Ka Nani
Volume Six 1988

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The Editors

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Cover
Still-life Edwin Solheim

Inside front cover
Untitled Edwin Chung

Inside back cover
Untitled Dirk Hilborn

Papermaze (pen and ink)
Florence Tokuda
From "High Priests of the Rythmic Noise" (acrylic on cardboard)
Kevin Yoshimitsu

Stranger
Jason Chang
What's in?
Do
You know?
What you want
Is it trendy
Is it chic
Is it old
Unlikely unique
Passionate colors
What does that mean?
When you walk
Are you seen?
Rhythmic reds
Can you picture?
I wouldn’t be caught dead—
Oh shut up
I know what’s hot
And you
My darling
Are
Not
Silver’s in
Gold’s out
Pastel’s passe
Plaid dead
Dead men don’t wear plaid.
That song is
Soooo
Old
Almost
A week now.

Can you see it
The definite trend
Flannel and leather, what a blend!
But don’t worry now
It’s almost gone
Plastic and wool are on the verge of cool.

Three Dancers (intaglio)
jinni Mitchell
Centered

Jerel Wakayama

In deep breaths they move
Silent giggles break the air
And in the crowded studio
they find one another
Shallow thoughts through lonely whispers
but still, the house is sold
In between hot flashes,
They click
He finds his camera
She finds her soul
The camera clicks
And pierces her soul
lights shoot their energy
as the cable unwinds
And the music quickens
Sweaty in the stuffy room
Sticky in the air
and sliding on about the floor
in superficial dreams
sweaty hands release their grips
and he lifts his head
Her simple eyes do not know
as she closes up her portfolio
putting on its cover
sitting back down he realizes
His camera has more film
Out from the case
And spreading open the two covers
the folder there once again
the camera clicks
while flashes burn deep scars

Memory of a Carousel

Charlotte Fellers

The carousel
Came to life in a dusty little town
of three thousand people.
Twelve dancing horses,
Three vicious lions, teeth bared,
Four prancing zebras,
Two lumbering camels,
And even a seahorse
swimming through the waterless air.
Like a magician performing a trick,
The operator cranked up the eighty-year-old Wurlitzer
And pulled the lever,
Bringing to life the wooden jungle beasts.
Off they’d go,
Dancing up and down,
Feverishly chasing one another
in quick little circles.
While their masters riding astride,
Were content to watch the creatures,
And listen to the cadence
of the pipe organ sounds,
and cymbals, and bells.
For seven short minutes and one thin dime,
The circus lived,
then...
The magician put away his tools,
and the animals gave up the chase.
Masters gave over the reins to new riders.
And the frenzy began again.
If Two Poets

Harry Mahler

If two poets
f***,
do their verses
intermingle
into an illusion
of melted one-ness,
sweaty words clinging,
moaning passages,
reaching a peak
of exquisitely merged
rhythm...
only to drift apart
into exhausted,
mundane
doggerel.

that won't be felt until tomorrow
But when it's over she knows
that she has him by the camera
But all he wanted was her portfolio.
And he got it.

A Lost Girl (intaglio)
Yu-Hua Yeh
And What If?  
Irma Righter

Is that not what they do  
when one tastes the other’s  
esoteric euphemisms, revels in the other’s  
rhetoric, swallows another’s  
copulative clauses;  
each descent  
down a page full of words an ascent  
to the culmination,  
the one-ness,  
the cosmic fuck.

In a Roll  
Jason Chang
Hey!
You with the dirty nails
why don't you clean up your act?
Come on
up
out of your slum
and see where I live.
Smell the flowers.
I can't stoop
to where you be
I don't like the smell of shit.
I promise you
a Mr. Coffee,
a Cuisinart,
an IBM-PC in every den.
I owe it to you after all;
I made you this way.
okay baby
you done fired me up
again.
but 'cha know
It's gonna get mighty hot
so I hopes you can stay
in my kitchen.
I takes awhile
to defrost sometimes,
just so's you know.
When I gets started
I doesn't cook
I SIZZLES

There is a man
who probably thinks of me
sometimes.
When he's on a rocky beach or in a certain bar,
or when he smells a ginger flower... I bet he also thinks of me in the shower.
We didn't want our need for each other.
Fought it all the way. He said he couldn't stay
and woke me up with flowers the next day.

He left me
songs and scents to take me back
to a time we melted toward each other, I guess
I'll always think of him and butter.
I'm not sure when we started to read between the lines
but one thing for sure I do know.
There is a man
who probably thinks of me
sometimes...
“OH GOD NORMA, THE MINUTE THEY LOWERED HER INTO THE GROUND
I said to myself, 'Peggy, she’s really dead,'” Mrs. Corbet said as she marched into her house in a tidy tornado of nylon-sable fur and tears. She flung herself down beside Norma on the couch and threw her head back. Her glasses became dislodged from her nose. She allowed them to settle in her lap.

“Tommy was so upset he just watched the whole proceedings and never uttered a single, solitary word. Derek’s bringing him here for lunch but God knows he won’t be able to eat, the poor thing. I’m too upset myself to eat. And I bought a beautiful piece of brisket”

“She was an old woman, Peggy,” said Norma over Mrs. Corbet’s grief. “It can’t be a surprise to you, dear.”

