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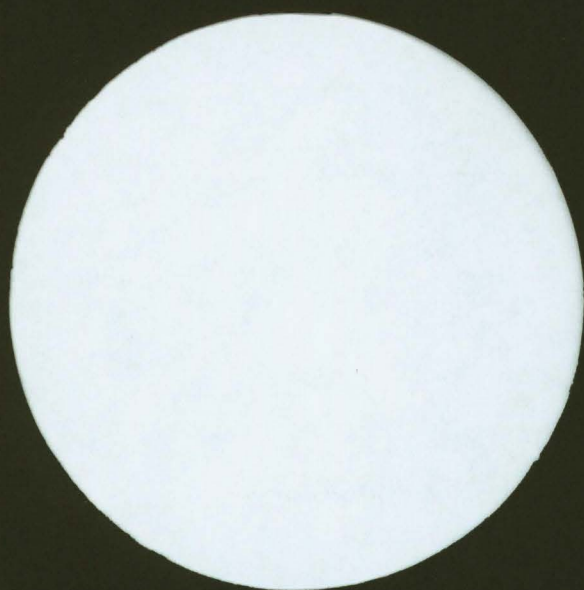
Roaring Muse

Literary Arts Magazine



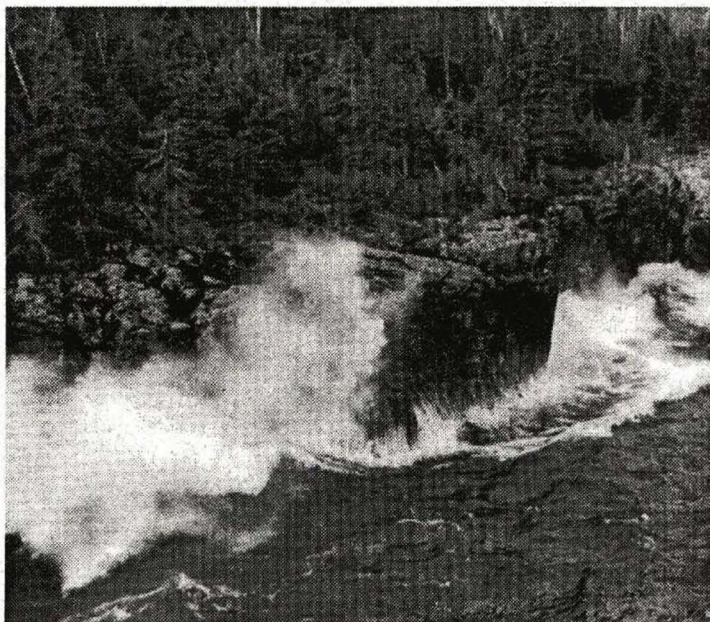
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∞ The Roaring Muse ∞

Literary Arts Magazine



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Flash

by Chris Lavelle

Flash! Love is an old woman
Holding a candle in a blackout
Crouching behind staircases and
Crawling up floors trying in vain battle
To retain balance while wafting through
Familiar surroundings now dark,
The lights turned off by a terrible, divine flash.

Flying Blue Angel (RH)

by Nancy Frederiksen

You were leader of the pack
and it had been brave of me
to trust in you,
meet you at the rink
lace our skates
in the warming house
tune our rhythm to the
"Flying Blue Angels" crackling
from a make-shift loudspeaker
hooked to the top of an old car.

I don't think I told you then
so I'll tell you now:
freshman year, Mom said
"tell that boy goodbye."

The only ice I dared not
skate was the thin ice
of Mother's warning.

I was an angel that melted
on winter snow at the
first sign of heat.
The wings fade first --
an impression to light to last.

Peter Church

#1

Throughout the twilight,
You become the vivid stars...
I envy the sky.

#2

Holding hands tightly,
the mighty, silent couple
are conversating.

How to Talk Dirty

by Y.U.

Is easy
once you do
the math
and realize
words
don't cost
anything-
just
10 minutes
a day and
a tape recorder
to play
back
all those
devil-thoughts,
again and again,
rearranging
the syntax,
and in-to-na-tions;
until any
hint of rehearsal
has disappeared
and all
that remains is
the subtle moaning
between breaths,
made by
curling your tongue
inward,
arching your back,
holding your breath,

and releasing.

