

shona cowart

melissa leahy

shelly barger

henry school

kc stout

alicia reed

nikki agee

shawn whitesell

jennifer steinfeldt

lera rooker

jonathan trundle

maya nitis ✓

lindsey turner

jeremy brown

nick fowler

paul sternberg

jaclyn morrow

turner hutchens

travis choat

amie leeking

jennifer bardoner

bryan barnard

stephanie tennis

amber goodman

jessica dungan

jennifer jennings

denny mcbride

rachel parrish

cover painting:

leslie miller

**untitled**

acrylic on canvas

photographed by:

amie leeking



Jonathan Trundle | **frigg** | 8 3/4 gallons of house paint  
 35 x 130 cotton duck canvas  
 105 pounds of human canvas

(Image 1 in series of 3, continued on page 20)



her and him, or milk, penises, and cookies

Maya Nitris

that morning she flew twice  
her mind repeating the word  
naked over and over and again  
she analyzed her dilemma  
she imagined his soft playful penis  
sleeping in her mouth  
she remembered his notions of romance  
and how secretly, they were hers, too  
but then she had only smiled  
as he stood pink, freckled, and naked  
in front of her chair and she  
thought of milk and cookies  
and how messy he was and the milk  
always got all over his face  
and it was a little gross.

### My Dark Confidence

Lindsey Turner

I crawl into my ultraviolet coffin  
thrice a week  
to lie in my own  
pig sweat  
for some twenty minutes  
or ten  
until my skin is parched  
and I am the paradigm  
of the modern white girl.  
I gain confidence with  
every tedious  
shift in  
melanin.

### Declaration

Lindsey Turner

I am a woman  
hear me shop  
as I browse the racks  
for duds  
(and that they are)  
that make me  
comic-book boxy  
and abnormally heavy-footed  
while the shelves  
stacked with paint  
and complementary gifts  
beckon for me  
and cordially request that I pay  
59.95  
just to cover up my  
disgust.

# Jeremy Brown

## Night Meeting

They met almost nose to nose,  
Lying in the leaf-speckled dark,  
Backs spotted with pools  
Of silver and ebony.  
Sprawled within a few inches of each other  
Staring, his eyes shadowed  
And hers wet with the moon.

The boy was naked, weeping,  
His skin scratched,  
Hot against the cool soil.  
His long brown hair hung before his face.  
He reached with one limp hand  
To brush the strands from his dirty cheek.

She was angular and lean.  
Her flanks heaved  
From exhaustion.  
Her ears moved back then forward  
Listening to his breathing.  
Rough and rasping  
Like her own.  
The pink tongue lolled out  
To lick a forepaw gingerly.  
Her muzzle wrinkled  
As she yawned,  
Her long teeth  
Pale in the light.

The boy raised his head,  
Trying to imitate the gesture.  
They looked up,  
And with one voice,  
Howled.

## Things Left Unspoken

The philosopher clicked his mouse.  
"I found this on the Internet."  
I can't call it sound,  
More of an increase of pressure in the ear:

Tension,  
Relaxation,  
Tension,

In a definite rhythm...  
I looked at the speakers.

He laughed.  
"Odd isn't it?"

I nodded.  
"That's the sound of one hand clapping."  
Then he clicked again.

"Listen to this."

I heard absence,  
A sudden clearing of the ear of silence.  
"What was that?"

My hand trembled on the edge of his desk.

"A tree falling in the woods  
When there's no one there to hear it."

Then the mouse clicked again.  
"What are you going to play now?"

"This time I'm going to play...  
The Word!"

"The Word?"

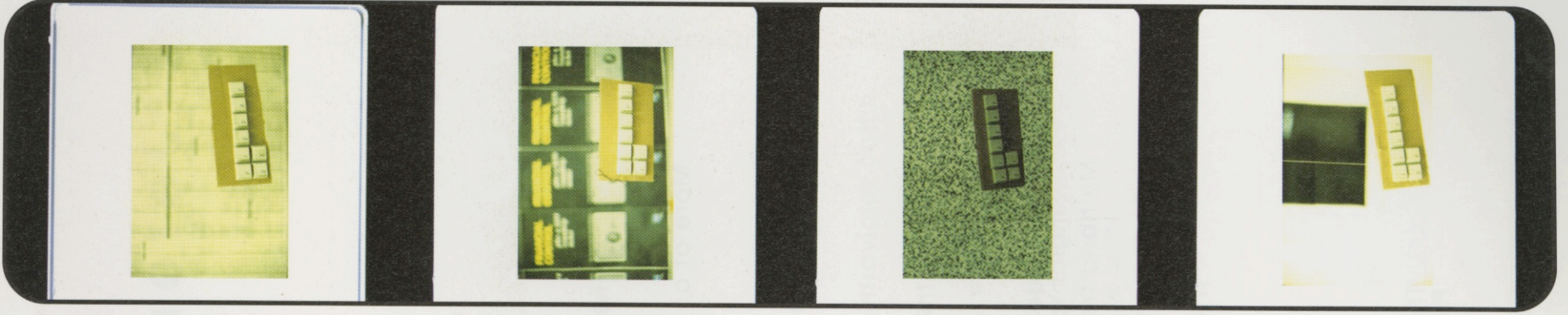
"You know, the Logos, the Word  
Made flesh—God, in essence."

He reached for the mouse;  
I snatched at his desk:

The heavy bust would have to do!  
Plato kissed the back of his head,

And I left—  
Unenlightened.





Paul Sternberg and Nick Fowler  
**new shame manual, ch I-IV,**  
**Details**  
 mixed media



Jaclyn Morrow | **Untitled |** Scratchboard



# The Curse of Davis Market

Turner Hutchens

On the corner of Tennessee and Main sits a small convenience store whose signs announce "Coldest Beer in Town" and "Kegs To Go." The painted window also pronounces that Davis Market is the center of the universe.

The only important information missing from the signs is that the friendly little beer store is cursed.

"If for some reason you happen in there, you'll be stuck in Murfreesboro," explains Ryan Malina, an MTSU senior, as he sips his beer in a local bar. "If

you do manage to leave you'll come back here to die."

This legend, or some variation of it, has been told around Murfreesboro from the keg parties of Greek Row to the wobbly tables of the Boro.

"If you go in the store, you can't ever leave Murfreesboro," says Lori Brewner, another MTSU senior.

"No," disagrees Jessica McKee, a junior sitting next to her. "You can leave, but you'll always come back." The two are drinking imported beer.

Gregg Matherly is a friend of theirs, and a former MTSU student.

"I can tell you this," says Matherly. "I did move away, and I'm back: four months."

The origins of the legend and of the curse are uncertain, though explanations abound.

Some say it was Ken Kelsey and the Merry Pranksters, the infamous acid trippers of the book *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

The story goes that they visited Murfreesboro in their bus and declared the Market to be the universe's center.

There are other explanations.

"The reason is it's an Indian burial ground or something bla bla bla," says Malina.

Others have heard different theories.

