



829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155,
USA. Northern Hemisphere, Planet Earth,
Solar System, Milky Way Galaxy, the Universe

first edition
printed in the United States of America

Freedom & Strength Press
You can't be free or strong until you can speak up



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SIDE A/SIDE B

ISBN# 1-891470-35-3

\$24.52

book, chapbooks, 2 Compact Discs

scars *nooppaeqqnd*

down in the dirt
**children
churches
& daddies**

*the unreligious, nonfamily-oriented
literary and art magazine*

ISSN 1068-5154

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"TERRACE AVENUE REVISITED"

MARIA LAPACHET

The same street,
Empty as usual.
The same trees
Whispering your name
As I walk by.
The same leaves
Murmuring you'll
Never be mine
As they fall.

WAR

LYN LIFSHIN

at a morgue
in the cold city
a man works
all day
washing bodies
trying to piece
together the
dead. Hands,
arms and legs
litter the bath
room. "We
don't know what
belong to
who," he says
grimly. "Over
the war, he's
driven his
hearse at least
2000 times

"THREE WAY LOVE AFFAIR"

MARIA LAPACHET

Standing in my basement alone
I wait for you. I'm wondering
What her lips taste like and
How long it's been since
You last kissed them.
I wonder if she knows,
If she cares,
If you care.

SEPTEMBER 11 2002

LYN LIFSHIN

my new kitten has
found a new game
as she does daily,
attack toilet paper,
toss the green
beans up in the
air and pounce on it.
Mouse rehearsal.
She is so small
and wild, hardly
afraid of anything
except maybe
the printer spewing
white mysteries
and making a
clicking noise. I
Was so unafraid a
year ago, brash
as she is running
for the train, no
fear of plans.
Riding upstate,
wild to see the
Empire State
Building, towers
like my mother
who asked in
her last days where
she'd go with
the little life she
had left beamed
"New York City"

FINALLY FRIDAY

LUCILLE POVEY

A week and two
glasses of red wine later
I finally reach
Friday afternoon.

Early autumn evening
is slowly setting in.
The quiet and the calm
wishes me to stay a while.

I wish I could.
To be caressed
by the wind of fall
and sunset drawing close.

I wish I could.
I wish.

"BECAUSE"

MARIA LAPACHET

Because you looked at me in anger
And said you were tired of me,

Because you compared me with your wife
Knowing that I'm the first one in making comparisons,
Knowing that I know I'm the one who loses,
Knowing as you do that it hurts me,

Because it hurts me not to be her
Cleaning your house,
Taking care of your children,
Making your lunches,
Helping you with your pills,
Cleaning your vomits,
Dressing all of you in cute clothes,

Because you implied you were tired
Of my untidiness, my laziness, and all my things,
Of my way of complicating everything,
Of the way in which I'm never happy,

Because you don't know if I listen to you when you speak
And you don't know if I'll ever truly understand anything
And I don't know if you listen to me when I speak
And I don't know if you'll ever truly understand me,

Yesterday I felt sore and lone and ashamed,
I wanted you to leave me.

SIDE A

Because you write that you love me,
That you woke up with my breath in your mouth,
And that means that somehow you love me,

This morning I love you again
And I will love you tomorrow
And the day after
And the day after
And the day after

VACATION

LYN LIFSHIN

My mother always re-packed the trunk.
My sister stayed in the car, ate bologna sandwiches.
When we were younger we let our dolls turn
 brown in the air.
Packing for them was better than going

My sister stayed in the car, as if leaving now
 to be difficult.
My father wrote down every penny he spent.
Packing for vacation was better than going
We ate at Bill and Thelma's for 99 cents a dinner.

My father kept a notebook where he wrote every
 cent he spent.
My mother had to coax him to go to musical theaters.
We ate at Bill and Thelma's every night.
When I saw Brigadoon I wanted to never come back
 from fantasy.

My mother had to coax him to go to the musicals.
She beamed when he liked it.
I wanted to dance, live in a dream, never come
back
We needed the mists of the gloaming to blur
 what wasn't said in the car

My mother beamed when my mother liked
 anything.
My sister was the beauty, better at ballet and boys.
I wanted to live in a dream, in fog.
My mother with her own dreams of father
 named me Rosalyn Diana

My mother beamed at almost everything I did.
After she died, a theater bought her clothes from the 40's.
At least her clothes would be on stage.
She would have beamed, she would have liked being there
to repack them.

THE FAST ANIMAL

IRENE FERRARO

honey
sigh in the dark
oh hush
black velvet runner
pungent glass full
like a tiger stalking
upside down leaving stars
pulling the red moon
fishing for salt
in a big blue garden

STEATOPYGIA

COLIN POPE

in front of the venus figurine exhibit
(an exhibit of ancient turkish
female fertility figurines) our tour group
listened to the anthropologist say that women with
big asses were evolutionarily advantaged because
the feast and famine nature of their food schedule
meant that women who store fat more efficiently
survived the few dry fruitless summer months
so my wife grins inwardly and glances toward the
few waifs of the group who worry briefly that
they're not perfect enough or less evolved so
i chuckle and step away and allow myself
to dream about the hunt and life and
my well rounded wife in the upper paleolithic
when she would not be so insecure and i
could say she's perfect and she could believe me
and we could live so tightly and free and our
euphoric love would make the wrath filled gods so
jealous and we would live so long and die so
honorably in the Catal Huyuk dusts where our
sun bleached bones would lay and preserve so well that
a man in a khaki hat could desecrate our graves
three thousand calm and peaceful years after
i told my super assed wife i loved her for
the very last time ever just so he can guess as to
why women with larger hip structure and
buttocks are made into tiny figurines
that the bony little public gawk and giggle at

UNSEALED

CYNTHIA OLIVER

"No one ever keeps a secret so well as a child"

Victor Hugo

Head on knees arms clenching calves,
she pivots her face to the right and peeks.
The frayed carpet is snagged and thin,
her only mode of escape, the filmy window,
drains cold air and the rusted nails
are layered in tan stubbornness.

