



voices 

## voices // spring 2007

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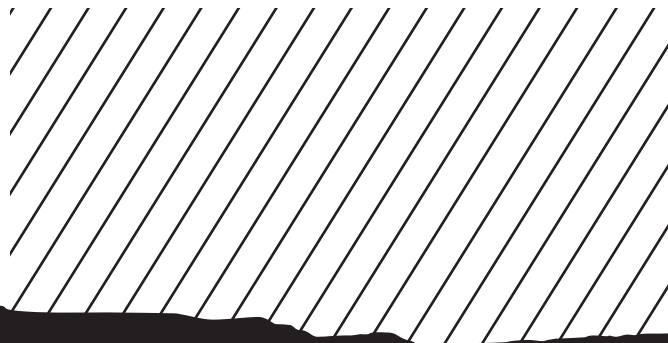
**Voices** is produced each fall and spring semester by students enrolled in JRN 139 under the direction of Assistant Professor Molly Sides, with help of Instructor Scott Fustin.

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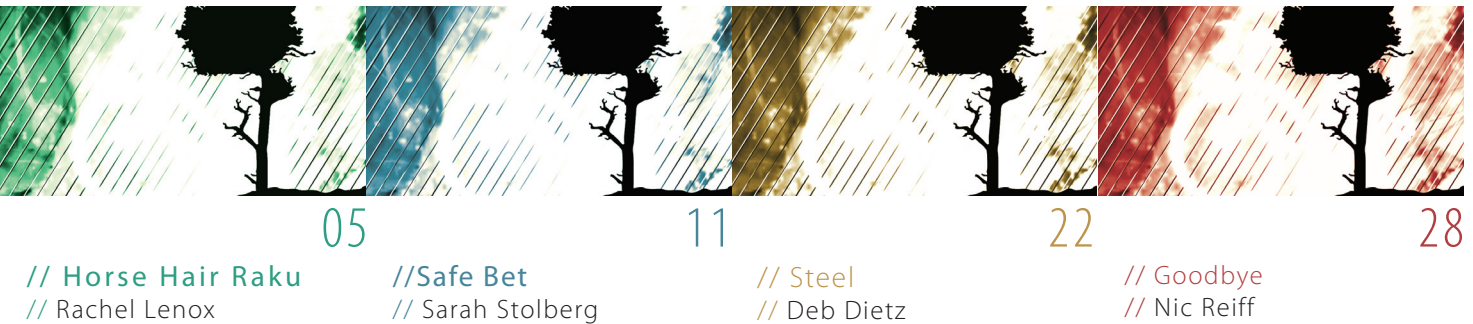
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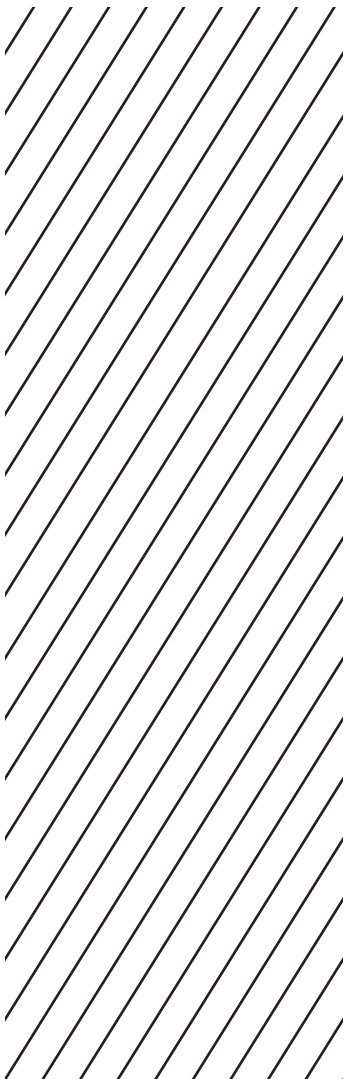
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#### Voices policies:

Submissions are accepted from students, faculty, staff, and members of the community. All submissions are considered by the *Voices* staff each semester and rated through a blind voting process. All submitted work in each genre is given

equal consideration, and winners are chosen based on numerical rank. Acceptance and publication of work is based on artistic quality as perceived by the student editorial staff. The views or opinions expressed in this magazine are those held by the authors and artists.





## voices // art



**art** - *n* - 1. The effort to recreate, supplement, change, or counteract images in or the products of nature. 2. Intentional arrangement or production of sounds, colors, forms, or other elements in a way that affects or originally creates a sense of beauty. 3. The production of something beautiful.



## //Horsehair Raku

//Rachel Lenox

//Ceramic, 4<sup>1/2</sup>"x6"







## //14 Dragons

//Elisa Phillips

//Micron pen





## //Cabin on Lake Waubesa

//Scott Fustin

//Acrylic on Canvas, 16"x20"



## // Moonwoman

// Deb Dietz

// Pastels, 9"x12"





// Something Woke Me Up in the Midst of Dream and  
Fantasy

// Erin Rae Guenzler

## voices // prose

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**prose** - *n* - 1. Ordinary written or spoken composition created without intentional metrical structure.

**fic·tion** - *n* - 1. An original story or idea created by human imagination that has been entirely invented without the intention of mirroring real life.

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## // Safe Bet

// Sarah Stolberg

It had been one rainy April, but May had promptly arrived with a bucket and a mop. Two weeks into May and not a single murky puddle left! Large congregations of flowers loitered in lawns, their giant, brightly colored heads lazily turned towards the sun; the sky was swept free of noisy, discolored clouds; and Grandpa Wilhelm's casket laid proudly before his shiny, marble headstone.

