

AGORA



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Agora

"Birthplace of Democracy, the Agora dozes at the foot of the Acropolis. Athenians thronged here to discuss, harangue, litigate, philosophize."

Volume XXXIV Spring 2000

Agora is the literary publication of
Belmont Abbey College,
funded by the college and
organized with the help of the
Abbey Writing Center.

Belmont Abbey College, 100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road, Belmont, NC 28012

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The *Agora* is created and produced by the students of Belmont Abbey College. About 500 copies are printed locally at International Minute Press, Gastonia. *Agora* is produced using Aldus Pagemaker 6.5 and incorporates AGaramond Book Condensed at 11 and 12 point sizes and typestyle. The cover is Graphika Adobe 80lb. and the text is Cream 60lb.

A hundred years ago....

St. Mary's College,

BELMONT, GASTON COUNTY, N. C.

We are happy to announce to our patrons and friends that St. Mary's College will reopen Sept. 15th. The burned parts of the College have not only been restored but various improvements were added, which place St. Mary's among the most perfect College buildings in the Country.

The Electric Light System is all that can be desired. Steam Heating has been put into all parts of the buildings thus giving a uniform temperature.

A perfect system of fire protection, up to date in every particular, lends security after our late experience.

The Sanitary Plumbing, put in under the superintendence of the City Inspector of Charlotte, Mr. T. C. Toomey, is not only a comfort, but also a safe-guard against sickness. Steel ceilings, tastefully painted, make every room pleasing to the eye. No expense was spared to promote the health and comfort of our Students.

Studies will be resumed Monday, Sept. 17, 8 a. m.

Examination and classification Sept. 15, 3 p. m.

Solemn opening services Sunday, Sept. 16, 10 a. m.

† LEO HAID, O. S. B., President.
F. BERNARD, O. S. B., Rector.

Cover Photo

Photographed by Danielle Linchan, which she entitles "Antiquites Gate".

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Innocence Lost

Miranda Locky

Questions of motive and standard
blocked clear sightedness
until hindsight seemed sweeter
because it no longer makes a difference.
Thoughts of love are lost for lust
or what else there to do?
She screams in stereo of things she wants
to watch bystanders nod in agreement.
And smoke swirls
of innocence lost
or wasted
or thrown out as it chased her conscience
that only the first time.
The mirrors of animation
add color to an otherwise mundane routine
that glorifies pop culture
and the reckless habits of unruly teenagers
with the "I can't remembers" piling up
as a security blanket
locks graciously into place
making it ok for her to open wide
and let something new invade her inside.
Pretending not to see it at all,
reluctantly,
even in hindsight.
But even though all things aren't the way they used to be
in the dreams and longings of aspiration,
these are concrete decisions
brought on by starry-eyed whispers
that linger like the butterfly kisses
growing along her spine.
Taking comfort in the things that stay
hoping what will won't hurt like things before.
All of this rests in the awkward pleasures of the politically incorrect relationships
between not quite disgruntled coworkers
as sexual harassment hangs thick
like the wool over everyone's eyes.

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Life

Joey Armstrong

As I walk into this darkened place
I look to God and pray for his grace;
My stride is rhythmically sound,
To somewhere in the East I am bound
With Christ as my champion my heart still pounds.

As I see illusions dance around
I look upon the world with a frown
For all my life I have been pushed down
But now I share in Jesus' crown
I will float away in happiness;
Released from my worries, no longer bound.

My despair diminished.

My trifles demolished.

My sins abolished.

Along a new path I now travel
On new feet I walk through the gravel.
The sunshine I see, on my way
God has given me a gift this day
It is this life that I am living away.

Pause—— I must give thanks to the Lord
For his requisite love His constant care and light from above.

Humbly I cry for the Holy Spirit's guidance

For it fills me with great confidence

As I attempt to perform before the Lord's audience.

Upon which I reflect on my story

All the time spent away from his glory.

Life is slowing down, coming to the end

It has come to this, I am not alone

No longer is search for a friend.

God is all I need

This is my final creed

He has never left me,

What more could one ask for

As I walk through the final door

On to the heavenly floor

The place I will spend eternity

One of grace, love and serenity.

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Prayer of the Prudent

Jane Russell

Plenty of bread at the feast of life, you have plenty of bread to share.

—M. Haugen, based on Mark 6:35-44

Here is good news
I'm too shrewd to believe.
If I really believed in abundance of life,
I wouldn't keep hoarding those piles
of books and old class notes,
caches of chocolates,
scraps of praise.

Life shows us limits
and counsels reserve.
We've been hungry
and done without.
We have coveted glory
apportioned to others,
hungered and thirsted for love.

