“Let the beauty we love, be what we do.”
— Jalaluddin Rumi, Founder of the Mevlevi Dervish Order

STAFF

Editor-in-Chief
Kevin Bolton

Managing Editor
Elizabeth Caligiuri

Associate Editors
Michael Bateman
Matt Brandt
Gary Grosenbeck
Tina Grosenbeck
Deborah Land
Mary Sharkey
Elyssa Waldman
Michael P. Zizzi

Faculty Advisor
Leigh Wilson

Cover: Untitled, 9 x 6 Pen and Ink, Theresa Napolitano

Naked Was She Born 14 x 20 Lithograph Theresa Napolitano
Peoples Park

Wind twirling psycho sweet women
reeling spinning sideways grinning
Bursting sun dripping silver starry
colors whipping around in a frenzy
of sound dreaming in coats and tangled in
hair . . . this is nowhere . . . these pleasure
vans escaping to sea to see the one
to fly with the free in the sparks
that fly and collide in the sky
black and gold flashing eyes backward
trance glance in a fantasy dance
listening underneath beneath the sound
digging around for shaky stones smooth
and clean disbelief crowded columns of
multicolored grief relief what kind of
blue is the seed of your eye? In the
violet dawn of revelation people
starving and climbing silver vines
with wires and chimes inside their souls . . .
tangled in freedom.

— Laura Molinelli
I thought...

When you get to be my age
you begin to ask questions
not ordinary questions
"what time is it?" etc.
BIG questions, earthshattering!
I will of course ask you, these
same questions I ask myself.
How much is a mule ride down the
Grand Canyon?
Did Emily Dickinson hear a fly buzz
when she went?
Did Peter, Paul, and Mary date other people?
Where is the nearest fallout shelter
and can I bring my cat inside it?
Why are there no purple station wagons?

You look strange, which question didn’t
you understand?
I thought you had all the answers.

— J. Switzer

Like Turtle, Like Me

If you ever wonder why sometimes I seem to withdraw from the world, it's because I'm playing turtle. "Oh sure, 'playing turtle,'" you say while thinking perhaps, that I'm a little touched upstairs, right? Well, I'm not, or at least not yet—or maybe I am, but if I'm not, I will be. There! Now you even have a reason to think I'm crazy! But that's okay, because you know, sometimes I think so too.

I suppose I should let you know that I didn't always think myself a turtle. In fact, it was only this past Thursday that I came to the painful realization of the astonishing similarities between a turtle and me. Really! Right through the whole metamorphosis, from the egg to the full-fledged adult snapper. I haven't reached the latter stage yet, but that's where I'm headed. Once you start, it's the only way to survive and, oh, how that makes me angry. It took a lot to make me the turtle I am today, but it's not going to take too much more to make me into the turtle I am to be. And if you're laughing at all of this, please be warned that you just might be a turtle yourself. If you're not, then you'll surely meet up with one in one stage or another.

An egg. A turtle egg is fragile, vulnerable, and defenseless. I was an egg. Blame it on things called “patience”, “understanding”, “ability to forgive” or just plain “stupidity.” You know how they say, “There's a sucker born every minute”? Well, in one of those minutes—I was born and thank God I was. I was fortunate enough to have experienced a time of special innocence that I know now I can never return to. It was a time when I felt the world was beautiful and all people were good. I trusted and believed without hesitation. I was convinced that if you looked hard enough, you'd see that everyone's got a good side to them. Well, now I've been convinced otherwise: everyone's got a bad side to them too, and sometimes that side is even bigger. So much for being innocent.

I've been corrupted and I resent that. Suddenly the world has gone ugly. It's just all the lies, the jealousy, brutality and the selfishness... I could go on and on. It's things like this that you've got to protect yourself from being rapped with. After all, an egg can only take so many raps before it breaks. I broke.

I don't know if you've ever tried gluing a broken egg back together again, but it isn't easy. If it's the yolks and egg whites that pour out from the cracked eggs, it's the aching pain of broken ideals that pours out from me. To see shattered pieces of eggshell scattered about makes me wonder if an egg could ever be whole again. After all, we all know the fate of Humpty Dumpty.

