Anthology

Volume 14
A Publication of Tarleton State University
Anthology
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Students enrolled at Tarleton State University are invited to submit their work for publication consideration online at: www.tarleton.edu/~anthology.

Anthology accepts work throughout the calendar year and is published annually in April.
Creative Arts Day Speaker
Tony Hoagland
One True Thing .......................................................... v

Anthology 14
Editors' Choice Award .................................................. vii

John Cameron
Fire and Wine ................................................................. 1
The Forest Floor .............................................................. 1
Front Range Creek for the Soul ......................................... 2

Morgan Christensen
A Dream ................................................................. 3
Night ................................................................. 4
While the Animals Sleep .................................................. 5
Window ................................................................. 6

Robert Daigle
The Rest of the Story .................................................. 7

Tessa Reynolds
Stephenville, TX ......................................................... 13
Highway Home ............................................................ 13
Ridin' Fence ................................................................. 14

Josh Davis
Oath ................................................................. 15
Rebirth ........................................................................ 24
Tracks ................................................................. 25

Marsha Decker
Blue ................................................................. 26
The Garden ................................................................. 27
The Night ................................................................. 28

Minnisha P. DeGrate
Caught in the Midst .................................................... 30
Deep ................................................................. 30

Vivian Dennison
Crowding Indigo .......................................................... 31
Fossil Record ............................................................... 31
# Anthology 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math's Gaffed</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poets Like to Moralize</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Summer Heartbeat</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Dulock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I See</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine (Katy) Thompson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And What Alice Saw</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet of Grass</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arielle Duncan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.W. Gardner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow Call</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tune Up</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Wright</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Project, Untitled</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Garrett</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhapsody in Black and White</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Gibson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 a.m.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Say No</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Voice</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Process</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strange Emotion</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Can’t Stop a Texas Tragedy</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad Morgan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth K.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arielle Duncan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for Tears</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen A. Zeiler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazos Reflections</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Lanting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Place</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen A. Zeiler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset on Manitou Beach</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhombic Expression</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Summer Storm</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forefathers Remembered</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Michael Cassidy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate Keeper of Savage Creek, The Savage Gulf, TN</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perplexed, Piney River, TN</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Protection, Green River, KY</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anthology 14

Contents

Kari Lanting
 Prince .................................................. 59

Melody Kennedy
 Scratch and Sniff Coffee ............................ 60

Sandra Wright
 Little Girl ............................................. 60

Cassandra Thompson
 Guarding the Ice Chest ............................. 61
 Surfer .................................................. 61

John Cameron
 End of the World Party .............................. 62

Joshua Fagner
 Peace in Nothing ...................................... 62

Jenna Murray
 The Mystic’s Eye ...................................... 63
 As Cold as You ....................................... 63

Rebecca Garrett
 The Day the Boats Came In ........................ 64

Sandra Wright
 Madre .................................................... 64

Colleen A. Zeiler
 Lancer Ferry Crossing ............................... 65

John Michael Cassidy
 Ecofusion, Beaman Park, TN ....................... 65

James W. Gray, II
 Chains of Bondage .................................... 66

Melanie Haas
 The Painted Woman ................................... 68

Kari Lanting
 Quiet and Trust is Our Strength .................. 76

John Michael Cassidy
 Not Happy .............................................. 76

Lauren Hall
 Happy Cat ............................................. 77
 Sammy .................................................. 78

Devyn Hallmark
 Illusive .................................................. 79

D’Leesa Keys
 Paper ..................................................... 80

Cassandra Thompson
 Uncle Billy ............................................. 83
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katherine (Katy) Thompson</td>
<td>Watching and Waiting</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Mason</td>
<td>Bound</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lilith</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>London: Day 1</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[There is a lost alternative]</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Life too Full</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonnet I</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within the Mirror's Face</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Morgan</td>
<td>The Artist's Glove</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chai Read-Walsh</td>
<td>Do Not Be So Eager</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tessa Reynolds</td>
<td>Forever I Do</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piece of My Heart</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi Roberts</td>
<td>Dear Jane</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanette M. Rogers</td>
<td>A Moment, An Eternity: an excerpt</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin McClure</td>
<td>My Dad the Cowboy</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Sims</td>
<td>Trying to Explain a Rancher</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On the Subject of Humanity</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paola's Response</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassandra Thompson</td>
<td>Intrigue</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Paige Wright</td>
<td>Finger Painting</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gentle Cast, Endless Dome</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Wept Because I Had No Claws</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Pretty Cake</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[There is a tomb where black birds sit]</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valley Storm</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors</td>
<td></td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
<td>Index 1 - Index 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emily Dickinson is often quoted for saying that a real poem is recognizable because it blows off the roof of your head. But I like better another of her beautiful sentences: “Art is a house that tries to be haunted.” What that statement implies is that a good writer must know something of carpentry—how to build a house, hang a door, install windows. Then, even after the work has been well-done, the house may not be haunted in the way of true art. You need the skill and the hard work even to achieve a respectable failure!

Even so, the writing of poems is remarkably democratic. I have often seen the greenest of students produce an amazing poem in one sitting, a poem I envy.

It doesn’t take a professor or a trip to Italy to write a poem—it takes some joy in language and a certain kind of personal intensity. Poetry is always, in that sense, going to be an amateur sport, open to the public. My friend Bruce Cohen, who has been writing poems for many years, has the attitude of the great beginner. I have heard him say, “This might be the morning when I am the best poet in America.” And he is right. It might be. The journal you hold in your hands might contain the best poem in America.

Personally, the poems I like most are those that combine the world of experience with some additional display of the magic of language. And I believe in the poem as something that makes contact with the truth—not that there is one truth. In my own writing, if I can get one true thing somewhere into a poem, I feel that I have paid the rent. When I say true, I mean accurate, precise, perceptive, or imaginative, and connected to the world we inhabit and recognize in common. Poems have something to teach us. Sometimes it is just to remind us of pleasure, of the delightful power of imagination. Here are some examples of my
favorite lines by favorite poets—lines that display, alternately, truth and delight:

“To live is to build a ship and a harbor at the same time. And to finish the harbor long after the ship has sunk.”
—Yehuda Amichai

The moon is Hamlet on a motorcycle coming down a dark road.
—Richard Brautigan

It’s a difficult world. The thought frightens us that this planet with all its darkened geese was created not for union but for separation.
—Robert Bly

It was a November night of wind. Leaves tore past the window. God had the book of life open at PLEASURE and was holding the pages down with one hand because of the wind at the door.
—Ann Carson
Anthology 14
Editors’ Choice Award

Our Editors’ Choice Awards honor three individuals who have contributed outstanding works to this volume. The range of talent demonstrated by these students exemplifies the breadth of creativity at Tarleton State University.

**OUTSTANDING ARTIST:**
Colleen A. Zeiler

**OUTSTANDING POET:**
Vivian Dennison
*With special recognition for “The Summer Heartbeat”*

**MOST DIVERSE CONTRIBUTOR:**
John Cameron
*For contributions in poetry, prose, and art.*
I introduced myself to which they
Pulled up a chair
As the fire cracked through the crisp night air

The stars begged to shine through
The thick leaves and smoke
Cool, high mountain, Monti-Le Sal breeze

Three days of music
Dancing, dirt and lost time
Seven traveling souls in the mountains of fire and wine

The forest floor
The forest floor sponges beneath each
Step of his foot
To a plain on a hillside where later he slept
And took notes of the sweet sullen
Whispers, he lay and waited
As the grass sprouted leaves and fallen trees turned to moss
The cloud crowd signaled shade, light, shade
And through it all the young man lay
I wasn’t homeless. In the back of the pickup I had plenty of room to sleep at night. Used and dirty backpacking gear was piled to one side of the bed with enough room for a sleeping pad on the other. The truck was nestled discretely in a neighborhood just below the mountains. The Flatirons. I rode my bicycle around town and left the truck until I would need it later that night. Boulder, Colorado is situated just below, overlooked gracefully by the Flatirons. The endless bike paths throughout the small town led me to old and new friends—lunch at the creek side Tea House, then a swim in the same creek. In the park the sun warmed the grass and everyone who lay on it. There was a small breeze and it felt great.

Later that day the sun went down like dinner while I pedaled around with a group of drunk and merry cyclists. The moon lit our heads while lamps lit our tires, neither of which fell upon the truck nestled discretely in the neighborhood just below the Flat Irons. “Sun Mountain Pub, on Pearl,” I said. “I’ll meet you there at 10:00.” Laura lived just down the street. I wouldn’t have to wait very long. The bike was locked to a post by the pub, but my feet were propped on the arm of a bench at the corner of the street, the one bench with the day’s newspaper left to be re-read. My small backpack was just below me when a lady in heels and a black dress walked up with leftovers; “Do you want some soup,” she asked me. “It’s tortilla soup, it’s still hot, I just left the restaurant and, I had this leftover.”

“Oh, no thanks, really I’m fine; I’m just waiting for a friend.”
A Dream

a blowing hurricane carried high seas that devoured the bay, sweeping those in its path onto a deserted island. where amongst palm trees, both tribes suffer casualties. cleansing wounds in crystal waters after the storm had passed the waves break on my knees, pushing me further into the dark ocean unexpectedly, 3 lions appear rushing in my direction to bat the sea foam with their heavy paws as it dissolves into the shells and sand beneath our toes. but soon, more emerge from the dense jungle and promenade along the beach surrounding me with their phallic teeth bared—

a coarse-haired tail whips against the small of my back that sends a rough chill down my spine and shoots open my eyes—

I yawn and wiggle my toes, bemused by the grit of sand in between them.
Night

There’s something about the way her contours fall onto the deadening landscape to create the shadows and sketches that accentuates such bleak scenery with beauty. She makes you appreciate a darkness that fairly illuminates faces and playfully hides the man in the moon or the falling stars, who weep to be seen. There’s no need to shine like day; she knows many covet the night.
the deep red eyes of Irene
tolled like bells
during the apocalypse sunset
carnival freaks in the streets
two-stepping with forgotten whores,
jazz-filled piano pimps
drank their way to Scotland
Irene danced in hazy air
under the spell of moon shine
she screamed “kill the cat”
to golden brothers and sisters
who knew she didn’t mean it
I watched through the window
to see glaze poured over a slate sky,
leaving abstractions of clouds
to contrast the swaying red and brown hills.
You always walked with your head in the clouds,
draggin’ your feet hard on the ground,
watching crisp autumn leaves fall below,
like grains of sand through an hourglass.
The rain began to fall sideways,
forcing the rising creek to swell,
its small banks determined to make their way to the sea.
I watched through the peephole as a giant wave
crashed onto my doorstep and seemed to stop the rain.
The swirling waters receded,
delivering you, balled up and shaken,
beneath my windowsill.
This is the tale of which no one has ever spoken; it is of a brief encounter, a life-long prayer fulfilled, and the power of unquestionable love and faith.

Atesteles was a Roman citizen, raised in Bethlehem, and at one time, the local smith. He was a frugal man as well as a very devout Jew. His entire life, he had prayed to God that he might live long enough to see the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Promised One come to save His children as the temple scrolls had long foretold. However, in the twilight of his life, that dream began to fade. Atesteles’ body just did not have that many more days left in it. It was a sad truth; yet, he had come to accept it. Atesteles had lived a long and rewarding life, full of love and filled with experiences. However, time had begun to pass him by. His wife had long passed, and he had never had children of his own. In his prime, Atesteles had stood a full head above his neighbor; his body measured over four cubits. (In that day, a cubit was the measurement of length from the nose to the forearm or the forearm to the tip of the longest finger, or in modern terms, a cubit measures roughly 18 inches.) Old age had bowed his back and deprived him of his stature. The hair on his head was long gone, but he still sported a massive, curly white beard that grew to the middle of his barrel chest.

One night after he fell asleep, he had a dream unlike any other in his life. An angel came to him and said, “Atesteles, you have found great favor with your God Jehovah and he has a single command for you. You are to make a cloak of solid gold, two cubits by four cubits. It is for a new king, and you must design it so!”

Atesteles kept his eyes to the ground and whispered, “Messenger of God, I would do as He commands but my hands are old and useless. I am no longer a smith and this task is beyond my meager abilities.”
“It does not matter!” the angel retorted in a thunderous voice that shook him to the bone. “You are to do as He commands. Moreover, time is of the essence. You must complete the cloak within nine new moons. You are to work from dawn to dusk six days a week. However, your God demands that you continue to honor the Sabbath.”

“But…” the old man began, almost in fear of his life for interrupting the messenger of God.

“There are no buts!” the angel demanded. “You will do as your Lord God commands!” With a resounding cacophony of sound, the angel disappeared.

The next morning, Atesteles began his arduous task. First, he sold all of his belongings, save the clothes on his back, a small blanket in which to sleep each night, and his small smith shop in order to purchase the necessary gold. The old man even sold his home of over fifty years to help provide the needed funds. He bought the ore from several vendors in minute amounts in order not to raise any questions as to what he was about to undertake. Then, with a short prayer, he began to work. Hands, old and useless, and fingers, bent in directions that should never have been, made the undertaking excruciatingly painful, but he never complained, not once, not even to himself. Day by day, week by week, the cloak began to take shape.

Meanwhile, half a country away, a young woman named Mary, aware that she was now with child, began work on a birthing blanket. She would weave this blanket out of lamb’s wool whenever there was an available supply, and with anything else that she could use when there was not. Mary had decided to make it two cubits by four cubits, the size most often used in her country. When she completed the blanket, she would fold it twice, once in each direction in order to keep the newborn baby warm on those chilly desert nights. She spent whatever time that she could on the project but with a new child on the way, there was so much else to do. Mary finished her soon-to-be infant’s blanket the night before she arrived in Bethlehem.

Finally, after nine cycles of the moon, Atesteles finished the golden cloak. He had painstakingly fashioned each link of gold
into a perfect circle, less than a pomegranate seed wide. The
smith had soldered each link to the next one in such a way that
nary a seam showed. Furthermore, although the cloak was
eight cubits in area, it weighed less than an equal quantity of
sheepskin. His body ached as he carefully wrapped the garment
in cloth in order to protect what was easily his finest work. It
bothered him to think such thoughts, being the humble man that
he was. However, never in his life had he seen a finer article of
clothing, nor of armor, anywhere, not even in Rome itself. The
old man dragged his exhausted body against one of the walls of
his small shop and was quickly asleep.

That night, the angel of God returned to him. “Atesteles, the
God of Abraham and the twelve tribes of Israel again smiles
upon you. Without hesitation or complaint, you have done as
your God has commanded you. This very morrow, as the sun
falls below the horizon, you will follow the first star that appears
in the evening sky. It will lead you to a new and powerful king.
You will offer him this gift, built of your own hands.”

Atesteles answered in a whisper, his face prostrate with the
ground, “I will do as my Lord commands me. But, may I be
permitted one question?”

“You may ask,” the angel responded.

“How am I to know this new king?” the old man queried.

“Follow the star and you will know,” the angel explained and
with a crack of thunder, disappeared.

Early the next morning, Atesteles took the little money that he
had left and went to shop for new clothes. He could not call on a
king in the rags that he wore. However, the funds that remained
to him were only enough but to buy a worn shawl with which he
hoped would help cover what he considered rags.

