## Agora 2004



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Cover

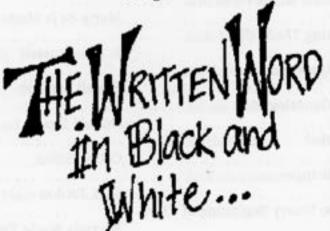
Sketch submitted by Patrick Sutton entitled "Tribute to Leonardo"

## Agora

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

## Volume XXXVIII Spring 2004

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#### Two Post-Modern Incidents

#### French Daredevil Causes Memory Of Ames, Iowa Woman to Lapse

French daredevil climber Alain Robert (pronounced Robear), who defies authorities by scaling some
of the tallest buildings around the world without permission, was critically injured Tuesday by sand artist Maria
Torp when she knocked him off the walls of a giant sand
sculpture that evokes the legendary city of Atlantis. She
and 75 other international sand artists have gathered at
the sand sculpture festival in Zeebrugge, Belgium, to
reconstruct the fabled lost city. Ms. Torp, wielding a
spanze (a flat shovel favored by sand artists), hit Robert
just as he came over the fifty-foot wall. The International
Association of Sand Artists (IASA) said that Robert had
been acting on his own without permission from IASA.

When Lavila Thompson of Ames, Iowa saw the made-for-TV movie of the Torp/Robert encounter, Torp being played by the scantily clad Pamela Anderson formerly of Baywatch, who now writes a monthly feature for Jane magazine on the issues of domestic violence, women's health and parenthood, and Robert by a shirtless Rod Stewart, who has been given his own commemorative tree in London's Hyde Park, she had difficulty recalling details about any of the commercials aired during the movie. When her live-in daughter asked her about a Martha Stewart (no relation to Rod) clothes special at K-Mart, she drew a blank, and said, "I don't rightly recall."

#### Spiritual Experience Moves Ames, Iowa Youth

Later that week, at the moment a gas explosion ripped through a coal mine in eastern China, killing at least 63 miners and leaving 23 others missing 1,500 feet underground, the same Lavila Thompson of Ames, Iowa, thought she felt the ground move as she entered an inflatable Gothic cathedral at the Christian Resources Exhibition in Berry, west of Ames. The moveable PVC structure, which measures 47 feet from floor to steeple, 47 feet long and 25 feet wide, was kept taut by a compressor powered by a four-cycle Briggs & Stratton engine that hummed against the background of recorded hymns. Mrs. Thompson had gone to church to pray for her teenage son Jeremy, who, after having his tongue surgically split as part of a new body-enhancement craze, now speaks with a lisp. "When I firtht thaw my tongue," claims Jeremy, "I thought it wath the motht beautiful thing I've ever theen, clothe to a thpiritual ethperienthe. It'th altho a pluth when it cometh to kiththing."

-Dr. Mike Hood

CREATE A NEW REALITY ... THINK



- "Absinthe," Jason Clark

#### MoonStruck

The moon is small from where I sit and stare It haunts my memory, delights not there. Though silver pitted high against black sky No splendor in its beam beholds my eye.

A night like this is cold and full of pain. The years have drifted by, no sign of rain. Yet still I wait for you both night and day To see your face again is all I pray.

Oh moon, cast not your shadow on my face Despise this child not, but show thy grace. Let not another night go by disdained, But curse the day, its mortals ever chained.

Death came before the morning met the sun And moonlight danced across her grave for fun.

Yet silently I sit and calmly stare, From here my window, moonstruck, in my chair.

- Monica Yantes



Photograph by Patrick Sutton



-Erin Morrison

#### The Wind

She remains unattached,
Passing by
Sometimes gentle
Sometimes fierce
Sometimes holding us back
Sometimes pushing us on
Yet, once her task is complete,
She moves on
She holds on to nothing.
- Carrie Perrine

#### In My Solitude

In my solitude
I lie awake,
thinking, viewing, experiencing
the beauty around me.
Nature has opened its arms
and embraced m,
admitting me
into its majestic palace
and I am content.
-Cindy Campbell



#### **Navel Gazing**

I guess I really am pretty lucky. I mean I do get to see a lot of the country and I am getting to travel with my best buds. But it's this feeling of never knowing where I am going, rather never getting to choose where I am going, really. All in all, however, things are good. I really should not complain.