Living

by Daryl Rathe

I have found it at last
That elusive, special place.
Somewhere within me
Where peace and happiness live.

Freedom has given me a chance
To explore, and find meaning;
Embracing life with an exuberance
I did not know was in me.

I have feelings that take me to
Heights never felt before,
Delighting in small pleasures;
A pink and grey sunrise,
The scent of a rose garden,
Holding hands with a friend.

I walk in the sunshine smiling.
My soul is happy with
The person I have become.
My eyes gleam with delight
And reflect my innermost feelings.

I skip down a path
Holding hands with a child,
Whose smile warms my heart.
And I am whole...

For Years

by Kim Sisto Robinson

For years,
I was too gorgeous to touch
Men fantasized...undressing me
With their vulgar thoughts.

What a sight,
In tiger pants and ruby heels
Walking...clicking against pavement
Gold bracelets singing.

Leaving a breath
Of vanilla and musk
Like the tail of jet streams
Or a worm that releases it's glitter.

Garbo brows
Arched, lifted, plucked
Brushed high to the forehead
Like two inky half moons.

Hair piled, twisted, woven
Like a dark spiral of snakes
Towering into space
Eliza Dolittle...entering the ball.

Who is that woman?
People would ask
A fashion model-actress
She must be somebody

With that face-that body
Hollywood plastic
But a living doll
In leopard and lace.

 The Roaring Muse

For years,
I was worshiped
Like a tanned God
Dali Lama with red lips.

Now, almond eyes
Curl like two scorpion tails
Melting, bleeding
Into unfastened skin.

And I, pet
Am drowning inside a shell
Crumbling upon this poem...like something dying.

One Beautiful Encounter
by Heather Johnson



My Companion

by Larry Hubbard

HER EYES, REVEAL A STORY
HER SMILE IS GENUINE
HER WORDS ARE SOFT AND FLOWING
AS HER LOVING THOUGHTS UNVEIL

MY HEART BEAT QUICKENS AS SHE NEARS
MY BREATH HASTENS WHEN WE TOUCH
TELL ME "WHAT IS THIS I'M FEELING?"
I'M CERTAIN IT MUST BE LOVE

WE MEET WITH ARMS OUTREACHING
WE EMBRACE AND SHARE THE MOMENT
WE CENTER ONLY ON EACH OTHER
OUR BONDED LOVE WE SHARE

A TENDER GLANCE OF LOVE REFLECTS
FROM HER EYES
SO WARM, SO CLEAR
IT ENTERS DEEP WITHIN MY SOUL
I'M CERTAIN OF THE MEANING

SHE IS THE STRENGTH WHICH DRAWS ME NEAR
SHE SUPPORTS ME OF MY FEARS
SHE ALLOWS MY TEARS TO OVERWHELM
WITH COMPASSION AND INSIGHT

AS EACH DAY CONSUMES THE LIFE OF ME
I CALMLY EMBRACE IT'S COME
FOR I LIVE WITH ONE, WHOM I TRULY LOVE
TOGETHER, FOREVER, AS ONE.

A Pleasant Life

by Fred Zachau

I sit alone, as I do every night, in the darkest corner of my living room with my back to the wall. From this position I can see the front door, the back door, and all of the windows in the living room and kitchen. Oh, someone could enter through one of the bedroom windows, but I can also see the door that leads from the bedroom into the living room. From where I sit no one can enter the living room of my one-bedroom home without my seeing them. The chair in which I sit is very comfortable; it is my favorite chair, a large recliner, and I have it tilted back just slightly. The back door, which is a sliding glass door, leads out onto my little patio. On a small table on the right side of my chair very near my right hand lies a .357 magnum revolver. On another table on my left I keep my shooting glasses and hearing protectors.