All too soon, the appointed time arrived and the sun began
to dip below the horizon. As promised, a new star appeared in
the evening sky, pointing towards the west. “How can that be?”
he pondered. “There is nothing in that direction where a new
king would be staying.” He was right. He was on the edge of
the town and the direction that he was heading would quickly
take him to the fields where the shepherds tended their flocks. However, he did as ordered and followed the star.

Shortly, he arrived at the edge of the town and all that remained before the empty countryside was a small refuge built into the side of a hill. Normally, domesticated animals would find shelter during a storm in places like this; however, this night a young man and woman huddled in its small area of protection. The man was stoking a tiny fire in one corner, and the woman was cradling something in her arms. Atesteles heard the diminutive cry of a newborn child. He wondered why any parent would have such a little one out in the elements.

As he watched, the young mother placed the child in a makeshift crib, hardly more than a few bits of wood nailed together. In that moment, light from the star brightly illuminated the little child. “How could this be the king I seek?” he pondered quietly. He approached the family and smiled as the young mother covered her baby with what appeared to be a hand woven blanket. Without a word, he removed the cloak from its protective wrapping and gently draped it across the child’s crib.

As he did so, starlight reflected from the tiny ringlets of gold so bright that he had to protect his eyes from the blinding glare. At that same moment, he heard the cry of ten thousand voices singing out in unison—no words, only the pure sounds of infinite jubilation. As the brightness faded, the old man saw that his cloak of gold and the child’s blanket had somehow fused together as one. Furthermore, the symbiosis of the two far outshone either of the original pieces. The new blanket, for lack of a better word, appeared to be woven of golden strands, each thinner than a human hair. As the light breeze passed over the blanket, it rustled as if lighter than air.

The old man knew that before this night, never in the history of the world, had anything like this existed. Atesteles fell to his knees, his face touching the ground as tears welled up in his eyes. Only now, did he begin to understand that he was truly in front of a king; the king he had prayed for all the days of his life. This was the promised one, the son of God, lying in a manger inches from his touch.
Without a word, Atesteles rose and left. Nothing that he could say would even begin to convey the thoughts and feelings churning within him. He had followed God’s command and Yahweh had answered by fulfilling his life-long wish. That very night, the old smith passed away. For years after his death, townspeople would tell the tale that even in death, Atesteles’ face shown of unimaginable peace and joy.

Now, Mary had no idea what to think of this gift that a stranger had given to her child. However, it had been a gift, given out of love and she treasured it throughout her child’s life. One thing bothered her though. As her son Jesus, grew older, small bits of cloth would fall from the blanket, but not so much as a single speck of the gold did. Then, as her son began to teach across Israel, more and more scraps of cloth fell from the blanket until there the blanket was almost entirely gold. Sometimes, it saddened her when she realized that the gift of a stranger would outlast her first gift to her child.

One day, Mary’s worst fears came to pass. Her son was arrested, beaten, and then sentenced to die on the cross. She could hardly believe what was happening. The morning of the crucifixion, two of her son’s disciples came to dissuade her from going. However, she was adamant. She brought the golden blanket with her, hoping that it would bring some tranquility during this chaos. She watched in silence as he hung from the cross, and her body shuddered in unison with his as he breathed his last.

The lines of silent tears, mixed with dust, etched her face as she followed her son’s lifeless body to the tomb. After the men had carefully placed his body inside the tomb, she stepped inside to pay her last respects. She pulled the blanket from beneath her robes and gently placed it over the still body. However, the gold’s luster had faded, and the blanket looked like an old, tarnished, and worthless piece of metal. Mary stared in disbelief at the blanket’s suddenly tattered condition. Nevertheless, it had covered her son at birth, and now it would do the same at his death.
Now, on the day following the Sabbath, Mary heard that someone had opened the tomb. Fearing the worst, she hurried to her son’s burial site. As she entered the cave, she cried in disbelief. Her son’s body was gone. Moreover, so was the tarnished blanket. She wailed in frustration as she searched the tomb for any clues.

An angel appeared before her. “Mary, why are you crying? All you would find in this place is death, and your son is very much alive. Leave this place at once and seek out your son.”

The next forty days, Mary spent as much time as possible with her son. At the back of her mind, she continued to wonder what had ever happened to the tarnished blanket. However, her son was alive and that was the only thing that was truly important to her.

Finally, one morning, Mary’s son whispered to her, “Mother, now it is time for me to return to my Father. Do not weep; today is a day of great joy. Remember me while you remain in this world; speak of me often. Anything you need, ask for it in prayer and I will provide it for you. And there will come a day when my Father will return you to me.”

Jesus walked over to His disciples, spoke a few words, and then raised his arms into the sky. Slowly, He began to ascend into the heavens. As Mary watched, she noticed something hanging from her son’s shoulders, wafting on the morning’s breeze. It was the golden cloak, restored to its original regal splendor, shining with the intensity of ten thousand suns.

Suddenly, it dawned on Mary, the real significance of the golden cloak and the birthing blanket, the two miraculously made into one. One part was of royalty, of kings, something beyond this mortal coil and the other part was of the Earth, of man. Then, with no way of understanding how, the two pieces fused together and make a one of a kind, priceless treasure—the allegory that it represented. In addition, how a gift, given of the heart, can provide immeasurable tranquility, assurance, and love. She smiled as she watched her son... and her God, disappear into the heavens.

Now, you know the rest of the story.
Anthology 14

Tessa Reynolds

Highway Home

Tessa Reynolds
Stephenville, TX
Tessa Reynolds

Ridin' Fence
He pulled down the brim of his hat to shield his eyes against the bright glare of the evening sun as he rode toward the silhouetted town up ahead. His cargo slung and tied behind him. He took a deep drag from his cigarette, finishing it off before flicking the remnants to the side. He exhaled a cloud of smoke that swirled around his face like a foggy veil before dissipating into the dry air. Other than the sound of hoofs against the hardpan, the evening was silent, the town up ahead just beginning to settle down.

He entered the town, its name declared on an old sign that arched over the main road, but that was of no meaning to the man. Names didn’t matter much to him anymore, just locations and destinations. It was just a stop on his continuous path in this region, nothing more.

Every now and then someone would call out to the man, and he would respond with a nod. He brought his horse to a stop and lifted his gaze, pushing his hat up slightly, his eyes scanning the building in front of him. The sound of boots on hardwood brought his attention to the door as a stout man came out to greet him. His boots shone bright with a fresh polish and his jeans just slightly faded. A leather vest was worn over a crisp white shirt, and the gold star that was pinned to that vest was polished to a high sheen. Except for his neatly waxed moustache, which curled upwards at the ends, his face had the smooth, fresh from-the-barber look.

All of this was a stark contrast to his own appearance. Boots were a faded tan, scuffed and scarred, his jeans thread bare. A nearly ragged duster covered his shirt, which was the no-color of dirt and sweat. His hat had seen better days. The only things that shone on the man, besides the gleam of sweat on his dusty brow, were his guns. Twin revolvers, polished, cleaned and freshly oiled, sat, always ready, in their holsters which hung loosely against his thighs.
“Mornin’ Van.” Came the sheriff’s greeting, a sly smile spreading across his face. “What brings you here today?” Van reached a calloused hand behind his back and gave a tug on a loose coil of rope. His cargo fell to the ground with a solid thud. There, lying in a mix of dust and fresh horse manure was a man, tied at the ankles and wrists.

The sheriff turned around, his eyes began to scan over the few remaining wanted posters nailed to the building. Casually he reached out and plucked one off the wall. “William Macnair. Wanted for two bank robberies, a train heist and a fair number of murders as well. Keep this up and there won’t be no more bounties for the rest to hunt.” The sheriff then walked over to the body and gave a nudge with the tip of his boot, a groan escaped from the prone man’s lips. “Alive I see, as usual. You know the poster does say ‘Dead or Alive’, you don’t always have to bring ‘em back still kickin’. In fact you’d save me the trouble of hangin’ the man myself.” He took a deep breath and the copper buttons on his shirt seemed to moan in protest against the pressure. “Oh, well. Shouldn’t be complainin’ I guess.” He reached a hand inside his vest pocket and pulled out a gold pocket watch, his dark eyes twitched nervously from Van’s face and that of the watch. “You mind lockin’ him up for me; I’ve got some business elsewhere at the moment.” He lifted a set of keys from his belt and tossed them to Van, “Just leave ‘em on my desk on your way out. Much obliged.” With that he headed off in what seemed to be the direction of the stables.

Van slid off the saddle and tied the reins to a nearby post, patting the side of his horse’s head as he walked towards the wanted man. He knelt down, slid one arm underneath him and with a powerful jerk he lifted the man up and slung him over his shoulder like a bag of feed. He entered the sheriff’s building, pushing open the door with a dusty boot and marched toward the jail cell. Using the varmint’s head as a lever he pried the iron door open then tossed the man unceremoniously to the floor. His limp body bounced and rolled toward the furthest wall. Van followed and knelt beside the body as he drew forth a large knife from the sheath that was strapped to the back of his belt then
proceeded to cut the ropes that bound the man. Finishing this he left the cell locking the door behind him and headed toward the saloon.

He pushed open the batwing doors, took a seat at the bar, and called for a glass of whiskey. When the glass arrived he downed it in one swallow, the sting of the liquor burned its way through his body and he called for another as he began to roll a cigarette. Van was halfway through his second glass when a drunkard stumbled into him spilling his drink over his jeans. He pushed the man somewhat gently toward the exit and reached for the dirty rag in his pocket. While drying off his crotch he noticed a set of keys hanging from his belt. “Shit.” He muttered as he tossed some money onto the bar and made his way back towards the sheriff’s building.

Again he booted the door open took a few step’s inside then casually tossed the keys onto the large oaken desk, they landed with a loud clank and sent the neat stacks of various papers toppling to the floor. He was going to ignore the mess and head back to the saloon when something in the scattered pile caught his eye. It wasn’t because it was a wanted poster; it was because something seemed familiar about it. Something about that partially hidden face. The eyes. That was it, those dark, crazed eyes. He knew he had seen them before. They haunted his dreams at night.

He tore across the room and grabbed the poster, pulling it free from the clutter. It was him. The man he had been looking for. His mind began to reel, his memories over taking him.

*    *    *

He was suddenly back home at his horse ranch. The setting sun a mix of purples and oranges, the fading light struggling to hold off the night as long as possible. He was making the evening rounds; his wife, Delly, had already rung the dinner bell. He had just decided to cut the rounds short, defeated by the groan of an empty stomach, when he saw him, a lone shadowy figure walking the horizon. Curiosity got the best of him, an
angry stomach growled in protest as he jogged to meet the stranger.

Upon reaching the loner Van saw that there wasn’t much to him at all. He had the skinny and worn look of an overworked and underfed horse. His skin was dried and blistered from overexposure, lips cracked and peeling, his dark eyes had a somewhat crazed look about them, more than likely a side effect of his condition. His clothing, or what could barely be considered clothing, hung loosely off his frame in tattered strips; he didn’t even have a hat. A deep sorrow and pity over took Van, and he offered the stranger his hand, as well as a place to stay and regain his strength.

Days became weeks, and those weeks became months. Delly’s pregnancy was obvious now as the child inside her continued to grow, the doc said it be just a few more months. Damon’s health had improved drastically. His frame had filled out as he regained the muscle he had once lost, though his dark eyes never lost that crazed look. Van never found out how he had ended up like that, he had asked once but Damon couldn’t seem to remember it himself, so Van just left it at that. There some things the mind just wanted to forget.

Over the time Damon had become a close friend to Van. He helped with the ranch and other chores around the house and refused to take any money, arguing that their hospitality was enough. For a while both Van and Delly thought they had a permanent house guest and they couldn’t have been happier. All that soon came to a crashing halt.

Van and Damon were out and around the horse corral. Van was in the process of winter proofing the stables when he heard footsteps coming up behind him. He turned around to see Damon approaching him an axe slung over his shoulder. “Finished chopping wood already? I’m always amazed how quickly—” Before he could finish Damon had swung the axe full force, the blunt end catching Van square in the temple.

Everything went black.

Van woke some time later, he had no idea how long he’d been out, just that the sun was beginning to set again. His mind
was a dense fog; he didn’t know why he was lying in the dirt. Suddenly it came back to him. Damon. He leapt to his feet and staggered as his vision swirled, his head felt as though a blacksmith had lost his anvil and decided to use Van’s head as a replacement. When he was steady enough to move, he ran. He ran as fast as he could, stumbling and falling along the way, but he continued, desperate to get to his house to see Delly. Fear ran through his veins like an icy stream but he refused to give in to it, refused to believe that any harm would come to her. Damon hadn’t harmed her, he knew it. That’s what he kept telling himself.

He reached the backdoor ready to kick it down, but there was no need. The door was already hanging off the hinges, splintered and broken. She’s okay. Delly’s okay, she knows where the guns are. I taught her how to shoot. She’s safe.

He raced into the family room and froze solid. There Delly lay in a pool of crimson, her clothing torn off her body, legs spread wide, her eyes staring blankly at the ceiling, a look of terror etched into her bruised and blood splattered face. And there was the axe, buried deep into her chest. He heard a deafening scream in the distance so loud that his ears began to ring. It was a few seconds before Van realized it was he who was screaming. He fell to his knees and crawled to where she lay, tears streaming down his face creating gullies through the dirt on his cheeks. When he reached her, he gripped the axe and shut his eyes as he pulled it from her body and tossed it aside. He lifted her and held her against his chest.

His mind and body were numb as he spent all night digging a grave for his wife; he buried her in her favorite spot, a small lone hill just outside the corral that overlooked the western horizon. She had loved to sit out there and watch the setting sun. When he finished, he placed two wooden crosses in the ground, one for Delly, the other for his unborn child. Afterward he walked back to his house, no not his house, it wasn’t his anymore. As he entered the family room once again something out of the corner of his eye made him stop, something he failed to notice before. He turned. There on the wall written in blood were the
words “Tag, you’re it”. He walked towards the enigmatic words, and ran his hand lightly over them. ‘You’re it!? What is this!?’, he pounded the wall with his fist. What is this!? again he pounded. Again and again he rammed his fist into the wall, the skin from his knuckles tearing away, boards splintering and cracking from the onslaught. “What does this mean?!” he roared punctuating each word with a hammer of his fist.

Eventually he dropped to his knees in exhaustion, letting the outburst subside before deciding what he was going to do. After a deep breath he got to his feet and began gather up a few necessities, the last of those were his twin revolvers, remnants of a past life he once lived. A life of hunting down men for their crimes, a life he was embracing once again. He held one gently in his hands, his eyes settled over an inscription delicately carved into the barrel. “A man’s life is never mine to take”, it read. He remembered the day he swore that oath, it was the day his father lay at Death’s door his belly riddled with bullet holes. He called Van, who was just barely a man then, to his side, handed him his guns, explained the oath and asked him to swear by it, to live by it. Van did just that. He fully believed in the code, believed in his father’s ideas that justice can be served without the need to take another man’s life. That’s how he lived once. He never shot to kill and always brought the wanted men back alive. A heavy sigh left his lips as he headed back outside. He saddled up a horse; left the stables open, and rode off.