I started out in Florida, that's where I'm from. The sun is always so bright there. My tan would be so deep I would look orange. I traveled from Florida though Georgia and all the way up to Virginia. The last time I looked out of the truck my pals and I were in New Jersey. The air sure is different here. And where did the sun go? I don't know how much more I can really handle. I mean, I love being with the guys, and seeing the East Coast is great, but I would just like to be settled at home. And home is Florida, far from Jersey, so how do I get there? I figure the first thing to do would be to get out of this truck. I wonder, would the others want to join me? There are twelve of us and we are a tight group. They might have some good ideas on how to get out of this Jersey place. I wouldn't really know where I was going, well, except south. I'll ask them later. Right now I want to just sit back and enjoy the ride. A car ride can be very therapeutic for a wandering mind.

My mind wandered to a place where I could be an individual and not always with the guys. At this place I could make my own decisions and go where I want. Well, that place looks so incredible! I have to go now; I can't wait for the others. I am going to jump from the truck. 3...2...remember to roll when you hit the ground...1....weeeeeee.

I indeed hit the ground rolling. And I kept rolling. I rolled down the turnpikes of Jersey, hitting all the southern ones. Going back through Virginia wasn't very eventful. I did see three yellow
Volkswagons. That was pretty cool. The Smoky
Mountains were as beautiful as I had been told. And
once I got to Georgia, I saw a league of motorcycle
bikers on Interstate 85. They almost ran me over.
Humph, juiced by bikers- that's not the way that I am
going to go. I am so close to home...Florida! I'm home
at last. The best place to become Florida Orange Juice.
- Amanda Marie Frentz

# Write Fill your FINGERS ACHE



- "Ready Badger of Carnage," David Neipert

#### - "Perspective," Jason Clark



#### Coward

I strung up Billy Budd from the mast high
And shot the albatross out of the sky
I filled the showers with Zyclon-B
Then nailed the prophet to a tree
I slew the children of the last Tsar
Before melting the homes of Hiroshima
With an endless parade of atrocities
I spread destruction like an overwhelming
disease

Never questioned my roll Never questioned my fate Circumstantial morality My tears fell too late - Michael Lillard



- Michelle Pazzula

ImagoriA+0 = N is

#### Iago

I have been warned By sages and Soothsayers And Shakespeareans Alike: "Beware the Green-eved Monster" I tried listening, But hearts tell Stories that the head Cannot (or will not) Comprehend. A lot can happen In 1000 days. We often learn That mistakes are Repeated. So are dreams. They work their Way through your Bedsheets that supposedly Offer you Security And give you an intoxicating night Of bittersweet Memories that Forbid the human Soul from passing Into freedom and Newness. Many things Became apparent from Encounters with the Shakespearean nemesis-The knowledge that Jealousy does not



Always end with the Exchange of rings At the beginning---Or end Of a relationship. It can hold a Person as firmly As barren oaks Hold to sidewalks And foundations of Victorian Homes long after life Has abandoned the Roots. It can work its way into Lives that never knew The fact that should have been Told by the Bard... Iago has red hair.

-Jay Smith





-Erin Morrison

#### Petalia

My vision of eternity happened in a moment of
petal worship
Under summer's breast.
It chanted blues music in a whisper
And
Smelled of my mother's peach perfume.
Then I awoke,
And found I had missed the bloom
Of a certain wild flower.
Life has a way of changing the way it remains.

-Amy E. Heishman

#### You will find me there (A poem for all seasons)

With heavy hearts on last lament; When lovers' whimsy came and went And patience and hope have both been bent, You will find me there.

Where winter's touch tickles new morn; When flakes of falling frost are born And hearts grow gray and love forlorn, You will find me there.

When spring has sprung and sprites proclaim: 'Gone is Glacius; his frigid reign,'
And verdant vines arrive again,
You will find me there.