If all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't save poor ol' Humpty, what in the world is suppose to save me? Well, piece by piece and with plenty of glue, one just might succeed in putting an egg back together again. It would take time and even with time, there would always be the jagged scars on the egg's surface to serve as reminders of the pain. After an egg's been cracked once, it becomes a little more fragile and a little more susceptible to getting cracked again. Applying glue merely serves as a salve over those scars; an ointment to "make it better." "Glue." That was the soothing, smoothing word of encouragement. People would tell me, "Hang in there," "Don't worry about it," "Your day will come," and just things like, "If you
don't succeed at first, try, try again.” Sometimes this is just the glue we need to hold us together. Sometimes it's not.

There comes a time when an egg's been shattered just too many times to ever be repaired again — no matter how much glue is used. With all your insides pouring out, suddenly, all you want to do is make it stop. That's when I sadly realized that I needed much more than an eggshell to protect me. I left the vulnerable egg stage and grew to be a young turtle.

A turtle's shell is hard and strong. It's the turtle's best protection from besetting dangers of all kinds. This is the shell that I rely on. It provides me with the freedom to stick my head out and enjoy the remaining beauty of the world, and allows me to withdraw when the ugliness of the world approaches. Underneath this shell, I am safe from the exterior bothers, exterior “hurts.” I'll never let that hurt be internal again.

They say I have hardened. They think I am strong. I pretend to be. True, I am no longer an egg, but I have not forgotten what it was like to be one. No, I will not break as easily anymore, but this is only because I will not give anyone the chance to try. As a young turtle, I will run away and hide beneath my shell if I sense any danger. I will avoid it. So, as a young turtle with my turtle’s shell, I am merely protected.

A turtle can’t and won’t hide forever. It can only take so many bothersome knocks before it seeks out the source. That’s when a young turtle becomes an adult snapper and that is the turtle I am quickly becoming. Call it “anger,” “revenge,” or “bitterness,” but a snapper is going to bite back. It'll inflict a wound that'll reflect its own. All the pain and all the hurt that has built up inside the turtle will be spat out in a single, gnashing bite.

I know I shall regret it if I should ever become a snapper. It will bring the “ugly” of the world into me. Do not provoke me to become a snapper. I will defend myself to survive.

Once I was an egg and I was innocent.

—Lauren Jade Chin

What's a girl to do with only one red shoe?
Where's my passport?
Sex is a sport, or haven't you heard those special words?
Oh no, My Dear, we are running out of beer!
I've changed my hair style so many times I'm not sure if this face is yours or mine but then, love is blind.
I know a deranged slut whose favorite pick up line is “Baby, can you get it up?” and all the fishes are just bitches their guppy faces leave their traces to be ignored, aren't we all just bored?
What's a girl to do with one blue glove?
What a stupid ass to believe in love.

— Adele Marie
Observation Number One
In silent cells we
three sit and watch each
other through television
eyes.

Oh, so certain
that the theme will change,
the tongue will fumble
words (wriggling, laughing
like cubes of jello).

The Second Observation
watch and three sit through
jello).

laughing silent
each (wriggling, cubes In
eyes).

theme Oh, other
that certain like change,
television the of will
words fumble tongue the
will cells we so

The Wonder of it
Pretty
Good idea why
Good God why not?
Your silent part wonders
Your silent partner wonders too
No wonder your sigh
Lent to eyes and ears turned inward
dies
Amazes and you're left wondering
Every why and its why not
Caught on the spot
So afraid of why
So, afraid not
Why?

— David Gill

— Michael P. Zizzi
Wishing Well

Inside the dark hole I toss
plastic magi gifts to the king.
Eyes stapled shut, I place my order.
(is dead Santa Claus listening too?)
"make me a salmon,
falling out of an ice cube tray
into a freezing faucet stream."
Stop! Funny it is to understand — I have wished for what already is.
"Is it too late to change my wish?"
I hear the king stirring from his sleep to mumble,
“What wish?”

— Patty Collins

Enveloped . . .

In shadows darkened with solitude
An aura swept, so chilled and new
Flooding membrane into
depths,
I sat a quiet still.

