



agora

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Athens, showing a dense grid of streets and a river winding through it. A prominent bridge is visible in the lower right quadrant. The image is in grayscale and serves as the background for the text.

agora

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

**volume 36
spring 2002**

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

Agora Staff

Editors

Gary Bowers
Miranda Lockey

Production Editor

Erin Walker

Production Assistants

Elizabeth Elliott
John Withers

Coffeehouse Coordinators

Miranda Lockey
Erin Walker

Moderator

Martin Harris

The *Agora* is created and produced by the students of Belmont Abbey College. About 500 copies are printed locally at Tathwell Printing Company in Charlotte, North Carolina. *Agora* is produced using Aldus Pagemaker 6.5 and incorporates VAG Rounded Light font.

Cover and Title Page art by Gary Bowers.

Table of Contents

agora 2002

4	Colder Kisses	Miranda Lockey
5	Frozen in Time	Christopher Iwancio
6	I Promise, I'll Never Drink Again	Jennifer Gabriel
7	The Abbey Experience	Gregory C. Copeny, Jr.
8	Free World Rocking	Matthew Memrick
9	Concert	S. Jane Russell
	Awake	Kevin Bezner
10	Yellow Green Tennis Balls	John Withers, IV
11	Palm Tree	Miranda Lockey
12	Slasher	Dana Crist
13	Good Times	Miranda Lockey
14	Weeping for the Streets	Andy Fenstermaker
15	The Journal	Kevin Bezner
16	Camille	Sara du Sablon
17	Requiem for 3310 Cardenas Avenue	Christopher Iwancio
18	Shed	Andy Fenstermaker
19	Requiem	Sara du Sablon*
20	Tiger Eyes	Nora Fleming
21	Seventh Sense	Dana Crist
	The Noble Duel	Sara Jordan
22	Brighter than the Sun	Erin Walker
23	The Cost of Excess	C. J. Zaworski
24	Too Young to be This Old	S. Jane Russell
25	Rocky	Jenn Gabriel
26	The Gifting Gone	Miranda Lockey
27	Bookshelf	Amy Heishman
28	Jim	Anne Mercedes Gibson
29	Wood Pile	Jennifer Gabriel
30	Maquillage Revisited	Matthew Memrick
31	High School	Anne Mercedes Gibson
32	Forbidden	Lougene Webber

* Recipient of the Jean S. Moore Award

Colder Kisses
dripped

rage

before the last
"I told you so!"
received a rebuttal
of indifference.

Then throw around words
and plans,
only to be ignored

for a greater cause;
no (a sultry sigh)...

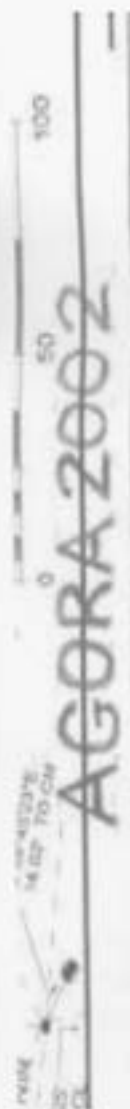
too conceited to be
acknowledged.

Stagnant waters
produce nothing good,

so get caught up
in infamy and
sometimes good times,

only to remember
you are always
the same.

Miranda Lockey





Frozen in Time

Christopher Iwancio



I Promise, I'll Never Drink Again

Jennifer Gabriel

The Abbey Experience

It's a small unique community
Not a lot of activity
It has become another home for me
3 long years at BAC

We've made our school a wonderful place
Athletes and scholars meeting face to face

From here to there they come to play
We laugh, we cry, we even still pray
Yes school sucks, I announce it every day
After May 11th I'll no longer stay
For then I'll miss it more and more each day
Using my Abbey experience, to help guide my way
What did I happen to learn today?
Maybe a new formula or how to improve my J
Either lesson shall not lead me astray
So my experience, let it delay

Month to month, season to season
In order to go on we search for a reason

Searching all over we turn to each other
A friend as cousin, a sister or brother
At times we might even ask our mother
Then we find that one precious lover

What has this experience done for u?
Maybe taught u about love, or given u a new doo

Have I yet grown to care for my school?
Even though that doesn't sound cool
I would rather suffer another year than to be counted as a fool
a necessary inconvenience is what's become of this institutional tool

in more ways than not, my experience has been a plus
Until death has its say, I'll believe in my heart, this place in my life,
was truly a must

Free world rocking

Detainees and or honored guests, Americans - where have you gone?
California? Again? Where do our heads of state hide them?
Where can your freedom of attorney attorneys find you? Right(s)?