When showers subside on sweet summer days, Filling fresh flowers with warm sun-rays, When dandelions dance and sunflowers sway, You will find me there.

As autumn's auburn burns their bows, When hunters hark for pheasants and fowl, And another year your love allows, You will find me there.

So, my sweet, through seasons' time, No matter now, nor morrow, always mine Lest love be lost, forever fine. I will always be there.

-Adam Chandler

#### Love is a Crook Thing

Wherefore I throw a coin to find out if I should love, "Go and love, go and love young man If the lady be young and fair" I am loose in teh hoist of her hair

Oh! token coin, token coin
Love is a crook thing
There is no one wise enough
To find out all that is in it
For he would be thinking
Of love till the sky ran away
And the shadow had eaten out he moon
Oh! token coin, token coin,
Love is a crook thing.

-Abloyou Sam Marzar

YOUR SELF I'M & B



- "The Calm," Bernadette Fagarang

#### The Ink Pen

Where has it been and where will it go? What springs forth from its fountain, but words and thus knowledge?

Along with the rounding letters, the pen cascades the paper with heavy, magnificent markings of rich, deep, black ink.

Smoothly and evenly it begins to spurt forth dark red.

Blood.

Whose blood is it, and why does it bleed? It is the soul who has lifted this crafty pen and trustingly applied it to paper.

This boy's words ebb from his heart to his hand and from his hand to his pen, which willingly

does the dark justice.

Blood abounds in the boy's heart and so it abounds in the pen.

Be strong for this dark heart of the boy who plans to redden his own body with his own blood and rusty tears.

Then, when the boy can write no more, or be anymore, the pen dies in a faint upon the abandoned parchment.

And so they lie, stretched upon the gravel of a lonely highway.

Life's possessions are packed but notebook open. Soon, all is a red stain.

Blood of the boy? Blood of the pen?

Who knows? They are now one.

Elizabeth Sweeny





- Ashely Bell

Paint Your Heart



#### Palestine

Fingers on our triggers, venom in our speech Self-constructed boundaries, dare the other side to breech

Two proud, but wonded beasts willing to fight to the end

And purge all infidels from teh sacred homeland

The blood of two peoples saturate this ground Wakes and weddings drowned out by the apocalyptic sound

As the Holy Land ignites, divided by race And the heretics and savages must be erased

I want to believe in my heart that you are just like me

A people striving to make a home, deserving of my mercy

Yet another bomb sends shrapnel through the crowded marketplace

And I have to restrain my vengeful will to lay your homes to waste

- Michael Lillard

#### The Stigmata at La Verna

It is September, centuries ago. The sky is gray and faithful. But it yearns to love even more fully, Like the man under it. He is a gentle begger, and he prays fervently Haggard in appearance from his chosen poverty. But his heart is clean. He is fixated on the Crucified A mountain breeze caresses his face. He seeks so earnestly To feel the torment of the Passion. He is parched. His lips long for the Sacred Blood. He is so hungry for God, And he is heard. As autumn's golden leaves float to the earth All around him. He is touched by the presence of the Father. He has seen Him in himself, and in others, spiritually, But now, physically, the Son is embodied

In his own flesh.

Wounds begin to open

In his rough hands, in his callused feet, and in his side.

As glorious sunlight parts the clouds, Red rivers of divine love run down Forming pools of affirmation on the ground. And Francis falls so deeply in love All over again.

- Maria de la Motte -

Rick Up The Pon And WRITE!

#### Walking the Walk

In nightly walks, neither deskbound nor drawn into gawking by profligate light, I languidly entertain in idling brain vague hosts of ethereal thoughts.

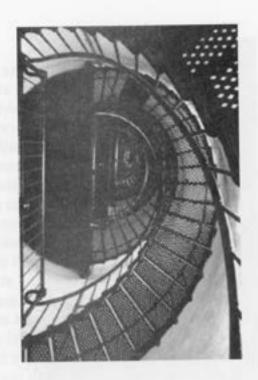
By starlight and lamplight ghosts of ideas gleam hints of brilliancetheorems almost glimpsed, bold paths to resolving the war. Half pints of poetry pour into the brain; bright flash in the pan flees before I can finger it...