*    *    *

If the wanted poster is here then he must be in the region! Van crumpled up the paper in his hand, tossed it aside and bolted out of the sheriff’s building. In what seemed to be one swift movement he untied the reins leapt on top the saddle and tore out of town, leaving only a trail of swirling dust to mark his passing. For a full day and night he rode hard, stopping only long enough for his horse and himself to rest their bodies. He did not know where he was heading. He only followed the direction his gut told him.

Around evening of the following day he realized, or finally acknowledged, where his destination lie. Just up ahead the ranch
came into view. A sick feeling crept through his stomach soon followed by a raging fury as he saw the silhouette of the two crosses up on the lone hill. He brought his horse to a stop about twenty yards from the empty shell of a house and dismounted. There he was, standing in the doorway, cigarette held loosely between his lips. Waiting.

An evil smile parted the man’s face; Van could feel those crazed eyes looking him over. “So glad you could make it partner. It sure has been a long time.” He took a step toward Van. “I’d knew you’d come.”

“Damon, your time has come to an end.” The gunslinger spoke; his rough voice brought the other to a halt.

“An ‘end’ you say?” the other laughed as he leaned his shoulder against a wooden beam that was one of many holding up the overhang for the porch. “Now is that the man I’ve heard so many tales about? What happened to the bounty hunter who refused to take another man’s life no matter what? Are you so quick to break your oath?” Splinters rained down over the other as the beam he leaned on seemed to explode as all six bullets from Van’s revolver tore it in two. A maniacal laugh erupted from Damon . “You missed me.”

“I wasn’t aiming for you.” Van reloaded. I should kill him!! He deserves death! But what about your oath? To hell with the oath! He murdered my wife! My unborn child! But what about your oath? What about it?!

“What’s taking you so long? Aren’t you going to kill me? It’s been how many years since I raped and murdered your Delly?” Six more shots rang out in a split second, one just grazed the others cheek, he reloaded. “Did you know she moaned like a whore?” Six more shots. This time one grazing each shoulder. A slight grimace of pain flickered across his face. He gave a long low whistle and a shadow of a larger man appeared in the doorway. Van recognized him immediately, the sheriff. You mind lockin’ him up for me; I’ve got some business elsewhere...That last sentence echoed in his mind, he must of left town that second to beat him here.
“I see you have a new friend, Sheriff. How long have you two been working together?”

“Not too long actually, Van. Damon came on by one day. Said he’d had a bone to pick with you and offered a hefty sum for my help. Although, truth-be-told, didn’t take too much to get you here after all, just a carefully placed wanted poster. My idea actually. Sorry to see things end this way, Van,” he rubbed his greedy hands together, “but as they say ‘money makes—”

“Does anyone ever tell you,” Damon interrupted as he pointed his revolver at the back of the sheriff’s head and a cocked it, “that you talk too much.” He pulled the trigger, the sheriff’s forehead exploded and he dropped to the ground.” Van tried to fire but Damon already fired a second time, the bullet catching Van in his left forearm, his revolver flew from his hand, blood poured freely. He made to draw his other gun but wasn’t quick enough, Damon had already fired a third shot, pain exploded through his right shoulder as the bullet went straight through.

Damon sprinted forward and planted a boot deep into his abdomen driving the air from his lungs and sending him sprawling to the ground. He stood over him, raised his leg and stomped down hard with his heel. Van could feel his ribs crack beneath the pressure. Damon then placed the smoking barrel against Van’s forehead burning a circle into his weathered brow; he heard the click of the hammer being drawn back, heard Damon’s demented laughter. Images of his life flashed in his mind’s eye. NO! This isn’t how it ends! He was suddenly aware of familiar pressure against his back, in a desperate attempt he slowly reached his good hand behind his back, drew forth his knife, then quickly buried it into Damon’s leg, the razor-like blade piercing his skin and flesh as it entered one side of his calf and out the other. Van then kicked his foot up connecting boot with chin, blood and spit rained over them both as Damon staggered backwards spitting out several teeth. Van drew his remaining revolver and fired once, twice, three times, each bullet hitting its mark, the first blew a hole through Damon’s hand, disarming him, the other two piercing each shoulder; the force of the shots rocked him back on his heels. Van leapt to his feet
and ignoring the throbbing pain he planted a shoulder into the staggering man’s chest, knocking him to the ground.

Van walked to where his wife’s killer lay, his left arm hanging limply at his side, his broken ribs making each breath a painful struggle. A fiery rage began to burn through his trembling body. He jerked the man up by his collar and pressed his revolver hard against the other’s temple, a stray ray of light briefly illuminated the inscription on the barrel. A primal scream tore its way from his throat, he spun the revolver around and swung with all his might, smashing the butt end against the other’s head knocking him out cold. “Tag.”

Van collapsed to the ground, his body crying out in pain. Not knowing if he had to strength to stand he gave a sharp whistle, even that minimal effort sent new pains stabbing through him, and his horse began to trot toward where he sat. He reached out a hand and grasping the saddle he pulled himself to his feet. Rummaging through his saddle bags he finally found the strips of linen and antiseptics. He allowed himself to collapse again and began doctoring his wounds, those that he could treat anyway, then treated Damon’s as well before tying him up.

After making certain Damon was secure he made his way slowly toward that one lone hill. There he sat watching the evening sun, tears traveling down his rough and lined face as he reached up and lifted his hat from his head, hanging it on the larger of the two crosses. He ran a weathered hand through his graying hair and stretched before he lay down on his back. He reached into his pouch, took out some paper and tobacco and rolled himself a cigarette, lit it and inhaled as deeply as he could, wincing with the effort, letting the smoke fill his lungs before exhaling it out in a swirling cloud. A slight smile crossed his lips, for the first time in a long time he felt at peace.
Bright spark flickers
In the dark
Igniting dry souls

Flames catch
Illuminating

Burning passion springs
Forth
Renewing that which was decaying

Life
Reborn through fire
Cold night air filling his house
Shivers traveling up his spine
Breath fogging before his eyes
It was cold out on the tracks.

Dogs howling somewhere outside
Screams and cries fill the night
Dead silence follows soon after
It was terrifying out on the tracks.

Footsteps sounded outside his boxcar
Flashlights cut through the dark
Uniformed men toss him outside
It was tough out on the tracks.

Train speeding down the rails
Warm air filling his lungs
Bright landscapes racing by
It was freedom out on the tracks.
Blue flowers with heavy heads drooping low
Petals falling onto a barren landscape

Birds fly toward home on broken wings
Feathers caressing the air with gilded whispers

Desert winds blow across shifting grains of time
Voices fade with their cries echoing through empty halls

Thirsty soil has only the gift of life to drink
How it hungers for the cleansing silver touch of rain

In the dark, the moon hides her face behind clouds of white
Tears of loss running down, washing away the hope inside
A haunting melody, soft as thistledown, drifts out through the garden and glides across my fevered soul. My breath catches in my throat as the memories it invokes rise like mist to swirl playfully around me. My hand reaches out, trying to brush them away only to hear the echoes of laughter in my mind at my efforts. I close my eyes as the memories lead me back in time, my heart aching inside from a journey it’s traveled too long. The moonlight glistens upon the purity of a single tear as it slips down my face.

My breath deepens and a tremulous smile parts my lips when a dark figure slowly comes into view. His eyes sparkle like jet in the bright moonlight, deep mysterious pools of time flecked with gold. I shudder to myself as a breeze flirts with his ebony hair, blowing it across his brow in heavy silken waves. My ears strain as if to hear the slightest whisper of his voice come to me across the lonely space and I tremble at the thought of my name on his lips. The apparition holds his hand out to me and I dig my nails into my palms at the memory of those long fingers upon my skin. A soft gasp escapes me and the sound releases me from his spell.

My thoughts are all I have left of him, and I cry out for the release from this living pain. However, no answer comes to soothe my spirit; no answer comes to show me the way home. I wander the halls of this hell alone, trapped in a world I can see but no longer feel. All that is left is shadow, searching for hope and leaving me far behind.
The curtains move gently as the soft breeze of the night blows warm across my skin. I toss and turn, moaning in my sleep, running from the unknown terror that keeps after me, never giving me a moment’s peace. Suddenly I awaken and feel his presence in my room, though the darkness hides his form from my sight. I can feel his willpower washing over me in a cold deep wave, holding me captive, unable to flee from its terrible weight. He glides closer, and I see the eyes of the beast glowing like the embers of a flame—captivating, hypnotic, and calling to me. They burn a path straight to my soul and glimpse the hurt, broken spirit I thought I had hidden so well. “Soon” he murmurs with a voice that sounds like everything and nothing I’ve heard before. Like a puppet under its master’s spell, my body obeys some unspoken command in my mind. I slip out of my bed and walk softly to stand before him. He reaches out, and his fingers trace the column of my throat, and I shiver like a leaf caught in the first chill of fall. His animal smell is deep and primal, so full of things I dare not name. I inhale deeply letting it fill my senses as the beast moves to envelope me and pull me to the floor, his darkness spreading with leathery wings around my trembling form. My head falls back at just a whisper of his voice as his breath flows liquid upon my skin. My heart is beating fast in fear of what is yet to come and knowing that I am helpless to stop it. My body jumps and then I slowly close my eyes as I welcome the feel of his fangs sinking deep into my throat, at long last releasing all the pain and anguish from the deep pool within. Tears of relief slide down my face like silver drops of blood to mingle with my hair. My body suddenly arches up into his dark embrace, his chuckle at my surrender echoing through the haunted corridors of my mind. He moves quickly, and a silent scream fills my throat as he impales my body upon his shaft, filling me and consuming me with that horrible familiar agony. His fangs slowly drain me as he masters my body, every
hated move driving me further and further away from myself. My vision blurs as I feel my soul start to leave, its tattered pieces drained bit by bit. I softly gasp as I feel the sudden flood of his release. The suffering has finally ended and a gentle smile is upon my lips at the vision behind my sightless eyes. With a lover’s kiss, he slips back into the night, leaving the shell of my empty body behind. My soul is now free to fly, high above the clouds under a wide blue sky.
Caught in the Midst

Caught in the midst of shoulds and should nots
Honest needs and my heart’s true desire
I feel so alone, why?
Is it because my every beginning always has to end?
Or that at times like these I can’t even find comfort in a friend...
How can one understand the emptiness that your absence has caused, unless they’ve felt it?
You’ve missed out on my whole life, that I can’t forget.
Am I just supposed to turn the other check and pretend?
No I refuse to do that, what type of message would that send?
That it’s ok for the person that makes up half of you to walk out of your life, miss it all
And still be able to come back in, to give them a chance to do it AGAIN
This can’t be right my thoughts are so scattered right now, and I’m supposed to get through this, HOW?

Deep

Emotions run a lot deeper than most minds will ever think
Right when I feel I’m in control like quick sand I sink
My dark past that lies behind haunts me until I’m weak

Everyday I walk around fully covered in a mask
Some say that trials come but they don’t always last
But it has been all my life and the pain has yet to pass

If when I look back all I see is pain
And in the present drowned in rain
Then how am I supposed to hope for change?
Crowding Indigo

I’m this other hue;
Strange, but not untrue.
My flashy stripe reclines
With all the other lines,
Hailing red and blue
But not between the two;
Yellow doesn’t see
Affinity for me.
I’m odd; for all I know
I’m crowding indigo.

Fossil Record

There, repeated in sandstone stripes:
A riddle of ages,
A knock on the record,
A keeper of hush.
I’m not sure how many bones
I’ve let settle in that silt of tears,
Of wrung hands, of neatly
Folded-refolded tissues.
I wish you would move
Against my fault, shift
Your scars lengthwise and down.
Let’s find a rise from opening air
To the calcified veins
Of our strata.
Math’s gaffed, in steeplechase cross-stitch,
Zebra-striped, stifling anomalies,
Canted digits giggling, heckling
Vectors pointing fingers, obtuse
Angles spread wide, mock-beckoning.

Math’s gauche, like expecting a voice
On the line, lovely, obscene,
And getting, instead, a tin-souled
Answering machine.

Poets like to moralize
And bid you how to be.
Poets like to chide the world:
Be brave, live now, die free!
But our own words we disbelieve;
We waver in each view.
Often times we’re telling us
As much as telling you.
The summer heartbeat of a field gone golden in its age:
The dry tremble of a breath, the sun sighing
Through the planet’s skin of air, miles above our hands
And our sweat, and the words we kick dirt across.

I am not this connected, to feel black space
Pressing its cold god eye down through me,
But I am wearing my weight, this gravity
(A human feature), something we
Forget, or never knew was birthed by metal
And magnetism, and brilliant, anonymous formulae.

I am wearing your flesh, unearned, mask-like,
A medal sprung from your blood.
I am wearing your time, unraveled and resewn,
A glinting stretch of galaxy grown from you: your shadow
And shout, your bending back, your truth, your patient hands
And favorite verses, and same refrains, and small, heroic signatures.
Farewell

Understand that some things just aren’t meant to be,
Scarcely included human instruments are
In the percussions of a symphony;
Also, HE did not make the seventh color
Of his supreme promise black,
And Beautiful was the Second Wonder
Despite the number of gallows it did lack.

Just as these things are certainly true
Though now you may not understand
So is my hopeless, lost love for you.
Hope a day comes when you comprehend
That alone will I always be
For darkness can never be a part of beauty.
I see your body lying there
And you refuse to breath
I see your body lying there
And I refuse to grieve

I see your body lying there
And no care do I take
I see your body lying there
And thank God you’ll never wake

I see your body lying there
And don’t think it’s wrong
I see your body lying there
And am glad that you’re gone

I see your body lying there
And thoughts flow in my brain
I see your body lying there
And remember all the pain

I see your body lying there
And what a content guise
I see your body lying there
And can’t avert my eyes

I see your body lying there
And remember the excuse
I see your body lying there
And know you did choose

I see your body lying there
And from the burden free
I see your body lying there
And still wish that it was me
In this late hour I am disgusted,
Betrayed by the strangers in whom I trusted,
The blueprints of my very heart and soul.
Now I’ll make revenge on them my one true goal.

Editors change my words
Say my poetry is absurd!
Seems it lacked power and force,
They know what’s best; Of Course!

“Heroic couplets they are old,
We want what’s new, something bold
Take out words; lose the rhyme
You’ll get better; good try this time.”

“Ridiculous!” I say
“Charlatans!” I say
I find this a foolish jest,
Think you know what is best?

You know nothing!
What a crime.
My words are something;
Give it time.

I’ll find meaning,
I’ll find a muse,
I’ll end up winning,
And you will lose.

I’ll find an audience,
I’ll find a place,
I’ll find passion,
You’ll find disgrace.

Regret will come to you in time.
You’ll rue the day you made up your mind,
About a simple fellow whose words were true
And then I’ll have IT, I’ll show You!
Katherine (Katy) Thompson

And What Alice Saw

Katherine (Katy) Thompson

Feet of Grass
Like a bird you fly away,
a dark spot on the sunset.
You leave nothing but a feather to prove your existence.
Straining your eyes to see the path ahead,
you don’t remember me here.
You allow yourself to be washed away on a gust of wind,
and up you go, into the clouds
where I can never follow.
I only catch a glimpse of your tail
as you flee from me and all that I stand for.
Like a bird you fly away
and feathers rain down around me.
In the stillness of dawn’s first light, Crows called as they took flight. “Trouble comes,” the call rang out. Deathly stillness revealed no doubts. Fear crept in soft and strong. Warnings were issued in their songs. I walked to the window. “What was the fuss?” (When Crows call, listen you must!) I scanned the horizon looking for them. All I saw was a tiny Wren. I listened hard but could not see. The Crows presence eluded me. I turned to leave, it started again…such noise wasn’t coming from the Wren! I looked through the Trees, and what did I see? A single Blue Jay was mocking me. “How is it one can sound like ten?” He moved away, began again.