"Dad?" Sebastian asked quietly.

Stefan was standing very straight, hands clasped in front of him. His wife, Meredith, stood a few inches behind him, laying a comforting hand on his back. Without moving his eyes from his father's casket, he lowered an ear to his son.

"What's the shiny bird on the lid for?" Sebastian asked the lowered ear.

"It's a golden eagle," his father replied, "the national emblem of Poland. Papa is honoring his home country." The eagle seemed to glimmer in agreement, showing off its engraved crown and aggressively outstretched wings.

"Like the eagle above the stove in the kitchen?" Sebastian wondered out loud.

"Exactly," his father said.

Sebastian let his eyes wander from one somber, black suited mourner to another. There were so many people there that he didn't know. Cars filled every parking spot in the cemetery, some even snaked out onto the highway, as more silent strangers arrived to crowd around the new hole in the ground. A large pile of discarded soil rested at the foot of the fresh grave. Sebastian watched a small chunk of dirt shimmy quickly down the mound and vanish into his grandfather's final resting place. That worthless piece of dirt made his stomach turn, made him angry and jealous. *It's not fair,* he thought, *that his beloved grandfather's eternal companions consisted of dirt! All of that love, all of that wisdom—just buried!* And yet, he recalled that his grandfather had still looked proud in the overstuffed coffin; he'd managed to be content even at his own wake.

Sebastian knew Grandpa Wilhelm well. He knew the slight smirk that his grandpa was being buried

with; the way his eyes said nothing, but the little curl on the right side of his lips said, "I know something you don't." When jokes were made at Grandpa Wilhelm's expense he would just laugh them off, and then that smirk would appear. Sometimes, he'd wink at Sebastian while wearing that smirk, making him feel special-like he was on the 'inside', wherever that was.

He felt lonely already, separated from the great company his grandpa could no longer provide. He was glad, however, that he'd spent almost every weekend since Christmas in St. Louis visiting Grandpa Wilhelm. Now that he was eleven, his mother would let him take the train from Kirkwood to St. Louis by himself. The trip only took thirty minutes and for \$5 he could get the weekend pass, which allowed an unlimited number of rides. From the station, Sebastian would walk one block South to the Gateway Gumdrop where Grandpa Wilhelm would be waiting for him.

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The Gateway Gumdrop had a sidewalk patio with painted white, wrought iron chairs and matching tables.

Even though Grandpa always sat with his back towards Sebastian, he was easy to recognize by the fog of cigar smoke that encompassed his patio chair. Sebastian would sneak up behind him and give him a big "I love Grandpa" hug! Each time, Grandpa Wilhelm would gasp in shock and pretend that Sebastian's stealthy hello had surprised him. Then, with that all-too familiar smirk on his face, he'd scratch his head and pretend not to remember what kind of candy bar he'd just bought for his only grandson at the Gateway Gumdrop.

"Hmm...", Grandpa Wilhelm would say, "it's Reece's that you like, right?"

"Nooo!" Sebastian would giggle. "Ohh, let's see now...Kit-Kats, right?!" his grandpa would say while

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pointing to the light that went on over his head.

"Nooo, not Kit-Kats," Sebastian would eagerly reply while digging through his grandpa's pockets.

"That's right!" his grandpa would exclaim, smirk re-appearing on his face. "It's a Baby Ruth!" and he'd magically pull a Baby Ruth out from behind Sebastian's left ear.

"How'd you do that?!" Sebastian would cry as he tore open the candy bar, split it in half, and shared it with his grandpa.

"Just one of my many secrets," he'd reply.

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**That worthless piece of dirt made his stomach turn, made him angry and jealous. *It's not fair, he thought, that his beloved grandfather's eternal companions consisted of dirt! All of that love, all of that wisdom-just buried!***

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On days when the weather was nice, they'd sit outside the Gateway Gumdrop and share jokes or funny family stories. Then, and this was Sebastian's favorite part, Grandpa Wilhelm would ask, "Say, you like baseball, don't you?"

"I LOVE it!" Sebastian would yell as he jumped to his feet.

"You feel like going for a little walk?" his grandpa would continue.

Sebastian's wide eyes and chocolate covered grin were the only necessary responses. Twenty minutes later, they were standing in front of Busch Stadium.

"Home of the Cardinals!" Sebastian exclaimed while he ran his hands over the brick entryway. "Boy, this place is huge!" His grandfather was admiring a life-size statue of a famous baseball player. "Tell me again about Ben Evans," Sebastian said while joining his Grandpa under the statue.

"I was 17 when Ben 'The Bat Boy' Evans played his first game as a Cardinal. It was September, 1941,

three months before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Ben started out as a bat boy and worked his way up. Eventually, he was the Cardinal's number one pitcher! Sadly, though, he only played for 5 years."

"What happened?" Sebastian asked.

"Well, 'The Bat Boy' had gained a lot of attention. He was quickly becoming the best in the league. In October of 1946, he took the Cardinals to the World Series to battle the Boston Red Sox. The Cardinals were a favorite to win, 2 to 1. It should have been the best game of his life."

"But the Cardinals did win!" Sebastian exclaimed.

"Yes, yes, they won. But, they weren't supposed to. Ben had gotten involved with some very powerful people over in Boston. Those people wanted to make sure that *their* Red Sox won, not St. Louis. They paid Ben a lot of money to 'throw the game.'"

