Fall 2004

The Summerset Review

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Editors' Notes

For this, the 2nd Anniversary Issue of *TSR*, in addition to our on-going review of literary submissions, we thought we'd unleash a little extra summer energy. We took to the Internet with the intention of spotlighting collections of "people photography"—our canvas being anything that was ready and waiting to be viewed by anyone armed simply with a browser and half an eye toward that sort of thing.

As expected, we discovered an enormous amount of material out there, and we can't claim to have breached more than a fraction of it. We've seen the good, the bad, the ugly, and the absolutely gorgeous, and ultimately decided to feature two artists who, like many others, have generously chosen to share their vision with the general public.

In addition to reveling in the images captured by the cameras of Graham Jeffery and Philippe Tarbouriech, we hope that you will share our belief in a subtle but important point, namely that truly wonderful work may be right under our noses. The old saying, *The best things in life are free,* can be applied here for sure.

To extend this thought into literary print magazines, though these carry a charge per issue, so many of them are not interested in profit and only levy this fee to sustain themselves. Writers are paid little or nothing when they appear in these publications, not unlike the artists freely sharing with us their images on their web sites.

In general, online magazines such as this one cost much less to produce than their print counterparts, and we are in no position to launch an appeal

for support, other than to ask that you engage in the stories and essays—and in this case, photo collections—we are publishing quarter after quarter. We sincerely hope there is something in this issue that will inspire you.

Here, you'll read about a ten-year-old boy with a mother quite ill, living in a place where hurricanes hit with unfortunate frequency. Bill Glose says about his story, "Escaping Ocracoke," that it is the mother's wish to spend her remaining time with her son. We were driven to run the piece, though, because of something more—an element of hope we found ourselves reaching urgently for, in the end.

In an age of political correctness where smoking is becoming less and less socially acceptable, Carolyn Therault finds herself clinging to a battle-worn waterpipe acquired as a graduate student in Egypt. Read about it in her essay, "Confessions of a Waterpipe Smoker."

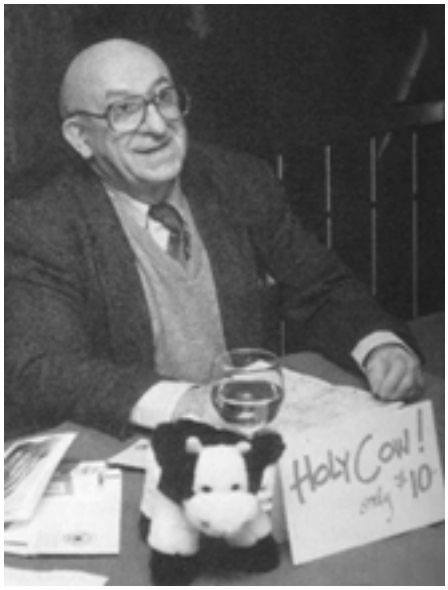
Julie Ann Castro, in her story, "Morning on Carrer Quintana," brings us a girl's life damaged by multiple circumstances. Herself a teenage model, her mother trying to make a comeback in the acting world and failing, and her father in Barcelona, Anna strives for meaning and resolution in the midst of adversity.

"Our lives are governed by invisible influences that scarcely touch our conscious minds." This is the running thought of William Starr Moake's story, "At Home in the Antipodes," where a man in Buenos Aires recalls a past acquaintance and a desire of hers to go to the land of fire, the southern tip of Argentina.

Once again, we would like to thank our contributors and all those who submitted fine work for consideration in this issue.

IN MEMORIAM

My uncle, Barney Confessore, affectionately known as simply Uncle by my family, passed away on June 22, 2004, at the age of 80. A World War II combat medic, editor of New York newspapers and long-time board member of the New York Press Club, this good man was the source of much of my inspiration for reading, writing, editing, and publishing. He will be missed very much. - *JL*



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(Prior to release of this story, a hurricane named Charley was coincidentally stirring off the west coast of Florida. The Charley herein refers to a hurricane that had swept through in 1986. - *Editor*)

Charley begins like most hurricanes, an embryonic swirl of white clouds inching across TV weather maps. He sprouts from the gulf as a tropical depression just west of Tampa then rolls east across Florida, barely disrupting beach-going traffic along the way. Once free of land, he blossoms, first swelling to a tropical storm, and then, gathering speed and fury, he surges up the coast toward the unsuspecting Carolinas.

It is August of 1986, and residents of Coastal Carolina are inured to storm warnings. The year prior, when the much-hyped Gloria threatened the shore, Ocracoke Island was evacuated. But Gloria shifted course and missed Ocracoke altogether. Now, as tourists cut their vacations short and flee to the mainland by ferry, residents lounge on their porches, kicking back with beers in hand and feet propped up in a posture that says this, at worst, will be a temporary inconvenience; at best, entertainment. They don't yet know that Charley will cause $15 million in damages and claim five lives.

In the late morning hours a preternatural quiet overtakes the island, replacing the usual background chirping and buzzing. Ten-year-old Justin creeps along a forest path, sneaking like a thief. Usually he kicks his way through the soft matting of dry leaves, grubs in the soil for insects, or uses fallen branches as swords, striking them against sturdy trunks. But today he steps lightly, and the noise of crunching twigs and pine needles underfoot seems all the more magnified by his attempt at silence.

A light breeze whispers through the forest, creating a gentle murmur of rustling leaves. Justin tunes it out, along with his footsteps and hushed breaths, focusing on the sound he's been tracking all month—a distant hubbub punctuated by intermittent peals of laughter. He weaves around towering pines and tilting cypresses, steps over the mossy remains of moldering timber, and ducks the low-hanging branches of live oaks. Soon the sound of crashing surf mixes with the light-hearted noise. The yipping chorus grows more discernible until finally, when the trail widens out to a sandy clearing, distinct words separate from the garbled chatter.

Justin leaves the path and crouches behind a final stand of cedar. Even with his face buried in the conifer's bristling boughs, he smells smoke and the salty scent of seawater. Beyond the trees, a large bonfire billows in the center of a curving ribbon of sand and pebbles, and past that, waves crash in a small inlet. Logs pop and crackle in the flames, launching occasional cinders and earning delighted whoops from half a dozen teenagers—an equal number of boys and girls—who circle the fire.

Two girls in bright neon bikinis and another in a black one-piece sprawl on the dun sand, watch the boys, and giggle. Two guys, bare-chested and wearing OP trunks, toss a football in a game of keep-away while a third, in frayed cutoff jean-shorts, charges back and forth between them. Justin watches from his safe distance, knowing not to intrude. He's too young and, though he's lived here since May, an outsider as well.

One day, a month before school let out, his mom told him to pack up his things, and they drove down to Ocracoke Island that very night. She calls it a vacation, though Justin knows better. He tries not to think about why they came here, but at night, when his mom coughs and cries herself to sleep, he can't help it. At those times, he pictures a hulking beast stalking his mother, a bull-sized creature with a devil's head, snorting just outside his window, waiting for him to drift asleep so it can slip inside. He tries to force it from his thoughts, but the harder he wishes it away, the more real it becomes.

During the first two months on the island, Justin slept little and plodded through their cabin in a foggy haze. It wasn't until he started trailing these youths that he found something else for his mind to focus on at night—imagining himself as one of them, taking part in their summer escapades.

His gaze drifts upward and he notices that the sky has grown darker, looking bruised and swollen. A mountain of gray clouds fills the horizon and rolls toward him. Justin takes a deep breath, and a shudder passes through him. The air tastes thick, like syrup.

A banshee wail erupts from the clearing and Justin looks across just in time to see one of the boys leap through the fire. The boy turns back around to face his friends, thumping his chest and yelping in delight. "All right. All fucking right!" He dances in a circle, pumps his hands in the air, then turns and wiggles his butt at the girls. They giggle and the middle girl, a slender redhead who is the tallest of the three, calls out, "Woo hoo, shake it baby!"

The other two, positioned at her side as usual, squeeze the redhead's arms and laugh.

Justin knew the first time he saw them that the redhead was their leader. That day, she slid a purple wildflower behind her ear and moments later the other two were searching for one of their own. The redhead waited for them to catch up with her latest whim, picking at a nail to bide her time while her girlfriends riffled through the timothy. She possessed an air of royalty and Justin knew, right then, that no matter what she asked of her girlfriends, they would obey her. Whenever the redhead dreams up some new stunt, the blonde always replies, "No way," but she never means it. It's simply routine; the others always follow her lead.

Justin understands following—following, blending, fitting in. You can be wrong if you make a decision, but by following what is already acceptable you will always be right. Though Justin loves the vibrant green and yellow walls in his bedroom, he opts to wear less conspicuous colors outside. His wardrobe is a collection of blue and beige solid prints bought at The GAP. He rarely wears new T-shirts out of the house, waiting instead for them to dull from repeated washings.

Blending in seems to be the brunette's philosophy as well, and seeing her in the group gives Justin hope. It makes him think he might one day be able to join them. Demure in manner with short-cropped hair, the brunette smiles and giggles at jokes, but never gives a full-bodied cackle. Of the three girls, her figure is the most developed, yet she is the one wearing the one-piece—a black spandex thing that hugs her neck like a wetsuit. She probably chose it out of modesty, but Justin prefers to think of it as a minor rebellion—her one choice that doesn't mimic the redhead.

The redhead opens a purple backpack and removes a dark brown bottle, smirking as she gives it a few shakes. "Time to party," she says. Justin mouths the words, "No Way," just as the blonde says the same thing. The redhead pours from the bottle into a large plastic cup then tops it off with soda. After a few sips, she passes it around the circle. The last boy in line finishes the cup with a few gulps, lets out a whoop, then cries, "Hell yeah." He runs into the water and the two boys quickly follow.

The girls stand and the redhead takes off her top, shooting it at the other two like a rubber band before rushing into the water. The brunette's mouth forms a shocked, O, and her eyes get wide. The blonde hesitates a moment, eyes flitting back and forth between the running redhead and the stunned brunette. But then she laughs and tosses her top onto the sand as well. Her tan is darker than the redhead's and the milky white skin stands out as more of a contrast.

Blood rushes to Justin's face and he instinctively lowers his head. When he peeks up to watch the girls running into the surf, he still sees the afterimage of those naked breasts. His racing heart starts to slow down as they dive into the water and bob up a moment later.

The six kids bounce on the rolling waves and all of them scream out together, "All fucking right!" Justin closes his eyes and imagines that they're cheering him as he jumps through the bonfire. He feels the searing heat for just a moment before landing on the other side, senses the congratulatory slaps on his back, and smiles.

Then all at once, the rain starts, a hard sprinkling on his upturned face. He opens his eyes and remembers the warning to be home before the storm hits. Out in the water, the three girls swarm one of the boys, trying to dunk him, while the other two boys fight to pry them loose. Justin turns away and retreats down the path, the cheers fading with every step, drowned out by the patter of raindrops on leaves.

Rain soaks Justin as soon as he emerges from the woods, and he slogs along the winding Lighthouse Road, staying on the shoulder to gain some protection from the nearby trees. Farther along, high tide creeps over the asphalt and covers one full lane. Justin stomps through it, slapping his Nikes down so water splashes out to the sides. Nearing the harbor, he stops at a ditch and fishes through the flotsam and grit. He returns to the center of the road with a handful of flat, smooth pebbles, squats down between the double yellow lines, and stares out across the bay.

A long wooden pier, supported by pilings as thick as telephone poles, stretches into the center of the roiling water. The decking usually stands high above the surface, but now the water splashes against the underside, sometimes high enough to reach the No Trespassing sign posted on the first piling. Closer in, below the wooden slats, the tall saw grass that used to mark the shoreline bends back and forth, as if swaying to some reggae beat. Water curls over the grass, stretches across the road, and laps at Justin's sneakers.