The call was true. I had a bad day. Those that I love had lost their way. Fear continued its angry sad song. I tossed and turned all the night long.

The Sun rose grateful on a new day. I went to the Woods. I needed to pray. Quickly, I walked with no thoughts, leaving the fear and all of the doubts. Briefly, the Blue Jay came to mind. A lesson unfolded, began to rewind.

There will be times when troubled fears come—screaming like Crows of lives undone. You must then look hard to see. A blue Bird is there, waiting for thee...
Tune Up

My head is stuck on empty.
My head is in high gear.
It’s becoming fairly obvious
That I am full of fear.
It’s hard to know exactly,
Just when the road blocks came.
But things are very different,
And I am not the same.
Perhaps it’s just a tune~up.
I’ve been “missing” all along.
Just a few minor adjustments,
Then I’ll sing my song.
It’s important to stay neutral
With feet flat on the ground
To clearly hear with open ears,
The purr of your Heart’s sound.
Anthology 14

Rebecca Garrett
Rhapsody in Black and White
Ink, 18” x 23”

Sandra Wright
Line Project, Untitled
Ink, 11” x 14”
Rolling wildly beneath these sheets,
My innocence is yours for the taking.
I’m open wide and praying inside
For this silent vow I’m breaking.
Lord please forgive me, for I know what I do
And yet I continue on.
How can I stop now? I don’t want to stop now
As deeper and deeper I drown.
Tearing and gasping and twisting and clawing
My soft breath erupts in a howl.
Oh, I can feel it. I’m getting close now.
The pounding in my chest speeds faster and faster.
I think I may well explode.
The warmth washes over every inch of my quaking body.
My mind forgets what it knows.
The rush is more than I can bear,
And suddenly it’s got you too.
The rise and fall of flesh and flood,
The reawakening of senses begins.
The pulses slow to aftermath bliss,
And I linger on the feeling of skin.
My brain starts its drift to starry-eyed places.
Everything is as perfect as it seems
’Til I awake in a huff and roll over to see
I’m all-alone.
For as long as I can remember, I’ve always had this feeling that I was sick, possibly dying. My doctors just didn’t know it yet. My name is Katie, and I’m a hypochondriac. This is my story.

It started long before I was ever born, before I was even thought of. Mysterious illnesses have plagued my family for at least a century. I’ll start with the most puzzling, my grandfather, James. You see, he never should have made it through his childhood. He was struck paralyzed for five whole months as a toddler. Didn’t move, didn’t try to speak. Doctors said he wouldn’t live. But Christmas morning, he stood straight up in his crib. Christmas is just full of miracles.

Then, around the age of seven, James started having awful nosebleeds. Bled “worse than a coke addict,” he always says. Anyway, his little brother came home one afternoon from school to find my grandfather passed out on the front porch, lying in a “puddle of his own nose blood.” He was in a coma for week. Doctors said he might never recover. But what do doctors know?

I also have this aunt; we call her Nina. She’s an old barfly, loves to have a good time. Lately, she can’t eat anything unless she purees it first. She chokes on even the smallest foods. She also has acid reflux disease and can’t sleep because of it. She’s so stubborn and scared she won’t see a doctor about it. She’s absolutely convinced it is cancer.

My dad’s dad died of that awful “m” cancer. I can never remember what it’s called. My great grandmother died of Alzheimer’s. It was very sad. Another great grandmother worried herself to death. My great uncle, the one who found my grandfather half-dead on the porch, died of Multiple Sclerosis. My dad has acid reflux. The valve to his stomach sprung a leak.

I’ve seen so many zany health issues hex the lives of my loved ones. And I’m always afraid I’m next.
I wasn’t always this scared. Sure, I was sick a little more than most kids. I had awful ear infections, and had more colds, sinus infections, and headaches than anybody I knew, and one spring I got sick to my stomach every Thursday. I started having serious migraines in 9th grade. I guess high school didn’t agree with me. Or maybe I didn’t agree with high school. But even still, I didn’t really think there was anything seriously wrong with me.

Then came Doctors on the Web, a website that has listings for almost all current diseases and illnesses known to man. And the rest, as they say, is history. They have this nifty little symptom checker that allows you to enter one or all of your symptoms into a search engine, and, voile, it tells you what could be wrong with you.

Unfortunately for me, I took everything they told me as the hard-core truth. If I developed even the slightest tickle in my throat, I would check it out on Doctors on the Web.

Like the time I convinced myself I had contracted the first case of West Nile Virus in the history of my hometown. It was mid-January, I was running a fever of 99.3, had, what looked to be, a bug bite on my chin, and was incredibly dizzy. It just didn’t occur to me that I had the flu and a case of teenage skin.

So take my advice: just say “No” to Doctors on the Web. It might be the sanest decision you ever make.
Noiseless the van was not.
Theology the topic hot.
What began as a humble murmur,
Soon was a melody of emotive power.
Dumb to the jumble of voices seemed he,
As he wove with his harmony a strange tapestry.
The incandescence of his private serenade
Lit my soul like a Vegas parade.
“I could listen to that song forever,”
I thought until my reverie was too soon severed.
For another voice invaded my mind,
The voice of one who sat behind me.
The voice of one the first holds dear.
She holds his heart and holds it near.
So my amorous ear I must turn away,
And, instead, focus my eyes on the passing day.
I tempt Fate.
"Fate," I say, "you never give me what I want. This time, let me have what I want."
Fate tempts back.
Fate says, "here, my whiny darling, You can have what you want. It’s just here on a silver platter, waiting for you to take it."
And I,
in all my ecstatic glory,
run silently screaming away from my prize.
The thing my heart contented is lost forever in my cowardice.
So fate continues to tease.
"See this thing you could so easily have had," it whispers, "this is the very thing you will now no longer have."
"But Fate," I cry.
"But nothing," mocks Fate. "You were given a perfect opportunity. Blame me or your personality all you want. Truth is, you didn’t want that thing bad enough. Otherwise, you would have fought yourself to embrace that which you wanted. Complain to or about me no longer. Blame yourself only."
Speechless and down trodden I turn away from Fate. Acknowledging the truth I decide, from now on, I blame everything on Weather.
An overzealous beam
Of moon so bright and sheer.
The things I hate,
I love,
I fear.

The endless raging
Of a tiresome shove.
The things I fear,
I hate,
I love.

A flash of lightning
Like a warm embrace.
The things I love,
I fear,
I hate.

“In time we hate that which we often fear.”
–Shakespeare
I guess I should warn you up front; the story you’re about to read is no fairy tale. It’s actually more of a nightmare. So if you’re faint of heart or even the slightest bit sheepish, you should probably leave this tale alone.

This is the story of the Texas Taco Stop Tragedy. Some call it a massacre, claiming that several of the Taco Stop employees died horrifically that day. Others call it a hoax, believing wholeheartedly that no one was even injured in the incident. Another theory is that the tragedy is simply an urban legend urging fast-food managers to treat their subordinates with respect.

We do know that the protagonist is one Carolina Cain; the story never varies on her name. Only now will you hear the real story.

Carolina Cain was born August 15, 1972, to her loving, and seemingly normal, parents, Fred and Gayle. Fred worked cows in the despairing Texas heat for most of Carolina’s childhood. Gayle, a self-confessed ambulance chaser, ran the local paper and took Carolina along on many disturbing stories. Car accidents and raging fires were common sights to the young girl. Both parents worked hard to give their darling daughter everything she needed and most of what she wanted. Some even called the girl spoiled.

Fred and Gayle, and two-year-old Carolina, welcomed a baby boy into the family. Michael was just as adorable as his older sibling; and “sister,” as Michael would come to call her, was so proud of the squish-faced little brother she got to take home.

There was rarely conflict between the two siblings. Their parents found this connection, and silence, comforting. Perhaps, this is when Fred and Gayle should have begun preparing for the worst. Weren’t brothers and sisters supposed to quarrel? Over toys? Over their parents’ affection? Over territory?

As time went by, and the girl grew into a beautiful young woman, her temperament still as mild as ever, she slowly developed a terrible nervous tick. Her parents, worried for the
mental health of their only daughter. Doctors and diagnosis and second opinions all concluded there was nothing actually wrong with Carolina. The family was ecstatic with these reports. But neighbors began to talk. It was evident to most of the town that there was just something not right with Miss Sweet Carolina.

* * *

“Is it morning already?” she grumbled as she pulled the sunshine-yellow sateen sheet over her equally sunny head. “It can’t be morning. Not yet.”

As her alarm continued ringing purposefully in her ear, she threw back the sheets and stomped loudly to the kitchen. Pour the water; flip the switch, she thought to herself. If it weren’t for that coffee maker, she’d never make it out of her apartment. Ever. One large mug of deep, dark coffee, one sugar only, was just what she needed to set her achy body in motion.

She trudged through the mess of her bedroom back to her still-warm bed, coffee in hand, and thought of the day ahead and the night she was trying desperately to leave behind.

Why did Mildred, her boss of two years, insist on being such an icy bitch? Did Carolina not explain the direness of the situation? Her best friend, Julie, had just yesterday morning watched her father take his final breath. Hospice had only been called the day before. He’d been given a week; he barely made it through the night.

Julie had been Carolina’s best friend since junior high. Julie had always looked after Carolina, especially after the town turned on her with the arrival of the tick. Now it was Carolina’s turn to take care of Julie. To do that, she needed to travel home for a little while. First, she needed her boss’s permission.

But had her boss seemed even slightly sympathetic at the loss? No. She simply said there was no one to cover her shifts. “Perhaps you should have put in a formal request like everyone else,” Mildred mocked as if Carolina should have predicted the ailing man would take his bitter goodbye on that exact day. The words shattered every possible train of thought like
a bullet through stained glass. “Your friend will just have to understand.”

* * *

I really shouldn’t be here today, she thought as she slung her recently paid for vehicle into its usual parking spot.

The job hadn’t always been bad. Carolina always had money for rent, always paid her bills on time (except for when she simply forgot what day or month it was), and occasionally had a little cash left over for the sweeter things in life. And she adored all of her coworkers, even Corbin, the naive, yet amazingly aggressive, sixteen year old who asked her out on a regular basis. Poor boy just couldn’t get it through his head that there was no way he would ever score a date with Carolina. But she liked her job, in the bigger sense.

But lately, the good didn’t hold a candle to the bad. Each day, it got harder to deal with the constant picking and squawking, the punishment she endured from her lonely old boss. Carolina could almost empathize with Mildred. Widowed at 25, never remarried, Mildred had always longed for a child. Now, far past her prime and forced to work with a group of hopeful “kids,” she took her sour hostility out on her staff.

Carolina wasn’t the only member of the Taco Stop team that felt belittled by Mildred. Slow hours at the restaurant were usually spent discussing her latest outburst: where does she get off treating people this way; do you think (insert name of latest victim here) will stick it out, quit before the end of the week, or put in their notice now; who will be next?

As she crossed the crowded parking lot, Carolina reminded herself, “Play it cool. Kill her with kindness. Don’t let her know that you’re hurting. Just make it through the night without destroying your position here. You’ve worked too hard to throw it all away now. You can do this. She’s just a big bully.”
So with 23 years of her mother’s good teaching, Carolina entered the familiar building wearing the warmest smile she could conjure.

* * *

Her false inner peace managed to remain intact for a little over an hour.

“You’re not doing that right,” Mildred’s voice rang with such disdain as Carolina smiled at the uncertainty of such a comment. “You’ve worked here for two years now, you should know better than to cut lemons with that knife.”

“We are completely out of lemons up front; it was dire that I cut lemons now,” Carolina said in the sweetest tone possible. “Whoever is in charge of dishes tonight hasn’t shown up yet, and the knife I intended to use is lost in the giant pile of dishes next to the sink.”

“Well...next time...would you please use the knife that is specified for lemons.”

Even with her sense of false joy shattered, Carolina continued on, hopeful that the night would end rather peacefully. If only she’d been psychic, as Mildred had suggested she be, she’d have seen the violence lurking just around the nine o’clock hour.

* * *

“CAROLINA!” Everyone in the tiny restaurant jumped as the awful screech poured from the kitchen. “WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO TO MY REFRIGERATOR?”

Carolina meekly made her way toward Mildred’s screaming body.

“What the hell did you do to this refrigerator?” Mildred squawked in a low, condescending tone. “You were the last employee back here. Did you leave the door open? All the food is ruined now. How do you expect I run a restaurant with you constantly screwing up?”

“Ma’am, the fridge was working fine when I was back here last. I made sure the door was shut. That was over an hour ago,” Carolina spoke calmly.
“Then how do you explain the fact that the temperature is 15 degrees higher than it should be? That doesn’t just happen, does it?”

Actually it did happen. Happened quite often here. The extreme heat in the kitchen caused the fridge to work overtime, which repeatedly caused the motor or compressor or whatever to freeze over.

“I’m gonna have to ask you to finish the night and don’t bother coming back here. You are ruining my business. I can’t tell if your stupidity is accidental or if you are sabotaging my life on purpose. But I’m not gonna let you anymore.”

“Excuse me? You’re firing me? Because that piece of shit you call a refrigerator decided to shut down on you again? And that’s my fault?” The anger pulsed in Carolina’s ears. She went deaf. The thoughts in her head blocked out her surroundings. Just last night, Mildred claimed she couldn’t keep this business running without Carolina. Now, she had just fired her.

Carolina let the rage stew within her. It consumed her for the remainder of the night. “Who in their right mind fires an employee and expects them to finish the night?” she whispered to herself. “I should just walk out of here right now.” But something held her, kept her grounded in routine.

The phone rang. Mildred barked from the office, “Carolina. Telephone. And tell your brother not to call you here anymore.”

Uh, duh, she thought as she grabbed the receiver. “Hello.”

“Hey, sister, you gonna make it home or what?” Michael’s voice sang.

“Yeah, as a matter of fact,” Carolina breathed as she tightly wrapped the porcelain white phone cord around her fragile fingers. “I suddenly have all the time in the world, seeing as how I was fired just a little over an hour ago.”

“Fired?”

“Yeah.”

Mildred lunged irately out of the office, her chilly gaze landing on Carolina.

“I’ll tell you all about later. See ya tomorrow, Mike.”

“K, sister,” preceded dead air. Carolina went back to work.
Closing time came and went, and Carolina stayed in autopilot. Working slower than usual, she waited for each employee to say goodnight and goodbye. Carolina had one thing on her mind. It wasn’t escaping from Mildred’s trap. It was revenge. It was cold blooded. It was intentional.

Once the building was quiet, except for the tap-tapping of the calculator singing from the office, Carolina set out to finish what the arctic woman had started. Moving slowly, quietly, purposefully, she grabbed the knife not specified for lemons.

Through the screaming and pleading, Carolina dragged the knife through steely flesh. Then the deed was done. She dropped her timecard in the slot one last time. She let the door slam behind her and never looked back.

