



Bocci, Lawn & Garden

The Tufts Magazine of Queer Literature and Art

Spring 1998

Editor's Note

In an attempt to keep our fledgling LGBT magazine alive, we offer you the second-ever edition of *Bocci, Lawn & Garden*. However humble this little publication, its mere existence does make a staunch statement. As, each year, one or a few individuals show an interest in generating this public outlet for queer creative expression at Tufts, the magazine will continue to evolve, with ever more numerous and diverse submissions and (hopefully) sizeable funding. We should ask ourselves, in putting this magazine together and in engaging with the final product, what 'queer literature and art' really is, anyway. I think the work presented here is of a highly personal nature, perhaps more so than in other comparable journals. As such, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you who submitted your work, for taking the risk. And to those of you reading this, thank you for your interest.

Recently, someone suggested adding a 'T' to our title, just to be all inclusive in name as well as in function. "Maybe 'Tennis'?" she offered. I'll leave that to next year's editor...

Jana Anderson

Editor

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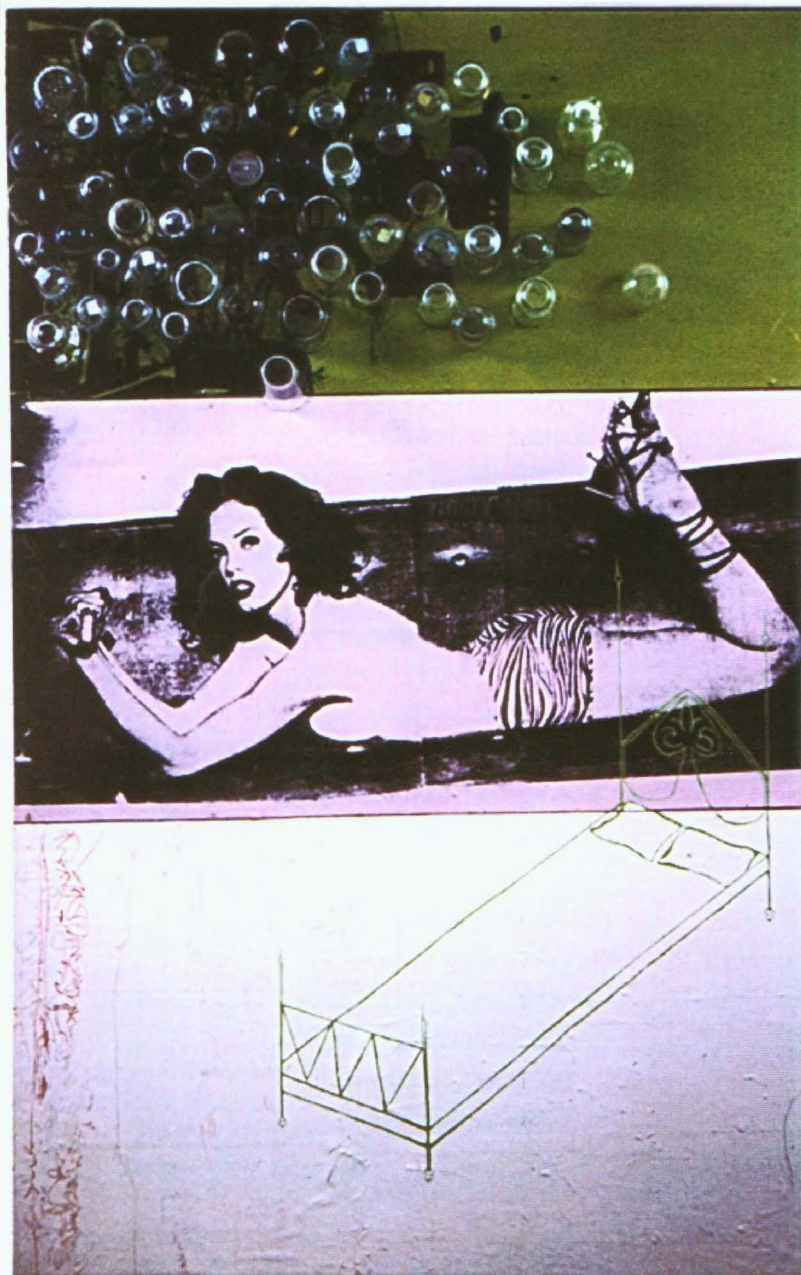
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Noel Dennis

