

Spiritus Mundi

A Collective Memory

Honors Literary Magazine
Spring 2009

Colorado
State
University

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**Honors Literary Magazine
Colorado State University**

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Table of Contents

“Searching for Hope” – Katie Trofholz.....	1
“Some Things Don’t Change” – Nick Scheidies	2
“Woodland Mosaic” – Kristen Hosek	3
“The Flies” – Chris Neal.....	4
“Yucca, AZ” – Erin Herburger	5
“What the Sea Remembers” – Shawna Strickland	6
“Just for a Moment...” – Caren Fleischmann	8
“Les Lumières de Nuit” – Lisa Steiner	9
“Candles” – Katie Lewis	10
“Finding Beauty” – Bailey Burks	12
“Without Vision, the People Perish” – Hannah Fowler	13
“Handwritten” – Nichelle Frank.....	16
“Middle America” – Nick Scheidies	17
“Daydreaming at Night” – Bailey Burks.....	18
“Sunset” – Annie Wallin.....	19
Acknowledgements	<i>Inside Back Cover</i>

We hope you enjoy reading our 2009 Spiritus Mundi collection. This publication is dedicated to alumni of the University Honors Program from 1957 to 2009. Your commitment and loyalty has left a lasting legacy to the Honors Program and Colorado State University.

Searching for Hope

Katie Trofholz

Her Bible sits untouched on the shelf, her textbooks sit untouched on the floor, even her pillow sits untouched on the bed as she sits, her back against the wall, her arms wrapped loosely around bent knees, and a single tear rolling down her cheek.

She wants to yell, she wants to throw things, she wants to cry loud enough to drown out her persistent, menacing thoughts, but she bites her lip instead. She holds it inside and tells herself to stop making a big deal out of things. She doesn't want anyone to hear her cry. She doesn't want anyone to ask if she is okay, to try to comfort her, to lend her a listening ear. She only wants to be alone so she can yell inwardly at herself for letting bad things happen in this world. For getting a bad grade on her last homework project. For not being fun enough to attract the attention of that cute boy who always sits next to her. For the teacher who assigns more homework than she can handle, for the losing football team, for the poor people in Africa who die because she doesn't send them money.

The only light coming into the room is from the street-light outside her window. The sounds of people talking and laughing outside make her heave. If only they would stop being so loud, if only they would stop being so insensitive, if only they would stop being so... happy. Another tear escapes. She is angry at that tear! It doesn't belong here, it has no right, she isn't going to cry!

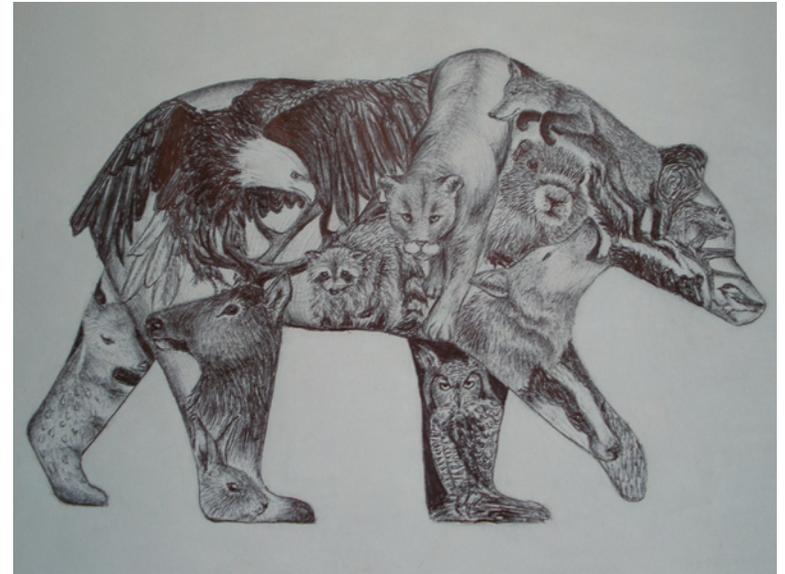
She shuts the blinds. She glances at her Bible still sitting untouched on the shelf, she glances at her textbooks remaining untouched on the floor, but now her pillow flattens under her head as she crawls up to her bed, still wearing her school clothes. It is 6:58 in the evening. She focuses on her breathing until she falls asleep, cheeks wet from the escaping tears and jaw clenched from trying so hard to hold those tears back. If only she didn't feel so discouraged! If only she could find some hope in all this mess!