We feared. Then, we stopped thinking about our huddled masses to let our
imagination
soar like the crop dusters that once did over lowan fields and forests.
Now - the morn is set to the norm with a million staring, fearful eyes
and a million uncomfortable feelings. And then we say:

Holy sheet! Unwrap their sheets! Towelheads!
Liberate their women - bring them to the American way!
Shave their men's faces so we can see them!
We've got them on the run!

Brothers of Joseph, Brothers of Judah, unite!
(Give me tolerance as the parade queues get longer,
the stickers and shimmering ribbons get brighter,
and the howls of the old get louder at the sight of flags
on the teenagers driving their luxury imports.)

(Give me comfort as Arab, Alabama gets a little more removed every night
as its residents look at each other and wonder - who's next.)

Hope they're treating you with dignity that only they can imagine.
(don't post this on the internet - that nosy Carnivore program might get it.)

Matthew Memrick

Concert

In afterglow
when day is done
the orange clouds
still see the sun
and sing its worth
to mortal eyes on earth.

S. Jane Russell

Awake

Out walking the woods
on a cold day, eating
an apple, leaves all turned to,

but a few, reds and yellows,
and the larch yellow too.
Sky gray. Snow soon.

Kevin Bezner

Yellow Green Tennis Balls

Recently

Walking along the cities vein
 Stretching my legs of Independence
 Nearing my Sam Ryburn Walk
 Golden poodles of sunshine
 Circling long shadows
 Cast of young trees
 Spreading long and tall
 Like full towering growth.
 Rolling quite near y path
 Were two well hit
 Raggedly tattered- but usable
 Tennis balls.
 Greened slightly by mildew
 Drying in the golden pools on asphalt
 Quite a distance from any tennis court.
 I paused a moment.
 Thoughts of postmodern gluttonous guilt
 Allowing such usable items to be neglected
 Abandoned
 Forgotten
 I looked ahead of me
 Toward a large rigid building
 Strict formality edges
 Part of a college campus
 To my right the under belly of a stadium
 Behind me-from whence I came-
 long expanse of road and parking lots
 Trash cans
 Street lamps - unlit
 Cars - some being driven
 The absence of people astounded me
 No tennis players
 No one to offer accountability

No one to render accountability
 Staving off a sense of isolation
 Was a field of padded
 Practicing
 Pee-Wee football players
 White uniforms
 Stark in the sun
 Just out of tiny ear range
 I scooped up the yellow green balls
 Two of them
 Mostly dry
 Still raggedly round
 Unseen I held them
 One for each hand
 Unseen sailing in twin arches
 One slightly behind the other
 Through streams of golden sun shine
 Toward a field of padded
 Practicing
 Pee-Wee football players
 Huddled White uniforms
 Stark in the sun
 Just out of tiny earshot
 Catching them by surprise
 Just out of tiny vocal range
 I paused a moment
 Watching
 Thoughts of postmodern gluttony
 Allowing such items to be neglected
 Abandoned
 Found

John Withers, IV



Palm Tree

Miranda Lockey

My mother has slept through many a murder
On the couch as if nothing could hurt her.
What bloody crimes her snores ignore,
Oblivious to the screams and gore
Of dying women, tortured men,
Souls torn out again and again.
Without so much as a slight nightmare,
She yawns to confirm she doesn't care,
As right before her tight-shut eyes
One more innocent person dies.
The killer breathes another threat,
But Mom will have no guilt or regret;
She heard nothing, saw nothing, too.
How could she know the killer would do
Another deed of violent doom
So brazenly in her living room?
I've watch my mother peacefully sleep
While strangers for their children weep
And victims struggle, gasp, and cough
Until I get up and turn it off.
And then she's wide awake.





Good Times

Miranda Lockey

Weeping for the Streets

We're bored with the same and afraid of the different.
High rise ideals in the hopes of a broken mother, forced to sell her
Children's toys
To pay the rent.
Sleep in Heavenly Peace.
In Poverty.
Life is easily managed by basing worth on property.
Little women and children.
Angry little men.
Blue as the cold steel of the weapons that kill them
With Virtuous patience, they hit the pavement so hard.
Who are we? Why are we? Can anyone tell me where we are?
Contagious is simply a word spread by disease.
In Poverty.
And if you can sleep at all in these streets....
Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

Andy Fenstermaker

The Journal

When she turned
the pages of the journal
flipping unmindfully

curious only
by the odd fact
that like her I kept one,

the book fell
open to a page where
I wrote of her,

where I complained
thoughtlessly
of her family's wealth.