Yet here in the face of
a hard-knocks world
comes a mad song of trust.
"You who thirst, come to the waters,
All you who hunger, come, receive bread."

If we are once watered
to the roots of our souls,
can we grow into children of love?

Unstinting Host,
help me unclench my fingers
and spend down my hoards,
trusting in manna
that cannot be stored.

Winter Unwhite

Jane Russell

December pansies
startle; yellow on violet,
spill of wine on gold.

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Going to Bed with Satan

Miranda Lockey

The window shut
as so many worlds ended around her
in the form of forgotten words
she promised to deliver tomorrow.
And her thoughts twist in her head
like wrinkled sheets and dirty clothes
that line the floor around her
not empty yet bed.

She thinks herself shallow
when she realizes she's been given a choice
but luck seems to have dampened that reality
with the not-so-recent lack of developments
that force her to put vanity aside
for meaningless relationships
that linger in dark hallways and behind half shut doors
to creep up when no one expects them to resurface
with torrents of promises
that sound more like threats of blackmail.

Goodness as the highest freedom
stopped working
when the philosophers of real life took over
so much so that she no longer bothers to care
about any of the reasons people aren't models of morality,
a mistake that seems more intelligent
as she sees through more and more less than honest individuals.
She cringes when she laughs at herself for thinking them friends.

But only Satan can look straight through the lens
and create no inner emotion in the photograph.

Was that who it was
With his over-bearing opinion
and relentless lack of social skill
he slipped past her guard
to make her hate him
when she doesn't like to not like people.

He makes her reevaluate her opinion
Not because he controls them
but because she's trying to be difficult

so he'll go away
and she can sleep with something that feels good
for a change
because with him she sleeps too much.

Thinking about being shallow
It was a lie
because he was insane.

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Taker

Jane Kessler

In the shadow of darkness
a lonely soul weeps
tears flow freely
eyes filled with only despair.

Concerns and suspicions reveal truth,
in due time,
Embracing a decision that must be made
Smothering the life within.

Struggling against illusions of the mind,
Reality prevails-he steadily approaches,
not for a bodily passing
but that of an ideal... a moral.

Sapping the strength
there appears no fight
only acceptance of what cannot be changed

Grief grips thy heart with ceaseless needs,
only following the bleak and dark deeds
of the one known as the taker.

He prays upon the life
of the one with strife.
He's not man's maker.

Cloaked in darkness
at times, he bestows kindness
to ease the pain of those he sought.

Invisible to the human eye,
he eventually seeks both you and I;
known as only... Death.

Let's Play

Edmond Medina

Walk in the field,
day not so gray,
sun hidden,
come on let's play.

Kids again,
running wild and free,
tag you're it,
come chase me.

Tell each other stories,
make me believe in your mind,
Cover your eyes,
it's me you try to find.

Lazy days,
under the tree,
stay here for awhile,
let's just be free.

Catch the ball,
play in the rain,
evening comes,
tomorrow we'll start again.

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My Child

Rachel Sanders

As I walk across the sunset beach,
the cool sand seethes between my toes.
and I feel the cool breeze sweep across my face.
Like a child sporting for attention,
the wind zips past me,
whistling into my ears,
mocking me,
and letting me know that autumn is almost near.
Watching it play,
I am amused,
and I laugh as I stroll along the sea.

And although it saddens me to see the summer wane away,
I am filled with joy to see what the changing season shall bring.
Cooler breezes and stronger winds that sway the trees,
releasing the leaves in droves of little funnels
before they glide upon the earth.

As time takes her course,
I find myself watching as she knocks upon winter's door.
Gone is the gentle breeze that I once knew.
Before me now is a strong spirit,
able to stand alone,
and ready to be set free.

As the wind beats upon my windowpanes with the sleet and the snow,
I'll be inside.
Smiling.
Detecting still a hint of my little child
That I once watched playing on the beach.