— Elyssa Waldman
Voices

The voices of the mad dead,
those illustrious art weavers —
oracles of life,
are my goddess gods —
neutered spirits now.
The pagan knees are mine,
stiff and bent
in praise.

— Patty Collins

Excuse me, is this branch taken?
No, help yourself.
Thanks, did you see that red-tailed hawk?
Where?
He just flew off the peach at the lower ridge where the
willow trees grow. Looked like he had another chipmunk out
of the stone wall. I don’t know why they just don’t freeze.
Yeah, it seems as if they panic and think they can get
away if they hurry.
Sometimes, I wonder, do you think they are sacrificing
themselves to allow another to live? Kind of creating a diversion for the hawks.
Sounds more like dinner is self-served!
Speaking of dinner, let’s go back. The sun will be setting
and we won’t want to make dinner. Here, you carry these, and I’ll grab these.
Are you sure? I still could carry two more.
Nah, I got them.

While the sun sat behind the hills, a short burst of intense
orange heightened every cloud’s lower section. As the final
phase dimmed like a dying fire — pinks, magentas, and yellow
whites pocketed into every cloud. Two silhouettes walked
mindfully through regular ground.

What are you going to do after supper?
If the kids haven’t gotten into my colors, I’m going
to finish up the mouth and eyes on that mask.
Where did you get the tail hair? I found that to be
an excellent choice.
It was. I used Grandeechy’s. Her spirit will move many fears.
How did it happen?
She broke down at Infant Rocks. Twisted her ankle all
to splinters. I had to put her out. She was unaware.
Well, stop by and give me a scare when you’re done.
Give some of those to your stew. It perks it up considerably.
Okay, thanks. See you then.

Bye.

— Dan Nisbeth
Green seemed to be a dominating color at first, but orange took over with a burst like flames of high intensity, they scorch direction. The orange pleases me and makes the connection. You say the gray is a relief. A light quality in the speed of grief. Flat verses textures — up front — distant nature. The Imagery and design is work hard and fast. A splurry of time elapses from the past. Speed, motion, cycle of life, predator, prey, and daily routine. Open mouths rushing at high speed, a flash in time, a time of need. Sends a drill. Ends a kill. So fully live you must die. Work it hard, live life don’t cry. When it’s over, pay thanks and kiss it.

Goodbye!

— Dan Nisbeth

Picking Up Women for Religious Purposes

assimilate, assimilate!
everybody must digress.

watching actions
“what’s your line?”
manufatured ego
it gets late

settling, settled.
for something less
regardless, loveless,
temporarily satisfied

dawn comes.
i get up very slowly

“something-less” is gone

and i remain, content in my knowledge
that there is a god.

— J. Switzer

— J. Switzer
Show Time

The house lights are up, it's midnight.
Now is the time, as time rules the now,
to be stripped of my ball gown which didn't fit anyway,
and those shoes that bound my feet like a china babe.
Nothing fitting today,
I have taken nothing — grudgingly.
They lied when they said the ugly stepsister was evil ...
she'd cut off her toes for love,
but still the slipper she could not have.
Nothing fits, the curtain falls again.
Happily never after for the ones left behind.
(The earth chews the sun today, but never swallows)
In the birth of blinding footlights time resurrects itself ... 
time to paint the theater mask,
time to costume myself,
time again to cut off my toes,
to squeeze into life ... 
time again to hide my knife.

— Patty Collins
Looking back, Margaret Porter couldn't remember when she began feeling the way she felt now, but one moment did stand out. It had been in the middle of April. She and her boyfriend, John were watching David Letterman. They were sitting on his couch, with his arm around her shoulders and her cheek resting on his sweatered chest. David Letterman's navy blue suit had been covered with strips of velcro, and as the drum roll sounded, he ran toward a wall that was covered with that fuzzy, bristly stuff to which velcro sticks. He stuck. John laughed, and his sweater rubbed her face. She didn't laugh; she felt like something inside her had shut down. Some switch turned to off. It turned off so completely, so certainly, that while the audience and John continued to laugh and David Letterman was pried loose from the wall, Margaret had contemplated what her life would be like without John in it. She thought about how she would spend her increased free time, whom she would date next, and which old girlfriends she would look up first. She did not contemplate the act of actually breaking up with John, for it seemed to her that it had been done already, that he should take his arm from around her shoulders and make some mention of it.

