



UNCOMMON 2011-2012

Vermont Commons School's
out of the ordinary, remarkable, unusual
literary magazine

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Special Thanks to

Jennifer Cohen

Ann Janda and Liz Breslend

for their constant support

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THE DARK WOLF

BY TANNER FRANCIS

LOOKING INTO YOUR SOUL
JUDGING
YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR MISTAKES.

THE LONE WOLF
DARK, YET WHITE AND LIGHT,
NOT SURE WHICH WAY TO GO
STARING STARING STARING INTO YOUR
SOUL.

YOU REGRET YOUR MISTAKES
THAT IS WHAT IT WANTS.
OR DOES IT?
DOES IT WANT THE EVIL TO SHOW?
WHY?
THAT DEPENDS.
ARE YOU GUILTY?
IT WILL KNOW.



Discarded Apple

by Grace Seeley

Supple orbs blossoming,
ravaged with eradicated chunks.
Buzzing vultures circling the carcasses
sketchy imitations dance where they fall.
The rescuer extends the hand of God
as Mother Nature takes her children home.



Polaroids

by Ryan Miller



The faded Polaroids lie patiently on my desk; they wait like a quiet elder, ready to delve into long forgotten stories. The discolored planes of photographs are lined with small creases, like wrinkles on a face. Their glossy coating glints against the glaring desk lamp as I pick them up.

I remember now, looking out the back window of our house and watching the playful, primary colored walls of the bouncy castle rise from the ground like a disheveled jack-in-the-box reluctantly popping back to life. The yellow, red, and blue rubber surfaces saturated the conservative palette of the backyard.

In the next vignette, I see cake. I feel and smell the potent vanilla frosting coat my mouth. The sounds of scolding voices follow as the sand colored pony attempts to eat the remaining dessert. As I reach for the last Polaroid, I remember a final image. Adorned in a shining party hat and flowered Hawaiian shirt, I stand smiling next to my grandmother. The mechanical snap of the camera disrupts the exuberant atmosphere. I run to the camera and shake the untouched, newly birthed Polaroid into the late summer air.



Engulfed

by Justin Decatur

*You tumultuous tyrant, you militated monster
with your insatiable hunger and capricious nature
you force your spray of words
into the ears of all that dare approach.*

You've killed before.

You make it clear you will again.

*But just as my hope fails,
you lower your voice, calmly reach out
and whisper,*

"Come to me ...

it's safe now,

there's no need to be troubled

any longer."

And for some reason

I believe you and

silently slide

into your embrace.



DIFFERENT SIDES / THE BEGINNING

BY SANDRA ACKERT-SMITH



THE SAME ROCKS HAVE BEEN HOLDING THE STONE WALL
TOGETHER
FOR THE PAST ONE HUNDRED YEARS
UNMOVED, UNNOTICED,
ONLY THE RAIN ERODES, AND THE FERNS SCATTER THEIR SEEDS
ABOUT
IN NO PARTICULAR PATTERN:
JUST PICKED UP AND FORGOTTEN IN THE WIND.
RODENTS HIDE THEIR LITTLE SECRETS
WEDGE THEM IN THE CREVASSES WHERE THEY WON'T BE FOUND
UNTIL YOU PICK UP A ROCK, TURN IT OVER
AND FIND AN ENTIRELY NEW SIDE
UNSEEN BY LIGHT, FOR THREE GENERATIONS.
CENTIPEDES AND LICHEN ARE ENCRUSTED
LIKE A THOUSAND PRETTY JEWELS
DAZZLING IN THEIR OWN WAY.



Photo by Sandra Ackert-Smith

The Only Boy

by Mitchell Leffler

I emerged from the small cabin of my mom's dirty white Volvo on a cool, dead, muddy Vermont spring day. The ground was like a snickerdoodle: lightly powdered on the top, but getting soft and gooey as you dig down. I walked into the sketchy, Burlington hipster-style venue of a ballet party for one of my friends, who just so happened to be a girl. I felt as though I was a glowing ember who had just landed in a mud puddle. I was the only boy. Again. A kind, mid-stature lady in her early twenties walked me into a cluttered, dusty equipment closet with paint chipping from the walls. She looked down on my frightened and bamboozled face and asked me in a quiet, sweet voice, "What size leotard to you wear?" The word "leotard" sounded like an evacuation siren in my young masculine ears. I made a bee-line for the door, only to watch my mom's Volvo turn and soar down the slushy road. I was stuck in the lion's cage. I was scared, screaming, and screwed. My leotard fit about as well as a jawbreaker in an outlet plug. At least I preserved a small piece of my masculinity with my escape attempt, but the rest had gone down the deep tunnel lined with porcelain. Gone.



