The Promethean Fall 2000
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Childhood Memories
by Anna McDonald

I am going outside to play. My brother and his friend are already outside. They are fighting Goblins; I am their princess. I would have been out there sooner—I love playing with my brother...most of the time—but I had to locate and put on my shoes. I finally tie my shoes and I am out the door before my mother can stop me. There are times when my brother, Ian, and Chris, his friend, don’t want me playing with them. Sometimes when the boys don’t want to play with me they tell my mother, and she tries to stop me by making up some reason for me to stay inside. But I always find some way to go outside.

I am traveling the well-used path that leads to the barn and the pasture. Along the way I pick up the stick that I discarded the day before. The stick has turned back into a sword, as it was yesterday. My torn jeans and short-sleeved shirt have turned into a princess’ gown, and the land around me has turned into a battleground in a faraway land.

As I run toward my steady knights, I announce my presence. They barely give me a glance and continue with their fight. I join them and we fight the evil goblins side-by-side. A large mean ugly goblin knocks Chris to the ground, and he gets up quickly. I have never been hurt and can fight quite skillfully in a dress. We finally destroy our evil attackers and run to fly away upon our dragon-like tree. My two knights have to help me up because I am too small to climb up by myself.

The three of us fly away soaring high in the sky. This is my favorite part of our imaginary world, because if I have reached this far it means I get to play longer with my two knights. There are times when my knights become unfaithful and leave me to fight the goblins alone. Sometimes they turn me into a goblin myself. Sometimes I become a sacrifice to the goblins, but if I have made it this far, then I know they are in the mood to let me play. We will go back to our homeland and fight new evils. That is, until our Queen-mother calls from the castle, breaking into our world of princesses and knights.

As we travel the same path we descended on, our medieval clothes turn back into torn dirty jeans and muddy shirts. Our swords turn back into sticks to be discarded once again until another day. The scenery around us turns back into my back yard, and we become hungry children, anxious for lunch.

Hearts and Stars
by Michelle Wudtke

I stopped drawing my stars
And began to draw hearts
Distracted from my perils
I began to fall apart.
The magic inside me died
And I succumbed to hormonal needs
The hearts fed off of the magic
That my internal stars bled
I lost my light and reasoning
Because my hearts don’t light the way
I gained schizophrenic voices
With nothing relevant to say
My stars feed on cold pizza and orange juice
My hearts feed on gossip and the magic I lose
My stars are made of dreams and wonder
My hearts are made of the feeling of being under
I need my magic pack
I need to dream of heaven again
I need to lose these leeching hearts
Who are made of apathy and sin
Because when I stopped drawing my stars
And began to draw these hearts,
I was walking into peril
And I began to fall apart.
I am the gravedigger. Well, at least that is what I have been told. "The world is a shallow grave, and I am gravedigger." That is always what my alcoholic grandfather told me. I was given a "gift"...a gift from whom? It is certainly not from God, or is it "the curse of Job"? He never gives you anything that you cannot handle," says my mother through the weeping willow of my dreams. Through her words the willow still weeps however. It weeps stronger through the mist that is portrayed on foggy nights...the foggy nights of death.

"Does death smell?" I said as I entered the tomb of my grandfather's spirit. His gay laugh answered my question as the tears rolled down his face. Thus the gaiety heard through his laughter was the last piece to the complicated puzzle. He replied by lighting the match over my father's grave. "It reeks," he whispered. "It reeks like the havoc that is brought upon the world by narcissistic royalty."

This thought trembled throughout my body, but what exactly did that mean? I was thinking in the wrong tones, yet I couldn't get myself to think in the tones of that which I had, and a future...yet now your future was your past. Every part of you was of the senses, even those that your subconscious owns. However, you are not the one to live by the ways of the unknown. You must try everything once." You shake your head in disbelief as if I am being sarcastic. Yet, you know the difference between raw honesty and my sardonic tones.

"It is not that I have to try everything once," you replied, "but I cannot stop my actions. They are a part of me, and that part is so determined to take care of my every want and need." The wry grin on my face disturbed you enough to look at me with salty tears in your eyes, and a weight on your soul. Supposedly I am the cure that is slowly being taken away by a syringe. The red smell of need is lost, and it would never be restored. There would always be a gap between the past and the future. A bridge had burned, and present time seemed to have been the match. Purity was lost, and it would never be restored. The virginity of our relationship had just turned red with deceit and salt-stained tears.

