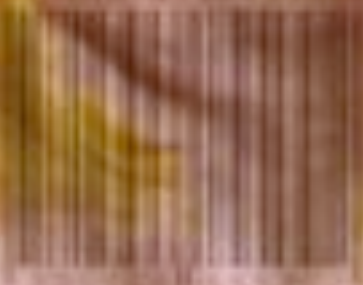


CC&D

the **UN**religious,
NONfamily-oriented
literary & art mag



v196
May '09

table of contents

poetry (the passionate stuff)

| | |
|--|----|
| Benjamin Nardolilli | 1 |
| Jack Henry | 2 |
| Peter Bates <i>art</i> | 2 |
| David LaBounty | 3 |
| CEE | 4 |
| Aaron Wilder <i>art</i> | 4 |
| Luis Cuauhtemoc Berriozabal | 5 |
| forwarded Sign Language image from C Ra McGuirt | 5 |
| Kathryn A. Graves | 5 |
| Janet Kuypers | 6 |
| Michael Ceraolo | 7 |
| Julia Pilowsky | 8 |
| Charles Michael Craven | 9 |
| Edward Michael O'Durr Supranowicz <i>art</i> | 9 |
| Adam Joseph Ortiz | 10 |
| Mike Hovancsek <i>art</i> | 10 |
| Brandi S. Henderson | 10 |
| Nicole Aimiee Macaluso <i>art</i> | 10 |
| Alleliah Amabelle Nuguid | 11 |
| Jean Wiggins | 11 |
| Julie Kovacs | 12 |
| Devin Smith | 13 |
| Brian Reickert | 13 |
| Sergio Ortiz | 14 |
| J. Neff Lind | 15 |
| Dvid Waite | 16 |
| R. N. Taber | 17 |

prose (the meat & potatoes stuff)

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Mel Waldman | 18 |
| Paul Baker <i>art</i> | 22 |
| Mary Chandler | 23 |
| Mark Ali | 26 |
| Rose E. Grier <i>art</i> | 32 |
| Cheryl Townsend <i>art</i> | 34 |
| Nick Brazinsky <i>art</i> | 36 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| A. McIntyre | 38 |
| Cole D. Lemme | 40 |
| John Duncklee | 44 |

Scars art

3 (Toronto skyline on the water, and a street in Montreal), 8 (tree tops), 13 (Joe selling his Mustang, off a farm road in Urbana, Illinois) 16 (metal photographed from a tower in Pasadena, California), 17 (a rifle and a gun, photographed 12/25/03 in Pennsylvania). Cover art of a portrait of Cathy (photographed 1988-1989), painted with Warhol effects.

Dependability

Benjamin Nardolilli

I get asked how dependable is
Protecting drivers?



bar night saturday

Jack Henry

it was a sad sack bar
that still allowed smoking
as long as you didn't talk too much and paid in cash

crack whore named betty
eased up on me with a mouth full of crickets
lead filled eyes and skin like the bottom of my boot

she offered to suck my dick
for ten bucks to score a hit
of low grade shit that would work her for an hour before the need kicked back in

i gave her ten bucks
told her to fuck off
took a piss on
a cider block wall
watched her smoke
her stuff and fade

at the bar i sat
forlorn, forgotten
mild in my demeanor
drank bad whiskey
from a semi-clean glass
and found myself
not much better
than her

Missing
Something,
art by
Peter Bates



Across the Driveway and the River

David LaBounty

Detroit, and across
the river to the
south is Canada,

another country,

and I can see it,
but I can't
hear it or feel it

and my house,
a red brick box
in a sea of red
brick boxes separated
by narrow driveways
of poured cement
and just across
my driveway is
a house I can
touch with my
spit and I see
the nameless neighbors
once in a while

but I can't hear
them living or
breathing and I
certainly don't

feel them at all.



Toronto skyline from
the water (above), street
in Montreal (below)



Fascists Find Oz

CEE

1996

We were in Arkansas

En toto

We were the 3 people

Who supported Dole

But we didn't do it

To be patriotic

"Mericans

Or better our nation

We liked Bob Dole

'Cause he was funny;

We used to

The 3 of us

Leap around the room

With pens in our fists

Wavin' 'em about

(As though he actually ever

Waved that arm about)

And we'd imitate him

Gain',

"**Bob Dole!**"

Only is was more kinds like,

"**Brrr-rrrr!**"

We was a-laughin' 'til we cried

And laughter's good medicine;

Even in 2000

I supported Liddie Dole

All 'cause I wanted to get up

Every day for 4 years

And leap around the room

And shake a stiff arm

With a pen in my fist

And go,

"**Brrr-rrrr!**"

And laugh

And be happy



Empty Spaces and Broken
Lines, art by Aaron Wilder

Don't elect the lesser man

Don't elect the better man

Elect a man

You can laugh your ass off at.

Impersonators

Luis Cuauhtemoc
Berriozabal

I called the police
because there were
strangers in my house.

My parents and my
brother were being
impersonated
by other people.

I scratched and punched
the mom and dad
imposters, but my
brother fought back.

These people are
breaking into
my parents home.

The police won't do
their job. Instead
they have me in
the hospital.

I called the FBI.
But they're more rude
than the police.
They called me crazy.



Sign Language, forwarded
from C Ra McGuirt

Poetry Reading in the City of Roses

Kathryn A. Graves

Under the Burnside Bridge, poetry slams
and bounces off a concrete stage -
the audience feasts
on handfuls of blackberries.

The hipsters sing songs that left home
to find themselves drifting with others,
rain soaked and stacked deep
against used bookstore windows

while the overpass scrapes into a chorus,
skateboards in wearing black T-shirts
and Goodwill sneakers -
all on city time.

Spectators rock and cock their heads
to their sides not listening,
as a young man reads
pulling his hood over his head
and his hair out of his sunglasses.

Now You're Nothing To Me

Janet Kuypers

love is like tap water
free flowing
remember when you were little,
just put a glass under the faucet
quench your thirst

wait a minute,
it's not like that
water isn't free
you even have to pay
for the water in your own home
and
it's not even clean

what you're getting is dirty
and you still have to pay for it

#

you know, they say us humans
are like seventy-five percent water

and when I think of you
and all the time we were together

well, if you're seventy-five percent water
I have to remember
that it wasn't pure and clean and clear
and if this is love, and this was you
it wasn't free
I'm still paying for it

#

when I now think of you
the fact that you made me feel like nothing
and when I think of what you now mean to me
when I think of what you're made of
I have to remember

we're all made of atoms
protons and neutrons wound tightly together in the nucleus
 apparently infinitely small
surrounded
 at a comparatively vast distance
by occasional tiny electrons
spinning around
keeping their distance
 almost like fluff

in a way,
you're like that electron, you know
Spinning around
but keeping your distance

but when I think of you
I have to remember
that you're made of those atoms
with really tiny cores
and those atoms are so filled with space
that you're mostly made of nothing

when I think of you
this is what I have to remind myself

when I think of the nothingness you made me feel
and the fact that you now mean nothing to me
this is how I have to think of you

On the Road Again

Michael Ceraolo

“Space: the final frontier”
Frontier:
any place not yet
exploited by humans

The Trees Are Sweating

Julia Pilowsky

The Trees are Sweating
they swelter from an unnatural heat
concocted in a thousand petrochemical fires
they cry the tears that melt their skin
they choke in the fog of a smoke-clogged night

The Trees are sweating
they are burdened with demands for their sturdy flesh
their predators besiege them and they can show no fear
and in their desperation they are sweating out their fright
but their sweating comes to nothing when they face a younger might

The trees are sweating
they were once gods and we were their worshippers
they were once masters of the earth and we cowered beneath them
we are young and proud, but they are old and wise
they knew your great-grandmother, and she knew:

the trees are sweating
their fear is for themselves but they pity for us too
for when our race dies, they will sigh, and grow another ring.
but when their kind dies, we perish in their carcasses -
embalm ourselves in carcasses of forests we once knew



Ant Eater

Charles Michael Craven

there is enough ignorance
on this planet
to drown
civilizations.

mix a little arrogance
with that ignorance
and a winner is born.

too oblivious to know the difference
he'll enjoy this existence.
thinking everyone else feels just like him
he'll put himself out there,
he'll talk out in class
and in business meetings,
he'll volunteer his services
and brown nose with the best of them,
he'll be loud at restraints
and think he could get every girl
that looks in his direction.

this guy will be
the typical drunk and stoner
the typical freshman and senior
the typical frat pledge

he'll be the typical student
the typical employee
until he becomes the typical boss



Dismay, art from
Edward Michael O'Durr
Supranowicz

he'll be the typical husband
and father
living the typical life
before experiencing the
typical death.

the man I speak of
enjoys his life.

I wouldn't,
would you?

song for the repressed

Adam Joseph Ortiz

he is
certain
that sex
is not evil.

yet,

he cannot
conceive
of a world
where it isn't.



Cathedral Light, art
by Mike Hovancsek

Outsider

Brandi S. Henderson

Out of the corner of
my eye
I see

housewives sneering in fear;
children innocent in their stares;
businessmen adjusting themselves;
lawyers looking for new cases;
hardworking people like yourselves;
the doctors and nurses trying to neglect;
the elderly remembering something;
my family trying to forget.

But I pass on alone,
the only way I've
fathomed life to be.

I am not safe...

Maybe no one is.



art by Nicole
Aimie Macaluso

A Nicely Built City Never Resists Destruction

Alleliah Amabelle Nuguid

Everyone knows it is impolite to refuse a guest.
The aqueducts extend an invitation with their watery hands.
Destruction is a welcome visitor within insufficient barricades.
It is armed with arms.

There is always a wind
to ruffle skirts
and scatter papers,
inciting pursuit.