Bocci, Lawn & Garden

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~Cynthia Underwood

I am Nothing, I am Everything

I am no hing, I am everything,
I feel 'hate, yet I am loving,
I can be warm, I can be cold,
I'm still young, yet I feel old,
I'm an adult and I'm a child,
I am bold, but sometimes mild,
I am innocent, yet cynical,
I am brave and somewhat fearful,
I can be stiff, I can be agile,
I am strong and yet so fragile,
I am black and also white,
I'm sometimes wrong and sometimes right,
I am rich, but I am poor,
I feel calm, but I'm at war,
I can destroy or create,
I am grey and maybe straight,
I am masculine and feminine,
Unique, but I'm still common,
I am wise, I am ignorant,
I'm important, yet insignificant,
I feel trapped, yet I am free.
I can live or die or be,
But I can't be anything,
Except if I am me.

~Jeté Fuqua

Separate Piles

Thinking about the books I've borrowed from
you and never returned, I begin to search through
dusty cardboard boxes, paper bags. I wonder
if I could make a tree from all this. Simon

sobs loudly in the next room: it's Friday
and it's *Guiding Light*. The phone rings.
Approaching life like a T.V. Commercial

has its benefits, I think. Don't take it
too seriously, realize it's short, learn
a catchy jingle about it, most of all let the buyer
beware. I pick up the phone. *It's someone*

from AT&T, I shout, *Do you wanna switch back?*
Simon looks at me like Sally Struthers, angry

but beaten down, holding the remote control
like an emaciated child. *Sorry*, I say
to the operator, and hang up. A calendar

is tacked up on the wall above the phone;
Get the Facts, Keith Haring posthumously
suggests, this month's Artist Against AIDS.
Meanwhile, Simon furiously switches channels:

Julia Child becomes Jimmy Swaggart instantly,
her tantalizing peach soup transformed into
the Holy Bible; Wyle E. Coyote furiously chases
the Road Runner on a rocket-powered unicycle,

then a grayish mushroom cloud rises
through a dirty sky; Merle Haggard
strumming his guitar becomes Madonna grabbing
her crotch; a vista of snow-capped mountains

is replaced by an appetizing bowl
of Kellogg's Corn Flakes. *Turn on
the sound*, I suggest, immobile for a moment.
Knowing Simon is content in this
intellectual masturbation, I return to that

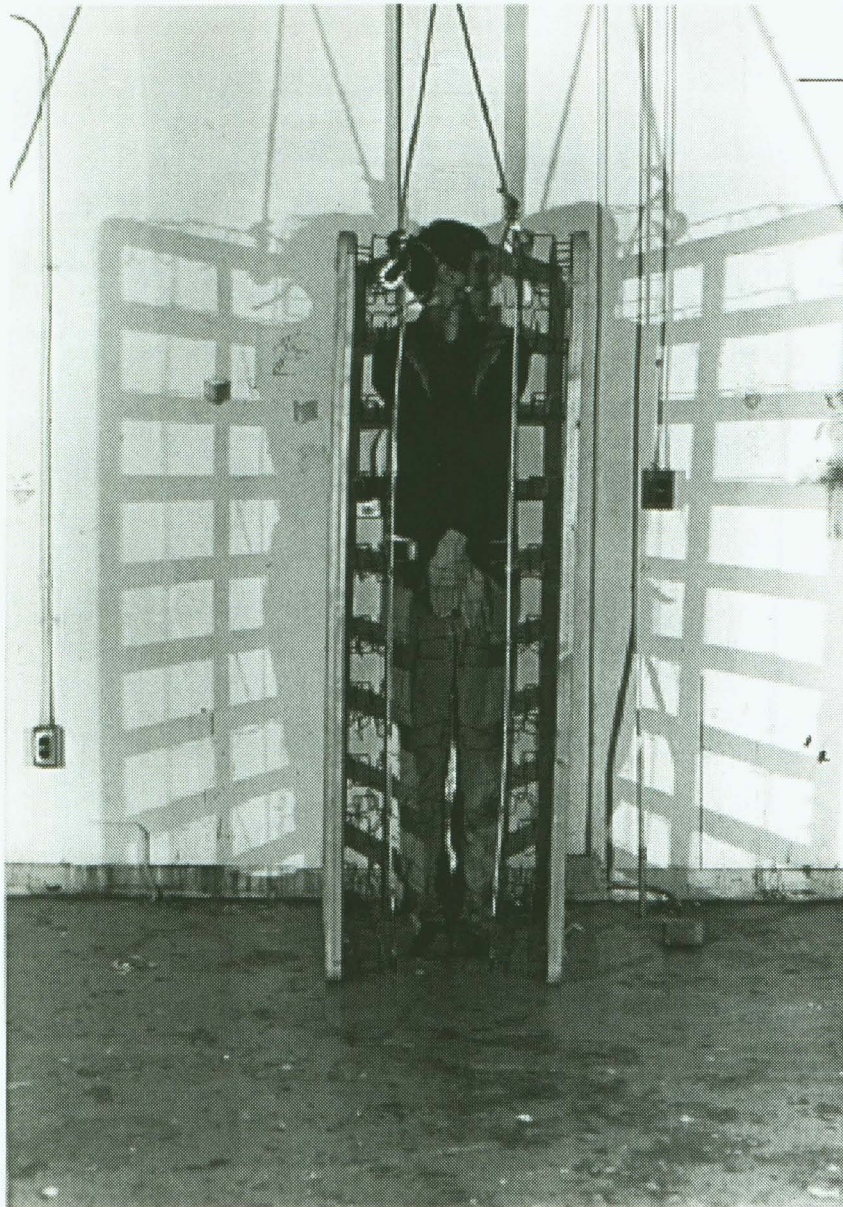
closet full of books, hiding its dusty secrets
and truths in separate, disarrayed piles.

