white
Norwegian girls,
solemn and pale, with broad, square faces
and unswept hair—
no Vikings, but daughters thereof,
their strength sapped by years of farming.

My grandmother moves gracefully through a house
so sternly kept that dust dares not collect.
With worn hands, she lays pine boughs
on a lace tablecloth my mother has ironed.
I bring candlesticks and set them beside the pastries.
"Thank you," she says, not so much to me
as to a memory of the time she would have said
"Takke."

While I know the candlesticks should be pewter,
not American silver,
I know also the concessions we made when we left the
sea for land,
left the old land for new; left that to cleave
to husbands.
She knows them well — now the legacy passed
from daughter to daughter.
Her pale eyes are watered-down Norwegian blue;
mine are green — the influence of a German father.

There was once a story told when I was small;
That God made us out of waves
that battered the North Coast;
we have since followed the sea.
Our blood, even today, must be saltier than most;
I wake at night,
and the sound of my heart still pounds like surf.

—Lori Magai
Don Mount
untitled
silver print photograph
Apartment Street
Apartment Street

Riding the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.
apt. street apt. street apt.—
Apartment. Windows with white blinds
cut into red boxes.
A new day.
The blinds are down.

Maybe they shut out the fourteen million.
Perhaps they close in dreams.
people only swim in there, New York Harbor,
with cement boots.
In New York City you can pick up any radio
station. If you’re lucky you win a prize.
"CONGRATULATIONS TO JOEY SUTTON"
(congratulations joey sutton; you’re alive
and in the Bronx)

Driving past, one’s eyes frown unaccustomed
to white windows.
Habituation: (i.e. a certain monotony seldom
registers on most
until the monotony is broken.)

Chin on a
Hand on an
Elbow on a
Window sill.
Eyes in an
Olive face rest.
These eyes rest on N.Y.C.
As far as they can see these eyes see N.Y.C.
Looking across bridges, factories and
apt. st. apt. st.

Eyes fall onto water.
Eyes, hoping to be caught—
in the right current.
Which would carry dreams?
Twist them,
Contorted and choking
To the dark bottom.
The dreary dregs.

The eyes screw the face into desperate expression,
then slowly relax into silent struggle
behind the window.
"Is it raining out?" I asked the driver. (tears?)
Did it begin to fall?
Small talk on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.

The eyes in the
Head on the
Hand, lift off the chin.
The arms reach up.
(To open the window?)
There’s Staten Island over there, to the right
said the driver.
I looked at the island.
I glanced back again and found
myself staring at white blinds.

Monotony.
White windows cut from red boxes.

—Meredith W. Gould
My Imagination as a Child

Quand le vin est tire, il faut le boire.

I huddle with friends on corners, and watch men build houses.
A shirtless man lays a wall with trowel and plumb line,
I am, by day afraid of elders, I cower easily when their voices thunder.

To sleep it would start;
A flat thicket with bugs swarming on me.
As I enter that night I pop cuticle thoraxes underfoot and pirouette them

Int o radial smears.
The house I re-built in the roof of a tree fell—
It fell again and again — with me.
My spine opens, my saved body awash in mid-air, I’d remember my bridle of insects.
My playing yard stood with them, their sapless femurs, shell eyes and a determined ovipositor, I’d sleep like heated eggs, biting puffed spit and tongue on pillow.

My parents said I ground my teeth at night, “sound like a flippin’ toad” and sent me to the dentist.
I wake from my damage and move.
Cropstones I throw in the ditch are graced with ice— they’ve molted my finger prints and water will dissolve them soon.
They would hold up water, I thought

—Mark T. McMullen
Summer on Mulberry Street

They were still, summer, suburban nights... under the streetlights... lying on manicured grass... sitting upon cool cemented curbs. There was always talking, laughing... ah, American dreaming. I watched the sidewalk arabs — free to cross the street alone, and create the games imagination plays... the prominent pose of old Mr. Pat, enthroned on a folding chair, just waiting then... retired.

I felt black heat from the street melting my beat-up sneakers — the dry warmth of a redwood porch beneath my bare feet. There were times of steaming thunderstorms we watched from cluttered, oil-blackened garages... our birthday bicycles we saddled like western stallions — chlorine pools and barbeques...

Music... the bells of ice cream vendors... midnight guitars in the garage next door... grating of skateboards on asphalt... Simon says we’re slipping away... songs I sing — harmonies to reconcile the earth and street. Sweat and scabs from dusty schoolyards... the silent kisses in moonlit backyards.