"You mean cheat?" Sebastian asked. "Like the game in 1919?"

"Exactly like that," his grandpa confirmed. "During the 9<sup>th</sup> inning of the 7<sup>th</sup> and final game, Ben was supposed to pitch poorly, walking one or two batters. Then, with at least one man on base, he was told to throw a wild pitch, over the catcher's head and into the grass. The runner was guaranteed to score and Boston would win the game."

"But that didn't happen," Sebastian recalled.

"No, it didn't. The score was 4-3, in favor of St. Louis during that 9<sup>th</sup> inning. There were two men on base, two outs, and two strikes. All Ben was supposed to do was throw the wild pitch, but he couldn't. He looked paralyzed for a good full minute before he wound up, lightning fast, and struck the batter out. St. Louis won the game!"

"But, what happened to Ben?" Sebastian asked, loving every detail of the story.

"Ben," his grandpa paused, "went to the locker room to celebrate with the team. That was the last time anybody saw him. He just disappeared." His grandpa was looking at something far away, his mind re-visiting a game that happened sixty years ago.

"Did he run away?" Sebastian asked.

"Nobody knows for sure," Grandpa Wilhelm said. "Some people say he ran off to Bermuda. Others say



the Boston Mafia got him. There's even a rumor that he was killed and buried under the 'Green Monster' at Fenway Park."

"Wow," Sebastian said, "that's my favorite story, Grandpa."

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The wind suddenly picked up and knocked over a small vase of flowers. Sebastian watched as a plume of baby's breath rolled into the open grave. *That's better*, he thought, *more flowers, less dirt*. The strangers were beginning to depart, leaving behind stalks of flowers and photos in gold plated frames.

"We can go home now," his father said. "We have a busy day tomorrow."

The first stop that morning was Harley Collins's house. Harley, an old friend of Stefan's, was letting them borrow his truck. He delivered packages for a small warehouse in East St. Louis and therefore drove a large, used U-Haul. Sebastian waited patiently in the U-Haul while his father and Harley shared a cup of coffee.

"How many trips you plan on making?" Harley asked Stefan.

"Not sure, four or five maybe. Dad owned a lot of stuff."

"Well, there's a full tank of gas in there. The first couple of trips are on me," Harley said.

Stefan thanked Harley and soon the father-son moving team were on their way to Grandpa's house.

They'd driven this way many times before and Sebastian thought that this time, the ride would be different; that things would *look* different, but they didn't. Consumers happy with their low-priced bargains shuffled in and out of the Wal-Mart on Brink Street and residents of the SpringBrook Estates were mowing their lawns. While stopped at the intersection of Washington and Main, Sebastian was smiled at by a giggling, young couple walking a dog. At that moment, Sebastian had his first adult realization, *Grandpa is gone and nothing has changed*.

Sebastian watched his father expertly back the U-Haul into Grandpa Wilhelm's driveway. *Nothing has changed here, either*, he mentally noted in his new, adolescent logbook. He climbed out of the truck and followed his father to the mailbox. Stefan grabbed the accumulation of envelopes and magazines. "Suppose it's finally okay to throw out the junk mail?" he asked while thumbing through the stack of letters.

Turning towards Sebastian he explained, "Your grandfather would NEVER let us throw out any mail he received; not the credit card applications, not the sweepstakes notifications, not anything! He insisted on inspecting every piece of mail addressed to him."

As soon as they were inside, Stefan threw away the 'junk mail' and immediately began packing. A St. Louis Cardinals blanket was crumpled up on the couch, most likely left behind after Grandpa watched his last game. There were still bottles of Grandma's Channel #5 perfume on the vanity in the bedroom, even though she'd passed away six years ago. It was like the blanket and the perfume were waiting for them to come back; waiting to be a familiar fragrance, waiting to provide warmth.

They hauled boxes and furniture out to the truck all day long. The kitchen and living room were empty by late afternoon, wiped clean of inhabitation.

"There's only a little room left in the truck," his father said, "find one more thing to pack up and then we'll call it a day."

Sebastian knew what thing he wanted to move next—his grandfather's roll top desk. It was the only thing Grandpa Wilhelm owned that was off limits to everyone, even Stefan. Sebastian had never seen what his grandfather had hidden in the desk, but he had created many theories. *Money!* he sometimes thought, *The desk must be full of money and gold coins! Or jewels from a far away monarchy, or maybe something dangerous, like a gun or a sword!*

"The desk," Sebastian said. "Can we see what's inside Grandpa's desk?" He felt as though he'd just asked to visit the moon with some friends. No way was his dad going to let him go through the desk.

"I thought you'd say that, so you know what?" his dad asked, wearing the same smirk that Grandpa always used, "I left just enough room in the truck for the desk."

Fueled by his curiosity, Sebastian ran to his grandfather's office. *It's okay to look now*, he assured himself, *Grandpa wouldn't be mad*. However, as his father began to roll back the top, he felt guilty, like an accomplice to a crime. With the top open, the desk revealed its secret occupants: stationary, pens, pencils, a stapler, and a glass paperweight with pieces

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of confetti-like paper in it. *It looks just like any desk*, Sebastian thought as a wave of disappointment washed the excitement from his face, *Grandpa was hiding what? Pen-pals?!*

**“The desk,” Sebastian said. “Can we see what’s inside Grandpa’s desk?” He felt as though he’d just asked to visit the moon with some friends.**

Sulking a bit, Sebastian helped his father clean out the drawers—which were full of junk mail—and pack up the other desk supplies. As his father moved the boxes out to the truck, Sebastian laid down on the floor beneath the desk. He was feeling foolish for having such wild fantasies about treasure and medieval weaponry when he noticed a sliver of something white peeking at him from the belly of the desk. A small, excited firework went off in his gut. *We missed something!* he thought.

