



literature poetry art literary artistic
world art diversity
art poetry dark
images to print
images to print
diversity
art magazine
diverse
art design
hope

imagine

words
pink
come
together
love
poetry

MAGAZINE

imagine a magazine
where words
and images
come together
to create
literary art...

ayousphere
twenty eleven

Bayosphere 2017

The Literary Art Magazine of the University of Houston-Clear Lake
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456 Houston, Texas 77058 281.283.2571 bayosphere@uhcl.edu
www.uhcl.edu/bayosphere



Imagine By Samantha Samuel

The black and white *Imagine* mosaic pays tribute to slain singer, songwriter John Lennon, is located in Central Parks Strawberry Fields, across from the Dakota Building in New York.

The artwork featured on the front cover was manipulated for dramatic effect by print designer Jade Wise with permission of the artist.

Foreword

Just Imagine

Just imagine the pointless disorganization of the “gesture” of John Lennon’s death turned into the triple sustenance of the peace symbol, the mandala, and the rose. Welcome to *Bayousphere 2011*. Congratulations to Jessica Faz and her crew for an issue of transmutations – stunning images, Texian tales, a poem partly in Twitterese, contemporary perplexities contained in the old forms of sonnet and sestina.

I, in on the Foundation of our magazine in the 1970s, have become the Brett Favre of Possible Retirement. I keep (so far) being around for another issue – as *Bayousphere* keeps being around, through budgetary contingencies, thanks to the incomparable Taleen Washington and her love of the enterprise. Let me take leave (or not) with a gathering of sparkling places in the stream of reconstituted life you are about to enter:

The ghost of a napkin, the glint off the rim of a plate – and then – the Wonderland Woman looking a bit more . . . Ominous *** A Catholic devotional image? Votivos? Or Botticelli up to certain Neoplatonic, Renaissance-o-Gnostic tricks we can’t quite zone in on? – and our own lingo pouring forth from Mystery *** Winter, a season so exotic in Coastal Texas we sometimes don’t have it at all, presenting itself in its full northern violence, the icicled abstainer with his bouquet of sticks *** West of us, a town of dusty religion, a tint of startle, a saint in pearls *** Even on these pages, some of what we get is music – crunching ping ping ping whiz the engine of a backhoe fires and dies thud “Here I go playing star again,” Wes bellows.

Everything above is from our Prizewinners (to whom exultant congratulations.) Now, before letting you see and hear for yourselves, a little poem from everywhere:

My words are me
Delight in the oddity and beauty
Take the plunge and fall
(see also the on-line animation)
“I hope you packed your patience”
Gazing out the window [*isn’t*] just a hobby
The simple joys of life still amaze me
No regrets.

*Dr. John Gorman
Professor of Literature
Founder of Bayousphere*

Editor's Note

When it comes to words, there's something to be said about their longevity. Lacking expiration dates, they live and breathe without end within Bayousphere, complimented by their visual counterparts. Strewn gracefully across these pages, they have been carefully arranged as they wait to be devoured by our famished readers.

Every poem, story, photograph and painting within this magazine is a testament to our amazing contributors who, by putting pen to paper or brush to canvas, have made certain their words and thoughts exist perpetually. We thank you for baring your souls and humbly bring your creations to life.

It is our sincere hope that the following works bounce delightedly within the halls of your minds and hearts and intrigue your subconscious, just as they have done to ours.

As you plunge into these words, photographs and artwork, delight in their oddity and beauty. Satisfy your hunger on the content we have labored to bring you, and grin as you consume our creation.

*Jessica Faz
Editor
Bayousphere 2011*

Assistant Editor's Note

We know what you're thinking... a magazine? Who reads anymore? But not to worry, for those of you who prefer to be visually entertained we have created a companion to our print edition - behold the Bayousphere 2011 Online Edition, easily accessible via your smartphone of choice. It features interactive media, compelling artwork and brilliant works of literature. But don't just take my word for it - I'm a little biased - visit us online at www.uhcl.edu/bayousphere.

*Britta Gamino
Assistant Editor
Bayousphere 2011*

Staff

Editor
Jessica Faz

Assistant Editor
Britta Gamino

Print Designer
Jade Wise

Online Designer
Michelle Kaldenberg

Senior Copy Editor
Jennifer Ferguson

Literature Editors
Araia Edwards
Padmashree Rao

Photography/Art Editors
Darby Staup
Ana Gabriela Avendano

Poetry Editors
Courtney Bowen
Victor Palomares

PR Coordinators
Kourtney Krampota
Samantha Samuel
Ashley Toman

Table of Contents

Bolded selections represent best of show.