Dog Fight

Jean Wiggins

Like an airplane lumbering down the runway
but failing to take off,
she is failing already in life

after so-soon a start. She trembles
like a blade of grass
blown by tender winds,

and that's what we see--
that and the hamlet
after the shelling, disgusting

as it used to be beautiful,
Seeing her now is like seeing
a skinned rabbit hanging

in a peasant's hut.
Sometimes I think we are apples
past ripeness, a rotten curse

to the benevolence of earth.
Other times I think we may be
angels, the wax on our wings

melted by too much light.
I wonder why history has a mouth
but not a nose, why ecstasy

sits in a dark corner, how a child
can be torn open like a split tree,
why the bitches of war remain unleashed.

I'm Not the Virgin Mary

Julie Kovacs

Two young men came down from the apartment upstairs talking to each other when they saw me outside my door getting ready to go bicycling to the local university campus.

I was putting on my helmet when they said "Good afternoon" to me and I returned their greeting. Judging by the way both of them were dressed, in black suits with crisp white shirts and black ties carrying a briefcase, I knew they had something to sell me and it wasn't aluminum siding.

One of the men asked me if I wanted to learn more about Jesus. I thought to myself, are you kidding? Dressed up like that? You don't think Jesus himself would be wearing that sort of get up to preach in, do you?

But I politely replied I already had a religious affiliation. Naturally, both men were curious as to what it might be. I declined but as an afterthought, should have said that I was a member of the Church of the Jumping Goulash.

It would have thrown them off course long enough to consider getting lunch than continuing this conversation that was going nowhere. By that time I had to get to class at the campus. The two men who were so clean cut and well dressed asked me my name as I mounted the bicycle. Positive they had to report back to their head honcho every mission failed or successful that day, I replied, "The Virgin Mary!" as I rode away.

Bruce Campbell's Worst Nightmare!

Devin Smith

i see things in black and white, and sometimes in mexican
my thought flows out like rubber cement
it dries before hitting the paper
it is immobile and useless before the creation
i live by literature that i never read and see it to the end
i know from intuition without warranty
three red lights surround my face
i am here. get a vaccine. your head will rot out.
i hate with a bigger heart than yours

If my heart were America
your purchase would include:
Montana, Iowa, Colorado.

We should be free,
shouldn't we?
To say stupid things,
and to make horribly disastrous
mistakes that might ruin
both your life and mine.

I could drive for days
across the sprawling fertile
expanse of my blunders,

wind up busted flat somewhere
on the outskirts of your affection.

Somewhere between here and
the lunar depths of the Grand Canyon,
you and I belong.

It's not a question
of when and where really,
but of our willingness to feel.

If My Heart Were America

Brian Reickert



At the Tail End of Dusk Inn

Sergio Ortiz

*“And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling.”
Sir Walter Scott, “Our Lady of the Lake”*

As a child Reneida was like tap water
scurrying through our fingers.
She grew to be a beautiful woman,
lips constantly in bloom,
a stare that made you rush
to find a maid of honor.
She went hungry so many nights
it came as no surprise when she married
the eldest Villalobos, owner
of the At the Tail End of Dusk Inn.
We counted the months and scratched out
greed as her motive.
She gave birth to a baby boy
twenty four weeks after the wedding.
He was so big she delivered him in parts.

I got caught in another of those leaf
storms that makes you want to use a cilice belt
and go to confession on Sunday.
The day Reneida and I took the kid
to get baptized, a runaway car
suddenly covered me in dirt. When I looked back
Reneida was in a puddle, eyes fixed on the baby,
and a smile that made you think
she had gone to heaven, or slept with Ricky Martin.
Reneida saved the child but died soon after.

Villalobos sold everything he had.
He wanted my godson, Luis, to starve,
to never learn to walk,
never find anything to prop him up,
so gravity would pull him closer to gloom.
He gave me the boy when there was
nothing left of his estate.

Luis graduated first in his class
and got a job as a chemical engineer in London.
I do cameo appearances on Grey's Anatomy,
as bi-polar nurse reciting verses
from Our Lady of the Lake.

Happy Together

J. Neff Lind

I painted my shower
to match your skin tone
and renamed both of my cats
after you
Tessa 1
and Tessa 2

I wrote your name
in my diary
with my
last name attached
and I whispered it
as I sinned
Tessa Lind.

Everyday I wrote you
letters
of love and lust
and burned them
every night,
they were
in response
to letters
that you'd never write.

I wanted to be
closer to you
than you would
let me be
so I carved your name
into my chest
and watched myself
bleed.

By the Hook

David Waite

there were two men working in the grinder room
pulling logs with metal hooks
to send down the line for newspaper, comic books

heavy coats to keep out the cold
twenty outside and forty-five in
with the wind pushing through the boards of the wall
so cold even the logs froze through

one man gets lazy at hooking logs
and chips them with his sappy tool,
a method the old guys use
that they were all warned against;
today the blade bounces and dives into his hand
cold iron in a naked palm

the way they work, they keep their head down
wait out the five hours until a break
so the wound goes unnoticed by one man
while the other rubs his hand on his undershirt
blood soaking to his belly skin



he turns to the other man
says *I got myself, need to go to the Mill Doctor*
the iron smell rising despite the cold
the other man looks over and turns white, *oh no he cut his guts*
thinking of the pierced small intestine, sprinkled with rust

the man with the cut walks to the doctor
tells him of the man who passed out beside him
the foreman shuts down the line

my father still has the scar inside his left thumb
and the image of a man filled with despond
falling to his knees, too shocked to blink or scream
the other man has the nightmares of blood and rust
a metal worm creeping through an open belly
with cold and wood all around him

Profile of a Hotshot

Copyright R. N. Taber 2008

We called ourselves the Hotshots,
my gang and me

Upholding the right to use a gun,
in our constitution

We'd pick fights on street corners
and raid stores

If some little old lady or a war vet
in the way...too bad

We were the Hotshots, graduated
from school to streets

No one could touch us because we
had youth on our side

Looks, girls, designer gear and guns
made us invincible

We even hit prime time News once
(fame at last)

Then a hotshot turned good citizen
and grassed us up

Disbanded now, gone to this prison
or that graveyard

We were the Hotshots, thought guns
were cool

Me? They say it's a safe bet that I'll
never walk again



prose
the meat and potatoes stuff

A Pair of Sticks Mel Waldman

It was still early in the evening when they arrived at the sleazy Jazz spot. The squat fellow entered first, followed by his pot-bellied swarthy buddy who seemed to be part of another world. Neither man cared at the moment where the other was, however, for each was slinking off into a private, inaccessible domain of brutal fantasy. Each was at that particular fragmentary moment-cut off, so to speak-from the other. But the smaller, lighter-skinned man carried his drum sticks. A subtle gleam covered his pallid face whose only distinctive mark was a tiny moustache perched unobtrusively on a lonely pair of thin lips. This man seemed ready for something, whereas the dark friend projected no special need or emotion. Indeed, as he quietly sauntered into the club, he looked untouched by reality.

Upon entering the dimly lit underground enclosure which contained a hot, teeming, inconspicuous stage, the shorter fellow, who was called Richie, began speaking to a waiter. The other guy simply paid his admission fee and disappeared into the back room. This chameleon was sometimes addressed as Joe or pal, my friend, a friend, buddy, or old buddy. But tonight, he was called Joe or nothing at all. And apparently, he didn't mind what Richie called him. He was preoccupied and obsessed with the interminable thoughts that assaulted him on this all-encompassing night.

For a moment, his glance smoldered as his eyes greedily took in and absorbed the whole scene of avant-garde and obsolete hippies. He observed everything-the fashionable looks and postures and subtle gestures that distinguished the vanguard from the old timers. And no matter what or whom he saw, his distant expression did not change except for the occasional intrusion of that smoldering look. It swept across his dispassionate face for an apocalyptic second when he lost control of whatever it was he was grasping inside. And then it vanished intransigently into the easy going atmosphere of the joint. Once again, the amorphous Joe was hidden from his surroundings and himself.

And so the evening began in a slow and ordinary manner. Richie was everywhere. He was a ubiquitous figure who mingled with everyone as the life-changing moment approached. His body and mind were spilling over with excitement tinged with self-doubt. Soon he'd get up on the quiet stage and try to create that beautiful high-that ineffable sensation that filled an artist's soul. Yeah, soon he'd try to create a winner's performance. That's what it was all about-those few slinky seconds or minutes when a regular guy had a chance to

make himself someone else, someone very special, a somebody people noticed—a star. Perhaps that short interval made existence vital. It transformed every iota of insignificance in every meaningless and trivial moment of life into a real, pulsating experience. In any case, Richie was passionate about the anticipated rendezvous with a pair of sticks. The moment and all its ornate fantasies clutched the little man.

Joe watched his friend kidding jauntily with strangers and bobbing along in blind ecstasy. Once again, Richie seemed to bask innocently in fantastic moments. And each moment was gradually building up to the ultimate encounter with himself and his dreams. With impassioned concern, he steadily thrust himself forward toward the imaginary union of majestic glory and triumph. With obsession and compulsion, he craved that uncertain success that made men notice an otherwise obscure creature. His desire was insatiable, indeed, and the other man observed him in his lusty quest.

But while Richie was obsessed, his buddy Joe didn't cling to any joy or pain. You see, he wasn't involved. He wasn't present in any palpable way. He was a dead man with vacant eyes that grabbed you and drew you into their remote domain. Well, Joe wasn't here or there, but he made you cling to him, without even trying. He made you enter him somehow. And you got in touch with his terrible pain. Then, he was real and more than a quiet observer.

One day our man Joe got married. Afterwards, his friends called him a happily married fool. Indeed, he believed the lie that he was happily married. Because he had this popular belief instilled into his average, culture-impregnated brain, one day he instantly and magically made his wife pregnant. For *that* was the proper thing to do. And *that*, for sure, was the beginning of the end for our boy Joe.