“She was old, Norma, but her mind was as active as mine. She did the crossword puzzle every day. And she could still pick the most beautiful wardrobe for Tommy.” She opened her handbag and searched for a cigarette or a handkerchief. She found a cigarette, lit it, and wiped her tearful eyes on her palms. “The man is impeccably dressed. See that brown suit he had on today? Mother’s taste: perfect.”

“I always found it a bit ridiculous that a man his age stayed at home with his mother. He should have been out in the real world fending for himself.” Norma said and waited for the words to settle on Mrs. Corbet’s ears.

“Yes, I’m quite aware of what you find ridiculous, Norma. Not today. Don’t wind me up. Not today Norma, I’m too distressed. Anyway, my brother had no notions of gallivanting off. He always felt it was his duty to look after Mom. He doted on her, and I resent you calling that kind of love ‘ridiculous,’ Norma.”
"I'm sorry, Peggy, I shouldn't have," said Norma. With a quick
sniff Mrs. Corbet resumed her upset at the funeral.

"Derek was heartbroken too. He disappeared the very second
the funeral was over to be by himself: to have a quiet little time of
grief I expect. He and his grandmother had a very special bond." Mrs.
Corbet tossed her cigarette butt in the fire and took out her
compact. "I'd better tidy myself up before they get here; I don't
want Tommy to see how upset I've been. Oh God, I'm a mess."

Her son's car stopped in front of the house. The two stiffly
dressed relatives stepped out. Derek had loosened his tie and
Tommy had taken his off. His shirt was still buttoned to the neck.

"Here they are, Norma. Now, don't upset Tommy will you. You
answer it." Mrs. Corbet bounded through to the kitchen to put the
kettle on for tea. Norma opened the door for them.

"Hello boys, Peggy'll be with us in a minute," Norma said with
the solemnity of a benediction. "You hungry?" She added, and
suddenly found it hard to make a suitable face for such a question.
She knew it had been inappropriate.

"I'm not hungry, Norma," Derek said. He fingered his uncle
Tommy in the spine.

"I couldn't eat neither," Tommy said, patting his stomach.
Norma then gestured with both hands to the men to enter. She
preceded them to the living room in a slight stoop, as if normal
walking might have been too disrespectful and would have per­
haps incited Tommy to open grief. The three lowered themselves
into the couch.

Tommy squinted to look out the window, his grey eyes glassy
and straining, to see beyond the houses across the street, where the
view stopped. Derek reached between his legs and drew a paper
from beneath the cushion; he turned to the sports section, and
snapped the creases from it. He slid in one fluid motion down to
an almost horizontal languish, and gradually elbowed Norma and
Tommy to the outer edges of the couch. Norma, hands clasped
and hair in a springy perm, sweated inwardly at Derek's lack of respect
for his bereaved uncle.

Tommy began whistling an imperceptible tune between two of
his three bottom teeth, and his birdy eyes were still focused on the
view, which he couldn't see, beyond the houses.

Mrs. Corbet returned to the room.

"Oh Tommy," she said, hugging and kissing his wispy head.

"Derek son, go and make the tea; I can't, my hands are too shaky.
Look Tommy." She displayed them to Tommy. He looked at her
quivering rings and nails and blue veins and liver spots. He looked
up at her, her eyes had little pockets of tears and face-powder
under them.

"Oh... yes... Peggy, eh, I think I'll go and give Derek a hand."
He launched himself up and out of the room. His sister shook her
head slowly as she turned to Norma. Norma began shaking hers
in sympathetic vibration. They sat for several minutes shaking
their heads and titching.

Tommy strolled into the kitchen. Derek looked up from a tea-
stirring trance.

"What you gonna do, Tommy?" Tommy thought for a moment
and then cleared his throat.

"I'm going," Tommy said, "to buy... a blue suit."

"I meant, what are you going to do now that granny's gone?"
Derek said. He handed Tommy a cup of tea.

"The first thing I'm going to do is buy a brand new blue suit,"
he said, not looking at Derek but at a blue suit in John Collier the
Tailor's. He sipped his tea, smacked his lips, and smiled with his
overripe teeth.

"I mean, you must have got used to her. She was always
something you had to consider, eh Tommy? It'll be different, don't
you think?" Derek said, trying to meet Tommy's heavenward eyes.

"It'll be different all right," Tommy said. "It'll be a whole lot
different." Tommy's chest expanded with a nostril-flaring inhale.
"This brown suit and all the others like it are going in the trash. This
boy wears blue suits from now on. And I mean that, Derek."
Tommy beamed at Derek for a second to allow
him to digest his
plan, and then let out a squeak of mischief. He began quaking with
elfin laughter. Derek feigned a smile of conspiracy.

Norma crept into the doorway.
“What happened to the tea boys ... what’s the matter, Tommy?” Norma said in her most concerned manner.

“We’ll bring the tea in a minute Norma. Leave us alone for a while,” Derek said. Tommy’s shoulders pumped up and down as he laughed. Norma scurried off to report to Mrs. Corbet.