If only she had chosen her Bible instead.

Some Things Don't Change
Nick Scheidies

Then, it was late January – a still life
cold enough for my sisters to curl into kittened balls
asleep upstairs in their closed-door rooms
while dad sat closer than usual on the waterbed
and waited out the waves so he could whisper.
Mom touched his leg; he bit her ear.

Now, she clutches his leg when she stands –
and when you stand between their closed-door rooms at
night
it is their radios and televisions that whisper waves to one
another.
The girls are grown as they are going to be, rubber band
balls
of neuroses, rolling around their homes with their men.
It's January again. The weather's still cold.



Woodland Mosaic
Kristen Hosek

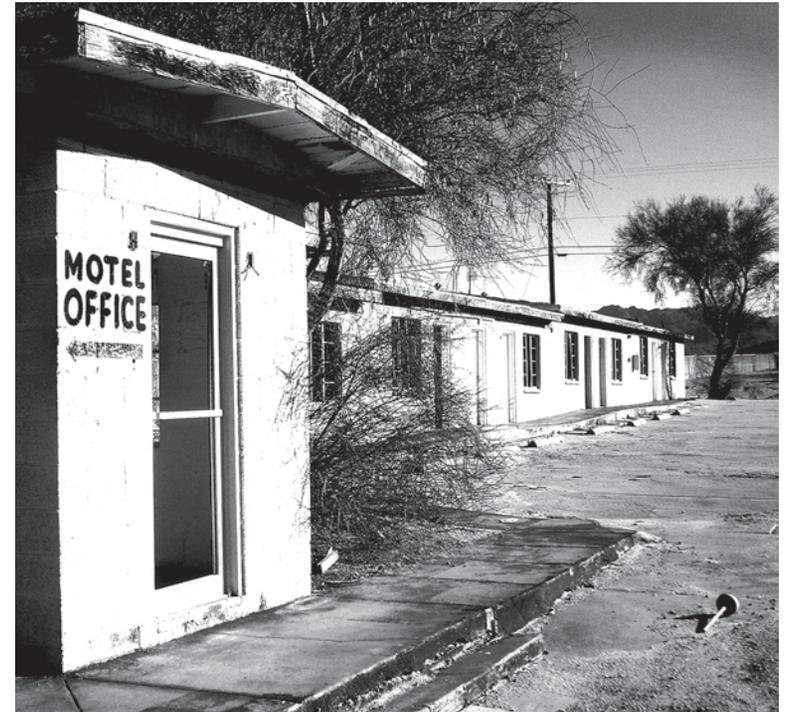
The Flies
Chris Neal

The dragonfly's slim form flits among cattails
Its ancient ancestor's wings were measured in feet
Thus its fearsome namesake with lungs full of heat
Mythical dragon: all wings, teeth, claws and scales
Fears of dragons are like fears of the Loch Ness hoax
Like night mares bearing headless horsemen with dark
cloaks

One wishing to dwell in dreams must have great desire
For he risks meeting hellish eyes and dragonfire

The firefly's nature is nearest to its first name
Its bioluminescence glimmers like a flame
Man's great innovation to ward off savage beasts
Fire was used to ward off nights chill and cook raw feasts
Although fire still has many important uses
Its true value was to light science's fuses
We refined our tools as our understanding grew
Set aside old practices; logic guides the new

The housefly is a pest; shoo and trouble me not
It invades our homes, buzzing, attracted to rot
Drawn to the sweet sugar in the juice of a fruit
As well as delightful meat, putrid and rancid
Drowning in nectar, floating bodies black as soot
Their young eat only corrupted flesh, and are sated
Thus, that which is precious can be ruined by flies
While that which is foul can be purged as the old dies
Before the link between flies and maggots was known
'Twas presumed that the grubs sprang from thin air alone
A simple concept, intuitive, easy to grasp
But truth is stranger than fiction, like the words of an asp



