—Jim Wenger

wooden teeth
Andrea

Ten days.
Gently, toes touch.
Bodies pronate on slab of marmo
in the garden of frozen women—
some headless, only a body with which to present themselves.

Corpo: Not your desire.
you wished to engage my spirit.

Anima: The proper word for the insides.
Not intestine and crumpled cavities,
but a nebulous thing.
The gist was received as words crackled and puzzle-pieced together;
fell from your lips just as bark was pulled from the albero.
But you said ti voglio bene
for the caresses not given.

This is our story--

me: left longing but for the absence of flesh
you: shards in hands, the crushed hopes of conversion.

—Sarah Evans
The Garden

Consider me a little wilder since we last met,
A garden overgrown and dancing up the poles,
scaling cracks up the silent wall,
and down with summer’s dirty toes
to caves of sleeping water.

It is the sky who shall harvest me
when the night comes walking through my rows
and feasting from my vines, barefoot
upon the soft earth singing low

of how I've grown so strong alone
and now you say you're hungry.

—Cynthia Saunders
Read Between the Tracks

My grandfather led me to the trestle where the train crossed the creek on suspended tracks. Red-capped hunters, I imagine, left their shotgun-shells to decompose on the black-tarred wood and in the brush surrounding. "The shell leaves the barrel," he said, "and releases pellets that spread the skin."

Ten years later the skin has stretched, my tribe scales the same tracks in search of hunters, graves, and gatherers. A new age of discovery on the tips of our tongues.

John wants to know if we're there yet, the site for our ritual, the line where wisdom is crossed and my mind's aware of the being of things, green outlined in black.

We make it to the trestle above the creek, continuing its course, animals concealed by sticks crack them, in the foliage void.

My tribe stations itself on the bridge, scanning the cracks and holes, the canopy of leaves above. Waiting... waiting for what? A train to dissect the silence? Or a voice, grand and fatherly, to give compass to the kids gathered here.

Phil pulls out a beer, drinks it, and throws it over the bridge. It spins as it falls and we fall down spinning until it smashes.

An army of green glass has assembled on the rocks below.

Dan is fifty yards away playing with imaginary trains that have skipped the track.

—Mike Owen

—Jeremy Daniel
subversion

vomit crabs skitter skitter.
up from drainpipes.
claw twisting, testing, reaching . . .
cold water dripping, dripping.
licking the walls.
creatures scurry into vague periphery:

a premonition of something much worse.
bare feet sloshing in dingy puddles
in basements and strange bathrooms.

a steady tapping somewhere indescribable.
a phone call unreturned;
red light blinking, futile, in an empty room.
a box of used-up lightbulbs.

a voice from upstairs, urgent
but muffled incoherent through the walls.
a box of wet matches.
amnies of tiny legs, moving, in the dark.

tarps are thrown down hastily, rocks hold down the corners
though everyone hears the leaking, licking.
precautions are useless.
while, below, gains are made against us.

—Jeremy David Goodwin
wall mart:
a short tale of good-natured futility

one day after school teddy handgrenade walked off the #74 bus, down the street, and into his building lobby. he stopped at the mailbox to get his mom’s bills and coupons, behold! what sat waiting for him but an envelope from the district representative herself. he ripped it open like a trojan wrapper and unfolded the enclosed letter. it said:

"dear mr. handgrenade,

thank you so much for your concern regarding the beautification of our city. we are quite familiar with the wall of which you write. we think sprucing up the wall is a great idea. your offer of help on behalf of your classmates is one of the utmost generosity and will certainly be considered. we will keep you updated on any developments in the matter."

oh so sincerely, your district representative

"hmm," teddy thought, "okay. so what if we’re not the ones who paint the wall. maybe they’ll get some really super artists to do it. i really made a difference!"

each morning teddy handgrenade climbed on the #74 bus anticipating a miracle waiting for him on the wall. then one morning the traffic on the avenue was extra thick. "what’s the hold up?" one bus rider complained. then, as the bus neared the wall, teddy saw it. he couldn’t make out just what it was, but he saw lots of bright colors all up and down the length of the wall. his face lit up with delight and he shot up out of his seat to smother the plexiglass window. all the cars ahead of the bus had slowed down to look at it. "finally," he marveled, "it’s all come true. the wall is happy and all the people who drive past it will be too." teddy had never been so proud of himself or so sure of the richness of life as he was at that very moment.