“Peggy! Tommy is hooting with laughter in there. Just what does he think is so funny?” Norma said. Mrs. Corbet did not seem surprised.

“Well of course he’s behaving strangely, Norma: he’s hysterical. Sometimes if you don’t laugh, you cry loud and long: it’s a release.” Mrs. Corbet resumed a posture of grief once again.

“Well I think it’s utterly disrespectful,” Norma said. Her efforts at showing respect were going unappreciated.

“I have to go Peggy, I’ll talk to you tomorrow.” Norma swirled from the room. Mrs. Corbet watched her leave and acquiesced silently to her departure.

She decided to oversee the anguish in the kitchen to ensure its properness. She strode in, grabbed Tommy’s head, and stuffed it into her bosom.

“I know, Tommy, I know. Let it out ...” She continued to talk. Tommy felt the vibration of the words through her coat: it felt like purring. The fake fur tickled his nose and mouth. “... and we all feel the same way, we just show it differently.” Mrs. Corbet concluded. She patted him firmly on the back.

“Let’s all go sit down, there’s a few things I’d like to say,” Mrs. Corbet said. She thrust the smiling Tommy at arms’ length and looked at him to diagnose his thoughts. He would be all right, she decided. She led him by the hand to the living room. Derek followed.

“You’ll come stay with us,” Mrs. Corbet announced.

“Why don’t you ask Tommy what he wants? I reckon he’d rather have that big old house to himself. I know I would. You’ll be glad of the privacy, eh Tommy?” Derek said.

“What time does John Collier’s close?” Tommy asked. Mrs. Corbet looked at Tommy and closed one eye.

“Tommy, we are trying to make some arrangements here. Please pay attention. Will you? Please?” She looked at Derek; he had turned to look out the window, wincing. After a brief closure of both eyes for strength, Mrs. Corbet continued.

“I wouldn’t be so cruel as to suggest such a thing, Derek. Tommy will stay right here where he has all the freedom and privacy he needs. Now ... what do you say, Tommy?”

“Eh ... I don’t know ... listen, I want to go into town,” he said.

“What? To live?” asked Mrs. Corbet.

“No, I want to get to John Collier’s before it closes.”

“What ... on ... earth ... for, man?” She eyed him, disbelieving.

“Your mother has just been buried, Tommy.”

“I know, and I want to buy a new suit: a blue one,” Tommy said.

“I’ll give you a lift, Tommy, let’s go,” Derek said. He grabbed Tommy’s arm and started for the door.

“Wait!” Mrs. Corbet said. “Have you both gone completely bloody mad? Derek, sit down and shut your mouth.” She snatched Tommy’s other sleeve and pulled both men back onto the couch in one stiff yank. She regained an upright posture and clasped her hands in preparation for her speech.

“YOU wait, mother. This is important to him,” Derek said.

“His future, Derek, is rather more important. Hm?” Derek stood up.

“Don’t treat him like a child, or a ... possession. He’s a grown man ...”

“He may be a grown man,” interrupted Mrs. Corbet, “but he is still very much my brother, and in his mother’s absence it’s my duty to help him all I can.”

Tommy sat between the two, gazing at the same short view as before and still seeing something more. He heard little of his sister and nephew’s conversation. He stood up and walked to the window.

“Derek’ll go get your things, Tommy, and we’ll have an early night; I’m very tired,” Mrs. Corbet said.

“Tommy!” Derek said, still standing. “Do you want to come to live here with me and her?” He held up his hand to prevent the inevitable interruption.

“Do you want me to stay, Dear?” Tommy asked. He was barely
aware of himself speaking, and wasn’t interested in an answer. He was thinking about what he had to do.

“That’s not the point, Tommy. What you want is what’s important.” On Derek’s words, Mrs. Corbet grabbed Tommy’s hand and squeezed.

“Yes . . . I suppose it might be for the best . . .” Tommy said.

“Of course it’s for the best, and I know a lot of ladies in the office who would be delighted to meet you. You’ll be ready to take on the world. Okay, Derek, take Tommy up to Mother’s house and get his stuff.”

Mrs. Corbet paused for a moment and watched Tommy standing mute, with one hand chinking change in his pocket, and the other picking fake fur from his mouth. She watched him examine each piece and then flick them on the carpet.

“Tommy, why don’t you stick up for yourself? You don’t have to stay here, you know. Goddamn it, why don’t you ever do what you really want to do? Goddamn it . . .” Mrs. Corbet had burst into sobs suddenly as she spoke. Derek stiffened, and Tommy looked to his eyes for an explanation; he knew what he really wanted to do.

“I’m getting a blue suit before the stores close,” Tommy said in a loud, high-pitched tone at his sister’s bowed head, to answer her outburst.

“She was a wicked, domineering old bitch,” Mrs. Corbet said, “She’s reduced you to shit. Go and buy a Goddamn suit. Go and buy a Goddamn blue suit. Go and buy a blue suit, Tommy. Go!” She was suddenly standing and, head bowed, she pushed past the two men, Tommy watching her and Derek not, out of the room and into her bedroom, where she lay face down.

