

Onyx Magazine Presents...

# BLOCK PARTY

Spring 2006

A Tufts Student Publication \* A Literary & Visual Arts Magazine

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Onyx Magazine has been going strong for 23 years. And over those 46 semesters, the pages of this magazine have held love poems, opinionated poems, poems that held history, poems of truth, poems of self-reflection, and more. It has reflected photographs, oil paintings, charcoals, watercolors, collages and mosaics. This rich variety has been the foundation to Onyx's success. Our edition's theme of "Block Party" attests to that. There have been literary and visual arts found within our pages that speak to the diversity of Blackness and the diversity of art. People have come together and brought their own opinions and backgrounds to create a cohesive whole that can be celebrated. Our "Block Party" contains the reliable, the talented, the songbird, the lovesick, the angry, and the insightful. So I hope you will appreciate the differences in our words and in our pictures, and enjoy Onyx's version of a "Block Party".

Dana Phillips

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"ONYX'S TENENTS"  
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mr. Fix It	Joe Truss	2
Untitled	Jennifer Barinas	3
Old Woods, Outside Friends 	James Wiley III	4
Thinkin Bout Your Hair	Elaina Mercedes Mends	5
Past Present Future	Faith Cummings	6
The Man	Dana Phillips	7
Shiva In Mirror	Meena L. Bolourchi	8
Centuries Old Eyes	Brittney Taylor	9
Silence	Angela Tierra Anderson	10
Forsan Et Haec Olim Miminisse Iuvabit	Lauren Michael Alpert	11
Enough Nourishment	B.K.	12
Untitled 	Raynata Ramkhelawan	13
Sailing In My Solitude	Joe Truss	14
Crying Tree	Jahn Sood	16
Unititled	Anonymous	17
Hazardous Dreams	Orla Thompson	18
A Message	Brittney Taylor	19
If You Were A Fortuneteller	Faith Cummings	20
Reflection of West Hall	Meena L. Bolourchi	21
Purpose	B.K.	22
Untitled	Latoya Hankey	23
Parent	Ezra Furman	24



denotes Editor's Choice

## MR. FIX IT

Welcome to Joe's Auto Repair, its rare that some1 actually cares, I stand in a room full of cars, confined by these designer named bars, and as far as I can see, theres no one in here but me, all these locked out owners with no key, and to my right I see a silver Honda civic, so sooped up and accessorized, that it overheated, coolant depleted, It blew a gasket, classic symptom of tryin to do three much, and to my left, a car with shreaded tires, inspired by videos, his "good years" were torn by clip on spreewells, you don't have to live fast and furious, these cars each tell a story, some of glory, but others of greed, like want without need,

I plead only, that drivers would care for the vehicles that transport their souls, I pray that they obey warning lights, refill their fluids and get a fuckin oil check every 3,000 miles, instead of waiting till it all piles up, and your on your last trip, and you did always say that you'd ride till the wheels fall off, and now they have, and as you rest you axels on Berkeley farms blue milkrates, you hesitate to look outside the window, coz the grounds not moving, because you're stationary, like a movement that's not revolutionary, I said you're stationary, like a movement that's not revolutionary. If  $p=mv$ , either you're moving minus a soul or you soul is sitting still, any case, your momentarily measuring a momentum of 0. Like crime with no heroes, or cupid with no arrows,

Now you sit in the mechanic's shop at a definite stop, prepared to pay any particular price even come back twice, just for a slice of you old life, but what strife is that I may not be able to bring you back to square 1, coz life is circular and you see, these tools are slippery in my hands, a combination of grease, sweat and blood. My tears have not affect on artificial life forms, so in these times, post industrial revolution, I use grease, hopefully it will increase the current through your wires, never mind those commercial liars, hopefully this inspires you to change, to rearrange your daily routine, coz when you leave this shop, I can't leave with you. I will no longer be there to give you a 3<sup>rd</sup> person inspection, its up to you to use your reflection eternal, without the hitek adds ons and bumper stickers slap ons, Its on you, And don't come back to this shop, accusing me or lying and swindling you. I told you to look inward and you blamed outside forces like the weather, and that shits not my fault.