Margaret told John the next day that she no longer wanted to see him. It was anti-climactic, and after it was done she could not remember the words that she used or the look on his face.

John lived on the West side and Margaret lived on the East side; and after she broke up with him she didn’t go back to that part of town. In fact, she didn’t go anywhere except to work and to the small A&P supermarket around the corner from her apartment building. John called her every night for the next week — at least she assumed it was him, because she never answered the phone. But after a week the calls stopped. She knew he was not the kind of man who would call or stop by without encouragement, and for that she was grateful. She sometimes thought of him; she remembered how he used to clasp his hands behind her neck and lift up her long hair, but even after a week, it felt like she was remembering something from a long, long time ago; like when she was in the second grade and Tommy Dawson knocked her off the jungle gym and then kissed her.

She never dated the men she had thought about during that David Letterman show. She went to work in the morning and she came home at night and fixed herself supper. Then she read magazines and watched television until she went to bed. And even though she never played softball or went dancing anymore, her days seemed as busy as before. She went to bed tired and she woke up tired. Several times, in the beginning, she lifted up the phone to call one of her girlfriends, but she always put it back down, because she couldn’t think of anything to say to them and she couldn’t summon up enough interest to listen to what they would say to her.

She read articles in her magazines titled “Office Glamor,” and “Office Etiquette,” and “Networking; Make It Work for You,” and she thought about quitting her job. She worked in the accounts receivable office of a hospital. When she first started, two years ago, she had enjoyed posting entries into the ledgers and computer. She even made up little stories to go with the transactions. When a bill was paid for labor and delivery, she made up stories about a couple who had tried for years and years to conceive, and finally succeeded. She didn’t make up stories anymore, though. Now she typed perfunctorily into the computer and didn’t wonder, like she used to, about its inner workings, and marvel at the wonderful complexity of the micro-chip. Even the ledger’s neat borders and blocks that had once been both soothing and exciting were now neither. Often she would look up from the ledger and the green grid would come up too, super-imposed on the office wall, or on the face of someone walking by. When she first started, fresh out of college, she came early and left late; now she was one of the clock-watchers she’d once complained about. Yes, she would have liked to quit her job, but did not want to take on the task of finding a new one.

Every night, she waited for the subway with a man who worked in the big office building across the street from the hospital. He always wore a pinstriped suit. And he always read the “Journal of Accountancy” on the way home. Her subscription had lapsed. “I feel burned out,” she thought to herself.

Ever since that night in April when David Letterman stuck to the wall, Margaret felt strangely attuned to what she was feeling. “I feel like I’m sliding down a hill,” she would say to herself, or, “I feel like I’m trapped, and I can’t get out.” Sometimes she
would cry over little things, like the time at work when her balance sheet was off by seven cents and she couldn't find it anywhere. She ran to the washroom and cried until her eyes were red and puffy. A week later, she stopped by the A&P on her way home and while she was walking down the frozen foods aisle, her heart began pounding and sweat soaked through her thin blouse and ran down her chest and arms. She leaned against the cooler, with her arms crossed and pressed to her chest, until her heartbeat slowed and the sweating stopped. And there were other times when she thought to herself, "I feel numb," and she thought that there was nothing that could induce her to cry or sweat.

It seemed to her that there were now two Margarets, or that the original had been split in half, because she felt like she was outside of herself, outside of herself and observing herself. She could picture, with her new clarity of introspection, a Margaret in a tailored skirt and blouse, holding a clipboard, watching Margaret. When she talked to the cashier at the A&P; when she talked to her mother on the phone; even when Mr. Evans, her boss, was teaching her how to use the new word processor and she was trying to pay complete attention, she could still see herself poised on the nest desk, detached and watching.