“I bloody-well will, Derek, whether she likes it or not. Give me a ride to John Collier’s.” Tommy unbuttoned the top button of his shirt where the tie had been. “We’ll pick up my stuff on the way back.”
His eyes held mysteries, oceans of *Mystery,* whispering 'yes, yes'

And she felt the surge through the waters of her body, the enormous tides; he was *the Moon* tugging at her, tugging

She knew he would leave her *don’t they all?*
He told her he was going at the very beginning, and from then on each time she reached out to touch him, she could feel him seem to draw away to someplace deep inside himself, leaving her wandering alone, thinking what could it be? what *stone in the heart* bore him down so, what dark gravity?

There could be reasons — there must be, like for the rain; and she asks herself,
"Whose fault is it, anyway?"
She thinks of the night they slept
on the beach and she remembers
the sound of the surf
rolling in beyond the trees, the Moon
 glowing above, and
the single bright
* Venus? * star
close by its side

She remembers how
she rose into the night
in her imagination and then
saw the star orbiting the Moon
in great arcs and ellipses,
caught there in its gravity

Now she sits at the window
looking out at the afternoon —
the deserted street, empty front yards —
feeling nothing looking in
as it begins to rain;
she considers briefly and once more
the long, thin lines
she could make,
feeling in her imagination
the long threads of stainless heat
— stainless; to be
that way
* but it’s a mistake, isn’t it? *
again . . .
he’s gone, yesterday morning,
or yesterday before,
and yesterday before
yesterday, before . . .
he’s

She watches the raindrops falling,
 watches them strike the windowpane
and curl dustily down to the sill,
where they collect and form a small, murky puddle,
leaving translucent water-trails on the glass

And she thinks about gravity —
how easy it is to fall;
you just lose your balance
a little

And she feels herself falling now
with the rain down to the earth,
grabbing at clouds and mist, reaching to
* a small handful of light,
a mouthful of spring *
hold;
she says to herself,
‘It’s all gravity’s fault,
some kind of gravity.’
Open silently the door
to a bare room where a young woman stands
alone before a tall storm-window;
she has golden hair,
and the light
streaming in through the glass
is soft and gold, and even
the dustmotes which drift
in the air about her
are gold-dust;
like a painting,
this bare room, this tall storm-window,
this light, this woman,
in gold
Strolling
Along the beach,
I spied her sitting there
With flowing hair and loving smile,
Wanting
A Kuhio Morning (acrylic on canvas)
Rose Perry
Prelude

Shannon Hughes

Cradled in gentle warmth,
I rest on his bristly chest,
encircled with heavy arms.
the familiar hollow
seemingly made
only to fit my head;
or could it possibly be
worn down,
from frequent use?

I open my reluctant eyes
to lazy shadows,
creeping along the covers;
forming a landscape
of mountains
and valleys,
shifting with the movements
of the rising sun,
and our slowly
awakening bodies.

--- letter to poppie ---

Shannon Hughes

standing here,
in this cool, green place,
I watch the sunlight filter through the trees
making a kaleidoscope of shapes on the grass.

the breeze carries with it
the moldy smell of damp earth
and a faint trace
of a familiar pipe tobacco;
I turn,
expecting you to be behind me,
but you're not there.

the quiet and the emptiness,
within and without,
leaving me incomplete,
needing to be whole again.
It's time poppie,
to think of you.

a broad lap,
you once said,
was just meant for grandkids;
and we tried to see how many of us
you could fit on it
at one time.

on shaky training wheels
I was pushed
by your shaking legs,
over and over again.
encouraged by your booming laughter
I succeeded,
and was rewarded
with the twinkle in your eyes;
given just to me
your oldest grandchild.

always there,
with great, crushing hugs.
pulled close,
I'd rub my smooth,
child's cheek
across your older, prickly one;
as if to leave a visible,
permanent
mark of our special moments.

poppie,
I wasn't there when you died;
and not until this moment,
looking at your hard,
grey
marker,
did I truly realize
that your laughter
is
silent.

the wind picks up,
whipping my skirt and hair,
but I'm not cold.

you're not really gone are you poppie?
how could you be dead,
when my memories
and love
are so strong.

I still have your comfortable lap,
twinkling eyes,
and prickly cheeks
keeping my love
and you
alive.

In truth
you have marked me.
I'm your granddaughter, poppie.
I'm now whole.

Pegasus
Rick Mogle
Village (acrylic on cardboard)
Bing Li

Banyan Tree (oil on canvas)
Margaret Chang
Francesca and the Mirage

More Light! *

Futile cries of men
Trapped beneath the waves.

The sun will not warm their backs.
The moon no longer holds mystery.

All is replaced
by cruel water.

Francesca bathes.
Her wet breasts glow
in the fading moment.

Her beauty stuns
but the waves will win.

* Courtesy of L. Van Beethoven

My Sister Was Asleep

My sister was asleep
when her heart stopped.
Did her dreams unravel?

Was dying like pulling an errant string,
reducing the tapestry
to a stack of thread?