Art

No Reason by Chelsea Fugitt | 9

Words Unspoken by RoseAnn Rapp | 12

Tree Climber by Jessica O'Rear | 27

Wonderland by Dessa Parker | 7

Icy Conditions by Jade Wise | 10

Dinner by Dessa Parker | 16-17

Colorful Reflections by Tonya Torres | 21

Night Time Bridal Portrait by Amy Salvato | 22

Pushed by Britta Gamino | 29

Purpose by Erika Andrade | 30

Photo- graphy

Fiction

I Hear Voices by Wendy Babb | 6

Just Mary by Britta Gamino | 19

Secrets of a West Texas Saint by Ginny Martyn | 23-25

First World Problem by Fulton Fry | 31

To Magritte by Erika Andrade | 8

Vital Signs by Heather Schutmaat | 9

Winter by Erika Andrade | 11

A Burial by Heather Schutmaat | 13

The Ever Consuming Darkness by Valdon Ross | 16

In This Skin by Araina Edwards | 20

Mortal Regrets by Fulton Fry | 21

Little Boy in an Apple Tree by Jessica O'Rear | 26

Poetry

Non Fiction

Last Man Standing by Jessica Faz | 14-15

Express-Hole by Ginny Martyn | 28

I Hear Voices

By Wendy Babb

I hear voices. It's not what you think: not the spirits from beyond, not the dearly departed, not even aliens. My voices are me: the whole me, the frightened me, the true me. They whisper to me at night. They pounce on me when I'm down. They demean me when I least expect it, and they keep me in a constant state of pins and needles. Why? Why is this? Why can I be so completely confident and morph into a spineless jellyfish at their onset?

They tell me I am not good enough. At what? At everything. It doesn't matter what it is: life, love, intellect, humor, cleanliness, godliness, even evil... it's never what it should be, and I am never who I should be. I struggle. Some can see it, most cannot. What a wonderful facade I have made for myself in these times of turmoil. Who would ever guess that the laughing, smiling, silly girl was at global warfare with herself? Who would guess that the one who handles their crises cannot even pat herself on the back without stabbing herself in the process?

What is it about me that deserves this curse? I've not lived a hateful or hurtful life. Some say it is because I am creative: creativity be damned. Some say it is because I care: I refuse to live otherwise. Some say it is because I wear my heart on my sleeve: I can be no other way. Some say I am simply asking for it: I think I may more be just expecting it.

I argue: my, how I argue. I put up a mental battlefield that would have the generals of history in awe of my strategies. I prepare. I brace. I dig my heels in and wait for the worst. They always seem to come from behind (no matter which way I am facing) and pull that darned rug that I didn't even know I was standing on out from under me. I fall flat, stunned enough to let them have their way, to let the damage be done. No amount of blockades will save me.

No armor will shield me for I alone know my weaknesses, and I am my worst enemy. I listen to the voices. On occasion, they are discounted with a mere shake of my head. I revel in those times. I can meet their challenge for I am privy to when I am mentally strongest, but alas, so are they. Let me stumble. Let me hit a wall. Let me show one inkling of insecurity, and they pounce like the hunter on its prey. They tear me apart before I am even aware of the damage that is being done, and I am left to clean up after the fray (but, mind you, it is never good enough).

I can't help but believe my whisperers. After all, they know my secrets. They know my faults. No matter how hard I try to bury my inadequacies, they will know where they are. Of this I am certain. They will bring them out to daylight, promote them, advertise them and let everyone see. Then everyone will know. Everyone will realize I am not who they thought I was or thought I could be. I am defeated.

I hear my voices. I hear my every sorrow. I hear my every worry. I hear my unending pain. I just didn't know I could talk so much.

Who would ever guess that the laughing, smiling, silly girl was at global warfare with herself?



To Magritte

By Erika Andrade

EIGHT

I paced through the art museum barefoot,
dressed up a sculpture like a mannequin,
and called it postmodern art.
I stripped naked in the outdoor garden,
streaked across the street — ignored the honks —
Took my place beside Adam and elegantly deceived.