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She Plays the Music

Amanda Stokes

She paints her own reality, recognizing all the colors.
Marking time by her experiences.
There is an openness in her mind, in her heart, a childlike wonder in her eyes...
Splashing insanity, peppered with grace, playful thought and compassion.
She can warm your heart.
She is everywoman
Sarcastic, ambitious, afraid, unsure, and worried,
knowing she'll be o.k.
Breathtaking.
She plays the music.
Living her life simply because she can;
for the stories, for the sadness, for the times that make your eyes twinkle, for peaceful sleep,
hectic schedules, angry people, and for contentment.
There is a quietness in her that juxtaposes her exciting charm.
She quiet-reflexive, conservative with her alone-time thoughts,
While wildly wasting and ranting and dancing to the music in her mind...
A beautiful smiling face, the kind that can warm a room grows everyday into womanhood.
When she tells you a story you can almost see laughter dripping
off her eyes and wandering down her face.
Like the beat of a bongo drum
Different and dancing
Rhythmic and strange
A drumbeat that plays a toestomptatapable kind of song.
A rhymed and commanding pulse, so strong and reaching,
Ready to be heard.
This rhythm so contagious painted like a smiling freckled soul,
peaking from behind careless hair,
peering over a babbling guitar,
harmonizing for the bongo beat:
Deliberate, entertaining-peaceful.
Dancing
Dance beat provoking spirit.
Dance beat playful reality
Dance beating life.
A lovely childlike magic, weaving into intoxicating wonder.
Our dreams are responsible for our reality,
and are made manifest in a soul's imagination.

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vague and confusing

Matt Memrick

579 miles from Belmont proper, a broken phonebooth hides off some superhighway near some ancient historical marker about someone who died long ago. The metal phonecord has been ripped out of the phone and the receiver is busted. **It's relatively old. It's relatively new.**

Phone numbers riddle the booth like bullets. Black shoes, bare feet, shoes without souls pass through, sometimes picking up gum or single pages from the 1992 telephone book on the way out. Worthless, semi-burnt flyers that don't give or get the message, are pasted all over the booth. Messages tell of God and good times in some 704 area codes, miles away though. One of the glass panes is cracked where somebody tried to put their frustrated hand through. Others accept messages that give the time as 4:20, the time everybody gets together to smoke up. Written over there, a couple Swastikas here, a couple of Dead lyrics there and then....

One message written in pencil. Talks something about the texture and the diverse color of black and silver walls. Claims that, "this was an original phonebooth from the early 1900s." Then, over top of it, a red scribble proclaims that the message is, "vague and confusing." This message goes unnoticed, sitting there vertically vanquished..

The coin bank's been broken into a few times, ever since the prices went up. The phone company keeps promising to come, but they often drive by it on the interstate, getting distracted by the waterfalls and pretty statues. The people come and go, trying to use it. It's funny to watch. They try to clean or preserve it, but then they leave with the angry-flavored gum on their animated shoes. Yet somebody approves of it. Somebody used their imagination to steal the number 1 and last week, someone crossed the letters DE and TV out on the dial pad. Somebody's got some use for it. It's still there. Till somebody comes along and jacks it to their home for their own appreciation. Don't worry or care. You'll get stuck along the side of the road. Get a cell phone.

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Nehemiah Owen

Stones
Kevin Bezner

I have known
happiness

holding in my
palms stones

I knew I must
leave

wherever
I found them

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A Day Late

D. M. Stokes

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The End of West and Practically Everything Else Mike Hood

After the unfortunate business with her boyfriend, Chad, Alice had resolved two things: first, never to date seriously again, and second, to change her major from English to Women's Studies. WS 101 had opened her eyes to pattern of gender abuse on a grand scale. This had given her the focus she needed during the painful healing process. Men were impossible, a royal pain in the you know what. Her experience with Chad had taught her that much. She hummed again the little ditty from her grade school days,

Boys go to Jupiter to get more stupider; Girls go to college to get more knowledge.

"Amen" to that," she said. Every last one of them could go to Jupiter for all she cared. Hearing her own voice was a comfort; it affirmed the presence of a self she'd almost lost down the dark rabbit-hole of romance.

"Girls go to college to get more knowledge." More knowledge is what she intended to get, too. She'd be a walking encyclopedia, a cornucopia of facts; she'd continue to develop a feminist perspective, get a handle on the big picture. She'd work hard, she'd learn, she'd grow to be as big as she needed to be.

Like a mantra, she sang the little two-line ditty again and again. There was lilt in her step as she walked across campus on a storybook autumn afternoon. She was headed to Jabberwocky Hall, which housed the English Department, where she had an interview with Professor H. Dumpte (pronounced dum-TAY). "Accent aigu on the e," he had said on the phone, as if it were a matter of the greatest importance. She was going to be his research assistant.

Professor Dumpte's office was on the third floor at the end of a long, dimly lit, tunnel-like hall. Alice felt anxious; the euphoria of a few moments ago had disappeared. Large metallic numbers, 364, were nailed to the lintel above the door which was slightly ajar. Alice heard someone talking inside. She waited. A raspy, nasal voice carefully articulated the same words over and over again, but with different emphasis each time. "*Time flies like an arrow*," the voice said, as if enunciating a great truth. And then "*Time flies like an arrow*," as if "time flies" like "house flies" were partial to arrows. At this point, the sequence began again. Alice waited for at least five minutes before knocking on the door. I drifted open and banged against the door stop.