I know what you're thinking, Im wearing this blue jump suit, printed on the back says Joe's Auto Repair and yes, Im Joe, but im not perfect, so know that my car sits right next to u'res, look the burgundy one with dents in the front doors, so of course Im no omniscient technician, listen I mean who am I to fix anything? My car's not in the best condition, Its scratched up, it overheats during an uphill battle, rattles of the steering wheel force me to drift to the left, but I always manage to pass my smog test, all the toxins that I digest, I am blessed to decrease the spiritual pollution and event though I not perfect, I have a solution, for starters, instead of rims get a tune up, instead of subs and dvds how bout some antifreeze, instead of leather seats try changing your brake pads

The point is the source of your problems come from within, begin with an honest evaluation of the vehicle that transports your soul, because superficial additions do not make you whole, careless driving does that a toll, it wears and tears until you have nothing there but a hollowed out shell, and the hell if I can ignite an inferno, but I can change spark plugs, that fire up engines, that spin wheels, that carry you toward your destiny, but ultimately, its up to you to get in your car and you still have to turn the key.

Surely I take cash, credit or debit, be sure to sign at the bottom, please fill out a survey to improve our customer care, and once again thanx for visiting Joe's Auto Repair.

JOE TRUSS



JENNIFER BARINAS

## OLD WOODS, OUTSIDE FRIENDS

Aren't you tired of asking

all your many thousand  
new found friends, grain by sand  
grain, just who they are? And

whose shoes  
are who's?  
Perhaps you think you could you walk in them, ooze

and toe-stink and all. Sick defecations  
might be there inside the unknown foot soles of Haitians  
or Tutsi warriors. If I laced their boots up my shins,

could I grasp them simply? If the simplicity  
of seeing someone's beautiful insides was just this, implicitly,  
how intolerable this city

would be! Foolish expression, I like the work of asking questions and guitar  
jammin' with John on the sitar  
I'm thrilled by speaking in music, I love learning who you are.

And yet, I'd like to retire  
somewhere lonely. I will tire  
of the constant irk, the subtle ir

ony of my inability to peer inside my friends: malcontents  
who writhe insatiably to glean the contents  
of one another.

Yes, once I'm old  
I will hike the woods alone,  
sleeping in aptly pitched tents.

JAMES W. WILEY III

## THINKIN BOUT YOUR HAIR

Thinking about each lock  
Unraveling the band  
Teasing each strand  
Until it loosens  
Revealing a nest  
set free  
From braided cells  
A tangled curl  
Set free  
To experience the world  
Fingers untame the mane  
To set free  
An unruly beast  
Feeling the origins of this kink  
Searching for the reason of this curl  
A kinkiness straight  
A velvety coarseness  
Due to a history complex  
An intertwining of legacies  
In each strand.

ELAINA MERCEDES MENDES

## PAST PRESENT FUTURE

me and you, you and i, funny how those words can't be past tense because they're not verbs

but we were a verb, we are a verb, we will be a verb

i was you, you were me, i am you, you are me, i did you, you did me, we do each other, we are each other

and cause we still perpetuate, we perpetuated and lasted, we will perpetuate

you are my first, you were my first, you will always be my first

because we're past and present and future, i can't let go

such a fool

you're running around with some ugly chick, yes i'm pretty offended. yes i will be offended for you choosing her over me

2 years of myself, granted i didn't even know myself then, but still 2 years is a long time

and you can't let go either

you still call me, you still want me, you still wanna marry me, right?

we'll end up together, you think? i guess, i'm still waiting for something new and perfect like we were

we were, or are we?

well i shouldn't be bothered by you, your i love yous and your hugs, and your flirtation

you were always so flirty, you are still so flirty

but i'm going crazy, i can't physically crave you, and emotionally desire you, and not be able to have you

i should leave you alone, i did leave you alone, you left me alone, we are leaving each other alone, but will we?

but i still think about you, when i get under the covers and when i wash my hair

it isn't right, you're with her right? were you with her? yes. will you be with her? who knows

what i do know is that you are my future, presently my past

my ahead, my behind, my stillness

we are love, we were love, we will be love.

i was loving you, you were loving me, i love you, you love me, we love each other, we are each other.

FAITH CUMMINGS



# THE MAN

i see your eyes from across the room  
piercing, sultry, deep brown pools of thought  
you make me feel as if its only you and me  
inside this lounge of poetry and jazz

you're not even my type  
but when you look  
my heart takes me higher  
to places of falsettos and smooth guitar strummings  
I fall deep into a neosoul abyss  
not wanting to find a way out  
i could drown deep in this

you walk over to me  
in dim lighting  
you glow  
your silhouette is heaven  
you smile and  
i'm gone  
floating over the clouds as the sensual saxophone plays sweet melodies  
i smile  
no longer do i have it together  
i'm mush  
all resolve destroyed by your personal walking soundtrack

you grab my hand  
flexing muscles as you grab tight  
not wanting to let me go  
which is no longer an option  
you have me  
pressed next to you i know there is no other place  
i want to climb higher, reach the stars