The red was hidden through the white powder flowing through your veins. Your life was slowly being taken away by a syringe. You were never one to be taken control of without a fight, yet willingly you were feeding the devil in your soul. It talked to you every moment that it had, and the struggle that I expected had vacated from your soul. Every part of you was of pure mortality. The angelic spirit that you once had was now absent, never to return. I am the gravedigger I say as I stand over your grave. The humidity beats down upon my neck in the sweltering heat, and the oak that you are hidden beneath doesn't shade me. I mumble it one more time, but I don't even know what I mean. Twenty years I have been uttering that phrase, and it doesn't seem to save anybody...not even you. It used to affect you. It gave you hope and a future; yet now your future was your past. You could only stand back and look at the life that was once yours, and watch it breeze by you like the wind. You scream and you angrily grab towards it, yet you recognize that it could be no more...You gave me the look of purity that I longed for from you, the look of hope, and you say, "No, I am the gravedigger."

...
Drunken Faith
by Alison Townsend

I'm swimming through the warmth of my own head and still they look like fish and drink like men.
A game proposed, a great moment that must be shared, I raise the cup and we agree.
As on my left, Ron starts to speak, his words, through smoke, bob up and down ~d float across to me. I wonder what my moment is.
A sunset, first love's glance? And no I don't remember what the others said. I know I realize Your love, great enough that I am powerless to stand against the flow.
Though smoke and drink still cloud the fevered room, I push through curtains veiling careless thought to tell them I am Thy Beloved Child.
Love
by Alissa Harris

It may be a tad melodramatic, but I think that the concept of love is only for fools like me. People who wish to live in dream worlds, worlds where no one gets hurt, both partners are devoted, and on a wider scope, the love was just... made to be. And it's obvious. You see a picture on a wall of a perfect duet moment, frozen in orange shades of abandonment, to both self and surroundings, and it puts you in a mindset that love is an absolution, like in movies, like in poetry. The picture on the wall melds with your soul and you can't ever shake it. It's an ideal of what life would be, of what a relationship IS. And you're disappointed. Again and again when what you want is always out of your reach, or when it doesn't even exist. But its existence is all that drives you in a world where people are like shadows that claw at your soul and the night encompasses you even in the starkest daylight.

It becomes like a flickering candle, spinning threads of shadows on the eyes of a blind man. A shaky flickering of hope, where a chasm of hopelessness threatens to swallow you whole should you stumble. What hurts the most is not the loss, but the loss of what you never had.
"Are you a priest?" he asked. "I've come to the end of my rope; I have nothing left to live for; I'm going to take my life; but I won't hurt anybody else." There was an extreme calm in his voice.

What was I to do? I'm no psychologist. Impulsively, I embraced him and kissed his cheek, and told him, "Oh, you are wrong about not hurting anybody else; you would break the heart of your Savior who died so that you could live; you would break my heart, too, because I am his priest. I am sure there are many people who would be hurt, of whom you may not be aware. Ask God to help you. He will; I'll ask him, too. There will be a brighter day, because Jesus loves you. And thank you for that hug! I needed one, I haven't had a hug in a long time."

He looked at me for a moment, and then gave me another embrace, and he was gone into the night. Without sounding proud, I think I was supposed to be on that street corner at that time. I may have helped the gentleman; I know he helped me. I think the Samaritan woman was supposed to be at the well when Jesus stopped there. And he surely could not have helped her had he been in the confines of the synagogue, checking out whether they were following the right programs and balancing their budgets. "My goal is the mystery beggars win."

I want to learn from my poor brothers and sisters out there, as I seek to expose them to the great I AM, the great High Priest, the One who loved them so much, he thought being on an equality with God was a thing not to be grasped, but emptied himself, took the form of a servant, and is now highly exalted where he forever lives to make intercession for us. Come to your annual meeting, count our pennies, incoming and outgoing, decide on this program and that; but remember, that is not where God's children are renewed—it's out in that big world. Lindsay's son worked in a Hartford steel mill with a friend named Rem Stacy. Here are a few lines Mr. Stacy wrote [I am amazed at the sensitivity of many blue collar workers in those days]:

The road I travel goes its own sweet way,  
And may lead nowhere at the very end;  
And many times when night descends, there may  
Be never an inn around the next dark bend.  
And he who goes with me must love the sky  
And play a game with the stars, and drink the wind  
And use love as a rule to reckon by.  
Nor pause to cast a cautious look behind.

The foxes have holes; the birds have nests,  
But the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

I shall end this homily by quoting from a Sunday School hymn from my youth:

Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light,  
Like a little candle burning in the night;  
In this world of darkness, so we must shine —  
You, in your small corner; and I, in mine.