"Who are you?" the raspy, nasal voice asked? Alice could not see where the sound was coming from. "Who are you?" it asked again with a different emphasis. Then, with more insistence, "Who are you?"

"I am Alice," she said. Her voice had become childlike, its resonance gone. Looking around the room to find her interlocutor, she spotted him perched on the seat of an enormous chair, the back of which nearly touched the ten-foot ceiling. He was the oddest looking fellow she'd ever seen. There were tiny arms and legs protruding from a round, oversized trunk, which extended upward to form his head. His complexion, if you could call it that, was matte white.

"Why I've never seen such an enormous chair!" Alice said, forgetting herself for the moment.

"I've never seen such an impertinent student!" he scolded.

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Alice felt her face redden. Trying to recover herself, she said, "I meant to say that I've never seen such an attractive chair."

"It's endowed," he said, the edge leaving his voice.

"Yes indeed!" said Alice. "That's really what I intended to say."

"Idiot!" he said. "Endowed means that someone else paid for it."

"I certainly hope so," Alice said.

"No, No, No," he said, banging his little fists on the cushion of the chair. "My salary is paid for by an endowment. I am," he said putting his little hands in his coat lapels and thrusting out his chest, "I am the Vorpil B. Slithy Professor of Post-Modernism and Deconstruction at this esteemed institution. My Slithy, who made his fortune in the demolition and salvage business, left the bulk of his estate to the University."

"It's a lofty chair, indeed, judging from appearances," Alice said, trying to mollify the professor.

"Appearances are everything," he said with conviction. "Things are what you say they are, or not, if you desire to say something else."

"I don't think I understand," Alice said.

"Take your name, for example," he said.

"It's Alice," she said to remind him.

"I know that!" he said, knitting his brows. "Do you know what 'Alice' means in a conventional sense?" Before she could tell him she hadn't the slightest idea, he answered his own question, "It means 'noble cheer.'"

"I'm pleased to learn that," Alice said.

"But it might just as well have been 'fallow deer' or 'bottled beer' or 'rotting pier,' and so on ad infinitum," he said with the dismissive wave of one of his little arms as his body tipped over backwards onto the seat of his chair.

As the top of the professor's head disappeared from sight, Alice gave a little gasp. As soon as he bobbed back into view, he grabbed the edge of the chair to regain his balance, cleared his throat, and repeated himself, as if nothing had happened.

"... and so on ad infinitum," he said.

Alice pretended not to notice that he'd nearly somersaulted off the chair, saying that she had no objections to "fallow deer," but she couldn't imagine any parent naming a child "bottled beer" or "rotting pier."

"You've missed the point yet again!" he shouted, raising both little fists in the air.

"I'm sorry to be so slow," Alice said apologetically.

"Nota bene," he said, trying to steady his voice while pointing an instructive finger ceilingward. "Nota bene," he said again, "there is absolutely no necessary connection between the sound of a word and what the sound refers to. Take, for example, the spherical-like object hens lay: It's ovum in Latin, oeuf in French, ei in German, and egg in English. Four different sounds for the same object." Looking directly at Alice, he said, "What must we conclude from this?"

"That a poached egg, let's say" Alice ventured, "that a poached egg will taste one way to a Frenchman and another way to a German or Englishman?"

"Precisely!" said the professor. "If you change the word, you alter the reality. We can never know the thing in itself, but only by way of metaphors and metonymies. There is, whether you chose to like it or not, an irreducible gap between res and verba, between the things of this world and the

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signs which point to them."

Alice was pleased to have given a correct answer, but the word "gap" sadly made her think how smart she looked in the new jeans she'd bought to please Chad. That was before he told her they needed to let their "relationship" breathe a bit because he felt he was "not good enough for her." Hal. What a load.

"You could say, then," the professor continued, "the only connection between subject and object, that is, between your mind and reality, is aesthetic so that the entire world is a text, and humans, whose very ground of being is language, live exclusively by the fictions they create."

"In that case," Alice said, "I'm grateful 'Alice' means 'noble cheer'; otherwise, I might have been someone quite different than I am."

"Not so fast, missy!" he said in the way chess players announce checkmate. "Seen in another way, 'Alice' is 'all ice.' Your name, at its very core, is based on a series of oppositions, in which "cheer" is privileged over "ice"; that is to say, hot is privileged over cold, affectionate over distant, assertive over shy, intelligent over insipid."

