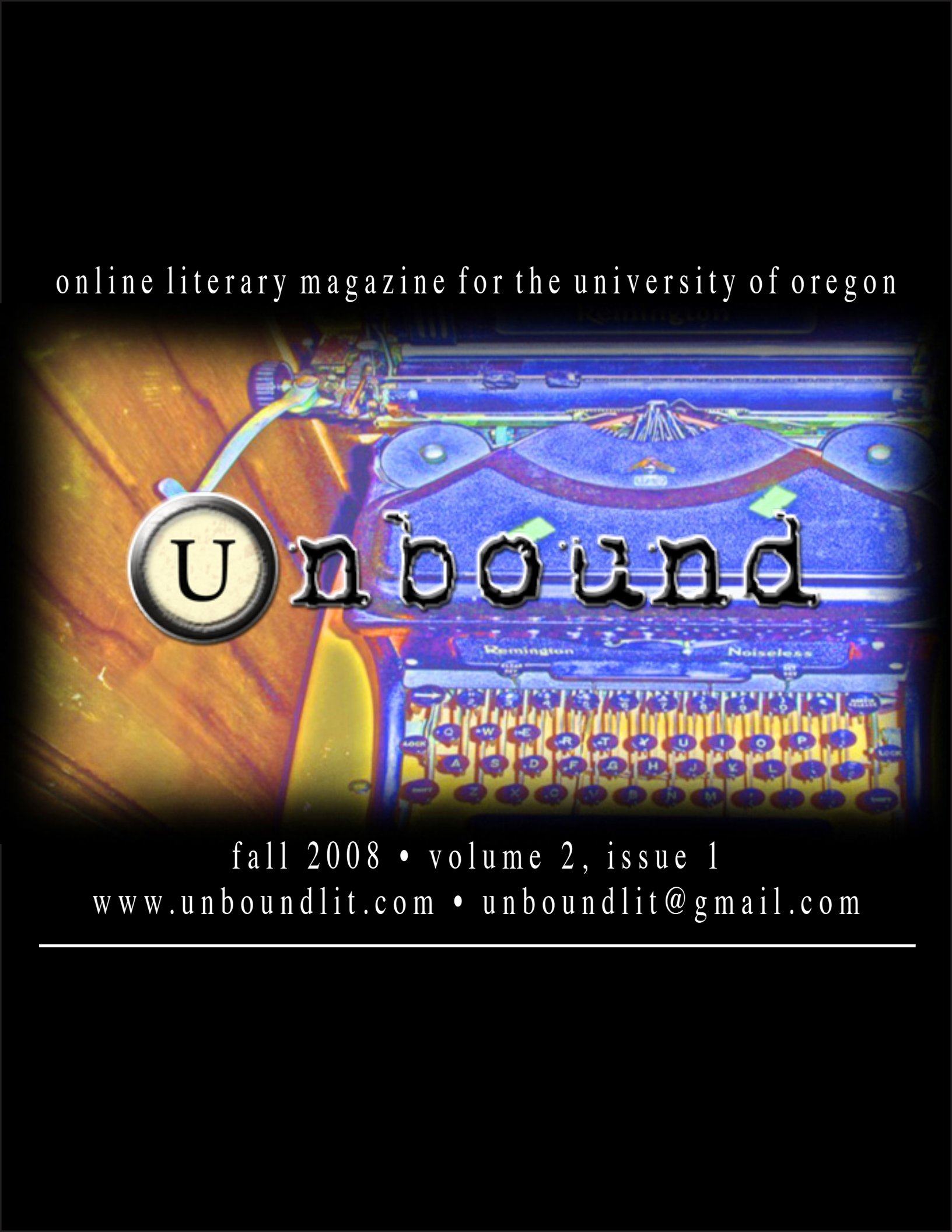


online literary magazine for the university of oregon



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in case of fire, take stairs

CASIMIR COVERT-KEEFE

No more than four feet. Not in any direction but up. A rectangular prism of shabbily maintained metal, stained tile, and whatever the hell these dour, white walls are made out of. You can look up to where the fans and motors are audibly, though invisibly, churning out synthetic air. I'll go mad in here. That's what I'll do. The sturdy handlebars on opposite walls, their grey metallic nature faded, scratched, marked, will break my hip when I go mad and run into them. Doors are the walls without handlebars. They have no handles. Why are there two doors? I came in one and plan very much to leave out that same one. Why are there two doors? Is someone else planning to use it? I'm alone. Like the handlebars, the doors seem to have lost their luster years ago, having been imperfected by a million passersthrough, a million marks. I can work out vague obscurances of my hand or body's form in their faux reflectivity.

Ticking? This door ticks. It sounds like the nervous rapping of pencil on my fingernails when I'm writing a note that will invariably be crumpled up. I wonder what this door is trying to write. I await its sudden burst of inspiration. It'll be explosive. The cloudy metal will erupt into a thousand pieces, shrapnel taking to me like rains to a thirsty lawn, sinking deeply, quickly. Nobody will know. Some people, hearing the bang, will look up from their desks and say, "What was that?" Their papers won't wait forever though, and so they return to their lives of pens marking paper while I bleed out the rest of mine, me marking floor. The lady milling in the hall will jump, her heart will race a bit, and then she'll continue walking, assuming it's just a problem she doesn't need to worry about. Really, it isn't. I'll be in an awkward position when they finally do find me. I won't be resting against the far wall, a fallen infantryman like my father ("Local Hero: G.I. Marceo, Receiver of Purple Heart, Silver Star"), able to gasp out his last confessions. After my dad's picture showed up in the newspaper, I heard a lot about how much he had loved my mother and me.