"Some team of, like, astrophysicists or something came down from some university in the north," explains John Wall, a graduate of MTSU still living in Murfreesboro. "And they had somehow determined that Murfreesboro was the center of the universe -- right around Davis market. If it's the center of the universe, it's got to have some pull. It's a vortex."

The rumors continue: many people believe monks from a new-age cult declared the store to be the center of the cosmos in the 1970s.

MTSU senior Craig Murphy has heard some of this version of the story.

"The cult offered to buy it from the owner, but he wouldn't sell," says Murphy.

Though the Davis Market does seem to have some pull, whether by gravity, vortex or beverage, many believe the curse is escapable.

"There is a way to get out of it," reports Murphy, a senior of many years at MTSU. "To break the curse you have to piss on the Geographic Center of Tennessee Monument. Then you can leave." Murphy is not the only person who has heard of this strange antidote to the curse.

The monument is just the other side of campus from Davis Market, a little way down Old Lascassas Road. It's a typical stone obelisk, stacked a few yards high to commemorate Murfreesboro's pride at being at the center of the state. Most people interviewed for this article had heard of urination as a

cure, and a few who prefer to remain unnamed have actually relieved themselves on the memorial.

"You visit some statue and piss on it," says Malina. "Then you can leave."

"Yeah, you just pee on the center of Tennessee," says McKee.

Charles Wolfe, a noted folklore scholar who has taught at MTSU for more than two decades, is also familiar with the urine antidote.

"Yeah, I've heard that," he says, chuckling a little but not offering further comment. Wolfe doesn't recall who first told him about the legend, but it was about 25 years ago. He says Davis Market has always had a certain mystique about it.

"I'm not aware of any legend quite like it," says Wolfe, reclining in his office filled with stacks of books and journals. "It's certainly not a motif in folklore."

"You have to understand that back in the '70s Davis Market was very different," he explains. "It was much more funky. It was dirty, and full of all sorts of stuff. You could find almost anything you wanted there. There was a whole counter-culture in that area around there that was really into alternative lifestyles."

The area was the closest thing to a hippie enclave Murfreesboro has ever had, says Wolfe, and Davis Market was the headquarters for many of the people, a place to meet, mingle, buy whatever one needed, or maybe make a connection.

At the time it operated not just as a convenience store, but as a general store, counter-culture hang-out and even a pawnshop for a while.

Now the Market sticks to more tame merchandise: mostly empty shelves with a thin supply of

crackers and personal hygiene products, full racks of pornography (magazines and movies), and a whole lot of beer.

One Murfreesborolifer cites this as the source of the store's pull: it's just the beer.

"It just comes from MTSU tradition," John McGhee says. "MTSU has always been a party school. Davis is a party place."

McGhee first shopped at Davis Market in 1977 when he was still a child. He first heard the legend in 1985 -- years too late for him to avoid it.

"I'm 31 years old and I'm still here and I still go down there to buy beer -- the best selection in town."

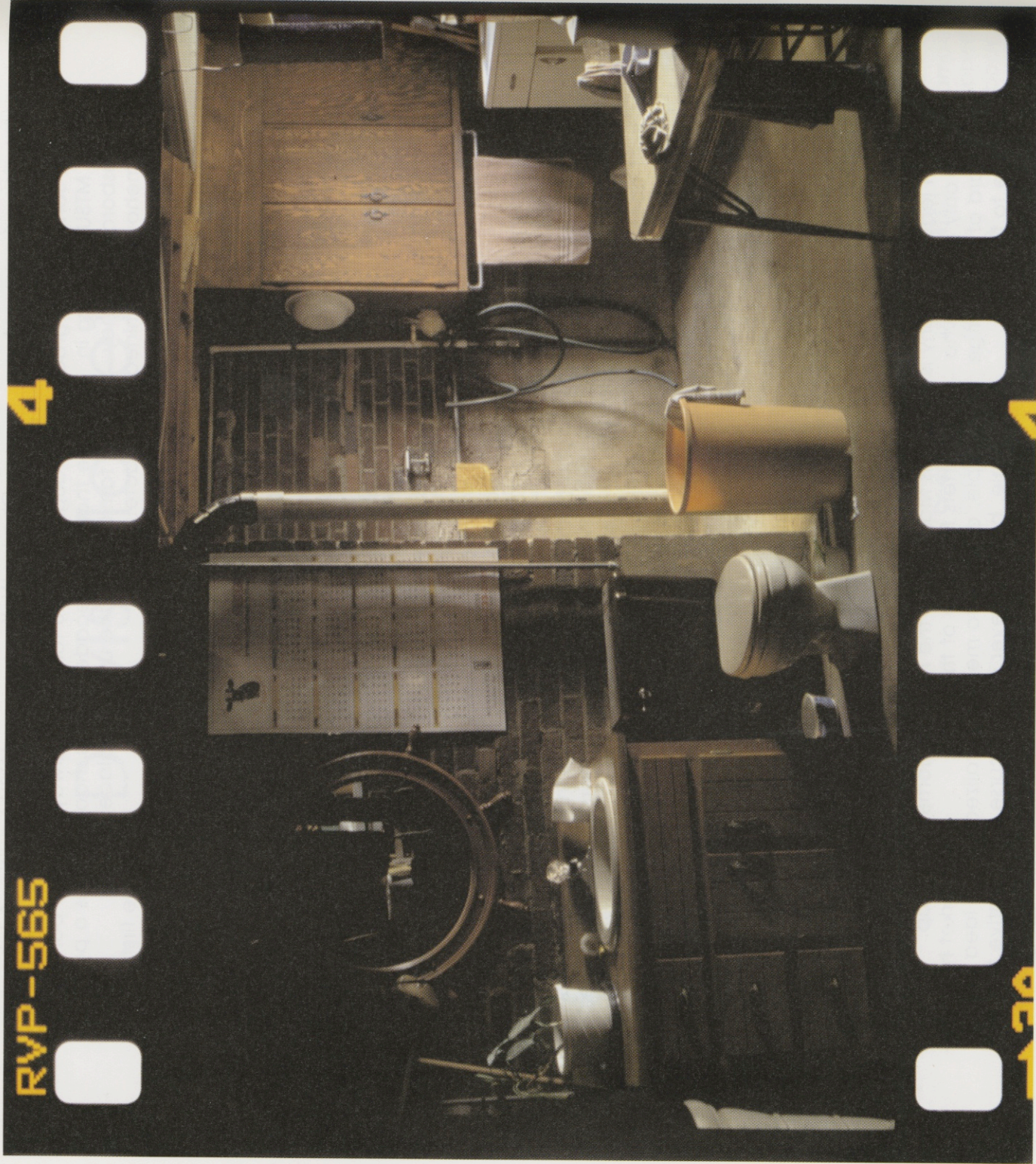
"I believe it," he says of the curse. "I actually went away from Murfreesboro for a year. After eight months I started feeling the pull back to Davis Market. The first night I came back to buy some Guinness. That was four years ago. I'm still here."

The market's broad selection of beer ranges from Milwaukee's Best (the Beast), priced at about six dollars a twelve-pack, to specialty brews like Young's Double Chocolate Stout which can put you out five bucks per bottle. The store has two full cases of beer, kegs to go, and if you're looking for a cheap drunk you can buy milk jugs of domestic on tap.