"I see," said Alice, wondering if this explained her problems with men.

"You," said the professor pointing an accusing finger at Alice, "you are, your name is, a paradigm for all that has been wrong with Western thought for the last two-thousand five-hundred years! In your own mind, you have privileged the first set of terms (hot, affectionate, assertive, intelligent) over the second (cold, distant, shy, insipid) in order to give your being presence, to provide a center for your consciousness."

The Women's Studies curriculum had certainly encouraged her in that direction. Would it be possible, she wondered, to work for this man? For this . . . "egghead." The thought caught her by surprise.

"What could you possibly find humorous about this subject?" he said, looking down on her from his endowed perch, his elbows jutting out, the sides of his coat pushed back by two impatient fists thrust against his belt, or was it his collar? Alice couldn't be sure.

"Actually very little, Professor," Alice said as contritely as she was able. "My mind was just being metaphorical."

"There's no other way it could possibly be," he shot back with an armor-piercing glare.

"Please continue," she said sitting down in a small folding chair and placing her hands in her lap with palms up to indicate her receptivity.

"As I was saying, Western metaphysics has done the same thing you've done with your name. It has done so, as you have, in a useless attempt to plug the gap between the sign's signifier and signified, between the word and the thing, to provide a center for each of its numerous philosophical systems. But, given the nature of language, there can be no point of presence, no fixed origin, no foundation, no center. Terms such as *eidos*, *arché*, *telos*, God, reason, and so on, simply represent a long parade of successive center substitutions."

The center can not hold, Alice thought to herself, and felt like slouching back to her dorm room.

"And, like your name, Western thought is based on a series of polarities in which one set of terms privileged over another in order to create presence upon which a center can be founded. For example, good is privileged over evil, being over nothingness, presence over absence, truth over error, identity over difference, soul over body, nature over civilization, speech over writing, life over death, man over woman..."

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As he recited each of these oppositions, with ever-increasing speed, the pitch of his voice spiraled upward. Also one of the professor's arm began jerking from side to side: a jerk to the right when he said "good," a jerk to left when he said "evil"; a jerk to the right when he said "being," a jerk to the left when he said "nothingness"; and so on until he got to the "man over woman" opposition at which point he nearly jerking himself over the side of the chair. Alice immediately jumped up and ran to the base of the chair. Was this, she wondered, some bizarre type of deconstructive frenzy.

"Are you all right?" she shouted up to the professor. After a moment, she saw him peer over the edge of the chair.

"There is no need to shout," he shouted back. "I was an excellent tumbler in my day. Besides, if you had been paying attention, you would have deduced from my comments that gravity is merely a social construction, like gender and numerous other metaphorical residua."

As he attempted to right himself, Alice envisioned a road stretching out before her paved with evil, nothingness, absence, error, and death, all leading to woman. What a downer! No wonder she felt a bit tentative about herself. Ms. Bandersnatch, her Women's Studies advisor, had repeatedly assured that the world was configured entirely by patriarchy. But was sisterhood the only answer? Or was feminism just another in a long line of center substitutions, a fiction, waiting to be deconstructed by the likes of Professor Dumpte?

"Before I leave," Alice said to the professor, who had by now rethroned himself after the considerable labored breathing, "could you kindly tell me what I will be doing as your research assistant?"

He immediately gave Alice the fishy. "One moment," he said suspiciously, reaching behind his back to produce a computer printout about as thick as a Reuben's sandwich. He unfurled it by grasping the top sheet and hurling the remainder over the side of his chair. The bottom half of the printout nearly hit Alice in the head.

"Oh!" Alice exclaimed, jumping back a step.

"Last name, please?"

"Liddell," Alice said.

There must have been hundreds of names on the list. Were these all Professor Dumpte's research assistants?"

"Ah! Here it is." As he refolded the printout, he gave her a little set speech. "Ms. Liddell," he said, "you, along with countless others, will be assisting me in deconstructing the entire Western literary canon. This is an undertaking on a scale comparable to that of the human genome project. I will assign a work of literature to you each week; your job will be to chart the binary opposition in that work. Then, based on your analysis, I will collapse those oppositions. Is that clear?"

"Yes, I think so" said Alice.

"Tell me, then, what binary oppositions or B.O. informs the following:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours..."

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"That's a sonnet by Wordsworth!" Alice exclaimed. "I love that poem!"

"I'm not interested in your likes and dislikes. The B.O., please."

"Let's see," Alice said. "Is it getting vs. spending money?"

"Wrong!" he said scowling.