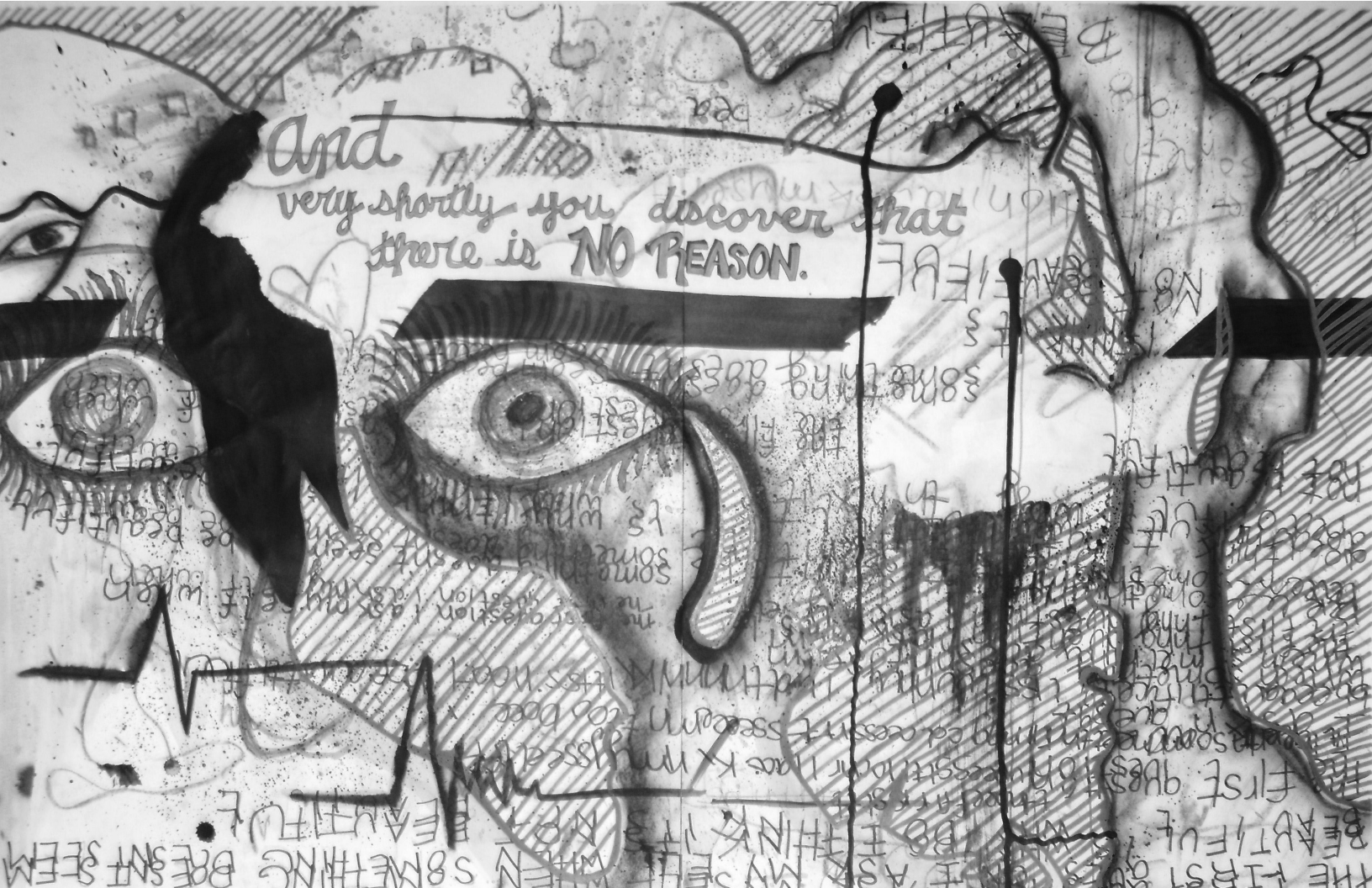
My marble teeth, strawberry-soda-pink, would not deceive,
but I didn't smile. One rarely sees smiles in good art.
(Don't think Mona Lisa, think mannequins!)

I stood there — not looking at Adam's honk —
Not thinking dirty, just as if in the Garden.
I posed gracefully, staring at the bones on my bare feet.

The fantasy ends with security pushing my barefoot,
pornographic ass out the door, past the whistles and honks.
"Not even Eve was thus expelled from the Garden,
Sir!" I yelled. And thought: Even they can't appreciate real art.
But they were thinking of the children—like with mannequins—
I saw some with nipples at the mall. Not deceiving,
pretend nipples on mannequins,
no. Perky ones that should be marked "do not touch," like art,
"nor stare." It was that boot from the Garden
from which our parents were kicked out barefoot
that placed us in this constrained, deceiving
situation. I'm shifting lanes, and someone honks.
I swerve. A speeding bull-truck blurs honking
past me. I sit stoically, a crash-test mannequin
wearing aviator sunglasses for deception.
I was taking off my shoes — barefoot,
I am free. But vulnerable, true, like sinners in a garden.
"With nothing but the radio on," sings the pop artist.

What I want to make is good, unforgettable art.
Art that paints a face on the common mannequin
I am. Now, dancing in a shopping center parking lot, I'm afraid to honk
while trying to "whip my hair back and forth." Garden
Ridge just closed. Are customers deceived
by my car's rocking? Who cares? I'm barefoot.

Art can be deceiving, like knowledge in the Garden,
like proportions of a mannequin. Our talent's honk may sound
like the croak of a pubescent teenager, but we bare our voice, like feet.



My heart beat,
My body said your name.
Pumping all your love,
Through my swelling veins.

I let myself believe,
Forever you'd be mine.
Now I'm dead, you see?
You were my vital signs.

Vital Signs

By Heather Schutmaat



By Erika Andrade

TEN

Winter

He is the shiver, the abstainer
of a lust-less naked nature.

He is wind, screeching cold
into vulnerable ears.

He presents himself
with a bouquet of sticks.

He annoyingly perches on nose tips,
cramps fingers,
and sentences feet to live in stockings
without breathing.

He curses you with thirst.
Although he hides the sun,
he burns with chills.

He forces you to smoke your own breath
and drops snowflakes like lasers.

