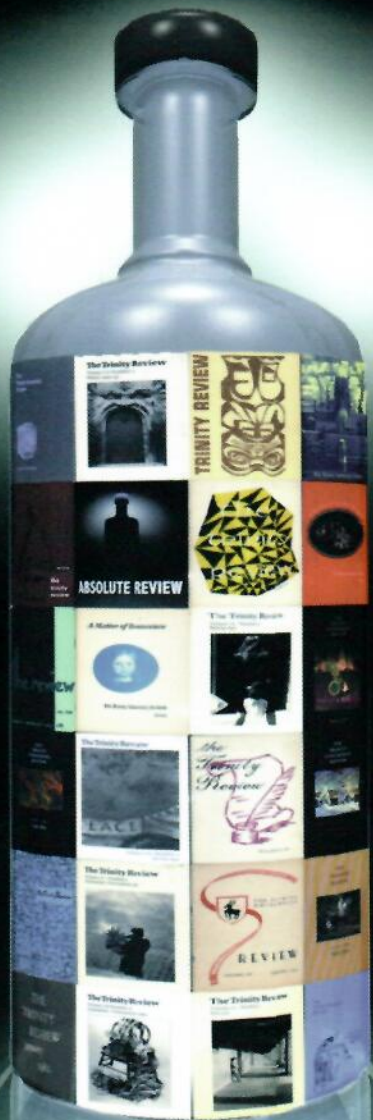
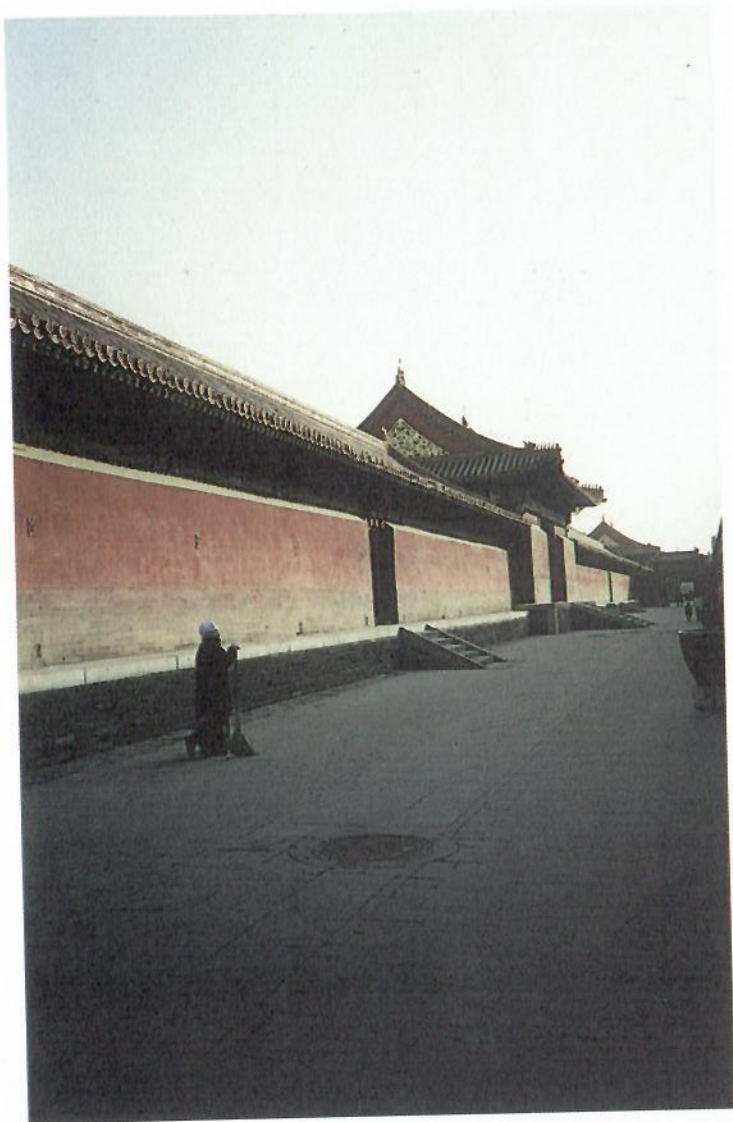


# TRINITY UNIVERSITY REVIEW



# ABSOLUTE REVIEW.

VOLUME CXII NUMBER 1 FALL 1998



*John M. Wong*

# TRINITY UNIVERSITY REVIEW

VOL. CXII NO. 1

Trinity College, Toronto  
Fall, 1998

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*Cover design by Ian Robertson.*

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Dancing

Here, the lines lurch forward like vomiting snakes  
The beer soaks into the hems of my pants  
As I dance beneath spinning, shimmering mistletoe  
And after, as I walk to buy cereal sometime past night  
The dance floor seems to me  
To be a lonely place to shuffle my feet.