Shortly after this effulgent event, Joe and his wife were quickly drawn closer together, given their upcoming venture into Parenthood. But despite their splendid dreams of grandeur, their future was ominous. For upon the birth of a strong and healthy boy, both lovers became absolutely serious about the Institution of Marriage. And thus began the breakdown of a very noble pastime.

First, the lovers were constantly interrupted by the shrill cries of their darling baby, especially late at night and early in the morning when they chose to get laid. Hence, intercourse often became unfinished business and left our joyful couple spent and frustrated.

Secondly, the lust and insatiable passion that often filled our lovers' bodies barely reached the young father's consciousness once Joe became obsessed with becoming a successful artist with glorious shows in the finest Manhattan art galleries. Perhaps, Joe's art work and obsession were a desperate attempt at sublimation of unfulfilled sexual desires. Who knows?

In addition, he was writing sci-fi and fantasy novels on weekends and taking expensive voice lessons whenever he had an extra buck. He was gonna be a star no matter what, and if he succeeded in more than one area of endeavor, he'd be bigger than Big. He'd be a Superstar-a Giant. He'd be a real person who wasn't always empty and seeking the moon without ever arriving. Tomorrow, he'd be rich and famous. And as he thought these maddening thoughts, his brain became cluttered with craziness and a ferocious rage which accompanied his great needs. So how could he think of his woman? He was forgetting her each day as he approached Success.

Joe almost achieved fame and glory. But he stopped short, you see. He walked away from all his cruel dreams. Before he did, however, he exploded. His rage cried out and demanded recognition. He screamed louder than ever before. And his wife Lisa listened. After she heard his infantile demands for glory and power, she threw herself into a dramatic anxiety attack and almost fainted. But she didn't. She almost wept interminably. But she stopped. Yet the following morning she ran away from Joe. She took her pretty baby too and left nothing behind.

From that day on, Joe searched for his missing wife and child. In time, he lost his old fashioned enthusiasm and delusions of grandeur. Transformed into a shy and humble man, he became a really nice guy who never got angry. But he was far away. He had this deadpan expression on his nondescript face. He was this gentle weird fellow who was nowhere people could find him. That's what people thought when they thought about Joe.

Yet indirectly, Joe revealed his anguish. Once, the olive-colored man had been a slim, attractive guy. In the distant past, he met Lisa, a tall, slim, blue-eyed blonde. Then, he was brave and loud and self-centered-a pure egotist, an outrageous narcissist. But after the separation, Joe's face and body changed. He started eating more and more. And the fat covered him. It spread throughout his self-contained body until the old boundaries of his flesh changed. The malicious, insidious feelings grew. Joe wasn't left unscathed by the critical events that had transpired. He was probably touched by every occurrence, although he never once got angry. But covered in fat, he was far away.

Wherever he was, he was about to see Richie's debut. Probably Joe felt a ripple of some faint emotion. But he remained in the backroom and drank his glass of ginger ale. He didn't feel like drinking or getting high in any fashion at all. Many times before, he had enjoyed the quick highs and the exciting sensations. Today, however, he avoided any loss of control. He preferred being on the outskirts of emotion. All the same, he felt an iota of something about the anticipated performance.

It wasn't Joe's great performance. Not at all. Of course, he had given up that nonsense years ago. His great dream was never gonna be fulfilled. His great moment was never arriving. And thus, he hid in a private place. He was nowhere to be found. But he was a friend, a buddy, Richie's pal. Much more than a performer, he was a person, observing the buoyant old buddy from a distance. He was whoever he was without wife and son, without dear Lisa who once had worshipped him and called him God. Now, in this very real moment, he wasn't in the limelight. He never wrote his big novel. He never had a show in a Manhattan art gallery, nor did he thrust his face into a sleek mike and sing, not even one beautiful note. At most, he was a quiet observer. But Richie was getting there today, perhaps for both of them.

As time approached that infinite interval of uncertainty and excitement, Joe's eyes became fixed on Richie's pair of sticks. The sticks were nothing special. But they had a magic, for they were adorned with a subtle beauty. And suddenly, Richie's regular face took on an extraordinary glow. He looked different just before he left with his sticks and galloped to the stage. Apparently, he was expecting something, maybe something big, and he seemed ready to get it. With his ordinary sticks in his hands, Richie was ready for a glorious encounter, perhaps. Something big might happen to him, and it was touching Joe.

For a moment, however, Richie faltered. He was no longer linked to his sticks. Now, he was instantly cut off. Suddenly, he was aware of himself, and this lonely awareness made him afraid. He could no longer cope. His great dreams started to slip away. All he knew and felt right now was the need to run away. This panic swaddled him and took control for a few hidden moments. And perhaps someone saw his hands shaking as he lifted his sticks, for Richie's joy had disappeared in a blinding terror. He was lost in his flimsy separateness. He couldn't tolerate the isolation and the ultimate helplessness—couldn't bear this horrible loss. And he couldn't trust, for he was desperately empty and dead.

The emptiness gripped him in his secret moments of despair. Then the shaking became more pronounced until he let go of his pride or the ego which demanded he be great. Something big was dying inside, and with this loss and parting, Richie was released.

It happened. Richie started playing. He took on a distant expression which was, however, unlike the remote look Joe wore most of the time. Richie's distance was actually a union, or perhaps, a reunion with a higher power. He was far away, but he was in contact with an effulgent force that transformed him. *It* made him create beautiful sounds with the beating of the drums. He was moving his sticks rhythmically, in concert with a greater spirit. And from wherever this mysterious force originated, he was able to

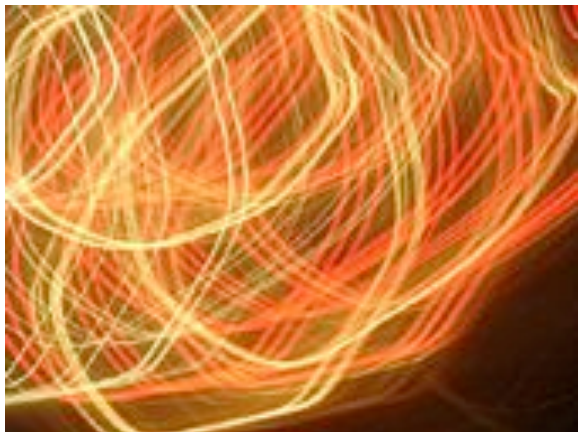
draw strength from its endless, torrential flow. He exploded with joy as his magical sticks pounded ecstatic sounds, and music reverberated in the smoke-filled room.

Joe's face lit up now. It was expressive and became a miniature stage of many emotions. The muscles in his face were no longer rigid or controlled. His face quivered and twitched and his entire body trembled. He shook violently as he ejaculated his alien rage again and again. Sporadically, his craziness emerged in frenzied assaults on his alien being and imaginary attacks on the world. Like a raging phallic interloper, his madness was launched forcefully upon existence until the rage ceased-until it changed to something else.

It couldn't last, you see. It had to disintegrate since it was no longer trapped. For a long time, this rage had been repressed. But once the great waterfall of fury cascaded down Joe's body, once it was allowed to dominate and control and destroy, it too was destroyed. And after the rage died, there was a metamorphosis.

Suddenly, Joe was touched by the unparalleled beauty produced by Richie's precious sticks. And his being was flooded with love which sporadically expressed itself as a smile, a grin, a smirk, a paroxysm of laughter and the quiet flow of tears. Yeah, Joe was feeling again, and he was filled by Richie's powerful moment of real passion. And the real feelings gripped Joe. Magically, he had new visions that transcended the older, weather-beaten dreams buried in the deep snow of his wounded psyche. Hopefully, these transitory emotions were genuine and valid. In any case, he felt alive again.

Richie's act was almost finished. Earlier on this night of miracles, Joe's seething emotions came forth relentlessly. A fat smile had covered the murderous face which struggled to find beauty-in one passionate moment-one evening in Greenwich Village. It happened in an out of the way place, in a cheap Jazz spot. An old buddy named Richie achieved a moment of greatness with an ordinary pair of sticks. Another friend found something else.



art by
Paul Baker

Payback

Mary Chandler

Billy stuffed his bent foot into his correction shoe, swung his leg over the seat of his Harley, and headed toward the courthouse. Never mind the pain that crawled up his back and the headaches that never stopped. He'd face that pimply twit who ran the light and slammed into him and Alice if it was the last thing he ever did.

Alice. Gone. His hand cupped his mouth. A tear slid down his wrinkled cheek. He settled himself on the bench outside the courtroom and closed his eyes, remembering.

"I love you, Billy Barnes," he heard her say-and he was back again in church. Back with Alice.

Church. Billy was no regular, but at seventy-three he'd found himself scrambling to redeem all those misspent years along life's way. Still, he'd eased back to church slowly. Cautiously. He remembered singing in the choir as a boy. But that was before the skepticism set in. Millions of questions. No answers. And the know-it-all always answering questions no one was asking. Too confusing. Much too complicated.

Long after he ceased to believe, the music kept him coming back.

"Billy, I want you to sing the solo next Sunday," Brother Stevens, the choir director, had said. "I like the way your tenor voice resonates throughout God's holy house."

He never refused. He felt like a hypocrite, singing in the choir like that and not believing. But on the off chance there was a God, maybe his singing would count for something.

Even after Bill stopped attending church, he sang often-in weddings, community choral groups, musicals-anywhere he was asked. The women flocked around him. He loved the attention. The ladies. But when the drinking started, the singing stopped.

The road back had been long and difficult. Along the way he'd shattered two marriages. Alice knew about both of them, but she'd taken him anyway.

Billy buried his face in his hands. Dear Alice, he thought. The only woman who really mattered. She brought me around. Made me want to be a better person.