Sitting up on his knees, he got as close to the desk as he could without crawling right into it. There was a hole, just big enough for a finger, drilled into the back panel of the desk. Cautiously, Sebastian looped a finger in the hole and pulled. The panel folded down revealing a secret compartment! The space behind the panel ran the entire length of the desk and was about five inches deep. It was filled with letters and pictures.

At first, Sebastian thought he’d stumbled upon more junk mail, but as he pulled the letters out onto the desk, a baseball rolled out from behind the stack. He immediately thought of his grandpa sitting outside the Gateway Gumdrop, “You like baseball, don’t you?” echoed the memory. *I sure do!* thought Sebastian.

“Whoa, what’s all that?” his father asked from the doorway.

Startled, Sebastian said, “A baseball. All this stuff was back in the desk. We missed it.”

His father leaned in to study the scrambled pile of letters and pictures. He picked up a Publisher’s Clearing House envelope addressed to Grandpa and

extracted the letter inside. Sebastian’s eyes grew wide as he watched his dad’s jaw drop and the color drain from his face.

“What is it, Dad?!” Sebastian exclaimed as he tried to peak over the top of the letter.

“It’s a letter to Grandpa...from a Mr. B. Evans,” he said, not believing the words in front of him.

“You mean ‘The Bat Boy’?!” Sebastian asked in disbelief.

“That’s what I mean,” his father said, “and take a look at this picture!” He handed the old, faded photograph to his son.

“It’s Grandpa,” said Sebastian, “and that’s...that’s Ben Evans!” Ben ‘The Bat Boy’ Evans was standing with his arm around Sebastian’s grandpa. They were at a baseball field, standing right on the pitcher’s mound.

“Sure is. Turn it over,” his father said excitedly.

Sebastian turned the photo over and read the writing on the back: “10-9-46, Safe Bet, Good Buddy, Safe Bet.”

“Is this from 1946, Dad?” Sebastian asked quietly.

“The 46’ World Series, I do believe,” his dad replied. “That’s Fenway Park.”

“What’s the letter say, Dad? Is the letter from 1946?”

“That’s the funny thing...” The smirk was appearing on his father’s face, “It’s not. It’s dated two months ago.” He handed Sebastian the letter as he re-examined its envelope. It had been opened once, emptied, re-sealed, and re-sent. Picking at the stamp in the upper right-hand corner, he found a second one buried beneath it. *Smart*, he thought, *very smart. That’s why we were never allowed to throw out the ‘junk mail’*. He looked down at the pile of disguised letters in their sweepstakes’ envelopes and laughed. The baseball was signed too: “Cardinals always win!” it said, followed by Ben Evans’s famous signature.

“Dad?” Sebastian asked as he put the pieces together in his own head. “Does that mean Grandpa knew all along what happened to Ben Evans?”

Laughing even harder, his father said, “I think that’s a safe bet.”



## //The Campfire Letter

//Michael Becker

The campground quieted down in a hurry. Just an hour ago, the whole place was alive with children at play, adults laughing too loud or yelling at their children and the noise of an occasional barking dog. Now, the loudest sounds are those of the tree frogs and an owl tuning up somewhere very far away. I seem to be the only one awake and out to view the beautiful full moon rising, warmed by the last embers of my camp fire and memories. I am very aware, all at once, that we never saw this scene together.

If I had brought you here with me, my darling daughter, when you were a young girl (say four or five), I would have put you in my lap to watch this pageant with me, this march of the moon to its finest hour. It's late; you may have needed a nap during the afternoon. I would have awaked you if necessary just to spend this time with me. Others might have been horrified, perhaps even your mother, but I would have kept you warm in the circle of my arms and a soft blanket while I tried to teach you to love this sight as much as I have come to love it over my many years. But I didn't, and it's just as well. That would have been an inappropriate way to treat such a young child.

If I had brought you here with me when you were a teenager, you would have hated me. I would have been separating you from your girlfriends and their endless chatter about things I thought unimportant. You probably would have accused me of whisking you away to the boonies to keep you away from your boyfriends, and you probably would have been right. I can be a jealous man at times. I think that discovering I must share your affection with somebody else, anybody else but your mother, would have been a blow that I would have avoided as long as possible. I see now that such behavior would have

been an attempt to prevent you from growing up, a goal that is unworthy of a good father.

If I tried to bring you here when you were a young woman, say the summer after you graduated from college, you would have been indignant. By then, you would have earned your independence. My preaching about the beauty of the moon, the stars and the forest would have been pale stuff compared to the excitement of an office, the thrill of business travel, the glow of lights in strange expense account cities. As you were only beginning your career, I would begin to face the worst part of my own, to admit that I chose the wrong road, to know that the best of what I could have was over, that I was peaked mentally and physically, that it would be all down hill until retirement or death. I began to drink too much then too. Many do. I wasn't proud of it, but I wasn't unaware of it either, any more than your mother was. I can just picture how you might have hated me if I coerced you into an adjoining camp chair to watch a moon you cared nothing about unless you were holding a lover's hand. Almost certainly, I would have rambled on about other moons I'd seen in other places with your mother and other women I loved. I may have quoted from poets you never cared to read. Shelly. I would certainly have quoted from Shelly. I thank God for sparing you that!