*Ray Hsu*



China 1997, Josa Lee

## Watch Your Back and Trust No One

Not your dentist, not your doctor, not your teacher, not your lawyer.  
When you're locking lips, keep your eyes open, and watch you lover  
Stabbing your back and sleeping with the postman placing letter bombs  
    beside  
The milkman's expired lactose that is unsuspectingly being drained by  
The paperboy, who says, "I just give you the paper," and points to  
The girl-next-door smiling and ogling  
The ice cream man giving \$1.99 chocolate yogurts to  
Police officers flexing their trigger-happy fingers and suspecting  
The cable guy installing CNN, who says it could be  
8 The drifter walking down the street, hoping to be  
A hitchhiker you picked up this evening, who dreamed about  
The Avon lady selling face-changing cosmetics to  
The nice old lady buying muffin mix for  
The babysitter having sex, while the kids are playing Super  
Mario tossing the pizza and serving it to  
The popular high school quarterback raping his  
Blond girlfriend pouring pig blood over  
The loner sitting on the wooden park bench, listening to  
The local deejay playing Radio-  
Head waiter serving wine to  
The big movie star in his first role as  
A fireman fighting fires and saving  
The blind man accidentally poking his white cane into the leg of  
The high-class yuppie checking his stocks and remembering his days as

A Boy Scout learning to tie nooses used by  
Fishermen having no luck at sea and finding only a rubber  
Boot camp sergeant yelling orders to his band of  
Ill-behaved misfits stealing O-Henry bars from  
The poor Indian clerk pointing his twelve-gauge rifle at the head of  
The black guy doing windmill dunks and beating up his  
Coach, who's drawing X's and O's, and who happens to be  
Your father crying, "No, I blame your  
Sister" saying it was your  
Brother pointing his finger at your  
Mother telling you to look in the mirror and say:  
"Psycho-killer-qu'est-ce-que c'est? (Talking Heads)

*Kelvin Cheng*

## The Pianist That Never Was

Hannah Sung

It appeared sometime during the second grade. The precursor for this huge event was probably a conversation much like the everyday

“What did you do in school today?”

“Nothing.”

in that it was equally unthinking

“Would you like to learn the piano?”

“Ok.”

My parents must have known that it was just a passive response and that the addition of a piano to the family wasn't anywhere near the importance of something like having a new dog

[“Would you like to have a cuddly, cutie-poo puppy?”]

[“Yes, yes, yes!!”]

or the new paper-tissue technique that Mrs. Sherwood taught us that day during art. Still, my fate was sealed through my own acquiescence as visions of concert pianists danced through my parents' heads.

It must have been delivered to our home while I was a yellowbus ride away in class, by movers I never saw. It pulled at my thoughts a little, the idea that big men in gloves were in my front room deftly maneuvering an intimidatingly large instrument into place, a feat accomplished by strangers instead of my own superhero parents. Anyhow, it was just there when the rigors of grade two class were done for the day, and it was there for good. I could tell it was large and expensive and full of possibilities, but that I'd have to sit still, perhaps for years, for the possibilities to actualize. I couldn't see the potential for immense, lush music in my plain small hands. It didn't matter, since I quit before the music got all that lush or immense.

My parents enrolled me in the Royal Conservatory of Music which sounds romantic and full of rich history and tradition, but I was at the Scarborough branch, which was situated in a strip mall above a Jackson's Milk. My teacher was Mrs. Lysenko and she was the scariest thing I'd ever encountered, awake or sleeping. Like the piano, she was very large and expensive. Unlike my compact plainly-dressed mother, Mrs. Lysenko was somewhat more-than-compact and covered in silk scarves, gold chains and either