The courtroom door swung open. "Mr. Barnes, please follow me."

Dutifully sworn in, Billy took the witness stand. He answered the routine questions-name, age, place of residence-all the while glaring at that pimply face and those defiant eyes staring back at him.

"Search your heart," he thought he heard Alice say. "He's just a kid. Try to forgive him."

“Tell us about the accident, Mr. Barnes.”

Billy’s heart pounded in his chest. His throat felt dry. Constricted. He reached for his water. Gulped it down. Cleared his throat and recounted the gory details he wished he could forget.

“The kid’s pickup ran the light and crashed into my Saturn. My car rolled twice before it overturned, pinning me beneath the hood and the steering wheel.” Billy felt his lips quivering. “I could hear the blood gurgling from my wife’s throat. I knew she was dying—and I couldn’t do a damn thing to help her. It was horrible.” Billy’s hands shook. His head throbbed. “Somebody help us!’ I screamed. No one came.” Sweat covered Billy’s forehead. “The cops found the wrecked pickup, but not the kid. He didn’t stick around. Didn’t care what he’d done.” Billy glared at the dressed-for-court punk in his white shirt, navy suit, and matching tie. “The little coward ran.”

The kid shook his head and sneered. Billy wanted to strangle him with his bare hands.

Alice’s voice whispered in his head. “Calm down, Billy. Finish your testimony.”

And somehow, he had.

Taking a seat in the courtroom, Billy listened to the speech about how the 17-year-old’s whole life lay ahead of him. How his childhood abuse and lack of parenting somehow excused his behavior. How society, not the spiked-hair delinquent, was to blame for Alice’s death. Billy felt sick to his stomach. He knew where all this was headed.

The judge lectured the boy about putting the pieces of his life back together and let the little creep off. Just like that.

“Ironic, isn’t it, Alice, that just when I’d managed to fit the pieces of my life back together, Mr. Cool over there managed to destroy everything,” Billy said aloud.

“Wha’s that, old man,” the kid hissed as he swaggered past. “You talkin’ to me?”

The odor of aftershave clogged Billy’s nostrils. “Surly sonofabitch,” he muttered. “Watch your back.”

The kid whirled around. “You say somethin’, old man?”

Billy studied that face. Those cold eyes. The grimacing mouth.

“You deaf? I axed you a question.”

Billy shrugged. “Yes and no.”

Outside, Billy watched the kid join his friends. Whooping and hollering, they climbed into a red Chevy. The car darted in and out of traffic and zoomed out of sight, but not before Billy memorized the license. His head throbbed. He swallowed three aspirins and settled himself on his Harley.

Back home, Max, his German Shepherd, greeted him at the door. Max lived for his walks.

“Not a great day for the beach, Max,” Billy said, “but what the hell.”

Clouds blanketed the sky. Waves crashed, and seaweed littered the sand. Soon the drizzle turned into a downpour. Max tripped on a hunk of driftwood and sank onto the sand.

“Get up!” Billy demanded.

Max whined, but he didn’t move. Billy tried to lift the dog to his feet. No luck.

“Be patient. He’s half blind, old, and tired,” he thought he heard Alice say.

Billy’s hands flew to his ears. “Dammit, Max,” he yelled. “Get up!” He wanted to hit the dog. Pound some sense into his thick skull. Show him who was boss. And then he remembered it was Max lying on the sand, not the surly little shit that killed his Alice.

He knelt down and coaxed the dog to stand. “You’re soaked, Max,” he said, rubbing the dog’s head. “I need to get you home. C’mon, boy. Get up. You can do it.”

The dog finally stood, and the two of them limped home.

On Sunday, Billy tried to go back to church. Again. He knew that he needed to lift the load from his heart. Try to forgive the teenager. Start over. From the church parking lot, he heard the choir singing. Billy sat on his Harley, listening. Struggling with his emotions. Trying to see things Alice’s way. God’s way.

A red Chevy pulled up beside him.

“Hey, old man,” the familiar voice said, “I been lookin’ for you.”

The kid got out, banged his car door shut, and stared at Billy, his hands balled into fists. A cross dangled from a gold chain around his neck.

Seeing that cross, Billy came unglued. How dare he? Billy put a finger to his lips. “Don’t say a word, Alice,” he warned. “Not one word.”

“Wha’ you say?”

Billy didn’t answer. Instead, he revved his Harley and drove like a madman from one end of the parking lot to the other. When he had all the power he needed, he slammed into the punk, sending him reeling to the cement, a look of terror permanently etched on his pimply face.

“Payback time,” Billy said, ripping the cross from the dead punk’s neck and tossing it as far as he could.

The weight from his heart lifted, just like that. He felt vindicated. Whole. When the cops came, he’d be waiting. Meanwhile, he’d talk to his Alice. Explain. Try to get her to see things his way. She’d forgive him. To Billy, that’s all that mattered.

Kaleidoscope

Mark Ali

The truth that had always eluded Bill Cooper came to light one evening with no purpose other than to tear through his world. A truth that had clouded his dreams for so long, a truth his conscious would not allow him to remember.

It was the truth about the flying elephant.

And if he had known what had actually been banging at his mind, he would have left it alone. His life would have continued just the same and his world never would have fallen. But he pursued it.

And so the truth came, and it came from the smallest of people.

The tiny woman pushing the baby carriage caught Bill's eye as he approached her near the bridge. From a distance, she had looked like a child maneuvering an oversized cart; but as he neared her, her mature walk showed the experience of a woman.

Maybe the first midget I've ever seen, he thought.

"Hello," he said, in passing.

She glanced at him without stopping or returning his greeting. She looked worried and Bill noticed a large mole between her lip and nose; it reminded him of chocolate covered raisins.

Her lack of response was offensive and he stopped, watching her push the carriage down the sidewalk, the sound of rolling wheels ringing out. She disappeared around a corner.

The park was lit with a few street lamps but otherwise deserted this late at night. Bill continued his walk, heading towards the arching bridge that hovered above the park's stream. He walked up and stood at its peak, leaning on the rail. The stream below coursed from the forest to the left and drifted underneath the bridge. Behind him it emptied into the park's lake.

Bill lit a cigarette and inhaled. He rolled-up the sleeve of his coat, staring at his scar. It ran the course of his forearm and twisted into the crevice of his elbow, a part of his body for so long now it seemed like nothing more than a bulging vein; a gift from his father.

The cut he had seen on one of his patient's arm this afternoon reminded him of it. He ran the tip of his cigarette along its path, ashes scattered to the wind, but no pain, no feeling at all. His patient's scar had been fresh. His had long since lost any trace of life.

The boyfriend of his patient, Amy, had cut the underside of her arm. She had come to his office hysterical, screaming of finally leaving. But Bill knew he would see her in the same situation tomorrow or the next day. She was a new patient, but he could already see how her case would end.

She was no stronger than the rest; none of them were ever strong enough to get out. And after working as a psychiatrist and counselor to victims of abusive relationships for the past five years, he still couldn't figure out why. But he couldn't blame any of them; he himself could never confront his father.

He finished his cigarette and tossed it into the stream. The running water of the stream sounded like an unsteady hum; a hum which spoke of brokenness and emptiness. A void that almost had a voice.

His dream from last night was still with him. The dream he occasionally had that was so vivid and repetitive. He was a child, sitting at the dinner table with his mother and father, a pink glass elephant was flying around, flapping its ears and giggling. Bill would jump up and chase it while his parents sat eating in silence. But he could never catch the elephant, as many times as he had the dream, he never caught it.

He began to walk along the bridge towards the other end when the sound of rolling wheels chimed through the air again; soft at first, but growing, sailing towards him. He turned and saw the midget with the carriage walking back towards him, but this time she was coming at a much faster pace.

She looked as if someone had plucked off the head of an elderly woman and spliced it onto the body of a child, creating a lopsided image which wasn't amusing.

The midget broke into a jog as she neared the bridge, thrusting against the cart. She was obviously running from something. "Are you okay?" Bill called out.

She didn't reply.

She reached the bridge and began to ascend. "Be careful with your baby!" he yelled. But the woman not only didn't respond she seemed to not notice him.

He looked out past her and saw nothing, nothing to be running from. Despite her size and the slope of the hill, she was coming fast.

"Is someone chasing you?" he said. But she paid no attention and came hurtling up the bridge like she was running from a storm.

Bill was knocked off his feet.

Before he realized what happened and before he could react, the midget crashed the front of the carriage into his groin, knocking him on his back. His head hit the pavement and he cried out. The cart stumbled into the railing of the bridge and tottered on its wheels before coming to a rest.

Bill groped the back of his head and felt blood. The cut was leaking, but didn't feel deep. "Are you out of your mind?" he yelled, sitting-up, dabbing the back of his head. She looked down at him and finally into his eyes. He could see nothing in them, not even fear—just a blank stare. He noticed the midget's hands now and felt his gut clench. He hadn't seen before, but her hands were smothered in blood, like she had tried to peel the skin loose. He got to his feet and the midget spun around with surprising quickness.

She then threw herself over the railing of the bridge.

"No!" Bill screamed.

He stood for a moment in shock, staring at the spot where the midget was a second ago, then ran to the railing and looked over. He could see her tiny body creased

between rocks near the stream's edge. It was at least 30 feet down and too dark to make out more than the general shape of her body. He backed up—clutching his face in his hands—then broke into a run.

He reached the edge of the bridge and turned onto the grass that led down to the stream, sprinting towards her. When he reached the small hill leading down to the stream's bank he slid to a stop, staring down at the midget.

She was lying there, like a doll that had been tossed aside. He could see blood splattered on her face and surrounding rocks. Her head was split on one side, the eye dangling out. The nearby street lamps seemed to cast light only on the mutilated woman, wanting to reveal the gruesome details.