—John Kaufman
Linda J. Sheldon
“Candle Flames Strengthen Eye Muscles”
silver print photograph
Paul Accardo
"Gazebo"
silver print photograph
Widowed

The air thickens, walls loom larger,
The babbling radio muffles itself
Behind the clock’s metronome ticking.
Each breath more shallow than before,
A sudden sigh, a quivering stomach,
Pacing, sitting, pacing, sitting,
Nervous eyes in a futile attempt
To focus on the screen’s silent picture
Illuminating the dark room in blue.
An occasional pair of roving headlights
Splash against the empty walls,
Eyes drift across the room.
The brown rug’s worn path
Lingers before every window,
Like the frosty breath on every pane.

—Wayne Motley

Autumn Thoughts

Traveling north, asphalt,
Jackfrost thumbing roadside,
hickory trees turning gold,
calm winds, white water,
horses breathing,
as autumn migrates
valleys fill with fog.
In New England woods
roads fall off
into countrysides, rolling,
growing gray bark
in silence.

—Charles Martin
Jenny Has Always Wanted a Piano

Jenny has always wanted a piano

A. and she gets one and learns to play very well and becomes rich and famous

I. but gets tired of it all and

   a. retires to an island with just her piano and is happy for many years.

   b. turns to drink and drugs and goes crazy one day and kills

       (i) several people.

       (ii) herself.

II. and is very happy with it all and

   a. becomes a household word so that even when she’s an old lady and can’t play the piano anymore people still ask her to be on their TV specials.

   b. realizes that she is very powerful so she

       (i) plays for charities and raises money for nice people.

       (ii) hypnotizes children with her piano and makes them steal money from their parents and give it to her.
B. and she gets one but doesn’t ever learn to play very well at all

I. so she becomes frustrated
   a. and gives up and
decides to be a
dancer and becomes
rich and famous at
that (see section A).

b. and runs over her
piano teacher with
her piano

   (i) and is sent to a
prison where there
are no pianos and
is very happy.

   (ii) and becomes a hitman
for the mafia and
does in her victims
by running over them
with pianos.

II. but still enjoys playing so that,
when she gets married, her husband,
who
   a. is a handsome prince and quite
a nice man besides, purchases
thousands of pianos for her so
she can play to her heart’s
delight even though she can’t
play at all.

   b. doesn’t turn out to be nearly
as nice as she thought, gets
sick of her piano playing and
decides to kill her and chop
her into numerous pieces and
hide them in her piano

   (i) but she plays an SOS very
loudly on her piano so that
the police come just in
time and chop him into
numerous pieces instead.

   (ii) and he does so and she and
her piano go to heaven and
there she learns to play
very well indeed.

C. and she never does get one at all.

—Phoebe Sutton
Promise Me

Promise me
Above all
That you will never look at me with that dull
Glassy stare as empty as an age old grave,
As hollow and worn as a windblown canyon,
As chilling as the clammy, sodden earth.
I would rather feel the biting burn
Of your rage.
And promise me
Above all
That your touch on me will never
Limply fall past feeling into numbness.
For hate was never born from absence of emotion
And fades with time unlike
The barren face of apathy.

—Barbara Hall

Nevertheless:

I would still rather be alone
in my own room
with soured milk, moribund plants,
and except for a faded teddy bear, a cold bed;
Than to be in your red and black
den of machismo
waiting to be sacrificed on
the alter of your ego.

—Alison E. MacDonald
Donald Becht
"Beachway Dr."
embossed linoleum print
Susan Plummer
untitled
sterling silver chalice
James Flory
"Catalyst"
bronze
Jim White
“Flight”
crystal painting
Dear Katia,

It has rained for four days now
or weeks—

a cold Canadian rain.

The world is gray
a lonesome gray

garage floor gray

I’ve never cried for myself before,
Katia,
It must be cold in Russia, too.

the faucet is fixed

though the roof leaks now

there is still no heat

my mother sent blankets

and love—

She writes Frank is dead

and Mike is missing near Prague

Paul has one leg and a purple heart—

He’ll be home to celebrate the birth of Christ

My French is getting better.

I’m told Quebec
is beautiful

in springtime.

I just realized that you may never read this.

No, I don’t believe

your brother

loved his country more

than he did you,

and yes, all in all,

I am satisfied

parking cars

in Canada.

Keep warm, Katia.

Love, your pen-pal,

John

P.S.—
Necking on the Carousel

Screw," I heard her say. In all my summers at the carousel I never heard a girl talk to a guy like that.