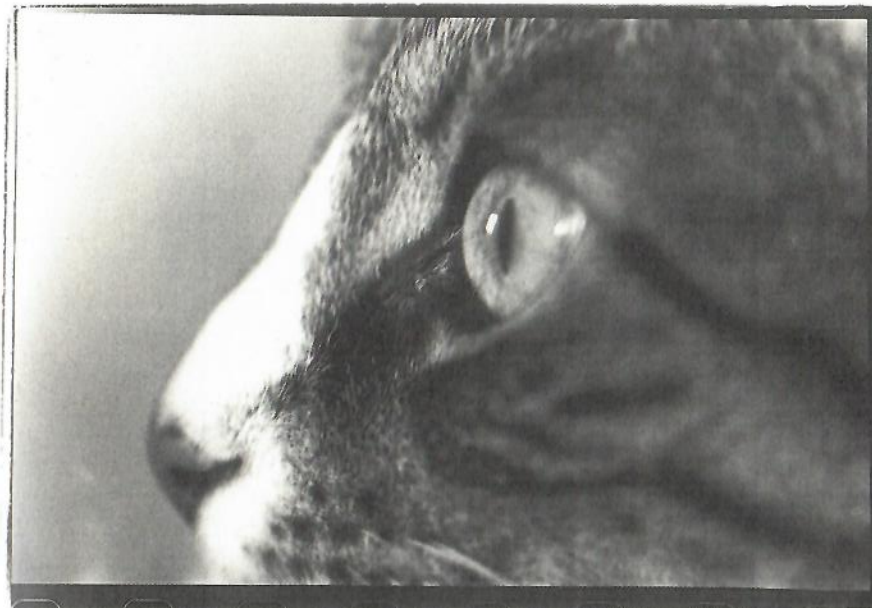
animal or flowery print, depending upon whatever fashion-decision making process she went through to look the way she did. She loomed over my seven-year-old self and counted really loudly in the voice of the counting vampire from Sesame Street [“VAHN, two, t-lee, four!”]. Sesame Street would have been a carefree hour of talking-puppet worship except for the inevitable counting vampire segments that would, by association, make me feel restless, frustrated and meek. Well-meaning as she was, she inspired terror just as much as awe, and I was as scared of her loud heavy accent as much as I was held breathless watching her fat, short, unseemly fingers positively fly up and down the keys, making trails of incredibly beautiful music. Promptly after a flashy show of Rachmaninoff, I would sit down for my lesson and plink out an anemic simplified version of “Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen” and then plink it out again and again, my face long, my whole notes not long enough.

We would go every Tuesday night, the three of us, for a ride in our green Chevette. Dad would be at the wheel, with myself and my younger brother writing words in the condensation on the back seat window from the little, huffing heater combating the fierce wintery night air outside. Some weeks, I'd forget to grab my piano books as we flew out the door and would arrive sheepish in Mrs. Lysenko's studio, with no charm or wit to save me. I was the shyest, most wordless little girl around my piano teacher. And even as I improved and began to play with both hands together, and learned to shade the music through Italian words like *crescendo* and *andante* and *maestoso*, and even after I started wearing lip gloss and reading Salinger, I was still the same girl every Tuesday evening with Mrs. Lysenko. I was *pianissimo* around her, all the time.

It occurs to me that the family member who should have been taking the lessons was my father. I remember how he would sometimes sit down at the piano, moving quietly as he always did, so that my younger brother and I would never notice he was there until the unrepentantly discordant notes would make their way down the hall to our bedrooms. We'd stop colouring or reading to look at each other and giggle and make fun of our dad for playing such silly, made-up songs. “Da-ad!” we'd cry as we'd run from off our beds or our bedroom floors to stand by him and the piano and petulantly put our hands on our hips. “What are you playing?” we would self-righteously ask. My normally stoic father would just impishly grin and ignore

our protestations as he'd keep on going, creating strange melodies and broken chords to accompany them. We would be held riveted for a moment, amazed that our stern father would be transformed by threadbare songs that sounded as if they needed to be shifted just an inch to be harmonious. Without a single lesson in dominant chords and arpeggios, my Dad would concentrate, smiling (smiling!) as he played music that he heard somplace inside his mind and my brother and I would just shuffle away shaking our heads in mock dismay, secretly delighted. I never thought about the possibility that the piano I took for granted was something that my father might have yearned for had he not been yearning for other things as a child, like food and a father that the Korean War took away. At the age that my father was learning to be without his own father, I was being carted back and forth between my piano at home and the piano at the studio. I had 2 times 88 black and white keys for only ten little reluctant fingers. More than I ever needed.