The newspaper will give me an obituary and maybe a half-inch article next to the War on Drugs. My dad went out the way a man goes out. But not me, no, I'll be slunched, my face on the floor and my hands bending at weird angles. I won't have a sergeant to tell stories about undying love. It'll just be me and my blood trickling out of a hundred tiny holes. Rivulets of red blood cells will form one big pool on the floor. I'll be a damned river delta.

I put my fingertips to the door and the ticking stops. Why doesn't the other door tick? I'll go mad in here. Anybody would. There is an emergency phone near my knees. That doesn't relieve me. Why would it? This addition means that disaster is both imminent and probable enough that installing an emergency phone is worthwhile. What if the phone rings? Nobody calls for me. They don't have my phone number. This isn't my phone. Claudia has my phone number. She lives in my house and sleeps in my bed and kisses me, and I've never told her I love her. So not only will my body be in a puerile position, but I'll be without a sergeant to relay my messages as well. Maybe she'll go through the trash and see all the crumpled notes. Maybe not.

I move my hand. The ticking starts again. I pray for the door's light bulb moment. Then I'll use the phone. Then I won't feel scared that it is here. I won't be worried that someone will call or that Claudia has my phone number. When I've fallen to the floor, I'll even be glad that it's by my knees and readily reachable, even in my prostrate shape, crumpled and tossed to the side like so many other untried ideas.

I don't know that the ceiling is real; its design makes it seem as though it doesn't touch any walls. Is it fake? It's fake. But it is within the reach of extended arms and it does emit light. Unwavering light. A steady robotic gaze from above is as unnerving as rain on a fully dandelioned lawn. Probably white at one point, the dirty, metallic-grey luminance is daunting. Maybe those air machines that I can hear are processing metals into the air. Through the years, perhaps, microscopic bits of metal have clung to the clean plastic. They turned that beautiful decoration grey and my lungs are next. I'm going to asphyxiate on air. Is that ironic? I'd much rather go insane than lose my ability to breathe. My friends will remember me and say, "How'd he die?" "Oh, he inhaled bits of metal until he couldn't breathe anymore." No, that's not how I'm going out. Not at all.

I sit down. I glance down. I stand up. The cheap marble tile is filthy. Have my shoes added to this or will they bring it home with me? I do not want this home with me.

The ticking stopped. It stopped and I didn't touch it. Did someone else touch it? From the other side? Who's there? Should I say, "Hello"? I don't. If I say, "Hello," then they'll know I'm here. Do I want

them to know I'm here? No, they're not good people. No one trying to get in here is good people. They'll use the latest in laser-saw technology and cut a hole into the door big enough for two of them to step through. They'll do it from both doors. Four people will be on top of me before I can see again. The orange-red glow of the lasers through the doors will have blinded me, no doubt. They'll put a bag over my head, tie my hands behind my back, my feet together, carry me to a van whose motor is running, throw me in, drive away without telling me a word, take me to their headquarters, and make a ransom call back to the office spouting off about how they have one of the office's employees. They won't recognize my name. They won't even know I'm gone, just that my report was never turned in. A letter will show up at my house notifying me that I've been terminated, and Claudia won't give a damn. She quit long ago. The letter will be crumpled and tossed aside. Meanwhile I'm bound and gagged and have been kicked near the point of passing out, and then it's back in the van before I'm dropped off on the side of the stre—DING!

Floor 37. I step off, palms sweaty.

Casimir Covert-Keefe is a junior majoring in English. His story, "In Case of Fire, Take Stairs," was selected for a reading at the Spring 2008 National Undergraduate Literature Conference at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah.



elizabeth myers
serena blue
digital print
2008

Freshman Elizabeth Myers will have a gallery showing in March 2008 at the Workspace Gallery in San Francisco, as well as an upcoming show this winter at the BUZZ Café at the University of Oregon.

air mail

I sit inside my room and feel the light
Lying upon my palm, a slice of heat.
If someone were to chance upon me now,
the beam would blink, flicker and rush away
And scatter outward, breaking on my hand.

It lies upon my palm, a slice of heat.
These nerves are taut. So is the laundry line
on which the clothes- wet, drooling, heavy words-
are hung: Milk. Vacuum. No, no, not today.
The carpet sticky underneath my feet.

If someone were to chance upon me now,
it'd just be someone telling me to wait
and not to bother him; he's occupied.
I'd sit, a cod fillet strip reeking of
the smell from batter frying in a pan.

I think the beam would blink and rush away
at any thought of black; the shadow of
a fist, an outstretched palm, a downward swoop;
the colour that you see when both eyes close,
the shade beneath the footsteps of two boots.