My sister was asleep
when the death-thief
stole her soul.

Was it sold
to a used-soul lot,
or bartered away,
for use as
Star Fuel
War Within

The brilliant sharpness
Beckons with its promised dream.
The barbed snag on skin
The prick; the pull
The drop of red
More beautiful than any blossom
And then:

The depth charge explodes
Brain to gut, via spine
A train in a hurry
Racing its precious cargo.

Annihilation
Anarchy
Genocide
We apply our politics
to our bodies
And we believe
Fervently
In our cure.
At the Cocktail Hour

Liisa Lovell

I saw a woman beat up in a phone booth tonight. Her head, Joe said, sounded like a coconut hitting the hard glass.

Her lover's arms stretched across the booth, the dark muscles flexing and shining in the streetlight, tattoos moving rhythmically, (remembering movement over these muscles the night before, and cries of pleasure) now punching at even intervals.

Silent villifyers, we watched the public passion steering us each in our own directions.

Joe and Mike discussed the merits of beating your woman. Kawika looked away eyes as shiny as muscles, head flinching each time the thud of head against glass hit him.

Those punches those maddeningly dull, even thuds, echo a crazy accompaniment to the lovers ballad.

We walk away slowly like the woman measuring her steps until her lover catches up.

Lisa Lovell

Man Looking at Himself

Laurie Deleot
Patience should climb like stairs
slowly padding on a flowered carpet
put in to lessen the noise
up
to a grandparent's room
to the sight of teeth
and
open hands and
the creak of wood
because years of living have proven
that small life is to be tolerated
not interrupted
or slapped at
or ridiculed
small life is what we all once were
before we were able to climb
My grandmother was visiting from Texas again
Everyone had to turn in at 9:00
For some reason
she always slept with me
in my single bed
her head turned toward the wall.
Once or twice a cough
always the smell of Ben Gay and hair spray.
And if I made the slightest move
to scratch my nose
or relieve a bedsore limb
she’d slap my thigh and hiss
“Lie still!”
And I’d freeze in that position
only relaxing when she began
to snore.

A person should bend like a spoon
yielding
yet
hard to move
curling, twisting
but only slightly changing its original shape
shining, proud, reflecting
without so much as a sound
However,
if the spoon is bent too far
it can never
really
stand up straight again
or be an instrument of usefulness.
Freestyle (pen and ink)
Michael Shiraishi

Boundaries
Linda Robertson
IN THE DISTANCE THERE ARE DOGS BARKING AND THE LOUD RINGING of the penitentiary alarms can be heard for a mile all around. A young man is running through the bushes gripping his abdomen as he hunches under branches and jumps over small boulders in his path. Sweat drips down his panicked face and his heart pounds with the fear of being caught. He grits his teeth as he forces his legs to move faster, farther away from the barking dogs, but their sound echoes in his mind and the shrill ringing of the alarm seems to grow louder.

He looks back behind his shoulder, certain the dogs are right there, and they are, teeth slashing the air as they bark in their excitement. He stumbles in his panic and terror shoots through him as he sees the ground rush up to his face. The alarm is still ringing.

"Ugh! Oh God, a dream. Damn alarm."

"William turn off the alarm. It’s annoying."

I reach out to press the "off" button on the alarm and run my hand through my hair. Claire goes back to sleep.

"Claire, come on love. You use the bathroom first."

"Mmmm."

"Claire, today makes a year since the old man died, and we better get ready. It’s a long drive."

My wife is instantly awake and moving as she gathers fresh underwear and heads for the bathroom. I sit up on the edge of the bed and stare at my reflection in the mirror hanging on the closet door. I look old, but I don’t know where the past year has gone. It seems like the old man died just last week. The memory is easy to summon up.

"William, it’s your turn."

Claire rubs her hair with a towel and sits at her vanity watching me through the mirror. I pick up my own clothes and shower quickly, not really paying attention to my movements. Claire is singing to the radio as I walk back into our bedroom.

"Don’t forget, William, that we have to stop off at Blooms."

Shrugging into a shirt, I just nod. I walk to Claire, bend down and give her a kiss on her shoulder. Breathing in, I can smell the sharp scent of Irish Spring soap.

"What kind would you like to pick up? Traditional roses?"

"No. I think we should get a mixture of country flowers, something natural. Not roses. They’re, well, too artificial."

Claire stands up and walks to the closet to get out a dress. A faint smile touches her lips as she holds the baby blue sundress out in front of her.

She slips it on and bends to pick up her sandals. I walk to the kitchen to pop bread into the toaster and pour out two glasses of iced-tea. Claire walks in.

"Aren’t you going to dry your hair, Claire?"

"No. It’ll dry in the car."

Without another word she goes to the ‘fridge and takes out the jam. We eat in silence and wash up the dishes. Claire picks up her handbag from the countertop and we go out to the car. The blue Toyota brings back memories of a year ago every time I see it.

We stop at Blooms and I wait in the car as Claire runs in to buy the flowers. She comes running out ten minutes later with two bundles of multi-colored flowers overflowing her arms. We start on our way just as we did a year ago. Claire flips through the stations on the radio. I remember when we went on our little vacation that would take us through the desert.