Similar piers finger out into the water from different angles, some with yachts lashed to them, others with trawlers docked alongside. A handful of weathered buildings—a fish warehouse, a bait shack, a dock office—surround the water, each of them also standing on thick stilts. In front of the warehouse, a large blue tarp covers a mountain of crab pots. Cinder blocks weigh down one end of the tarp and the other end is tied to a reefer with a red crab painted on its side.

He stands up, leans to one side, and throws his rocks sidearm to skip them across the water, but the surface is too choppy and most of them disappear with a hollow plunk. However, a few bounce off a crest and hop out into the sound, so Justin keeps at it until they're all gone, then he hunkers down again and stares out over the water. A whirling waterspout twists up from the sound, spinning in a crazy tight circle, and Justin imagines it's a show put on for only him to see. As it fades, a sudden gust knocks him off his haunches and he plops back on his butt, laughing. *No more putting it off,* he thinks. *Time to get home.*

He scoops up a few more rocks and tosses them at the pier, where they bounce off the boards into the water. When he has no more, he dusts off his hands and turns to leave.

At the next intersection, a One Way sign points back toward the harbor. Months ago, when his mom was still walking, they'd stroll together around the island and on their return trip she would always point to the sign and joke, "Figures, doesn't it? We're headed the wrong way." She made the same comment every time, but her tone grew more wistful as the weeks passed, and on their last few walks, she cried.

Mr. Bertram, the ex-Marine who brings them groceries from the mainland once a week, says everything about the island is the wrong way. He says that people here prefer it like that so they can't be found. Until the 911-system was installed a few years ago, none of the roads had names. When giving directions, residents would use natural landmarks to send visitors on their way, or else they'd create a street name, Dead End Road or whatever came to mind at the moment.

The concept of unnamed streets rankles Bertram's military nature. He calls it chaos. Ten years retired from the Marines, he still rises at dawn and presses neat creases in his clothes. His bald head, square jaw, and aquiline nose would make a perfect recruiting poster, if not for his bushy eyebrows, thick as an owl's. Justin smiles whenever the old soldier says, "Yes, ma'am," or "No, ma'am" to Justin's mother, or when he speaks to Justin without the

soft, singsong tone most adults use with children. Mostly though, Justin likes the way he calls him Trooper.

Mr. Bertram calls Ocracoke an escapist's paradise, a place where no one worries or cares about anything. But Justin knows some things matter. Cinder blocks, for example, are an important commodity. They are everywhere, clustered under decks, lining driveways, piled in great heaps in the middle of yards.

Justin races past the One Way sign and the dilapidated houses lining his street. The roofs form an irregular skyline, cantilevered from many seasons of buckling. Halfway down the street, surrounding a large A-frame house, is a once-white picket fence, now spotted like a Dalmatian from all the chipped away paint flecks. Justin drags his hand across the slats so his fingers make a drumming sound, pulling back just before reaching a girl's bike with a wicker basket leaning against the fence. The bike has stood in that spot since he's been on the island, and wisteria vines now weave through its spokes. The chain loops off the sprocket wheel and hangs down to the ground.

As he passes the fence, a gaunt man with frizzy gray hair calls out "Hey there, Pardner. Slow down. Relax. Enjoy the heat wave." The man next to him, just as thin but with tanned leathery skin and a bleach blond ponytail, slaps the first man on the back. "Ha. Heat wave!" he says.

They both sit on wooden chairs in the front yard, each holding a bottle of Bud. Though the porch is covered, they sit just below the front steps, getting soaked. The one with the ponytail tilts back and leans his head against a yellow canoe, which lies upside down on two sawhorses. The other holds up his bottle in a salute and smiles. "Keep on trucking, Pard," he says.

By the time Justin gets home, the howling wind is blowing the rain sideways. The house tilts to one side, not from this storm, but perhaps from the cumulative effects of so many like it. The only part of the faded blue rancher that stands plumb to the earth is the thick foundation of scored concrete. Water puddles in the yard, covering the sparse clumps of grass dotting the hard-packed dirt. Leading from the gravel driveway to the side door, moss-crusted stone steps stand out from the water like an island chain.

Justin skirts their tan Volvo and races for the screen door, pausing when racking coughs explode from inside. His hand hovers above the handle and he stares at the rust patterns burnt into the screen, opening the door only after a long breath.

In the bathroom, the medicine cabinet is crammed full, with the overflow lining the sink. He sorts through bottles, vials, and tubes with an expert's touch, having long ago foregone the need to refer to the abbreviated prescription labels. He knows what his mom will need: pills when she's crying, capsules when she's throwing up, and syrup when she's coughing. But there is no cough syrup. He opens drawers, sifts through the fish-patterned towels on the floor, lifts the bathmat. It's no use.

Standing before his mom's bedroom, he sucks in a breath to ready himself. He's accustomed to the smell by now, but it still assaults him whenever he enters her room. Holding his breath usually forces him to swallow a big gulp of air later, when his lungs start aching, but he can't stop doing it.

The first sight is always the ivory-framed picture on the nightstand. When they ran from Pennsylvania, they left with three hurriedly-filled suitcases and an apple crate packed with various appliances and toiletries. The only non-functional item his mother brought was this photograph, the sole memento of her previous life. In it, Justin's mom and dad press together,

cheek-to-cheek, smiling for the camera. His mom's face beaming out from the beveled glass is his lone reminder of what she once looked like—rounded cheeks with tiny dimples, a soft mouth with a wide toothy grin, and raven locks circling her face in a permed halo. It was taken when Justin was three years old, just before his dad died in a car wreck. Though his dad is a hazy memory, Justin recognizes how he is the natural result of his parents' union. Justin has the fair, freckled skin of his father, the wide face and dark eyes of his mom, and curly light brown hair that is a subtle mixture of both.

He cracks the door wider and sees the bony arch of his mother's back. She leans over the bed with her head hanging in a trashcan, her shoulders shaking. The silk top—once shiny white, but now a dusty pearl—clings to her back, outlining her spine, each vertebra, each rib. There doesn't seem to be any meat left to her. Behind her, a large ruddy blotch stains the cream pillowcase in a pattern resembling a jellyfish washed up on shore. Justin tries to ignore the constant disarray and dirty linen, but it's hard to do. Their house in Philly had always been spotless. His mom was fanatical about housecleaning and persnickety when it came to clean clothes.

In addition to bringing food to their cabin, Mr. Bertram also takes their laundry to the cleaners, exchanging one duffel bag of clothes for another. The bags have been growing lighter, containing less in them each time. Lately, his mom has been throwing away some of her clothes instead of sending them out, asking their neighbor, Mrs. Murdock, to buy her new outfits. Although it's Justin who makes the actual requests, and each time he does, Mrs. Murdock squeezes her lips together and shakes her head, muttering, "Good Heavens," or simply clucking her tongue. Justin wishes she could see the discarded clothes one time—the ones speckled with ruddy brown spots—just to silence her. But, like his mom, he is also embarrassed.

His mom hugs the trashcan, coughing harder, her face so red it looks like it might explode. When she finishes, she turns to the side, resting her head on the trashcan's rim, and gulps air in heaving breaths. She sees Justin and offers a weak smile, the articulation of bones showing like slow-moving machinery covered with a drop cloth.

"We're out of syrup," he says. "I can go get some, though. Run to the store."

"No, no, just—" she breaks into coughs again.

Justin approaches and bends close. "What, Mama?"

She spits a glob of pink phlegm, coughs again, then gulps more air. She looks up at him with teary eyes, unable to speak yet.

Justin bites his lip and turns his head. The wallpaper is a dizzying pattern of schooners and clippers on a dark brown sea. The sails seem to ripple and the ocean seems to roll thanks to the warped lathing underneath.

Justin's mother wheezes, catches her breath, and says, "Next door." She tries to push up from the bin and Justin jumps forward, grasping her shoulders to help her ease back. He's careful not to squeeze. The bones feel brittle as dry twigs, and he's worried the least pressure might snap one of them. She flops back into her pillows, breathing in ragged gasps. The sunken space around her collarbone fills with each breath, then recedes again into a pronounced vee as she exhales. "Next door," she repeats, waving dismissive fingers at him, as if she lacks the strength to hold up her entire hand. "Go," she says.

"O.K. Be right back."

As Justin steps into the hallway, he hears a deep sucking breath—the precursor to another bout of coughs—and then it begins all over again. He can deal with the coughing though. It's the crying that rips him apart; the crying is worst of all.

Mrs. Murdock says they should pray more, that God ignores those who ignore Him. She's passionate about religion, but preaches to fear God and His wrath instead of loving Him and His mercy. As if in warning, God has shaped her into a lumpy potato—stout and blunt, coarse in complexion. And, just like buds growing on a tuber, warts dot her cheeks and neck, sprouting from her as if expressing penance for being born into this wicked world.

Justin slides through the Murdock's gate and ducks his head from the pelting rain. He knocks and the door swings open in Mrs. Murdock's traditional manner, giving Justin an unobstructed view of the large crucifix down the hall—perhaps her way of sharing Jesus' pain with visitors. She peers at Justin from around the door's edge and emerges after a few moments, her lips tied into a square knot and a hurricane lamp clutched in her hand. She doesn't ask what he wants, merely raises her eyebrows and waits for him to speak.

Justin lowers his gaze, traveling over the white cotton yoke, down the drab brown dress, landing on her hard square brogans. He addresses her feet, asking for cough syrup but she replies, "We've got none."

Another salvo of his mother's coughs shoot through her window and Justin's cheeks redden. "Harsh, that," Mrs. Murdock says. "Wicked enough to expel the devil." Her voice lifts at the end, making Justin wonder if it's some sort of question. "She'll be needing your prayers. You must be strong. Understand?"

Justin keeps his head lowered but nods. "Yes, ma'am." When his eyes flit up, she seems to be ruminating. Before she can add any more, Justin says, "I gotta go. Gotta get some medicine."

He walks down her path, through the ivy-covered arched trellis, refusing to look back. At the end of the driveway he turns left and trots toward Albert Styron's. Her words echo in his head as he picks up the pace. *You must be strong. You must be strong.*

It's obvious that the store is closed, but he leaps over the two cement steps onto the timber esplanade and pulls at the knob anyway. After a few yanks, he leans on the door and his breath fogs the frosted glass pane. He lifts his cheek, staring back the way he came. The wind blows from the backside of Styron's and hurls rain over the awning in sheets. It falls down and away so it seems as if the store is the storm's epicenter and the roof is its origin.

Justin eases to the porch's edge and tries to identify individual drops in the whipping rain, but they fall so fast that they merge into long watery cords. They remind him of guy wires stretching overhead as he rides across the back half of a suspension bridge, except these shimmer with constant movement. A film he'd seen in science class about the making of the cosmos said everything in the universe had erupted from one ball of mass the size of a golf ball. When he'd seen The Big Bang explode, his gaze followed the smoky particle trails racing out into the black void, disappearing off the edges of the screen. As then, these cables of water spray out into the distance and Justin can't track where they end. His head spins with a dizzying sense of vertigo, like he's slipping. The whole world seems to be pulling away and as soon as he has this thought he's again reminded of the One Way sign. "Wrong way," he whispers. "Figures."

Turning in the other direction, he jumps down the steps and continues up the road to the harbor. Mr. Bertram taught Justin how Marines call cadence when they run, and now, each time his left foot hits the ground, he speaks

another word. *Must—be—strong*—step, step, step—*must—be—strong.*

When he reaches Lighthouse Road, the wind off the harbor socks into him, roaring like an eighteen-wheeler on an overpass. Both sides of the street are flooded now and farther out in the bay waves leap in every direction, creating a rolling carpet of whitecaps similar to the churning in his stomach. The blue tarp has torn free from the cinder blocks and flaps in the wind. The crab pots are nowhere to be seen.

Justin sloshes through the ankle deep water, which rises to his shins as he nears the dock. His chest is heaving but he wades through and pulls himself up onto the slick wood. The waves shoot up and splash through the slats, making a slurping, sucking noise that reminds him of his mother. He feels the wet, slimy wood, and imagines that muck creeping through his mother, taking her over.