I quit playing when I was sixteen. I had grown up with Mrs. Lysenko, then taken a brief break with two other teachers when I became a teen. I ended up back with her and the second time around, I wasn't so scared, but then again, she had changed. She was more relaxed. It could be that little kids made her nervous, as preposterous as that would have seemed to me. Or maybe my own obvious nerves were catchy. But since then, my handwriting as an adult has turned out a lot like hers - garland script full of rolling loops, so smooth. Our hands spent a lot of time together and even though mine didn't learn to be as musically magnificent as hers, it's fitting that they picked up a different habit instead. And my father doesn't play anymore although now that I'm out of the house, he can have the prime hand-picked 30 minutes of practice time that I've given up plus 23 and a half other hours a day that the piano sits untouched. He doesn't, however, and I think maybe my hapless but hearty renditions of sonatinas and mazurkas inspired him, as unfathomable as that would have been to me at seven years of age. Now my fingers pick away at keys that don't make any music, but only clicking, and they don't shine in long, even shapes, but instead have designations like tab and F7. Just quick, quick, go, and no lengthy notes in the excitingly deep ranges of the far left or embellishing trills with the right fourth and fifth. And since trading in one keyboard for another, I can't help but wonder if tradesies are for keeps.



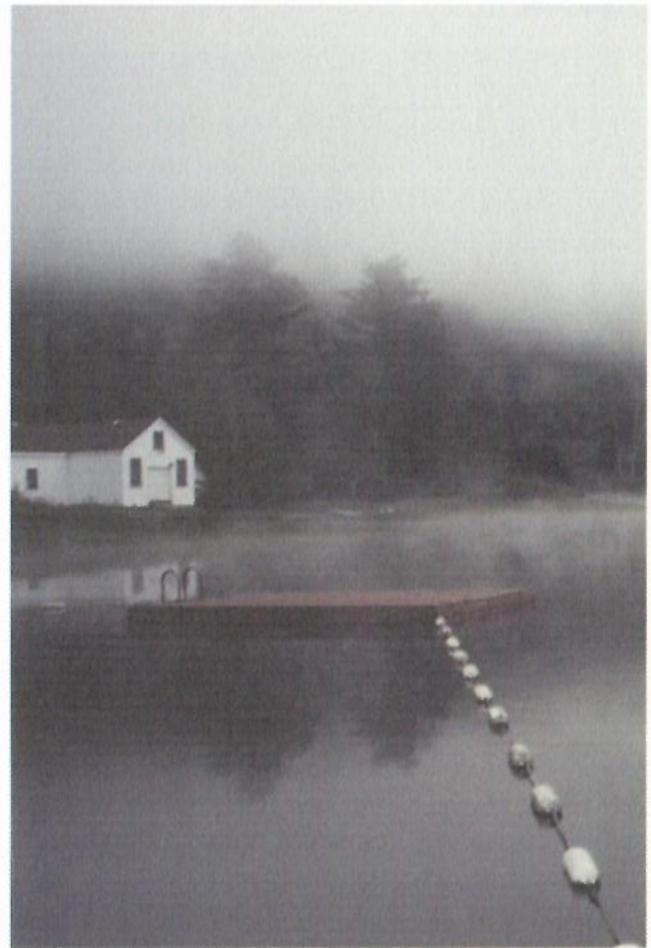
*Albert, Ian Robertson*

Mild

I look there

I see people  
that make me want  
to take judo lessons  
so I can effortlessly inflict  
suffering and  
a great deal of pain  
whenever I choose

*Clinton Wong*



*Calm Before the Storm, Karrie Wolfe*



## The Jazz Singer (An Internal Monologue)

Renuka Jeyapalan

16 Crowded tonight. One two-and-uh one two-and-uh one two. Rob in and then tromb slide and easy. Missed the Saturday dance, heard they crowded the floor. She isn't here. Couldn't bear it without you. Should have picked her up. Said she would come. Still early though. Head it in and don't get around much anymore. Repeat now. Slow tempo and Scott come in. Did she mean it? I want to hear you sing. Crowded tonight. Is she here? Who's here? Suits. Lots of suits. Hey, Tyler. Tyler's in the corner. Talk to him after the set. Where? Where? Where? She looks like someone. Pretty. Staring. Who's she like? The actress from that movie. What is it? What is it? I can see her face. Name. What the hell's her name. That same red hair. Great scene when she lifts her head up and that smile. What is her name. She sang Put the Blame and the black dress and those gloves. Great scene. Head in again. *Thought I'd visit the club.* Is that her? No. *Far as the door.* Okay, he's behind and *asked me about you, don't get around much anymore.* Caught up now and into sax improv around now. There. One two-and-uh one two-and-uh one two. She's not coming. I said ten, yeah? Ten. I did say that. What's the time. Fourth song of the set. Then about quarter to. Where is she? I want to hear you sing. I want to hear you sing. But not here. Apple pie. She made me apple pie. Whole thing. Ridges in crest. Glazed top. Powdered sugar. A whole pie for me from scratch. Be here. Be here. What? Where are we? Shit, I'm late. Right, go another round and head in again. *Darling, I guess my mind's where where where but nevertheless why stir up memories.* Head out and one two-and-uh one two-and-uh one two and now Baxter. Right. Good. Low bass. And move it up and into bridge. Should have picked her up. I could have brought her. Then she would be here now. Where are you? Wellington. She knows where the Wellington is. God, so many people. Yeah, I sing. I'm a singer. Really, sing something for me. No, no not now. Oh, come on I want to hear you sing. Come on Reservoir, I'll sing for you there. And head in again. *Been invited on dates might have gone but what for.* Easy now and piano slide and Scott goes in and *awfully different without you, don't get around much anymore.* And one two-and-uh one two-and-uh one two-and-uh. Repeat and tag. Softer and close. Rita Hayworth.