The terrible moan
she emitted,
that guttural moan,

pierces me even now.
How my words said
in undiluted anger,

became cold breath
on our just bloomed love,
and made white

petals fall all
at once, like glacial
ice in Arctic wind.

Kevin Bezner

16



Camille

Sara du Sablon



Requiem for 3310 Cardenas Ave.

Somewhere in a busy city,
lies an empty house.
Grass and weeds have overgrown the garden,
where mother once planted.
Inside the musty smell of suffering lingers.
Shadows of the past have burned into the faded wallpaper.
Above the door hangs an unnoticed crucifix.
The unwashed dishes piled high in the porcelain sink.
The kitchen table covered in ashes,
at its head has only one chair left.
From the bedroom the ghost of a woman cries.
In the barren maple tree,
whose limbs have been cut,
lies an empty nest,
washed by November rain.
The juniper pine still grows despite the early winter.
Every so often someone comes by to feed the dog.
October's fallen leaves protect April's daffodils.
Somewhere in a busy city lies a house waiting to be a home.

Christopher Iwancio

Shed

On our way home we must have passed at least a thousand leopards
in striped skin.

I remembered using similar disguises and considered it, never once to be a sin
Prisons on parade.

Poisoned lemonade.

Feeding children themselves for dinner.

The last one to die wins the race, if you can really call him a winner.

Sidewalks that weren't made to withstand the weight of walking.

Closed ears doing all of the talking.

The leopards move left.

Their stripes move right.

The crooks and creeps aren't the only things to be weary of tonight.



Andy Fenstermaker

Requiem

a priest
blesses the children,
the children like birds

the one who sang in whispers to him
died
in the jagged quiet
or early morning
her bones
in unfamiliar angles
her eyes burnt

she was the lightest
victim
he had ever held
standing in the sunlight
frightened by her breathing

she had her hands shut tight
as if guarding
some wonderful treasure

but when he laid her down
and opened them, her dead palms
held nothing but light

Sara du Sablon

20



Tiger Eyes

Nora Fleming

Seventh Sense

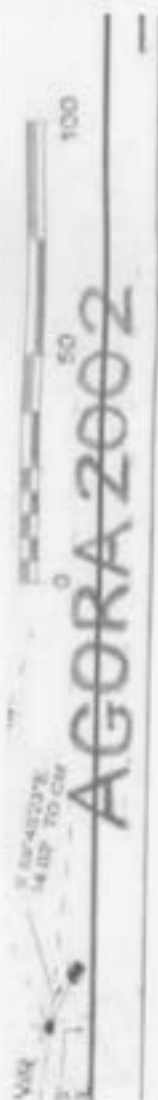
Beautiful, but no tower of iron will,
He builds walls
that he is forced to protect,
And she hurts for him sometimes,
not out of pity,
not out of love.
She has done it for strangers.
Slave to her own numb enigma,
She will only study his walls
from behind her own.

Dana Crist

The Noble Duel

Painted hands falter to grasp,
As pain kissed his frozen mask.
Knees had hit the dirt with vengeance.
"My Lady!" words sting with copper hindrance.
"My love have I failed to win thy heart?"
The traitor of my bed had pierced mine own part!
But there I lay; there I lay dying,
And there she stood; she stood not even crying
Yet he, he to her was only lying.
This gaping truth in my chest
Crimson shock will not spare you rest!
Even now he waits the night to flee,
But I was always here! Why can't you see,
Nevermore will I be here to forgive
Take your few nights with your lover called Mordrid.

Sara Jordan



Brighter than the sun
is the eye
of Love which looks down
upon you
now
in your darkest hour

More gentle
than a child's smile
are His hands
which hold you

But, O, sweet, treacherous
Love -
He that comforts you
as He kills you,
betraying you with a kiss

He is an actor with two roles:
executioner and angel.

The Cost of Excess

Too often something rules,
its presence often acknowledged,
ignored but allowed and encouraged,
its effects are more obvious,
obviously draining and debilitating,
its prolonged exposure numbs,
the cost grows and is repeated,
its weekly repetition translates negatively,
an opportunity here or a chanced there...missed,
yet it rules on,
it causes intellect and creativity to slip,
a friendship or possible romance to falter,
its sacrifice is self-respect,
an experience highly sought after lost,
its victim is our memory,
question and confusion all that remains,
it can entice one to anger,
hurting friends and even the unwilling,
its impact either immediate or distant,
a family can watch helpless,
it beckons the question why,
one simple moment can be life lasting,
even if,
its benefit is mere brief sensation,
yet its rule sometime seems inescapable,
it is the cost of excess.