It scatters outward, breaking on my hand.
You said my palm was cold despite the heat,
and grew much colder when I sent you off
in autumn. Tell Elise I'm well and he
is too. We'll see you when we visit soon.

– KOH XIN TIAN

Koh Xin Tian is a junior English major. Her work has appeared in Argot Magazine and The Smoking Poet.



kodiak atwood
false sanctuary in purple haze
acrylic, watercolor and oil
16 in. x 20 in.

Kodiak Atwood is a freshman majoring in English with a minor in Japanese.

mentors

ROSS CONCILLO

Freedy was fourteen when he took Mr. Goodall's P.E. class. He was his favorite teacher because he always talked with Freedy and put his arm around him the way his father did with old Vietnam War buddies.

At the time, Freedy did not realize this was because Mr. Goodall was a drunk. A real drunk. He got fired that same year. One day in class, he told Freedy the best way to off yourself would be to walk in front of traffic, but buy groceries first so everyone would think it was an accident. After he lost his job, Freedy would see him at the store, milk, eggs, a six-pack in his basket, and he would wonder if Mr. Goodall was going to do it, but he never asked because Mr. Goodall pretended he didn't notice him, or maybe he really didn't.

When Freedy was seventeen, Mr. Goodall did it, but not the way he described. He jumped off his roof into his empty swimming pool. Nobody found him for three days. When he heard what happened, Freedy wasn't sad; he was relieved. Knowing Mr. Goodall realized how unhappy he was, that was part of his relief, but he was also relieved for himself. It had worried Freedy that he might grow as unhappy as Mr. Goodall, and he would have to live like that, but now he knew if he was ever that miserable, he would not have to live at all.

On Freedy's mother's insistence, their family attended the funeral. "If it was me, I'd want there to be a crowd around my casket," she said. It was a muggy day in June, the week after school let out, and the sun beat down on Freedy, his parents, and a few of Mr. Goodall's relatives as they stood by the open grave. Freedy thought of how he could have been sitting in his cool basement watching Nickelodeon and felt a brief hatred towards his mother for making him come.

"They're gonna get the weather wrong, they might as well give you a cute girl to look at," Freedy's father said, to nobody in particular, as the service was about to begin. The forecast had called for clouds, so his father had worn thick socks because he hated cold feet. After getting laid off when Freedy was in middle school, his father's only joys left in life seemed to be his complaints. It was his inability to over-

come his intense fear of life-changing events, Freedy had concluded, that kept him from jumping off a roof himself.

"I bet that's the ex-wife," Freedy's mother nudged him in the side, and tilted her head towards a thin woman with a dark head of heavily curled hair, much younger than Freedy expected. She was wearing large, square sunglasses. There was a girl standing a foot to the left, letting the square sunglass woman stroke the top of her head, and Freedy found himself watching her. Her head was tilted away from the hand on top of it. Her eyes darted around between the trees, the grass, and her nails, to everything but the person reading from the Bible. A small black locket hung loosely from her neck. When she caught Freedy staring at her, Freedy looked down at his shoes, counting the holes his shoelaces ran through, and wondering what was inside her locket.

Not until the end of the service, when Freedy and his parents were back in their car, did he work up the courage to look for her again, and managed a glimpse as she pressed her skirt against her knees and climbed into the back of a limo.

"What a scorcher," Freedy's father said, reclining his seat. "I was tempted to hop in the grave myself, just for the shade." They drove home in silence because his mother told Freedy she didn't feel like talking, and his father fell asleep.

Within a week, Freedy's friend Terry decided Mr. Goodall's empty house would be the perfect place to spend their summer nights. They sat in the bottom of the swimming pool, drinking and smoking, talking about different plans to meet girls.

"I heard they like it when you sneak up from behind and squeeze them on the side, right above the waist," Terry said.

Aaron, a friend of Terry's who had tagged along, smiled, his cleft lip spreading and flattening as if it had been hit by a mallet. "Bet it gets them wet," he said.

Freedy stayed out of these talks. He didn't want to embarrass himself by saying something that revealed his sexual inexperience. In seventh grade, he bought a girl a candy bar, but was too afraid to talk to her. He handed it to her, and ran off. He did not mention this to Terry or Aaron. When he did speak he asked questions like, "What kind of gifts do you think they like?"

"Perfume," Aaron said.

"Flavored vodka," Terry said, and Aaron gave a knowing nod.

It was a routine for the three of them that summer. Every night. Except the night Terry showed up with the girl from the funeral.

Her name, Freedy learned, was Nina, but Terry introduced her first as Mr. Goodall's daughter, and Freedy thought he heard a sense

of triumph in his voice. Nina stood a few feet back, watching the ground, as Terry and Aaron exchanged smirks.

"We usually sit in the pool," Aaron said.

"Yeah, whatever." She jumped to the bottom without glancing at the ladder. "Do you have a cigarette?" She rested her hands on her hips, her black sneakers pointing away from each other. She had a red streak in her hair that Freedy had not noticed before, and it gave him the impression she was mysterious and mature. The locket still dangled from her neck.

They sat in the deep end and drank beers, same as other nights. Nina was just as crude as Terry and Aaron. "Girls are such little ditzes. They're obsessed with being best friends. They share everything. Probably share their fucking tampons," she said, and they all laughed. Freedy could tell she was the type of girl who would scoff in your face if you bought her perfume. He had never met a woman that held herself with such confidence.