he couldn’t wait to see what exactly had been painted on the wall. as the bus inched forward, he realized that the mural had words in it. he wondered what kind of message they had chosen. and then the bus got just close enough and teddy’s eyes adjusted to realize that what had been painted on the wall wasn’t a mural at all, but a series of advertisements. teddy’s mouth stood agape; his spirit defeated. his beloved wall looked like the inside of a hockey arena. "clear wall," teddy thought, "what have i done to you?" and all the other bus riders stared at the wall with equal amazement. they saw ads for beers, and movies, and airlines, and all the riders had something in common to talk about now. teddy sunk into his seat and rubbed his left thumb and index finger over his closed eyes.

that morning, teddy handgrenade, student, rider of bus #74, citizen with the greater good in mind, resolved that from then on he would keep his big ideas to himself.

———Jason A. Sheehman
Serenity

My little Buddha rests on his windowsill altar
With his legs folded and his skin
Melting into the woodwork
From the rain and the sun.

He does not speak to me; though
I admit to having stopped just short
Of asking him why we both sit with
Our backs to the world
And stare at nothing.

Like me he seems comfortable.
But there are times when I wonder
If he wouldn't be better off in
A pair of cheap flip-flops
And a Hawaiian shirt.

—Eli Cohen
Untitled

Discarded oil vats and spare tires
All things dark and between the bare branches
The indigo sky
Shivering, sugar on our tongues
We chased each other in long coats
Dark shadows against pipes and concrete
The plastic ball skittering across the lot
We lanced with long forking branches
Misty drizzle faded into soft rain
As we joined and left into the neon night

—Juliet Arkin
How was your weekend?

Six cups of coffee. A Hershey's bar. Half a plate of bad sushi. Two bowls of Frosted Flakes. A pickle sandwich. Two buckets of water, a bottle of wine, and most of a twelve-pack. Fourteen kisses, two of which were taken back later. One hot sweaty night -- all of which was taken back later in six "fuck you"s, two tablespoons of tears, and a smashed lamp. Two guitar picks, a broken E string. Two newspapers and a Penthouse. A shower with no shampoo. Two BB King records, half a Billie Holiday CD, and the same Doors album twenty-two times. One bone necklace, two earrings, and a nose ring. Two sterling silver rings, and then, suddenly, just one. A holey white t-shirt. A holy pair of jeans. A pair of camo shorts, two spit-shined Doc Martens, and one I KILLED KENNEDY t-shirt. Four packs of Marlboros, one Zippo, six sitcom re-runs, four bad eighties movies, one classic spy film, thirty-seven rock videos, and seven cartoons with the sound turned off. One $12.16 call to a 900 number. One local call to an empty apartment. One fist through the wall, six hours of sleep, and two band aids.

—Kate

—Shane Klein
Lucas Clay

Allow me the opportunity to thank four of your chancellors for allowing me range to grow a section of humanity in private. Upon hearing of your need for a prince, I immediately leapt for the recognition. I knew what it might mean for the precursor to hear of my success; therefore, I ask you for the might of man as well, to bring fall my enemies. Lastly, I ask you to create for me a phantom of proportions dissimilar. He is the heir I intend to unleash for humanity’s sake; meager though he is.