Bill stood trying to catch his breath. He looked around for any sign of help, but saw nothing. "Lady?" he said. She didn't move. He moved closer and could smell urine.

He could see that her right arm was twisted and almost dislodged from her body. He knelt close to her, holding the collar of his shirt over his nose to block the smell, and tried to hear if she was breathing. She wasn't.

She suddenly coughed with a convulsion. Her body flexed as if trying to stretch itself apart and Bill lunged back, lost his balance and sat down on the muddy bank. She heaved with a tough gag and blood sprinkle out of her mouth.

"God!" Bill muttered.

She twisted her head in Bill's direction and her one good eye looked at him. The other eye was dead. Bill fumbled in his pockets for his cell phone.

"I'm going to get help. Just don't move, okay."

He found his phone, but the sound of the woman's voice made him jump.

"Don't look inside it," she said. "Don't go near it." Her voice was harsh, but audible.

"Don't try to talk, just be still." He flipped open his phone and began to scroll through his contacts.

"My carriage," she croaked. "Don't...it'll show you everything."

Bill looked into her cracked face. Her one good eye glanced over him one last time, and then went dead like its other half.

Bill fumbled with his phone until he found the number he was searching for.

He pressed call and waited for his father, Detective Andrew Cooper, to answer.

The carriage stood alone like a tent abandoned in the middle of a forest. A black half-cover was pulled up and around the bed beneath. The whole thing reminded Bill of a coffin.

He looked down into it and saw a white sheet sprinkled with blood. There was a pink heart-shaped pillow near the top, also damped with blood. Bill felt as if the whole world had stopped. Silence, except for the wind which he could feel and hear circling him; it sounded like air from a flat tire; soft but there, reminding him that things were still moving. He took a deep breath and moved the sheet aside.

There was nothing but more blood-soaked sheets. He stared in disgust, begin-

ning to turn away until...something else in the carriage caught his eye.

A black cylinder was sticking halfway out from underneath the heart-shaped pillow, hidden amongst the bloody linens. He reached in with his fingertips, careful not to touch any blood, and grabbed it.

It was heavy, like iron, with glass lenses on the top and bottom. Bill thought it looked like a kaleidoscope.

He jumped, almost dropping the tube, as sirens screamed out around him. He looked out into the fields towards the parking lot and saw police lights flashing.

Two officers jumped out of a patrol car and ran up the sidewalk towards the bridge. They looked like nothing more than moving shadows in the dark. Bill made his way down the bridge to meet them, stuffing the cylinder in his jacket pocket and trying to calm down.

“Are you Andrew’s son?” one of the officers asked. Bill nodded. “You called in a suicide?”

Bill turned around, looking at the stream below the bridge where the lifeless body waited. “She...she just jumped. She didn’t say anything, just jumped off the bridge.”

The officers took-off into the fields towards the stream. Bill watched them descend the hill and then disappear.

The tiredness of the night swam over him, and the thought of home was tempting. He made his way over to a bench on the edge of the sidewalk and sat down, waiting for the officers to return with their questions, although he had no idea what had happened.

He lit another cigarette as a new car pulled into the parking lot now, a brown Cadillac.

A short man in a grey overcoat stepped out and looked across the field in Bill’s direction. Bill stood up; an embarrassed, guilty feeling crept-up as he waited for his father to approach.

“Son?” Andrew said as they met. Bill looked down at his father, he was maybe a foot shorter, but his dark eyes showed nothing but arrogance. Bill tossed his cigarette to the ground.

“Dad, I’m sorry. I didn’t know what else too do, this woman, she...” Bill began to loose his thoughts and stutter.

“Calm down, where’s the body?” Andrew said.

“She jumped...jumped off the bridge, just jumped.”

His father looked over at the bridge and the stream beneath. Bill could smell his scent of bourbon and Ralph Lauren cologne. “Are the officers down there?”

“Yeah,” Bill said, sitting back down on the bench.

“Just wait here. I’ll be back.”

Bill gave a slight nod. His father crossed the sidewalk, his boots clicking the pavement with every step until he reached the grass.

The cylinder bulged from Bill’s pocket. He pulled it out, holding it in his hand. It was defiantly some sort of a kaleidoscope. What had the midget said?

Don’t look in it.

It'll show you everything.

He placed the lens to his eye, aiming out at the park. It seemed to be some sort of magnify glass. Bill aimed it at a tree and the tree seemed twice as close, enlarged in the viewfinder. He tried to rotate the outside shifts but it wouldn't budge.

He brought the kaleidoscope down as he saw his father and the officers walking back from the stream. They made their way up the arching bridge towards the carriage.

Bill aimed the kaleidoscope at his father. The back of his father's head magnified, but something was different.

There was a series of numbers written above his head.

Bill pulled the kaleidoscope away in confusion. The numbers were gone. He looked through the kaleidoscope again and the numbers were there.

It was a series of red numbers with blinking colons placed in between certain sets. It read **22: 8030: 192720: 11563200: 693791998.**

Bill counted five sets of numbers; each set larger than the previous, and the very last digit of the last set ticking down, like it was counting off seconds—**693791998, 693791997, 693791996**, and so on.

The magnified face of his father turned, looking at him and Bill dropped the kaleidoscope from his eye. The two stared at each other for a moment, and then his father made his way down the bridge.

He walked over to Bill with a smirk on his face, leaving the officers behind on the bridge. Bill stood up to meet him.

"When you called, you said there was a baby in the carriage," his father said.

"I hadn't looked inside yet, I thought there was."

"The woman's dead. Back-up's on the way to investigate the crime scene."

"Crime scene? I told you the woman jumped."

"I know, its just procedure. I do need to get an official statement from you before you leave though." His father took a step closer; Bill could almost taste the alcohol on his breath.

"Fine," Bill said. "I'll give it to the officers."

Bill began to walk away and his father grabbed him by the arm, pulling him back.

"She just jumped, huh?" his father said.

Bill didn't answer.

"Just an accident?" His father tightened his grip. "That's all right, I know about accidents."

Bill yanked his arm free.

He sat in his car outside his father's apartment, waiting for his return. The statement he had given earlier was embarrassing now that he thought about it—a midget pushing a carriage, with no baby, slammed into him and then jumped over a bridge.

He was holding the kaleidoscope in his hands, rolling it back and forth. It *was* a kaleidoscope, Bill was sure. But usually a kaleidoscope could be twisted to

show an array of designs reflected by mirrors lining the inside of the tube. This one didn't seem to twist and it worked more like a magnify glass.

Its weight was unmistakable. Bill guessed it to be about ten inches long and made of brass. It was solid black with a silver ring around the center, separating it into two halves.

He was waiting outside his father's apartment because of what he had seen through the kaleidoscope. Those numbers, they seemed like a chain wrapped around his father's neck, dragging him down. Bill remembered there were five sets; the first was 22 and the second 8030. The other three were too complex to remember, *if* there were any to remember. He probably imagined the whole thing, the whole night.

If the numbers were real, Bill's first thought was that they were some sort of countdown. He remembered that the last digit of the last series seemed to be counting off seconds, but he wasn't sure. He tossed the kaleidoscope onto the seat next to him and slouched back.

There was a stack of books on the seat; some psychology journals and reference books, the novel he was reading—Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*—and a book he was going to give to his patient, Amy, as a gift. It was an old hardcover edition of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*; not quite a first edition, but very old nonetheless.

During some of their sessions, Amy mentioned that her favorite book was *Through the Looking Glass*, the famous sequel to Carroll's, even more famous, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The story followed Alice as she made her way through to the other side of a mirror after pondering what the world would be like over there. Amy had mentioned that she often thought about the book when she was looking in the mirror at her bruises, wondering what it would be like to float through to the other side and disappear.

It was 2:54 a.m. Bill closed his eyes, realizing how drained he was, and began to doze off. This night had been like a dream, and tomorrow he would wake up to find it really had been.

The glass elephant statue sat in the middle of the dinner table, his mother's chewing mouth magnified through its body. Bill was a child again, watching his mother eat through the glass of the elephant. But there was something different this time. Those giant red numbers were blinking above his mother's head like a ticking time bomb. He looked at his father and the numbers were hovering above him too.

*There were also words written above both his mother and father. Above the first set of numbers was scribbled the word **YEARS**, the second set was labeled **DAYS**, the third set **HOURS**, the fourth set **MINUTES**, and the last set **SECONDS**.*

*The sets of numbers above his mother's head were filled with zeros, except for the last two digits of the last set; they seemed to be ticking down the seconds—**0: 0: 0: 0: 32**. The 32 counted down **31, 30, 29, 28**, and so on.*

The glass elephant flapped its ears and winked at Bill. Suddenly, it jumped off the table, using its ears to fly. Bill leapt up, laughing and chasing it. His mother and father sat eating in silence, not noticing the flying elephant at all. Bill shouted at his mother as

he cheered for the elephant, telling her to look at it. But she only sat there, lifting potatoes to her mouth.

The elephant floated down towards Bill, smiling. As it got closer, Bill could see its eyes turning red. It jerked away and darted across the table. Bill jumped on the table, chasing after it like he had so many times. He saw the red seconds above his mother's head tick down to zero, and the glass elephant slammed into her face, shattering. His father burst into laughter as his mother's face flooded with blood and then plopped down into her potatoes.

Bill screamed and screamed, but his father's crackling laugh was louder. Suddenly, his mother raised her head and stared at Bill. She began to laugh, her face dripping with blood and mashed potatoes, teeth falling out. His father stood up and walked over. He shoved her face back down into the food.

Bill screamed, and kept screaming until he was awoken by a tapping. He was back in his car, the sturdiness of reality taking place. There was another tap, like a bottle braking over his head, and he jumped.

He heard laughing and looked over to see his father standing outside the car window.

"Didn't mean to startle you" Andrew said.