"How come I've never seen you before?" Aaron asked.

"I live with my mom. We just moved back to Tacoma because she says Seattle was too big." Nina shook her bangs and took a drag on her cigarette. "She sucks."

"She's going to be a sophomore at that all girls school," Terry said.

"Really? I thought you were in college," Freedy blurted. Terry, Aaron, and Nina laughed, and then Freedy joined them.

"All right," Terry said, and pulled a joint from his pocket, offering it to Nina.

She shook her head. "I get paranoid."

Terry lit it for himself. "Don't be so self-obsessed." He breathed in deeply. "Nobody's out to get you. Nobody gives a shit about you." He stuck it in front of her face again, his stubby fingers inches from her lips. She took it and coughed hard.

When they were leaving, Freedy made sure to get out first so he could offer to help Nina. She took his hand, and after he pulled her up, she smiled at him before going to stand by Terry. Freedy wanted to ask if she remembered him, but figured he knew the answer, so there was no point.

"Think Freedy's got a little crush on someone," Terry said.

Freedy put his hands in his pockets. "Shut up."

Terry laughed and gave him a punch in the shoulder, then left with Nina. Freedy's mind began going over all the questions he could ask Nina the next time they hung out, the different ways he could strike up a conversation. He could buy her a candy bar. She seemed like she would appreciate chocolate. Maybe she would tell him what

was in the locket.

But there would not be a next time. Nina would start at the all girls school, and Terry and Aaron would never mention her, and Freedy would never bring her up, for fear of them thinking he wanted her as his girlfriend.

Twenty-one year old Freedy sat at Tavern Tacoma by himself, waiting for the right time to buy Terry a birthday drink. He didn't know many of the people, and didn't want to intrude. So he sat by himself. The bar was only two blocks from his apartment, but he had never been inside. It wasn't that he hadn't wanted to, but the good money for a cab driver was at night, and he often saw people singing karaoke when he went by. He didn't want to have to sing.

"Freedy! The Freedster!" Terry slapped him on the back. He was with someone Freedy had never met.

"The Freedster!" The man repeated, slapping Freedy on the back as well.

Terry leaned in. "This is Dave. He works in the shop with me." Terry swung his head towards Dave. "Me and Freedy, we go way back. Isn't that right, Freedy?"

Freedy gave a smile. "Way back."

"Used to hang out all the time in high school," Terry paused as his eyes tried to focus on a fly in front of them. "All the fucking time." He made a quick grab at the fly, nearly hitting Freedy in the nose.

"The Freedster," Dave said, losing interest.

Terry dropped onto the stool next to Freedy and pushed his sweaty hair behind his ears. "We could drink and smoke with the best of them." Dave had started talking to the bartender, but Terry didn't seem to notice. "Those were the days, weren't they?"

Freedy nodded.

"Those were the fucking days. Say it! Say, 'those were the fucking days.'"

Freedy lifted his glass to his mouth. "Those were the fucking days." His voice echoed in the glass as he took a sip.

"Freedy, the man," Terry trailed off as another fly landed on his wrist. He stared at it for a few moments, then gave a clumsy slap in its direction. "Goddamn flies." Terry took a drink from Freedy's beer, thinking it his own. Freedy let him. This way he wouldn't have to buy another.

"High school." Terry turned towards Freedy. "Hey. You remember that girl Nina?"

Freedy pretended to think for a moment. His pulse quickened, and he wished he still had his beer. "Yeah. What happened to her? Wonder

what she's up to."

"Who knows." His voice lowered. "But I fucked the shit out of her." He put his hand over his mouth, spitting and laughing. "She was wild."

Freedy could tell Terry was waiting for him to respond, so he grunted, "I bet." In the back of his mind, he had probably known, but hearing Terry say it was different. He imagined this was what a person with a large lump felt like when the doctor confirmed they had cancer.

Terry took another drink. "But man," his voice got even quieter, "she was totally crazy. Started crying her eyes out afterwards."

"Oh?"

"No shit." Terry shook his head. "Sobbing like you wouldn't believe. Crazy, you know?"

Freedy pretended he wasn't listening. He leaned over and looked at his shoes as if something was wrong with the laces.

"Goddamnit." Terry stood and slapped at his shoulder as another fly landed on him. "I think that's the same fly. Can you see it?" He picked up a newspaper on the counter and handed it to Freedy. "Hit it. Wherever it is, just hit it. I don't care if it's on my nuts." He stood perfectly still, arms straight at his sides.

Freedy picked up the paper, but didn't move from his seat.

"Hurry, before it buzzes off!" Terry's eyes went to the ceiling as he rocked backwards.

Freedy stood, setting the paper down. "I'll use my hand."

"Think that'll work?"

"Don't worry. I'll get it good." Freedy looked harder than he had ever looked for anything, begging for every fly in the bar to land on Terry's face, but then Terry's eyes closed, and he began to fall forward. Instinctively, Freedy reached out and caught him before he hit the ground. The smelly drunk rested in his arms, his chest rising and falling slowly. Freedy looked around. The bartender was filling a pint. Dave was smoking a cigarette, talking to a woman. The karaoke was playing loud. Nobody realized what had happened.