Yucca, AZ
Erin Herburger

What the Sea Remembers
Shawna Strickland

Again, I feel the yearning,
The pull of that which I'll never forget:
The waves swollen like a sun-ripe grape,
Breaking over the frothy white crest
To spill, like milk, to the beach.
Only to recoil back to the body,
The truth, that is the sea.
The surface of the water, far out
From the shore is like glass,
Stretching untouched and soft.
But a strength, a courage in the depths
Causes a riot, and the glass breaks, shatters,
And pours with powerful desire.
The lavender light of sunset washes across as it builds,
Causing a flicker of peace, of compassion
Before the rage becomes greater,
And the wave comes to a crest to crash,
To echo across the water, the sand, the beach.
And a hush will follow, the momentary silence
As Poseidon takes a breath and the wave is taken back,
Like I am taken back,
Back to the place from whence I came
When mermaids were real, and I swam with them.
When childhood memories were forming
Like an idea in the mind of an artist
About to create her masterpiece.
When the waves were angry,
Demons prepared to devour my small form
And the danger was intoxicating.

It was like chasing a comet, a rush
A speed into the unknown, the space,
And a flight on the back of a power bright
Like a theater marquee, a beacon in the sky.
And I, barefoot, scramble in the depths
To surface with a gasp, a smile, a joy
For I have shared with the great ocean.
My feet reach the sand, smooth, like silk
And I'm running again, to the dry beach
And the landlocked quest. Only to dash
Once more, when rested, back into the beckoning,
The loving, embracing waters.
And now, I stand, remembering
Before the shrine of my youth,
A memory as distant as a year-old letter
Remembered only by the foreign postage-stamp.



Just for a Moment....
Caren Fleischmann



Les Lumières de Nuit
Lisa Steiner

Candles

Katie Lewis

I've set foot in my grandmother's church once, a small one-room building not at all like the two-story Methodist monstrosity half a country away where I whiled away my childhood Sundays. It was dark in her tiny worship hall, the only light having filtered through stained glass too many times to be of any use except to turn the walls various shades of red, green, and blue like some heinous plaster bruise. Against the far wall was a small, unobtrusive alter with a radiant picture of Mary on one side and Joseph's own drab portrayal on the other. Mary's side had a table with candles while Joseph's side was bare. The asymmetry of this set up didn't sit well with me. Poor Joseph always got gypped. My grandmother caught me staring.

"Would you like to light a candle?" she asked. I blinked in the dim light for a moment, squinting at her.

"No, thanks," I replied.

"Are you sure you don't want to light a candle?" she pressed, stepping closer to me. "I light one for you father every week."

Gee, thanks, Grandma. I turned so she wouldn't see me roll my eyes.

"Really, I'm okay."

She turned to my mother next.

"Darla? What about you? Would you like to light a candle?" She was using that sweet voice reserved for stubborn children that usually promises candy in exchange for obedience, essentially waving eternal salvation under my mother's nose and displaying all the tact of a door-to-door salesman.

'There just ain't nothing to it, Ma'am,' salesman-Grandma was saying in my head. 'Just light this here candle and all yer troubles will be a thing o' the past!'

My mother met my gaze and quickly shook her head.

"No thanks, Mother."

Thwarted again, my grandmother turned to my little brother, who was five years old and eyeing the dancing flames with all the eagerness of a budding pyromaniac. Glancing at the table again I wondered who was running this place that thought it was a good idea to leave lit candles unattended. Talk about having faith.

"How about it, Nick? Would you like to light a candle for your mother and your sister?" I shared a disbelieving glance with my mother before realizing I probably should have been expecting that. Turning, I made my way towards the table.

"I changed my mind. I think I'll light a candle after all," I said, reaching for the electric lighter perched on one end of the table and again wondering who thought it was a good idea to leave such things unsupervised and within easy reach. Prometheus learned the hard way that humans were not to be trusted with fire.

"Oh really? For who, dear?"

"For you, Grandma."



Finding Beauty
Bailey Burks

Without Vision, the People Perish
By Hannah Fowler

I

In the heart of the deep black sky,
Swims a dancing star.
This little star pirouettes while the sun spins.
Leaps while the earth turns.
She thinks of bearded ladies.
She sees circus clowns.
Always busy spinning and jumping.

In the world of the deep black sky,
Dances a breathing star.
She spins away the time.
She flips as the moon circles.
No one sighs.
No one breathes.
Always busy blowing their balloons.

II

Around the deep black heart of the world,
Lives a mass of busy ants.
The mass hustles while the sun dies.
Makes haste while the earth cries.
They think of their chores.
They see their routine.
Always busy with the machines.