The John Henry

Grievances filed in the recesses of the mind. Mined grievances stocked and ready for independent sale among modern businessmen. Investment bankers estimate grievance sales will top $893/4 by the end of the quarter. Balanced on the edge of a quarter, ready to make waves. Serene occurrences display an obstinate emotion, little seen. Grievance miners wear heavy gear for their chosen profession. Salary per annum is moderate, with a good dental plan and time off. [i.e.: it’s not the wages of sin, it’s the fringe benefits that count! Today they have come upon a lode, a vein of rich grief running from the Blue Ridge to the Rockies; they call in the JOHN HENRY, an automaton mining machine. Ancient miners speak of his construction in fiery pits, the welding chambers once entered would blind all who thought to exit. His core of ore was mined on an obscure island in the sub-Pacific, on an island inhabited by fearless tribesmen. Their spears were made from this iron, an unbreakable, unbearable iron; unbendable taken from the mountain in whole pieces. Shipped by steamers to the West, this iron was smelted in furnaces blasting $100,000. The liquid iron was combined with titanium and sand; a super-strong shell resulted, with a glassy look and feel as if you could see right through him. His eyes were human. Brain patterns shifted to bring out the demanding posture of his schedule. He covers one hundred miles a day, city to city, state to state he mines the grief. A steel, driving man. Upon completion he is stored safely away in hay and wooden crate. Wheeled on to the north.

Half-Hearted

You’ve been allotted twelve hours to speak your peace, and that time has come. An unending flow of words springs forth from his lips. A spurt of double entendre, unrelenting puns and word mazes. Speaking in foreign languages, creating new ones on the spot. Ears grow numb and lifeless, no new sound they will know. Each minute that passes they are entreated to continue listening. Exploring the depths of new auditory expansion, some resist and cause blisters to arise on their eardrums. A bleeding sensation is felt deep inside, through the channels, between hammer and anvil. They resist still further as time drags on into the sixth and seventh hours. Lobs harden into steel, hanging down, glittering in the light shining through the stained glass. Chrome spreads from within the car, to the outer section gathering steam. It spreads to the scalp, the neck; down the body over the face. Features molded in perfect harmony. The eleventh the twelfth hours come and go as the final observers become coated in chrome. A silent chamber of shimmering spectators. The speaker descends from the lectern.

—Graham Cranfield
Metamorphosis

I see her there,
And she bares her neck; it is a butterfly
While she speaks of caterpillar days
Spent devouring herself from the inside out
And years passed in a cell with no windows
Where all she saw was the red pulse
Beneath the bruised skin.

I see her there,
She wears her heart on her sleeve; it is a dragon
And she whispers words of fire from closed lips
She carries the sky in her eyes, the water and the smoke
And she rises from the depths of an ocean
She calls home.

I see her there,
Her face is set; it is a stone
Shaped by wind and waves
She picks it up and puts it in her pocket
She has seen that it is cracked, and she smiles.

—Eli Cohen

—Kristina A. Paris
Small Steps

Long before I unsquinted
my new eyes
her white curve
cream glow
dark side
had been stepped upon
with dusty boots.

Perhaps it was decided
this way
without ancestors
or descendants
knowing.
Because no one stopped it
from happening,
and afterwards,
no great ripple
surged through the weave
of natural things.

It seems there should have been
a vote
among all the people
and orangutans
tigers
mosquito fish
ferns
oak and willow trees
to decide upon
unanimously
who would go,
if anyone.

And so who
were these men
who looked out
upon a cratered landscape?
And who were they afterwards?
And then
back home
did they have to forget
to live without?

—Jennifer Mason
Fiesta de San Fermin

Reitberg whistle stop.
Deadlines gone to the back of my head
in a cold German rain.
Cross and uncross my legs.
Eat a peach from my backpack.
Look at my watch and tend to
the journal of my trip to Pamplona.
Wine label.
Two weeks' rants in runny red pen.
Cafe napkins.
Black and white photos of us.
Chuck - head bandaged like 1776.
Me.
Maria and Chloe in their brilliant Gypsy scarves,
red scarves,
own drained gray by tri-x pan and pasted
into a hard-backed book of blank pages.
For the first time, I see that Maria's poet shirt is open
against her breasts.
Two buttons.
It hangs loose around her shoulders.
She has slipped off one shoe.
Her eyes are narrow and
she looks straight into my lens.
The train jolts angry on twisted trestles and
I see a farmhouse skeleton blur by in a sheet of swirling gray.
I conjure fresh-faced German virgins in steel helmets crossing its fields.
Americans walking in their wake with jazz, flamethrowers and Palooka Joe.
Kiltroy was here.
The young Serbian woman next to me drinks cold coffee from Styrofoam
and hums loud Dylan and Baez as if
she wants my flat Midwestern drone to chime in.
She smells of Turkish smoke and two days ride in this carriage.
She pulls coarse hair to one side,
reads over my shoulder and
tries not to smile as I dig into the backpack,
find the Misolna,
and frame her in black and white.