The Market has capitalized on the idea of the curse, an initiative first taken in the '70s by the store's owner, Mr. Davis, who has since died. Key chains, generally free with a purchase, proudly advertise the store. They are printed "Davis Market The Cosmic Center Of The Universe."

The key chains don't mention the curse. But now you know.





Travis Choat | Basement 1 | Photograph



Naranja dulce,  
limon celeste,  
dile a Maria,  
queno se acueste.  
Maria, Maria,  
ya se acostó,  
vino la muerte  
y se la llevo.  
Naranja dulce,  
limon celeste,  
dile a mi amada,  
que me conteste.  
Maria, Maria,  
no contesto,  
vino la muerte  
y se la llevo.

Sweet orange,  
celestial lime,  
tell Maria  
not to lie down.  
Maria, Maria,  
in bed she lay.  
Along came death  
and took her away.  
Sweet orange,  
celestial lime,  
tell my beloved  
to answer me.  
Maria, Maria,  
did not reply,  
death came 'round  
and made her die.

◆ *Traditional Day of the Dead Calavera* ◆



44  
100

S. Cowart



## Staring at the Coke Machine over Chaucer

The incessant humming  
calls my thirst,  
flashes ice and cool red  
bottle, smiling.  
Drink before you die  
of boredom-

Reading Chaucer,  
the red rooster prancing

Still I feel the prick  
of endless bubbles  
and the rumble  
each time a girl gives in  
to the redness,

The hen jumping  
first into the flames.

### When

Noah carved the boat with little help  
and let all the animals parade in front of me.  
Now the current gains  
on my knees it drags  
and my new brown shoes are ruined.  
There he perches proudly,  
above the ugly waters filled with anger  
of the drowning dead and I  
know he didn't realize-  
He'll have to mate with a giraffe.

### Noah

### Left

## Shelly Barger

### #1

Run with me in golden heather fields.  
You stand poised on the rim of my eyelid  
dive in.

He says if you can't tell what color it is,  
decide what color it is not.  
Love is not endless slumber.

Red roses twirl in your eyes, or maybe  
the pink clouds  
I want your hands to feel like.

The wind strings invisible veils over my face.  
You want to know who I am  
and I am afraid I will shriek from  
the constraint  
of fear the grain underneath  
I could choke it out  
only it hurts to tears.

Toss me a donut, will ya?  
Kill one little dragon for me.

### #2

The ocean shore down I dove  
into cool water.

Never smelled the salty ocean air,  
though the taste was always at the tip of my tongue.  
Sheathed in water,  
I dove down for pearls and smashed them  
for the telling grains choked smooth.

Perfectly smooth sand travels in an hourglass  
sharded by a million fiery explosions.  
Scouting for the bomb that smashed my majestic sail boat.  
Where is the captain wheel amidst the shambled aftermath?

Dove down for pearls and  
cracked in the threads of crimson silk  
rippling up the ocean  
threatening to dredge anchored mystery.

## One for an Albatross

Henry School

If you ever see me smile, remind me of sadder change for sake of change and show me waves of  
blankness pouring from your eyes onto the tile. We've stuttered through another day.

If you ever see me smile, remind me of bruises, howls and waiting rooms. I'd save a corner of  
myself for others' uses but I couldn't do this carving for you.

No, they're not the ones who failed.

I guess it's sad we've never staggered past brittleness.  
I guess it's sad we've no real ties to break.

You were my field of buried mirrors and you were the wings in my way.

You were the wings in my way.

# Melissa Leahy

## Kissing the New Rapunzel Goodnight

Breathe  
No more lips play-rolling tongue or soggy cheek  
quit the sexual nature of human tendencies  
silence the pulse of this animal  
that lurks and waits to jump and hunt again.  
Dance with the devil one last tango  
with smooth pale hands  
to cover vulnerable flesh of man  
and girl who stands facing herself.  
Her innocence as a reflection  
in a broken mirror-

his emerald eyes cracking and displaying her beauty.  
Pristine striking white teeth.  
To taste her is to end the world  
of Rapunzel and poisoned apples-

a new story full of truth and her length  
swaying back and forth between reality  
and what dreams are made of.

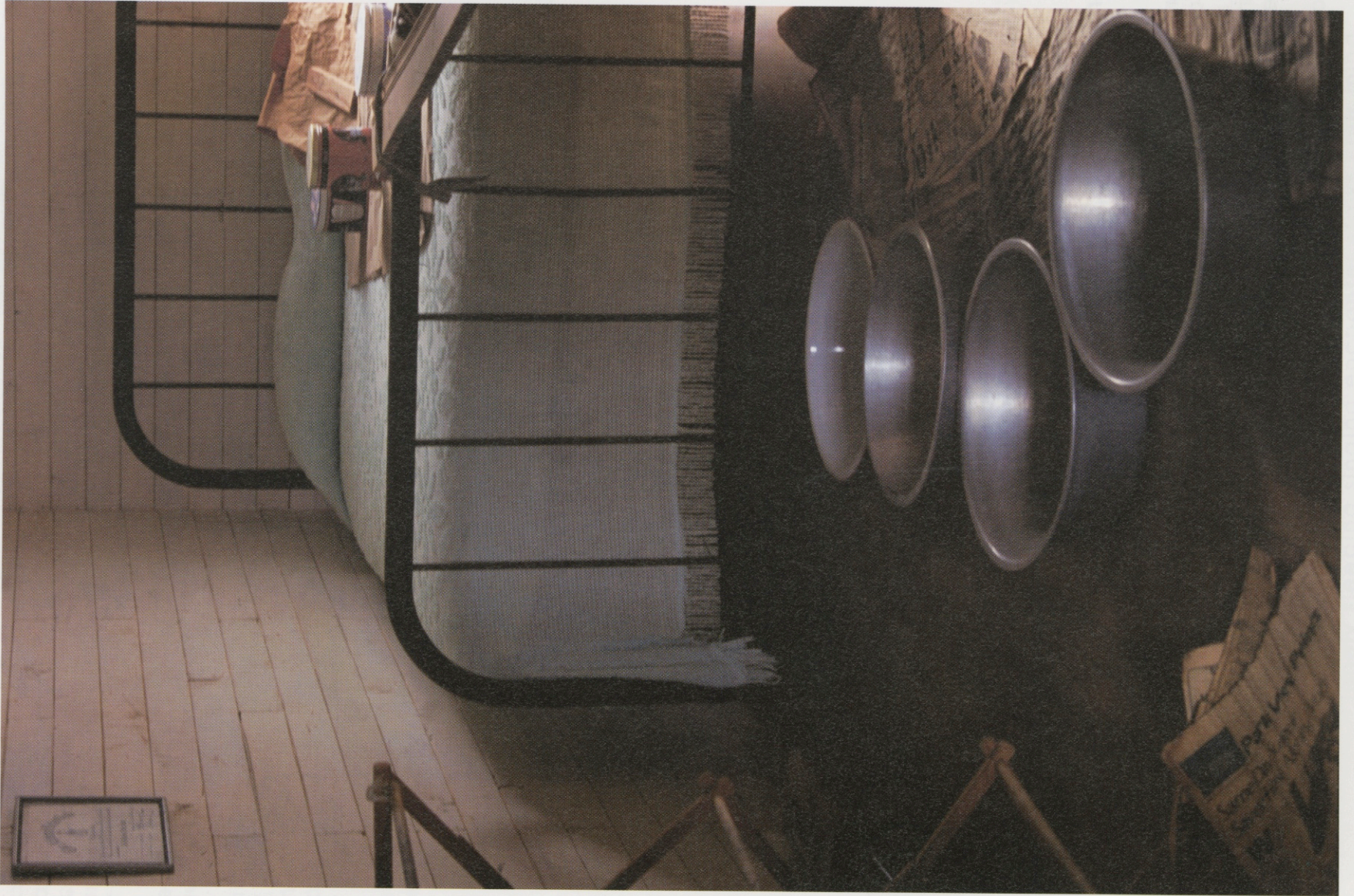
Kiss the angel fair and sweet,  
hard and long until the river breaks  
the dam and love comes  
rushing in to feed the emptiness  
inside- the void