One night toward the end of June, during the eleven o'clock news, Margaret's mother called her and asked her to come home for the weekend. Margaret knew her mother was worried about her because of the tone of her voice and because she'd called her "Maggie." As a child, Margaret never had a nickname. Peg, Marge, Maggie -- none of them seemed to fit her. It was always Margaret. Her mother still tried, though; in playful moods she called Margaret "Peggie," and when worried, she said "Maggie." It didn't surprise Margaret that her mother was worried; in the past three months her weekly phone calls had grown more and more sporadic.

She packed a duffle and left for her parent's house after work on Friday. They lived two hours to the east, and as Margaret drove, she realized that she hadn't said goodbye to anyone. The girls in the office had given up asking her about her weekend plans, and would she like to go to Happy Hour with them. Not only did no one know she was leaving, she thought, but no one knew when she was coming. She looked inside her. "I feel numb," and she thought that there was nothing that could induce her to cry or sweat.

Margaret's father gave her a conspiratorial wink and offered her his arm. Margaret almost laughed at this. Her father probably thought he was bringing out the big guns, now -- chocolate cake with chocolate frosting! It used to make your little girl feel better, but I don't think it'll work this time she thought.

"Of course. What you need is a hot meal and a good rest. Then we'll talk, just the two of us. Here, let me get your bag."

Margaret knew her mother meant what she said. After her nap, her mother would sit her down and ask her why the phone calls had become so irregular, why she wasn't seeing John anymore, why Aunt Grace hadn't gotten a letter in two months, and "Honey, what's wrong?" Her mother would put her hand on Margaret's knee, she was sure, and would exude concern. The thought of being pinned beneath her mother's puzzled blue eyes and questions frightened her. Her mother was not a girl form the office who could be discouraged by a cool nod or a brusque, "I'm sorry but I'm busy right now."

Inside the house, Margaret looked around to find that nothing had changed since St. Patrick's Day, when she'd been there last. In fact, very little about the place had changed from the way it had been when she was a little girl. The kitchen was covered in a tiny floral print and the wood paneling gleamed. The smell of Murphy's Oil Soap hung in the room. A bottle of Jack Daniel's stood on the counter, probably to celebrate her visit. She doubted her parents had opened the bottle since the St. Patrick's Day party. The whole family had come and Grandmother Ryan and her cousin Conrad had offered as many of the old Irish toasts as they could remember.

Margaret's mother's face shone and she jigged furiously, while her normally quiet father led them all singing "Mother Machree." Margaret had enjoyed the party, but she'd had a hangover the next day.

Her father arrived home shortly after she did. He hugged her close and rumpled her hair. "How's everything at the hospital? Makin' those deadbeats pay up?"

"Sure am, Dad."

"Come on, you two, dinner's ready. I've spent all day on this stew, and I don't want it to get too mushy."

Margaret's father gave her a conspiratorial wink and offered her his arm. Margaret smiled as she tucked her arm in his. "Like a lamb to the slaughter." She wondered how she could think such a thing, but the words played over and over again in her mind.

Margaret's mother dished herself some stew and settled back slightly in her chair. "So, what have you been up to lately, Margaret?" They were light words, spoken lightly, but Margaret didn't miss the narrowing of her mother's eyes or the look that passed between her and her father.

"Same old stuff, Ma. Wild parties, shopping sprees, a different man every week. You know how it is." She laughed, but she thought it sounded more like a choking sound. "Don't ask me, Ma," she thought. "And don't look at me like you're trying to look inside me. There's nothing to see, and you'll only be disappointed."

"Must get a little boring after a while." Her father tried to keep the loppy joke going.

He smiled at her and she smiled back. The knuckles on her right hand were white and she realized she'd been gripping the fork too hard.

"Green beans, honey?"

"No thanks, Ma." She put down her fork and opened and closed her hand several times. She could smell the Murphy's Oil Soap and ammonia of the freshly cleaned kitchen mingling with the smell of the stew and her father's coffee. She felt sick, dizzy, and she gripped the sides of her chair hard.

"We've got chocolate cake with chocolate frosting for dessert."

Margaret almost laughed at this. Her father probably thought he was bringing out the big guns, now -- chocolate cake with chocolate frosting! It used to make your little girl feel better, but I don't think it'll work this time she thought.
“Linda Conley’s getting married, did you hear that?” Margaret’s mother pushed the potatoes around on her plate with her fork.