Tonight, I visualize a full moon on the night of your wedding. You don't notice it; you are having too much fun inside at the reception, laughing and drinking and expecting your life to be perfect from that moment on, as a bride should do.

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After standing in the reception line and making the rounds of the guest tables for assurance that the very expensive party I am throwing meets with their approval, I excuse myself. With a bottle of champagne in each hand, I go outside where I will enjoy the company of my old friend, the moon, while I am seated near the glowing swimming pool. I know better than to invite you to spend time, even a moment, with

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**With a bottle of champagne in each hand, I go outside where I will enjoy the company of my old friend, the moon . . .**

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me. I find that I feel more than a little sorry for myself (no doubt assisted by the wine) because I feel as though I am losing you. I hope that you will miss me at the party and come to find me. I want you to hold my hand to assure me that everything is all right, that you are not really leaving me after all, just like I held your hand when the thunder was too loud and when the doctor was casting the wrist you broke falling off your bicycle. I recognize this as a pathetic moment for us both. Better, much better, that it didn't happen.

How I would have handled the birth of your first child, if you allowed me to be there, I simply cannot imagine. I think about it over and over again. I believe that a daughter giving birth for the first time must be the hardest, most complicated moment in a man's existence, something like the jolt of killing your first enemy in a war. Your daughter is happy; her mother is happy; the community congratulates you. But any satisfaction of seeing your blood line continued is marred by the certain knowledge and final, objective proof that your little girl, your perfect and innocent and adored little girl, is a sexually

active human being. If I were there to pace the floor of the hospital in the manner of comic books and TV sitcoms, it would not have been for anxiety over your welfare. It would have been trying to work off the urge to strangle your bestial husband. Thank God that we were all spared that too.

The moon is higher now. Even the tree frogs are quiet, and the embers of my fire are giving very little protection against the increasing cold of the night. I hope that by now, reading this, you will understand why I never allowed you to be born to me, why you were conceived only in my mind. I would have been a terrible father: possessive, selfish, weak, controlling and insensitive. I would have given you less than you deserved and demanded more than I deserved, which I see happening around me far too often. Of all the mistakes I have made in my life, at least I have the comfort of knowing that I did not have children merely to elevate my standing in the eyes of the community or to satisfy my own longing for unconditional love. I loved you too much for that. I have no regrets in that one area, only that one area, of my life.

It is good for me to be able to write to you this way from time to time. I sometimes wish that you could write back or call occasionally. When you don't, you are even more real, more like my friends' children. I can deal with it. At this stage of my life, I have given up the pleasures of my accidental successes as well as any depression over my inevitable failures. I will go into the tent now, into a sleeping bag, a retreat that is much like tucking back into the womb. When morning comes, the camp will be teeming with life: beautiful birds and raucous, not always beautiful humans. The moon will be gone.

Remember this above all: we have been separated all these years only because I loved you too well, not because I loved you not at all.

## //What Do You Think?

//Janice Heiss

A m I the only one who uses this? I mean, it's only ninety degrees out, and I'm using this blanket... I feel chilled and so tired. Maybe I have cancer and don't know it... Do you even care?

Yet, every few months, to my surprise, I feel real safe here with you, like nothing bad from the outside can get us.

But sometimes, y'know what I think? I think, what a job. To sit there for ninety dollars an hour, nodding uh huh, uh huh, and knitting no less. Did you know Woody Allen didn't even know his therapist had been dead for two years! Ha, ha, ha. Can't you just laugh? You're so professional. You remind me of this guy at work who has so many years of office in him that he reeks of paper, pencils, and outgasing carpets.

What do you think? No comment, huh?... Always me who has to break the silence. Y'know, I wait for the day when you suddenly spend the whole fifty minutes spilling all the beans about me, and I can just go home and never have to come back again. Ha, ha. Really.

Is therapy like confession? I don't really get confession. Maybe it's just a way to let you off the hook... The most holy I ever felt was when I laid down in the snow and made snow angels when I was eleven in Oakknoll, Illinois.

I know that you think that shoplifting increases my paranoia. But did you know that one out of three Jews was executed last century? "If God lived on earth, people would break all his windows." That's a quote from old Hasidic rabbis.

I think you've fallen in love with Mark because of all I've told you about him. You know exactly what he's like in bed. I bet you want to go to bed with him. I don't know if I could

trust you with his phone number...

I swear I saw you at Macy's when I got caught. I saw you go into a dressing room near me. You must have seen me. Then you notified security that I was there and that I would try to shoplift something. How's this for a headline: "Therapist Informant Breaks Patient Trust."

I can't tell you how horrible it was getting caught. Shit. If my family ever found out, I'd kill myself. But I can't stop. It's ruining my life, and I can't stop.

How do I know I can truly trust you? Sure, I know, everything here is strictly confidential unless I tell you I've murdered someone or am planning to murder someone. Right? Unless... So, there are conditions...

Hmm... Um... I'm not sure about this sitting-together-in-silence thing you suggested. Pretty expensive. Look, it's already twenty after.

My job stinks. I hate the corporate world. I'm going to quit soon. I'm meant to be an artist, not a stockbroker. I just haven't found the right medium yet. I'm so frustrated, I can't tell you. I hate myself.