> None of this will concretize or survive the return to my study, the chance to write anything down. The millstone grinds over fairy dust- all one can ask, I suppose, from a walk on the town!

> > - S. Jane Russell



- "Round and Round She Goes...," Marie Gamis



#### The Question

When darkness falls above the earth gone sleep,
I feel a tingling feeling crawling up
My spine and so I rise up off my bed
Look out at starry blanket draped on us,
Try to think why God took this black cloth and poke
Holes tiny and countless, white dots for us

To view the heavens deep and wide beyond
Our wildest dreams. Since now you know the stars
Purpose, this I ask you, my friend: since God
All-knowing, gave us eyes to see then why
Did we only get a peep-hole at space?

- Powell Latimer

#### The Genealogists

To find them you must enter the library At night, and descend the dark stair That at first apperas to lead nowhere But leaves you at last face to face With a door. Open this door with care. You will not want to disturb them. Sitting in dim rows, eyes gleaming Blue-green from their microfilm dream. And you, with your preposterous ancestors And creaking shoes, are the interloper here. But if you are humble, they will tolerate Your descent, and allow you to stare Over their shoulders upon the austere Screens. You will wonder what and who They are searching for, hunched over As if in prayer, in silent posture before Their purring machines. You may wish To inquire, perhaps, of the frail woman In the rear, whose frosted hair glimmers Like an elegiac star. She will smile at you And whisper, in a voice age has chided To cracked ice, her Byzantine lies. These are the genealogists, and after all. Cannot really tell us why there are here, Staring at ship manifests, court minutes, The simulacra of the dearly departed, Reduced into microscopic negatives Whirling like atoms of antimatter. So I warn you, do not touch this woman Or you will both disappear with a flash Into that black hole where the future Becomes an x-ray of the broken past. -Donald Beagle

#### Untitled

The sun sets
a raindrop falls
my conscience at work
everything seems so
peaceful.
-Colby Dollar



-Erin Morrison



-"Passing Place," Jason Clark

#### The Bringer

He is ripping the veil, andthe sacred skies fill with anger.

He becomes the bringer, becomes what the stories said.

He carries with him companions made of war and apathy.

His good intentions melt with the rising tides.

He sings the song, the bloddy melody they told of him. Standing by the sea, time washes his humanity away. He waits in the world with indifferent eyes As people build around him walls of fable and lie.

The sands sweep away beneath his feet
The world around him is hollow and sad
He spreads his hands and releases his frustrations.
War coils and breaks among the world
The walls fail and fall as he calls them.

Clean, away from the walls he walks across the sands He seeksa place away from the melody, away from the land

Alone he finds peace with his companions two less. He becomes the tides, the winds at ocean sides Walking the sands, as he calls them.

-Sara Jordon



- Patrick Sutton



#### My So Weary- Beginning of a Day

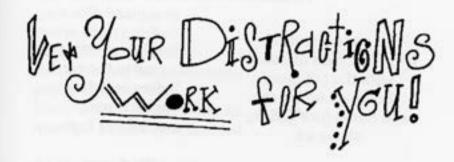
My so weary view from the top today
Looks briefly like a double red pin stripe.
On the lines is where they limply lie,
A cold place where wee boys warp to wee men.
These wee men see what should never be seen,
For they can no longer hear the bright lights.
Mother Mother where is my dear Mother?
Popping Zinging Striking Burning Bloody.
These wee men then must turn to stony men.
Real men, cloudy eyes no matter the subject.
Home, but still ever there, tentatively there.
Real pebbles are now different stones.
Warm skin, cold eyes, down on his scarred knees.
End of man, Beginning of a day.