Father Brown  
Passion Sunday 1999

Poetry on the 9
by Matthew Benjamin Reichert

1.

under-body rumbles  
like rigid snapped-string bass  
no face to the horn on the strained voice overhead  
i knew it was miles' song tattooed on my head  
mind blind to the memory of the future  
as i cannot see you and i as we to be a memory so soon  
i slipped into my plastic seat  
no padding  
feet resting on some bag lady's career  
and i wonder "how did i get here?"  
this place is dripping with words and punctuation choking out the noonday shine  
on some suffocation fixation i arrive late at the station  
ot stationary mind you but constantly changing  
like the lines that fill a puff of breath in the death of the midnight sky  
(over there i met a girl and over there i saw her smile and somewhere in between i fell in love...)

2.

above miles of smiles down on me  
though the haze of the city blocks out angel eyes  
bodies rumble by  
and sigh when they run out of steam  
but cymbal snare and sax keep sounding through the static wall  
on box near ear  
a wordless poetry that stimulates a memory yet to be written in the scripts of time  
this one goes on impromptu  
as i stroll down some somber avenue  
concrete cracking below my step  
each footstep into another  
onto abandoned asphalt playground  
under flickering globe  
alone this night tonight  
dew sticks to air like words caught in throat  
perfect note to carry on and we go on  
... she told me to shut up about miles and asked when i was going to kiss her and i unaware missed the point entirely)  
all in all i'm feeling kind of blue
Grace  

by Brian Blums  

On that summer afternoon we took shelter beneath the heavy shade of Veda's back porch, shirtless and shoeless, laughing at Ty and Gy's growling bellies, hungry for Mr. Johnson and the rest of the men to return triumphant from that smoking rusty drum bearing a rack of barbecued ribs, luring our naken growing feet away from the house and out, out past the barren brown grass to the sweet gummy lawn resting below the bent branches and paper leaves of the ash tree, where we the children were allowed to eat so long as we shouted "Amen!" after Lincoln--Mr. Johnson's golden son soon catching a bus back to UCLA--gave us Grace. And we would. And we did. Before a crumb of flaxen cornbread or a single leaf of spicy mustard-greens had touched our glad lips, we the children looked at one another with confidential smiles and shouted "Amen!"

Of Slaves in Winter  

by Tim Winterstein  

sometimes I am wishing just to sleep through a month or two it's cold and dark and wood smoke is layered in the air the plaintive voice singing to me is reminding me of my original sins (at this point I'm inclined to be reticent but I ignore my inclinations more often than not) I'm seeing the stages of my life so far as if in a jaded pointillism recognition only coming when I'm standing far away and we're all slaves to something whether we have it figured out or not and we've all got placebos in place of the only real cure but everything is much more clear in the bright light of eternity burning all flesh will surely pass returning dust unto the dust let me never resist the terrible force of Your eye as I'm marked with the permanent transience of ink and we're all slaves to something flesh and blood or plastic and all eyes are blind or dim let them with eyes and them with ears ....
An Actor's Life, My Life  
by Phillip Kennedy

A dark and empty stage, there is where I lived. On the stage is where I found a love, where I found myself... where all my memories, good and bad, have come from. I can't imagine what it would be like to not be onstage. Like a gosling following his mother, I am to the stage.

The characters I play all come from me. From deep inside my soul, I have a connection to everyone. Although I am not the best I am still learning, still growing. Still growing into me, into who I know I am. I know not many can say who they truly are, but I am so close to knowing.

We are all two-faced coins, waiting for someone to flip us, to see who we are. Do we ever truly know? I do... Life is theatre and theatre is life. We all have our own parts to play.

Student, teacher, son, daughter, parent. They are all parts we play in this life of sorrow. Now why don't we see the joy in life, instead of the sorrow? Why do we cling to the negative like a baby to its mother? Maybe it's the same reason we cling for acceptance.

I think that we are beyond this, we don't need to be accepted by anyone. Anyone who passes judgment without knowing who you really are isn't worth being friends with. What matters is what you think of yourself and for others to accept you for who you are. The part you play in this life is your own.

A dark and empty stage, there is where I lived.
But that's not all. He said that he had to be honest with me. As if I hadn't already had all the honesty I could take. He had been... seeing someone else for the past few weeks. He said that it was better with her because she didn't try to get under his skin and get too close, that all she wanted was a superficial relationship, and that's all that he could handle right now. How could he? How could be do that to me? The last two questions came out as a whisper to God. We both sat there for a few minutes, and I could feel Sara's arm tensing up.