17

Minjeong Eom

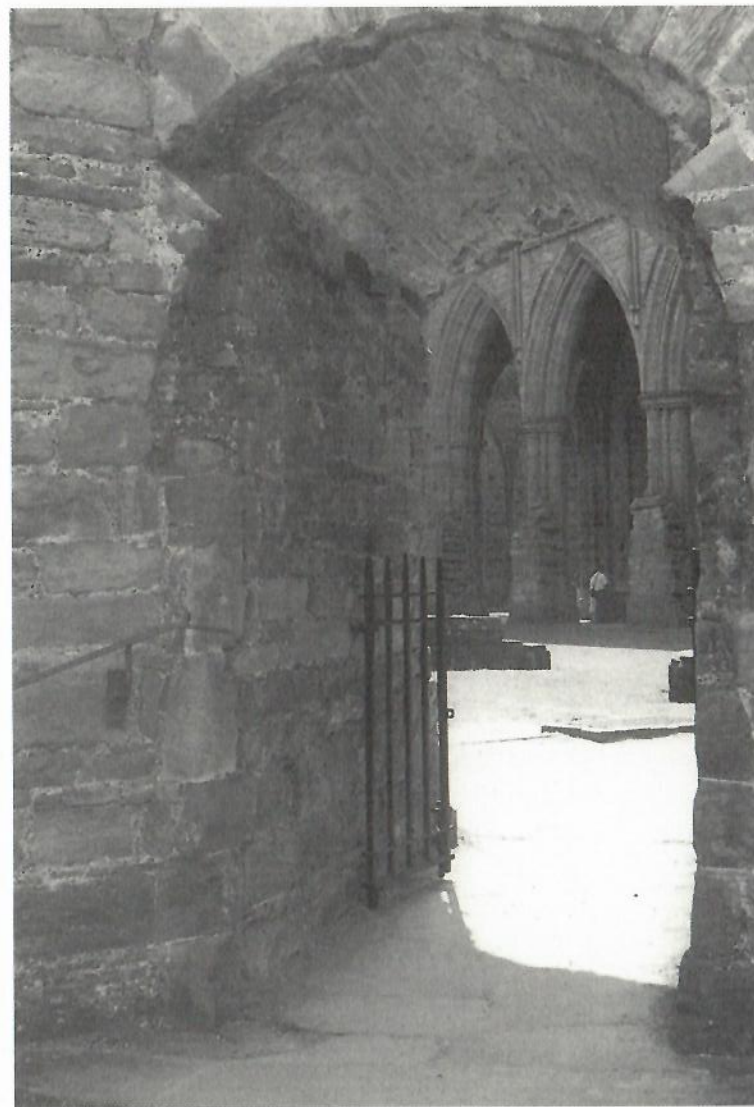
## Statue

There she is, I tell the people, beautiful and warm  
standing high at twenty-two feet, if you back up far enough you can see her  
face

They don't believe me, they tilt their heads, then they shuffle backwards  
like a herd of sticks, scarping at the museum floor with their sensible air-  
tight shoes.