Through the sliding glass door I can see my patio clearly. A full moon in a cloudless sky illuminates its every detail. Since my cataract surgery my eyesight is again excellent. When they did the surgery, they put plastic implants in my eyes. In the left eye I had them put an implant that focuses at a long distance, and in the right eye, one that focuses at about two feet. After the surgery I learned to shoot a handgun with both eyes open. (I always used to shoot with one eye closed.) Now my right eye focuses on the sights and my left eye, on the distant target. I can shoot almost as well as I could when I was young. Ronald Reagan had the same thing done, except his right eye implant focuses at about sixteen inches for reading. I am more interested in shooting well.

I do not sleep as much as I did when I was young, only about four or five hours a day, and I always sleep during the daylight hours. Every night I sit in this chair. If I look left in the evening, I can watch the afterglow of the set sun fade into darkness. If I look right in the morning, I can watch the east gray, then orange. Usually I do not watch the sun slide over the horizon. By that time it is too light for them, and I am in my kitchen making my breakfast of oatmeal.

Next I read the morning paper. After I finish the paper, I go to bed and sleep for four or five hours. I then eat lunch, usually a roast beef or pastrami sandwich and a glass of red wine. Red wine, I have been told, is very good for the heart and circulatory system. After lunch I take my walk (except on days when it rains hard). I walk around the block, not very far for a young man, only four short blocks, but a very good walk for me. I am ninety years old.

Two afternoons a week I drive to the grocery store. A nice young man always bags my groceries for me and loads them into my car. He puts only a few items into each bag so the bags are not too heavy. I must carry them from the car into my house myself. I always give him a dollar. Two afternoons a week I go to an indoor gun range and practice with my .357 magnum. Each time I fire fifty rounds. The people at the range are very nice to me, and we laugh much while I am there. They think I am colorful. I drive to the grocery store—it is very close—but since the range is on the other side of town, I always take a taxi. I no longer like to drive on the freeways. On days when I do not go grocery shopping or go to the range, I do my housework, and sometimes I read a little. Every evening just after sunset I return to my recliner, and with my revolver on the table on my right and my shooting glasses and my hearing protectors on the table on my left, I watch the day dim into night.

Night is my favorite time for then I dream-daydream, night-dream, whatever you choose to call it. I am awake, and with my physical eyes I watch the doors and look through the windows and through the sliding glass door out onto my patio, but with my mind's eye I look into the past. I see my wife, dead for twenty-four years, and I watch us walk in the park, fish in the river at the edge of the sand bar where the walleyes would bite, pick blueberries in the woods, dance the polka on Saturday night, and in the morning sit in bed and drink our morning coffee while the rising sun shines in through the bedroom window.

During these daydreams at night I am now my happiest. Dreams are always as much a part of life as a good job, or a bad one, as the thrill of young love, as the sorrow of losing a loved one, as the good feel of young muscles engaged in strenuous play, as the pain and ache of old arthritic joints as they attempt to climb a simple stairway, as a glorious sunrise, as a drive-by shooting, as hearing a poem that says exactly what you feel, as cholesterol in the arteries, as death. And I have my dreams. I also have my mission.

Like most people, during my lifetime I accomplished nothing truly great. I made no significant scientific discovery; I did not write a classic novel; I did not find a cure for some terrible disease; I was not a war hero; I never saved someone from drowning. Also, I did some things of which I am ashamed. But everything considered, I believe I have been a good person. I have done more to help than to harm the human race. When I die, which will be soon, the world will be, I believe, for the less. But that cannot be said of everyone. John Donne was wrong. Each man's death does not diminish every other member of mankind. Some deaths improve the human race. That is why for twenty years I have waited every night for some evil predator to break into my home and attempt to rob and harm me. Should that ever happen, I would kill him and improve the human race. That is my mission.

Such has been my thinking for all these years. Then a short while ago something happened to change it. While with my mind's eye I was watching my wife prepare a Thanksgiving dinner, with my physical eyes I saw a person steal onto my patio. It was a man, a young man. By the light of the full moon I could see him very well. He first examined my sliding glass door. Then he went to my kitchen window and carefully tried to push it up. It slid up easily. I never lock it. I want to make it easy for the evil predator. I put on my shooting glasses and my hearing protectors. He put his head to the window and looked around. With both eyes open I aimed my .357 magnum at his nose. The moonlight was full on his face.