of lost prayers and swollen feet from stumbling  
so far, so close to her heaving breast-  
lonely sleeping singing enchanter stalks your mind.  
Behold the sun, shine brighter every day  
light her mouth so kiss at dark, flying  
on a shooting star bound for nowhere, everywhere, anywhere but here.  
Breathe and release her to the night.





Nikki Agee | **Untitled** | color print



Alicia F. Reed | **Great-Grandmother's Attic** | 35mm color slide



they sang a song of endless nights waiting for the next sundown  
Jennifer Steinfeldt

fishnet tights  
tiny holes ripping  
down the leg  
nailpolish streaks curling around  
lithe muscles

they sang a song of girls in deep pantomime  
twisting their hair so tight that their scalps can't breathe

high heels clicking down the pavement  
they listened to the sirens weep  
between second and fourth street  
a little banjo here, a little drum  
a garbage can lid  
mingling with the old men smoking cigars playing chess  
in the alley.

the younger ones must be home before midnight  
they drip out the rest of their bottles and scream into the driveway  
still young enough to think about a bowl of ice cream before bed

perhaps smoke long slim cigarettes held daintily between two fingers  
and roll into a club farther out of town  
dancing on the tables  
finding somewhere to sleep that night.

the taxis weave in and out of the morning traffic  
pushing debris with the wind from their tires  
horns and business suits and clean shoes that smell like  
cheap perfume  
the morning sounds make music  
a hectic rushing sound from the other side of the city.

### The Hills Wriggle Like Round Bodies

Shelly Barger

The hills wriggle like round bodies  
under patch work covers  
of grass and tree.

The earth opens her legs  
into valleys that beckon  
the sun

to feed  
her fertility  
his green

giving  
light.

Hills are like the rounds of woman's body.  
Slowly, she moves with the rain.  
She flows  
in pale shades of layered canyon  
cut by deepening rivers.  
Rivers that carry her ever

present  
flavor  
to the ocean.

### Average Man

Shawn Whitsell

Don't have much money  
I'm down to my last two dimes  
Can't promise you diamonds  
All I have to give is time

The muscles on my arms aren't that big  
But my heart is  
And the only six-pack I have is Pepsi  
But you can have a swig

I don't own a car  
Don't even have a bike  
But we can always walk  
Or catch the bus if you'd like

I don't wear the most expensive clothes  
Got this shirt from the thrift store  
My pants are kinda faded  
One day, I'll get some more

I'm not the most popular guy  
I'm not down with the in crowd  
Not the star quarterback  
But I always make my mama proud

I'm just an average man  
Trying to maintain  
Who loves to read books  
And stare out the window when it rains

Don't have many material possessions  
May never have fortune or fame  
All I have is life's lessons  
And my granddaddy's last name

But what I do have is love  
And my word to remain true  
And if you'll accept  
I'd like to share my life with you

### Arctic Valentine

Shelly Barger

I wore my heart spotted shirt  
two sizes small.  
Driving, your eyes glanced,  
want ice cream?

No, love: loves me not.  
Do you then want to spend the night?  
Yes, of course.

Turn the page now  
to see me losing my pants  
for a fiery red head.

Be mine, but not too close.  
Let's fuck the world away.  
Pretend for closeness.

Walk like strangers to breakfast.  
Arms extended  
forever pushing a prayer for protection.

You call this love?  
Didn't you know that we don't want what we secretly yearn for?  
Can't make ruby from sidewalk.

The snow outside the ice crusted window  
couldn't quite-cool the uproar  
of flattened blankets  
cheap whore  
feeling.

Love, will I ever lift the embargo?



# K C Stout

KC Stout doesn't think her art has a theme, but she works with the idea of absurdity.

"I like to juxtapose things and take things out of context," she says. "It's very intuitive. I don't think about what I'm painting until afterwards."

What all her works share, she says, are tight painting and clean lines coupled with a manic explosion that almost rejects the process.



**Stain = US Forever** | oil on canvas



**Stain = Us** | oil on canvas

"I refer to that as tension and release. I think that's the main theme of my life." It's something she has noticed in nature, music, sexuality and machinery. It's a contrast that gives things a life of their own.

She insists that her paintings are not precious.

"I don't care that the piece is well constructed or going to last," she says. Much to the dismay of some of her teachers, KC reuses old canvasses, painting over earlier work. "I'm not afraid to dismiss something that I spent a lot of time on."

These two paintings started in a cafe, when KC used coffee to make marks on index cards. Intrigued by the stains, she incorporated the cards into her canvasses.

"Making stains is like leaving evidence that we've been here," she says. "We can't live and not leave stains."

Because she wanted to focus her energy on the act of painting, and not on creating precious works of art, KC didn't bother to carefully attach her canvas to the stretchers. When she submitted the paintings to Collage, the cor-

ners flapped and some threatened to come loose from the frame. After acceptance in the magazine, the paintings were taken to Chromatix, a photo lab in Nashville, to have slides made. Amusingly, before taking the photos someone at the lab carefully folded the canvas edges to the back and stapled everything tight!

--Interview by Nathalie Mornu

### What's the most significant event of your life?

"I can't remember anything in particular except silly things. But those are important to me."

### Who would you most like to meet?

"I'm afraid I'd be totally disappointed if I met someone I really admire."

### What's your first memory?

"When I was really little I remember being in my crib and hearing sirens outside. Someone had been in a bike accident, and my mom and I went outside to watch. I think we lived in Virginia."

### Do you have any bad habits?

"Consumerism in general. I'd like to cut back." An army brat, she moved frequently as a child, and still keeps her possessions pared down. Everything she owns will fit into her car. "I buy a lot of clothes, but those are really easy to get rid of." She smokes, but says she can quit.

### What did you dream last night?

"I dreamt that I bought a really nice motorcycle for \$200 and it was really cool." Although she doesn't know how to operate a motorcycle, she drove it in the dream.