The pier's slippery planks jut out into the bay, disappearing into the water fifteen feet closer than normal. Justin follows them as far as he can, toeing the boards as he inches forward, until all he can hear is the roaring storm. Rain stings his face and the wind rocks him, but he braces himself thinking, *I must be strong. . . I will be strong.* Jaw set and fists clenched, he screams up into the raging sky, "How strong do I have to be?"

As if in answer, the wind bursts forth and Justin stumbles, his sneaker slipping on the slick boards. He catches himself just before falling, and shakes a fist at the sky. "All right," he says. "All fucking right!"

Imagining himself as a statue, able to endure anything, he bends his knees to gain a steadier balance. His legs ache, but he doesn't move, a determined grimace etched on his face. The water rises over his sneakers, crawls up his shins. The waves tug at his feet as the pier slowly retreats under water. But still he doesn't budge.

Another gust strikes, this time knocking him down, and he falls over the edge. He wedges one hand between two planks and holds on while the surf tries to pull him under. Brine fills his mouth and he considers letting go, but then, the gust ebbs and his head bobs up over the water. He yanks himself up, skinning his knee on the wood, then looks back toward land. Where he kneels, the dark wood rests about eight inches under the water, but Justin knows the path to safety, can see it protruding twenty or so feet away from him. Trembling and heart racing, he crawls toward shore, notching his toes between the slats and grasping the upwind side of the boards with his hands. The serrated edges cut his palm, but he ignores the pain, gripping tighter and pulling ahead. The sea first beats against his elbows and thighs, and then, as he moves farther along and rises from the surf, it tears at his forearms, knees, and hands.

When Justin surfaces, he collapses onto the planks. Blood trickles from where the boards cut his hand. He glances at the protruding splinters then drapes his arm over his face, crying into the crook of his elbow. Between sobs, he says again, "All fucking right then."

When Justin first wakes up, he doesn't know where he is. The absence of the ceiling fan's rhythmic squeaking—a sound that's greeted him every morning since moving to Ocracoke—has him momentarily disoriented. For a few seconds he is back in Philadelphia, but the coarse shriek of a seagull shatters the illusion. When his eyes open, he sees his new room instead—seashell-patterned sheets and curtains, chipped oak nightstand holding a fish-shaped lamp, and thick netting tacked up in one corner of the ceiling. The only toys are a few dozen plastic army men stuffed in a jumble of green arms, legs, and machine guns into an empty Skippy peanut butter jar.

When Mr. Bertram gave him the toy soldiers five weeks ago, he'd explained small unit tactics—how to set up a defensive perimeter, communicate in the field with hand signals, and build a foxhole that provides both cover and concealment. He showed Justin how to set up a base camp in the side yard, and war games got him out of the house. A week later, when Mr. Bertram taught him reconnaissance techniques, Justin ventured farther, following the other kids around the island.

Justin rolls over on his side, sees his sodden clothes lying in a heap on the wood floor, and yesterday's events rush back to him. The power was out and the house was dim when he'd returned home last night. He'd lit a votive candle and hovered in his mother's doorway, the halo of light dull against his dripping clothes and barely illuminating his mother's still form. Thundering rain and rattling windows had overwhelmed all other sounds, making it impossible for him to detect the ragged whisper of her breathing until he was close enough to touch her. He'd tiptoed out, stripped off his clothes, and crawled into bed, but Mrs. Murdock's warnings kept him awake. Maybe she was right; maybe everything *was* their fault for ignoring God. Justin had squeezed his eyes shut then and promised he would do anything, trade anything, to save his mom. Now he cocks his head again, turning an ear toward the open door, hoping for the ordinary clatter of kitchen utensils or footsteps in the hall, hearing only the chirping birds outside.

The hardwood floor creaks as he pads to his mother's room. Easing her door open reveals the vacant bed, but his mother is not up and walking about; she sits in a rocker by the window, an afghan draped over her knees. Morning light casts long shadows across her sallow features, creating dark rings around her eyes. She turns her head and smiles, saying, "Finally get up, eh sleepyhead?"

She turns back to the window and pulls the gauzy curtains aside. "Come here," she says. "Look at this."

Justin crosses the room and peeks over his mom's shoulder. In the back yard, beneath a leafy arbor overgrown with honeysuckle and wisteria, a squirrel scurries down the bird feeder, clawing for seeds. It slips and dangles for a moment, then repositions itself upside down. "Persistent little bugger," Justin's mom says. For the first time in a long while, she giggles—a rasping chuckle, but a laugh nonetheless.

Justin leans into her, careful not to press with any real weight. She keeps her gaze fixed on the squirrel, but drapes an arm around his waist. Back in Philly, whenever Justin did something good or bruised himself on the playground, she'd squeeze him in a powerful hug. But right now, her arm feels less substantial than one of his belts.

She rests her head against his hip and puckers her lips a few times, licking at the corners.

"Mom," Justin says. "You need some water?"

"No, no. I'm fine. My mouth is dry, that's all. But thank you for asking." She reaches up and pushes a lock of hair away from his eyes, patting it down on his head. He used to hate when she did that, but right now it feels like the greatest thing in the world.

"How about some cocoa then?"

"Mmm, that does sound good. You convinced me." Her smile deepens and ghastly pits crease her cheeks. "And you can finally try out the mermaid-stove," she says.

Justin's mother loves all of the cabin's beachy kitsch: carved ducks on the mantle, seascape prints on the walls, and lighthouse figurines scattered throughout. Her favorite discovery, though, is a butane cooker with legs shaped like mermaids, backs humped and tails curved so they look like they're swimming.

Justin's mother gives him one final squeeze, pressing her knobby shoulder into his abdomen. "Go on, now," she says.

In the kitchen, Justin removes the stove from a cabinet drawer. The construction is simple enough—a metal ring, four legs, and a butane canister—but something about it seems magical to Justin. The way the ring rests atop the mermaids' open palms makes it appear as if they're offering him the world. Just wish and it will come true.

He turns a knob at its base and gas hisses out, erupting with a satisfying *Whoomp* when he inserts a lit match. Justin twists the knob a little more, and a blue flame rises through the ring. He fills a kettle, sets it on the stand, then sits down. The kitchen table is covered with brown shelf paper, a deep maple matching the wall's wainscoting. A folded piece of cardboard steadies one of the legs, but the table still wobbles when Justin leans his elbows on it, cupping his chin in his hands.

Their first month on the island, Justin's mom cooked breakfast every morning, replacing his usual bowl of cereal with hot meals: pancakes, waffles, eggs and bacon. They ate every lunch and dinner out, and though selection was minimal—six restaurants, five of which served nothing but seafood—they didn't tire of the meals. When the frequency of their lunch excursions dwindled, Justin made sandwiches at home; and when their trips ceased altogether, he cooked frozen meals in the microwave.

Justin rises and removes two packets of hot chocolate from a mason jar. He dumps the contents into a couple of mugs then looks out through the window over the sink. Outside, the man who called him *Pard* yesterday is tromping through his front yard in yellow waders that go up to his chest and buckle over his shoulders. Holding a sled that looks like a giant Frisbee with handles, he races toward the still-flooded street then leaps into the water, skimming the surface for a few feet before capsizing with a giant splash. The man's ponytailed friend hoots at him from the roadside, and then they switch places, repeating the process again and again. The mermaids' outstretched arms beg Justin to go play, do something, do anything; but Justin only drops his gaze and bites his lip.

The power comes back on, overhead lights blinking to life and music springing from the radio. REO Speedwagon sings, *I Can't Fight This Feeling Anymore.* Justin turns up the volume and sings along with it under his breath, imagining his mom doing the same. REO is one of her favorite groups.

But before the song finishes, a breaking news report interrupts the music. A teenage girl drowned last night off the Ocracoke shore. Justin stares at the radio, hoping it's not the brunette. When the announcer gives the name, Justin realizes he doesn't know if that's her or not. Last night's prayer flashes in his head—*I'll trade anything*—and he wonders if he somehow caused this to happen.

Then the water begins to boil.

Justin rocks in a hammock stretched between a fencepost and a twisted oak in the back yard. Bees buzz through the arbor and birds chirp in nearby trees. With his eyes shut, Justin imagines that he is flying with them up in the sky. The hammock doesn't convey the same sense of soaring as playground swing sets—that stomach-lifting experience when you separate

from the seat—but it still provides a calm feeling of weightlessness.

The dreamy sensation remains after Justin opens his eyes. The sky seems hazy and out of focus, and shapes form in the clouds—a wild buffalo, a rocket ship, a spinning top. Wind rakes through the oak's branches and light dances in the leaves. Though not as sturdy as the elm in their front yard back home, the oak is a good climbing tree. It's got a good, low notch for that all-important first step, and the limbs slant upwards with a gentle slope.

Justin relaxes his eyes, and in the shifting light he pictures his mom straddling one of the gnarled branches, laughing while she swings a hammer, building him another tree house. The last time she'd done that, she'd swung from the branches and cried out like a monkey. She'd hugged him to her and sung, "Justin and Mommy sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g." Her voice had been soft then, the same lilting tone as the birds overhead. But the voice coming from her room now is shrill and irritated.

Justin turns his head toward the open window, and the slack, peaceful look slips from his face. When he rolls out of the hammock, a webbed imprint is stamped across the backs of his legs. He tiptoes over the hard-packed earth, crouches outside the window, and curls his fingers around the cracked frame, pressing his head against the wall below. He hears, "No tubes. No hospital. Which word don't you fucking understand?"

A brief shudder passes through Justin. He rarely hears his mother curse, and when that happens, she usually follows up with effusive apologies.

"It won't change anything," she continues. "So why bother?"

Mr. Bertram replies in an even voice, "I'm sorry, ma'am. It's not my business."

"You're damn right it's not—" Hard coughs choke off her words, followed by the sound of something shattering. After she catches her breath, she says, "Damn it! Look what you've made me do."

"Are you all right, ma'am? Can I do anything?"

"No, I'm fine. I don't—"

She starts crying and Justin cringes. He picks at a large splinter protruding from the windowsill. *I shouldn't be here,* he thinks. *This is wrong.* But then the scraping sound of glass being picked up pulls his attention back to the room.

"Please don't," his mother says. "I'll clean it up later."

"I just want to help, that's all."

"I know, I know. Oh shit. How can this be happening? I'm not even forty. I'm not…" Her voice trails off then breaks up again.

"There, there," Mr. Bertram says. "It's going to be O. K."

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't cry like this. My life's been good, you know. Better than most."

"I'm sure it has," Mr. Bertram says.

She coughs again, just a few sputters, and then there's a long pause. "Have you thought about Justin? What you want to do?"

"What? Well, my sister in Virginia, she'll take him."

"But what about right now? Should he be here when you. . . well, you know?"

The splinter snaps off in Justin's hand with a loud, *Pop.* He looks down at it,

surprised, then turns and runs away. He runs past Mrs. Murdock's house, past the One Way sign, past the harbor, and when he reaches the end of Lighthouse Road, he keeps on running.

Dog Beach hugs Pamlico Sound in a wavy line that traces the shore like half of a figure eight. Seen from above, it resembles two giant bites taken out of the land. To one side, breakers crash in a lulling rhythm while gulls glide on the soft breeze, scissoring their wings for lift and then drifting back down in slow, swirling circles. An occasional blue crab skitters from one hole to another as the tide surges forth and washes away their tracks. On the other side, a flat stretch of sand, shells, and pebbles extends into a series of dunes. The seaward face of the dunes is barren, ribbed by the wind; but the opposite side is smooth, tapering off into thickets of pampas and saw grass. A few sturdy cedars grow here, but they, too, obey the wind, bending drastically where they crest the dunes like grass that's been stepped on.

Justin has been pacing the beach for hours, crunching shells beneath his feet. His words have rolled through his head for the past few days. United Methodist Church is holding the brunette's funeral service right now, and Justin has avoided that side of the island all day. He knows her drowning was not his fault—wishes don't come true. But he still feels guilty, because he knows, if they did, he'd still wish for the trade.