—E. Doyle-Gillespie

—Shane Klein
Contributor’s Notes

Juliet Arkin hails from New York, New York. She is a graduate of Hunter College High School in Manhattan. Among her interests are music, drawing, Poppy Z. Brite and fall.

Eli Cohen is currently somewhere else, following the peaceful and meditative path of the ninja.

Graham Cranfield has a hard time thinking of pithy self-referential remarks. He’s tall and has sideburns. If you like what he wrote don’t hesitate to say, “Hey, I like what you wrote.” If you don’t like it, don’t hesitate to say, “Hey, you suck.”

Jeremy Daniel, third year steeuw-dent at GW, can’t help but wonder if it’s all a joke.

E. Doyle-Gillespie, a 1992 graduate of GW, has recently returned to the Baltimore/DC area after a term of exile in Ohio. In addition to longing for his days in Mitchell Hall, he teaches Freshman English at The Baltimore Friends School, studies Hapkido and is working up the nerve to get his first tattoo.

Sarah Evans is an Art History major who dreams of living in Italy. Running and playing the cello occupy her free time. She wouldn’t mind it one bit if one day Vincent Perez were to run naked across her lawn carrying a Klimt painting.

Brian Flatley quoteth the almighty Gene Simmons who declareth, “I’m sick of musicians saying ‘I’m gonna play whatever I want –I’m an artist.’ ‘You’re an artist? Paint my house, bitch.’”

Jeremy David Goodwin is a writer.

Kate is not an English major. She likes fangs, wings, and bad television. Her long-term goals include forgetting the eighth grade and making her parents happy. She hates Saturday nights.

Shane Klein is a graduate student in the Columbian School currently studying for her master’s in sculpture.

After spending several decades trying to be some kind of scientist, Diana Lord has recently discovered a passion for artistic expression. She hopes to spend the next several decades drawing, painting, etching, sculpting, etc. She is very grateful for the opportunity presented by the alumni program at GW for allowing her to expand and advance her interests and abilities in art.
Ariana Markoe is a junior majoring in Art History and minor in Fine Art. With only 3 semesters left at this fine institution of higher learning, she does not have a clue what will come next. If all goes as planned, Ariana will continue to roam the world clueless in constant pursuit of the perfect job.

Jennifer Mason lives nestled between paradoxes. Fortunately, she has grown to love them, and they her.

Michael Owen is from Brooklyn, NY. He has a major in marketing with a photography minor. His goal is to go into film with his younger brother, and his hobbies are reading, movies, hockey, cooking and writing.

Kristina A. Paris, a freshman from New Jersey (as is almost everyone), occupies most of her time with chasing tiny green frogs over the rainbow, through the Swiss-cheese moon, and up the thorny beanstalk to her technicolor wonderland.

Catherine Resler is a sophomore majoring in Environmental Studies and from Fairfield, Ohio. As Dar Williams said it best, "You preach that I should save the world; you pray that I won't do a better job of it." Advice to all: go try and make a difference, someone has to.

Cynthia Saunders, whose population is 47,393, is a Sophomore majoring in English and minor in Creative Writing. She can be seen performing regularly in an imagination near you.

Jason A. Shechtman knows the meaning of life.

Hi, I'm Luke Stroinski! You may remember me from such driver's ed films as "The Decapitation of Larry Leadfoot" and "Alice's Adventures Through the Windshield Glass" . . .

D.J.R. Sweeney is an itinerant artist from Cincinnati, Ohio. He graduated with honors from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1987. He began graduate study in painting at GW this fall.

Jim Wenger is a senior majoring in physics and geology, who feels somewhat like a senior "imposter" because he's not going to graduate on time but oh well, he's not alone. He takes pictures sometimes a lot, and hopes that you like them.
—D.J.R. Sweeney