When they are far enough away from me I lean my body against her base  
and let out all my air. Resting one hand on my dirty hip, I can gently  
brush her gold. With my eyes shut tight, I salute her. I salute her sweetness  
and her temper, her secrets and her belly. Her eyelids and her scent. One  
eye open cautiously; my nametag has fallen to the tiles, and when I bend  
down to pick it up there is a pair of astro-shoes stuck into the ground, ask-  
ing me just how long she took to build and does she have a name. I poke  
the nametag back into my blouse so that it juts off of my left breast. I call  
the group together again. *If you back up far enough you can see her face.*

*Kristi Green*

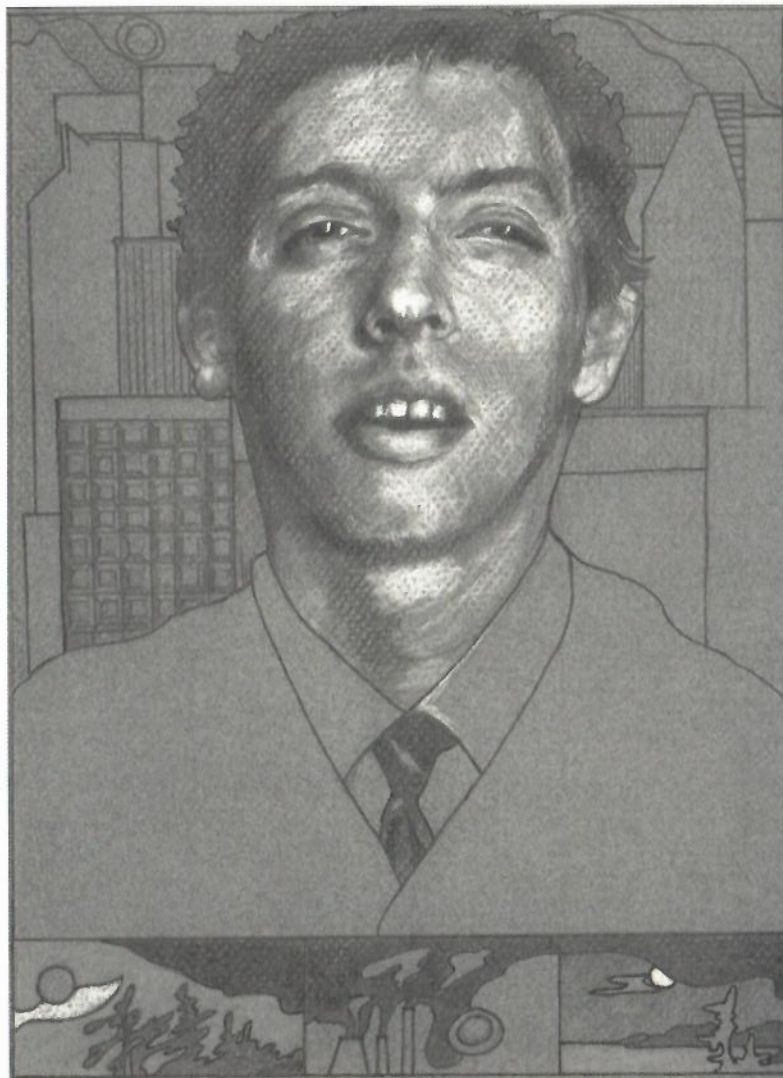


*Lisa Schincariol*

### The Paper Man

The Paper Man on his way to work  
Paper in his briefcase  
Paper in his wallet  
His smile plain-bond  
His tie flapping carefully in the breeze  
The points of his collar two arrows protruding from his throat  
The crease in his pants origami-sharp  
As artistic as the folds in his brow  
His is the Paper Man  
His life is paper  
He is the artist of himself.