He invokes:

Three months of goose bumps;
One-hundred-twenty endless nights;
Hunched backs and sore lungs.

He makes horizons cry.



A Burial

By Heather Schutmaat



She knew she had to kill him,
So that she could live again.
She wrote him off so painfully,
Striking hard against each key.
The rooftops and country roads.
The bathtubs and harmonicas.
The time he shaved her legs.
It's all ink on folded paper, now.
Set inside a box.
She's pulling up the floor boards.
Nails separate from flesh,
Her blistered fingers bleed.
She brought him to this house,
Where it all began.
So that she could bury him,
And learn to love again.

Last Man Standing

Grimacing, Matthew forces another breath into his lungs. It is five o'clock on a Wednesday night. The preacher's words are barely audible over the sound of traffic carrying into the cemetery and the ping ping ping of rain.

Matthew turns his head to watch the cars whiz by in the distance. In a few moments his big brother, Wes, will be lowered into the ground to forever be kept in cold darkness.

Matthew's afraid. He's afraid, and he's shivering. Trying to free himself from the weight bearing down upon him, he tugs at the noose around his neck.

It's no use. Tie or not, the grief wraps its spindly fingers around his neck, threatening asphyxiation.

One, two, three. The cars speed past.

Matthew chokes down the knot in his throat.

Wes was light and joy and love, a star blazing through the cosmos, streaming across the night sky. Every spot he had touched in Matthew's life was vivid and bright and precious. Without Wes the world faded to grey.

"Son, it's time," Matthew's mother says, squeezing his hand.

He flinches as the metal of her rings press into his skin. They are cold, cold like death, cold like Wes. Hot tears flood his eyes, burning.

Matthew remembers.

"Hey little brother, it's not goodbye."

That day, Wes had smiled with glittering teeth.

"Good luck little-big brother," Matthew had shouted over the sound of the tires crunching gravel as Wes rolled out of the driveway.

And now, Matthew's here, six months later, hugging strangers. Their faces blur through his tears, and he finds it hard to distinguish one black dress from another. Each pair of eyes shy away from his as their owners mumble condolences. He awkwardly nods, shaking with an odd combination of grief and nausea.

One by one, the small crowd dissipates.

But Matthew can't leave. He waits as the casket sinks into the ground.

Blanketing the cemetery, mist falls as the engine of the backhoe fires and dies, fires and dies. Again, the engine booms only to die out with a labored wheeze.

A gaunt man approaches with two workers, each with a shovel in hand.

"Wait," Matthew shouts as one man drives his shovel into the mound of dirt.

He sets his mouth and bears down on his teeth to stop his quivering jaw. Without a word, he takes the shovel into his hand. The rain, the cars fade into nothing. Silence.

His fingers gingerly wrap around the splintered wood. Heaving, he drives the metal into the earth. The thud of the moist dirt pounding the casket reverberates through him, filling his head. It shatters the silence, destroys it.

He grits his teeth, and he remembers.

Slow passing summer days.


Nights of Spades.

The smell of cologne, rich and heavy.

Wes.

"Remember, it's only for fun," Wes says in his mind, elbows resting against the dining room table, stained by smoke and beer and marathon late-night card games. He's heckling his





parents as he thumbs through a deck of cards. Crowding around the table, everyone half-talks, half-yells. Bob Seger blares on the radio. "You can listen to the engine moanin' out its one note song..." Wes sings.

Everyone fades into shadows. All Matthew can see is Wes.

"But your thoughts will soon be wonderin' the way they always do," Wes sings off-key, laughing in between verses, filling the dark room with light. This is Wes, living and breathing and existing.

The corners of Wes' blue eyes crinkle as he grins, taking a swig of beer.

"Here I go, playing star again," Wes bellows.

And Matthew's lost. He's somewhere away from the rain pelting his back, away from the wood biting his raw palms. He's falling through time and space and light and memory.

He's remembering a time when summer days were spent under the Texas sky, friends were more important than money, and wealth was measured in ice cream and watermelon. In those days, there was no place better than on the back of a horse outrunning the wind, all the world was right because your brother was by your side, and time was something that stretched on and on forever.

Love.

Laughter.

Wes.

Wrenching salt water from his eyes, the memories are sweet and harsh and beautiful.

But some memories, dark and terrible, lurk in the shadows.

Matthew digs with more force, jabbing the moist dirt as he chokes the shovel. His movements are harder, angrier.

In his mind, it's morning, cold and grey. The house he imagines is empty and lonely and foreign. Sprawled across the couch, Wes lies without breathing or moving at all. Dim light streaks across the room; synthetic heroine lingers in his blood.

It's painful and terrible.

Plowing through the earth, the sound of the shovel is muted by heavy jagged sobs, his own.

"I'm sorry, little brother. That's life," the Wes inside his head says.

And that is the truth. That is life.

Life is unfair and unforgiving and unrelenting. Life is a brother who squanders his life to drugs and late nights. Life is smoking and drinking and gambling. Life is watching those you love rot in prison. Life is dying at 26 before you even have a chance to live.