I sometimes have this fantasy when I'm sitting in an all-hands meeting, and the head of sales is rallying the troops with crap like, "Let's get out there and really kick butt this quarter and blow our competitors out of the water and you, our salesmen, — I mean sales folks — the best and the brightest, can do this," yakkety yak. I want to just rip this straight corporate scene apart. I imagine running up to the speaker as I pull a huge red dildo out of my purse and scream, "make love not war, make love not war" and then I rip off my skirt and tights and jump

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on the conference table, giving them a full-frontal shot, while I thrust the dildo in and out while doing passionate pelvic tilts and come again and again in front of all of them! What would they do? Run out screaming, become paralyzed, get turned on? It'd be so in-your-face, so outrageous. Umm, hope I didn't gross you out...

I really wanna know if that was you — I'm sure it was — driving a blue SUV on Fillmore Street. I hate those gas-guzzling, immoral monstrosities! Candi Ellis told me when she saw her therapist drive away in an SUV that it destroyed twelve years of therapy.

I know I have to stop shoplifting, but, you know, nothing else in life gives me such a charge. Getting something for nothing. That's what I like best. When in life do you ever, ever get something for nothing? Do you know how good it feels? That's why I haven't stopped all these years.

Y'know, it's really odd... On those rare occasions when I get to go out to dinner on my company's expense account, it is so much more pleasurable than when I'm paying myself. I can just relax and order what I want and not have to worry about it, and do you know how different the food tastes, the whole experience is? It's so totally delightful. I become a different person, one who can just let go and enjoy, who gets off on the whole experience.

Did you know that chimps, gorillas, and baboons are all natural thieves? They will always try to take something from you, playfully. They're so adorable.

Can you believe that I dated that tightwad Rich for so long? I know, I know — you think it had something to do with unresolved father stuff. But that entire year our relationship was all about whether or not we had a relationship! Ridiculous!

Listen to this. Did you know that sometimes a person who has migraines will become so addicted to the medication for it, that the person will actually get a headache in order to take the medication. Isn't that something?

Y'know, I feel overwhelmed with feeling most of the time. I wonder if everyone is walking around like me, overwhelmed with feeling... What do you think?

I feel I'm constantly lying to everyone I know. Because they don't know my deep dark secrets. You're the only one who knows. But I don't tell you everything, you know...

Knock, knock. Um... Just checking to make sure that you're awake, ha, ha. Get this, this is neat: Y'know what the origin of the word "gossip" is? Women who talked women through childbirth.

Maybe it's just the logical extension of growing up shopping in the suburbs when you can no longer afford that lifestyle. Shoplifting — shopping for those who can't afford it. Y'know, this whole society is based on stealing from each other. So, I'm not doing anything wrong. Anyway, I'm making a lot less this year. Weak market. God, does that sound lame, "weak market," from me, a child of the sixties.

I sure had some weird dreams last night. First — and this is quite weird! — I went shoplifting in a store named Touchless. Then, I had these three kittens, and I accidentally killed one that I called "Shrink" by washing it. It was no bigger than a little mouse, black and white and as cute as could be, and I had it wrapped in a towel and when I opened the towel it had become a wet rabbit's foot and it was dead. I felt unbearable pain and guilt over this little innocent being, and I just wanted to die. And then I called a relative and I said "I killed this Shrink, and I'm gonna kill myself." I couldn't stand it, I couldn't stand to be in my own skin.

How would you react if you found out that I'm simply trying out new material on you? Now that would be a hoot wouldn't it? What do you think?

Remember I told you I started shoplifting when I first got married? Maybe because I knew I made a mistake marrying Jim. Some Tylenol from Walgreen's. A total accident. The checkout line was way too long, and I had to get to my waitress job. The door was right there. I went blank for a second and just walked out. It was almost as if the Tylenol walked out with me.

But, in a way, it's a matter... Like you do this thing, shoplift, in order not to feel trapped but you're getting trapped in a different way. Stupid, huh? But the high comes when you walk out of the store. You've escaped! It's thrilling to escape, to get away with something. And you can escape ten, fifteen times a day if you want to. Free! Free! Free! For a second, you don't have to feel stuck.

Did I ever tell you the wonderful story about Mrs. Williams? My Grandma would just follow her around their grocery store, Morry's Sav-Mor. Gram would make a note of the items Mrs. Williams stuffed into her purse. Then my grandparents would add them to her tab. You see, they had worked it out ahead of time with her husband. Mrs. Williams was one of the more well-adjusted women in Gary, Indiana, because she always left Morry's Sav-Mor thinking she'd gotten something for nothing. You see, we all get tired of paying for everything. Life is so hard. Grandma and Grandpa felt fine about the arrangement. They told me the whole story so I wouldn't go crazy if I saw Mrs. Williams sticking things into her purse. At that time in my life, when all my friends spent each Saturday ripping off Woolworth's, I was the most moral character on earth, believe it or not. I actually ended up liking Mrs. Williams. It was fun because she thought she was putting something over on us, while we were putting something

over on her. The best of all relationships!

I wish I had someone to protect me like Mr. Williams. Every time I shoplift, I wish someone was standing at the counter to pay the store back when I leave. Because honestly, I don't want to hurt anyone. I'm very political about who I'll rip off. Like it's only the big stores like Macy's and The Gap. Anyway, I plan to make it all up to the world when I die — in my will. A modern-day Robin Hood.