Bill rolled down the window. His father's scent drifted in, the alcohol smell covered with heavy dampness, like the smell of cut grass.

"You didn't, it's all right," Bill said, rubbing the sleep from his face, the light of dawn settling into his eyes.

His father rested his elbows on the ledge of the car door. "What are you doing here?"

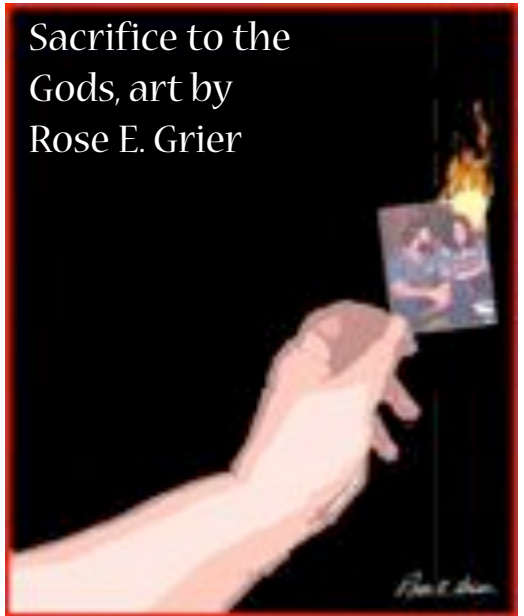
"Nothing, I just...I was waiting for you to come home. I wanted to know if everything was alright."

"Everything's fine. It's going to be documented as a suicide. She had ID on her; her name was Agnes de Selby. Her family will be notified and called to identify the body. We only have your statement, but it'll be enough."

His father stood up. "Go home, Bill; get some sleep. I'll call you later." He walked across the street to his apartment building. Bill felt that embarrassment creep-up again.

He turned the ignition key and began to reverse the car when he remembered why he had come—the kaleidoscope. He grabbed it off the seat next to him and put the car back in park. The dream he just had raced through his mind and he remem-

Sacrifice to the Gods, art by Rose E. Grier



bered the numbers above his parent's heads; the labeling above the numbers.

His father was standing in the parking lot, pulling bags out of his car's trunk. Bill aimed the kaleidoscope at him and peered through the opposite looking-glass end.

His father was magnified. The red numbers were blazing above his head, they read **22: 8030: 192715: 11562900: 693773997**. The 7 in the last set was ticking down—7, 6, 5, 4, and so on.

This was the countdown of his father's life, Bill knew it; the countdown to the end, to his death. Instead of showing shapes and colors, this kaleidoscope was showing Bill his father's life, so to speak. Bill didn't know why or how, but he couldn't deny what he was seeing.

From his dream he knew that the first set showed the years, the second set showed the days, then the hours, the minutes, and finally the seconds. Bill looked at the first set, which read 22. His father would live for 22 more years—

His father turned around, and Bill dropped the kaleidoscope from his eye. He looked at his father, wondering what all this meant, wondering what truths this strange kaleidoscope had. His father turned around and began walking towards his building.

Bill aimed the kaleidoscope at him as he walked up the steps. He peered again though the looking-glass. Now he tried to twist the outside tube. This time it slowly rotated until it clicked.

It felt like someone slammed a pole through his head. A flash of white light streamed into his eye and the kaleidoscope began to tunnel into his head, digging into his mind as it peeled and stretched the skin of his face, spinning deeper into his eye with spirals of white light.

Bill screamed out in pain.

Then he was back in his childhood dinning room, sitting at the dinner table. There were no blinking red numbers this time. His mother sat across from him, the glass elephant in between them on top of the table. Bill's father sat at the head of the table. Bill could see his mother through the glass of the elephant. She glanced up at him as she ate, and winked. Bill smiled.

This felt so familiar; he was a young boy again, his mother alive and in front of him. He could smell her—her scent of perfume and laundry. Unlike the dreams, where he was merely watching himself from outside, he felt like he was inside himself, separated but attached at the same time; like he was the conscious of his childhood self, watching and feeling everything from the back of his own mind while the child version of his self acted out.

"Billy, don't scratch your fork on the plate," his mother said.

Bill looked at her, shocked by the clarity of her voice. His child self smiled at her again. "Sorry," he heard himself say.

"Mom, I forgot to tell you! Today we found a dog at recess. We got to play with him before the teacher took him. He was black, we called him Buck."

Bill had no control over the words that came out of his childhood self's mouth, or the movements that were made. He found that he could merely watch

and listen from inside his own mind, chained against the wall of long-ago memories, unable to change anything. But even though this felt familiar, Bill could barely remember it, like there was some barrier over this part of his life that was now being bulldozed down.

“That sounds like fun. What did you do with him?” his mother asked.

“He followed us around and chased after balls. Mom, can we get a dog? I want a black one and I want to call him Buck.”

“Your mother seems to think she already has a dog to keep on a leash,” Bill’s father said. “She doesn’t need another one.”

From the back of his childhood mind, Bill could sense the coldness rushing out of his father. The fact that his father was in the room suddenly became very evident. Bill’s childhood self cast his eyes down at the chicken on his plate.

“Well sometimes a dog that can’t control his own slobber needs a chain around its neck,” his mother said. Bill’s child self was still staring down at his plate, but the adult Bill could sense his confusion at this statement. His child self glanced up at his parents with his head close down to his plate, as if they might forget he was still at the table.

His parents were staring at each other, his mother with a look of defiance and fear on her face.

“What did you say?” his father whispered. His mother just stared, not answering. After a moment, his father picked up his fork and began eating again. “Son, if you want a dog, we can get one. But you’ll have to take care of it. You’ll have to feed it and take it to the bathroom. Do you think you could do that?”

Bill nodded his head, staring at the hard image of his father.

“I think it would be hard to get you up in the morning to take the dog outside. I have trouble getting you up to go to school.”

The next statement his mother made only made sense to Bill now, as an adult in the back of his child mind. But his child self was completely lost. The statement was so subtle and so direct. And what happened next was nothing but a blur.

Under her breath his mother said, “That’s not the only thing you’ve been having trouble getting-up lately.”

With his eyes, adult and child, Bill watched as his father yanked the glass elephant off the table. He then brought it down with both hands into the middle of



Lucky Strike, art by
Cheryl Townsend

his mother's face with the sound of a hammer knocking out bricks from a wall.

Glass shattered in a puff of glitter around his mother's head and then fell around the dinner table with the sound of raindrops on a roof. His mother sat staring into Bill's eyes, her face cracked and mashed, blood spilling and staining her blue dress. Then her head fell forward, smacking into her plate like a chopped tree crashing.

Bill's lips, adult and child, uttered the word, "Mom?"

And then the blackness was consuming.

The kaleidoscope tour out of his face with such sharpness that Bill felt his eye loosen from his head. He screamed, letting the kaleidoscope fall to the floor. He clutched at his face, feeling if it was still intact. He felt dampness and attempted to open his eyes, but it was like trying to pry a locked safe, they felt clipped shut.

He finally managed to open them and could see blood on his fingers. His face was ringing with a sting that was spreading into his mind. The kaleidoscope had shown him everything, just like the midget had said. It had shown him the truth that had always been one step away, dancing in his dreams but blocked from his memories.

As Bill raced through what he had just witnessed, his face bruised with the proof of the kaleidoscope's truth, one emotion began to boom out of him. It wasn't confusion or hesitation. It wasn't the deep insecurity he always felt. It was hate; hate for the man who had done this, the man who had taken away his mother, the man who was and is everything a father should never be.

Bill jerked out of his car, grabbing the kaleidoscope, and rushed towards his father's home. At first he merely walked, but as the hate raged he began to run. He ran until he was sprinting, almost ready to fly.

His father's loft was twelve floors up, with a view of the Ohio River in the distance. Bill hammered on the door until he heard a ruffle on the other side and a click as the door opened.

"You killed her," Bill said as he charged past his father into the apartment.

"Excuse me?"

"You killed her, and I remember everything now." Bill met his father's eyes and for the first time didn't divert. He wanted to look into his thoughts. His father stood there with a towel wrapped around his waist, his belly jutting over it. His hair and skin were wet.

His father closed the door. "What are you rambling about? Killed who?"

Bill stepped towards him, refusing to back down. "You know what I'm talking about. You killed mom and you're not going to get away with it any more."

His father stared at him, a crossed look on his face, that look of indifference. "Is this what you're banging on my door for? I was in the shower." He ran his hand through his wet hair and brushed past Bill.

Bill grabbed him, his adrenaline racing. "Don't walk away from me."

His father slapped his hand, rage in his face now, "Get out!" he screamed. "Go home. You don't know what you're talking about."

“I do know what I’m talking about and I’m not going anywhere!”

They stared at each other and then Bill’s father turned, walking across the living room.

“Dad,” Bill said.

His father stopped in the entrance to the hall, his back towards Bill. “Just wait here,” he said. “Let me put some clothes on. Then we’ll talk.”

Bill stared at his father, the sound of his own breath clouding his thoughts. His father disappeared down the hallway.

There was a large mirror hanging on the wall next to the kitchen entrance. Bill walked over and stared at himself, lost in his reflection, his eye still red from the kaleidoscope. The version of him self in the opposite side of the glass looked distant and blurry, like a solid turning to mist.

He touched his finger tips to the glass, watching his hand inside the mirror



Frod,
art by Nick
Brazinsky

do the same. He felt as if he could almost reach through, float through the looking-glass to the other side and forget everything. Become like mist, the way Alice did in *Through the Looking Glass*.

He reached inside his pocket and felt the kaleidoscope. A thought occurred to him, a thought he hadn't had before; the thought of himself dancing in the kaleidoscope.

It was almost like clockwork as he placed the kaleidoscope against his eye and aimed it at his reflection in the mirror, like it was always supposed to happen that way; like he was supposed to know beforehand.