Life is sorrow. Joy.

Everything. Nothing.

It is finding the strength to breathe and willing your heart to keep beating even when you want to lie down and die. It is surviving and living for those who were taken too soon.

Matthew drives the shovel into the ground one last time. Mud cakes his shoes and pants, and tears and sweat run down his face. The rain washes away both. He is the lone figure standing in front of his brother's grave, the last man standing.

He tilts his head toward the sky and closes his eyes.

There I go. Turn the page.

The Ever Consuming

By Valdon Ross

Darkness

in the dark the only thing to fear is your own mind
and i see you've been driven mad with fear
yet i allow myself to be devoured

my eyes glare through the blackness
burning like the stars in their final moments of life
caving in like black holes consuming space
and drawing everything within them like my Cheshire grin
the evil stirs within my gut like a caged inferno
and i come alive

yet i sit patiently
i burn to tear you apart
break into your skull
to untangle the twisted gray matter
rip into your chest
to loosen your heart strings
and strum a haunting melody
stitch together the fragments of your soul
graft pigeon wings to your broken spirit

yet i sit patiently
allowing the darkness to consume me
in the waiting i am pacified
in the devouring i am freed
my dirty little heart tempered by understanding

i was lost until i found my way
and so you shall be too
and you must do this for yourself

so i sit
and let the inferno burn within me
to be a beacon in the darkness
calling out to the moths "everything is light"





Just Mary

By Britta
Gamino

EIGHTEEN

Mary Greenwood didn't have a unique name or a unique face or anything unique about her at all. She wasn't tall or blonde, redheaded or young. In fact, she stood a squat five-feet flat. Her dark, over-permed hair covered her left cheek, and her muddy brown eyes were veiled under thick, green, plastic-rimmed glasses that were a size too small for her face. She wasn't too big or too skinny; she wasn't too pretty either. Her clothes were just clothes, no name brands, no colors.

Just gray.

Just Mary.

She didn't have a significant other, a lover, a child or a family, and Mary certainly didn't have any cats for fear of being labeled a crazy cat woman. Not Mary. Her days were simple and cold, lonesome and silent. Her mornings started with a cup of black coffee, no sugar, no cream.

Just black.

Just Mary.

Her afternoons were spent indoors by a window, no particular window, just whatever window Mary felt like that day. She didn't have any hobbies or interests, unless gazing out the window was a hobby. Pastimes, special memories? None. No, Mary just wasn't that type of woman. She wasn't the type to swoon over the hunky mailman like other women did. Even if she did, he wouldn't notice her. He wouldn't give her the time of day. With his tall, tanned, trimmed body and his firm, fantastic physique, she couldn't get him to keep his eyes on her for two seconds even if she did try. Why?

Because she's Mary.

Just Mary.

But then again, maybe she could. Maybe she could do or say something that would make all the other women jealous. Something where somehow, some way, she could keep that mouth-watering mailman (otherwise known as Mark Red) all to herself.

She'd had a few ideas in the past, but they were all wrong. Something new, something fresh is what Mary needed.

Just Mary,
and just Red.

She got what she wanted. She didn't want much. She didn't want a life in the fabulous lane or loads of money or fame. The "American dream" was not for her. No white picket fence; no 3.5 messy children floating around; no high-power, stress-filled job downtown in the city.

All she wanted was Red.

A little piece of Red.

She wasn't greedy; she left plenty for the other women. Unharmd, undamaged and unbroken. Well, almost.

What did he need it for anyway? God gave us two for a reason, right? Certainly any *normal* citizen could function minus one limb. It's not like she took anything vital. All Mary wanted was something to hold on to. Mary never got anything she wanted.

Until now.

Just now.

She covered it up nicely, so nicely in fact that it looked like a complete and ordinary accident. Everyone knows mailmen attract vicious, violent dogs. Oh, I forgot to mention Mary had a dog. A pitbull actually. But never mind that. Mary wasn't afraid of being caught. No one would suspect her. No one would come investigate her small, shabby shack of a home.

Mary is still around. She's still short. She's still skinny. She's still not too pretty. But she's not lonesome. She's got her piece of that tall, tanned, trimmed body now. Red is still around. He's fine. He's not a mailman anymore. But Mary doesn't care. She's got her own fairytale now.

Just Mary and just Red.