*    *    *

The Texas Taco Stop closed its doors not long after the incident. Word got around town of the butchery. Business slowed desperately. And nobody wanted to work in a building haunted by the curse of a past employee.

Upon hearing the door slam that night, Mildred left the office to find the restaurant empty. Her employees always reported to her before they left, she thought. She wandered slowly, peering around each corner, hoping that she truly was alone in the dark structure.

It was in the kitchen that she found the abomination. Scratched into the stainless steel refrigerator, the gall of Carolina’s wrath, were the words, “YOU’LL REGRET THIS.”
Arielle Duncan
Time for Tears

Brad Morgan
Elizabeth K.

Acrylic on canvas, 22" x 28"
Kari Lanting
Home Place

Watercolor, size 16” x 20”

Colleen A. Zeiler
Brazos Reflections

Watercolor, size 22” x 30”
Colleen A. Zeiler
Rhombic Expression
Watercolor, Gouache, 11” x 17”

Colleen A. Zeiler
Sunset on Manitou Beach
Oil on canvas, 9” x 11”
Colleen A. Zeiler
Late Summer Storm

Colleen A. Zeiler
Forefathers Remembered
John Michael Cassidy

Gate Keeper of Savage Creek,
The Savage Gulf, TN

John Michael Cassidy

Perplexed,
Piney River, TN
Kari Lanting  
Prince

John Michael Cassidy  
National Protection, Green River, KY
Anthology 14

Sandra Wright
Little Girl
Acrylic, 16” x 20”

Melody Kennedy
Scratch and Sniff Coffee
Mixed Media, 18” x 7”
Cassandra Thompson  

Seaside Wanderer  

Surfer

Cassandra Thompson  

Guarding the Ice Chest
John Cameron
End of the World Party

Joshua Fagner
Peace in Nothing  
Acrylic on canvas, 40” x 28”
Jenna Murray
As Cold as You
Acrylic, 16” x 20”

Jenna Murray
The Mystic’s Eye
Watercolor and marker, 16” x 12”
Rebecca Garrett
The Day the Boats Came In
Acrylic, 24” x 18”

Sandra Wright
Madre
Oil, 16” x 20”
Colleen A. Zeiler  
Lancer Ferry Crossing

Oil on canvas, 18” x 24”

John Michael Cassidy  
Ecofusion,  
Beaman Park, TN
The woman and I sit face to face,
But on opposite sides of the world
I in my sneakers with white shoe laces,
She in a fur, Louis Vuitton, and pearls.
I am the object of her intense gaze,
As it moves from my toes to my head
I’m sure stereotyping me in many ways,
When she could just speak to me instead.
How do I know?
By the way that she clutches her briefcase
Each time that I shift in my seat
As if mugging her here would be the ideal place.
Clearly fear has made reason obsolete.
Or maybe I seem to her as Death manifest,
Lurking beneath my hood
Hades rising on a soul searching quest
To devour what’s pure and good.
Certainly not.
I am but a simple man
Who finds meaning and value in life.
Would she believe that I enjoy Chopin
And that I have three kids and a wife?
How would she react if I told her that
I’m actually partner in a prestigious firm?
Lawyer of the year as a matter of fact,
And everything I’ve obtained I’ve earned.
Oh, how easy her life must be,
With no hills or valleys to pass.
There’ve been no easy roads for me,
Always separated by race and class.
Our conditions are appointed by circumstance,
Therefore who am I to judge?
We all have the opportunity to advance,
And for that I hold no grudge.
The fact remains that she’s white and I’m black.
For this there need not be guilt.
On this once thought broken back,
Is the very back on which this nation was built.
The train stops and I reach my final destination.
I stand and face the woman across the aisle.
She awaits my passing with nervous anticipation,
But as I walk by, all I do is smile.
Caroline swung her legs over the side of the bed as Ellie’s first cries awakened her.

“Time for that famous two a.m. feeding,” Caroline thought to herself as she winced at the pins and needles shooting up her legs. “And I have got to stop sleeping in one position all the time!” Caroline leaned over to kiss her sleeping husband, James, and shambled down the hall to the nursery to feed Ellie.

As Caroline sat rocking her precious two month old daughter, she reflected on how very lucky she was. She and James had met in college and had married in June after their graduation. James had been offered and accepted a good position with an up-and-coming computer company, and within three months of their wedding night, she was pregnant with their first baby, William. Two perfect pregnancies and many happy, busy days later, here she sat, nursing the one who had completed their happy little family. Caroline gently placed her sleeping daughter back in the crib and headed back to bed, thoughtlessly massaging her hand to try and get rid of the numbness there.

The tingling had begun shortly after the birth of William, but she had chalked it up to sitting in one position for too long while she fed him, or lying in one position for too long. After a while, she hardly noticed it anymore, and since it normally went away after a little while, she didn’t worry too much about it. By the time Ellie was six months old, however, Caroline noticed that the tingling wasn’t going away, so much as she was just getting used to it, and in spite of her busy schedule taking care of two small children and a busy husband, she decided that a check-up with her doctor couldn’t hurt.

-2-

“Hello, Caroline! How’re the kiddos?” Dr. Hendricks asked as he came through the door of the exam room.
“They’re fine! Growing like weeds and happy as can be,” Caroline replied with a smile. Leave it to Dr. Hendricks to ask about the kids first she thought. Dr. Hendricks had been her doctor since she was a teenager, and although he wasn’t an obstetrician, he had agreed to deliver her children, after only a little begging from her. She simply hadn’t wanted to change doctors. And besides, he’s as proud of those kids as I am, she thought. They had been his first deliveries in years.

“So what seems to be the problem today, Caroline?” he asked.

Caroline explained the problem with the tingling in her hands and feet as Dr. Hendricks began her check-up.

“Well, I don’t see anything wrong here. Tell you what. Let’s get some lab work done, and we’ll see if we can’t figure this out, ok?”

“Sounds fine to me,” Caroline replied.

A few days later, Dr. Hendricks’ nurse called her with the results of the blood work.

“Dr. Hendricks says that you’re ‘fit as a fiddle,’ and that’s a direct quote. He says just to make sure that you wiggle your fingers and toes while you’re sitting for long periods of time, and that should keep the circulation going.”

Feeling a little sheepish about going to the doctor over her hands and feet falling asleep, Caroline thanked the nurse, agreed to keep moving, and hung up. Well, I guess it was nothing after all, she thought as she went to get the kids up from their nap.

The next few years of Caroline’s life were measured out in bottles, nap times and the kids’ check-ups, and adding PTA meetings, school volunteer work and room mother duties to the list once William started kindergarten. The tingling and numbness in her hands and feet never really went away, but she rarely noticed it. She was too busy now that both the kids were
in school to let something so little distract her, especially since James was gone so much of the time on business trips now.

James and Caroline had a huge blowout for William’s tenth birthday, complete with clowns, a blow-up jumper, and even a pony for rides around the backyard. Everyone in William’s class at school came, and Caroline was certainly a busy woman keeping all the activities for the kids going. The only disappointment was that James wasn’t able to be there as he had been called away for yet another business trip at the last minute. The next night as Caroline stood at the sink washing dishes and enjoying the one or two peaceful moments she had between arguments from the kids and their pleas for intervention, she happened to look down at the pretty blue flowers on her favorite dishes. A second later, she realized that she was seeing them through her hand! Caroline dropped the plate back into the sink, barely managing to keep herself from screaming as she looked at her hand and could clearly see the dishes, the sink, and even the bottle of dish soap through it.

“MOM! William stole my pencil!” Ellie’s cries distracted Caroline from her hand for a moment, and she turned to go deal with what had to be the fifteenth argument from the kids in the last hour. Later that night, as Caroline washed her face and brushed her teeth for bed, she examined her hand closely and realized that in a certain light, it did seem that she could see through it. Caroline walked slowly to the bed that she so rarely shared with her husband and perched on the side, wondering what to do about her peculiar new plight. Another trip to Dr. Hendricks was out of the question. She hadn’t gone back to the doctor since her trip over the tingling in her hands and feet, despite the yearly reminder cards that it was time for another check-up. She just couldn’t shake the feeling that the nurses were laughing at her behind her back. She could call her mother, but what would she say? “Hey, Mom? I just noticed that I was starting to disappear. Ever have anything like that happen to you?” Caroline chuckled to herself over the idea of telling her
thoroughly realistic mother anything of the sort. She mentally ran down her list of friends who she considered close enough to tell something so personal to, and realized with a start that she hadn’t spoken to most of these friends in over a year. Between household chores, dinner parties with James’ business associates, Little League games, and ballet lessons, she had managed to let too much time slip by.

“Oh, hell,” she thought. “Maybe who I really need to call is a psychiatrist!” With that she rolled over, turned off the light, and tried to sleep. The next morning, Caroline woke early after a long night filled with bad dreams and trudged to the bathroom to start her daily routine and to examine her hands. Vaguely seeing the bathroom counter through her left hand and the toilet through her right, she decided that maybe a little extra make-up was in order this morning, and not just to cover the dark circles under her eyes. Ok, I have to figure out what to do about this…today, she thought as she dabbed the make-up onto the back of her left hand, finished her face, and went down to fix breakfast for the kids.

After the kids had been taken to school and the breakfast dishes cleared and washed, Caroline sat down at her computer to pay a few bills and then turned her attention to her favorite search engine to try to find a solution to her new “illness.” After a couple of hours of searching anything she could think of that might yield a result, she shoved the keyboard tray back under the desk in disgust. She had learned more than she had ever wanted to know about fictional characters who became invisible, but not a single mention of a real person. As she went into the kitchen to fix herself a snack before she left to pick up the kids and begin the round of afternoon appointments, she noticed that the make-up on her right hand had smeared. “Maybe the best solution is to buy better make-up.”

Over the next couple of years, between dentist appointments (Willie was going to have to have braces), the tap dancing lessons that had followed the ballet lessons for Ellie, and generally keeping her ducks in a row, Caroline became an expert in the field of make-up. She experimented with many different
brands, colors, and formulas, and finally found one that was intended to help burn victims mask their scars. Water-proof and smudge-proof, it allowed Caroline to continue her day-to-day activities in some semblance of normalcy. It even held up under James’ infrequent displays of affection…well, except for that once, but she was easily able to convince him that all women used make-up to cover freckles and sunspots once they reached a “certain age.” By then, what Caroline thought of as “her little secret” had crept up her arms to her shoulders, and her legs were beginning to go as well. The amount of time it took Caroline to get ready to go anywhere became the family joke.

-4-

“Caroline…why not?” James’ voice was a mixture of confusion, hurt, exasperation, and whining as he once again asked for an explanation. “Why not tonight?”

“James, I’m just tired. You have no idea how much work it takes to keep this house the way I do and to make sure that you and the kids have everything you need and want!” Caroline responded, as she braced herself for the argument that was sure to come.

“You’re always too tired! You think I’m not tired from my job too, Caroline? I’m not asking you to clean the Aegean stables, for Christ’s sake! Would a little affection now and then kill you? Do you know how frustrating it is to have to lie next to you at night and know that you don’t want me to touch you anymore? What happened to the woman I married?”

“Nothing, James. I do still want you. I’m just tired. Maybe tomorrow night” Caroline responded sadly. Yes, James, I do know how frustrating it is. I also know how you look at your secretary and how she looks at you these days. But I have a feeling that it would be a lot more that “frustrating” to you if you saw how I look, or rather don’t look, down there these days. “Disgusting” would probably come closer.

“No, not tomorrow night!” James said, raising his voice. “Can’t you remember anything? I’m leaving for D.C in the morning, so tomorrow night will be too late. At least to have sex with me!”
“Is that an accusation?” Caroline was astonished to think that James might think she was having an affair. When would she fit it in to her schedule? Before Ellie’s gymnastics lessons, but after Willie’s football game, while she was picking up the dry cleaning and going to the grocery store? The thought was so ridiculous that it made her smile in spite of the argument. Bad move.

“Hell, yes it’s an accusation! What other excuse could there be? Especially with that little smile that just crossed your face!” James yelled.

“James, I promise you. I am not cheating on you! Even if I wanted to, which I don’t, I just don’t have the time or the energy after everything else I have to do. I also don’t have the time or energy to continue this argument. It’s already one in the morning, and I have to be up at six. So, if you want to keep this going, keep it going with the couch. I’m done! And keep it down, you’ll wake the kids!” Caroline shouted back, shoving James’ pillow into his chest.

“Fine, Caroline, I’ll sleep on the couch tonight, just not the one in this house,” James replied as he tossed his pillow back onto the bed and sat down to put on his shoes.

“Fine!” Caroline replied. “Just don’t miss your damned flight in the morning and blame it on me!”

After James stalked out of the house, presumably to spend the night at one of his friend’s houses, Caroline slipped between the sheets of the bed they had shared for more than 15 years now. I’m sorry James, she thought as she drifted off to sleep, but I don’t know what else to do. When she woke the next morning, her pillow was still damp from tears she didn’t even realize she’d shed.

-5-

It turned out that the “friend” James went to spend the night with on that fateful night was his secretary, and the only time he’d been home since then was to pick up more clothes. He, of course, did this while she was out taking the kids to school and just left her a note saying his lawyer would be in touch. After
reading those horrific few words, all Caroline wanted to do was crawl back in bed and stay there until she woke up from this nightmare, but of course she couldn’t do that. Both the kids were in high school now, and Ellie’s cheerleading uniform needed to be ironed, Willie’s football jersey had to be washed, the house needed to be cleaned, and the kids were having study groups tonight which would require mass quantities of snacks and, therefore, a trip to the grocery store. And, of course, now there was the matter of hiring a lawyer.

The divorce went smoothly and quickly, far too quickly for Caroline’s taste. But she was awarded a settlement that allowed her to continue to stay home with the kids, an award that wasn’t contested by James. At least he understood how important it was that she still be there full-time for the kids. Unfortunately, after the divorce, Caroline’s “little secret” progressed rapidly. On the day of Willie’s high school graduation, she was little more than a floating head without her make-up, and by the time Ellie graduated two years later, she wasn’t even that. Without her clothes and make-up, Caroline was totally invisible. What was worse was the fact that now, at times, she couldn’t put make-up on her hands and feet. There just wasn’t anything there to put the make-up on anymore.

-6-

In a house that is quiet in a way that only an empty house can be, a phone jarringly breaks the peace. After the fifth ring, an answering machine picks up in the evening gloom.

“You have reached the home of Caroline Edwards. I can’t take your call right now, but if you’ll leave your name and number after the beep, I’ll get back to you as soon as possible. Have a great day! BEEP!”

“Mom? Mom, this is Ellie. If you’re there, pick up...Hello? I’ve called three times this week. I need some money for books, and Dad’s out of town on his honeymoon remember? All right, well...guess you’re not there. I’ll come by tonight to pick up a check, ok?”
Later that night, Ellie pulled up to the dark house in the little red sports car her dad had given her for graduation and let herself in.

“Mom? Mom, are you home?” Ellie called as she went into the kitchen to fix herself a snack. *Hmmm…odd that Mom’s not home. She’s always home…always!* Ellie thought to herself as she reached for the refrigerator door. Ellie’s mild confusion quickly changed to fear when she realized that all the food in the fridge was spoiled. All of it, covered in mold. That was really not like her mother!