At the end of another circuit, he turns around and sees Mr. Bertram approaching from the far side. *Of course,* thinks Justin. *He should have known. Even on an island with no traffic lights, no shopping malls, and no cable TV; on an island where bodies have to be shipped by ferry to a funeral home; even here, there is no escape.*

"Hey there, Trooper," says Mr. Bertram. "Your mom was getting worried about you."

Justin drops down, sitting on his feet with his knees pressed into the beach. He keeps his chin down and wriggles his legs to dislodge the shells.

Mr. Bertram stares out across the water with his hands on his hips. He says, "Hard to believe a hurricane came through just four days ago, huh?" He pauses a moment, continuing when Justin doesn't reply. "This one big storm I heard about—I can't remember where exactly—blew an oil tanker right up into the city streets. Can you imagine that? Wind picking up this huge ship and tossing it like a Wiffle Ball?" He waits again, but when it's obvious this will be a one-sided conversation, he launches into it with fervor. He chatters about the post-hurricane clean-up efforts, about bulldozers and other heavy equipment, how many man-hours were required to scrape sand off the roads and push it back into the dunes. He tells Justin that horses ran wild on the island until the '60s and that island legend says Blackbeard's treasure is buried somewhere in the dunes.

Justin doesn't react until he feels a tapping at his shoulder. When he looks up, Mr. Bertram is holding out a sandwich. "I'm not hungry," Justin says.

"O.K. For the birds then." Mr. Bertram peels the bread away and tears it into bits, passing half to Justin. When Mr. Bertram tosses out the first chunk, seagulls swarm to him, and a few brave ones waddle up to within a few feet. "Try it," he urges.

Justin throws his entire handful at once and the flock explodes with motion. Most of the bread falls to the sand, but a few pieces are snapped up in mid-air. As they scurry for the leftovers, the bigger gulls peck at the smaller ones to bully them away.

Mr. Bertram takes a deep breath and scratches beneath his chin for a few moments. The large vein on the side of his bald head throbs as he grinds his

teeth. “Hey Trooper, you want to tell me what’s on your mind?”

Justin picks up a conical shell and rolls it between his fingers. He keeps his head lowered, focusing on the spiral pattern as he spins the shell in his hand. Justin tries not to cry, but his voice cracks anyway. “Why do people have to die?”

“We all die, Trooper,” Mr. Bertram says. Then he turns and places a hand on Justin’s shoulder. “But first, we have to live. Life is tough enough without worrying when it’s going to end.”

Mr. Bertram pulls a thick brown wallet from his back pocket. He flips through several plastic windows then holds it open in front of Justin’s face. “My daughter,” he says. A fair-skinned girl with a black graduation cap on her head smiles in the photo. He points a finger at her chin. “See this cleft right here? That’s from my pop. And those blue eyes? My mother had those.”

He folds the wallet, clenches it in his hand for a moment, then returns it to his pocket. “When my mother died, I thought it was the end of the world. Thought I couldn’t go on anymore. But I did. And now my parents live on because I never gave up.”

Justin turns his head and rubs his nose on his sleeve.

Mr. Bertram reaches over and ruffles Justin’s hair. “Your mother loves you, and you love her too. That’s what really matters. Right?”

Justin bobs his head but keeps his chin on his chest.

“You’d like to do something for her, right? Well, the best way to make her happy is for you to be happy. Know what I mean?” Mr. Bertram gives Justin’s shoulder a gentle shake.

Justin nods his head. “Yeah,” he says. “O.K.”

The night sky is clear and the full moon makes the grave easy to find. Sympathy cards and flowers coat the freshly churned ground, and a few framed photos lean against her headstone. The largest photo is a close-up of the brunette, a posed yearbook shot. Her smile is tentative, all lips and no teeth, but her eyes are bright and hopeful. Justin is glad to see this picture. He doesn’t want his last memory of her to be the shocked expression when the redhead stripped off her top.

The cobalt moon casts a shimmering light across the simple inscription:

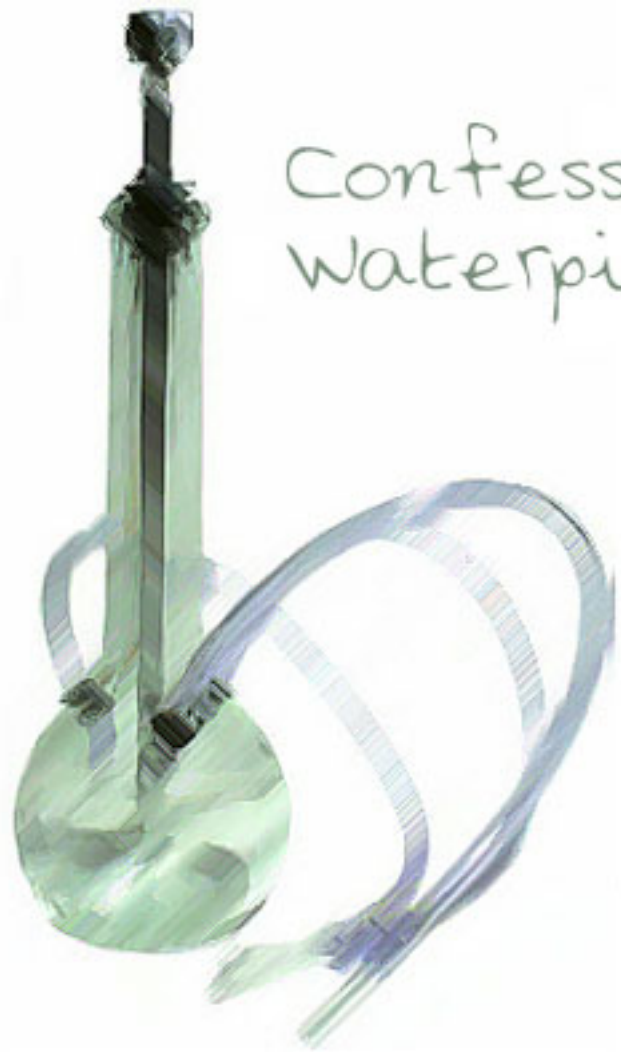
In loving memory
Rebecca S. Jones
July 15, 1970
Aug 22, 1986

Justin scrapes at the packed dirt where he guesses her heart might be. The digging is easy and he quickly makes a small hole. He fishes in his pocket and removes a handmade necklace, a seashell looped on a shoestring. He drops it inside the hole, covers it up, and tamps the dirt back down, standing there, chewing his lip. "I made it myself," he says. He takes a deep breath then adds, "Well, Mr. Bertram drilled the hole for me, but still."

He picks up one of the bouquets then lies back in the grass, clasping the flowers to his chest. Staring up at the sky, he rolls the stems between his fingers. Out here, away from the city, the sky seems to hold so many more stars—more pinpricks of light than grains of sand on the beach. It's as if they, too, chose this place to hide.

Something touches his finger, a bright green caterpillar, flexing and curling, wiggling in the air as if waving hello. It slinks into his palm and wriggles across his hand. As soon as it rolls off into the grass, Justin pulls the bouquet up to his face. He hadn't noticed any insects before, but there they are: aphids chewing on the flowers and a stationary ladybug clinging to a stalk of Queen Anne's Lace. Fingering one of the tightly fisted roses, Justin feels a network of veins inside the velvety petals. The detail is so amazing it takes his breath away. It's like a whole new world is coming to life in his hands, one that was invisible just moments before.

This morning, he couldn't have imagined such a mystical finish to his day. *If this is possible,* he thinks, *then anything is. Maybe, just like the stars above, billions of possibilities still exist in the future. Who knows how tomorrow will end.*



Confessions of a Waterpipe Smoker

by Carolyn A. Thériault

I am a Dr. Frankenstein, a creator of sorts; I have harvested liberally from the defunct bodies of those less fortunate in order to generate life. I look upon my progeny and confess that it has a face only a mother can love. In spite of, or rather because of its spurious legitimacy, I dote on my gaudy green waterpipe, made (so its faded label tells me) of the finest Bohemian crystal, its chipped body stained and sticky with overuse and inadequate cleaning, its now-tarnished stem and valves pathetically bereft of a tin of Brasso. I have plugged its ubiquitous air holes with bits of cellophane and cardboard in an effort to facilitate airflow. Its faded leather hose has become dangerously brittle and its many resultant cracks repaired with duct tape. The dapple-grey plastic mouthpiece has broken twice but is still serviceable when used backwards. It is truly a thing of beauty, but then again, love is blind.

When my waterpipe was but a twinkle in my eye, I secured a position as an archaeological site supervisor in Upper Egypt for several months. I flew into Alexandria, believing that Alex would be a logical transitional point between East and West mitigating the inevitable culture shock awaiting me in Cairo. Within hours of my arrival and imbued with a heady cocktail of jetlag,

adventurousness and na•t•I veered off the beaten path and found myself lost among a myriad of alleys which split from the main thoroughfare like the legs of a centipede, half-heartedly illumined with sallow neon lights and bare bulbs suspended by lone wires.

Like so many alleyways in Egypt, this one was also a makeshift tea stand where wobbly chairs (no two of which shared a common ancestor) stood precariously along each wall, where men in suits or *galabiyyas* came to discuss the events of the day over a glass of tea and a *shisha* (for such is the waterpipe called in Egypt). Behind me I could hear Alex freshly-awakened from its siesta, its traffic and promenading youth shaking off the fug of the afternoon heat, gathering momentum and volume. Before me, men sat in huddles, gesticulating with the mouthpieces of their waterpipes, voices raised in mock rage or laughter, while boys ran up and down the length of the alley, deftly bearing trays of glasses, foodstuffs fetched from other shops, or shavings of live embers to refresh a pipe.

The alley was filled with the din of conversation, the clinking of glassware and the sound of a lone lovelorn woman, her recorded voice rendered warbled and tinny by the archaic cassette player that stood in an open doorway, doubling as a doorjamb. I stood at the mouth of this Aladdin's cave and gaped like an idiot.

I wanted in. But I was a *khawagayya,* a female foreigner, and before me were none of my kind. Would I be allowed to sit? Would I be offering offense, sowing discord by my very presence? Would I be transgressing some age-old code of male solidarity? Gathering what little resolve I had, I passed over the outstretched legs of a number of men who, startled, shifted awkwardly to make way for me until I found a vacant chair. Immediately a young man in track pants and a T-shirt appeared with a small table and a glass of water. I asked for a glass of tea, looked about me, and then paused. He paused. I pointed to my neighbour's pipe and attempted to win him over with my pigeon Arabic.

"Mumkin shisha?" I asked feebly. *Can I have a shisha?* (well, sort of).

"Aiwa! Aiwa!" he cried. *Yes! Yes!*

My neighbours who had been watching me covertly up until that point made no attempts to hide their interest and apparent delight as my waiter told everyone in earshot that I had asked for a shisha. Chairs scraped as they were repositioned in my direction. All eyes were on me as my waiter carried the shisha over. I was the stage show. God, I was the headliner! From a brass dish he deftly removed the sizzling embers, breathing fire into the quickening night, positioning them on the clay cone that was filled with the treacle-sticky tobacco and stood back a few paces. The cone sputtered and hissed from the marriage of cool moist tobacco and glowing charcoal; within seconds a sweet perfume of smoke serpentined before my eyes. I took my first drag. I heard the intake of many breaths. Heads were cocked to watch me closer. I closed my eyes. I inhaled; I exhaled.

I neither coughed nor hacked up a lung; instead, I experienced The Rapture as the first rich hit of unadulterated molasses-flavoured tobacco began to undulate within my body. I felt myself billowing, if not swaying, in an ineffable awareness of bewildered peacefulness: two days' worth of traveling stress was suddenly washed from my body. I opened my eyes and smiled.

"Good?" my nearest neighbour asked me in thick English, with a co-conspiratorial look in his eye.