In This Skin

By Araina Edwards

To be in this skin is to:

Live and breathe

Be happy and free

BECOME the woman I've always wanted to be

Survive and thrive

Feel good deep inside

REALIZE I have a purpose to provide

Run and leap

Close my eyes and weep

BELIEVE that beauty is more than skin-deep

Pursue my depth

Cherish each breath

UNDERSTAND each one brings me closer to death

Take the plunge and fall

Run without stall

SEEK to understand the meaning of it all

Ponder and prance

Steal one last glance

APPRECIATE in life there is only one shot, one chance

Embrace this realization

Treasure this beautiful creation

LOVE that being me needs no explanation

To be in this skin

TWENTY





Mortal Regrets

By Fulton Fry

Soaring past King Minos' grasp
Where mortals never dared
My heart embraced the hot bright sun
Even as my waxen wings plunged my flesh
Into the cold dark sea
Tell them Icarus, son of Daedalus, has no regrets

From my Father's side above
To rankest poverty
The stable, the miracles, the final table
The sun, the spear, the cross of agony
To the stone rolled hence in triumph
Tell them Jesus, son of Man, has no regrets

I watch the sky unfettered by convention
My great truths only what I observe
The Inquisitors' threats, damnation, death
Exile, blindness, my life's work suppressed
And yet it moves
Tell them Galileo, son of Vincenzo, has no regrets

Colorful Reflections By Tonya Torres

TWENTY
ONE



Secrets of a West Texas Girl

By Ginny Martyn

One Christmas I found myself in a West Texas town where the sky's expanse was wider than the narrow people that lived there. It was a town of dusty religion and "bless her heart" gossips that made society especially prickly for the family that I married into.

Not directly, of course. Salacious rumors were never verified; they were simply inflated by every beauty salon and Southern kitchen all over town.

As it turned out, this rumor was true. The good doctor, one of the only ones in town, had been sleeping with his youthful secretary for a number of years, but the poor woman he was married to just happened to be my mother-in-law.

SECRET
SHEETS

She knew, of course. Everyone knew. Their glossy next door neighbors knew. Their capricious friends knew. Even the cashier at the Pick n' Save knew what wasn't happening behind their closed doors.

Even though my mother-in-law was aware of all the hushed finger-pointing, she still got up every day, put on her pearls, her conservative dress, her expensive hat, and walked out into the society that talked behind her back.

No one, least of all me, knew why she stayed with the doctor. Some figured it was the money. Some figured it was the status. Some thought that she still loved him and couldn't help herself. I never asked, and no one ever talked about it because it was supposed to be a secret. And, my mother-in-law was great at keeping secrets.

The doctor was always away; he rarely came home, but his good wife hushed his behavior all the same. "He is working. He is delivering a baby. He is at the hospital," she informed her children whenever he didn't materialize at the dinner table. With a smile that could melt butter, she excused her husband even though she knew he was with her, the other woman that filled his days and nights but wasn't the one who raised his

children or ran his home.

I wondered what my mother-in-law had in her life that was worth living for. Her children were all grown and gone; she didn't have many social occupations to speak of. What did she do to fill the void that so obviously left a gaping hole in her life? I wondered all these things as I looked out the window of the doctor's house. I had spent the afternoon alone in the ranch-sized home because my wife had gone out with her sisters to do some last minute shopping. The doctor was predictably away, and my mother-in-law was at the store.

When her **big** Cadillac car drove up, I rushed out into the snow to help her unload the bags. She had been gone awhile, but there were only a few bags in the back seat.

"Pop the trunk, and I'll get the rest," I called to her through the falling snow.

"Oh dear...", her lacy voice said as she rolled down her window. "I thought you had gone shopping with the girls?" A tint of startle masked her cornflower-blue eyes.

"No, not today," I said. "Let me help you with the bags." I scurried

around to the back of the car, and opened the trunk where there was a full load of bags.

“No, dear, not those; those stay there,” she admitted as if being discovered.

“What are you going to do with all that food,” I asked.

“Well, now, I suppose I will have to show you,” she said with resignation. “Climb on in.”

I opened the passenger door and sat in the leathery luxury car. The Cadillac was as immaculate as her house. Ever the prepared woman, my mother-in-law kept tiny red and white candies in the cup holder and a box of tissues in the console for their anticipated use.

Peppermint and perfume, her familiar scent filled my nostrils while the heater warmed my cold, caked sneakers. Billie Holliday’s dreamy voice lulled around us, and we drove away.

The wife of the good doctor took me through the town that night - the town that talked about her; the town that pitied her or shamed her; the town that didn’t really know her.

She drove while I wondered why her car was filled with enough food to cater a Christmas party.

When we came to the tracks, we crossed over to the wrong side. She didn’t comment, and I didn’t ask. We just sat in silence as the car stuck out like a sore thumb. We passed dirty streets lit up by lazy strands of twinkle lights, and I watched my mother-in-law wave regally to the porch-sitters.

The car rolled to a stop and the craziness began. She knocked on doors that opened to familiar smiles and gave away turkeys, groceries, dinners and Christmas goodies to those who needed it the most. There were no cameras snapping her photo. This wasn’t a charity event. She worked under the cover of night, moving throughout the town, blessing it as she went.

Back at the house after the deed was done I sat in the big Cadillac with my mother-in-law completely deflated by the injustice of her life. When my wife and sisters-in-law came out to meet us, I wanted to launch into the lost praises that had never been lavished on her, but she stilled my voice with her gently gloved hand on my arm and said, “Let’s make this our little secret.”