“Mom? Mom, where are you? Are you ok?” Ellie called as she began searching the house, turning lights on as she went. Ellie began to notice other things that were not like her mother, like the thin layer of dust that lay on all the furniture and the load of laundry soured in the washing machine. Ellie looked through the entire house, ending up in Caroline’s bedroom. The bed looked like it hadn’t been made in weeks, another bad sign, and still no sign of Caroline. As Ellie turned to leave the room, she noticed a piece of paper on her mother’s nightstand. Ellie thought at first that it just had make-up smears on it, the realized that the smears were words. Scrawled on the paper were the words “Don’t be me.” Ellie’s legs felt like they wouldn’t hold her up anymore, and as she collapsed on the edge of her mother’s bed, she noticed the empty jar of make-up on the floor, half hidden by the comforter.
John Michael Cassidy
Not Happy

Kari Lanting
Quiet and Trust is Our Strength
The large, happy cat basked in the sun light and in the moon light. He rarely made any quick movements, with the exception of his sprints around the house. He glared at the dog that dared to come in his living room. Strutting through the kitchen to the laundry room, he chased every bug that tempted him. If he caught the bug, he would play a hacky sack game with it. Bad moods, good moods, hungry, sleepy, never had he chased a mouse. He screamed for his breakfast, watched as people went on down the street, dared the dog to come near his large pink rug. Had he ever seen more than a small porch lizard? No one knows. The cat moved slowly and slyly as most cats do, never making that sudden life-ending movement. Then, on one Sunday afternoon the cat playing on his back on his large pink rug watched a small grey mouse scamper across the kitchen floor. He looked almost in disbelief, at this very large bug. As if suddenly inspired by the Gods, the cat ended its play and the life of the mouse at once.
Sammy

Sammy the first, a large cat from the pound,
Given up after only a month
In every other home he found
He has been mine for almost four years now
Sam sits in the window, sleeps at the foot of my bed

People call him fat. Little do they know,
He thinks it’s a compliment.
He sleeps, eats, and plays sometimes
I’m honored to call him mine.
Sam sits in the window, sleeps at the foot of my bed.

The first month came and passed
My home will always be his last.
Sam sits in the window, sleeps at the foot of my bed.
There is endless intrigue to be found in the beautiful pain that is yours.

You are a merciless assault upon useless senses that strive to justify hope.

The unknowable origins of the passions you inspire will always lie just beyond explanation.

You tease with possibilities that seem to dwell beyond the limits of mortal endeavors.

Your gift is a moment’s experience, offered to a blessed few.

Just as the poet finds heaven in his dreams; you find heaven in denying the secrets that are yours to keep.

You delight in your captivation of the heart and mind, for you are the inestimable prize that will be forever pursued, but never obtained.

These passions will know no limit of time or place, and will continue to thrill the soul through encounters with sublimity and departures from frigid explanation.
Construction paper sits with the crayons
It becomes magic in a child’s hand
Hanging up his creation he runs for the lawn
Takes a spoon and makes music with pots and pans
This boy is a teenager with more paper on his desk
And has an essay he doesn’t want to write
Now he’s a man who still has the mess
An office with skyscrapers to the left and right
The man walks in to the everyday bore
Devising more ways to rake in more cash
He looks up to hear a deafening roar
Followed by an explosion and frightening crash
Paper tumbles to the skyline floor
Where they matter no more.
Katherine (Katy) Thompson
Watching and Waiting

Cassandra Thompson
Uncle Billy
Dark and light, bad and good, are not different but one and the same.

– Heraclitus

I am and not, I freeze and yet am burned, Since from myself another self I turned.

– Elizabeth I

Two lives I lived between the days; In time the lesson taught That one, upon the morning light, A rising truth was sought.

In darkness though, the other thrived And veered upon the way, To drag with it a sorry soul That grieved the light of day.
Her need
Runs deep.
Twisted,
Dark and dank.
It echoes in
The labyrinth of her mind
Beyond mere measure.
It is not human.
She wraps terror
About her like a cloak
Of squalid blackness,
Welcoming it like a starved lover
With needs unfulfilled…
Gripping, penetrating.
Wholly unforgiving.
Horrified images
Of the lives
She has drained
Are reflected in the
Polished black of her eyes.
Their visages are glazed white,
With mouths frozen wide,
Pleading mercies
Forever unheard.
And with a hunger
Beyond passion,
She roams.
Gasping and grasping
With skeletal white fingers
And fetid breath.
This is a true story...*mostly.*

I left Dallas/Fort-Worth International airport for Gatwick, London at 4:20pm, Central Standard Time. This was to be my first trip overseas as part of a class of amateur photographers.

During screening at the security checkpoint, my carry-on bag must have tripped some silent tell-tale sign of terrorism as I was politely escorted to the rear examination area. A man dressed in Federal airport security garb proceeded to unceremoniously dump the contents of my luggage across the table for inspection by something that looked like a small ineffective cleansing utensil.

As the details of my private life were on display, I could feel the silent stares of everyone who passed by, each gazing for some plutonium-laced device that was certainly in the mix of my no doubt dubious what-nots.

‘Joe Security’ searched the pockets of my leather jacket which I had carefully rolled up and tossed it aside—apparently content that it was not some new type of explosive material made to simulate cow hide—and continued to paw through the remaining contents of my bag: an iPod, camera batteries, the latest novel by Janet Evanovich, various other sundries, and finally my power converters and adapters for use with foreign outlets. Nestled in their own drawstring pouches, he gingerly opened each one, carefully avoiding any tripwires I may have had set for him to activate; then he opened my medication bag, replete with ibuprofen, Xanax, and what-have-you. Sherlock Holmes didn’t even bother to look at the bottles, but rather shook each one vigorously to listen to the pills rattle.

I made a mental note to pack my explosive nitroglycerine in an aspirin bottle the next time I took an international flight.
anywhere so that ‘Airport Einstein’ here could shake it like a red-headed stepchild.

As he continued his search in earnest, he came across my DK *London* travel book.

“Are you taking a trip to London?” He asked me flatly.

I almost let loose with a disbelieving guffaw of laughter. *What gave me away, Gomer?! The book or my boarding pass you’re holding hostage that says ‘DFW to Gatwick, London?’ Wow, you almost caught me there with that shrewd bit of investigative questioning.*

“Yes, sir,” I simply replied, mentally rolling my eyes.

He finished his search—to no avail I might add—and wished me a safe journey as I was re-packing my now despoiled belongings, leaving me Scott-free to hash my next nefarious plan of mayhem.

We boarded a Boeing 777 international aircraft carrier operated by British Airways. In the forward section, there were approximately twenty first-class seats that fully reclined to the horizontal position, turning into a comfortable in-flight bed. The air was circulating at a soothing seventy degrees while flight attendants stood ready: smiles, pillows, and courtesy bottles of champagne in hand.

I was not in one of those seats.

The next section contained about sixty “Club-World” business-class seats that looked roomy enough to shuffle around in from side to side, should you so desire. Flight attendants helped passengers with their carry-on luggage and offered complimentary headphones to each passenger who settled into their seat.

Again, I was not in one of those seats.

Deflated, I continued my death march to the bowels of the plane and my area: the approximately two hundred and fifty seats of the sardine-class economy “World-Traveler” ghetto section. Bereft of air-conditioning, it felt like Calcutta at high noon. I think I saw a single, haggard flight attendant hosing passengers down with vegetable oil to wedge them into their seats.
The flight was an eternal ten hours. Let me repeat that for emphasis: the flight was ten hours!

Four hours in, my transcontinental flight was made all the more unpleasant by the dinner that was served, and I use the word “dinner” most lightly: rubbery chunks of something that was described to me as Asian Chicken over rice. Picture a congealed fist-sized mass swimming in an orange glaze and soy sauce pool of monosodium glutamate: Mmm, yummy!

At one point, the so-called dinner had me wishing that Homeland Security had carted me away back at DFW because surely prison cuisine would have been an improvement over this nifty little delicacy.

An hour or two after “dinner,” sometime between when my iPod lost its charge and when I finished reading my mystery novel, my mystery meal decided to suddenly revisit me south of the border.

As I briefly pondered the physics of dislodging myself from my seat and making my way to the aft lavatory, beads of sweat popped out across my forehead, and my colon sent a frenzied alarm to my brain: Red alert! Go! Go! Get up, get up! Get up NOW!

Ass clenched, I struggled from my seat like a pregnant woman: torso, pelvis, and upper legs all one stiff, single body part. Regardless as to which was faster, light traveling at almost three hundred billion meters per second or me making my way to the passenger toilet area, it was a photo snapshot across the finish line.

I lunged for the stall door, my bliss within reach.

It was locked.

On the verge of tears, I braced myself against the opposite wall, glared at the door and attempted to use every untapped potential within my mind to either will the occupant out of that toilet or blast the door off its hinges with a surge of newfound telekinesis.

I looked around at the unfortunate passengers nearest the lavatory area. Whatever deity they bowed down to, be it God, Allah, Buddha, Visa, or MasterCard, they had best start praying,
because there was about to be an explosion of unparalleled proportions on British Airways’ flight 837.

Each second became an eternity of torture. If I had had any military secrets, I would have revealed them to the enemy a long time ago in exchange for a porcelain throne and a roll of toilet paper.

By now I was pretty sure I had the butt muscles of Baryshnikov.

Simultaneously, as the door lock clicked open, a little old lady idled her way down the aisle towards me, the question of wanting to cut ahead of me was on her lips.

My head spun around three hundred sixty degrees like Linda Blair while my eyes hissed at her, Go away!

The previous occupant gone, I flung myself into the stall and had an experience that—at 39,000 feet—was pretty much as close to heaven as I’ll ever come.

After Thursday afternoon in Dallas, Texas morphed into 7 o’clock Friday morning London time, the plane finally touched down at Gatwick airport.

At customs, I stood in line for what seemed like another nine hours as I waited to have my passport unceremoniously stamped with a dull thud.

Welcome to London, I thought.

A chartered bus was waiting to take the group directly to the University of London, Queen Mary campus, on Mile End road in east London where we would be spending our month abroad.

Now, imagine—if at all possible—that everything which had passed before was as nothing compared to the incomprehensible incompetence of our bus driver, who not only drove around the east end of the city in circles, I kid you not, but actually tried to, not once—but twice (!)—leave us at a completely incorrect university campus!

Trapped as I was in yet another vehicle of mass transit, I could do nothing but stare out the window as we circled London like a buzzard looking for road kill. My eyes were locked wide, had lost the will to blink, and felt like two piss holes in a snow bank.
Finally…blissfully…mercifully…after what was surely more
time than it would have taken us to walk from Gatwick to Queen
Mary—replete with luggage in tow—we arrived at the correct
campus.

However, the day’s smack-you-in-face fun was merely a
prelude for what came next. Oh yes, it gets even better, dear
reader: the dormitory room!

Or, as I have come to call it: Hell’s Armpit.

Picture it with me, won’t you?

Queen Mary campus accommodations come replete with
assorted stains, holes in the baseboards, a bed hard enough to
-crack diamonds on, and an unidentified odor somewhat akin to
bodies decomposing in a boiling vat of curry.

The fluorescent light over the lavatory sink flickers so much,
I’m certain to have an epileptic seizure very soon.

However, lest you think that I am nothing but complaints,
there were a few nice things of note. The room is nice and quiet
at night as the building is nestled on campus away from the
traffic of Mile End road (Londoners do love using their car
horns!), and the view from my window is pretty and lets in
plenty of fresh air—or rather, lets out the smell of curried zombie
flesh—although I did have to make a trip to a local electronics
store to buy an oscillating fan as there is no air conditioning in
any of the buildings—or anywhere in London for that matter—
and, having been raised in the American south on circulating air,
I was in desperate need of relief.

I must say that my mood improved a tad after I plugged in my
little fan and no longer had beads of sweat dripping down my
brow.

I then took a quick walk to Budgens, a small market down the
street, for bug spray and antibacterial wipes—I was not touching
anything until after I wiped the place down and fumigated the
other inhabitants out. I also bought some toilet paper, Kleenex,
milk, cereal, and sandwich staples.

After orientation (and sitting in another stagnant, air-
conditioned free room), the photography class and I went to
Trafalgar Square. I must say that I enjoyed the architecture, mostly Greco-roman, and the sparkling fountains.

However, pigeons were e-v-e-r-y-w-h-e-r-e. And, people were feeding them! Rats with wings.

The group pretty much split up after that into individual cliques, leaving yours truly to fend off pigeon-poop and see the sights.

I wandered the streets, taking pictures at random: impressive building porticos; pieces of public art (covered with pigeons); a group of elderly women having tea, each wearing lavender scarves; red double-decker buses, and anything else that caught my eye.

A few hours later, I returned to the Queen Mary campus and unpacked. After I had showered and changed, I met with an acquaintance from Dallas—Jeremy, a native of London who was home from university abroad during the summer.

My day completely turned around! What a genuine treat! After nine hours on the plane and easily another ten getting to the campus and settling in, hanging out with Jeremy was a godsend!

It had been his last day at work in the UK before getting ready to return to the US of A, and his coworkers had taken him out to the pubs, bought him five pints and gotten him pissed drunk—it was entertainment enough just listening to his inebriated accent.

However, I digress.

Even slightly tipsy—or perhaps due in part to being so—Jeremy was a wonderful tour guide. We went to Covent Garden and Chinatown, Soho, and the West End; we had a few drinks and wandered along the streets of central London before calling it a night around 3 a.m. in the morning.

Suffice it to say, I was extremely happy and after an otherwise long and miserable day of traveling, my little granite slab of a mattress felt like the most wonderful bed in the world as I promptly fell asleep—my little electric fan humming softly in my dreams.
There is a lost alternative
To every choice we make;
Divergence suffers ignorance
On every path we take.

For every little morsel fed,
There goes a feast to rot—
And to the soul mistreated more,
The meal is never sought.
My Life too Full

Shoved into a populace
Too careless for life’s sake.

Reared in a time
Too absorbed in the self.

Programmed by software
Too exacting in perfection.

Living...no, existing in a space
Too crowded by the microscopic.

Crashing on the diet
Too demanding for physicality.

Choking on the health
Too luxurious for the common.

Aging in an air
Too callous by its youth.

Dying on a schedule,
Too impatient to idly wait.

Burned, instead of buried;
Too expensive for the dirt.
Anthology 14

Anthony Mason

Patience

Somewhere within my garden grows
A silent piece of me...
Kept by the gates of steady Thyme,
Throughout Eternity.

In stillness, as the morning dew
Clings to the lonely blade,
And as the spider waits as stone
Upon the web she made,

So shall I keep company with
Lavender and the Woad,
Where Rosemary’s for remembrance,
And bees make their abode.
Sonnet 1

My love looks as the lonely mirror’s gaze
And gives as much warmth as the silver shows.
In form and fashion, and in silent praise,
She grants no more than the glass doth compose.
Her effigy is as a liquid slate
For the living art within her cold eyes;
The eternal abyss, flat, is her fate
And echoes the truth which her soul decries.
In timeless repose, and ageless attire,
She stares for an answer, never to find,
The faith for a truth with which to devour
The mirrored face that glares back at her, blind.
Look not on beauty with but beauty’s sight;
The mirror’s visage is never contrite.
Anthology 14

Anthony Mason

Within the Mirror’s Face

Within the mirror’s face,
There is a yearning soul
That hides beneath the crimson cheek
On which a tear does roll.