Alice looked at the floor. "Could it possibly be, uh... conserving vs. wasting power?"

"Wrong!" he said, throwing up his hands. "Then let me tell you. It's an opposition at the very core of the entire Wordsworthian oeuvre: nature is privileged over civilization as it clearly is for all Romantics. "Does the opposition hold? Absolutely not!" A little fist came crashing down on a little palm. Alice flinched. "Wordsworth's lament for the lack of presence, which he thinks he'll find in nature, has absence as its starting point, which is made possible by civilization. In other words, difference produces what it forbids, creates a longing for what it cannot fulfill."

In her exasperation, Alice asked, "But what's the point of all of this?"

"Twofold! First, to affirm playfulness." For emphasis one little digit mechanically popped up on his right hand. "When there is no longer the possibility of a center to hold any given interpretation together, what is left but to embrace the play of signs within any given text? However, it's play without security, without a net." That was obvious to Alice from where she was standing. "The second purpose is to eradicate cruelty." Another finger shot up. "If there are not privileged positions, then all views are equally valid or invalid, as the case may be, and the foundations for discrimination, hatred, and war are eliminated."

"But doesn't your stance against cruelty assume a center like Christian charity?"

Alice had scarcely finished her question, when the professor shouted, "DISMISSED!"

"What?" Alice said, not fully comprehending the situation.

"DISMISSED!" he shouted again. By now he had struggled to his feet, standing at full height on the seat of his chair. "GET OUT! YOU ARE DISMISSED!"

As she fled the room, Alice turned for a final look at the professor. With both little fists clenched, he was jumping up and down on his endowed chair, screaming, "DISMISSED! DISMISSED! DISMISSED!"

As she emerged from the dark hall, a heavy crash shook the building from end to end. Back outside, to calm herself, she softly repeated:

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses,
And all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

Then, in response to the question posed by the riddle 16, what was Humpty Dumpty? She whispered the answer: "An egg."

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With regards to one of your militant bumperstickers...

Christopher Sabatini

Ok, yeah, fine, I'll admit it,
It's true, and Girls really do Kick Ass.
As you've shown me, you-their recently volunteered spokesperson,
For who else can rip out a heart and
Leave me still alive?

No one else, now, because it's already been done.
But when the wound heals I foolish I,
I am sure, will find a new part of me to offer up
To someone just as wounded and cruel
Until piece by piece I am disturbed
Among a few Ass Kicking Girls in a small corner of the world.

Take this body it is my bread,
Take this blood it is my wine...

Love is slow, involuntary suicide.

the house
David Beaumont

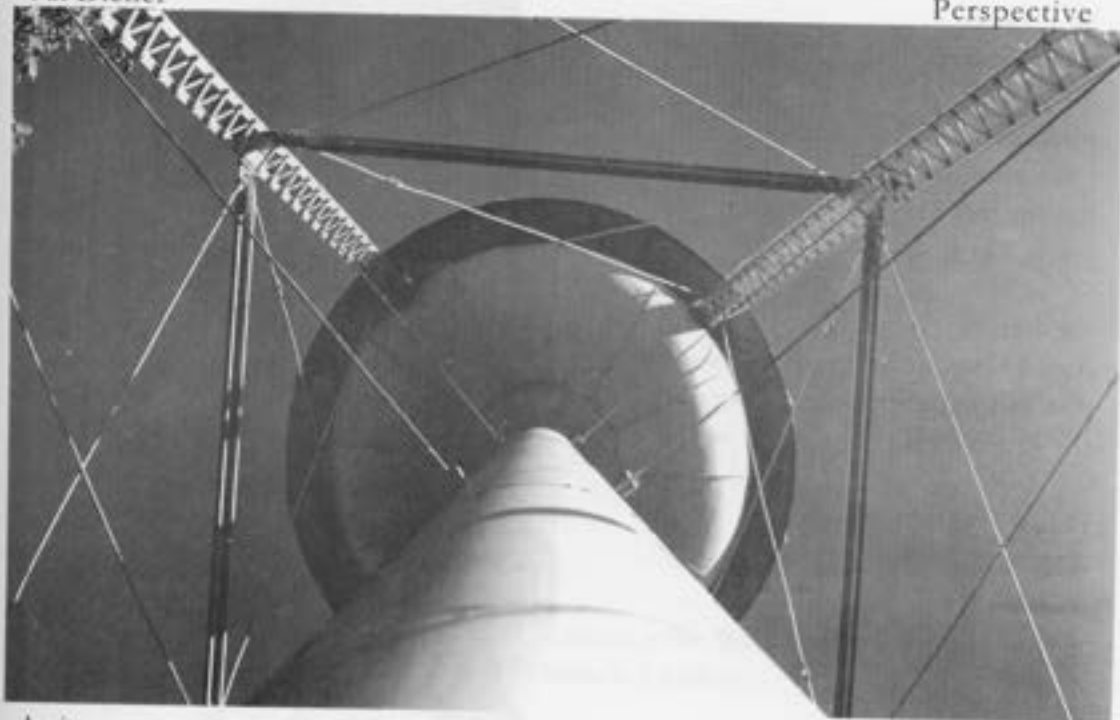
scattered, smattered, and covered
late at night in the right hand
booth adjacent to the bullet-proof
window.