~ George Piggford

Desperate Regrets

I thought for a moment tonight about one last piece of you
Running my nails through your hair, over your head
The music brought me back to the perfect sexual desire you inspired and condoned
I wanted you again, like the craving of a cigarette six months after I've quit.
I wanted to feel black velvet, feel a rebel, fill a need.
But then I looked back and you weren't the only one there.
And I realized I was incidental, accidental, an accessory to your bliss
I entertained and made a stir and after two weeks of
no me, you'd never even looked up.
Not from your music, not from your lover, and not from your life.

~Azalea



~Jesse F. Reed

Untitled

I leapt over the night like fire
into the balanced embrace of her arms
where I had been before but never like that she said
I could feel my soul exploding Hiroshima into the skies
feeling it split into a thousand many parts
all of which were named

each night—I stare at those parts
waiting for the end to come
it never does
and her burns heal mine

~ Marisa Matsudaira

Men Like You

My guard went up
As I saw your eyes
Go straight to my chest
Every time you move closer
I back away
I back away.

What ever made you think
That you have the right
To touch me at all?
You are not my friend
And certainly not my lover—
I've already survived my share of jerks.

The fact that I'm not a virgin
Doesn't make me a slut
It's guys like you
Who make me want to
Keep my legs shut.

Your sexual jokes
Don't amuse me at all
Your slimy little smile
Tempt only my fist.

You say you like tough girls
Well, I like them too.
It's not that I don't like men,
Just not men like you.

~ Catherine Marquardt



~M. Coyle

Dare to be Different

Historically in the United States, one's race, religion, gender and sexual orientation determined one's value. White was considered better than black, male better than female, and straight better than gay. When our country originated, 'niggers' were akin to animals, men were deemed stronger and therefore dominant to women, and homosexuality was believed to be a mental disorder. Therefore, a fifty year-old white married male pastor was considered more important than a fifteen-year-old black Pagan lesbian. However, times are changing and diversity is slowly becoming not only acceptable but admirable. As Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote: "I am different from all men I have seen. If I am not better, at least I am different." It is not necessary to be better, but every one of us is unique and that distinctiveness should be praised and encouraged, not suppressed.

From kindergarten until the time I graduated from high school, I went to a boarding school which was very big on images. It is the richest private school in the nation, behind Harvard University. It was originally created for white orphan boys, but I'm a black girl with two living parents, so times have changed. The school is very accepting of racial and gender differences and even encourages those types of diversity. Homosexuality, however, was another issue. When I began to realize that I was bisexual it was very difficult for me. Not only because it caused a series of problems internally, but because I was not allowed to express myself externally. Even in the Psychology Department, where everything was supposed to be confidential, I knew I would not be safe. The list of things that must be disclosed to an outside party includes suicidal tendencies, homicidal tendencies, and 'homosexual tendencies.' As a very verbal person, attempting to hide my sexuality was near impossible for me.