## Mary, Mary QuiteContrary

Maya Nitis

You are so beautiful,  
Your lean body, keen honesty  
firm breasts, bold stare  
blend into a gorgeous bouquet,  
a rose named Mary.

Mary, Mary  
tough and strong  
on the world and yourself,  
your doubt beats down your back  
like a weapon breaking bones.

Your disbelief is unfair  
to that beauty in so many ways.  
Playboy is fake.  
It is a rotten stinking toy  
for dirty boys

and you deserve a man,  
The pictures are brushed up,  
illusions painted to hide the imperfections.  
You are real, woman through and through.

Mary, Mary  
growing through a garden full of weeds  
You rose up straight.  
We've all got thorns.

You have the most womanly body  
and the dazzle of your curves  
is obvious to any eye but yours.  
Look harder, look past your thorns  
quite contrary, you are beatific, rose.

II

First, overjoyed, having not spoken  
to you for almost six months,  
I hear your confident familiar voice  
speaking in terrifying riddles.

After the first hellos and explanations  
you begin, repeating "I have made the worst mistake."  
It took so long for you to tell me  
when you did, I heard your tears  
flood the receiver. You gave me  
pieces—changed, implanted, fake, and not yourself.  
Talking in circles, you could not  
let it out, so you started months ago:

I was driving home  
after a horrible day at work empty  
looking at my life I saw it  
dragging nowhere unsatisfied  
I needed something so I turned  
and walked into a bank  
in ten minutes I was approved  
for two credit cards equaling  
five grand

the next rest stop—  
a beauty shop with scalpels  
something small to lift the mood—  
a nosejob but they had a discount  
for seconds so I thought a boobjob  
too the bank again a different one  
approved again two more five grand  
I can't look in the mirror  
but they follow me

I can't sleep or fuck  
it was an impulse—look more beautiful  
feel better stupid  
stupid I've lied to everyone  
I told them I was in an accident  
and had to have reconstructive surgery  
the mirrors are full of shallow women

On the phone for an hour,  
I shake with disbelief.  
Now we sit in a dimly lit bar,  
the only place you will go.  
The implants will be taken out.  
The only cost you have to pay  
is anesthesia, but the nose must  
have a year to heal before another  
surgery. You can not let it go.  
At twenty, ten thousand dollars  
in debt, you have to work  
seventy hours a week to make minimum payments.  
You can not, crying all the time,  
be banished to darkest corners.

## Road Less Traveled

Melissa Leahy

Frozen patches of stiff leaves  
coated the night's path to his  
feet, under my steady stride.

The coarse branches  
bristling, cracking apart,  
swooning and bending to the  
rush of wind, of our breath  
moving.

He stands alone, the end of my  
conscience, the goal my mind  
can reach— tonight. So I stum-  
ble, shake, find

my way in eerie darkness under  
silent watchful stars that sting  
my skin. Come feet, come  
wobbling lazy legs, beat  
on forward. March to the  
sound of his rumbling stomach  
and bleeding heart from  
wounds my desires inflicted.

Foolish, yellow moon, to try to  
stop this movement, interrupt  
the dance of things remem-  
bered.

I collapse into his faltering  
arms that scratch my name  
from his memory, he holds me  
still until the panic breaks and  
once again I am alive— Awake  
to his rough fingers pricking  
holes into my dreaming back  
that dreams of him no  
more.

I scream and fight the edge of  
something beautiful floating  
over our heads; perhaps a  
blessing on this curse— of two  
people lost in one imagination.  
Searching for a soul to cling to  
aching for a hand to grasp,  
yearning for a love that  
lasts longer than the passing  
moon and laughing stars.

## Final Glimpses

Lera Rooker

I hear only the sound of my wheezing breath, irregu-  
lar and slow. Alas, it is not loud enough to shut out the  
sound of my thoughts, which reverberate through my soul.  
On the brink of death, you cannot escape yourself; I am  
too weak to hide. I have lived my life according to my  
own morals and ideas of goodness. Lying on this  
deathbed, inhaling disease and decay, I alone am left to  
answer for my actions. All my things, my books, which  
used to be a great comfort, now only taunt me from their  
places on the shelves. They mean nothing; they are noth-  
ing to me. How I long for the touch of a hand that knows  
me. My friends have been wonderful coming to sit with  
me, but they know of me only what I have allowed them  
to see. I have never let anyone truly see me.

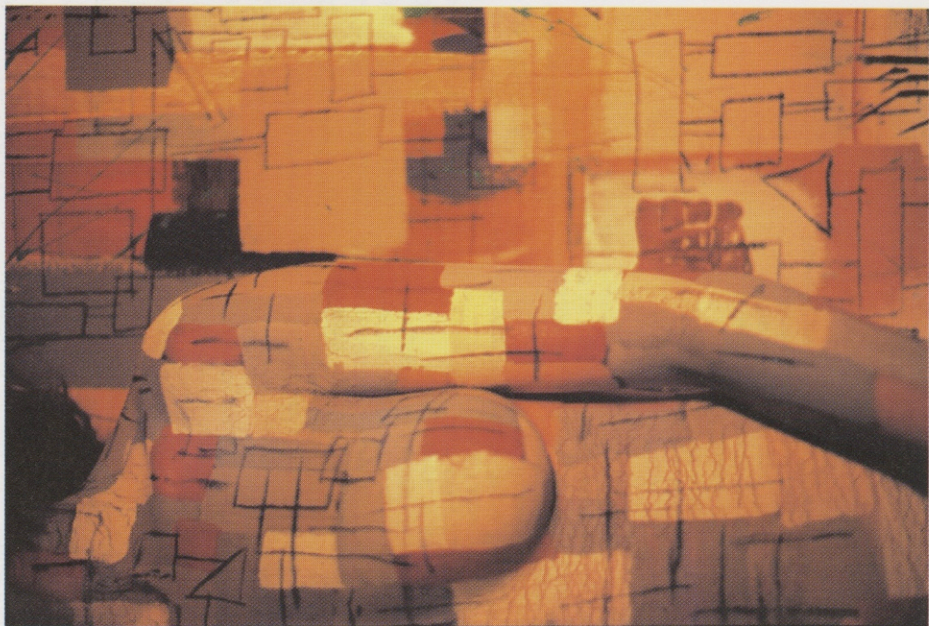
Life, it seems, has been composed of a string of  
decisions based on my own limited perspective, a per-  
spective that has often been skewed. I see that parts of  
me have died many times over the course of my life, yet  
they have been reborn through the love of others or the  
love I have for myself. I smile at the ignorance, the shal-  
lowness of many choices, and I cringe at the decisions  
that wronged and hurt others and myself. So many times  
have I lost confidence, hope, and belief in myself. In  
hindsight, I see that fear, like a serpent closely wound  
upon my heart, killed so many desires and dreams. They  
are now mere skeletons that litter the bottom of my soul.  
Ironically, what I face at present is the fear of eternal  
sleep, not of youth and life. I used to be scared to live;  
life, at this moment, is my greatest wish. Fears never van-  
ish from one's soul, they merely change as one grows  
older. When one fear is conquered or conquers us, we are  
faced with another, often greater fear. Life is hard, I was  
always told, but I laughed at that statement. "Life," I  
said, "is as easy as you make it." What a pompous, silly  
fool I was. Life is always hard; however, some people  
become more adept than others at shutting their eyes to  
or running away from obstacles and challenges. I always  
walked around any barrier that happened upon my path.  
Was that the best way?