"I'll be back." Sara rose, picked up her keys off the wood floor, and was gone. Great, now she's ready to smash his head in. I had no clue what she planned to do, but I was hoping it would be deadly.

I put my head in my hands and concentrated on breathing regularly. The scream started out deep within me, from my heart, working its way up until it filled my entire being and burst from my lips. It didn't stop until my eyes watered and my lungs and throat burned. Then I stretched out on the couch and slept fitfully, dreaming of devils in the forms of angels, and Jason.

***

"Alice? Alice, wake up." I moaned and opened my eyes, only to close them immediately as the bright light shot in painfully.

"Where have you been?" I asked Sara sleepily. She sat on the coffee table, and when I was finally able to open my eyes and see her through the blur, she was smiling.

"Nuthin'. I just went over to Jason's place and told the landlord I was here to pick up my five pounds of crack from the guy in 314. The landlord got all red in the face, then asked me if I was an undercover cop, and I said no, but if I didn't get my buzz real soon, I wasn't sure how stupid I would act. He called the cops on me, so I bailed outta there. I believe we can rest assured that Jason will soon be sleeping in that pretty little car of his."

At first I was horrified that she could do something so terrible. Then I laughed so hard I fell off the couch. Sara smiled, then went to the kitchen, coming back with a cup of coffee. She handed it to me, and I sipped it thankfully.

"So it's Friday, and the night is still young. I'm taking you out." I looked up as Sara walked out of the room, calling over her shoulder that she was ready when I was. I swished the coffee around in the cup, then set it down on the table. There were only two things that I needed.

"It's Friday, and the night is still young. I'm takin' you out."
nearly four-thirty. On the way home I fell asleep in the car, and barely made it into the house, only to fall asleep again on the couch, not bothering to change.

I had survived. For the next month I was in a mental coma. I went to a cafe every Sunday with “the eccentrics,” one of Sara’s nicknames for those people who I only enjoy talking to because they get me thinking. I would never really be friends with them, however. I considered calling Will, just to tell him I was all right, physically. I only got as far as picking up the receiver and dialing the first few numbers. Instead, I ate an entire pint of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream. I went to other raves, to dance ‘til I dropped. I even took up cooking again. But inside I was just empty. Like my body was walking around doing everything without me thinking about it. I wasn’t sad, angry, ashamed. A black nothingness seemed to cover me, freezing everything inside me. Then, I found a way out.

*****

“Alice, I found it! But... Ack! Stupid spider! I hate those things. Alice, where are you? I found the suitcase!” I sat up and called to Sara so she could find me in my room. Spread around me was every piece of clothing I currently owned, neatly folded and separated into piles. Sara walked in and dropped the suitcase by the door. She stepped over the piles of jeans and sweaters, landing on top of a stack of old papers I was throwing out. She nearly slipped, causing me to giggle. Sara glared at me but her annoyance quickly faded into amazement as she glanced about my room.

“Geez, Alice, I had no idea you had so much junk!”

“Hey now, only half is junk. The other half is trash.” I picked up a faded tee shirt and sucked on my bottom lip as I contemplated what to do with the thing.

Crazy as this may sound I actually remembered that it was the same tee shirt I was wearing when I first met Jason. A Hard Rock Cafe shirt from Orlando, given to me by a friend, was now just a souvenir to look at.

“Burn it.” I smiled at Sara, and we took the box of things I had set aside as “Jason memoirs” out to the back yard. We toasted marshmallows over the fire fueled by the memoirs and made smores for dinner. I have never tasted anything so satisfying. When the fire truck showed up, we claimed that some punk kid had gotten into the yard and started the fire. Sara flirted with them as a distraction while I snatched up any remains of the carnage that used to be favorite memoirs. Two of the five fire fighters left their phone numbers. Sara and I blew kisses as they drove off. Men can be so easy, it’s awe-inspiring.

Peeling
(Anonymous)

You hold the apple
in your brown, blunt-fingered hands.
The peel bleeds away
in one perfect spiral.
I feel as though
you are stripping my heart,
slicing away all resistance.
I lay naked and white
in your dark palm.

Back roads/Small towns
(Anonymous)

Grass has grown tall along
the back roads of my heart
where you walk singing
to summer. We meet in small cafes
under the round eyes of hot donuts.
The pies gleam like jewels: blueberry, cherry,
lemon, peach. Coffee is free.
The old man in suspenders, bow tie, straw hat
tells us how to find the baseball game.
And we watch the dusty drama under lights
as fireflies come out to play
in the dark behind us.
The past is burnished in our souls
like Heaven revealed in an icon.