A Pressed Flower in December

by Jordanna Dulaney

I plucked you from the garden at the height of summer and
pressed you tight between the pages of Tana French's *Faithful Place*
like I was trying to press the rays of a blithe August sun
into a polaroid.

Peering at you now in the ghostly winter sunlight's shadows,
You are not so bright as you were back then.
Not as alive, not as striking

Like a taxidermied parrot covered in dust.
You no longer hold the neon summer days of bees
and swing sets and chlorine-smelling hair.

You are a memory now, resurrecting the brilliant gardens,
the sweet chlorine smell, the bumblebees
and the fluttering swings.
It is all held in a paper-thin purple-veined note
from summer to me.



Left to Die

by Ryan Senior

*My strings vibrate
as you stroke them with
your silky touch.*

*You bring me
wherever you go.*

*You and I together
make the air itself
tingle*

with vivacity.

*But when I break
from your thousandth stroke
you toss me away
without a thought.*



*A dark shroud of misery
creeps over my base.*

*Not a single sound comes
from my broken string.*

I'M YOURS by Lex Jackson

I know what it's like to wander namelessly
I was aimlessly chasing inspiration for too long
right up until you came along.
Emptiness had already caught me got me shot me and bled me out
you tripped me into a puddle of lyrics and led me out.
The truth is I found out about
the perfect exit from the roundabout
and there are around about
a million things to make sound about
a million ways to sound it out.
Shout it out.
I've got you and
I said what I should shout about.
I was away and you said, "Come back to me."
I'll answer your plea.
I was driving these lines
watching metaphorical road signs confine and bind me.
Thanks for breaking me free,
talking to me,
having you is making me see
there's something swelling inside of me,
the pride in me.
It's like I fell into
a haze if Spanish Incense and swagger Old Spice
a craze of Neil Young and "who do you like?"s
a daze of early mornings and late nights.
In a haze of crazes this was not one of the dazed phases.
You make my chest pound
Baby, it's the best sound
hold me like a vest around
my heart.
buh-dum.

I'm Yours (continued)

You know that songs sound better on repeat
turn it up to hear the
buh-dum
This hello L-O-V-E beats me
what to call this?
how about a a melody?
You know that songs sound better on repeat
turn it up to hear the
buh-dum
buh-dum.
I adore how you finish my
stanzas.
And does ...
a date sound nice?
I'll give you some sound advice:
this slam was my poetic rose,
but I think for this I'll switch to prose:
Will you be mine?
Say yes.



Home

by Will Shayne



Home is the house with the blue door.

Explore inside to find blue blankets
on white sheets.

Home is where I am.

It is always in the way I think,
my waterproof shoes inside the door.

Home is where I live
and where I stay.

Home is my family
my brother is part of me.

My mothers are part of me.

My family is my home.

I trust my family with all my secrets.

They know my darkest truths.

I trust them as they trust me

I am sheltered by everyone

I feel safe.



Photo by Elsa Hollyer

Don't Pretend by Haley Harder

Remember when we didn't have to pretend

Around each other?

Remember when we were actually friends

That actually laughed and smiled and hugged.

No pretending.

Remember when there was no

Lying

And shying

And prying

And dying inside?

Just Flying

And sighing

And relying

And crying

On each others each other's shoulders.

Remember the times

When we could tell each other anything?

Words would rush from our mouths

Like we were two waterfalls

We didn't worry about

Gabbing

And crabbing

And jabbing

And backstabbing

Because we were kind, sweet, innocent girls.

So where did my old friend go?

She was replaced by someone

Whose once warm, soft brown eyes

Become cold daggers when I walk by

You used to twirl your pretty skirts

For me to see

And you would smile

And I would smile

But now, you don't face me with a smile

You face away

You turn your back.

When I open my heart

You just tear it apart

And believe me, it hurts

When you pretend to be

Someone you can't be.

Please don't pretend

Because all I want is to

Fly

And sigh

And rely

And cry

On your shoulder again.



DEAR SNOWBOARD

BY HENRY FRANTZ



Dear Snowboard:

Our relationship is yet newly formed
but I feel as though you have always been with me.

You carry my burdens, and I carry yours.

You have traversed many distances

in short periods of time,

and I know that you shall do so many times more.

We remain so close, as though inseparable, and although

I have experienced much pain by staying with you,

I would have it no other way.

You alone understand me, you may not be flexible,

but you have sacrificed much on my behalf.

When first I beheld your beauty, I knew that nothing

would ever tear me from your side,

and today I still hold this to be true.

You bring out the best in all the places you go,

people cannot help but to stop and

stare at your beauty,

for like a reflective surface catching the sun,

you catch the gaze of all those around.

And who could blame them? I find comfort in the fact that you are mine

And I will always treat you as such, never to leave your side.