"Kwayyis," I answered in Arabic, "Good!" The men about me broke into peels of approving laughter. My neighbour slapped me on the back with a bear paw, which nearly sent me reeling onto the pavement.

"Tamam!" I added, "Excellent!" and I was a hit. *Thanks, I'll be here all week—don't forget to try the fish.*

I spent another hour or so drinking tea and chatting in the patois of travel: bits of whatever tongue worked, be it Indo-European, Semitic or body language. Fresh tea was served, more embers added to my pipe. When I eventually got up to leave, I realized that I had somehow lost my land legs so that the act of standing and balancing was not as simple a task as I had remembered it to be. Nobody seemed terribly concerned about my condition and I did manage to rappel out of the alley without falling. As I rounded the corner, I lurched against a wall and retched uncontrollably; remarkably nonplussed, I kicked dust on my roadside offerings and went on my way.

From Alexandria to Aswan I whiled away many the hour in swank coffee houses, impromptu tea stands, hotel patios—wherever a shisha glowed and the kettle was clanking on the fire. Men unquestioningly shared their waterpipes. With the exception of that first shisha in Alex (you always remember your first), none were sweeter than the shishas I shared with our site caretakers and staff. In their gracious company, we talked and laughed and smoked languidly at the door of the dighouse after their evening prayers. In the lengthening shadows of the Temple of Karnak, we would watch desert fox course the outer mudbrick walls, watch nighthawks and owls careen through the tall grasses, and listen as donkeys laden with fodder appeared out of the charred night, their drivers offering up a litany of greetings to us. Sometimes they would sit and join us; more often than not they continued on, their donkey's little hooves never missing a beat.

On the penultimate day of my stay, with only a hundred or so last-minute errands to run, I ventured into the Khan el-Khalili market, once the largest caravanserai of the Islamic world and now Cairo's largest tourist mecca, (second only to the pyramids at Giza). I had neither the time nor the inclination to comparison shop or negotiate for my "best price." Nevertheless, thirty minutes later, after a considerable amount of haggling, I left the medieval district with three shishas (one to use and two for parts), and a goodly supply of tobacco which, when wrapped up and placed side by side in my suitcase, looked suspiciously like bricks of hashish.

My shishas are still with me in spirit although only one survives, a hopeful monster, an amalgam of my original three. My furniture is irrevocably permeated with the smell of Egyptian tobacco. I unabashedly enlist anyone I know traveling to Egypt to bring me back tobacco, which is, unfortunately, the weak link in this narrative. Shops who do carry shisha tobacco tend to sell the fruitier blends (apple, banana and strawberry, mint and, horror of horrors, cappuccino and licorice), tantamount to offering Juan Valdez a cup of butter pecan coffee. I sourced out Egyptian merchants in Montreal who will occasionally sell me a few packages of the unadulterated stuff clandestinely in their backrooms, and every once in a while I am able to track down a rogue shipment to a local Lebanese food store. It is all so sordid, yet so worth the effort.

I fear that my sources will eventually go up in smoke—I know that I must return to Egypt with a couple of empty suitcases for the mother-of-all tobacco runs. If successful, I could follow the trend of larger cities and open up a shisha bar—but how would this jive, I wonder, with our smoke-free sensibilities? Perhaps I would qualify for some level of government funding as long as I don't use tobacco in my advertising. I'll have to look into that a bit deeper. In the meantime, a new Egyptian restaurant has opened in town. I should pay a visit to the owner.

MORNING ON CARRER QUINTANA

BY JULIE ANN CASTRO

It must be seven o'clock; I can smell the coffee already. Maria always takes good care of me. My *caf•mb llet* always ready first thing. My other morning wake-up call—the swoosh of passing cars and the honking of impatient drivers below. Is the sun up? Suddenly, I don't remember what it looks like.

It's been so long since I've seen another person's eyes. That's what I miss most of all. Talking to someone and having that person look you straight in the eye. Seeing their expressions, their smiles, their admiring glances. I wonder what people see when they look at me now, if they are looking at me at all when I speak to them. Did I look at people when I spoke to them then? Probably not. I was just so damned busy—too many shoots, so many fitting sessions. The lenses of a camera were the only eyes I cared about. I know now that, somehow, I am being punished.

God, how everyone had adored me! I hate having to feel this way and if I cry this time, I won't be able to find a tissue. I can't see now. I can barely move.

Everyone eventually leaves. They always do when you have nothing to offer

them. Michael was the first. He discovered me, here in Pla•Catalunya a few days after I arrived in Barcelona from California to live with Daddy. I was shopping at *El Corte Ingl•* taking the escalator downstairs to the *supermercat* when I noticed a man staring at me; the intensity of his gaze made me feel a familiar sense of unease and tiredness. They're all the same. It doesn't matter where I go. Another older man trying to get at me. This time, I guessed him to be about thirty-eight years old with his blond tousled hair and blue eyes that seemed to grow large as saucers as he spoke.

"You're American, aren't you," he mumbled in a faint New York accent, as he picked up a stack of wrapped bananas, behind the fruit stand.

"My father is from here, from Barcelona."

"Well, whatever you are, you're exactly what I've been looking for."

We began sleeping together soon after the preliminary shoot. I was nervous and he rubbed my shoulders to relax me. He was thinner and more experienced than the others, older and articulate. Freddy was my first and always had a hard time unfastening my bra's hook. His lips were thick and forceful just like his heavy body. He made me bleed once. Then there was Carlos, shy and awkward with a pimply face. He didn't ever want me to see him completely naked and always managed to keep his long white socks on.

Afterwards, Michael read aloud poetry from his leather journal as we lay on the white crumpled sheets, me twirling his growing wavy locks into small twists as he spoke. It was during these times, when I felt the most secure and special, wrapped in a protective cocoon. My eyes completely covered, making me a fool.

If it wasn't Chantal, it would've been someone else. I remember the humming high pitched French accent trying to pronounce Spanish words, each shrill like tiny daggers in my eardrums. *"Presencia de mujer. . . tus ojos, tus labios, tus pechos. Todo tu cuerpo llena mi vida vac•de esperanza. . ."* Specific lines from the journal. All by heart. A hypnotic, lovesick siren song from our joint dressing room after the *Allure* cover shoots in Paris.

I had just begun working with Daddy, helping him out with administrative tasks at his accounting firm on Carrer Aragón, when I met Michael. Daddy would be in the office no later than 8:30 a.m., stirring his caf•t 8:45, but always the same question first thing in the morning, *"Alguna trucada important?"* Montse, the forty-something secretary would shake her curly chestnut hair and shift her thick black-framed glasses upward with a long and perfect French-manicured finger. "Not today, Josep. No one important has called." No one ever called before nine, but she was patient with Daddy. She understood that it's routine for him to ask this question, just as it was to greet everyone with *"Bon dia."*

I do not have the same temperament as Montse, however. When was Daddy going to realize that I did not belong in a stuffy old office filling out forms and sending faxes? *I'm suffocating here!,* I wanted to shout by midday, wondering if anyone really noticed or cared. Each tick of the white circular clock on the wall tested every core of me. I waited for the others to say, *"Fins dem•* see you tomorrow, before I left. That's what Daddy expected of me.

And oh, how Daddy tried. He tried to convince me for so long, without exactly saying it, that it was no use having my mother around anymore, but I didn't want to admit it until I woke up in the hospital this first time. I must come to Barcelona and live with him, he told me adamantly during one of my summer visits. The divorce was almost final. Three long years of separation and they were ready to admit to the failure with official

documents. And I was an obedient seventeen-year-old girl. By then, mother was already falling apart at the seams like an old tattered dress. Audiences had grown tired of her weary, dramatic onstage performances, which had aged just as badly as her once-celebrated beauty. She was only forty-one years old.

Often when I was a young child, Mother stared at me, examining my facial features with cold, hard intensity, comparing our likeness side by side. We had the same pert nose and dark, round eyes. I looked almost exactly like her, but with thick dark hair like my father. After her "examinations," she would brush my hair harshly with a wooden paddle brush until my scalp turned pink or I cried.

One afternoon after school, when I was seven, she frantically took out a pair of scissors and decided to turn my waist length hair into a short pixie cut. She had just found out she had lost the part of Maggie in "Cat on A Hot Tin Roof." This was to be her comeback performance, she mumbled, shaking with every snip. I cried as the pieces fell to the floor one by one. I was to hold still, she warned, or she would shave my head, too.

That was the first and only time Daddy ever slapped her. Actually, the only time I can recall in early memories, when he touched her at all in my presence. They did not kiss or hug in front of me or in public, as it was my father's manner to remain calm and composed in front of others, sometimes even appearing detached and uninterested. If I cried over a bicycle fall in the nearby park, or over anything at all, he would fold his hands, look deeply in my eyes, and say matter of factly as if I was an adult, "Now, Anna… Don't cry. Let's only think about what can be done now."

On Sunday afternoons, I would watch him go outside to the balcony in our living room and smoke, puffing slowly on one cigarette after another. Then, I would wait for the transformation to begin, the ritual of a thirty-eight-year-old man. First, taking off his glasses, his fingers through his dark hair, now with hints of pepper-grey. Staring beyond the modest open space that was our flower garden of roses and peonies. Closing his eyes, his world began to shift and I could no longer reach him. He was alone, inhaling the intoxicating sea air and listening carefully for the imaginary ocean waves that stood in the distance of our quiet suburban neighborhood.

"What are you thinking about, Daddy?"

"Home."

In the evenings after work, he would come to my room, hold me in his lap, and tell me fantasy-rich stories, always with the main character named after me. The lingering traces of cigarettes and after-shave lotion, as I lay my head on his shoulders, playing with his tie.

Anna the Queen with the ruby-encrusted crown, who was the savior of her kingdom, defeating an evil witch with a magic sword made of enchanted metal. Anna the Baker, whose specialty was to make chocolate cookies with fudge morsels that turned to gold before eaten. But my favorite one of all was Anna the Magician who could make white rabbits and just about anything disappear or change simply by snapping her fingers three times. *Snap. Snap. Snap.* She made the furious storm go away to protect the delicate flowers planted by the people in her village. *Snap. Snap. Snap.* She produced a puppy from thin air to make Johnny, the crippled boy, smile.

Anna the Magician, the heroine in my dreams. The one who had the gift that really mattered. Wanting to become this Anna, I would begin each morning snapping my fingers, dreaming that Daddy and Mother would start holding hands, and that Mother would be happy enough one day to really love me. It could happen at any time. One day, I thought, it must.

Despite the lack of open affection towards each other, on certain nights I could hear my parents making love from the dark hallway when I went to use the bathroom, adjacent to their bedroom. If you walked on a certain

corner of the wooden plank floor it made a creaking noise, so I always made sure to avoid this section as much as possible for fear of being discovered. I could hear myself breathing heavily with each careful tiptoe of my red Mickey Mouse slippers, my heart pounding like a little drum in my chest.

One night, I crept slowly down the short corridor and peered into their bedroom door, which was slightly ajar. They were in bed, naked under the glowing light that shone from the window. Daddy held her in his arms, planting small kisses on her forehead. "Love me like this more," Mother whispered, pleaded as she clung closer to him, knowing in the morning things would be different. I realize now the frustration that grew and festered inside of her.

Each time my mother hurt me, it ended the same way: "I'm sorry, Anna. . . so. . . sorry," she sobbed as she held me in her arms afterwards, black rivers running down her face. "I didn't mean it." I hugged her back tightly with my own tears, my tiny hands rubbing her gold hair, desperately wanting to believe her. Daddy cried too, I'm sure now, although in solitude, just like his balcony fantasies of returning to his homeland. I thought I could tell what was on his mind: "If only she had another big break. There has to be *some* part." It was only years later that I discovered what he really must have been thinking: "Why did I get her pregnant in the first place? I should have known this would never work."