As I wait for the final darkness, I find that all I have  
are my regrets and my memories. What pallid, grotesque  
phantoms and shadows are these! But to these appari-  
tions alone can I cling. With love, pain, and regret, I lay  
down my heavy heart. Oh, that I be released from this





Jonathan Trundle  
**frigit in frippery** continued



Amie Leeking | **Situations I** oil, stencils, computer print-out on wood



and endure frisking by police after waiting in line to get into a rented venue equipped with extensive lighting and sound systems.

Kids crowd into every corner of the club. Despite the chilly temperature outside, the body heat raises the temperature inside to what feels like 90 degrees. Girls wear tube tops and skimpy tanks even though the forecast calls for snow this week.

The air is filled with smoke. The smell of it is overpowering. It creates a haze like a swamp fog that settles over the entire area, saturating everything it touches.

The club is dimly lit with about as much light as a single candle gives off in a large, open room. The eyes do not need time to adjust after walking in the door, and faces are clearly visible.

The dance floor, however, shrouded in darkness broken only by the multi-colored lasers that shoot into the crowd and by the glowing, twirling lights that kids have brought to amuse themselves, is alive with the movement of hundreds of bodies moving in time with the music.

In this sense, raves can be likened to spiritual and mystical events, many of which used music and drugs to induce heightened emotional states.

One college student traces its roots back to ancient times in a term paper, noting that, "The actual concept of a rave is not new. It is as old as time itself. At the base level, raves are very comparable to American Indian ceremonies. . . where music is the key towards pulling oneself into a unique emotional and psychological state."

The visions seen by Native American wise men were also often brought on by the use of mind-altering substances such as peyote.

Methylenedioxy-methylamphetamine (MDMA), commonly known as "ecstasy", is often referred to as the raver's drug of choice. Although most religions typically denounce drug use, there are still some who believe in its spiritual power. Nicholas Saunders describes four such people in his article, "The Agony and Ecstasy of God's Path."

"Besides the Benedictine (monk)," he reports, "I also interviewed a rabbi and two monks from different Zen disciplines who believe that ecstasy is a valid tool for teaching and mystical experience. All four have written religious works, three teach their religion and two are abbots."

The rabbi in the article presented a positive view of youth drug use:

"Traditional religions have lost the ability to provide their followers with mystical experiences,"

he said. "Instead, young people are far more likely to have such experiences while on LSD or ecstasy."

The bass drums out the beat. Thump, thump, thump, constant and rhythmic like the beating of a heart. Amidst a conglomeration of electronic sounds reminiscent of those heard while playing video arcade games, a strong male voice can be heard.

"Keep on thumping, everybody jumping," it commands over the incessant beat.

Josh, a 23-year-old construction worker, has been coming to raves for the past four years. He finds dance music soothing and uplifting.

"It's like the feeling you get when the sun shines on you, warming every part of your body and makes you feel golden," he says. "Or like when you're driving with your windows down on a warm, sunny afternoon and your favorite song comes on the radio. And you turn it up and sing along at the top of your lungs, filled with the joy and beauty of life."

His girlfriend Laura, a 19-year-old college student, experienced her first rave with Josh about a year and a half ago. She is no less adamant about the music's spiritual and uplifting qualities.

"Everything breathes in unison," she says. "Everything is inextricably connected by the constant beat of the music. The floor trembles with it, creating a vibration that snakes its way to your feet, where it collects in little pools, tickling the soles of your feet before it moves through the rest of your body. The beat vibrates within you, giving you those little butterflies in your stomach. You feel the energy racing through you. You get warm and notice that your head is moving, your foot is tapping and you're smiling. You just can't help it. Eventually, your heartbeat falls into time with the rhythm. Everyone in the club is sharing the same heartbeat, the same pulse, the same life force. All the barriers are broken: you are one throbbing mass. And then you just go with it, and you dance all night long with your brothers and sisters."

Ecstasy is usually associated with the sense of spirituality and unity that many partygoers allude to. P.L.U.R.- Peace, Love, Unity and Respect- is the core value system of the movement and has lately become something of a catch-phrase and motto for the developing rave scene. Many claim that ecstasy helps achieve these ideals.

"I think ecstasy is the key to world peace," Josh says. "It breaks down all the barriers. It starts with butterflies in your stomach and then your whole body starts tingling. You feel light and surreal. You're filled with a joy of life and an openness to share it. You just want everyone to be as happy as you are."

This euphoria is the apparent cause of all

the touching that goes on at raves. It is not uncommon to see kids seated in a circle on the floor giving each other back rubs.

"I would say that the touching stems from several things," Laura says. "First of all is the most obvious reason. Everybody's out there jumping and dancing around all night. After a while, you can get kind of sore, and back rubs are the perfect cure for sore muscles. Second of all, ecstasy heightens all of your senses. Touching becomes a very pleasurable experience, sometimes even sensual. Also, ecstasy makes people feel so good that they want to make someone else feel good too. Most people like back rubs, and when your tactile senses are heightened, most people love back rubs. The human touch is the most basic form of bonding. When someone is rolling (high on ecstasy) they feel a connection to those around them, and with their natural inhibitions removed, they are able to act on this feeling, which is probably another reason for all the touching. In short, it just feels good."

That seems to be the catch-all phrase for the rave scene. It's fun, and it feels good.

The couple wildly dances the rest of the dwindling night away amidst the throbbing crowd. Every person in the room has a distinct style, a different way that the music touches them and tells them to move. One girl stands with her eyes closed and her face upturned, swaying with the beat while another girl jumps around her, swinging her arms wildly.

"That's what's great about music," Laura says. "It's different for everyone, but it also brings people together. And that's what this scene is all about."

The crowd starts to thin around 4 a.m. Finally, at 6:00, the music stops, the lights are turned on and kids are pushed toward the door.

"It's always such a disappointment when the party ends," Josh says. "You would think six hours would go by really slowly, but I guess it's true what they say: time flies when you're having fun."

As the couple steps outside, they immediately squint and shield their eyes, trying to block out the dim rays of dawn.

"Walking out of a party is such a shock," Laura says. "It's like a big slap in the face. All night long, you've been in another world. You danced in the dark with only neon lights and lasers to light the room. You forgot about what was waiting for you at sunrise, your house, your job, your family. And then the real world is right in front of you. It looks gray. You try to cling to a piece of the joy you felt the night before, but it slides off of you like a thin veil as all your responsibilities flood back to you. So you pick up the fliers and find the next party."