Then I recognized him. He was the nice young man who always loads my groceries into my car. Confused, I yelled as loudly as I could. "Get out of here! Get out of here!" I did not want to shoot him. He ran across my patio, jumped over my low hedge, and vanished.

At first I was angry with myself for not killing him. He is obviously a charming evil predator out to victimize a helpless—thought-old man, I thought. But then I realized that he might not know I live here. Why should he? As far as I know, he has never seen me anywhere except at the grocery store. Perhaps he picked my house to burglarize by accident.

Now I remember that the last time he carried my groceries out to my car, he talked about some problems he was having. Was his wife sick? I do not remember. I must find out more about him. Tomorrow when I go to the grocery store, I will begin my campaign to learn as much about his life as I can. If I find he is a good man, if he was driven to burglary by desperation, I shall try to help him. I really have more money than I need to lead this simple life that I have. If he turns out to be an evil predator, I shall kill him and accomplish my mission. Oh, this is such an interesting, exciting time of life.

No Light

by Monica Natzel

No earth shattering news today
No answers to deep questions
Looking out over the bay
Wondering about lifes deceptions

Feeling neither happy nor sad
Depending on the trigger
events going well or going bad
Feeling made small or bigger

As long as there is nothing
I suppose it is quite safe
So is nothing better than something?
She asked the incoming wave

It depends upon the something
To know if nothing's better
Primrose path inviting
Neolithic neighbor

I grow tired and weary
Nothing is black and white
Something and nothing are blurry
No news, no answers, no light

Shadows

by Andrea White

They are always watching
hiding in the shadows.
Following you were ever you go.

Feeling their eyes on you,
you turn around
but no one is there.
Yet you still have the
feeling some one is there.

Paranoia creeps
into your heart
as you try to shake
this feeling from your mind.

They move closer
until they have
your trust. Being
there until they
know and have taken
everything from you
and your soul.

The Most Marvelous Thing

by Jon Eckblad

THE FINE YOUNG HANDSOME RESPECTABLE MAN
WITH HIS FACE AFIRE AND HIS HANDS OUTSPREAD SAID,
"I ONCE SAW THE KING OF THE WORLD RIDE
UPON A GALLANT STALLION OF THE BRIGHTEST BLUE.
INTO THE CITY OF REALLY GREAT THINGS HE RODE,
THE CITIZENS KISSING THE DUST IN SINCERE HUMILITY
AS HE PASSED THROUGH THE GOLDEST OF GATES,
HIS CROWN OF DRAGON TEETH SHOOTING BEAMS OF BLISTERING LIGHT.
THE KING, A PLANET OF NOBILITY, A CELESTIAL SMILE
PAINTED IN MASTERFUL BEAUTY UPON HIS FACE,
LIFTED HIS RING-BURDENED HAND IN BENEVOLENCE
AND BLESSED THE MASSES IN UNSURPASSED MAJESTY
AS HE GLIDED INTO THE PALACE OF FAME LIKE A SOUL INTO HEAVEN.
I TELL YOU, FRIEND, IT WAS THE MOST MARVELOUS THING
A MERE MORTAL COULD EVER SEE..."

"MARVELOUS INDEED," THE VAGABOND SAINT REPLIED,
"BUT I HAVE SEEN SOMETHING OF A HIGHER DEGREE--
I ONCE BEHELD A SQUIRREL NIBBLING ON A NUT,
JOYFUL AND CONTENT IN THE SHADE OF A TREE."

Heredity

by Nancy Frederiksen

I am my Father's daughter.
It is out of the scorn
I break loose
out of the chair
out of the house he paid for
out of the corner I turned
out of the winter and ice
summer and heat
out of the loving arms that held me
out of the unspoken laws
out of the screened in back door
by the carefully rowed garden
in the center of life
and the way he
plowed us under
to make us grow.

Aeire Lake Eagle
by Gary Erickson



"To catch a bald eagle in the wild and to be able to photograph it while taking flight is truly a unique moment in time."