I remember the day he finally gave up, the day he left. I was fourteen and had just come home from school. As usual, the bus ride was overcrowded and stuffy, smelling of sweaty gym clothes and licorice. Kids pushed each other to get the front seats. But I didn't care that day. A smile was plastered on my face since lunch because I knew Anna the Magician had saved me. I received an A on my history exam and Mrs. Lipton, our teacher wrote "Well done!" in bright red on the top page, next to my name. I had conquered the Civil War, but I was unprepared for the havoc I would find at home.

Letters, many letters scattered everywhere around the house, in the hallway, along the corridor, in the kitchen. All addressed to my mother in opened envelopes from Dr. Jack S. Burton, or Dr. Jay, as we neighborhood kids liked to call him. The good house doctor, who was more comforting than Daddy during one of my bike falls in front of his house. Our friendly long-time neighbor three houses away. Mother wasn't home and Daddy was in the living room, picking up each letter and burning them with his lighter. "I need to leave, Anna," his voice cracking as he read one final letter and watched it slowly burn.

The discovery of Mother's love trysts with something other than a caramel-colored bottle had finally sent my father back to Barcelona. I had no idea what must have been happening for years while I was in school and my father was at work. Daddy was gone with a half-filled suitcase before Mother came back from one of her auditions.

Daddy promised to get me as soon as he had settled in, or at least send me to Uncle Jordi's house in the nearby town of Sabadell. But I refused to go. I felt guilty for not completely blaming my mother for the affair, and I knew that someone had to take care of her. At the time, I thought that was all she really needed.

Dr. Jay came by often after my father left, staying over on certain nights and cooking an omelet for me in the morning before school. Ham, feta cheese, green peppers, and mushrooms. Always quick and delicious. He was kind to me like always, but quieter than before. He didn't look me directly in the eye when he asked me how my day was, not the way Daddy would. He didn't tell me stories. The constant blaring of the television was his escape from house calls and sometimes from Mother. In the end, he left us, just like Mother´s future lovers did when they realized just how much effort was involved with her. How that energy would eventually suck them dry like a prune.

When she wasn't drinking, Mother was kind, sweet, like a lost child trying to

find her way in the dark. She would take me shopping with her before auditions and buy me strawberry ice cream afterwards. "I really think is it, Anna!" she would squeal in delight, wiping away pink, milky drops with a napkin before they fell on my dress, as if I was still a small child. I could expect chocolate brownies and a glass of milk on the kitchen table and hugs at any moment, if only right beside it was a thick manuscript for a new part she had been chosen for.

But I'm not sure anymore that people can really change. I need more proof.

"Come here! Did you hear me, young lady?"

"Mother, you're drunk again. I'm going upstairs. I need to call Daddy."

"Don't you dare!"

White ceiling, white walls, men and women in white uniforms. Was I in Heaven? No, my head and arms were in bandages and it hurt to move. My mother whimpering like a helpless puppy, beside me. I knew all at once where I was and what I had to do.

Then I became Michael's newest discovery, his new "angel face." Daddy was furious when I told him I was signing the contract. I had just arrived, university classes were beginning in two weeks, and now I was to be whisked away to Paris, then New York for my first shoot. One city to the next. "That is no way to live." I knew, looking into his eyes, that he was genuinely afraid. He didn't want me to change, to end up like Mother.

It did change me, of course. My plan to study architecture (it was really my father's plan for me) fell through. I started out in *Allure* until finally I was able to accomplish three magazine covers almost simultaneously. "It is an honor," I would practice saying in front of the mirror with pink lacquered lips. This scared me, the unspoken power I had. But I'm ashamed to say now that it also made me feel wonderful and accepted. Exhilarated. I was determined never to turn out like Mother, weak and unable to handle being in the spotlight. Too fragile and emotional. I knew how to deal with my success: I would make sure those around me were there to serve me and ensure my feelings of stardom. Nuria probably felt it the most. She still calls occasionally to check on me, though I don't know why she bothers after the way I behaved towards her.

"I told you I want water with lime, not lemon. Don't you know the difference, Nuria? One is yellow, one is green."

"I'm. . . sorry, Anna."

"Never mind. I'll just take the lemon. I'm already late. Where's my red bag?"

"I packed it in the car, like you said."

"Yes, but I told you about ten minutes ago, I changed my mind. You really need to start paying more attention. That's what all personal assistants should do. I pay you to be efficient. So, just go get it, O.K.?"

"O.K. By the way, thanks again for the gift. I…wasn't expecting you to know. I mean, I haven't been working for you that long. I'm planning on opening it later. Paco is taking me out tonight with the kids, so I was hoping I could leave a little earlier."

"No problem. This is an exciting day for you. You're thirty-eight, right?"

"No, thirty-six."

"Well, anyway, I figured it would be great with your new diet program."

"My diet program?"

"Nuria, it's a diet kit. I had it shipped from the States. There's everything you could possibly need: monitoring cards and special recipes. I thought you'd find it useful. You need to make yourself useful. Now go get my bag and don't forget to get my black coat as well. It's a little chilly in here."

A few days after the accident, Michael came to visit me in the hospital. He told me his schedule didn't permit him to come sooner. He was in charge of a shoot in the Bahamas and had to leave the next day for Paris. Daddy came, too. He was silent at first, held my hand. My entire face and eyes were wrapped in bandages, so we couldn't look at each other. With the intimate squeeze of his hand he told me what his lips could not: I was ruined just like my mother.

When the doctor told me there would be permanent scarring and that I may never see again, I honestly felt nothing but numbness. First in my head and then throughout the rest of my limp, broken body. Except my legs, I couldn't feel my legs. The impact from the other car was very strong, he explained. It could take seven months before I could walk again. If I'm lucky. They would have to perform more x-rays to see the damage to my bones.

I didn't cry. Instead, trembling from shock, I tried hard to piece everything together from that day. The photo session at two, shopping in the afternoon at five. . . or was it six? I couldn't remember. Make-up for the party at the Universal Hotel. . . I tried to remember how many glasses of wine I had. But Daddy couldn't stop, like a broken faucet. I was stunned. He thought he was to blame. He should've made me go to the university and quit this modeling nonsense from the very beginning.

Michael held me loosely. I felt his thin arms around me, touched his hair. It was shorter and felt crunchy, slicked with styling gel. "Everything will be O. K., angel face." He called me a few times later but he never visited me again. There were excuses, of course. And I think I believed some of them. He would try and see me, if he could. But I should understand, he said, the demands of the job, an industry that brought us together once. *Yes, of course I understand.* When Chantal picked up the phone at his apartment, I felt a thump inside of me, like a foot had kicked me in the stomach. But it was telling me to wake up. I had served my purpose.

Mother called me after the accident to say what she's said so many times before, "Sorry, Anna. . ." She was sorry for everything, for not being a good mother, for being a drunkard. It took the news of her impending death from cancer to see what she had done. The counselor at the hospital assigned to help her face her undeniable future made her see things clearly, encouraged her to close all wounds that were still open in her life, she told me. I cried then, cradling the phone in my hands after she hung up. The bittersweet admittance of the pain she had inflicted on me.

Last night she called me from the hospital, convinced that the staff was trying to kill her sooner than the cancer would. "The food here is absolutely dreadful, Anna. Tonight it's mushy powdered water they're trying to pass off as mashed potatoes. Not like those omelets I used to make for you. Remember?" I didn't have the strength to tell her it was Dr. Jay who cooked the omelets and then drove me to school because of her hangovers.

So, now every morning begins the same as it has been five months ago on Carrer Quintana 65. From the second floor apartment, the balcony in my bedroom, I listen for the rhythm of the street. The sweet smell of *caf•mb llet* and the rich, buttery taste of *una torrada amb melmelada* on a tray. The knock, knock on my door and the sound of Maria's voice, sometimes telling me she will be going to the *supermercat* around midday to pick up some

things for this evening's dinner. I smile for a moment as I imagine what dinner will be tonight, the tantalizing aromas from a savory feast. Perhaps, starting with the salad, *amanida,* and then Maria's special seafood medley, *escaixada de bacall*• my favorite. Sweet Maria, the caretaker of our household.

Then I realize that the rest of the morning must continue. With Daddy coming into my room to kiss me goodbye before he goes off to work at the firm, thinking that I am asleep after taking my pain medication. He rubs my head softly, gently with the back of his hand, as he did when I was a child, telling me a story about a girl named Anna. Paying close attention to the faint sound of my breath, the deep rhythmic inhalations and exhalations that let him know I am in a peaceful state. Under the bedcovers, I snap my fingers three times in quiet unison. I am Anna the Magician.

At Home in the Antipodes

by William Starr Moake

A mysterious thread ran through my life to Argentina, like a murky path I followed blindly in the fog of time. The path began with Leslie, a young American woman I fell in love with at the age of thirty. She was exquisitely beautiful and melancholy, reminiscent of a strange wild orchid hiding itself in the shadows of a rainforest. Her fondest wish was to visit Tierra del Fuego, the land of fire at the southern tip of Argentina. She called it the ends of the earth and we broke up before she was able to bewitch me into taking her there. I didn't want to go because I was afraid she might choose to stay in such a lonely place, or simply vanish into the stark landscape. She was that kind of girl.

A few years after Leslie and I parted, I became a close friend of two Argentine families who had immigrated to my hometown in the U.S. Though it seemed quite accidental at the time, I realize now it was part of the continuing thread that would eventually lead me to Argentina. The family members talked mostly of Buenos Aires—fairly raved about how cosmopolitan and lovely it was. With an architecture and lifestyle patterned after Paris, Buenos Aires had the widest boulevard in the world, sidewalk caf•on every street corner, tango nightclubs, museums, theaters and lavish parks in a huge city that never slept. I listened politely to their enthusiastic recollections, never suspecting that they were describing my future home.

The two Argentine families eventually scattered to the four winds and I lost track of all but one member. As I grew older, I began to dream about retiring in Buenos Aires where I could get much more bang for my Yankee buck. The Argentine economy had virtually collapsed and prices dropped to one-third of their previous level. A fully-furnished apartment in Recoleta, the swankiest neighborhood in the city, could be rented for as little as $250 per month including air conditioning, cable TV and maid service. A sumptuous meal with wine at a sidewalk caf•ost less than $3. On my meager pension, I could live like a king and dance my last tango in life as a Porteno, as Buenos Aires residents call themselves.

Like many writers, I had always wanted to emulate Hemingway's life in the Paris of the 1920s. It was a bohemian city, to be sure, but Hemingway moved there initially because the cost of living was much cheaper than America. Although Paris had become more expensive than the U.S., I could at least live in a bohemian city known as the Paris of South America. (Old dreams must be adapted to current economic realities.) As I made plans for the move, I never suspected that I was nearing the end of a long thread stretching back to Leslie. Our lives are governed by invisible influences that scarcely touch our conscious minds.

Now that I actually reside in Buenos Aires, my existence here retains a certain dreamlike quality that confounds me at times. I live like a fictional character in an old adventure tale about the fabled Antipodes where everything is reversed. July is cold and January hot. The tropics are north while an icy climate lies to the south. Even the water spins counter clockwise when I flush the commode. I am Gulliver's opposite. I stroll the streets feeling six inches tall in a land of superlatives. Thirteen million people live in this teeming city, but I have gotten to know only a handful of them, mainly due to my bad Spanish. I speak baby talk Spanish which sounds hilarious to Portenos, judging from their reactions.

I have a studio apartment with a balcony overlooking a park five storeys below. I eat the majority of my meals in small caf•within walking distance. If I cook at home too often, Elena (the maid) complains about having to wash dishes and threatens to ask for a raise. Although Elena is twenty years younger than me, she is very much like a mother to me. She scolds me for staying home too much, urging me to go out on the town and meet a good woman to marry. I tell her I am not interested in marriage and she looks at me as if I came from another planet. We have a strange relationship, to say the least. I have never had a maid before and I feel somewhat uncomfortable about it, yet I am too distracted and lazy to clean the apartment myself. In a city where nearly everyone with money is in psychotherapy, it is appropriate to say that Elena and I are co-dependent. She enables me to be lazy with a bad conscience while I enable her to support her husband, who is unemployed through no fault of his own.