Little boy in an apple tree,
You look down and smile at me.
“Look mom, I can climb this thing.”

Take your picture and capture your precious face,
Almost as warm as your sweet embrace.
It’s incredible what comes from God’s grace.

You jump down and run to the swing,
“Push me mommy, higher than the sun that’s shining.”
The simple joys of life still amaze me.

Child, that sun doesn’t compare to you.
Every day you show me your virtue,
And I’m inspired to be brand new.

Beloved boy, you are a gift, gleaming.
You stole my heart and now I want to sing,
And tell the world what you mean to me.

At night when we say our prayers, I have to hide my joyful tears,
When you say so innocently,
“And God, thank you, thank you, THANK YOU, God, for making my mommy.”

Little boy in an apple tree,
I will love you until eternity.
Because of you, I’m richer than the wealthiest queen.

Tree Climber By Jessica O’Rear

Little Boy in an Apple Tree

TWENTY
SIX

By Jessica O’Rear

[illegible]

Express-Hole

By Ginny Martyn

Pushed By Britta Gamino

Whoever said God is without a sense of humor will undoubtedly find themselves the victims of Divine humor in the coming future. It probably won't be a pie-in-the-face kind of thing, but it will be good for a chuckle.

Recently, I spent what felt like my entire morning behind an Express-Hole at Wal-Mart. For those of you who never heard the term, it is because you are an Express-Hole and people are calling you one behind your back OR you are ignorant of new slang. If you are the latter, the definition is this:

Any person who has more than the amount of items listed for the express lane and jerk-ishly checks out anyway!

If you are the former -- may God have mercy on your soul.

I am a mother of a small child; she is two years old so my visits into the outside world of social order and decorum must be limited and free from any stimulus that might send her into a tantrum. When I finished shopping my items were: deodorant, gum and pull-ups. And yes, I had used the last of all these items so I couldn't just abandon my basket and leave the store.

As I pulled into the express lane, the Express-Hole moved in front of me (being cut off isn't just an automotive term.)

I took one look at her basket and gently said, "Oh, this is the express lane," and pointed casually to the sign that clearly read "15 items or less."

I truly believed she hadn't seen her error, but I was wrong which is why she was a HUGE Express-Hole

As I live and breathe, the woman actually responded with, "I hope you packed your patience," and began to unload her products on the belt.

It is a wonderful thing that God gave us the ability to think before we speak because I actually thought something that shouldn't be repeated. My second thought was to simply find another line, but I noticed that the 57 other registers were all predictably closed, and the open ones were just as long as my line if not longer.

At the very least, the Express-Hole could have let me and my three items go first, but oh-no, she was in pure Express-Hole form. Particularly because she tried to use coupons that had expired and asked to speak with the manager about a loaf of bread that was shelved under the wrong price.

After an amount of time that was just shy of me bleeding out my eyes, the Express-Hole finally finished checking out. I restrained myself from following her out to her car and committing vehicular retaliation... but it was difficult. Very difficult.



TWENTY
NINE

First World Problem

By Fulton Fry



We starve. The warlords take our food and our sons to feed their endless wars. The shouting, machine gun fire and the shadow of death has become our way of life. The Nations United sends us food and medicine, but most of it never reaches us. The warlords capture it all and sell what they cannot use on the black market. My own Ayotunde, my first born son, is dead. They made that gentle boy carry a gun. He had only seen 12 summers. There is something black in my wife's lungs they say. I brave the machine guns to get her food and medicine. Last night I got a rifle butt to the head coming home, and they took what I had, so I will try again today.

Thank God I have my tribe. Every man among them my brother, every woman my sister. Those who live care for my wife Rehema when I am away, just as those who have passed protect my poor son. Together we will press on, and share the fufu as far as it goes.

The economy sucks. I think the plant is downsizing again. I have been there long enough; my job might be safe this time. I just got a letter from my son in Afghanistan. He had a friend die last week. I wish to hell they would just send them all home. I should have insisted he go to college instead, but after 9/11 he just got so fired up to enlist. Kayla is out of work again. Selectric outsourced their customer service overseas. She is gonna be in trouble; her boyfriend isn't going to work. The little jackass has dedicated his life to pot and computer games. I almost wish the little turd would sell some pot, at least it would be a little income... but even that would require a little initiative.

I think Karen is sending her money. I can't grudge her though. Thirty damn years at Hamilton Junior High school cafeteria and all she got for it are a lot of calluses on her feet. She can do whatever she likes with her little bit of pocket money. Tough broad, my Karen, fought through Hodgkin's, praise God, and pass the radiation. I wish I had some more real friends; most of the guys I worked with try to keep their distance since I got promoted. The lay-offs aren't helping any either. It's like they think they are my idea. I walk outside and look at the stacks and wonder if that is why everybody seems to get cancer. Can't think about it; I'll go crazy.