The Nest

by Chris Lavelle

Let us go
You and me
Two perched as if by sea
And there to take
Your hand in mine
And together leave this all behind.
Into sweet abyss we shall fall,
A plummet from where
The armies clash silently by night,
Alone, together, without fright,
Into darkness running free
Hand in purple beaten hand
From this world we'll flee.

Here we sat then leapt,
And what shall they say?
"Two minds against the madness!
O! Sweet Cupidon!
Give us half the strength,
Half the ire,
To so cut from our necks
This rusted, bloodstained wire!"

They Bug Me

by James A. Vath

I never smelling flowers that didn't
like looking before Looking before
at them. I didn't that
i didn't – That I did, I mean
I did like looking Look
sometimes then I'm...-Liking
No No No I'm liking then then
LOOKING

Flowers like me they really do

It's the buzzys, though Buzzy Buzzing buzz
buzz me

Buzzy Bees –w/the bees
bizzing & really bugging me. & bugging
me, – really
buzzing me out of there! Those darn Bugs,
buzz busy

making me crazy
(They bug me.

They make me)
(crazy)

❖ The Roaring Muse ❖

My Spirit Soars

by Rhonda Peterson

My spirit has recovered
My body only partially,
From the serpent that bit deep into my mind.

My spirit soars
Higher than it ever has before
With new life.

The electric pain stings my left side.
But I am whole.
I have nurtured my spirit.
It will not succumb to the inner battle of my body.
I am strong.

For seven years I have fought for self-freedom.
The freedom I took for granted as my birthright.
The freedom of movement, speech, and vision.
But now, in the quietness of my being,
My spirit soars.

I can not explain in your words,
The inner most feelings I experience,
Because they are mine, and mine alone.
You are not welcome here.
Nor should you be.

I am complex.
Made of neurons, atoms, and molecules
Of blood that pulse through my veins.
But stop when they sense danger,
Like a frightened animal.

The blood can not trespass past the hurt,
The injured area of my brain.
But my spirit soars
Because I have touched the face of God
And returned.

First Growth Haiku

by Lance Molis

young caterpillar,
i remember how your hairy legs
tickled my pink lips.

* * *

curving your body
in dormant cocoon upon
mustache upper lip

* * *

you crawled across my
expression to weave a web.
hanging ear to ear.

* * *

sudden compulsion
would have scraped you away. but,
metamorphosis.

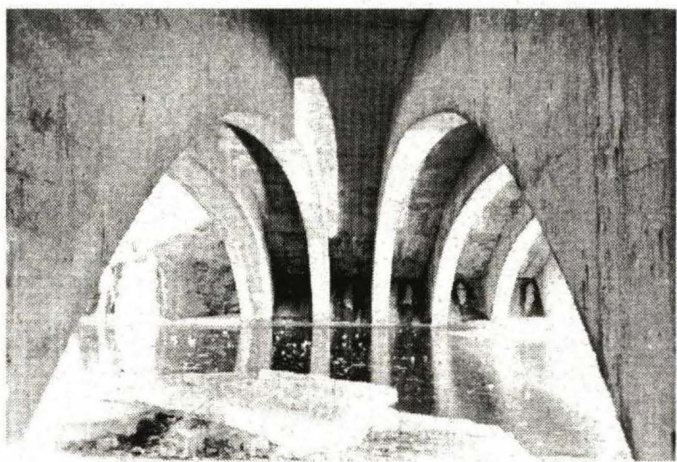
* * *

you emerged from your
weave, and shook your red body
loose from its pale skin.

* * *

beneath watching eyes,
you perched on my lip spreading
wings across my face.

Lester River: Ice Under Bridge
by Lance Molis



The Creature of Lake Superior

by Josh Brown

A disheveled professor Ness entered his office and immediately closed the door. He didn't want to hear the jokes made by people passing by in the hall. For years now he has been made a mockery at the University of Minnesota Duluth. He wished he'd never seen that thing in the lake. He wished he'd never decided to take a walk through Leif Erickson Park that day.