I have lived here long enough to consider a meal of ninety-five percent beef and five percent vegetables quite normal. I now *leave* my apartment at the time of an appointment, realizing that I will be expected to arrive late like everyone else. Punctuality is a North American compulsion from which Portenos rarely suffer. The local cigarettes taste like they are made from cow dung, yet nearly everyone smokes constantly in elevators, offices, restaurants, virtually everywhere. No surgeon general here to warn of the dangers of lung cancer or emphysema. It would be useless in any event since the ubiquitous black smoke from diesel buses is worse than cigarettes.

A sizeable American population exists in Buenos Aires and I used to eagerly introduce myself to any stranger who spoke English, but now I generally avoid my countrymen. They lean on each other to escape culture shock and homesickness; the whole group is leaning on illusions for support. One illusion

is that Buenos Aires would feel more like home if they could only eat maple syrup and pancakes for breakfast rather than empenadas with dulce de leche, a local syrup made from boiled milk, sugar and vanilla. As if that would change the essence of this radically different place. It was laughable, but I grew tired of laughing at them.

However, I enjoy watching certain young American women on the streets. When a Porteno man makes a lewd suggestion, as invariably happens sooner or later, the more liberated of these females replies with a phrase that translates roughly as, "In your dreams, asshole!" One such exchange is enough to make my whole day. It is my only revenge for the grocery clerk who grins every time I apologize for my Spanish accent.

"Pobrecito," he says mockingly. "You have no accent. You do not know how to speak Espanol."

The Portenos speak Spanish with an Italian accent because so many paisanos immigrated to the country in the early 1900s. More of them have Italian or German last names than Spanish last names. Germans settled here as early as the Italians and during the 1930s Argentina's government was patterned after Mussolini's fascist regime. After World War II, Nazi party members flocked to Argentina to escape war crime trials in Europe. Politically, Argentina is a schizophrenic country. Taxi drivers talk openly about the difference between Marxism and communism a single generation after a brutal "dirty war" in which the military government murdered tens of thousands of its own citizens who had leftist leanings. Even though some of the generals are in prison now, they have the respect and gratitude of whole segments of the upper class. At the same time many young people have posters of Che Guevara in their rooms. (Che grew up as a member of the Argentine middle class.) Moderate views go begging in a land of political extremes. The pendulum swings first one way and then the other. Some day the military will take over again and everyone knows this in his heart, but it is too unpleasant to think about when dreamy nights beckon with goblets of wine and tango dancing until dawn.

I took me two months of scouring Buenos Aires to find Eric Benitez, one of the Argentine family members I knew in the U.S. Eric was astonished to learn I was living here and he seemed glad to see me, but his excitement quickly turned into sadness when I asked him about his family. His wife, Victoria, left him a year ago to live with another man and she took their two daughters with her. She had been unfaithful to him before and he forgave her, but this time she ended their marriage permanently. Eric took me to his favorite bar and introduced me to his friends, a collection of wild-eyed artists, writers and political activists. Although we all got gloriously drunk, Eric appeared to be on the verge of tears when he wasn't laughing.

Eric is an artist as well and he works mainly in leather goods, which is big business in Argentina. He drops by my apartment from time to time, always bringing a bottle of good wine, and we talk for hours about anything and everything except Victoria and their children. Eric is lonely and still in love with his ex-wife. I wish there was something I could do to help him forget her. He needs to fall in love with another woman, the only cure for a broken romance, but I am in no position to arrange a tryst with a pretty senorita for him. I doubt if I could find one for myself if I bothered to look. I'm too old for chasing women until they catch me. At my age I am content to live alone and recall past loves like the bewitching Leslie.

Tierro del Fuego lies yawning to the south, but I stubbornly refuse to go there. I realize that Leslie has influenced the course of my life to an uncanny degree and I don't want to give her this last victory. She had a degree in anthropology, so I majored in anthropology when I finally went to college. She hoped to become a writer and I did become a writer. She yearned to see the

ends of the earth and here I am only a Patagonia away from it. Leslie has won a contest of wills in absentia, though I was unaware until recently that the contest had continued all these years.

I stay home and watch old American films on cable TV over and over again. I have gotten into the habit of reading the Spanish subtitles rather than watching the characters, hoping in vain that this will improve my shaky comprehension of the language. I am beginning to watch Argentine soap operas despite the fact that I understand precious little of the dialogue. Something about the animated facial expressions and body gestures is oddly fascinating to me.

Most nights I take long walks in parks or along the waterfront of the Rio de la Plata. Buenos Aires is considered the safest big city in South America and I seldom worry about muggers. The evening air is filled with the perfume of flowers that bloom year-round. Although I have become something of a night owl like most Portenos, I am still not accustomed to eating supper at 10 or 11 p.m. However, I derive an inexplicable joy from watching others dine very late in sidewalk caf•as I make my way home. Married couples bring their children and young couples in love hold hands and kiss furtively. Sometimes I sit at a table hardly touching my glass of wine, absorbing the night scenery in a kind of reverie.

I realize I have used the word home twice in the last two paragraphs. This is difficult to fathom since Buenos Aires remains alien to me in most respects. It is nothing like any other city where I have lived and yet it is my home. I spent most of my life in dull middle-class towns, but I always longed to live a bohemian existence like Hemingway in Paris. I may have been forced to wait until I was an old man to find the right place, but better late than never to realize a lifelong dream.

On rare occasions I spot an attractive older woman on the street who looks like Leslie. I follow the woman, fantasizing about a reunion, wondering if Leslie has been in Buenos Aires all these years. Then the woman turns to confront me and I am disappointed to observe that the nose is too prominent and the eyes are dark brown instead of hazel. It is a ghost from my past following me. I laugh and apologize to the startled woman, but secretly I wonder if she is Leslie in disguise. I remember how Leslie possessed a chameleon-like quality to make her face appear Asian or Latin or Middle Eastern even though she came from Scotch-Irish and Welch ancestors, the sad people of the British Isles.

To me Buenos Aires is a phantasmagoria, always changing and never quite real, like a Salvadore Dali painting set into motion. I don't feel the crush of thirteen million Portenos as I move around the city, as if I were floating through a dreamscape. I expect to wake up each morning and find myself back in familiar surroundings, but when I open my sleep-filled eyes I am still here in the dream. A cat yowls in the hallway and I am convinced it is not a real cat. It is a cat figment of the dream with tongue lapping in a bowl of condensed milk.

As I kneel and stroke the feline illusion, I hear the faint echo of Leslie laughing from somewhere far away—perhaps the opposite ends of the earth. It is strange laughter that reminds me of a siren's wail. I make a cup of strong Brazilian coffee and take it to the balcony to sip at my leisure. At 6:45 in the morning, the street below is already bustling with traffic. I listen to hear Leslie's laughter again, but it fades away in the morning sounds of the dream. I am haunted by this surreal city in the Antipodes and the woman who led me here.

Sensitive Light

by Graham Jeffery

I am interested in all types of photography, but most of all I like taking pictures of faces, expressions. Even when out without the camera I watch people, try to read their thoughts or mood. This is not something that I make a conscious effort to achieve; it's just the way it is.

When shooting candid pictures, I am conscious of the people around me, watching me. There is no point in hiding; if you are in the street with a camera bag on your back and a full-sized SLR on your chest you are sure to be noticed. I particularly like to shoot in locations where the camera is expected, at carnivals, parades and events. Nobody worries too much about a camera in these places. A smile, a nod, a thank you or 'please' goes a long way towards making the subject feel at ease, whether before or after the shot.

Is it an invasion of privacy or a celebration of humanity? There are different opinions on that question. I only shoot with permission, or when the subject has elected to venture out into a public place. For me it's a celebration.

Sensitive Light

by Graham Jeffery

North Norfolk Steam Railway. The fireman seen here is relaxing for a few minutes before stoking up the boiler for the return journey.

One of six...

Sensitive Light

by Graham Jeffery

Running in the Park. I was invited to take photographs of two friends flying their kites at the local park. On arrival, I found they had brought their families and a substantial picnic. This picture, of one of the younger members of the party, captures the spirit of the occasion, sunny, relaxed, happy, and loads of fun.

Two of six...

Sensitive Light

by Graham Jeffery

In the Carnival. Joe was on the Mencap float at the local carnival. Dressed up, painted, and thoroughly enjoying the occasion. Thumbs up, Joe.

Three of six...

Sensitive Light

by Graham Jeffery

City Streets. Candid photographers need people, and there are few better places than city streets to capture them acting naturally. This gentleman was striding quickly along the pavement, full of purpose and determination.

Four of six...

Sensitive Light

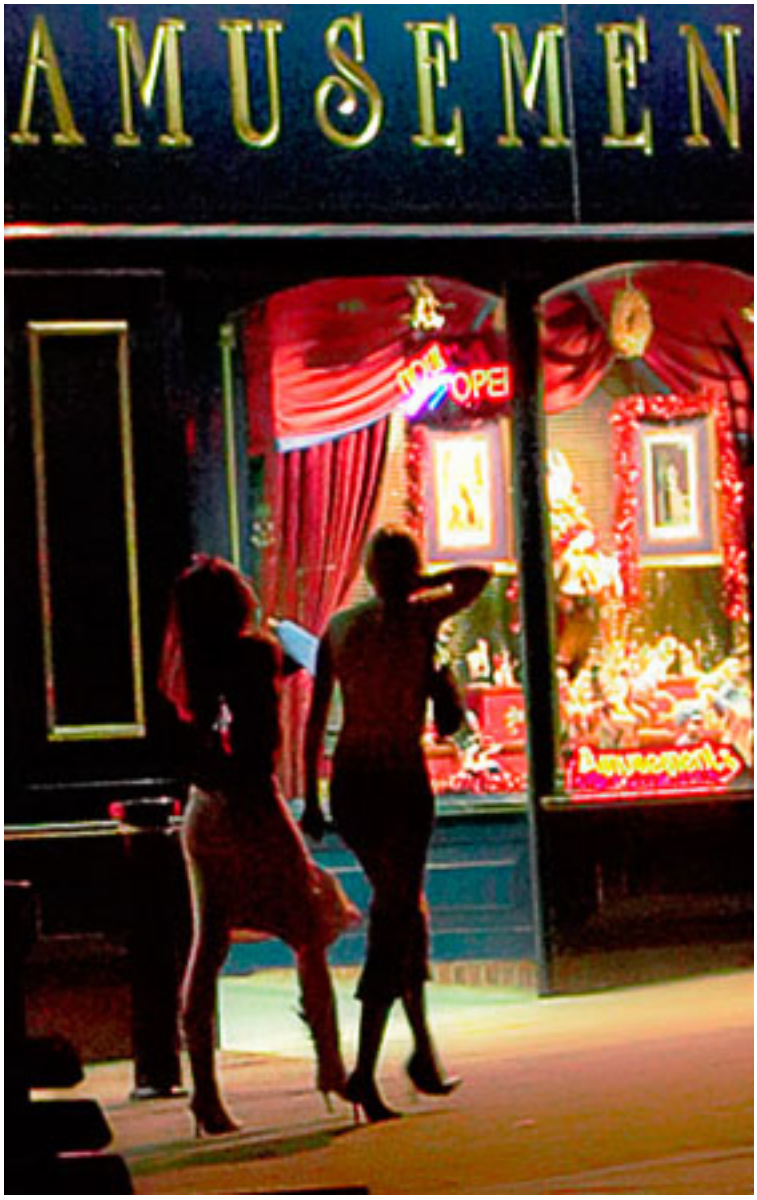
by Graham Jeffery

Father's Pride and Joy. Late afternoon sunshine streaming into the second floor flat gives a warm glow to the gentle "rough and tumble" between father and son.

Five of six...

Sensitive Light

by Graham Jeffery



Saturday Night Flavour. I had taken the camera into town on a Saturday night to try and capture the party atmosphere. The girls in their tight skirts silhouetted against the shop lights caught my eye. It wasn't until later when I was processing the pictures that I realised I could crop the name of the amusement arcade into a more suitable title.