Ross Concillo is a senior majoring in Environmental Studies. His poetry, "Groceries" and "My Name," can be seen in the Spring 2008 issue of Unbound.

e u g e n e

Sordid rags along the road,
puddles growing into lakes,
rain never ceasing,

never resting; it weighs down
and darkens
my blue winter coat.

Chips of glass in the alleyway,
at a late hour
when the sun
burns luminously
off scattered
prisms,

I question my isms
I answer with bullshit.

I search for it all
In all the wrong places.

– SHANE CONNOR

h a l l

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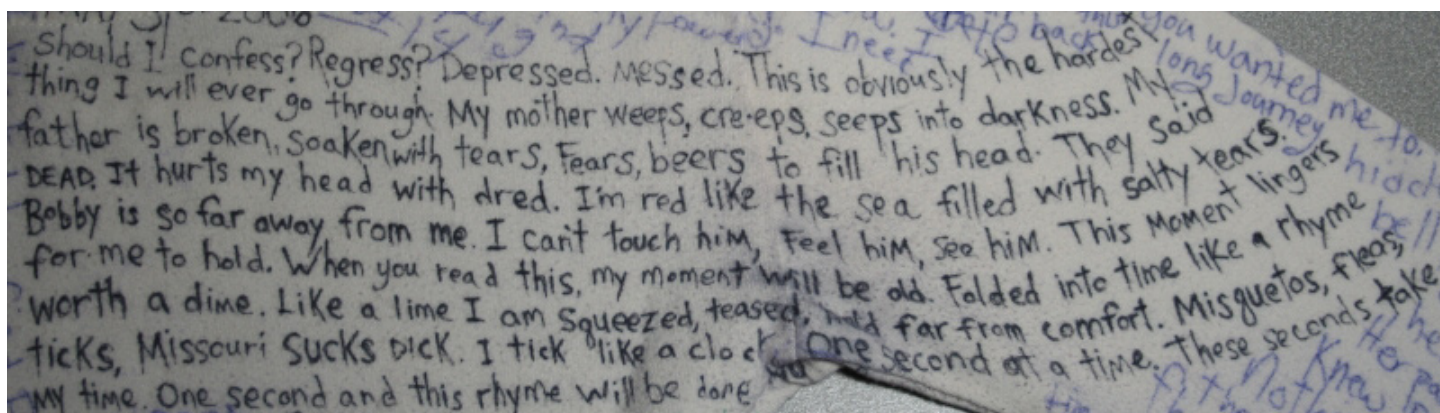
mangy we remain
and walk around with bare feet
on the pool table
is a game unplayed
we arrange our thoughts
and manage the best ways.

I'm underground
piled under cement
and waste
in the next room over
people roll on one another
on a purple couch
all the while I sit and wait
for my laundry to dry.

– M. BROCK GRENFELL

M. Brock Grenfell is a junior at the UO who plans on double majoring in Philosophy and Religious Studies.





joyce maddeaux
second skin
2008

this performance piece represents the words that were once inside us and help to form who we are today. joyce paid homage to these words by covering her body with past journal entries. this process was emotionally and physically taxing because she dug up “old drama” and experienced headaches from the toxic ink used to cover her body.

Joyce Maddeaux is a senior majoring in Art, with minors in Community Arts and Special Education. She has previously exhibited work at the Strange Folk Art Festival in St. Louis, Portland Community College, and at the Women Student Art Exhibit in Portland.

o d e t o s o l i t u d e

I turn the heat up to 85,
undress,
and sunbathe
underneath the lamplight
in our kitchen.
The limestone tiles
are hot sand, the refrigerator
my cocktail waitress.

I slip into my evening gown
and heels, climb onto
her barstool and
recite Stephen Dunn's
"Everything Else in the World"
to my cats.

I throw burnt popcorn
at her Simon and Garfunkel poster
for an hour,
wear her deodorant and
practice yoga to the
sounds of G-Unit,
abandoning my sweaty laundry
on the living room floor.

Tomorrow my housemate returns
from Klamath Falls,
but tonight
I'm sleeping in her bed.

— LAURA MARIE PIZZO

Laura Marie Pizzo is a senior Comparative Literature major. Her poem, "A Sort of Prayer," was published in the inaugural issue of Unbound.



josey bartlett
underwater
acrylic and watercolor
2 ft. x 3 ft.

Josey Bartlett is a senior Journalism major. She has previously exhibited work at the WOW Hall in Eugene.

o n e - a r m e d t h e k i n d n e s s

It must've been a problem. She must've gone
out of her way to come to my place,
brimming with food prepared to look
fresher, bowls wrapped in headlines
that babble happily, shining
with the erasure of dust. Her voice flies

towards me: Teens with hollow bones fly!
Experts in marrow transplants who've gone
to investigate found them shining,
alert and chatty but unable to place
their feet on the ground. Lines
are forming at their doors, people queuing to look

at the wunderkind. She pauses, looking
at me expectantly. I say it flies
in the face of reason. Lines
crease her face, then she's gone
to the back, the only place
in my shack where a light shines.

man applauds of strangers

She draws nearer to the shining
filament as if looking
into it would help her place
my situation more clearly. She's a fly
buzzing around what looks like the moon, but is nearly gone
to her dazzled death, thinking the lines

she flings at me are lines
her limbs have the tautness to pull. Shining
down, her guilt looks almost gone
from her face when I look
at her full set of porcelain teeth. I can't fly
to where she promises a place
is kept for me. The rush of offerings to my place
began when the headlines
broadcast my plight to those like her who'd fly
to my rescue, headlights shining,
hovering at my door. Look!
Helping others is helping ourselves. Then they are gone.