Stringy fingers curl the curtain's lace in her palm
while outside nuns walk in gasps at the neon signs
and suits scurry quickly over spiked curbs.
Inside spiders sew webs to the leaky roof
above the hovering staleness.
The corner light beacons the slanted street,
tilts it's interest in the sidewalk.

There are no children here,
the failing limbs of the forgotten swelter.
Ms. Mason's poppies bloom and die cyclically,
wilting under whimpers, the capsuled seeds
swept into slick street hands cupped like
an anxious child.

She envies those to whom life denies only want,
seeing her sidewalk squares smeared.
Her mom sang about buying mockingbirds
but the rag doll with black thread eyes lays limp
on her bed, torn and sore on tired springs.

Drugged with frailty,
night envies her patience.
Petulant on the hard wood,
shuddering and cumbersome,
light struggles in flickers of bad wiring.
Drooped eyelids bring hunched shoulders
as she feels him cup the banister
like a young girl,s pale knee.

The stairs cry in creaks to her,

Disappear they beg.

JUNE 17TH

COLIN POPE

stagnant, fat;
my brain started squeaking today
after i watched The Simpsons horizontally
for the third time

my mother trickled by, looked down on me
like i was some neglected shower curtain
i couldn't comprehend her words
especially over TV and silence
and with only one ear anyway

i forgot about the kitchen but
she walked down to it with heavy, deadened legs
(by 5:30 work generally filled her up
to a dragging plumpness which
made her testy)

i'd apparently left whole milk sitting
on the starry, starry lucite counter
inches from the refridgerator
which stood aghast, like it was missing a hand

so i wrinkled myself upright
my ear flowered open and
i rolled into the kitchen
as a fly beat itself against the living room

SEPTEMBER 11 2002

LYN LIFSHIN

For my new cat
it's a day of
discovering
new thing: wind
and the thrill of
unrolling toilet
paper. Maybe
mew babies are
what keep the
young widows
alive, something
to live for when
hate unfolds
like some man
eating plant. I
try to imagine
a mother whose
son died because
he wanted to
help someone in
a wheel chair,
how she could
walk by his
old room and
not want to lie
down in his quilt
and never leave

STAIRWAY

CYNTHIA OLIVER

Under the frosted barred window
the child curls up- a cacooned green
caterpillar winged in sleep.
The stars sit nestled in separate pills
downed by the moons swallowing child
praying in tiny gasps for rain.

Later under pelts of winter rain
the child's drowsy head tilts on the window
as an elderly woman leaning on a child
for support. Chilled in her tight green
sweater, she glares in curses to the pills
packed under cotton that force sleep

like a provisional nightlight. Facing verging sleep
her leaded lids pulse rampant with the torrent rain.
Peering through angry slits cutting the pills
into damaged roads, the shaking window
bounces her head- the bruised ego of green
thumbs. Arms circling calves, the child

moans in whimpers as sweltering children,
who flower like the heads of artichokes- sleep
on brown clover patches, where green
is inhaled with mildewed whips by transparent rain.
She hovers over temptation, shaking the fogging window,
while thunder beats the table, pounding the pills

to the wood slats like a slapping parent. The rolling pills
swerve in roads towards the tempted child,
dispersed as splattered paint on the cracking window.
The whipping rain pardons her ominous sleep,
stifles it as rainbows waiting out the rain-
stomping it as verdure only shuts in green.

Outside her yard, the unexpected sprouting green
stems seep into the shape of the oval pills
and roll towards the top stair, the end this rain.
The outstretched legs of the unbent child
elongate with numb, pressure-induced sleep
while the humid air collects and buries the window.

Squinting to see the sprouting green clovers, the child
hears the rain squealing, the pills counting the stairs,
waves over the dewed pane and sways to sleep.

IN ONE SHOT

LYN LIFSHIN

only a small plume
of smoke, hardly there
at the right of the
square where every
thing else looks
ordinary. A brown
cube like a Rothko
painting, still, long,
quiet calm. A few
birds gliding thru
the clear air that
you could never
believe were
people jumping

HEART BURN

COLIN POPE

at 3 am alone
my stomach grumbles something
in broken spanish

i imagine my stomach to be
lewd, saucy,
sitting on a balcony harassing
large breasted brunette women in
red heels
toothpick between yellowed teeth

"Ay ma-ma-ci-ta" with those
overemphasized syllables that
burn themselves into the brain

nonchalantly raise up
and shuffle towards the

bathroom
and give the pepto bismol an
open mouthed kiss