Being bisexual is a challenging thing to deal with. Internally it brings up quite a few questions. Why do I feel this way? Was I born this way? Can I change this? Do I want to? I remembered my childhood and the love I'd had for certain women. Actresses, teachers and friends' older sisters had all been amazing to me. I couldn't discern whether it was because I'd wanted to be like them or because I'd loved them. I'm still not sure; it may have been a combination of both. I remembered wrestling with girls and wanting to do more than wrestle. I began to analyze every thought and feeling I'd ever had, trying to decide when I first knew I liked females. I felt separated and deviant. It was wrong to like girls, right? I was positive there was something wrong with me and I couldn't talk to anyone.

I was aware that 'engaging in homosexual acts' was one of the few things that would warrant immediate expulsion from my school. Though I didn't actually engage in any acts, I was still very afraid that I would be ostracized physically and emotionally from my school. I was certain that merely by identifying myself as bisexual I would be risking 'dishonorable discharge,' so I didn't tell anyone, not even my best friends.

Towards the end of my senior year, a very upsetting issue arose. Two girls were formally reprimanded for holding hands in the hallway because another girl had told the principal it bothered her. What made me so angry about the entire situation was that the two girls were not gay. They both had boyfriends and in this particular incident when the other girl was bothered by them holding hands, one of them was pulling the other to class. A few of us were in a heated discussion about the issue when I blurted out that I was bisexual.

I felt safe around the people I was with. My friend's mom is a lesbian and I knew my friend, at least, would accept me. I also knew that none of them were homophobic and they would not disclose my secret. I laughed after I told them, because most of them already knew. The stunned silence and strange looks I'd expected were not there. I hadn't told a soul, but my friends knew. It made me feel good to know that they supported me.

In my quest to discover more about myself I've also discovered more about our society. Homosexuality may be more widely accepted now than it was years ago, but it is not an everyday topic. In a discussion about relationships, those between two men or two women are not usually mentioned. If they are mentioned, they are mentally placed in a different group as if gay people don't have the same problems as straight people.

Thoughts and opinions are changing everyday, so I am still not completely certain about the tolerance level in our society. Sure, black people are not animals, women can be stronger than men, and homosexuality is not a disorder, but what else have we taken for granted in the past? I am positive, however, about the intolerance level in my home. My mother still believes that all white people hate black people, that men and women should act a certain way, and that two men or two women in a relationship is disgusting. She is very set in her ways and I'm not even sure if knowing about my sexuality would change her mind. I hear her talk sometimes and I'm afraid I may never tell her the truth. I may come out to everyone in my life except my mother!

I have been thinking about my place in the world and how I can label myself. What am I? I could say, "I'm a young, poor, black lesbian," but I'm not. I'm almost an adult, I was raised by rich people, my ancestors were immigrants from everywhere and I also like guys. I began to realize that I am a little bit of everything, but in the large picture, I am really nothing. I'm a small part of something so large, it is unfathomable. It is comforting to know that I don't have to be any specific thing, I can just be.

~ Jeté Fuqua

Love

Love is so distant
Far away, yet vaguely visible
I run from fear and hate to find you
But you keep on moving.

You seem so distant
Although at times you feel so close
I keep running to find you
But you move so fast.

I wish I could fly.

~ Simon Shields



~Lutz Fichtner

Drought

I am waiting for the rain.
My well has long been dry
I want to throw my head back
And feel each drop
As it hits my craving skin.

The water will slither
Smoothly
Along each curve of my face.
Of my body
My hair plastered into a frame

The sky will thunder
And I will scream
Out of ecstasy
Out of relief
As my parched throat
Is satisfied

I will drink you in.

If it would only rain
I could feel whole again,
Clean again
As the water washed away
Layers of dust
And solitude
Weighing me down

I look up, hoping
But all I see
Is the harsh sun
Draining, drying,
Blinding...

I'm waiting for you.