In the deep black of the sun,
Scurries the busy parade.
They prance away the time.
They repeat as the moon circles.
Everyone blindfolds.
Nothing changes.
Always busy with heavenly business.

III

At the heart of the deep white sky,
Sits a silent monk.
This lonely little man thinks while the sun spins.
Meditates while the dancers eat.
He thinks of everything.
He sees twirling tigers.
Always light in deep relaxation.

Deep in the world of the white universe,
Ponders a man with folded legs.
He prays away the time.
He sits as the moon circles.
No one blossoms.
No one sings.
Always busy with making the earth keep turning.

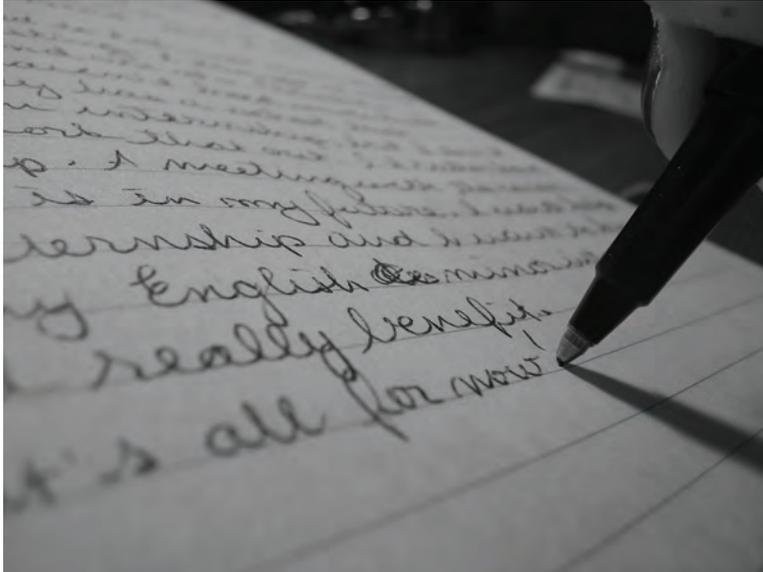
IV

In the world of the deep black sky,
Pumps a deep black heart.
It thumps away the coffee.
It pounds as the breathing ends.
No one feels.
No one hears.
Always busy blowing the flying time.

V

In the cage of a big green field,
Runs a tough white cow.
He feels the time.
He watches as the moon circles.
He speaks.
He desires.
Always busy wanting freedom.

Over the fence of a big green cage,
Jumps a free white cow.
He lives in the heart of time.
He follows as the moon circles.
He sings.
He breathes.
Never behind fences.



Handwritten
Nichelle Frank

Middle America
Nick Scheidies

You can pick any direction,
(it doesn't matter which – draw closed your eyes,
accuse the horizon with rigid finger
and spin like a wind-mad weathervane,
for all I care) drive all day
all night, a pioneer with heroin-addict hands
and mustard packet stains in the cracks of your lips.

Then the sun will pink the eyelids of your
motel room's construction paper curtains,
squinting over a new land

where trees are fat and round, red-cheeked baby girls
or where snow is not a blanket, but a tremendous
teeming sea

or where the ancient fury of earthbound gods is
remembered, their fists and teeth towering
still above the sun-burnt ground.

It depends on which direction you chose.
But, anyway, make yourself at home.

Daydreaming at Night
Bailey Burks

I'm daydreaming again. But it's not daytime. It's midnight,
and I lie awake thinking of tomorrow. Not only of tomorrow.
Of the summer, which is so close but still feels so far away.
Cliche perhaps,
but it's true.
I think of next year, of the year after, and of the years after
that.
I wish my *real* dreams would be normal every once in a
while.
Others can look forward to living their hopes and desires
while they sleep.
My dreams aren't like that.
They're never realistic enough to fool me that my wish is
coming true.
They always have some weird twist. Then I wake up
confused and annoyed because my brain is disrupting
what could be good restful sleep.
Actually, I take back my last wish,
about having normal dreams to live out my hopes and
desires.
I wish I could live *now*.
And I don't mean just having a heartbeat.
I want to live my life instead of daydreaming about it.
Not that my life isn't wonderful. I have an amazing and
blessed life.
I've never been good at living in the moment, though.
And that's why I daydream about the future.
That's why I daydream at night.



Sunset
Annie Wallin

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