*Ray Hsu*



*Theresa DiGangi*

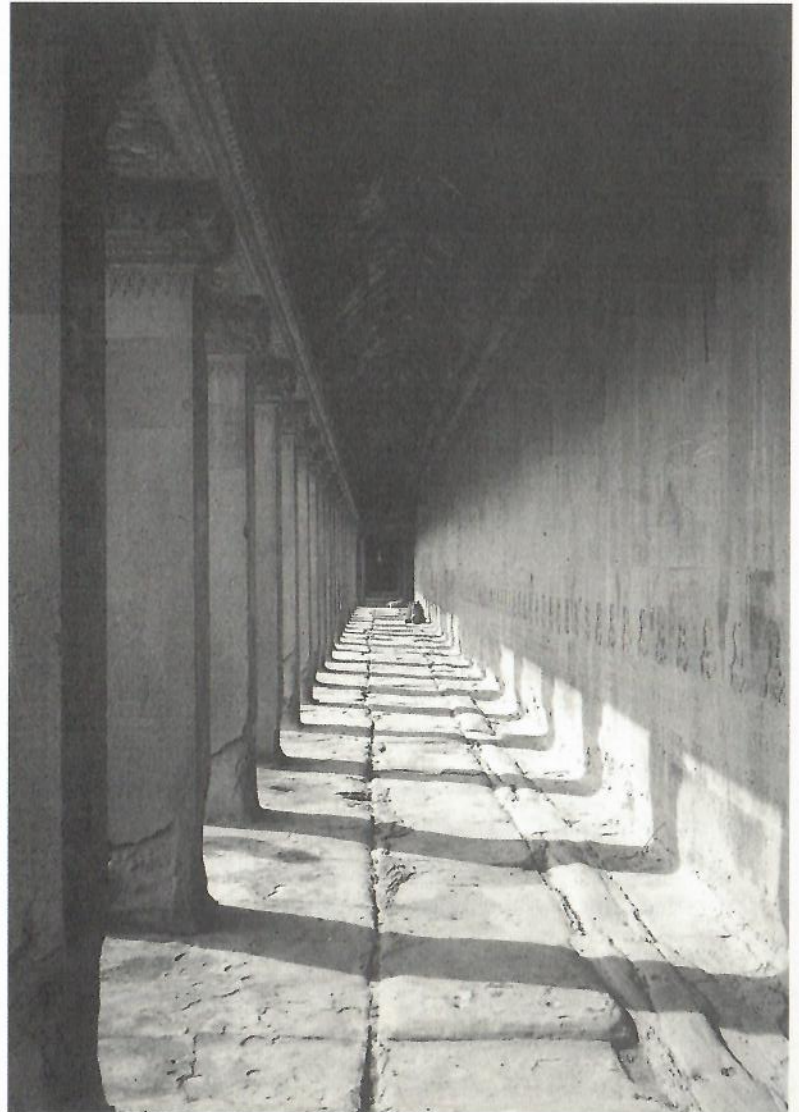
## Unconsummated

The circle still exists  
from where I left the breakfast dish  
this morning  
imprints bare  
inscribed upon a shelf somewhere

or bed sheet  
drawn up over your descent flesh  
knees and hips, breath and neck  
and where you slept you left  
auras and grease  
depressions

lost beside me  
where you reside at breakfast  
unconsumed  
crumbs crawling into your skin

*Lisa Schincariol*



Siemreap, Cambodia, *Laura White*

## Pleasing

Mike Callaghan

what is pleasing?

Pleasing to who?

Pleasing to me or pleasing to you?

To you haven't a clue.

To me can do:

Writing.

Sometimes, it's all I have. It's what I do.

Thus, in itself, it should be pleasing to you.

It's only something small, and not always welcome, but all the same it's my gift.

To who?

To you.

Like the shiny, mad vagrant, mumbling deep in the tonsils of the city who offers you a prized piece from his collection of greasy old matchbooks or dried-out cigarette butts because it's all he has but still he wants to share them with someone. Because he has made them important, they become valuable to him and then they are valuable to anyone else passing by who lingers long enough in the cold and the stench to feel him like he feels them. And like the millionaire who could buy his love all the jewels in the land but instead decides to make her a worthless (and yet priceless) present: he grows her a rose, or plays her a song, or reads to her the poem he wrote which bears her name because it's important to him and should be important to anyone else who lingers long enough in the incense on the silk carpet and who feels him like he feels them.

It pleases me, reader. It's true.

But can you feel me like I feel you?

what is pleasing?

Sunshine is pleasing.

What does it do?

Make me warm? That's nothing new.

(And nothing a furnace can't do.)

True.

But, it warms us all me and you.

It's red when I'm blue.

That's enough for me what about you?

Of course, it's a two way street with the sun. It's a give-take relationship. Clearly, the sun gives us all manner of things. Warmth, light, photosynthesis you might even say he's right up there on the A-list as far as The Creation of Life goes. But he's not all smiles and sunshine, you know. Your dermatologist will be the first person to tell you that he's an insidious killer who'd rain cancer on you and everyone you care about if you gave him the chance. And astronomers will be the first to tell you he's the bastard son of the Big Bang, nothing more than a minor player in the Milky Ways night life scene (which itself is no great fiesta compared to the Andromeda galaxy). Hell strut and fret his hour on the Universal stage, shrink to White Dwarf proportions, and then will die out, without so much as a Supernova. On the other hand, if you talk with any of the trees in your neighborhood, they'll have nothing but positive comments about him. "Doing a great job!", they'd say. "Nothing to complain about here!". If you asked George Harrison, he'd be full of high compliment too everything's alright, owing to the sun. So then, who's lying? Well, we all are, of course (surprised?). The suns just an average Joe who's no different from the rest of us: he's a tragicomedy, neither hither nor thither. Can it still be pleasing? Must I recant?