The sun seemed extra-bright and hot as it beat down on my battered blue Toyota. The paint on the car had faded over the many years I’d had it, and the rays of the August sun bounced off the hood, partially blinding me. My wife sat next to me, slouched crookedly in the seat, bracing herself with one hand on the cushion.
while the other fanned her moist chest. She might have been asleep except for the constant flapping of her limp hand, which made what happened later all the more surprising.

I remember looking over my arm resting on the open window of my door. The scenery was breathtaking. For miles there was nothing but flat land sprinkled with round bushes of tumbleweed. Columns of eroded stone and dirt were spaced chaotically about in the distance like sticks poked into the sand by a child. The land was dusty and dry and the dull earth colors added to the barren feeling I had that day; even the breeze on my face was warm.

I accelerated, hoping to cool the wind blowing into the car; my wife hadn't changed her position or stopped fanning herself for the past three miles, and the long, straight road stretched endlessly into a watery silver ribbon that melted into the horizon. My mind set itself on auto.

"William!" My wife screeched as she pulled the steering wheel out of my hands. The car lurched sharply to the right side of the road, bumping against something with a loud cracking sound before coming to a sudden stop in a ditch.

"Damnit Claire! What the hell did you do that for?"

"William! William!"

My wife was frantic. Letting go of the steering wheel, she grabbed my arm and dug her nails into it. If it hadn't been for my shock, I think I would have hit her. The last thing I like is being stuck in a situation I don't know how I got into with a hysterical woman to top it off.

"William, did we — are — are we —"

"Claire, I'm trying to think."

"William! What are we going to do? We just can't leave him here!"

"I know, Claire, but I don't exactly think taking him with us in the back seat to the next town is such a fuckin' great idea!"

"What was he doing out here, and why didn't you see him? William! Why didn't you see that old man on the road?"

"I don't know! For the past four hours I've been driving in this heat while you just sit there on your ass. Now... I think our best choice is to bury him. Look, Claire, he was just an old man walking out here. Why, I don't know, but it certainly wasn't healthy for him."

"Bury him? William, we killed someone. We can't just bury him and drive off."

"What do you want to do, Claire, take him to the nearest police station and say 'Oh we accidentally killed this old man on the road and we thought you ought to have him?' Claire get real, we'd be tried for manslaughter and probably thrown in jail. No one will know about this, and if by some wild chance someone finds the old man's body, no one will know we did it. Look, there's no witnesses, this place is in the middle of nowhere."

Claire turned around then and went to sit on a rock. Her limp hair covered her bent head, but I knew she was crying from the shaking of her shoulders. With a disgusted sigh, I got back up and went to the old man. Pangs of guilt started to beat at my head, but I kept reminding myself that it was an accident and the old man had at least lived a full life. Hell! What was the old geezer doing walking in the middle of nowhere on the road? Why didn't he hear...
me? Why didn’t he move out of the way?

Claire had taken a long time to pick out the site for the old man’s grave. She’d walked around, stopping every once in a while to stare at the ground in a thoughtful way. With her left arm folded across her chest supporting her right, which was gripping her chin, she surveyed the land around her as if she were picking a suitable view for a house. Finally she settled on a site next to a lone rock formation.

It took us two hours to bury the old man.

“We better get a move on if we expect to get out of the desert by nighttime. Claire? Hey Claire, are you all right?”

Claire was sitting on the ground by the old man’s grave. I walked to her and said her name again. She didn’t answer me but instead she stood and went to the car, opened the passenger door and got in. Shaking my head, I went to the drivers’ side and started the engine. I put the car in second gear to get out of the ditch and stepped on the gas. The car strained and lurched a little, but it remained in the same spot. I pressed the gas again, but the car refused to move more than a few inches. I stopped and the car rocked back into place in the soft, sandy dirt.

“The car’s stuck, Claire. I’m going to have to push it out. Here, you take the wheel and step on the gas when I say so, ok?”

“Yeah.”

Claire looked exhausted. She had dirt in her hair and all over her clothes. Her face had a pinched look of stress, and sweat soaked her blouse, leaving dark rings under her armpits and on her chest.

“Claire, stop thinking about the old man. We gave him a cross just like you wanted. It was the best we could do, ok? Shit, we even spent an hour getting flowers for his grave.”

“I know, William.”

Claire positioned herself in the drivers’ seat and waited for me to get ready:

“Make sure it’s in reverse. Ok. Now, slowly step on the gas.”

The car made a whining sound, and I could feel it strain under my hands. I pushed the car with my whole body and it slowly moved backwards.
"More gas, Claire."

Claire stepped on the gas and I could hear the car’s engine working faster. Dirt sprayed up into the air on either side of me, some of it getting into my eyes and down the collar of my shirt.

"Not so much!"

Suddenly the car shot out of my hands and bumped its way up the ditch to the road. Claire had slammed on the brakes, and my ears rang as the car skidded to a screeching halt. I ran up the road, slipping on the loose gravel and using my hands to help myself up. Claire had already gotten out of the car. I could see her wearily walking over to where we had buried the old man. She knelt in a swift motion, her hand reaching out to arrange the flowers that had blown astray.