~ Catherine Marquardt

Ode to the Cute Waitress at First Out

I love the way you bring me my coffee,
or the way you hand me my vegan toffee.
I love the way you bring me my tea,
be it lemon or camomile, it's all the same to me.
Because the smile you give me when you hand me my desert
is more than I can take — you're such a flirt!
I order lots of coffee which I "accidentally" spill
just so you come armed with your sponge; "can I get a refill?"
And when you brush past me to pick up my plate,
I hope to God that this is a sign of fate.
When sometimes I notice there's another girl you eye,
I hastily order another piece of pie.
Once you looked at your girlfriend; "I love you," you said.
But, you know, I want to be the one to butter your bread.
But alas, it's true, it's probably all in vain,
(unless maybe I can become the new employee you train...)
So bring me more coffee and bring me more toast,
'cause you are the one who I like the most!

~ *Danielle Costa*

(with helpful commentary from Dulcie and Sally)
London, England

A Love Lost Three

Vindictive souls,
through uncanny intentions;
find love
through a game of war.

Sweat night taste,
of skin's soaked surface
resonates lust
by my heart's misled guide.

To have her,
or for him to have me:
a triangle of pain,
a riddle of pleasure
and no feeling
other than loss.

~ *Jesse F. Reed*

Pulses

A myriad of urges pulse through my veins.
Some linger, some are flushed and
Yet, some are fulfilled.

Those that linger may run a race
within my body but are harmless like
children in a playground.

Those that are flushed leave a
Trace of frustration but never
a bit of anger or regret.

Those that are fulfilled are the
Happiest and they coat my body with
Chills of joy.

Do not preoccupy yourself with
Thoughts that urges have a
Mind of their own.

Urges come and go.
But those that stay
Sustain

To hold, to touch, to talk,
To look at, to be with...

Those are the urges worth
living, dying, waiting for.

~ Marina Novoa



~M. Coyle

Idol

I do not know if my love for her was victorious. It came to me hidden under anxiety and impulse and then, ultimately, defeat.

She was nothing if not mine to love, mine to consume, mine to desire.

She stood above me, high on a podium as a monument to a great power, but now, she, the untouchable, has been molded to my touch, to my gaze, to my lustful exploitation. Even when I yearned for her and prayed to her — she, the diva of my nights, hungry wench of wantonness — I could not endure the coolness of her unsatiated and betrayed passion.

I said to her, come to me, please come to me, as the tiny blessed child only I can envision.

Come to me, and rest your body against mine.

Come to me, please come to me, as a child, as a mother, as a hero. Let's twist our images and our selves around each other, and we'll discard any facade of ugliness and shame.

She was nothing if not mine to worship, mine to cherish, mine to own.

She was nothing — she, the untouchable — was nothing if not mine to own.

~ Danielle Costa

Litter

My mind is littered with impressions with your smiles with you('r)(e) passing me by and I get that smell that scent that penetrates my nostrils with some luscious perfume of old promises and angry wretched youth we were so happy in our misery our malcontent but then but back now to the present showing me rolling over me your presence like a lusting wanting aura you (, you) walk by.

~ Azalea



~Rebecca Goldberg

Untitled

(for Maria)

My dream is a dancer
She is my nightmare and she is my fantasy
She taps and sashays
and shimmies and pliés
—my crowd's love
—my artist's envy.
My dream is a dancer
She is the vision of my poet
She is the vibrance in my song
She arches my pain in the point of her foot
and stretches my longing in the curve of her arm.

My dream is a dancer
and my dream dances on.

~ Tiphonie Yanique

Mundane Chores

A young man eats his breakfast: granola
from the co-op, skim milk, a banana,
an enteric-coated aspirin, the big white pill,

the powdery stuff dissolved in a glass of water.
When he's finished, he rinses the dishes,
gently places them in the dishwasher.

They'll be fine, he thinks. He closes his eyes,
breathes slowly: (in, out) *I am not a temple*,
(in,out) *I am not a fortress*. He's heard

that metaphors can kill. Opening his eyes,
he looks through the kitchen window,
touches its veined sill, sniffs at a flowering

cactus in its cracked porcelain vase.
This is the first day of the rest of my life,
he recites, engaged in a staring match

with the sun. He begins to see spots.
He squints, pulls a small slip of paper
from behind a pear-shaped magnet

on the refrigerator door, holds the paper
up to the light: *Things to Do*:
Go to the dry cleaners. Buy carrots.

*Pick up Matthew (5:45). Fight micropolitical
oppression in all its forms. Don't panic.*
He considers what it means

to be alive, to be a body. Blinking,
he turns from the bright window
to the mundane chores of his life.

~ George Piggford