Look ma'am, I cannot thank you enough but- she's gone
back home; dead flies shining
in the light, lined wings littered like sacrifices.

– KOH XIN TIAN

Koh Xin Tian is a junior English major. Her work has appeared in Argot Magazine and The Smoking Poet.



holli toon
my heart belongs
silver gelatin print
8 in. x 10 in.

Holli Toon is a senior Art major. This piece is part of a series, entitled Forever in the Forties.

my dodger shirt

Greg Blake Miller is a doctoral student in the School of Journalism and Communication. His work has appeared in The Southern California Anthology, OC Family, Las Vegas Weekly, Las Vegas Life, The Moscow Times, VURB, and other publications.

Every time I wore the Dodger shirt
I got into a fight.
I still hear the echo
Of James Washington's slap
In the dark gray hall
Next to the light brown gym,
That rubber-floored gym,
Just beyond the doors
Of the sweet-scented woodshop
Of Woodbury Junior High.
Maybe the kids still hear it today,
The echo of
James Washington's slap
Across the plastic blue cursive
On the face of my shirt,
My Dodger shirt,
The home jersey (white),
That team jersey (fight),
With my name on the back
And the numeral 3,
Which Steve Sax wore in those days,
And buttons down the chest
Where blue plastic "Dodg" joined blue plastic "ers."

I don't know
If James Washington, or anyone else,
Had anything against
My Dodger shirt.
I can't explain the call to battle
That seemed to emit from its seams.
I do know, however, that a hand,
Particularly an open hand,
Strikes plastic lettering with a great crackling thwack,
And everybody around says "ooooh."

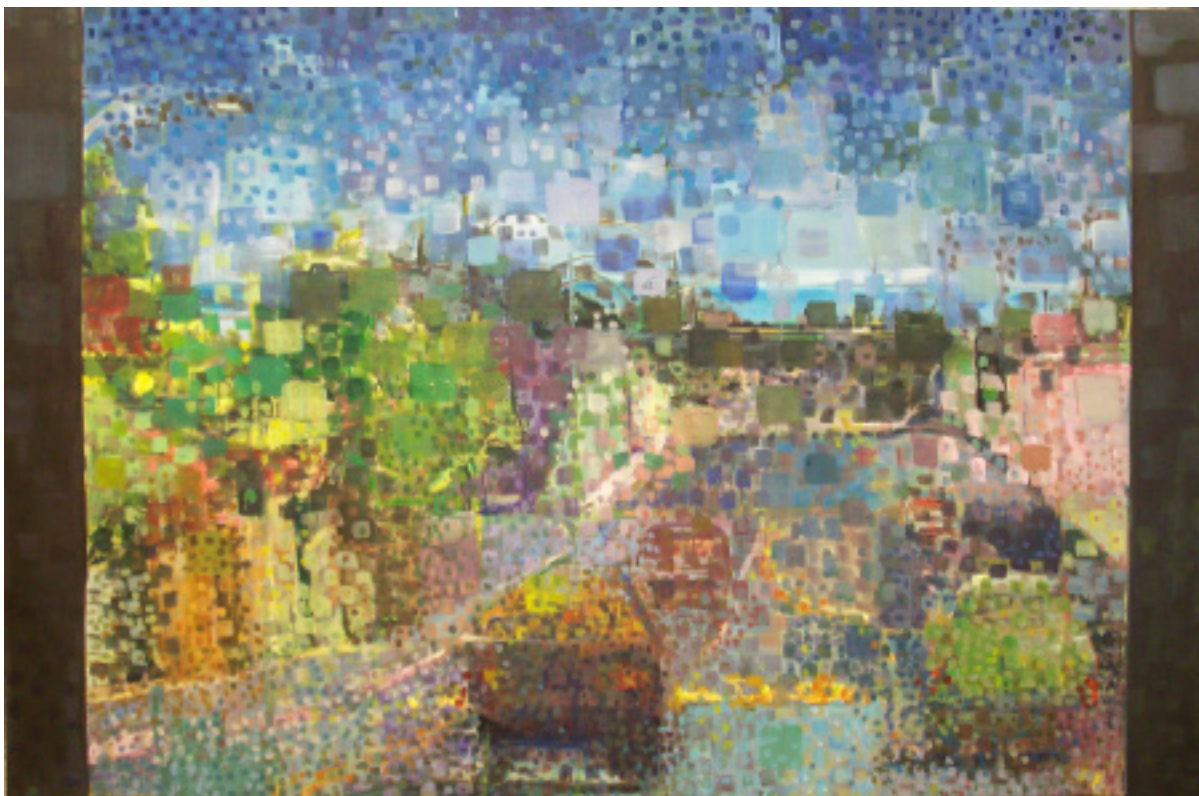
Everyone thought it hurt,
But it didn't.
I straightened my Dodger shirt like I'd just stolen second.
And later I shook James Washington's hand.