"Claire, come on, we’d better go."

"William, please! We may be the only people who know who he was."

"No! We didn’t know him, we just hit him, that’s all. He’s an old man with a red shirt and faded jeans; we never got to talk to him, we didn’t even see him alive, we just hit him Claire! Now he’s in a dirt grave with a cross made of twisted twigs. It was an accident, Claire, and we did the best thing for him and for us."

"I don’t know, William. We are the only two people in the world who know about this. His family won’t know what happened to him."

"Claire, he was by himself out here in no man’s land with no I.D. or anything that states who he was. He probably was a drifter or a hermit or something. Now get in the car, Claire. We’d really better go."

I took her hand and helped her up. We walked to the car and as Claire got in, I looked back and made my own silent apologies and goodbyes. I got into the car, started the engine, and stepped on the accelerator. The grave became smaller behind us, until it soon blended in with shrubs and all I could see was the rock formation standing alone amongst them.

"William, do you think we could come by next year?"

"You mean visit him next year today, right Claire?"
Claire looked at her clenched hands that lay in her lap, her fingers rubbing together and pinching the fabric of her skirt. I reached out with my hand and covered both of hers.

"All right Claire. I know we both feel a tremendous guilt for what happened. I guess the least we can do is to come back again. Now why don’t you find that station on the radio we heard last night."

"Claire, wake up. We’re here."

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**December Wind**

*Michael Molloy*

Late December wind wounds the lukewarm sun
Molokai squats purple across the water
We sit at our hotel pool
While the cocktail waitress waits

"Do you want something to drink?" I asked my friend.
"Some orange juice or some ginger ale?"
You haven’t eaten anything
Either yesterday or today."

"No," she says. "No. I’m not hungry or thirsty.
I can’t think about food or drink anymore.
...... I am thinking about Truth."

Post-Christmas music plays. Palm trees wave.
**Dad Combing His Hair with His Hands**

Kevin Kashiwai

Dad emerges from the steaming bathroom, wearing slacks, belt unbuckled, and a towel around his neck.

Standing before the mirror, he rubs hair dressing between his palms, then begins to work it into towel dried, salt and pepper hair.

Using only his fingers, like a five-toothed comb, he sculps his clean cut tresses into everyday form.

As I watch him, I remember when I was a little boy, how he'd slick my hair back, and the embarrassment I felt at school, due to my greased hair.

Now that I'm older, he no longer gives me the slick treatment, but often he says, "Eh boy, push your hair back!" And when given the chance, he reaches over, and runs the five-toothed comb through my overgrown locks.

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**The Barn**

Kevin Kashiwai

Back when the barn at the Honolulu zoo was brand new, I lost touch with you. I understand that you and Dad had a big fight never to speak again. It's funny though, because I never missed you. I guess I was too young to understand and when you died I didn't cry for nothing was lost, all you ever were to me was a memory of an old man who took Michelle and me to see the new barn at the zoo...
Sunset at Makapuu

The winter’s wind waged war against the dunes of the sandy beach. Surging waves dredged frigid waters from the ocean’s depths to throw upon a rocky shore.

   The night was cold.
And yet, the night was warmer than the heart that beat within me.

Blackened clouds dropped salty tears on the sloping cheeks of the mountain lying behind me. Tiny streams rushed in torrents, carving grooves in the sand, as they raced towards the sea.

   I cried throughout the night.

As I sat upon the lava shore, the morning’s light shone through the passing grey of night. The cool, wet dew drenched my clothes, awakened my mind and refreshed my body.

   I turned and walked away.
I Love You?

William R. Shiroma

I care for you yet I cannot stand you from the bottom of my heart.
Always taking forever to get ready as you beautify yourself with make-up only because underneath, AGHH!
I think you would look just fine without any if you ask me besides, you'd just be wasting your money on a lost cause.

Be with me forever or at least until I find someone better.
We can start the nights off with candlelight dinners but times are hard so we'll have to go dutch.
After, we can dance the night away but try not to step on my feet any more.
As I gaze into your beautiful eyes, my they're hypnotic!
Is it because your eyes are crossed?
I begin to feel entranced into a romantic mood.
Is it because you put Spanish fly into my drink?

You are very special to me even though you tend to be a nuisance most of the time but because you are very kind and loving which makes me wonder if you are a nymphomaniac at certain times which I do appreciate.
You tend to over do it a bit though; all those phone calls,
it's no wonder I never get any peace and quiet.
You must care for me a lot.
Sorry, no mutual feelings, my care is doubled for that other woman who is nothing like you.

I must leave now and please understand that I never felt the love for you.
I don't think I ever will.
Believe me, I wouldn't lie.

P.S. Oh! I forgot to tell you to please read every other line starting with line #1.
If ever I am late to class
Blame Socrates
Whose weighty words so tax
The tongue-tied Prophet Xerox.
It doth multiply at Fickle’s whim,
Not mine!

And where lies damned Demosthenes,
Stoned?
When burdened low with teaching aids
Risk I alone
The perilous, pupil-strewn path?