Too Young to Be This Old

There is something timeless in us,
said the doctor from Cairo.

Do you not (inner "you")
feel the same as the you
who looked guileless
from two-year-old eyes
and claimed a place
in the world?

Oh, no, I've grown wise
or at least much bigger,
thicker, textured in soul
by loving,
hopes, disappointments,
learning and working and play...

Though I thought to dispute,
inner Jane heard a truth.
Through a million memories
and changes in form
something stays
ever-same

I.

S. Jane Russe



Rocky

Jennifer Gabriel

AGORA 2002

25

26

... the gifting gone
and our bitter spring
pleases.

Summertime ladies
melt
leaving pools of
jealousy

watering withering
branches,
wrinkled old maids'
lack luster jewels

sparkle
behind voyeuristic draperies,
and hushed.
So frequent affairs

conquer feelings:
self-doubt, honesty
settling for
melancholy fond memories:

the gifting gone
and our bitter spring
pleases.

Miranda Lock

Bookshelf

I hit my head on his bookshelf again
Causing all the stories to fall to the floor in ruins.
"Damn," he frowns. "The words have broken free."
And now Juliet is smoking with Sherlock Holmes, discussing the troubles of being
noble.
"It may be forever before we right this out."
His fret appears like racing clouds in his big, big, blue eyes.
I sigh;
And begin to chase plots and words before they join forces,
Before they nullify the meaning of an awkward moment,
Before they interrupt the lusty stare,
Before they defy the feeling of starrng into those blue, blue, pools of his...
"Damn, Snow White has become a lawyer." He races to catch the meanings before
they
scramble
And I smile
Trying to look tragic with a book in my hands.

Amy Heishman

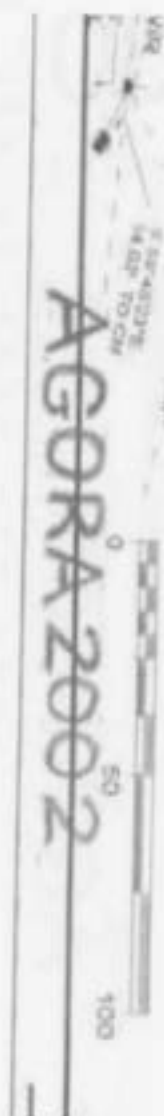
Jim

Images flow through my mind.
Ghosts of yesterday bring memories to the present.
Then one surfaces and returns anew
My heart beats faster as this ghost steals the very breath from my chest
With every breath he shortens, I am reminded of the past
Injuries inflicted upon the naïve soul
The ghost still haunts me.
His reminder is with me always.
Tearing my soul to join him,
While the other he repulses and rejects with his dark deeds.
My heart he invokes to choose
Largely wanting to choose him,
I do, my heart, body and soul choose him
Then rational thought seeps in.
The rational thought that has been infected with romantics, diseased by
Books and technology
In the cold war of my thoughts,
The rational side wins.
He has befriended my doubts and concerns
It is he who takes over and keeps me from anything risky.
Thus my existence goes from dry spells to completely and utterly
Boring.

Anne Mercedes Gib.



Wood Pile



Jennifer Gabriel

Coincidences aside, the intergalactic fabric won't remake itself a second way.
Put things over, on, around it and she's always on the level plain to which I arrive.
The rain could be falling in syncopated rhythm and her shine would never leave.

Tested on animals, she shines when she shimmers, but otherwise it stands still in wait of
nothing, burns when match is set and heat gives way to tired death...death.

And the hovering aftergloom can't be lifted;
No slap in the face can remedy or
intoxicating potion dissolve the memories
and looking at the stars won't reveal anymore anyless.

All that is affected results in effect
Home is enclosed in a little snowy glass prison, shaken up by the bottom
Right down the block from what I used to know

There's no way of handling this right now
The macabre is set, the decorations are tied tight
Spells, if you believe in them, are unbroken
And I am left to wonder if someday it will all be reconjured again

High School

Isolated...
You don't remember me.
Do you?
Afraid to show my true colors,
I hid from you.
You overlooked me anyway,
So I never mattered.
Not cool enough,
I hid myself and kept walking.
Oh, the politics of a high school society:
Stick to your own group,
Don't branch out.
The quiet ones aren't acceptable for this party.
The chaste ones aren't acceptable for this orgy.
Don't remember me,
For I was in a cocoon then
And now I'm hatching.
Not yet fully emerged,
I prepare to free myself,
And to take my first flight.