how I love them mayonnaise packets
and small-talk truckerized things of
route 66 seventy-seven or 49 down
some lonesome highway creeping
up from the lizardmen and bar-beer
bellied thugs just waitin' to get their
greasy hands on a homemade slice
of a waffle sandwich.

Agora 2000

Pat Diener

Perspective



Again

Kevin Beza

Sitting at dusk
TV news in

the background
thinking

of the woodpecker
I saw this morning

climbing
up the oak when

clearing my mind
I looked

An Ode to Organic Chemistry

Jane Kessler

Eating, sleeping, dating Org...
Late nights, early mornings;
Consumed only by it.
What was I thinking?

Confusion, frustration, hallucination
I think... I don't... Maybe
Understand? Ya, right!
Will it ever end?

Agora 2000

To a friend-
Chris Iwancio

no one knew what to think
i was waiting for you to come
but she told me you were gone
you left so soon

the dreams you had
now shine in the heavens as stars
your love sends ripples across our memories
the joy, a seed you planted in our hearts

the sun will shine again
angel sent from above
we miss you



Grandpa

Gary Bowers

Agora 2000



A.D. 79

Danielle Linehan

Tomorrow We Wake
Danielle Linehan

I waited for tomorrow
It came as expected
Pure bliss, a night of love
Twisted bodies and groping hands
Alcohol flavored breath seduced one another
Traveling to the unknown world of ecstasy
We lived for the moment
Rules and morals were cast aside
Our naked forms grasped to be one
We loved as should not love
We dreamed the unobtainable dream
Tomorrow we wake, and then ignore one
another

Agora 2000

Life
Jane Kessler

We all make decisions about our
individual lives,
but do we really understand their impact
or are the end results just illusions of
something better...hopeful ideals.
Small or large, they rule everyday life.

Just Another Name
Joey Armstrong

"To be or not to be"
That was once the question

But now "Who am I" and "What do I
stand for" is our new acquisition.

Who is in control
And what is my role

Many stumble through life
Looking for answers

They all look like
Off beat dancers

The pursuit of knowledge
Makes one wiser

While claims of ignorance
Make one miser

So pause now and think
Because life can pass in a blink

And find yourself
Before you're packed away on a shelf

Become a new person
Not just a name.

Agora 2000

Jean S. Moore Award Recipient

The Jean S. Moore Award was established in 1998 in memory of the late Jean S. Moore, an Abbey English professor. Each year the recipient of this award receives publication in Agora and a cash prize of fifty dollars. This year's award was received by Christopher Sabatini. This award represents top submission as judged by the editorial staff and is based on creativity and originality.

Don't Build a Box About My Body
Lines Composed in Contemplation of The Heavy Church
Christopher Sabatini

All this time untimely wasted,
We watch our watches unwind.
As lives we've lived like wines untasted
Spoil within this mind.

I'll never find a faith unfounded
For followers who follow the truth.
I'll never grind a ground ungrounded
To flower such forlorn youth.

May we bake a bread unbroken
To heal this haunted home?
As we seek to starve this sickness
To which we all are prone?

But for far corners lightly lighted,
But for far darkness dim,
There are no doors which can contain us,
No walls we're held within.

Agora 2000



D.U.I.

Miranda Lockey

Agora 2000

Melville's Dick
Matt Memrick

pine away slowly
forget the mashing of teeth and resumes
for the drunken puke is too slippery on the poop deck
the night has come and erased the day once again
but the question remains when to turn and run

pine away slowly
within half a decade, the average life of a good mast rope
because ship building needs little money
new sails are a luxury and old can be replaced with new
and somehow, the journey keeps going on and on
there is that ironic feeling of getting screwed that feels good

pine away slowly
when your leaders refuse to see and everything seems so
perfect anyway on your hundred year-old ship
until someone blurts that "there he blows"
and all you peoples feel good again,
comfortable in ignorance

pine away slowly
the boat is falling apart,
its planks split, its people divided
just maybe it is naturally free and elementary
cursing and cussing all the way throughout the day
into the night

Agora 2000

Labor Day, 1996

Jane Russell

In the last blaze of summer,
Wonder Lake townsfolk turn out in droves
for a final display of prize-winning form
by the local Water Ski Show Team:
1996 National Champions,
best in the land!