-Amanda Marie Frentz

#### **Out Here**

All the lights are out. Even the stars lie. Pale memories burned up a million years ago. Darkness palpable flows in from Mexico. Blackens the eternal landscape, and leaves Us high and dry. You know this music Better than I, this playful larceny of The emotions, this mummery of the Old high ways of love. Outside the wind Picks up, then dies, confused too About the way of things, wondering, As I wonder, if true motion is possible Or just a trick of perspective, peripheral, Wishful thinking behind an attractive eye. You, of course, will never say, For that is your nature, yet truths Will have their way, work gradually To the surface, apply another layer To these rocky remnants which surround us. That way of things which will not say If you and I ever spoke at all. Or simply exhausted our days.

READ SEE ON TAKES YOU!



#### Stag

Standing alert in dawn's misty haze
Movement flashes between the gray trees
Twitching nostrils warn of approaching
Wolfpack! The stag instinctively flees
Head for the road, abandon the dark woods
Running alone exposed to the wild
Stag has no herd to warn or protect him
Keeping alive- such a perilous task.

Distant ridges and traverses repeat themselves Reassembling patterns of rust-colored earth Puddles of last night's rain in the humus.

From a high ridge he monitors the city's expansion
Conquest of nature in development's name
Between the pothole and cracks in the pavement
The earth breaks free, splendid oasis for the weeds
The living cry out in the stillness of sleep
As the first frost paralyses the country
Songs of preparation from indigenous wildlife
As autumn sneaks through the wood like a thief.

- Michael Lillard

#### In Our Own World

In our own world lying in a field of daisies with the tall grass tickling our noses and butterflies gliding above us.

The smell of rain
in the air
as the sun
sashays behind a cloud
veiling herself
in a cloak of
shadowy gray.

Droplets of water progress to the earth before colliding in little pools around our feet.

We dance
as the rain baptizes us
purifying
making us ready
to face the world
once more.
- Cindy Campbell



- Jenny Rahilly

#### Utility Trumps Aesthetics, Again

New loss from last winter's ice storm: guys with chainsaws rise in cherry pickers, hack off healthy limbs that dare overhang too closely precious power lines. Every branch within thirty feet of a line must go, Duke Power decreed.

Ancient giants maimed, mutilated, pull away aghast with their fingers burned. How long can they lean like that, lopsided till they topple in total defeat?

It would cost too much to bury the lines. This way we only pay the beauty and grace of our street, a pittance indeed against priority flow of light and heat. -S. Jane Russell

- "Kitten Love," Nora Fleming





-Erin Morrison

#### Sharing Shakespeare

I sit outside alone on a beauteous day
Basking in serene solitary sun.
Proclaim to nature words of Shakespeare's play
Reading out loud, yet reading to no one.
Sweet words go out from classic work of art
Happily join with silence all around.
Yet what can be this loneliness of heart,
Among such beauty, with such classic sound?
Brown butterfly upon my page alights,
Sucking sweet nectar from the masterpiece.
Delicate creature pauses from its flights
Like me, upon great works it wants to feast.
Heaven-sent insect changes loneliness
Into surprise and joy to be so blessed.

#### Untitled

The morning sweat of gods cut throughthe clouds like cold lightning and rained down upon my glowing face cooling my world and causing my head to fall with the weight of my thoughts.

-Jay Smith



108E YOUR SELF I'M of BOOK!



-"Soul Gazing," Jason Clark

#### Contributors

Michael Lillård attended BAC in 1990-91, then transferred to UNC-Greensboro where he graduated in 1993. He currently lives in Westchester County, NY, where he works at the Business Library at Columbia University and is the drummer for the band Tortuga.

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Donald Beagle is Director of Library Services at Belmont Abbey College. His poems have appeared in Carolina Quarterly, Blue Unicorn, Lake Superior Review, and other journals.

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Sumitted works must be submitted 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.

Annually, the Jean S. Moore Award will be awarded by the editorial board to the top literary submission. Beginning this issue, an additional art award, the Creative Pulse award, will also be awarded annually. Winning entries will recieve a prize of fifty dollars and be recognized in the Agora. Notification will be in mid-April.

For more details, write to:

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> All small pen and inks created by Amanda Marie Frentz