“I think you sent me the engagement announcement from the paper.” Her mother looked rebuked by Margaret’s brief response. Another opening gambit tried and failed. “I’m sorry, Ma, I’m sorry.” She said it to herself but it sounded loud. It reverberated off the flowered, cleaned walls.

“That’s the most exciting gossip we’ve got, honey, what about you? Anything scandalous happening in the office?”

“I’m afraid not, Dad, but I’m beginning to wonder what Mr. Evans and the hospital administrator are doing, holed up in the conference room all day.” Her parents laughed and Margaret managed a tight smile. She had arrived less than an hour ago, but it felt like longer than that.

“You think you got it bad working for Mr. Evans, you should try working for Sam Dudley! Yesterday he called in five guys form the line and five of us foremen to talk about ‘values clarification.’ What the hell is that? Ever since he went to that management seminar the man doesn’t talk English! Joan, I told you what he did last week, didn’t I?”

As her father launched into another Sam Dudley story, Margaret felt as though she’d been given a reprieve. She concentrated on her food, methodically spearing each piece of meat with her fork and cutting it into four pieces with her knife. She ate a piece of meat, chewed, and then a vegetable.

In her old room after dinner, Margaret felt exhausted, as if she’d just run a marathon instead of eaten a meal. She took off her clothes and draped them carefully over the chair. It still held all her stuffed animals. After pulling on her nightgown, she grabbed Petey, the teddy bear, from the bottom of the pile. As a child, she had dragged him with her everywhere. He was missing a leg and his paws were covered with nail polish, the result of her early attempts at giving manicures. She pulled back the covers -- freshly washed, she could tell -- and got into bed. Fixing the pillows behind her back, she waited for her mother. She’d be up soon, Margaret knew. She rested Petey on her propped up knee and looked into his unblinking eyes.

“Well, you see Mom, it’s like this. I’m sliding; I’m falling; and I’m trapped. And I don’t know why.”

There was a time when she could tell her mother anything and everything, and she did. Now, Margaret felt like she had nothing to say, or too, too much -- she wasn’t sure which. She supposed she might just plunge in and start with David Letterman and the Velcro and take it from there. Petey’s gaze held firm, and Margaret could feel the other Margaret looking at her, too, from the dresser.

—M. Gilligan

And she in that season
when drifting towards sleep
through golden after glow
memory of blossom heat
and salty sweat may sweeten lips
and ripen like Bramblemust
in secret corners

And she in that season
when drifting towards sleep
through fruitful autumn dream
memory of blossom heat
and tasting self of lover’s lips
may ripen sweet smiles, so rank
in secret corners.

—Kevin Bolton
Equality

Sleeping naked.
Nameless, in patches of light.
Fast asleep, with warm dust spinning weary circles in the window shine.
Naked and brave, are the unmoving eyelids of innocent sleepers uncovered.
Dust spinning weary circles in the window shine.
Nothing lies beyond this glass.
All is honest, yellow air, and the scent is the scent of pure, white, wind.
People are sleeping naked in patches of light are beautiful, speechless and true.
Equal and unborn spinning slowly in the dusty windowshine womb...
Equal and undead spinning slowly in the dusty windowshine tomb.

— Laura Molinelli
And when you empathize,
You realize your true weight in gold.

— John Akers

Downtown walked to Johnny and a gun bought him.

— Paul Austin

Meditation on how rocks work

— Paul Austin

A rolodex inlaid with bronze spins uptown—a ledger of who's been around.

— MPZ

Who makes the rules? And by what divine right am I crazy because I play in a different ballpark?

— R. Levy

Blind eyes with crystal water-blind me so I may see

— Elyssa Waldman

There is no manger for birth today, though... no midwife savior to deliver me

— Patty Collins

Bubbles burst from underneath the surface
Or is that rain falling from inside the earth?

— Deborah Land

Smoke was always a signal - a form of communication.
Nature was always a sign. Winter was obvious with its approach

— Dan Nisbeth

And spiders spinning webs
on dawn's windows wind us off to sleep.

— Kevin Bolton

Selected quotes from poetry reading, 10/29/86.