— GREG BLAKE MILLER



sydney ryden
african bride
acrylic
24 in. x 30 in.

Sydney Ryden is a junior Pre-Journalism major, with a minor in Business Administration.



brooke borcharding
ocean park pixelation
oil on canvas
6 ft. x 4 ft.
fall 2008

Brooke Borcharding is a senior majoring in Painting. Her work is currently on display in Academic Advising in Oregon Hall and Café Roma. Borcharding has previously shown work at Diablo's Downtown Lounge in Eugene, and Novel Café and Unurban Café in Santa Monica. In February 2009, she will exhibit pieces at Palace Bakery on Pearl St. in Eugene.

University hires Italians to solve parking crisis

BY CHRIS BRADLEY

EUGENE, OR — With mere minutes remaining until the start of a crucial midterm, Janey Lance's heart fell as she turned her coupe onto South University Street: lines of parked cars stretched for blocks. Janey had to circle around for fifteen minutes to find a spot, and by the time she got to class, she could only write her name on the top of her exam before the class ended.

This was last spring. Now, as finals approach and stress levels rise, across campuses nationwide, the University of Oregon has taken a novel approach to avoid the reoccurrence of heartaches like Janey's: hiring Italian valets. University administration hopes that by employing a squad of fifteen Italians to roam campus lots and streets and park cars, it can finally reach a solution to the double-edged sword of growing enrollment and finite parking resources.

Senior Vice President and Provost James C. Bean explained the merits of the program at a press conference Saturday.

"It is a well-known fact that Italians can parallel park cars in smaller spaces than anyone in the world," Bean said. "I mean, my friend Giacomo once parked his Fiat in my laundry room. I see this program as a great way to increase our on-campus parking capacity while further cementing the University of Oregon's relations with our friends from the 'boot.'"

The program is set to run on an interim basis through the end of this academic year while the University gauges its effectiveness. The cost of hiring the Italians will be paid for by selling an undisclosed number of additional parking passes.

So far, responses from students have been mostly positive.

"I think the U of O has really hit upon something here," said senior Taylor Johns. "I used the Italians for the first time last week, and they were even able to find a spot for my full-sized Toyota Tundra."

Junior Tasha O'Donnell had her own reasons for liking the program.

"The clothes the Italians wear are just so cute," she said. "The one who parked my Jetta yesterday had on purple pants. Purple pants! I could never get my boyfriend to wear those. Then he kept say-ing, 'Bella, bella' — I don't know what that means, but it sounded hot."

Most of the Italians hired were already living in the area, but had lost their jobs during the current economic slide. They seem happy to have this opportunity to both earn some extra income and get to know the local student population.

"I have already met many pretty girls," said Ludovico Luttini, 23, originally a textile worker from Bologna. "I have dates through next Thursday. I have only to say three words, and they swoon."

Given the overall reaction to the parking program, Vice President Bean professed confidence that it will become a permanent University fixture.

"I have just been pleased as punch with how the University community has embraced our Italian amici," said Provost Bean. "If things continue as they are, we may just have to bring over some Danes next spring to serve as bicycle valets."

Chris Bradley is a senior English major at the UO. His work has appeared in the Oregon Voice Quarterly, and the Clark Honors College Creative Arts Journal.



aileen tolentino
detritus
scrap wood, wire, paper, glue and twine
5 ft. x 3 ft. x 2 ft.
november 2007

Aileen Tolentino is a senior majoring in Sculpture. She has had previous exhibitions at the LaVerne Krause Gallery and the Cheap Jewelry Show.



sydney ryden
the lady
18 5/8 in. x 22 5/8 in. (framed)

Sydney Ryden is a junior Pre-Journalism major, with a minor in Business Administration.

o r g y

KEVIN GILBRIDE

187 E Lynn Lane
Victor, Montana 59875

March 7, 2006

Mother and Father
187 E Lynn Lane
Victor, Montana 59875

Dear Mother and Father:

It has recently come to my attention that you do not approve of my dream to someday have a mad sexual orgy in my bedroom on a Saturday night. Your unforeseen disagreement with my fantasy has led me to much mental distress and a questioning of my sexual desires. This has even caused me to lose sleep at night in fitful spells of nightmares about the arguments you have given.

I am writing you today to address your issues with my dreams of a mad, hot, sexual orgy in my bedroom. I have asked for your misgivings about my party, and you had four main problems: the risk of me getting an STD, the risk of me getting someone pregnant, the risk of a guy showing up, and the very slim risk that I would be rejected by the girls invited to the party. There is a very easy way for me to defeat two of your risks; I will wear a condom. As for the risk of a guy showing up, I'll lock my door, and finally the risk that I would be rejected is very slim, so slim that you shouldn't even think of it. I mean, come on.

I have had many sexual experiences in the past, including my hand, pillows, and even that back massager you bought for Christmas four years ago. I am having trouble seeing how this is any different from any one of my previous experiences if I use a condom. I beg of you to rethink your decisions and realize that I am your son, and I need some kind of experience like this eventually.