Six of six...

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

What interests me most in photography, which I think appears in the images selected here, is being part of the scene. I never steal an image and I'm not intrusive to the subject. I use short lenses, and always build a rapport before shooting. Sometimes, subjects are not looking at me but they are never surprised. While creating a certain level of connection, I try to find angles and light, and I'm drawn to saturated colors and contrasts. Finally, I try to center on what drew me to take the picture in the first place.

Shooting images of children gives me the most pleasure, especially when photography becomes just another game to play. Salom•nd Isoline are two great models. Still, I enjoy traveling to Asia and spending time just meeting people.

Since 2000, I have shot more than 200,000 images and have focused intensely on photography. Some of my images have been published but it has been more by accident than through my own doing. I still try to define my style, understand what drives me, and strive to produce images I feel are interesting for both myself and others.

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

Freewheeling. Salom•n Annecy's lake shore. I had to be lying on the grass, and barely avoided being kicked on that image. Salom•ow spins much more elegantly thanks to her wheelpower.

One of six...

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

Straight on. Isoline, my one-year-old daughter who is discovering the world with her eyes so wide open! Curious and easy-going, we take her everywhere.

Two of six...

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

Burmese woman preparing rice for monks. In the Mahagandhayon Kyaung monastery, this woman was preparing rice. I took a number of images of her before she went on to sort it.

Three of six...

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

Delta, courtyard in a Rajashtani haveli. I had been shooting images of children, of the paintings on the wall. I was the attraction for those kids, as the owner showed me the house. When I looked down in the courtyard, that's what I saw.

Four of six... Next >>>>

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

Young woman sorts tomatoes. Lake Inle is the first producer of tomatoes in Myanmar. In fact, the culture is hydroponic, the tomatoes are grown on floating gardens, with their roots directly in water. NASA did not invent the technique! What struck me is the contrast between the piles of green tomatoes and this beautiful woman's red pants.

Five of six... Next >>>>

Phitar

by Philippe Tarbouriech

Old Tamang woman. She was drinking her morning tea, in the Lapsiphedi district, north of Kathmandu. She found it extremely amusing I wanted to take her picture. This image is in a rare moment of calm, as she looked outside. Young Tamang girls, because of their beauty, are often kidnapped from Nepal and sold to Indian brothels, 8000 of them yearly. I was helping a non-govenmental organization develop photo ID cards to help track little girls at border posts, as a way to curb this unfortunate traffic.

Six of six... Restart >>>>

Contributors' Notes

Julie Ann Castro,
a native of San Francisco, has a B.A. in Communications from St. Mary's College of California and has attended creative writing workshops at the University of California at Berkeley. Her work has appeared in the poetry anthology, "Great Poems of the Western World." She lives in Spain, where she is currently working on a collection of short stories and her first novel. She can be contacted at jcfiction@hotmail.com.

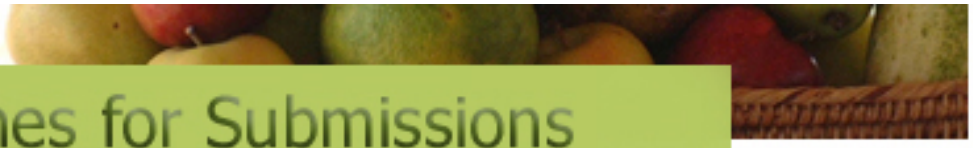
Bill Glose
is a graduate of Virginia Tech, a former paratrooper, and a Gulf War veteran. Six years ago, he walked away from a successful management position to dedicate his life to writing. Since then, he's written over 250 short stories and articles, which have been published in four countries, and in 2001 he won the F. Scott Fitzgerald Short Story Award. Currently, he is a columnist with *Virginia Living* and a frequent contributor to numerous other publications. He is working on a collection of literary short stories and a novel. Visit his website at www.BillGlose.com.

Graham Jeffery
has been interested in photography since a teenager, having practiced off and on for over thirty years. "When I took early retirement at the beginning of 2003 the hobby really blossomed. At last there was time to devote to my photos, and I have taken advantage of that time almost every day since. I shoot with a digital camera and do not miss the time spent in a darkroom. The modern cameras and software afford far more control over the final image than I was ever able to achieve with film." His website of photography is at www.sensitivelight.com.

William Starr Moake
grew up in a small town in Michigan and began his writing career at age nineteen as a reporter for a daily newspaper in South Florida. After majoring in anthropology in college, he freelanced as a travel writer-photographer during extensive travels over half the world. Moake is the author of two novels and a short story collection published as paperbacks since 1999. When he is not writing, he works as a freelance web designer and software programmer from his home in Honolulu. He has lived in the islands since 1972.

Philippe Tarbouriech
leads strategic development in a startup company working on technology to remove optical defects from images shot with digital cameras (and a few other yet to be announced secret tricks). Prior to that, he created the company Xenote, after inventing a device called the iTag that allowed for bookmarking of songs and ads playing on the radio. He had also worked seven years for Electronic Arts, a video game company, and was producer on *SimCity3000.* His website of photography is at www.phitar.com.

Carolyn Therault's
passport may be Canadian, but she's unquestionably more at home in the *kasbahs, souks* and *medinas* of North Africa. A trained Egyptologist and classicist, she has traveled abroad with camera and notebook, preferring to describe her many misadventures as personal triumphs rather than adversities. She has contributed to various academic publications and, as co-founder of *Urban Caravan Photography,* has established a global clientele for her travel photographs. She is currently considering collaborating with 3M to create a high-quality duct tape that will keep her last waterpipe intact. She resides in Halifax, Nova Scotia with her husband.



Guidelines for Submissions

Writers are invited to submit literary short stories and essays of up to 8,000 words. We enjoy seeing lighter stories, and we prefer essays that are insightful without being instructional. We are currently not accepting poetry.

To get more of an idea of what we are looking for, writers are asked to read *The Summerset Review* or consult our Recommended Reading list. We also suggest that contributors be familiar with the writing found in quality literary publications. Here are some examples that have inspired us in both content and the manner in which they have handled submissions, based on first-hand experience.

Email submissions to editor@summersetreview.org. Please be sure to state whether your piece is fiction or an essay. It is preferable that the submission be an attachment in standard manuscript MS Word format. If you are sending a piece in plain text, please be sure to clearly designate paragraphs, alignment, and italics. Please do not simply give a link on the web where the story appears.

You may submit in hard-copy by sending the submission to: 25 Summerset Drive, Smithtown, NY 11787. Be sure to include a SASE (and proper postage and envelope if the manuscript is to be returned). We cannot claim responsibility for lost materials; do not send originals. All submissions receive replies, usually in less than six weeks.

All submitted work is assumed to be original. Book excerpts will be considered if you believe the work stands alone. Reprints will be considered if the work has not appeared elsewhere within the last two years. Simultaneous submissions are accepted. We read year-round.

We do not give previously-published authors any more attention than new writers, and judge submissions objectively on literary merit. Even with this, we prefer a brief note accompanying the submission. We are not sure what we want to read in this note, but would appreciate the extra effort, rather than a blank email with an attachment. We usually comment on material that got further along in the review process. On pieces we accept, we usually suggest minor editorial changes and always confer with the author.

Authors retain all rights to their work, and will see galleys of accepted pieces for review. Unfortunately, contributors cannot be paid for accepted submissions. Once published, we may nominate pieces for higher acclaim or inclusion in a print edition of *The Summerset Review* (should one materialize in the future), but we would take no further actions beyond nomination unless permission was granted by the author.

Author	Title	Source
Aciman, Andre	Cat's Cradle	From the November 3rd issue of *The New Yorker*, 1997
Altschul, Andrew Foster	From A to Z	From Issue #1 of *Swink,* 2004
Anderson, Dale Gregory	The Girl in the Tree	From the Spring/Summer issue of *Alaska Quarterly Review,* 2003
Ashton, Edward	Night Swimmer	Online at *The Blue Penny Quarterly,* Spring/Summer, 1995
Baggott, Julianna	Five	From *Other Voices* #28, 1998
Bardi, Abby	My Wild Life	From *Quarterly West* #41, 1995
Baxter, Charles	Snow	From the collection *A Relative Stranger*, published in 1990
Borders, Lisa	Temporary Help	From the Spring/Summer issue of *Bananafish*, 1998
Broyard, Bliss	Mr. Sweetly Indecent	From the Fall issue of *Ploughshares*, 1997
Burns, Carole	Honour's Daughter	From *Other Voices* #31, 1999
Cain, Chelsea	Pretty Enough To Be a Showgirl	From the Spring issue of *Grand Tour,* 1997
Cheever, John	The Stories of John Cheever	A collection published in 1980
Christopher, Nicholas	Veronica	A novel published in 1996
Clark, Susan	Besides the Body	From the Spring issue of *Red Rock Review,* 2004
Crane, Elizabeth	When the Messenger Is Hot	A collection published in 2003
Crowe, Thomas Rain	Firsts	Online at *Oyster Boy Review* in January, 1997
Dancoff, Judith	Vermeer's Light	From *Alaska Quarterly Review's* Intimate Voices issue, 1997
Dormanen, Sue	Finishing First	From the Summer issue of *Lynx Eye,* 1998.
Doyle, Larry	Life Without Leann	From an issue of *The New Yorker* in Fall, 1990
Kennedy, Thomas E.	Kansas City	From Vol 62 No. 4 of *New Letters,* 1996
McInerney, Jay	Model Behavior	A novel published in 1998
Millhauser, Steven	Enchanted Night	A novella published in 1999
Moses, Jennifer	Circling	From the Spring issue of *Gettysburg Review,* 1995
Murakami, Haruki	South of the Border, West of the Sun	A novel published in 1998
Offill, Jenny	Last Things	A novel published in 1999
Orlean, Susan	The Bullfighter Checks Her Makeup	A collection of essays published in 2001
Robison, Mary	Why Did I Ever?	A novel published in 2001
Salinger, J.D.	For Esme - With Love and Squalor	From the collection *Nine Stories* published in 1953
Tilghman, Christopher	The Way People Run	From the September 9th issue of *The New Yorker,* 1991

Alaska Quarterly Review

Black Warrior Review

Gettysburg Review

Hayden's Ferry Review

Other Voices

New Orleans Review

Oyster Boy Review

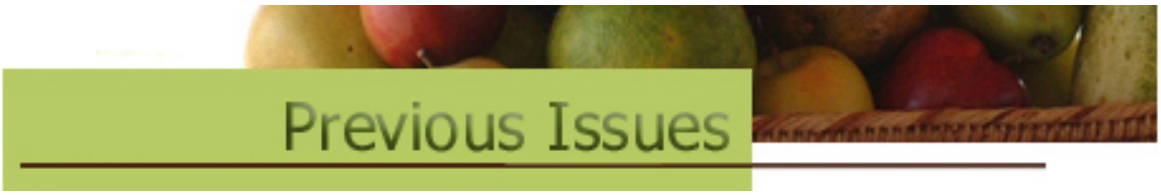
South Dakota Review

StoryQuarterly

Quarterly West

West Branch

The Summerset Review



Previous Issues

Summer 2004

Karen Kasaba, Chris Ludlow, Court Merrigan, Michael F. Smith, Mark Vender

Spring 2004

Scott Carter, Alan M. Danzis, Gerard Marconi, Jordan Rosenfeld

Winter 2004

Maura Madigan, Troy Morash, Pam Mosher, Paul Silverman

Fall 2003

Aline Baggio, Susan H. Case, Zdravka Evtimova, Tony O'Brien, Tom Sheehan, Jennifer Spiegel

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Linda Boroff, Thomas Brennan, Sue Dormanen, James Francis, Gina Frangello, Gwendolyn Joyce Mintz

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Eric Bosse, Sarah Maria Gonzales, M.M.M. Hayes, Janice J. Heiss, Pia Wilson

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