We visitors jostle with natives
for viewing space, placing our chairs
and blankets as near as can be to center beach.
First, the predictable speeches
review recent growth of the art form
and factors in judging. We hear the praises
of Wonder Lake's hard-working kids.

At last, boats rev up. Skiers in Spandex
begin to whiz by. They ski forwards
and backwards, crisscrossing, slalom or barefoot.
We see the latest in freestyle jumping,
"pinwheels" and "helicopters"
launched from the ramp.

From gymnastics, the tone turns
to buildups of beauty. Chorus lines wave
while towed past by their toes.
Male backs and shoulders bear layers
of females; doubles and pyramids build.

Inside me memories stir, ancient connections
with pools, lakes and water ballets.
Though land-lubber friends will haul me away,
the water nymph I once was, awakened,
will splash through my spirit for days.



The American Agora

Chris Iwancio

Contributors

Joey Armstrong is a sophomore from Charlotte, NC. He intends to major in Biology and is a resident advisor.

David Beaumont is a sophomore from Huntersville, NC.

Kevin Bezner has published three collections of poetry, most recently the book-length poem Particularities. He teaches part time in the English Department at the Abbey.

Gary James Bowers is a sophomore Political Science major from Thomasville, NC. He is involved in numerous organizations on campus. His artistic talents come from his creative parents and his training from the great Janice Cooper and the North Carolina Governor's School.

Pat Diener is a sophomore from Charlotte, NC. Among many activities like The Crusader, he spends too much time taking pictures.

Mike Hood is Director of the Great Books program and an Associate Professor of English at Belmont Abbey College.

Christopher Iwancio is a sophomore from Baltimore, MD. While being a co-editor of The Crusader, he is too active at the Abbey.

Jane Kessler is a senior Biology major from Seneca, Pennsylvania.

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Matt Memrick is a senior English major from Durham, NC. He finishes work on the *Agora* for four years and would like to thank Ellen Weir, Lynn Varn, Tucker Hearn, Jennifer Torpey and Miranda Lockey as well as many others for their patience, time, and assistance.

Nehemiah Owen, a junior from Birmingham, AL, studies Business and Communications at Belmont Abbey.

Sr. Jane Elyse Russell, OSF is Chair and assistant Professor of Theology at BAC. She formerly taught theology and served as campus minister at Creighton University, Omaha, NE (1982-91) and also served as a member of the School Sisters of St. Francis U.S. Provincial Team in Milwaukee, WI (1991-99).

Christopher Sabatini is a writer of poetry, prose, short stories, and songs. He claims America as his home generally, and Charlotte, NC as his home particularly. He has been a student of Belmont Abbey College for four years (with a slight necessary interruption), and upon graduation hopes this year to discern plans or notions as to what to do after graduation. Any further evidence or claim that he is responsible for anything else at all is wholly ungrounded.

Rachel Sanders is a junior Biology major who enjoys writing in her spare time.

Amanda Stokes is a senior Sociology major with a minor in Psychology.

D.M. Stokes, a 1982 alumnus of Belmont Abbey College, lives with his wife Felice and their two children, Tyler and Corinne, in Belmont. Serving his alma mater as an administrator, Denis makes no claims as a photographer, only a deep appreciation for anyone with artistic ability.

Jennifer Torpey is a senior Sociology major from Asheville, NC.

Agora is published by students every spring at Belmont Abbey College. Next year, submissions of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, plays, photos, graphic arts and pen-and-ink drawings can be submitted during the year or during the submission round in January.

Submitted literary works must be typed in duplicate. A cover sheet containing a name, address, telephone number, and a brief biographical profile along with the titles of submissions must be included. Copies and/or photographs should be attached with submitted photographs and drawings. Submissions not meeting these requirements will not be accepted.

Annually, the Jean S. Moore Award will be awarded by the editorial board to the top literary submission. The winning entry will receive a cash prize of fifty dollars and be recognized in *Agora*. Notification will be in April.

To submit work or to ask for more details, write to:

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Special Thanks to:

The Abbey English Department
The Abbey Writing Center
Office of Academic Affairs
Eric Bates
Deborah Heath
Fr. Paschal Baumstein
Kristin Foliano
International Minute Press, Gastonia



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