Respectfully,

Kevin Gilbride

Kevin Gilbride is a sophomore majoring in German. "Orgy" is his first published piece of work.



chelsea pero
the circles of life
acrylic
20 in. x 16 in.

Chelsea Pero is a freshman majoring in Art

t w o
p l u m p
c h a i r s

They sat there, plump, in two plump chairs.
Sipping coffee, sometimes, and staring,
But not at each other.

A fat silence.

A wide void.

A lengthy nothing.

Eyes probing everything,
But not each other.

Soon their drinks were gone, sipped to nothing,

And the time was nearing

To recognize each other.

When it came, with their unison slurps at the bottom,
Their eyes swiveled around the room,

Nearing, nearing, nearing,

And finding

Me.

– CHRIS BRADLEY

Chris Bradley is a senior English major at the UO. His work has appeared in the Oregon Voice Quarterly, and the Clark Honors College Creative Arts Journal.

n o r a

the northern hemisphere
 could bring out the worst in
 her, but gave birth to us:
 those with gill, scale, and fin.
 we were merely drifters
 always found wandering
 in the pelagic zone,
 with no lungs for breathing.
 essential to our niche,
 we did serve a purpose.
 unable to resist
 each other and currents.
 together we would drift
 always found side by side,
 in the shallow waters,
 or the foam of the tide.
 Then, surface winds took hold,
 we could see cumulus
 clouds in the distance, not
 what was in store for us.
 and i saw what looked like
 the folds of a meringue.
 clouds of whipping cream formed
 what was a hurricane.
 Nora took you that day
 and stopped not only your
 heart, but mine too, when i
 couldn't find you on shore.
 though we'd never know her
 name, we'd know her better
 than anyone who was
 upset by the weather.

— SAMMY SHAW

Sammy Shaw is a sophomore Humanities major. Her work has also appeared in The Pierian Spring



joyce maddeaux
look!
carved linoleum print
14 in. x 22 in.

Joyce Maddeaux is a senior majoring in Art, with minors in Community Arts and Special Education. She has previously exhibited work at the Strange Folk Art Festival in St. Louis, Portland Community College, and at the Women Student Art Exhibit in Portland.

the fate of feathers

M. K. BANSMER

She never wondered when it was outside of the garden. There was no time for her in the unceasing sunshine.

The crone wandered through her flock, watching the birds pecking at grain and worms in the soil, and observed the stragglers. She adjusted her square glasses on the bridge of her nose and tapped the dirt with a cane to stir up the huddling cluster. Time would come when each would be ready for their purposes. She leaned forward on her crutches, her body bracketed by their solid metallic frames, and sighed. The males puffed up their splendid tails as a drab brown peahen bobbed her head nearby. The plumage rose into shimmering green-gold-teal fans; a thousand eyes seemed to stare at the woman. She plucked a feather and floated it over the hedge down to the blue-green world below.

It was the job of her scrutinizing eye to catch them before they weakened and fell into the dust, dead from exhaustion and the sheer weight of bearing their destinies within. When a peafowl took to squatting, the crone would tap its legs with a willow switch. If the peacock lifted heavily and kept moving, the crone was satisfied. If the bird sank further into the ground of the farmyard, it was time to take it out of the assembly and bear it to Valhalla to squabble with Raven, whose black wings were painted last, after all color had been exhausted on Peacock; or to Paradise, to let the fork-tongued Serpent into Eden.

Her old bones did not relish the daily duty, but her sense of pride would not release the work to younger bodies. Her eye was well versed in the precise shift in carriage that came upon each bird before the critical moment. It took centuries to learn such skill, and she had destroyed three apprentices during their trials with her demands. None were willing to take the post now. Should she die and a green hand tend these flocks, countless birds would burst, killed by their cargo, rather than be safely delivered. But she looked to the cloudless, empty sky and knew she would never die. She would never decay as her herd did, for as long as they abided their fates, so would she bear hers.

Thunder clanged distantly, and the crone looked over her flock to see a peacock tilting to one side, struggling under an invisible burden. She bent carefully to clutch the peacock in the crook of her arm. She waddled with the bird to the edge of her garden, forced to shift her package from arm to arm to support herself with the cane as she walked. Her withered, dry-paper hands caressed the silken blue head, then, she tossed the creature into the air beyond her arbor gate. The bird called in irritation and surprise, disappearing in a blue-green flash, gone to some arrogant goddess or blundering god, to be made a present to a prophet or a paramour. Her duty discharged for the untold time that eternal day, she moved back toward her congregation.

Grooming feathers, tossing out grain, humming a tune between her ancient teeth. She will wait for the sound of thunder, sucking dryly on her bottom lip and scratching the pebbled dark dirt with her metal cane. Time will flow around her, and she will wait.

M.K. Bansmer is a senior majoring in English. She has had poetry published in the Clark Honors College Chapman Journal, as well as academic papers in NOMAD. This is her first published piece of fiction.



chelsea pero
whirlpool of passion
acrylic
20 in. x 16 in.

Chelsea Pero is a freshman majoring in Art.