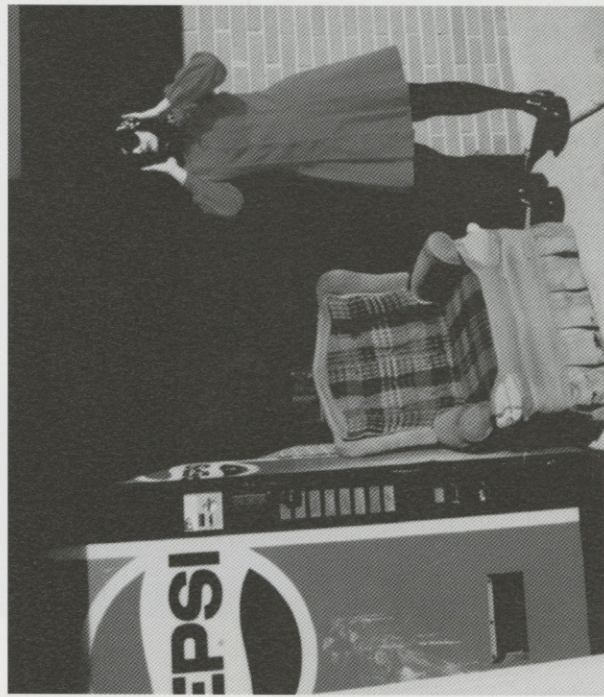




4 under 10







coordinator: Bryan Barnard

photographers: Travis Choat and Stephanie Tennis

models: Amber Goodman, Amie LeeKing, Jessica Dungan





**Italia!** | oil on wood

J E N N I F E R J E N N I N G S



**Untitled** | oil on wood

**Changing Seasons**

Denny McBride

Snowflakes feather down,  
gray frozen land a paler  
shade of winter sky.

Crispéd leaves cascade,  
blanketing sleepy ground with  
motley red, gold, brown.

Silver raindrops slash,  
sun-drenched sky, lamb-lion winds  
waken vernal earth.

Molten sunbeams bathe,  
hammering all with heat while  
heavy eyelids droop.

**Blue Bathed Goddess**

Shelly Barger

Blue bathed goddess cracked her ribs open  
to sing her guts out.  
I wanna be like her.

Power voice punches out  
my belly, birthing dance,  
spreading fertile her golden eyes.

Blue bathed goddess make me ache  
to that deep-beat song.

Sing, lift my dreams on blue bathed wings.  
Blue crests on her mouth corner,

cavernous knowing, groan erupting her mouth red  
opens the portal to a time before the ancestors.

**Sons**

Lindsey

They sit in dirty white skin,  
smoking pine-scented grass,  
watching animated violence,  
dreaming of a revolution  
while strumming battered guitars  
that never carry a tune.

**Liberty**

Turner

They sit in dirty white skin,  
smoking pine-scented grass,  
watching animated violence,  
dreaming of a revolution  
while strumming battered guitars  
that never carry a tune.



# Blue Raider with the \$6000 boobs

Rachel Parrish

"She paid \$6,000 for her boobs."

says Taz, smashing her Marlboro on the plastic neon tablecloth, seemingly oblivious to the ashtray just inches away.

"Plus, she goes to MTSU-- that's the only reason why she makes so much money."

The other strippers crowded around the table nod in agreement towards the dazzling blonde on center stage dressed as a little girl, complete with pink and white

grin before going down into the splits. Obediently, like a child, the man hastily digs in his trouser pocket and comes up with another bill.

"You're the best, Dana," he yells while he is rewarded with another one of her infamous squeezes. "You're the best!"

Men and women of all ages and races crowd around the stage and line up to get some of the same from the 5-foot-8 dancer. Full

"I wanted to vomit right there on stage." She grimaces and wipes the old man's saliva from her chest.

"Next time wear a bib then," jokes Katrina from across the dressing room. She opens the door to peer out on the stage, though. "Which guy was it? Tell me quick. I'm on stage next."

Dana stands behind the tall dishwater blonde and the two peep out toward the tip rail.

"It's that old guy right there with the cheesy suspenders on. Watch him, hon, you may have to slap him or something."

They give a high five at this and laugh uproariously before Katrina leaves to do her number on stage.

Dana puts back on her pink and white little girl outfit and begins to count the dollars she made while performing. It proves to be quite a challenging task, as several of them are wadded up into little balls, each one seemingly smaller than the last.

"I hate when this happens," she says, holding up a dollar bill that is folded into a bow tie with a double loop. "But this is what makes up for it!" She grins and unfolds it. It's a \$20 bill.

## "I thought about getting a regular job, but I am sure it would be just as stressful."

knee socks and a large candy sucker. There is no doubt that tonight The Blonde is the obvious crowd favorite.

She unties her pink ribbon, letting her hair cascade over her shoulders. Wadded-up dollar bills start flying toward the stage. One almost pegs her in the eye. She giggles and tells the thrower her better stick with his day job because he'd go broke in the NBA. The man replies he'd rather go broke right here at Deja Vu, and downs a Bud Light for emphasis. The jam-packed crowd roars with laughter.

Long-legged Maya, a beauty in her own right, shakes her chestnut head and narrows her green eyes. She points to The Blonde. "Hmph! If I had \$6,000 boobs I'd be on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*," she declares.

"Shut up, dingdong," laughs Nikki, a curiously thin slip of a girl who is a self-proclaimed expert in pole tricks. Her deep, raspy voice bellies her waif-like body. "Tramps Illustrated is more like it!" The girls laugh at Nikki's teasing.

Oblivious to the cutting remarks, the girl onstage removes her pink and white frilly top and squeezes an old man's head in her cleavage. She takes his dollar bill and flashes him a perfect, angelic

## "I wanted to vomit right there on stage."

Dana (whose name has been changed to preserve her anonymity) is an MTSU Advertising student who dances at the downtown Nashville gentlemen's club Deja Vu.

Although she's been there for two years and counting, she's hardly seen any MTSU students or professors at the 11-year-old club. Inside her modest Smyrna apartment, Dana begins her dish-

water. "I think because it costs 20

bucks to get in there, a lot of college men shy away from the Vu," she says. She adds Dawn to the hot water.

"A customer is a customer. I used to get all upset when I saw someone I knew...but now, I'm just like, he's not embarrassed to be here so why should I be? I mean, I won't go out of my way to make him know me or anything like that," she laughs.

"But if he recognizes me...then oh, well. By the time he says hello I'll have figured out a way to take all

his money anyway...it's all a big game."

Forks, knives and spoons clatter into the water.

Of the things you learn as a stripper is how to be tough and shrug things off. You have 50 to 100 guys a night turning you down for dances and you have to figure out a way to make them say yes...regardless to what they tell you."

And then there's what she calls the drill.

"The drill is the same every night so I just try to make the best of it." Dana wipes her hands on her Blue Raider jogging pants. "It's a routine we have to do every night, all night long...it's tiring to the girls but it keeps the club going. You see, after every three performers on stage, the DJ calls the girls onstage for a mystery dance."

Dana explains that the DJ chooses a "mystery girl" in his head and calls the dancers down, one by one. When the girls get off the stage, they go around and ask the guys for dances. If a customer chooses the right girl, he gets a prize from the DJ.