It's enough to make me wonder,  
what is pleasing?

what is pleasing?

How pleasing can anything be?

100 years and we'll be dead - you and me.

Why bother to look for pleasure, really, if the only thing that is ever sure to be found is death? You don't have to look hard for that one. But then Happiness could put a neon sign on its hat saying "HERE I AM INDEED" and even Scotland Yard couldn't find it. It would be standing right beside Mr. Meaning-Of-Life and God (both of whom would be wearing similarly conspicuous attire) and they would walk right past the lot of them. Then at the end of the day the chief might say, "Right lads, find anything?", and they would only be able to answer, "No, except we found several large arrows and a variety of other clues pointing toward the pathetic inevitability of death, Captain." Doesn't one have to be ignorant to be really happy? Can anything make us truly and deeply happy? Oh, we're happy alright, that creases stay longer in our Teflon trousers and that we can finally get quality long distance for only 10 cents per minute within Canada, but somewhere there has to lie that realization that you're not fooling yourself and you're not fooling me, and there is no pleasure.

what is pleasing?

Pleasing for who?  
Not only for you -  
or only for me, but (I hope)  
for two.  
(Total, including myself.)  
Love is pleasing.

Like when I spend just the right amount of evening (making sure to leave enough for later on) eating and drinking and gazing into eyes. Now talking, then walking under the generous moonlight (which presently pays the interest it has been collecting since we went inside under fluorescent lights) and figuring that everything is comfortable. Sitting down on a bench with her in my arms, thinking that if one could arrange for the right climate and a proper diet, one might just want to spend the rest of one's life sitting

here like this. Finally, after long and labour some petition (with myself, Prince of my own private Denmark) deciding to force the moment to a crisis. With all the drink-imbued confidence of a Montague, I say

I love you.

And as if simply being able to say this wasn't enough in and of itself, she replies

I love you.

How should I presume to go on after that? How can I reasonably be expected to do sums, to buy groceries, or to fill out scholarship applications now? I say to the teacher, assigning homework (or to the officer, waving a speeding ticket, or to the parent announcing the laundry): Don't you see? The moon was out over the water just for us and the night was perfect and I'd had the greatest dinner of my life and (only a bit of) wine and I was happy as a friar in a keg and then I said I love you and then she said I love YOU.

That is pleasing to me.

**In the Garden**

It seems  
Two thousand years  
Of going somewhere  
Have rushed to nothing.

Faith matters  
But matters of faith  
Now come in thirty pieces  
Of easily assembled surety -

The silvered variety.

28

and He might have come again  
But we did not see  
Having eyes only  
For billboard sirens.  
Unpiloted, we heed only songs  
A single voice is unheard.

Yet  
We skillfully circumnavigate  
Another human shaped  
Hole  
In the pavement.

*Catriona E.K. James*



29

*Ian Robertson*

## Measuring our Salinity

1.

I memorize them  
as if they are unchanging pigment  
and magnetization as if it matters  
fossilized shadows

And call back to a friend  
A plate beneath me moved,  
moving  
a spewing subduction  
a ragged fault

Scraping gases deflect all light.

30

The rupture of their lives  
those two  
she said  
when I hit something hard  
I can say it was you.

The natural vairability,  
variates unnaturally  
unknowingly measured  
by a metal wick

dipped over the edge of a rowboat  
Cutting deeply  
100 years and one 1/2 metre  
frozen, froze, freezes  
fragile, pulled up  
dangling over depth

-midges indicate the non-presence of fish.

2.

I knew that your scent  
ratioed to mine  
fossilized in crystals beneath my skin.  
Gaspd air, laiden with acids.

When we go camping  
You like to play with fire,  
and smoke  
You like to build sand  
castle, and swim.  
That is all  
But I like to watch the foraminifera  
shed from  
your skin  
and settle at the  
bottom of the lake.

31

3.

Tephra breathes over pores.  
Overpours.  
Particles of your dust  
- trapped in weather -  
Can't predict if we will freeze  
or burn.

Every moment is 2 moments  
Yours + mine  
Sacred, secular time dividing us.  
You facing N, I E.

*Lisa Schincariol*





Mint, Anyone? *Laura White*