The Spirit becomes...
the matter matters.
The image waits for the dawning of
an unexpected birth.

A window opened invites the light,
even a breath...
the very sustenance of our daily food.
Open it!
Take it in.
Remember with wonder
And learn for today.

But hold your heart for tomorrow;
It will come...
It too will come.
We've Put Buildings Where Farms Used to Be
by PJ. Bentley

Do you take
a double take at those old men
hoched up and thrown out
and dying?

They're on the walk
and you're walking past with your hand
in your pocket holding
onto some bills.

I just want to let you know
that in no way should you
worry about them because they can't
even ask for change.

Think a little
about being a little boy
the walk moves along quickly
and the alcohol stench dies.

It's all perfect
all according to plan
I keep reminding myself of this
while corporations trademark grain
that only grows one season.
Profit and common sense
have never been good bedfellows
Ten years of sanctions
equals legions of dead children in Iraq
But prices at the pump still go up?
I know it's all perfect
God's known the outcome since the outset
We are all to blame.
But so much more the spin doctors
and the politicians
chatting in newsrooms with
cigar smoke hanging in the air
deciding what the public can hear today
and how they can hear it.
I know it's all perfect,
it's all in how you see it.
The BIG PICTURE, you know ....
People sell their souls for money and power.
Look at corporate lawyers and televangelists.
The ones at the top have made the decisions
that lead down the road
to global suicide.
How much will the money in the world be worth
if the world's been destroyed to obtain it?
God, are you teaching us something?
What man does when he follows his own rules?
What happens when he puts the gods of money and power
before You?
Lord, I ask for you to let it be
that your justice descend to earth
to punish each according to what he sowed in life
to create the kingdom by your laws
so that I can bring a child into the world
without a guilty conscience.
Frosty Concrete
by Matthew Benjamin Reichert

cold potomac breath
bring and manifest breath
feet on frost glaze concrete
step in a memory out of step
ground grows over lazy shoes
hold them there and never lose the image
of a picture perfect dissonance
no voices escape the machinery
going by on clockwork
machinery on concrete

street melts into thinning flesh
voices crawl in under flesh
toxin seeping through the skin
killing innocence within
cold potomac winter within

try to hold the winter in (old skin)
it's just another step
it's just another step (it's home)

Contributors

P.J. Bentley is from Rampa, Idaho, and was born in Alaska. He's broken many bones, all on the left side of his body, all at different times. He likes to think, to read, and listen to music.

Brian Blums is a child of the 1980s, and as such, believes there is little worth saying about himself except that a poet once told him that his main problem was that he presumed to be a writer. She was right, he says.

Dorian Brown says that every once in a while she is amazed by the things her friends tell her. She thinks the following quote describes her personality perfectly: "Just living is not enough...one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower." —Hans Christian Anderson

Father Brown is an uncle of Randy Bush and Midge Kehoe.

Megan Flannery is an education major with an emphasis in English. When she graduates, she would like to teach high school in some inner city on the East Coast. She loves the outdoors and hates being confined.

Alissa Danielle Harris has written for The Herald, a widely distributed newspaper of the Klamath Basin, reporting on community, local schools, and public events. She served as her school FFA reporter. Her favorite person in the whole world is her best friend Molly whom she loves dearly, and she likes dogs.

Phillip A. Kennedy is a theater/psychology major and has been an actor his entire life. He has appeared in approximately sixty shows.

Anna McDonald is a psychology major who loves theater and people. If she could, she would become a professional observer.
Graham Munce is originally from St. Petersburg, Florida, and moved here to get out of the sun. He is majoring in business, and his interests include traveling, visiting art museums, and hiking.

Matthew Benjamin Reichert is an English major from Fairfax, Virginia. He draws inspiration from his memories of “home” and those he met on his way west. His family currently resides in Idaho. Everything else is lost in the details.

Michael Schultz is stark, raving mad. If you want to know more, come talk to him.

Ricole Stack is a freshman from Washington. She is majoring in English.

Alison Townsend is a senior in the pastoral ministries program. Alison is a Portland native.

Tim Winterstein is a junior in the pre-seminary program. To God and T.D.P. Psalm 86:11.

Michelle Wudtke is a sophomore with a double major in psychology and elementary education, with a minor in business administration. Her favorite quote is “Sleep is still most perfect when shared with a beloved.” —D.H. Lawson