It's just that I keep wanting and wanting. And, a new free whatever helps. But then it starts again. I can never get enough. What if we finally discover why I am like I am (as you keep promising that we will) but I still can't stop?...

I wonder if you hate me? If you sometimes want to scream, "Shut up! Shut the hell up!" Or, hmm, maybe you're secretly jealous of all the things I get for free?...

Maybe you and I should go to couples counseling? Yes, that's it. My shrink and I have to go to another shrink to work out our relationship... How 'bout it? Pretty clever, huh? Come on, it won't hurt you to laugh. You can break character every once in a while.

Y'know Alice more or less admitted to me that through therapy she's picked up psychological skills that allow her to manipulate her husband and kids. Twisted.

I'm as weird as Alice in other ways. Like, can you believe this? Being that my landlord is a racist, I don't use stamps of black people when I mail in my rent. Low, low...

Do you know what my friend's, Didi Evans, parents constantly told her when she was growing up? "You're homely, deformed, and you have a fresh mouth, so no man will ever want you, so you better learn to take care of yourself." Didi felt her worst feature was her nose so at the age of fifty-five — yes, fifty-five no less — she goes and gets a nose job even though she had long

// Continued on next page

## //Continued from page 19

given up on men. I'm disappointed in her, and yet I might do the same thing. On top of that, I'm a little jealous, because all these women having plastic surgery put all of us who aren't down on the food chain, so to speak. Isn't it disgusting the way I think? That's why I come to therapy. To relieve myself of these stinking thoughts. Wouldn't it be something if Didi lands a man now just because of a fraction of an inch... It's happened before...

Remember that asshole, Barry? He recently had the gall to tell me, quote: I had a crush on Laura Weiss even before she had a nose job, unquote, giving himself a big pat on the back. All bad women are reborn men.

I can't believe you listen to this drivel. You listen to me in a way no one ever has. How did you get to be so understanding? Sometimes I... Sometimes I really like you.

I'm sick of myself. You know I do care about the world. Not enough, maybe. I don't always talk about myself, do I? I'm so sick of working for Merrill Lynch. Why are my feelings always so much stronger than my actions? Why don't I have the guts to live my life like I want to?

God, that's annoying! Don't you have to answer that? Guess you forgot to turn off the ringer.

Now, where was I? I have bad thoughts that I hate myself for. Like, I can't really feel for other people, sometimes. Or, even worse... Like my Mom tells me one of my cousins is going to the doctor. And I want something to be wrong. I'm not sure. I can't understand these feelings I have. I sure hope that I'm not boring you.

How much time do we have left? I see. You sure have the new clock in a prominent spot. Then I guess we have time for the absolute worst dream. Um, uh... I'm coming back from Berkeley from this benefit... It's one in the morning. I'm getting off at Fell Street. I'm

thinking about a lot of things. Of work. Of the next day. I was driving up Fell Street. The ocean fog, like gray spray-paint, coated everything, blinding me while also blotting me out. I slowed down but I guess not enough. When I turned right on Lone Mountain, all of a sudden, like a bat out of hell, this drunk comes out in the street, and I hit him head on. He was out cold. What a nightmare! I feel like I'm losing it just retelling it. It was so dark and misty that it all seemed unreal, like a movie. He was dressed in black — I think perhaps he was black, hard to see. I slowed down but was afraid to get out. Can you believe it? This person could have been dead, and I was afraid to get out of my car. Instead, I thought: this is it, this will ruin my life, and I looked around and didn't see anyone, so I just drove away. Something else takes over and you become a machine. It's like you're on automatic. Like shoplifting. You're just trying to take care of yourself. I was shaking and thought of going to an emergency room because I was hyperventilating. Can you believe me? I should have taken this dying man to the emergency room, not me. I kept thinking of my auto insurance and if it would cover this and about my life being ruined. Yes, I felt bad I had killed someone, but it wasn't my fault. He stepped in front of the car. Yet, I didn't think anyone would believe me because there were no witnesses. What do you think? It's such a vivid dream, I can't shake it. It feels so real.

My time has to be up. We went over, a first. I sure captured your attention, huh?

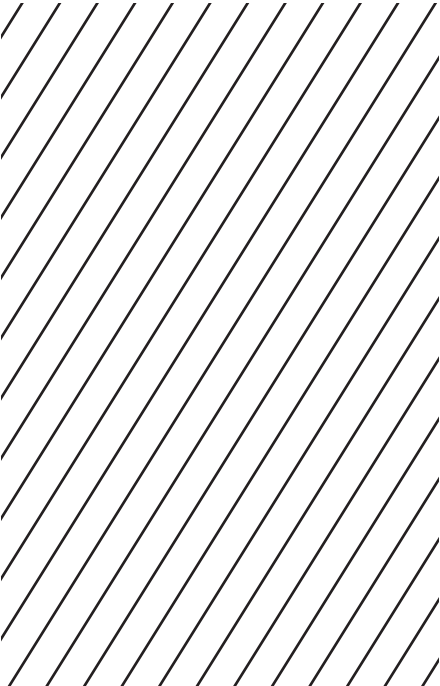
Well, um, wait, before I leave... I'm worried you think I took your waiting-room Buddha. Did you ever find out what happened to it? No, huh. I'm just worried that you suspect me, and I didn't take it! Honest! Well, I hope you find it soon... OK, later. Bye.