The image of himself looked inverted and lopsided in the kaleidoscope, like portions of his body were growing while others were shrinking. It was strange staring into his own eyes while his magnified reflection stared back. He looked at the red numbers floating above his head and dropped the kaleidoscope from his eye in confusion.

He stood for a moment, his mind racing. He put the kaleidoscope back to his eye and looked again. The number read: 0: 0: 0: 0: 27, the last digit counting down 27, 26, 25, 24, 23, and so on. Bill stood frozen, watching the seconds click down, his heart pounding. The numbers reached 9, then 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and then 0.

There was a loud bang and Bill felt something cold erupt in the middle of his back as the kaleidoscope crashed to the floor. There was another bang and Bill felt the same cold gush-out in his stomach. He looked down at his torso and saw red seeping out of his shirt, dripping onto the hardwood floors. There were footsteps behind him and he glanced up in the mirror to see his father walking towards him with a rifle in hand.

Bill fell to his knees.

He collapsed onto his back, his breath so cold it was stinging his throat. He clasped his stomach and chest, trying and softening the pain as his body began to convulse involuntarily.

The footsteps grew louder and louder until they were right outside his eardrums, knocking on the door to his mind. But they also sounded far away, as if they were stomping through a thick haze.

As the room became blurry like his reflection in the mirror, Bill caught a glimpse of his father's face staring down at him. A smile was spread across it, a smile of conquest.

But the smile began to sag and smudge as Bill found himself floating through the haze, floating through the looking-glass to the other side to join the mist.

Ambush

A. McIntyre

My round lads. I rise and walk towards the bar, your perfect friendly Irishman, the one they sing about in the songs. I'm the enemy no-one knows, a skinny fellow working a construction site, an illiterate Paddy waiting for the next call. London, where you disappear, and I've disappeared all right. Four pints when you're ready, I shout across the smoke. Saturday night, the usual crowd, tourists, yuppies from the City, associated tarts. I've been refused before for being Irish. It was exactly a year ago today, like a birthday.

It all went wrong when me older brother bricked a constable. Mick's his name, doing life. Can't get more Irish than that, eh? Lack of imagination on me parents part. Me own name's Patrick, believe it or not. RUC the man was, and he died of a brain hemorrhage within the week. So they came for Mick, as I knew they would. The twat already had a record so it was donkey's work to find him. Down comes the door at 5.00 a.m., me Pa trying to stop them till they crack him with a truncheon, Ma screaming like she was going to die. Then Mick squirming out of the window until he got stuck and they battered him. All well and good, I thought, Now we can all go back to bed and get some sleep, the cunt got what he deserved. But they hadn't finished. They started to go through the house destroying it room by room. An official search, said the officer with a Public School accent, Nothing to be afraid of, if we had nothing to hide, just routine.

They found me sister, Oonagh. She was in bed. She's done nothing you bastards, I yelled, but they bust into her room all the same. A squadee punched me back against the wall while another pulled off the bedclothes. Come on then, he said, Show us what you've got. The accent East London. He manipulated the muzzle of his rifle under her knickers and put it into her. There you go, you little slut, how's that then? She made no noise, not even a whimper. He pushed it in further, Come on then, come on, you little slut. The officer came up the stairs, All in order Cummings? He stopped in the doorway when he saw what was going on. Just making a search of some cubby holes here, sir, replied Cummings saluting. The officer began to laugh, Yes, rather, I see what you mean. Come on, we're off, let's get this slab of meat into the wagon. They were hauling Mick down the stairs. Ma was on the sofa drinking a cup of tea, should I say clutching a cup of tea, because if she'd tried to drink she would have drowned. I never told her what happened to Oonagh. They'd taken Pa to the hospital for concussion.

We could have complained. We could have written to the newspapers. We could have contacted our MP. We could have called the police. We could have done a lot of things, but would it have done any good? If you ask around, you'll find what happened to us is normal, everyday, nothing special. Stuff like that is never reported because the people who write the rules write the news.

I left school the same day. That was it for me, from now on I was going to write me own fucking rules.

I knew who was in, so I hung about the Falls. Everyone knows who the boys are. Some of them lads me own age. One day, I approached a group in a corner of the pub, the shadows so dark you couldn't see the faces. Sit down, young fella, I heard. A kindly voice. An old man, from the Republic by his accent. What can we do for ye? I told them what happened, I wanted to join. Yer a bit young aren't you m'lad? I mean to say, shouldn't you be in school? No younger than some of them, I said pointing. True m'boy, true, but you'll have to be proving yourself now, dy'hear? Give me a chance, is all, I said, You can check me out, I'm all right, just give me the chance. We will in time, said the old man, You know we will, but we knows you're local, that at least. O'Donohugh's your father is that not correct? That is he, I agreed. The old man drank some beer and sighed, And ye had some trouble with Her Majesty's boys. Well, ye'll hear back from us either way, within the month. Don't you be coming here to see us again now, y'hear.

Six months on a farm in Armagh, living in a cellar, farm work in the day, training at night. Long runs, further every week, tactics, watching from woods, getting to know the land like me own street. Handle a Bren better than me prick. Others arrived. They said the piker organizing us had been in the Foreign Legion, I never knew his name. But he knew his trade. One day, over breakfast, the piker said, Today. We staked out a road, ten miles away. Farm vehicle ready to break down, tall hedges on a corner, one way out, the killing zone. Explosives either side, below a wooded slope for refuge when the deed was done. We waited a day and a night.

The morning of the following day they came, two armored Landrovers crawling along like beetles. Eight squadees and an officer. Very early, just light, the dew thick on the grass. First insects stirring, far off the cooing of a dove. On they came, and the first explosion, then another. Black smoke rising into the mist. Briefly, ever so briefly, I thought, I shouldn't be doing this because I saw a lad me own age running down the lane. Red cropped hair, face white with terror. Then someone shot him down, so I opened up with the Bren cutting open a squadee's chest. I emptied the magazine into the Landrover while the other burned. C'moan we're out of here, shouted the piker, and we were running to the woods. After burying the guns, we went our separate ways. I rode a bicycle to Belfast, and that was that. I never saw them again, and the incident was never reported.

There you are lads. I place the pints on the soaking table. What took you, you silly Irish cunt? says Busby, my Brummie mate. You'll not be using language like that in my presence, I reply, You watch your tongue now ye fucking slag. A pretty girl smiles. I stare at her and she looks again. If you'll excuse me gents, I say, I'm going to seek fairer company, no insult meant Busby m'boy. I flick his ears, stand up, and I walk towards her muttering, Irish bastards for the Kingdom.

The Baby Stealer

Cole D. Lemme

I'll never forget the man who stole the babies. I've seen him do it and I know he still does it to this day. The only thing I can't decide is if I think it's okay. You see, I never did hear him justify why he stole the babies; not really, there was just something about what he did that day; the little bit that he did say to me. *Something* about it.

I was about 12 years old when it happened, but I remember the story vividly, because I've never stopped going over it in my mind. I woke up late that morning to my mom hollering that my brother had just become a daddy because my sister in law had just given birth to a baby boy. It was summertime and I hated school more than anything, so the last thing I wanted to do was drive from the country where we lived into the big city. I'd had plans of going out exploring in our backwoods, but when I tried to pretend I was still sleeping my mom came in and turned on the light in my room and said If I didn't get going she was going to ground me.

I dressed and went outside to the station wagon where she was waiting for me. I didn't know what city we were headed to but I had to sit in the car for over an hour thinking about the fun I was missing out on. When we did arrive at the hospital I just followed my mom through the doors and into the sterile environment. It smelled funny and I wanted to leave after I saw all the old people that looked like they were just waiting to die.

We rode the elevator up about three or four floors to the maternity ward. When we went around several turns and to the receptionist desk, my mom gave the receptionist our names, which the lady wrote down. She then handed us sticky pieces of plastic that we put on our shirts. After this we were told the room number and another nurse came up from behind us. She looked young and very cheerful. She flashed a white smile at us and gestured for us to follow. She led the way to a large glass door with black x's running through it. It looked impenetrable. The nurse then slid a security keycard through a slot and a green light blinked on. The door made a noise of releasing pressure that reminded me of something out of a science fiction movie.

"Why do you have to let us through?" I asked.

She smiled her phony smile again. "We have security doors so that people don't steal the little babies."

I went through and down the hall with my mom.

"Why do they worry about people stealing babies?" I had asked.

She was looking for room 1056 (they had to write the room number on our nametags too, apparently so we wouldn't be caught in the wrong room)

and she hardly heard me. "It's just a precaution," she mumbled.

We found the room were looking for and went in. At the age of 12, I couldn't possibly see what everyone was so excited about. My sister in law sat in bed looking pale and tired while grandmas, aunts, moms and dads passed around a fat little baby boy. I looked at it once and decided to slip out and explore while my mom was preoccupied.

The door shut behind me and muffled out the enamored voices of everyone. I went around a few corners, looking for something interesting.

The maternity ward was a huge square floor with about fifty doors on the outer walls. In the middle of the floor I saw a large rectangular room with thick windows with the same plastic x's on them that marked the security door. This room housed hundreds of little babies, all of them in plastic cribs with a clear plastic dome over the top of each of them. Little pink and blue hats dotted the room and only the babies, no other humans, lay inside. Some had tubes and other plastic devices hook up to their domes. It reminded me of the Matrix movie; all of them part of something bigger than them that they had no clue about. This odd depersonalization and mess of technology kept me staring and thinking long enough for the baby stealer to cross my path.

It was easy to tell that the man was out of place in the maternity ward: he wasn't with anyone and he didn't have a baby, at least not when he came in. He wore some sort of long pea coat and donned shaggy salt and pepper hair with a wrinkly face covered in stubble. His eyes were darting from left to right looking at all the babies. He slowly turned and faced me for a split second and then he moved on passed. I couldn't help but follow him.