It was a warm spring afternoon so many years ago when Samuel Ness was walking along the rocky beach of Lake Superior. He hadn't been there long before he spotted something unusual. Something was making a giant moving "V" along the water like a boat would, but there was no boat in sight. Not even a ship coming into port. His eyes stayed fixed on the movement in the water, but he had already passed it off in his mind as a big fish swimming underwater or something. That's when he saw it. A great big greenish-gray colored hump came rolling over the surface of the water. Professor Ness was astounded, but the most amazing thing hadn't even happened yet. The movement of the water stopped and right there before his eyes the head of a dinosaur, or what can be best described as a dinosaur, popped out of the water and looked right at him.

Professor Ness was excited to say the least. As an associate professor of geology at the university, he thought he would be hailed a hero. He thought he would receive grants and awards for his wonderful discovery. He was wrong. Everyone laughed in his face upon his ridiculous story and he has never been respected since. Ness didn't care. He knew what he saw and he knew it was real.

Ness sat in his office chair and stared at the wall. True, *he* knew he was right, but the harassment from students and even other faculty members was getting to be too much for him. Earlier in the week he had found a picture slid under his office door. It was a picture of Bigfoot with professor Ness's face superimposed on the head. That was one of the more clever ones, some were just pure cruelty.

Professor Ness ran his fingers through what was left of his hair and sighed. He looked in the corner at his camera equipment. He had tried desperately to get a picture of the creature, but to no avail. He had only seen it once since the first encounter, at least he thought he had seen it. He did snap a photo, but it turned out so blurry that nobody believed it was what he said it was. Not even those computer science freaks with all their high tech computers and scanners and crap. This was going to be the year, he thought. This was going to be the year when he finally got some evidence to prove he was telling the truth. In fact, he had planned to go out on the lake with a boat this very afternoon, right after he got done teaching his nine o'clock introductory geology class. Ness grabbed his tan corduroy sport coat with the brown elbow patches and headed to the lecture hall.

Professor Ness let class go early. Students didn't seem to pay attention to him. He had a reputation as a quack and a weirdo. He had no respect, hell he didn't even respect himself. He was starting to wonder if he really had been at the park that day and been witness to an extraordinary phenomenon or if the whole thing was in his head. Of course it wasn't in his head, he told himself, and soon he would prove it to the world. Everyone would beg at his feet for forgiveness as soon as he had the proof that he was in fact telling the truth.

Ness went home, skipped lunch and got his things ready. He already had his camera and he hooked up his boat trailer to his old rusty Blazer. His boat wasn't much, but it would get the job done. It was an old pike boat that he used to use to go fishing at his cabin. He stopped a moment and thought of the times he had up at the cabin. There would, however, be no more times at the cabin; it was just one of the many things that his wife received in the divorce settlement. On his way to the boat landing and while he was getting the boat in the water he couldn't help thinking about his family that had left him...

"You care more about some fictitious creature than you care about us!" Mrs. Ness shouted at her husband.

"Milly, you know that's not true." Ness tried to defend himself.

"Well then where were you today?!" Mrs. Ness continued the shouting. "Where were you during your own daughter's soccer game? Don't even answer, I know exactly where you were. Chasing some damn sea serpent!"

Ness sighed. He had nothing to say. His daughter's game had completely slipped his mind.

"How... how did she do?"

"Like you care. She's so upset, I can't believe you would let her down like that." Mrs. Ness went from shouting to talking between her teeth. "She's up in her room, but don't you dare try to go talk to her. She doesn't even want to look at you."

Professor Ness motored out toward the middle of Lake Superior. He deliberately picked a time when there would be no ships coming into port. He sat back and thought of the fame he would achieve after he got the pictures and proved to the world he was right. He could almost see his picture on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*. He thought of what he would say during his interview with Barbara Walters. He thought of the millions that he would make writing a book. He thought that maybe his family would come back to him...

"Sam, I want a divorce." Mrs. Ness stood over her husband as he sat in his chair reading the evening paper.

"What?" Ness was caught completely by surprise.

"You heard me." Mrs. Ness said coldly. "You're just not the same man I married. You've changed, Sam. It's your damn obsession with... with that creature that doesn't even exist. Chelsea needs a father, not some wild fool. I just feel that we'll be better off without you."

"You don't believe that, Chelsea doesn't believe that. Does she?"