Anne Mercedes Gibson



Forbidden

When you forbid me to speak
I will learn to write
Forbid me to write
I will sing songs
Forbid me to sing songs
I will cry
Forbid me to cry
My laughter will reign.
Forbid me to hate
I will love you.
For it is in the forbidden, I am set free.

Lougene Webbe

Contributors

Kevin Bezner has published several collections of poetry. He teaches part time in the English Department at the Abbey.

Gary Bowers is a Senior Political Science major from Thomasville, NC. His creative parents, Janice Cooper, and the North Carolina Governor's School are credited with the development of his artistic ability.

Gregory C. Copeny, Jr. is a C. S. major originally from Michigan.

Dana Crist is a Senior CIS major at Belmont Abbey College. She lives in Charlotte, NC, with her husband and three cats. While most of her structured time is spent building databases or doing class assignments, she occasionally finds the time to write a poem here and there.

Sara du Sablon is a 22 year old Junior at Belmont Abbey College. She transferred here from Duke University. She is a native French Canadian, although she grew up in North Carolina, and still speaks fluent French. She is the oldest of ten children (soon to be eleven!) and was home schooled up until college. She has been writing poetry ever since she can remember. she won the Terry Welby Tyler, Jr. Prize for Poetry her Sophomore year at Duke, and published in the University literary magazine, the Archive.

Andy Fenstermaker writes as an outlet for frustrations toward personal problems and issues with society/the world. He is inspired and owes everything to his friends and his family. He tries to use his work as an instigator for positive change and action. Thank you's are addressed entirely to everyone and everything that he has ever loved. You know who you are unless you fall under the "everything" category, in which case you can't think, so you don't have any clue.

Nora Fleming is a Sophomore and is majoring in History. She is actively involved in SGA, College Chorus, and Student Ambassadors. She draws to simply relax and she hopes one day those skills will be of use.

Jennifer Gabriel, a resident of Stanley, NC enjoys computer techy stuff along with various musical interests in addition to photography.

Anne Mercedes Gibson is a Sophomore Biology major, who started writing as a way to relate feelings that were inexpressible as spoken words.

Amy E. Heishman is a Sophomore at Belmont Abbey College currently pursuing a degree in English, has been writing poetry since she could pick up a pencil, and hopes to one day publish a collection of all "her scribbles."

Christopher Iwancio is a Senior Theology Major, originally from Baltimore, Maryland. He is involved with the Abbey Players, The Crusader newspaper, Abbey Admissions and Spiritual Ambassadors, is a founding member of Brothers in Christ, Sons of Mary Household, and involved with many other clubs and activities on campus.

Sara Jordan is from Belmont, North Carolina. She has lived in Belmont all of her 19 years. She is a Sophomore English major at the Abbey, and is involved with the theatre. Her mother is her greatest writing inspiration.

Miranda Lockey is a Senior English major from Charlotte, NC.

Matthew Memrick '00 is a proud Durham transplant now living near his alma mater. He now works near and with it (depending on certain circles) for it is still a good source of inspiration.

Jane Elyse Russell, OSF is the Chair and Assistant Professor of Theology at BAC, after previous jobs in theology and campus ministry at Creighton University (Omaha) and with the School Sisters of St. Francis U.S. Provincial Team (Milwaukee). She has enjoyed writing poetry since college, as a way to capture "snap-shots" and reflections of everyday life.

Erin Walker is a Junior English major at Belmont Abbey. She is from Charlotte, but loves the country - go figure.

Lougene Webber is a 46 year old Black woman with four children and four grandchildren. She has lived in Gastonia for 12 years, although she still calls Shelby her home. She is a Licensed Practical nurse, and has worked in nursing for the past 22 years. She is now pursuing a degree in Psychology.

Having spent many years at Gaston College, John Withers IV transferred into a Junior English major at Belmont Abbey College. Besides compulsively poor study habits, he is also obsessed with motorcycles and playing pool poorly. Other hobbies that he never has time for are music and sleep.

C.J. Zaworski is a Senior Political Science major from Atlanta, GA.

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

Submit 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 ask for further detail, write to:

Agora Editor
Belmont Abbey College
Belmont, NC 28012-2795

Special Thanks to:

The Abbey English Department
Office of Academic Affairs
Kevin Andres
Bo Baity
Deborah Heath
Dr. Lynn Varn
Sr. Ellen Weir
College Union Board

Jean S. Moore Award

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 the award receives publication in *Agora* and a cash prize of fifty dollars. This year's award was received by Sara du Sablon. This award represents top submission as judged by the editorial staff and is based on creativity and originality.

agora