People get mad at the heat sometimes. They mutter at it, but they never swear at any one person. And the girls never swear at all. They come here to be romanced, or the guys take them here to romance them; either way, they dress high class and they talk high class, like a galaxy of stars on Fifth Avenue. I stand by the carousel gate, watching the lines, and imagine these things: she's a Smith girl, that one got sixteen shares of IBM on her sixteenth birthday, those three lookalikes, the ones with pastel sun bonnets, they're from St. Joseph's. Actually, they're all Jersey City girls with commuters for fathers. Even the girl with the IBM.

They come here with their boyfriends. They hold hands and they kiss on the carousel. I practically have to pull them off their horses to give the others a chance to neck for a while.

"Screw," she said, just like that. "Screw."

She said it like she didn't even know I was there. She said it with complete disregard for the others waiting for rides in the line forming behind her. For her, it was just her and her boyfriend, who didn't take her very seriously. He just smiled at her intelligently, and she beamed a smart smile right back. It was a peculiar relationship.

Abby would say her behavior was "unbecoming of a lady." Likewise for the gentleman. She'd say, "Vulgarity is altogether unbecoming," and I'm a son of a bitch if she isn't right about that. Here, though, all the vulgarity is locked up in my mind, and it's locked up in yours, waiting to take over, ready to leak out, just like it did when the girl said, "Screw," just like that.

"Do you mean that?" he asked her. "Tell me you really mean that."

I don't think he was being facetious. I think he was hoping she meant it.

"Piss me off," she muttered, face down, looking like a schoolboy preparing to spit.

I hoped she wouldn't spit. Anyone that pretty probably never spit in her life.

Instead, she looked at me, so I looked the other way, down the green to the penny arcade and the old, wooden rollercoaster. My stares naturally fall over there, on the woven white frame shaped like giant rose arbors, and the miniature red trains that track its scary spirals. Every summer I watch for the trains shooting down the first slope, throwing fragile arms into the air, leaving behind an invisible trail of screams.

The screams I invent, because the calliope makes such a racket. Oom-pah-pah, oom-pah-pah, waltzing me into sailor dreams, scaring birdshit out of the pigeons that come too close . . . .

She brushed her straight blond hair in time with the calliope: zip-zip-zip, zip-zip-zip, beating the hell out of it as far as I could see — out of the corner of my eye. There was no charm to her indignance.

"I respectfully decline," she seethed between brush strokes arrested just long enough to make her statement.

He touched her shoulder, wary of the brush's bristles, and then she paused, looked up at him and smiled without effort. I thought for sure she was going to let him have it. Instead she wrapped a tanned arm around him and buried her chin into his shoulder, eyes shut tight like little clams, her long bleached hair throwing sunlight like chrome, and her brush hanging still by her summer skirt.

"But you'll ride a horse around in circles."

"On a thrill scale of one to ten, I'd give it a two."

"What could possibly be more thrilling than that?" she asked, smiling at him with only a hint of menace.

"Oh, I could think of something." He cradled his chin in his hand. "A bus ride, perhaps."
"Merry-go-rounds are more romantic than that, silly," she said lightly, and started to laugh.
"Damn things make me feel like a kid."
"Mmm, I love kids, especially you . . ."
"They’re immature."
"Of course they are! What did you expect?"
She moved toward the chain at the gate. I started to slow the carousel down.
He grasped her arm, cutting her graceful turn in half, and pulled her closer.
"I was expecting to ride something a bit more gratifying, if you receive my meaning."
He pulled his mouth tight and peered into her face, which was now ashen, and he stared, and he stared, and he stared.
"Oh!" She choked on her reaction. "God! It’s always that, isn’t it? You never stop thinking it for one minute. You never quit, do you? Do you?"
"Never do."
"It’s always pressure, pressure, pressure — til I give in."
"You will give in, you know. You always do."
"Not this time. Not —"
"You did last time."
"Yeah, well that was last time. This time’s different."
"Nothing’s different. Nothing’s changed."
"You’ve changed," she said, face down, and pouting, and preparing to spit. "You’ve become so demanding lately. I don’t know how to explain it. It’s like — it’s like you expect so much. You expect so much."
"Ah, I see. I expect so much."
"You do."
"Well I expect cooperation, that much a man can expect. Your man. Your man has come to expect that. He’s not a kid anymore."
"Cooperation, ha!" She laughed a mocking laugh.
"It’d make things easier, you know. We wouldn’t have to go through this every time."
"We don’t have to go through this every time. We don’t have to go through anything every time. You’re the one who makes us go through everything all the time."
"What?"
"I just don’t want to! Okay?"

"C’mon babe, for me," he said, nudging her shoulder, then pressing against her, then wrapping around her, as he were an insomniac and she were his pillow.