Bought some nosebleed seats for the Sixers tonight. Hard to justify the expense, but a man has to have something. I'll eat a Big Mac on the way in so I don't have to pay 8 dollars for a hamburger. Man, part of me wants to sneak in a half pint of whiskey in my sock, but that's for younger dudes. Be a good way to get Karen to crack the whip. Dancing with the Stars is on tonight. I hope that Rob whats-his-face she likes doesn't get voted off. There will be hell to pay.

I sometimes think my baby brother has it right. He sells weapons and doesn't ask questions. Got drunk the other night and said some Brooks Brothers suit type bought some heavy firepower to send to Africa on the down low. I guess some tin horn dictator has his panties in a bunch.

Contributors

Erika Andrade has received her B.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Houston. When alone, she practices writing, photography and silence.

Wendy Babb has returned to college after a 20-year hiatus to complete her B.A. She has the full support of her husband Gary and their two dogs. Wendy feels very lucky.

Araina Edwards is a busy mom and undergraduate student currently working on her B.A. in communication in hopes of entering the field of marketing.

Jessica Faz is a senior majoring in communication. She looks forward to pursuing a career in writing.

Dessa Parker is a social work student and full-time mother to an active toddler. In her free time, she enjoys taking beautiful photographs.

Fulton Fry is a senior literature major and aspiring playwright. As a 40-year-old man just now wrapping his mind around “what he wants to do when he grows up,” he gives much credit to the faculty and his fellow students for creating an atmosphere conducive to achieving the best ideals of education.

Chelsea Fugitt is a 20-year-old art major and a Houston native.

Britta Gamino is a communication major who enjoys photography, design and Mary Higgins Clark novels.

Ginny Martyn, an undergraduate student, is just a girl.

Jessica O'Rear is a communication major who enjoys taking photos, creating graphics and writing. She also spends as much time with her son as she can.

RoseAnn Rapp is majoring in applied design and visual arts. She has been a professional photographer and graphic artist for 30 years. She looks forward to continuing to create art.

Valdon Ross, an undergraduate student, has been accused of being a modern Renaissance man for the way he dabbles in all artistic endeavors from photography and “wordsmithing” to spray paint and music.

Samantha Samuel is a 21-year-old communication major and aspiring actress who is earning her degree while trying to live her dream.

Amy Salvato is a communication major who has loved photography all her life.

Heather Schutmaat is an undergraduate humanities major. She writes short stories and poetry, some of which have been published in several literary magazines, including *Backhand Stories*, *Viraicat* and *Chicklit Shorties*.

Tonya Torres is a communication major and loves taking pictures. She believes photography is much more than a smile for the camera; it's about capturing a moment in time and creating a memory that will last forever.

Jade Wise is a communication major is focusing on graphic design, photography and Web design.

Editorial Policy And Submission Guidelines

The University of Houston-Clear Lake publishes Bayosphere annually to provide an outlet for creativity in the community. It is produced by students enrolled in the magazine publication class. Each entry is "blind reviewed" by the students, and a certificate is awarded to the highest scoring work in each category. Bayosphere accepts submissions in the areas of fiction, nonfiction, art, photography, poetry and digital media from students, faculty, former students and members of the community.

All material accepted is subject to cropping or editing by the Bayosphere editorial staff as they deem necessary. Materials should be submitted as follows:

Submit copies of written work, not originals.

Fiction, nonfiction and poetry must be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 2,000 words. Include a text-formatted disk with submitted copy.

Photos must be black and white, no smaller than 5 X 7 inches.

Original artwork must be suitable for magazine publication. Pastels, water colors and light pencil drawings do not reproduce well. Artwork must not exceed 11 X 16 inches. No framed work. Black and white photographs of sculpture and other three-dimensional artwork can also be included in the category.

Digital media consists of computer generated works of art. Works can still be animated, i.e. moving images. Still artwork for digital media can include color, but if chosen it will appear solely in the online edition. All animated digital media will appear solely in the online edition. Digital media can include, but is not limited to, any of the following forms: Flash, Macromedia Director, digital video, 3D animation, and Quick Time Virtual Reality. Submissions must be five minutes or less.

Complete submission guidelines are included with entry forms. Bayosphere entry forms may be picked up in the Student Publication Office or downloaded online at www.uhcl.edu/bayosphere.

Submissions for Bayosphere 2012 may be sent to Bayosphere, UH-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456, Houston, TX 77058, or delivered to the Student Publications Office, Room 1239 of the Bayou Building. Entries are accepted year round. Any work not received by March 1, 2012, will automatically be saved for the following year.

Direct inquiries may be made to the address above or by telephoning 281-283-2571. The Student Publications Office is officially closed in June and July; however, entries may still be mailed during that period.

Colophon

Paper

Cover: 100# Hannoart Silk cover
Inside Pages: 80# Hannoart Silk text

Fonts

Champaign & Limousines, Europe Underground Light, Opificio, Walkway Semibold

Ink

Black plus overall satin aqueous coating

Software

Adobe Indesign CS5, Adobe Illustrator CS5, Adobe Photoshop CS5

Binding

Saddle Stitch

Size

8.5" x 11"