They Would Love to See You Die

by Giselle Glaspie

They would love to see you die
become one with dust of gray.
I know, I know your time grows nigh.

To see the gleam depart your eye,
to watch your scream and hear you pay.
They would love to see you die.

To Hell your soul will fly,
cursed, driven, damned away —
I know, I know your time grows nigh.

Your lifeless ears would hear no cry.
The innocent, too, will yet be gay.
They would love to see you die.

No more hands to bind and tie,
no more children left to slay.
I know, I know, your time grows nigh.

It's too late now to breathe goodbye.
Hush, love, you must softly pray.
They would love to see you die.
I know, I know, your time grows nigh.



Ouch! by Gabriel Mantegna

Dear Metal Bar

Your aluminum gleam
your silver burnish
your cylindrical shape
have been ever present
as I have entered the shower
throughout my life.



You used to be merely a holder
for the opaque soap-scum-coated glass shower door.

You used to be of use to me
keeping water off the bathroom floor.

You used to hold
my towel with dignity.

But now you are much more than that.

Bang! Resonates through your metal
like a bell struck by a mallet
as I enter the shower.

Damn it! I react
every time.

Every time I enter the shower
you make my head sore for the rest of the day.

I will destroy you.

Sincerely, your worst enemy

Ode to the Seasons by Bella Carrara

The sun was gleaming,
the wind, it blew.

The river was streaming
and the flowers, they grew.

Changing seasons cast their shadows
where memories and the present unite,
changing white snow into green meadow
where fact and burden are finite.

Cold days frost the ground,
crisp winds console weeping icicles
as they and the snow flakes
are silent wind chimes to the soul.

The sobbing teardrop of glistening cold
slowly deforms its solid corpse
yet grips its life with a determined hold.



What Don't I Love in this World?

by Adam Hamilton

All of us have freedom
to walk the land without thought of danger.
Some of us possess even higher positions
the work that we put in pays off in
spades.

I notice the beautiful colors of the sunrise over the mountains as
I get up in the morning,

my mother's cooking at dusk after soccer practice

my father's long walks

my full, satisfied stomach as I struggle to fall asleep.

It was such an exciting day.

My life's lesson:

Be grateful.

But even so, we ignore this wisdom and want.

And as I notice these miracles of life

I feel a slap in the face because my wanting
is vain and stupid

I wonder:

What do I not love in this world?



The Art of Dancing Between Moonbeams

by Nora Hill

Girl under moonlight

Angel in white

Next to me

Dancing with feathers of light

In the shadow of darkness

Inside the dream

Beginning sky —

Beginning dawn —



La Aventura de Mexico by Miles Lamberson

As I approached the builder, my nine-year-old limbs tightened fast, my breath grew short, and my courage became non-existent. Three others and I sat in the back of a small red Chevy, traversing the streets of Merida, Mexico, while I looked for a builder that looked school-like. To this day, I remember seeing a large, gray, cinderblock building on the hill and wondering, “Is that is?” No, that was not Escuela de Ruben Dario Herrera, but around the corner it sat. As we rounded the final intersection, passing the crazy man who I later came to recognize as “Tarzan” washing cars, my school came into view. It felt as if I was being told to spread my roots like a struggling maple might have to do.

Just the previous night, my parents had brought me into the dining room behind the funny wrought iron fence in the middle of the guesthouse. We had only been there for two days as part of our *Aventura* across Mexico, but it already felt like home. I will never forget my mom and dad sitting me down and telling Jill and me: “You’re going to school tomorrow.” As our questions flowed like water, a 100-year flood seemed imminent. Questions like, do they speak English, do I have to go, and what if they don’t like us, began to pour out, along with tears, and lots of them. I locked myself in the bathroom with the glazed glass window where I could only see the looming figures of my parents talking.

It was now clear that our school was not the cinderblock fortress of the hill, but instead, the peeling relic of old times. In lettering on flakey white paint, the word “Escuela” was printed in a fading brown. The scene was framed by the fence that protected the school’s facade, cluttered with little boys and girls wearing identical uniforms: a white button-down short sleeve shirt with a Ruben Dario patch and either polyester pants or a plaid skirt. As I pulled my limp body out of the car, the fumes enveloped me on one side, and on the other, spilled Coke and crushed, off brand Cheetos. Entering through that gate, than the doorway, and lastly up the stairs, took a Herculean amount of effort. From my upstairs classroom, the emission could still be smelled, the kids still seen, and my determination still lacking.

At the same dining room table four weeks later, my family discussed where we would go next. We had to get to Baja, CA by May if our four-month Mexican peregrination was to succeed, and time was starting to run out. As Jill and I began to realize it was necessary to leave new-found friends, classmates, and routines for four weeks, tears began to pour out. I locked myself in the bathroom with the glazed window where I could only see the looming figures of my parents talking.