It travels, as it must,
This single pinch of salt,
Yet carries with it oceans of
Recriminating fault.

The silver swimming eyes,
Beneath the surface cold,
Reflect upon a giving heart
And mourn the pieces sold.

They search within themselves
The error of their ways,
And harden like their constant twin,
Until the end of days.
Anthology 14

Luke Morgan

The Artist’s Glove

He sits on a bench, watching the slow ebb and flow of taxis and pedestrians. His paint-splattered shirt is moist from both the humidity-induced sweat and the light mist that has fallen upon the city since late that evening. On his right hand, he wears a leather glove, faded with age, spotted with stains and tears. Light brown threads hang from the seams at the end of each finger, as well as at the base of the glove, snugly fit around the man’s wrist. This was not the first time he has found himself sitting on this bench, on this street, at this time. No, this bench might as well be considered his second home.

The man suddenly jolts straight up from his slumped position, the same position he has assumed for many nights prior upon. His bloodshot eyes move across the street and adjacent sidewalk with an intensity reserved for heroin addicts and excited children first seeing the entrance to Disney World. His gaze settles upon a young woman, probably in her early twenties, waiting on the corner opposite the odd insomniac. She wears a t-shirt several sizes too small, her breast looking as if at any moment, they will reveal themselves right there, on the corner, for all to see. Had this woman been of any other occupation, her wardrobe would be seen as something brought out to entice a bored husband to bring excitement to a dull sex life. The woman’s tight, bleached jeans struggle to contain her ample curves. A few inches above the woman’s jeans resides the top of her bright-blue thong, looking as if it had given up on the battle with her firm derriere and escaped.

The man stands up from his nocturnal resting place, dusts off the backside of his tattered slacks, and makes his way to the edge of the sidewalk. The headlights of several cars reflect upon the damp street as they make their way toward some unknown destination. He steps off the curb and begins to make his way across the street, an undeniable anxiety present within his gait. The man’s dark brown leather shoes, already damaged by prior rains, squeak with each step he takes upon the damp pavement.
Stepping up onto the sidewalk, the man mistakenly steps in a cardboard container of stale nachos, scrapes the side of his left shoe against a half empty Coca-Cola bottle, and stubbles over a discarded bicycle tire left in an array of glass, the same array of glass that caused it’s demise. He walks up to the young woman, and, with a tremble in his voice says, “Uh...hello.

The woman turns to face him, her curly blonde hair bobbing against her petite shoulders. It has become a mess due to the mist and humidity, but this slight dilemma does little to take away from the young woman’s beauty. She looks at the man with her soft, green eyes. Her deep-set cheekbones move ever so gently as she replies, “Seventy-five dollars for an hour, One-fifty for two, condoms included. Anything unusual or freakish is twenty dollars extra.”

The man reaches for his back pocket and removes his wallet. Glancing up at the woman, he notices a look of anxiousness and aggravation. Fumbling through the numerous bills in his wallet, the man removes four bills: A hundred, two twenties, and a ten. He hands the money over to the woman, who promptly counts it.

“So you want something a bit kinky tonight, eh?”

“No,” the man replies.” I want something unusual, and I am sure it will take me a good two hours to get it.”

“Oh, is that so? Are you so in tune with your manhood that you know what and how long it takes to get your rocks off?” says the woman, placing the now rolled and rubber-banded cash into her bra. “I don’t know why I’m putting it there when I’m sure I’ll be taking it off within the next twenty minutes. So, where do you want to do this?”

The man points to a lit window directly above the bench in the apartment building across the street. The young woman understands. Wrapping his arm around her waist, the man guides the woman across the street, having to stop midway to wait for a young paperboy, apparently attempting to compensate for lost time by peddling as fast as his legs allow. They quickly make their way to the sidewalk and to the apartment complex’s entrance. The woman glances down at her waist. Noticing the glove, she says nothing, but a look of curiosity spreads across
her face, betraying the air of indifference which she has always attempted to maintain during her work.

The man opens the apartment building’s front door without a word; a pale light interrupts the darkness of the sidewalk. He remains silent and guides the woman up the dimly lit stairs, down a dingy hall, and to an apartment numbered 124. The man pulls a set of keys out from his shirt pocket, clinking as he inserts one into the door. He twists the key, then the doorknob, opening the door to reveal a sparsely filled room. Light from a lamp sitting upon an old milk crate illuminates the room, reflecting upon the dust stirred up by the doors abrupt movement. The woman looks around the room, noticing a folding table resting in the corner, covered in newspapers and magazines. Two chairs, one made of wood, in good condition, and another, a dented, metal chair, resembling the chairs commonly used in bingo halls, sit at opposing ends of the table. Against the left wall lies a full size bed, dressed in a modest sheet and ripped quilt. Two pillows rest at the head of the bed, each a different size. The woman wonders how much action the bed has seen. She can normally tell the possibility of a second night’s work by the state of a man’s bed, but this bed leaves her knowing nothing. Against the right wall is a door, presumably for a closet, and a television, resting upon a metal chair nearly identical to the one at the table. Paintings adorn the walls, some covered with sheets, others visible for all to see. These paintings seem to intrigue the young streetwalker.

The uncovered paintings range greatly in form, composition, and technique, some bearing resemblance to the impressionism of Monet, others to the expressionism of Kandinsky. Each has an individuality about it that the woman can’t help but admire. She turns to the man, who has opened the door next to the television and is pulling out a large canvas and an easel. He sets the easel up in front of a window, the window they had viewed earlier from the street. The man returns to the closet and brings out two stools and a box filled with paint and brushes. He sits one stool down in front of the easel. The other he places besides the first, upon which he places the box.
“Wow…your own collection of paint splattered paper. I hope you aren’t trying to impress me,” states the woman, all the while watching the man set up his equipment.

“Yes, I painted them all, and yes, I do collect art. However, the art I collect is within my own paintings. You, ma’am, are a piece of art,” the man answers.

“A piece of art? Ha, try piece of ass. I prefer to be the artist, trying to create the perfect intimate experience, and then walking away with an extra twenty or so. Your idea of ‘art’ serves no purpose in this world other than to take up space.”

“Oh, is that how you feel about art? I guess it goes without saying we have rather contradictory opinions on the issue. Care to elaborate upon yours?”

“Well…it just seems like men and women only care about getting ahead in life. Why take the time to admire art? An opportunity could pass you by while standing in one of those stuffy places where they keep that stuff. Besides, think of one’s needs: food, shelter, and sex. When given the choice to fuck or go look at some collection of random brush strokes, I think most people are going to fuck. It’s easier on the brains…most of the time.”

“Uh huh…I see. I must say, you are one of the most opinionated women of the night I’ve ever had the pleasure of wasting two hours with and a hundred and fifty dollars on.”

The man pulls out a paper plate from a cabinet above the table. He walks back to the stool with the box on top. He removes the box, placing it upon the floor. He sets the plate lightly upon the stool, then begins rummaging through the box of paints.

“I’m sorry you feel that way. We appear to be of two different mindsets. I’m not in the business of changing minds, so I won’t attempt to change yours.” The man pauses. “Now, can you please remove your clothes? No, I don’t really need to see you in all your glory. Don’t take it the wrong way. I just feel that your beauty can be seen without you being completely exposed. So uh, please remove your clothes and lie on the bed. There’s a sheet there for you to cover up. Just cover up the parts normally covered by clothes. I would prefer to be able to see your face,
of course, and your arms and legs…and the contours of your body. Thank you.”

The woman begins to undress while the man once again returns to his work, now mixing paint. No longer do the woman’s clothes have to do battle with her body. They are set free from her well-proportioned body and strewn upon the floor. The bed squeaks as she lies down upon it. She takes the sheet and drapes one end over her breasts. The other end she takes and drapes over her pelvic region. The remainder of the sheet she lays behind her. The woman lies upon the bed, her smooth belly, arms, and legs exposed to the warm night air that drifted through the open window. The vast majority of her hair lies between her head and one of the pillows. “I’m ready,” she says, breaking the silence.

The man looks up at the woman for the first time since he asked her to undress. “When does the two hours start?” he asks.

“It started as soon as you paid me.”

“Well, guess I’ll have to work fast.”

“Are you sure you can paint my portrait and get off in,” the woman glances at the clock mounted on the wall, “an hour and thirty five minutes?”

The man smiles before disappearing behind his easel. “Who said anything about getting off?”

“Well, you paid me one-hundred-fifty dollars. That’s two hours of my company and some weird act you’ve dreamed up. You’d better hurry.”

“This is the weird act you’re referring to: painting your portrait. After your small outburst earlier, I’m pretty sure that to you, this acts seems unnatural for someone with a set of balls.”

Several minutes pass before the woman finally speaks. “I’m Abby.”

The man remains hidden from Abby’s view. Suddenly, his glove falls to the floor. He grabs a brush from the box with his left hand, dips it into the paint he had mixed moments earlier and once again disappears behind the easel.

“Normally when someone introduces themselves, you return the gesture. Yeah, I know you’ve paid me to lie hear and copy
the art which you refer to me as, but come on, at least show a bit of respect to the whore you picked up across the street.”

“ My name is James.”

“Why, hello James. I’m a hooker. What do you do?”

A stifled laugh arises from behind the easel. “Well, I know it’s not glamorous or anything, but I’m a window washer. Yeah, I guess it’s okay, washing windows and all. The views from the sides of some buildings are simply breathtaking. At least it pays the bills, you know. It pays for my painting equipment.”

“Well, turning tricks isn’t glamorous either, but I guess I really didn’t have to tell you that. So…why do you wear the glove?”

The room remains free of Abby and James’ voices. The sounds of the streets fill the room, as if the silence left by James and Abby has been taken over by night owls rushing home from bars, men returning home from rendezvous with their mistresses, and the unfortunate souls who have to work while the city sleeps. Both Abby and James belonged to this crowd. Abby fits in with those who were forced to work at night, standing in the spotlight like glow of street-lamps, waiting for some strapped and horny guy to pick her up and make her a star in his dimly lit hotel room. James fits in with those having affairs. However, his affair is with art, not women. Switching from one painting to the next, hiding his mistresses under white sheets, keeping his rendezvous with each a secret from the others until he is finished. Then, he tosses his mistress aside, finds another, and begins the process over again.

Minutes pass, hours follow. The sounds of the streets change from near silent to boisterous as the city comes alive once again. The hour and thirty-five minutes have passed by some time ago, yet Abby says nothing, her gaze never leaving James’ glove, lying on the ground. He had not answered her question, and she knows it is something he will have to address of his own accord. As the first light of morning began to enter the room, James looks at Abby from behind the easel.

“You could have left hours ago. It didn’t take me long to get your image in my head. I’m done now, so I guess we shall go our separate ways, no?”

The sheet sticks to Abby’s sweat-covered body as she pries it off. She picks her clothes up off the ground and puts them back
on, returning them to the battle they had fought the night before. James picks up his glove with his paint-covered left hand. He appears from behind the easel, his right hand once again gloved, and begins cleaning up. He puts the stools away, followed by the box of paint and brushes. The painting he leaves upon the easel, allowing it to dry in the morning breeze that has begun to cool off the room. When he is sure Abby once again is dressed, he looks up at her.

“Thank you,” he says.

Abby makes her way to the door, then turns abruptly. “May I see it?” she asks.

James pauses, turns to the easel, then to Abby. “No.”

Abby stands in the doorway, shock covering her face. “I lay there for hours waiting for you to finish. I…I…Why can’t I see it?”

“Because, Abby, art is not meant for men and women who want nothing more than sex, money, and emotional ties,” James replies sharply.

Abby stares at James, at a loss for words, her once beautiful face now contorted into an image of confusion. She looks down at his right hand. James follows her gaze, and then looks her directly in the eyes.

“And they do not deserve to see the hand that creates it.”
Do not be so eager
Awards, medals, and honors they will come
Do not be so eager to fight
Young lieutenants your war will come
Your muscular frames will one day be undone
Yet care more to keep your soldiers alive
Do not be so eager to make your mothers cry
Care more to save others than to take lives
Care more to survive
Young lieutenants do not be so eager to die
Tessa Reynolds
*Piece of My Heart*

Tessa Reynolds
*Forever I Do*
This is an ode to my sisters of similar spirits
Bonded strong despite our era limits
Connected with the call of the pen,
And the lure of releasing the wit within.
I beg you to tell me; unravel our guise
Are we forsaken souls so comparably despised?
Am I, so free in my rambling verse,
But a modern embodiment of the ancient curse?
The ink that spills each echo of my life
Once breathed the glory into your daily strife
On quiet parchment she lays out her tale
Tells of her thirst not quite quenched by the veil,
Nor by rose, nor by wealth, nor perspectives of age
But by the transcendence of words on a page.
Jeanette M. Rogers

A Moment, An Eternity: an excerpt

Do you want to see me?
Do you want to hear my thoughts?
Do you wish you could understand me or help me?
Do you think you can?
Do you want to really know the mind of a person in the deep abyss of depression?
Do you think you can understand my words?
Are you truly able to comprehend or decipher them?
Do you want to know how my mind rambles on and on, endlessly?
How it overpowers speed limits and breaks barriers, without ever moving?
How when I lay down at night there is no peace; there is no quiet; there is only chaos?
How the words and thoughts continue on and on, changing, never a complete moment or thought, continuously moving?
How I fear to sleep, for I know sleep will be a war that I will most likely not win?
Do you really want to know how insecure I am?
How things that I do not normally address or allow to bother me, eventually overwhelm and overpower me?
How they leave me vulnerable and weakened both physically and emotionally?
Do you desire to hear that I only want to cry every moment of every day?
That I fear being left alone with my thoughts, which will allow the tears to flow?
How exhausted I become trying to fight the giving into of this desire?
Do you want to know how in a crowd of people, I feel desperately alone?
Erin McClure  My Dad the Cowboy
He never stood a chance. He was dead before he made it to the warmth of the kitchen, dead before he got to the operation table, dead before they gave him the injection. He wasn’t even important in the grand scheme of things, just another body. Yeah, he would have served a purpose somewhere (doesn’t everything), but he was one of many. Why should he be remembered? He was one of the many that are forgotten. His story has happened before, and it will always happen again. There is no way around it, no matter what.

*   *   *

The cold morning air penetrates the stained Levi jacket; the traces of mud make each step an extra effort, and instantly the brain registers that something is wrong with the landscape. Look at the tree line and then scan the brush growth. There it is—a foreign object on the bedding grounds. It is an intruder pushed to the side and left too long alone. The jacket always comes off, and the morning chill isn’t felt; what is important is wrapping it gently so as not to harm it anymore than its mother already has. She was too young to have it, but it was a mistake. Not a mistake of nature, but of those who were suppose to be in charge. Well, everyone makes mistakes that cannot be helped. However, perhaps this one can be saved; maybe this one can be corrected.

Yet initial duties are calling in piercing, bawling voices. Its uncaring parents need basic attentions. Other responsibilities are dominating the physical world when all the heart wants to do is provide it with a chance of survival. It is a gamble, but then again, every day is lived in a casino.

Gently ease along towards the house, cradling it in steady arms. It looks bad, worse than before. Moving it is hard on the back and on the mind, but leaving it to die alone in the cold is not an option that would ever be considered. That isn’t how
things work. Maybe some think that is how it happens, but those who are carrying the burden know better. Even if the idea is considered, leaving it long enough to find the 22 and a spare bullet is agony, let alone the metal fortification leading up to the deed.