Had Aristotle early quit
As Rhetorician’s Muse,
I would not quander long and late
Besot, adrift and mired
In chalky syllogistic fogs
Term-paper thick.

Oh Sophocles,
Whose tragic flaw of sabered sight
Doth sharply blind my students’ eyes to see,
Abide, abide the Golden Mean
And from the Pedagogian Sphinx
Rescue all who teach:
Like me
FRANK WAS THE FARTHEST THING
FROM HER MIND THAT DAY.
She was with Anne, headed out of the main lobby, dodging other
office workers going to or returning from lunch hour. She was
pondering the big decision of the day with Anna — where to have
lunch, Chez Pasta or Heidi's — when she saw him.
She stopped so suddenly, so violently, that she turned her ankle,
nearly twisting the heel off her black leather shoe. Anna grabbed
her, supported her elbow, glancing around to see if anyone was
staring.
"Are you all right?" Anna asked, her brow wrinkled with con-
cern.
She nodded, turned around a bit to examine the heel of her shoe.
She could feel the itch of sweat forming in her armpits. She couldn't
bring herself to look ahead, she couldn't start walking, not with him
there. He might see her, might look into her eyes, speak to her . . .
Abruptly, she grabbed Anna's arm and went in the opposite di-
rection, away from him.
"Oh, I guess we're going to Heidi's then," her friend said eagerly,
then launched into a monologue about the people who worked in
her office.
And though she walked beside Anna, she wasn't really listening.
She was thinking about the way he'd looked.
He'd been standing in the middle of the walkway among the
bustling office people, just standing there getting in the way. His
mouth had been moving slightly, although there was no one
stopped near him to listen. There had been a black bruise on the side
of his neck. He was wearing a torn t-shirt, bluejeans three sizes too
big and mismatched rubber slippers. It was quite clear that he
hadn't shaved his face for some time; the grease and hair and grime
blended into one shade on his face. The hair on his head was
shoulder length, matted and in clumps. She hadn't seen his eyes.
She went on to Heidi's that day with Anna and ordered a salad
but only picked at it. She nodded and smiled at all the right times
to Anna's stories, but she didn't really know or care what the
woman was saying. The image of Frank kept returning, however
brief it had been.
His hands, almost black, the fingernails long with dirt imbed-
ded under them. His mouth, ruptured either from beatings or
sores, and the slow way it moved to form the words no one could
hear. His whole frame seemed bowed, as if he were constantly
taking a mental beating, or fighting off the cold. There was just one
word to describe her overall impression of him. Gray. And she
knew that if she'd been close enough to him to smell him, that he
would've had that street-person, mental illness smell, the rank sign
of neglect.
But she would never get close enough to smell him, never again.
The rest of the day, she functioned as usual, typing letters, an-
swering calls, and handling a multitude of problems that were the
everyday part of her job. Occasionally she looked down from her
20th story office window and wondered if he were among the
throngs of people below, gray and overlooked, existing only as
something to be avoided.
Yes, she knew he was there somewhere; he probably slept with
the other street people in the underpass below King Street, right
near Liberty House, the store that sold perfume that cost more
money than Frank undoubtedly saw in a year.
Or maybe he frequented the Salvation Army or the Homeless
shelter. Maybe he slept in the park and washed his clothes in the
drinking fountains and found his diner in the leftover trash from
the downtown office lunch crowd. Perhaps he was a drug addict
now, or an ex-mental patient, or an ex-con. Maybe he even killed
people.
It didn't really matter, any of it. She herself was a successful
business woman. She drove a BMW, but not to work, no place to
park. She was making enough to afford a penthouse condo, a
private school, tutor and round-the-clock babysitter for her daughter. And she had at least 20 different pairs of shoes to match her wardrobe. If that wasn't successful she didn't know what was.

She pushed herself away from her typewriter for a moment and leaned back in her chair, eyeing one of her employees a few desks away. The woman was talking to one of her kids again, that was evident by the loud, sing-song voice she used. Well, a meeting would have to be called to talk with this woman about the number of personal calls she made. It didn't matter that the woman's daughter came home to an empty house after school — the line had to be drawn somewhere. Maybe she should make it a point not to hire women with children.... But then she realized what she was saying. She too had a child, though she only saw her daughter asleep in bed at night and on weekends when she wasn't playing golf. Her daughter. Half of the gray man.

It was almost funny when she thought about her job, then thought about him. She was in charge of a whole office of people whose lives she governed. It was up to her who stayed with the company, who advanced, and who remained on a monetary treadmill. She had an impeccable reputation in the business for being able to judge people instantly, to sum them up in seconds. She could usually tell if a person was worth hiring or not.

She stood up and looked down at the street again. She wondered if she would be able to avoid Frank as easily as she had today. But then, would he even remember her after 5 years? He looked as if he didn't even remember his own name. Yes, it had been five years since he'd run off, made a fool of her, left her with half of his flesh. She wondered what she would have done if he had turned today and focused his dour gaze on her. And she wondered, for the millionth time, why he'd left, and what he'd found out there on the streets that he preferred to living with her.