"She doesn't even know you anymore. Hell, *I* don't even know you anymore. We've made up our minds. Chelsea and I are leaving tonight."

"But... you... she... why..." Ness gave up before he could even find the words. It didn't matter anyway; his wife had already left the room. It was his own fault. He let this happen to himself.

Professor Ness turned the motor to his boat off and just let it coast. He picked up his binoculars and scanned the lake. He wasn't thinking about his family or his future fame anymore, he was only thinking of the creature. Where did it come from? How big was it really? Why had nobody else ever seen it? Will he ever see it again?

As he was thinking of these questions, the boat began to shake a bit. Ness lowered his binoculars. And then it happened. Approximately fifty feet in front of him a dark green head emerged from the water. Professor Ness was frozen in awe. The head came up about four feet from the water. It was attached to a long, slimy neck that went who knows how far down into the chilly waters. Ness could do nothing but stare at the creature. The creature did nothing but stare back. The creature had beady black eyes that seemed to be looking right through Ness. The head wasn't that big, about the size of four footballs put together. It was oblong in shape, and there was a line below the eyes where Ness figured the mouth must be.

Professor Ness saw his future flash before his eyes. His fame, his glory. Ness scrambled for his camera. He adjusted the lens to focus and put the creature right in his sights. The dark colored creature was still staring back at him. Ness had the camera focused and ready to shoot. The creature was motionless. Ness hesitated. He lowered the camera to his chest and blankly stared back at the creature. The creature stared back. The two stared at each other for what seemed like half an hour to Ness. Professor Ness finally set the camera down beside him. He looked back at the creature and watched as it moved slowly backward and finally submerged itself back into the cold waters of Lake Superior. Ness started the boat and headed for shore.

The next day Professor Ness turned in his resignation and stepped down as associate professor of geology at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

Discoteque
by Heather Johnson



The Lament
by Chris Lavelle

-For A.N.

*Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip his
finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame!*

Some days I recollect
Moonrises over glassy water
And long pauses between the clicks of grandfather clocks.
I know of where skies in their dawn
Once burned the heavens and the clouds and the dirt with their beams,
Revealing slighter shades than I ever before knew in humanity.
Begotten of this was
One yet untouched,
Her skin a bronzed hew
By contact with the divine.

But was she true? Was it true?
What right bears she to now enter
The less permissive present of my brains?
She whom in life was both my night and day?
Doth she dwell? Doth she dwell?
In the ranges of my breast
In her wool clothes
That upbraid me lie a hairshirt when we touch?
Is she wolf there yonder in her seat?

She stirs not,
Yet wakens Goliath
In all around her.
She yields her grin,
(To all but me)
And is become David,
Stealing before the fallen warrior
To declare before the world

"I am thus!
Unyielding to the will of giants
I am myself
And nothing more!"

Yet her visage
Mocks me with some great truth
All know and I cannot discover,
Taking my will to over turn
The stone where wisdom
And sweet entertainment's lie
Like insects in the soft, wet, cold ground.

With childlike wonder and young energy,
(Oh! My life used to have these!)
She steers her song
Far from my direction.
Not here have I contributed my verse,
I am lost like all the rest.
Herding to their
Cars
Classes
Shops
Factories
Offices
Where I, like all, once counted out my life,
And all the while, from across the chasms,
My eyes burned blind with the fires of heaven.

The Lakewalk

by Daryl Rathe

Walking by the lake
Listening to the waves
Caressing the shore;
A vacation for my mind.

My soul at peace
Renews itself,
Getting ready for the world
Of everyday living.

My body invites the challenge,
Thriving on the tests I put it through.
Invigorated, I speed up my step;
My whole being recharged with life.

Untitled
by Heather Johnson





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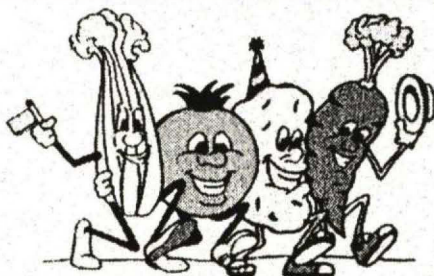
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