Besides, the kitchen has been warm since before daybreak, waiting and ready for it. There is no whiskey, so lukewarm coffee in the bottle with milk will have to do. Just something to get it going. After the first swallow, its eyes open and there is no need to contemplate the next action. His eyes tell the story: he wants to live.

If he is to live, he has to have more help than a warm kitchen and lukewarm coffee. The number is on speed dial; it doesn’t matter that it is seven in the morning and that the trip will cost half a day’s time. One ring, two rings, on the third, a familiar and overly cheery voice comes on the line. Explanations precede any pleasantries. They are used to that. They have to be when emergencies call at seven in the morning. “Bring it on over; we will see what we can do.”

His eyes are fading. The drive was hard on him, despite the cushion of bath towels and the top cover off the bed. It was a mistake to bring him all this way, to make him suffer more. They insert the needle, after a brief examination. They understand, but they are a different breed. They have no attachment to “it.” They have seen too many forgotten souls to really feel anything. They did not know him; they did not carry him; they are not the reason he was born. They do not understand, despite the comfort and sympathy they offer. Their empathy for a forgotten is impossible; they did not carry him in from the cold and look into his eyes. They are essential, and often useful, but even they cannot help a rancher ease the pain of losing one in many.

No tears will be seen; no other will know the depth of the wound. No mention will be made other than in the personal record books: calf—male, dead at birth.
On the Subject of Humanity

You are a single star
Falling from the sky
I am a single human
Who is destined to die

We are all different
So, judge me for my own—
We are all equal
So you are not alone.

And blame the world
Or blame your own flaws
I share them with you
One of many stars

Let’s be a moment
Found before we’re lost
Or a single snow flake
Forming in the frost

We are all different
So, judge me for my own—
We are all equal
So you are not alone.
Crystal Sims
Paola’s Response

I would speak with you also honored guest,
If one of your grace would hear me,
Though in character I am unworthy at best.

From my love you heard our sad story
Of love and our deaths from this love,
Reminded here of our sin for all eternity.

And you, still able to walk the lands above,
With poetic words so elegantly written,
Will you tell the world of my longed for dove?

She flew to me, on words soft spoken
(I could not resist her dear honored friend)
She lured me with the love of men for women—

So by her side I shall be till times end
Clasped to her in our deadly embrace
Eternally tossed in and amongst the wind.

I too forever shall look upon her face,
As she bade me over that fated book so long ago,
Never to be separated by time or space.

And despite her telling our story so,
We love and love for each other still.
To my brother’s wife I cannot say no.
Cassandra Thompson

Intrigue

Dazzling moonlight dances on dark water,
As rushing rapids render reckless romance.

Primitive passion erupts in playful plunges,
Sending sensual shivers to the shore.

Uncertainty

Countless words and letters will forever be unseen.
As they quickly live and die
Within the mind and on the screen.

So many hours we have spent, yet nothing is to show,
What could have been, and might have been,
We now will never know.
I was helping him was his hands.
We had been finger painting.
He was crying.
Mostly because we had to scold him a lot
for not using his “inside voice.”
Everything upset him.
He was sobbing.
I ran the water over his hands
and instructed him to use soap
to rub the paint off.
His whole face was shiny
from the tears.
“It’s a bad day!” he sobbed between breaths,
“It’s just a bad day!”
I just kept saying the only thing I could think of,
“It doesn’t have to be.”
Gentle Cast, Endless Dome

Gentle cast
Endless dome
Above the misty eye

Relishing
Soft silver
And glitter spilled miles high

The wordless
Eternal
Sends melting woes afar

In silence
I gaze at
The cloud behind the stars
I wept because I had not claws
   A cougar took my prize from me
The others watched within the trees
   Assuming that I did not see
Her slinking forth, relentless stealth
   She snatched it up, her eyes aglow
I could have snarled and hurled a rock
   But it was not my stone to throw
I wept because I had no claws
   I was defenseless, in a daze
The danger neither black nor white
   Instead, a chilling, silver haze
What sort of prize had I with me
   To be devoured so easily?
—A cougar! Of all senseless things!
   That cold prize then was not for me
The wretched fight was never fair
   Though, always, I obeyed the laws
I fell and watched the jungle burn
   And wept because I had no claws
A pretty cake sat on a tray.  
The tray delivered it to me.  
With closer look in light of day  
Some subtle layers did I see.

The first was sweet and good to taste.  
It pleased all who would have a bite.  
As I devoured it in my haste  
A foulness made my teeth clench tight.

The second layer was no treat.  
Inside the first it had been kept.  
The taste was that of rancid meat.  
My heart cried as I spit and wept.

All eyes glanced at me in surprise  
Then eagerly they took some more.  
I shouted just as one who dies  
When first I saw its hollow core.

It was the cure for my sweet tooth.  
I gulped salt-liquid from my cup.  
For I had choked on buttered truth  
While others simply ate it up.
Lindsay Paige Wright

[There is a tomb where black birds sit]

There is a tomb where black birds sit
Crows, perched on slimy sheets of moss
Some say beyond it lies a pit
But no one ever dares to cross

Some try through cracks and holes to peer
But only darkness hovers there
They cringe and flee the sight in fear
They run, but never knowing where

The ivy grows and chokes out life
Men pull it off to no avail
Exasperation, like a knife
Cuts deep and causes hearts to fail

Some try to read what lies beneath
For we desire familiar ground
All walk away with gnashing teeth
For no inscription can be found

Decayed by time, yet it remains
We are aware and so we moan
We will forever bear its stains
This is the Tomb of the Unknown
Valley Storm

Brown blades of grass curl round a sky
So blue, and clear, and very dry
A laughing brook between soft banks
Reveal white rocks with many thanks

Down underneath this valley bright
A storm awakens with the night
The four-roomed cavern, cracked in two
Will bid the skies to change their hue

The ground heaves forth, then lowers down
The white rocks crash with turmoil found
There’s no relief from this storm’s blows
It rages here and no one knows

The storm will flee the morning sun
The sky will dry, the brook will run
Sole remnant from this violent ride:
A raindrop on the valley side
Editors

Ryan Farrar is a graduate student and graduate assistant of English at Tarleton. Formerly published in Anthology, this is his first year as a staff member. Ryan has also edited the 2005 volume of Marine Creek Reflections at Tarrant County College. His research interests include dystopian and modern literature but do not fail to extend to other areas such as post-structuralist rhetoric. His independent activities include crafting creative literature, playing electric bass, and keeping physically active. He is also a closet enthusiast of Stephen Hawking.

Shayna Dunn is a senior studying English and Political Science. After graduating in May, she will be moving to England to study for a Masters in Linguistics at the University of York. She likes all genres of music, shoes, and politics, and she hopes to be able to become a professional student and world traveler. Also, grammar revs her engine.

There isn’t enough room to describe how fantastic and charismatic Carl Manes is, but if you meet this English major, he could very well change your life. His interests include ego trips, exaggeration, editing, Celtic mythology, linguistics, and writing.

Publication Directors

Benni Konvicka and Marilyn Robitaille Benni Konvicka and Marilyn Robitaille are professors in the Department of English and Languages. They have been co-publication directors of Anthology for the last thirteen years. Since founding the journal with students Jimmy Hood and Cris Edwards in 1995, they have read hundreds, maybe thousands, of submission and worked with student editors from a variety of majors.
Acknowledgements

We extend heartfelt thanks to each of the following people for their help in making this year’s volume of Anthology possible:

Editors’ Choice Award Sponsor:

Our families
Our Anthology editors
Barb Wendel
Sam Dodson
President Dennis McCabe

Publication Directors:
Benedda Konvicka
Marilyn Robitaille
Index

Symbols
3:45 a.m. 42

A
Acknowledgements 119
A Dream 3
A Moment, An Eternity: an excerpt 105
And What Alice Saw 37
A Pretty Cake 115
Artist’s Glove, The 95
As Cold as You 63

B
Blue 26
Bound 82
Brazos Reflections 55

C
Cameron, John 1,
End of the World Party 62
Fire and Wine 1
Forest Floor, The 1
Front Range Creek for the Soul 2
Cassidy, John Michael
Gate Keeper of Savage Creek, The Savage Gulf, TN 58
Ecofusion, Beaman Park, TN 65
National Protection, Green River, KY 59
Not Happy 76
Christensen, Morgan
A Dream 3
Night 4
While the Animals Sleep 5
Window 6
Creative Arts Day Speaker v
Crow Call 39

Crowding Indigo 31

D
Daigle, Robert
Rest of the Story, The 7
Davis, Josh
Oath 15
Rebirth 24
Tracks 25
Day the Boats Came In, The 64
Dear Jane 104
Decker, Marsha
Blue 26
Garden, The 27
Night, The 28
DeGrate, Minnisha P.
Caught in the Midst 30
Deep 30
Dennison, Vivian
Crowding Indigo 31
Fossil Record 31
Math’s Gaffed 32
Poets Like to Moralize 32
Summer Heartbeat, The 33
Departure 38
Do Not Be So Eager 102
Dulock, Simon
Farewell 34
I See 35
Revenge 36
Duncan, Arielle
Departure 38
Time for Tears 54

E
Ecofusion, Beaman Park, TN 65
Editors 118
Editors’ Choice Award vii
Elizabeth K. 54
End of the World Party 62
Etymology A-B

F
Fagner, Joshua
Peace in Nothing 62
Anthology 14

Farewell 34
Feet of Grass 37
Finger Painting 112
Fire and Wine 1
Forefathers Remembered 57
Forest Floor, The 1
Forever I Do 103
Fossil Record 31
Front Range Creek for the Soul 2

G

Garden, The 27
Gardner, D.W.
   Crow Call 39
   Tune-up 39
Garrett, Rebecca
   Rhapsody in Black and White 41
   The Day the Boats Came in 64
Gate Keeper of Savage Creek,
   The Savage Gulf, TN 58
Gentle Cast, Endless Dome 113
Gibson, Crystal
   3:45 a.m. 42
   Just Say No 43
   One Voice 45
   Process, The 46
   Strange Emotion 47
   You Can’t Stop a Texas
   Tragedy 48
Gray II, James W.
   Chains of Bondage 66
   Guarding the Ice Chest 61

H

Haas, Melanie
   Painted Woman, The 68
Hall, Lauren
   Happy Cat 78
   Sammy 79
Hallmark, Devyn
   Illusive 79
Happy Cat 77
Highway Home 13
Hoagland, Tony
   One True Thing v

Home Place 55

I

Intrigue 111
I See 35
I Wept Because I Had No Claws 114

J

Just Say No 43

K

Kennedy, Melody
   Scratch and Sniff Coffee 60
Keys, D’Leesa
   Paper 80

L

Lancer Ferry Crossing 65
Lanting, Kari
   Home Place 55
   Prince 59
   Quiet and Trust is Our
   Strength 76
Late Summer Storm 57
Lilith 83
Line Project, Untitled 41
Little Girl 60
London: Day 1 84

M

Madre 64
Mason, Anthony
   Bound 82
   Lilith 83
   London: Day 1 84
   [There is a lost alternative] 90
   My Life too Full 91
   Patience 92
   Sonnet 1 93
   Within the Mirror’s Face 94
Math’s Gaffed 32
McClure, Erin
   My Dad the Cowboy 106
Morgan, Brad
Elizabeth K. 54
Morgan, Luke
The Artist’s Glove 95
Murray, Jenna
As Cold as You 63
The Mystic’s Eye 63
My Dad the Cowboy 106
My Life too Full 91

N
National Protection, Green River, KY 59
Night 4
Night, The 28

O
Oath 15
One True Thing v
One Voice 45
On the Subject of Humanity 109

P
Paola’s Response 110
Paper 80
Patience 92
Peace in Nothing 62
Perplexed,
   Piney River, TN 58
Piece of My Heart 103
Poets Like to Moralize 32
Prince 59
Publication Directors 118

R
Read-Walsh, Chai
   Do Not Be So Eager 102
Rebirth 24
Rest of the Story, The 7
Revenge 36
Reynolds, Tessa
   Stephenville, TX 13
   Highway Home 13
   Ridin’ Fence 14
   Forever I Do 103
   Piece of My Heart 103

Rhapsody in Black and White 41
Rhombic Expression 56
Ridin’ Fence 14
Roberts, Mandi
   Dear Jane 104
Rogers, Jeanette M.
   A Moment, An Eternity: an excerpt 105

S
Sammy 78
Scratch and Sniff Coffee 60
Sims, Crystal
   Trying to Explain a Ranch 107
   On the Subject of Humanity 109
   Paola’s Response 110
Sonnet 1 93
Stephenville, TX 13
Strange Emotion 47
Summer Heartbeat, The 33
Sunset on Manitou Beach 56
Surfer 61

T
The Mystic’s Eye 63
The Process 46
[There is a lost alternative] 90
[There is a tomb where black birds sit] 116
Thompson, Cassandra
   Guarding the Ice Chest 61
   Surfer 61
   Uncle Billy 81,
   Intrigue 111
   Uncertainty 111
Thompson, Katherine (Katy)
   And What Alice Saw 37
   Feet of Grass 37
   Watching and Waiting 81
Time for Tears 54
Tracks 25
Trying to Explain a Rancher 107
Tune Up 40
Anthology 14

U
Uncertainty 111
Uncle Billy 81

V
Valley Storm 117

W
Watching and Waiting 81
While the Animals Sleep 5
Window 6
Within the Mirror’s Face 94
Wright, Lindsay Paige
   Finger Painting 112
   Gentle Cast, Endless Dome 113
   I Wept Because I Had No Claws 114
   A Pretty Cake 115
   [There is a tomb where black birds sit] 116
   Valley Storm 117
Wright, Sandra
   Line Project, Untitled 41
   Madre 64

Y
You Can’t Stop a Texas Tragedy 48

Z
Zeiler, Colleen A.
   Brazos Reflections 55
   Sunset on Manitou Beach 56
   Rhombic Expression 56
   Late Summer Storm 57
   Forefathers Remembered 57
   Lancer Ferry Crossing 65
We chose the flower motif for the cover because of the etymology of *Anthology*. The word *Anthology* comes from the Greek words *anthos* (flowers) and *legein* (gather). The definition, according to our dictionary, is a collection of prose, poetry, and visual arts.
CONTRIBUTORS

John Cameron
John Michael Cassidy
Morgan Christensen
Robert Daigle
Josh Davis
Marsha Decker
Minnisha P. DeGrate
Vivian Dennison
Simon Dulock
Arielle Duncan
Joshua Fagner
D.W. Gardner
Rebecca Garrett
Crystal Gibson
James W. Gray, II
Melanie Haas
Lauren Hall
Devyn Hallmark
D’Leesa Keys
Melody Kennedy
Kari Lanting
Anthony Mason
Erin McClure
Brad Morgan
Jenna Murray
Luke Morgan
Chai Read-Walsh
Tessa Reynolds
Mandi Roberts
Jeanette M. Rogers
Crystal Sims
Cassandra Thompson
Katherine (Katy) Thompson
Lindsay Paige Wright
Sandra Wright
Colleen A. Zeiler

ISSN 1081-938X
http://www.tarleton.edu/~anthology