He walked quickly and with purpose, as if someone were following him, but he kept his eyes on the plastic cribs to his right and the room numbers on his left. He stopped several times and looked intently through the glass but he didn't find the baby he was looking for until we came to the end of the hall.

He stopped and peered through the glass again at another set of babies in their cribs. I had one eye on him from around a corner. He put his hands up to the glass and stared at this one baby in particular. He stared for so long that at one point I thought that perhaps my suspicions of why he was there were only in my head; perhaps he was a father looking for his own baby. He looked on for several more minutes at the baby and then made sort a small raspy chuckle. It made me flinch, and I held my breath, scared of the man, the baby stealer.

In an inhuman feat he smashed his hand through twice making a hole big enough to pull the child through. The black x's hung suspended keeping together broken bits of glass. When he took up the baby it began to cry and I stood stunned. He walked back and passed me without saying a word.

I quickly composed myself and ran after him.

The baby stealer bolted around several corners and back to the security

doors. He was so fast, especially for his age, that I could barely keep up. By now two nurses had been following him shouting at him to stop and people began to come out of their rooms to see what the commotion was all about. The baby stealer kept his eyes locked on the security doors.

I watched the receptionist reach under her desk and push a button. The baby stealer reached the security doors and tried to smash through these as well. The glass must have been much thicker here and bulletproof because even the inhuman strength of the man couldn't budge them. The receptionist picked up the phone and dialed shakily.

The baby stealer, still holding the crying child, wheeled on a nurse cowering in the corner.

"The security card," was all he said.

A man, another visitor, much bigger than the baby stealer walked out of one of the rooms.

"Now take it easier there mister," he had said. "The police are on their way and I'm not letting you take that baby out of here."

The baby stealer smiled.

"Heroes..." he said.

It was difficult to understand for certain what he did next. In under a second, the baby stealer had hit the man, or done something, that made him unconscious, rushed to the nurse, knocked her unconscious as well, and grabbed the security card off her neck before either of them had hit the ground. Still to this day I've never seen a human move anywhere near that fast.

Everyone in the room backed away except for me. You could call it bravery, being a naïve child, or what have you, but I walked up to him in defiance because I thought what he was doing was wrong.

I didn't say anything to him right away but when he swiped the card, the green light blinked on again and those security doors made the depressurization nose and opened up for him. I followed after him, both of us leaving the whole of the maternity ward in fear and shock.

As I had done when he was looking for the right baby, I followed him again. I was a slender and light-footed kid so I don't think he knew I had slipped through the security doors and followed him down the stairs that he had decided to take.

When we got into the parking lot he began to walk at a much faster pace, like I said he was so fast he was losing me quickly, so before he ran away I shouted at him.

"Hey! Why did you do that?" I asked.

He jumped and spun around holding the baby with only one arm and holding the other out in defense.

We stopped in a stand off in the parking lot just the two of us. He held

the baby and said nothing for a moment and I stood with my fists clenched.

“Why did you hurt those people?” I asked more meekly.

The baby stealer glanced back up at the hospital.

“They’ll be fine kid, I promise,” he said.

He turned to leave again.

“Why are you stealing that baby?” I asked. “Is it yours?”

The baby stealer turned again but I could tell he was becoming impatient with me.

“No, it’s not mine,” he said. He looked around quickly and back up to the hospital. “Kid, I don’t expect you to ever understand what happened today, hell, I don’t expect most adults to. I won’t get a chance to explain myself to them, but it doesn’t matter.”

He sighed. “Have you ever known something in your life? Known the absolute truth about something when nobody else did?”

I thought for a brief moment. “I don’t know,” I had said, because at the time, truly I didn’t.

“You ever known you had to save everyone from someone even though you they’re going to hate you for it? Even though you know no one will even believe what you know?”

“No,” I had said because truly I hadn’t.

We both jerked our heads toward the sounds of police sirens in the distance.

“I’ll let you in on something,” he said. He looked down at the little baby in his arms. “This here baby that I’m holding could’ve been the end of everyone and everything you know, and of course, you. I just saved millions of lives by stealing this baby, yours included. I’ve done it countless times before this and I’ll do it countless times again. I’ll be condemned for the rest of my life as a baby stealer, a coward, and a murderer. I’ll be the only person that knows what I’ve done is right and I’ll die a hated man for it.”

“You’re going to kill that baby?” I asked.

“It’s either him.... or you and everyone else, kid. You wanna make the call?”

I looked back toward the police sirens and when I looked back to where he had been standing, he was gone.

I had to hear for weeks from my mom about how she’ll never understand why I went down to talk to that kidnapper and how lucky I am that he didn’t kidnap me as well as that poor baby.

My mom says he was a terrible man, but to this day I still can’t decide if he was telling the truth. Was the baby stealer doing the right thing? He said he would die a hated man by everyone and maybe he was right. But I’ll never know if the baby stealer saved my life.

Brokeback Foothill

John Duncklee

Historians, writers of the West and Earpophyles are dashing about in various states of quandary, amazement, and downright denial. It is all about a bundle of love letters found in an old, time hardened leather saddle bag, discovered in one of the myriad mine shafts in Tombstone, “The Town Too Tough To Die”. The question now posed is “Was Tombstone really tough?” Another perplexing question that through the years plagued the minds of Earpophyles is “Why did Wyatt Earp go to San Francisco when he left Tombstone? The letters first surfaced in 1981 and have passed through a succession of owners since that time.

The current owner of the bundle of love letters, Bowick Treyer, refuses to reveal where he is keeping the letters for fear that local loyal Earpophyles might possibly try to take possession of the letters to destroy the valid evidence that the famous gunfighters, Wyatt Earp and “Doc” Holliday were, in fact, lovers when they both lived in Tombstone. Many would question the social lives of the famous Marshall and the gunfighter dentist, both of whom have soared to hero reputations, in spite of their roles as murderers in the now famous “Shoot-out at the OK Corral” in Tombstone.

From some of the messages in the letters, Earp and Holliday sounded worried that after Ike Clanton found them in a rather compromising situation in Big Nose Kate’s parlor, news of their sexual preferences would get around town. Wyatt worried that he might lose his job as Marshall and “Doc” didn’t want his reputation as a fast draw gunfighter diminished in any way. In several letters the two exchanged ideas about a solution to solve their dilemma. They finally concluded that to force a shoot out would be the safest remedy because Wyatt and “Doc” were confident that they were faster with guns than any of the Clantons or McLowrys.

Threats lashed out against Wyatt from the Clantons and McLowrys who refused to honor the Tombstone law of no firearms within the town limits. On October 26, 1881 Wyatt summoned his brothers and “Doc”. They walked, four abreast down Fremont Street toward the OK Corral. John Clum, editor of the Tombstone EPITAPH described the gunfight. Wyatt and “Doc” must have sighed in relief that their secret would not be revealed to the townsfolk to ruin their reputations as hard-core gunfighters.

Shortly after the “Only noteworthy event that ever happened in Tombstone” Wyatt tired of “Doc’s” tubercular cough and “Doc” tired of Tombstone. Wyatt went to California and “Doc” sought peace in Colorado.

The will of Bowick Treyer made no mention of the location of the love letters between Marshall Wyatt Earp and John Henry, “Doc”, Holliday.

cc&d



cc&d: the **unreligious, non-family** oriented literary and art magazine

Produced By Scars Publications and Design

Editorial Offices Children, Churches and Daddies; Scars Publications and Design
829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155 USA

Internet ccandd96@scars.tv ▶ <http://scars.tv>

Publishers/Designers Of Children, Churches and Daddies magazine; cc-d Ezines; Scars Internet Radio (SIR); The Burning mini poem books; God Eyes mini poem books; The Poetry Wall Calendar; The Poetry Box; The Poetry Sampler; Mom's Favorite Vase Newsletters; Reverberate Music Magazine; Down In The Dirt magazine; Freedom and Strength Press forum; assorted chapbooks and books; music, poetry compact discs; live performances of songs and readings

Sponsors Of past editions: chapbooks, books, past Poetry Chapbook Contest; past Poetry Book Contest; past Prose Chapbook Contest; past Prose Book Contest; Poetry Calendar Contest; Editor's Choice Award (writing and web sites); Collection Volumes

• **Children, Churches and Daddies** (founded 1993) has been written and researched by political groups and writers from the United States, Canada, Australia, Belgium, England, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Norway, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey (as well as input from both Japan and Slovenia). Regular features provide coverage of environmental, political and social issues (via news and philosophy) as well as fiction and poetry, and act as an information and education source. Children, Churches and Daddies is the leading magazine for this combination of information, education and entertainment.

• **Children, Churches and Daddies** (ISSN 1068-5554) is published monthly by **Scars Publications and Design**, Janet Kuypers.

• To contributors: No racist, sexist or blatantly homophobic material. No originals; if mailed, include SASE to io. We request that you refer to us by email. Previously published work accepted. Authors always retain rights to their own work. All magazine rights reserved. Reproduction of cc&d without publisher permission is forbidden. Copyright © 1993-2009 **Scars Publications & Design, Children, Churches & Daddies**, Janet Kuypers. All rights of pieces for written pieces and artwork remain with their authors.

subscribe,
or i'll have to kill you.
get a **Children, Churches and Daddies** subscription 4 only \$50.00/year (issues are \$5.00 each, + \$1.00 s&h, so \$6.00 per issue... so a subscription is like getting 4 issue free!). Order issues on line with a credit card (via PayPal) through the issues link at **cc&d** mag, or mail checks for issues or subscriptions made out to "Janet Kuypers" **only** (not to Scars or cc&d) to the address in our masthead. Get a subscription. You'll thank us for it.