"We have all sorts of prizes and things. I have a collection in my bedroom closet I can show you." She wipes her hands again and leads the way to her closet. Stepping over clothes and books strewn across the floor, Dana pulls out a box full of Deja Vu paraphernalia: magazines, T-shirts, plastic cups, key chains and a lacy,

loud neon-pink garter. "This is my keepsake box. I wanna have something to remember when I quit. I can't wait to graduate and get a real job. I don't know how girls can call this a career for godsakes...it just pays the bills for me," she says.

"If I don't hurry up, I'll have a head full of white hair before I'm 30," she laughs. "I thought about getting a regular job, but I'm sure it would be just as stressful." She heads back into the kitchen to the pile of dishes.

"Dancing is a lot like gam-

smile, smile.

"I'm not fucking White," she says.

"Personally, I act like an adult head and laugh at everything that comes out of their mouths," she reveals. "I tell them that I have three little boys at home and we're on welfare." She bursts out laughing.

"And nothing is further from the truth. It's funny, but men don't like smart girls. I never tell them that I go to school or anything like that. If I did, I wouldn't make a dime. It's all about making their

## A natural brunette, Dana went from being a 34A making \$850 a month, to a 38DD blonde making \$4000 a month.

bling," she says wistfully. "One night you can make \$1000 and the next you make \$10. You just never know when your big break is gonna come." She has only had three \$1000 nights.

"One of those nights was a double shift. I worked 11(a.m.) to 5:00 in the morning and I was dog tired...but not too tired to count all that money at the end of the night." She laughs.

"One thousand dollars is a lot of money and I never tell anyone at work how much I really make. Then everyone will expect a big tip. At the end of the night, you're expected to tip the DJ (at least 10% of your earnings), the bartender, the waitresses, and the bouncers. It can really add up, too."

She recalls one of her less lucrative nights. "See, just a couple weeks ago I walked out of there with five bucks to my name." She shakes her head and twists up her hair into a knot with a rubber band from the kitchen drawer. "The crowd hated me that night for some reason...I dunno." She pauses, considering.

"Plus I didn't really feel like being nice that night either," she goes on. "One setback of doing this is that guys expect you to be supernice all night long and smile,

feel as if their money is going towards a real purpose." She holds up a glass, inspecting it.

"The irony of it all," she continues while drying the glasses that the girls that really do have three kids at home, and don't go to school, lie and say they don't have any kids and that they go to school full time. I don't know how they pull it off, though, because guys aren't as dumb as you think, she says thoughtfully.

She explains why Saturday is the best night to work.

"Saturday is the most profitable night," she says, scrubbing the last copper pot. "It's also my favorite night. Most girls would probably say Friday, but there's too many rednecks, students and drunks for me. There's nothing worse than having to sit and listen to a drunk guy rant about his problems...even worse than that is having to smell his breath," she says scrunching her nose.

"College guys are usually broke so I try to steer clear of them," she says, tossing her head. "Saturday is more laid back and has an older crowd. Older guys are the best; they have great conversation, buy me drinks all night and generally come there to have a good time. Those are the kind of customers I like." She pulls out



pack of Newport's and heads out to her balcony.

"There are all different types of men that come in our club." She puffs on a cigarette, settling down in a chair. "Some guys come for conversation and some come looking for a wife. And a lot, I'd say about 70 percent, come looking for a piece of ass to take home," she says angrily.

"And those are the guys that I can't stand. I mean, just because I dance naked doesn't mean I'm for sale outside of here or that I'm hard up for some, ya know."

Working at Deja Vu has affected her love life.

"I hate to tell guys when I first meet them where I work." She exhales deeply and watches the cloud of smoke curl up into the air. "And if I do, the outcome is always the same, never fail. They're always, like, 'Oh that's so cool,' but then in the next breath they're like, 'Dance for me, baby.' Ugh! Get real! If I get paid to dance then why am I gonna come home and do it for free?" she rants.

"Men can be real dip-wads sometimes. Plus, if I was a guy, I wouldn't want my girl dancing in a strip club for all types of men."

She bristles at the suggestion that working in a strip club may have turned her against men.

"If you're asking if I'm gay, then ask just that," she says and tosses the Newport over the white ledge. "I hate it when people beat around the bush...that's something else that pisses me off. Get to the point already!"

But working at the club has not made her gay.

"No, just bi-sexual," she laughs and gives a wink. "Maybe because I get to look at beautiful women all night and we can share our problems and dreams together on a level that people outside the business wouldn't believe or understand...I dunno," she muses.

"But I definitely like girls...not as much as men, but I'm definitely attracted to them."

Dana explains that women customers are no strangers to

Deja Vu.

"I have a female customer who comes in every Saturday night and she always wants to talk and drink her whiskey...a little odd, I know, but she's really cool compared to some of the women that come in," she recalls and shudders. Some women, on occasion, can be worse than men when it comes to trying to take the dancers home.

"I mean, I love a pretty girl as much as the next man, but there's no way I would sleep with a customer, male or female."

She says a lot of the dancers get caught up in the glamorous lifestyle and turn to other kinds of comforts when the money isn't right.

"Lemme tell you something," she says leaning close. "Everything you ever heard about strippers is probably true. They're drunks, they do coke all the time, and they have problems like you wouldn't believe," she freely admits.

"Most of the girls at the Vu don't even have high school diplomas, let alone a college degree."

Dana says she realizes that she's not perfect, but there's no

## "It's all about making customers feel as if their money is going toward a real purpose."

way she'd get involved with hard drugs.

"I smoke marijuana before I go to work," she confides, "but that's not anything like popping a Valium or an 'X' (the drug ecstasy). I feel sorry for the girls that do that stuff, but at the same time I'm disgusted."

"I think that most of the girls at work hate me because I go to school," she sighs. "Sometimes they try and hurt my feelings by saying rude things about my hair or my tits...but screw 'em. It used to get me down until I realized that I don't go to work to make friends, I go to work to make money."

She is the first to admit that changing her appearance helped boost not only her self-confidence

but her income as well.

"Stripping is very superficial," she says bluntly. "Guys like big tits and blonde hair. Always have, always will."

Like a talking calculator, she gives the math. Naturally a brunette, Dana went from being a 34A making \$850 a month to a 38DD blonde with a monthly income of \$4000.

"And I wouldn't change back for anything in the world," she says steely.

With all the late hours the club keeps, Dana had an enormously hard time trying to keep up with her schoolwork until she found a way to manage both.

"I work two day shifts, 11-7, and a double on Saturday. And I only take about nine or 10 class hours at a time," she says, recalling the many times she would fall asleep in class.

Dana's manager Keith says he respects the fact that she is going to school.

"I think it's phenomenal that she's trying to get her education, so we let her work those odd shifts. Plus, she has a really cute butt." He winks as Dana shoves at him.

"See why I love my job so much," she says and laughs.

Inside the dressing room, Dana pulls all of her newly unwadded bills into a neat stack, counts them out and folds them down into her pink and white garter belt.

"Well, \$85 on stage isn't bad...it could be worse. At least now I can pay for my parking tickets and overdue library books," she jokes.

It's almost time for her to perform again. The Blonde carefully ties her hair up into pigtails, practices her innocent smile and adjusts her white kneesocks.

"Guess it's showtime again," says Dana, and she swings the dressing room door open.

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