I thought I saw him touch her breast. I know I saw her touch him back. I heard her surrender a long and passionate sigh. He kissed her neck, she flushed, and a smile came to her lips. He kissed her again, and she moaned, loud and clear above the calliope, so I jangled the change in my trousers and began to whistle. It’s what I always do when lovers forget I’m there — I oblige, and pretend I’m not there.
I slowed the carousel to a stop, unlinked the chain and slipped through the gate to escort the slow and unsure to their horses.
She mounted the ebony stallion, he mounted the white appaloosa beside her.
"Screw!" she yelled over the din of the calliope, seconds after the carousel began spinning and the horses began their gentle, mechanical gallop.
"Scroooooo!" she insisted as she shot around the far side.
And then the steampipes drowned her out.
"Scroooooo!" she insisted as she swung around the near side, drowning the steampipes out.

But she wound up necking on the carousel, just like all the other Jersey City girls, clasping the pole with one arm and her lover with the other — balanced by a miracle on the edge of her saddle.
When she walked through the gate, dizzy from passion and so many circles, her last fiber of resistance worn to a fray, she turned to him and surrendered:
"Yes," she said, "I will ride the rollercoaster with you."

It was no sailor dream. It had to have been her, with the shining blond hair, shooting down the slope in a careening red train — leaving behind an invisible trail of screams.

—Dean Honeycutt
Liebtraumilch

Two sips, and we are back together on a gas-lit corner where cicadas and cooler breezes echo a failing day. Behind, townhouses with fan-shaped windows attend complete with peering young eyes. "Victorian nightmares," I say; your hand tracing mine, you chuckle. "They think we're lovers." And we huddle not so much from the dark as to be together.

Three sips, and you balance glasses and Wagner while from the couch I laugh and mock the tenor. Windows shut against a chill October night, we wrap in afghans, our faces heightened by wine and spirit, we trade poems and bread-baking techniques until, wine gone, music run down, we sleep.

Four sips, and we curl on quilts and pillows with bottle empty and corkscrew filled. Outside snow fills the windowsill and early light the floor—your blankets are warm, and you full of dreams. Under your arm I lie a vessel to cage your dropped memories. Your breath brushes my face, my heart, stirs my thousand intoxications to silent consummation.

—Lori Magai
Leonard Phillips
“Self Portrait with Litho Stone”
lithograph print
Leonard Phillips
untitled
lithograph print
Peggy Smith
"Posed"
intaglio print
Zero

I am lonely-cold
And life-bruised
My dreams have all flown
And my days have gone dry

I am the dream junkie
Going cold turkey

—Carolyn A. Haykin

Impressions of Emptiness

The hollow ringing of a bell,
Dirty neon over a dirty street,
and the hotel room Bible:
The echoing hymns — a tinny sound,
Solid words bent from wavering voices
Rising, hitting the ceiling,
forever bouncing back.

The tinkling glass of a bottle
Forgotten, rolling in the gutter.
The rustling of a windblown bag,
The shadowy figure on the stoop,
Eyes like glittering marbles,
Gaze at the blue worms
crawling through his empty hands.

The clanging of the alarm clock
As the sun rises wearily, forming
Another link in the infinite chain of days.
Spacious hours of half-forgotten memories,
Distant hopes of filling the void—
I call your number
and listen again
to its endless rings...

—Kathy Campbell
Gen

water ended the rise of land,
tumbling grey Occaquan.
then, a god lifted eyes
to their scintilla yet to be put out.

Wyandot, Erie
Micmac and Sauk

erstwhile,
an affair of men
move to a pool,
the whereabouts is specked with pools.
and sunned chicle and they've already culled squash,
wild rice and beans.
felled deer.

the lakes are clear and small:
a blunt trail sews them on memory—

only, it visits ones that never dry.
they spend two hours at one lake and unpack brown nets.
slackened, the men and water blend.

later, the webs tremble from caught silvers—
they wade to the bank, counting on fat ones,
aged ones who've passed secrets to the young.
slide open mouths in dark leather
and take silence to show their yet to be — gone families,
gone selves.

—Mark T. McMullen
pipe dream

the smoke spouted
out in a stream
black pipe on roof
alive
twisting and billowing
rage
happiness
as if it had a direction
then the wind
and it slowly
and we all slowly
slowly

—Steven Palkovitz
Mark Pascal
"The Fear of Creation"
mixed media Xerox
Chrysalis
presents
"Taulard's Cave"
A scene from "The Pendragon Institute"
by Phoe Sutton

The Cast
Sir Marmal
Damsel of the Waye that Lay South
Sally
Taulard, a Dragon

Charles Webb
Darcy Beardon
Doreen Murray
Phoe Sutton

Engineered by Michael Brown

Recorded at WMRA, James Madison University
Harrisonburg, Va.