## voices // photography

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**pho•tog•ra•phy** - *n* - 1. The art or process of producing images. 2. The production of positive prints through the use of a camera and reproduction of captured images on a photosensitive surface.

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// **Steel**

// Deb Dietz

// 35 mm film

// **Rainbow Boat**

// Deb Dietz

// 35 mm film







//Untitled

//Aaron T. Hall

//Black and white film

// Lil'  
Guatemalan  
Abuela  
// Megan Kasper

// 35 mm film





// Iced

// Deb Dietz

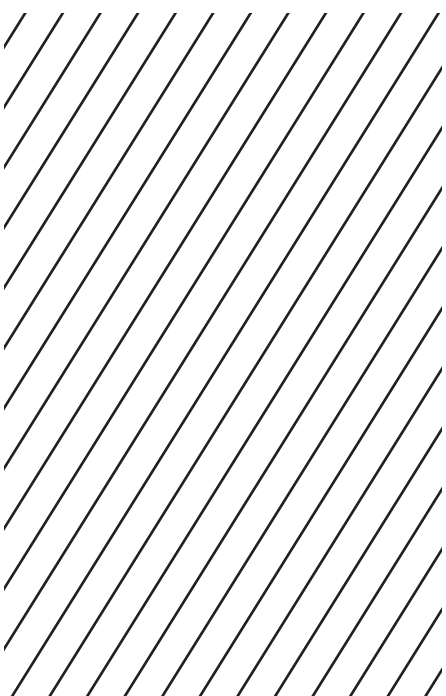
// 35 mm film





## voices // poetry

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**po•et•ry** - *n* - 1. A verbal work of art created by a poet  
2. Literary work intentionally written in verse or meter.  
3. Prose writing that bears the quality of a poem in form or sound. 4. The essence of a poem or its characteristic quality.

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## // Goodbye

// Nic Rieff

I'm torn from my slumber in the early morning night,  
 a tear runs as I hold in a sob and cling to my pillow,  
 my heart booms empty and hollow, I dreamt of you again.  
 I light a candle and sit at the kitchen table  
 listening to the sleet against the window,  
 my mind drifts back, touching tender moments  
 yesterday slipped past.  
 I cry, emptying my heart of the hurt harbored deep inside  
 as the sink drips rhythmically.  
 I sit at the table, thinking of a poem, thinking of you.  
 Candles burning, where are you?  
 The sky ceases its raining but my eyes continue, too tired to hold back.  
 Your image still haunts my memory, my mind,  
 what could have been, should have been, now will never be.  
 Blue flames swirl in the ashtray, the thick heavy smoke of burnt paper rising,  
 a letter set on fire, never sent.  
 With far away eyes I stare at the smoke, the final remains of feelings once felt.  
 I lean forward, trying to catch them one last time, leaving me with an outstretched hand,  
 grasping nothing.  
 I look out the window towards the horizon,  
 clouds cover the midnight sky  
 the cold winter wind blows in from the north.  
 My eyes flicker to my hands,  
 lingering for a moment on the place a ring used to be,  
 the last remnant of a time long since past.  
 I light a smoke and sink back into the chair,  
 ornament lights glow green,  
 Iggy's "Candy", freed from the speaker sink deep into my subconscious.  
 I drag deeply, exhale and stare at the smoke,  
 searching for a reminder of you,  
 a shape, a curve, a flicker of a memory before fading into nothing.  
 In the middle of the night I call out your name  
 but you do not answer me  
 your ears listen for another.  
 Like a soft rain in the dark of night, you came, loved and then were gone, leaving little trace of  
 ever being,  
 only scattered teardrops on closed shutters of the windows of my life.  
 The room is dark,  
 the candles have burnt out long ago.  
 I sit, my head down,  
 listening to a sink drip,  
 looking for answers,  
 remembering you.

## //In a Night

//Ryann Robertson

It's always in a night,  
Stranded between yesterday and tomorrow,  
Willing the clocks to rust shut  
And every eye to sleep.  
What we gain could be far more  
Than what we lose—what we've lost,  
Pressed back into needy skin  
A humanity with which we've come to terms.  
Fear settles, flies, settles again,  
Though we do our best to look away  
Now that we've submerged,  
Who needs the shadow here?  
There is no hope, but neither pain,  
Caught in a blind spot  
Behind the smoke of reason,  
All that remains of that beast.  
Clutch and whirl, ever cystic lights  
Flicker in the eyelids, the mind,  
As marks, teeth on skin,  
Keep the thoughts sharp as shatterfacets.  
It's always the unsung, the observers,  
The twisted, cunning, the glacially cold  
Who seek solace in this carnality  
When calculation and careful masks are torn away.  
It was too late the second our paths crossed,  
Too late to rein in the inevitable,  
For like bodies may circle for a time,  
But the collision is imminent.



## //The Demons Leap

//Justin Johnson

The preacher leans over the pulpit and shouts,  
Spittle flying from his mouth.  
“The demons are leaping my children!”  
He screeches to the congregation.  
“They sway pitchforks, jeering and leering  
deep in their fiery pits they cackle!  
Your souls they are hungry for,  
They will dine on your pain and suffering!  
My fellow followers of God, we must resist.  
Lucifer leads the parades of Hell!  
He tears at the walls of the followers of God!  
Throw off the shackles of sin and free yourselves!  
Resist the yaulp of Satan!” He pounds a fist.  
The preacher continues to roar, but his children nod off.  
The lecture tired and worn, Satan already safely in their hearts.