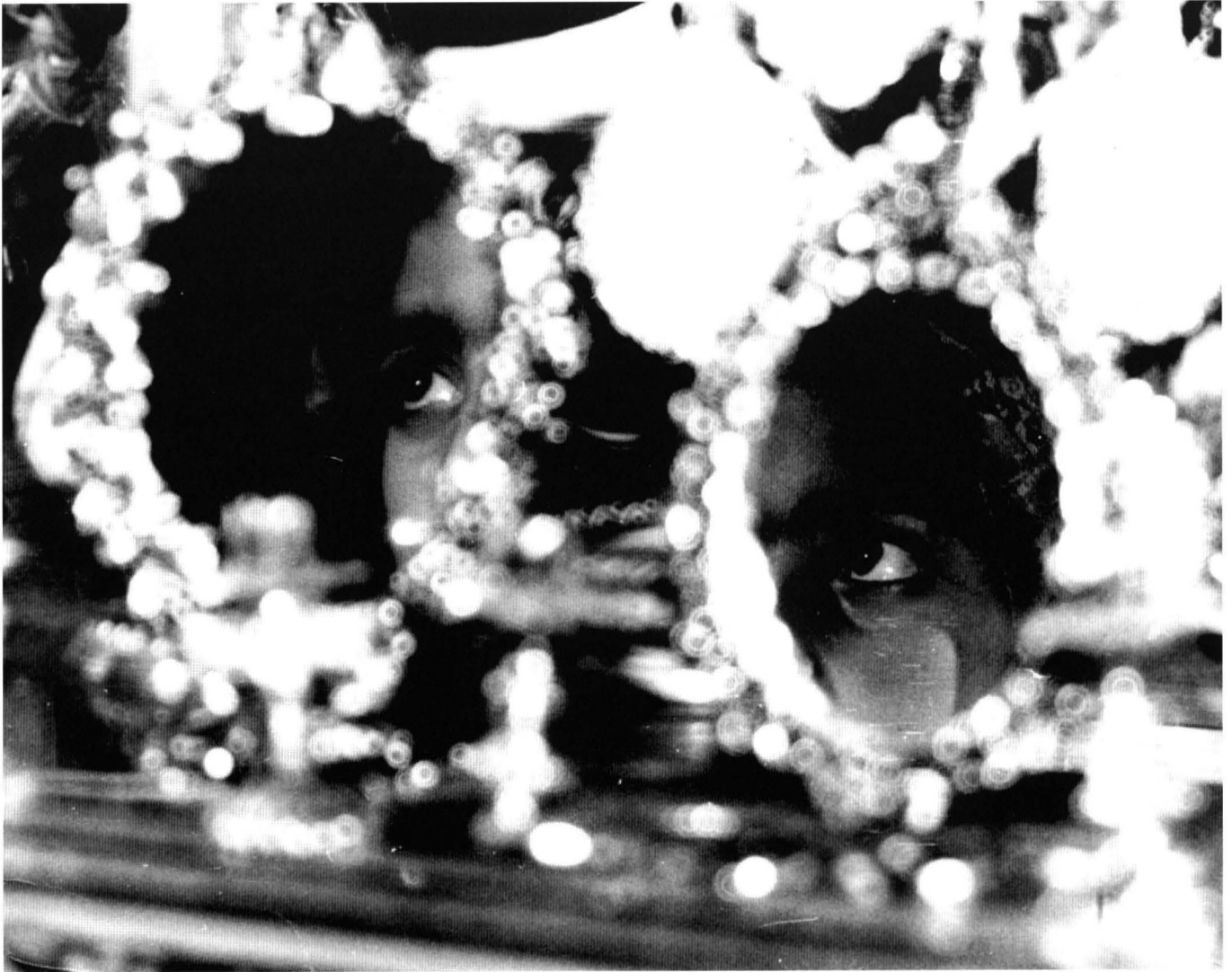
you open your mouth  
poetry exudes from your lips  
your voice sounds like the bass in the background of my favorite song  
i open my mouth  
but no words escape  
i am speechless at the sight, at the thought, at the touch, at the speech  
of you.

We go outside  
raindrops pierce our skin  
the wind howls  
wetness spreading over us  
does nothing to put out the fire

the realization has been made  
this is destiny  
fated for us  
lost in the melodic tones of each other  
me and you  
the man

we will always

DANA PHILLIPS



SHIVA IN MIRROR

MEENA L. BOLOURCHI

## CENTURIES OLD EYES

What I wouldn't give to look through centuries old eyes,  
To be able to look at every opportunity with hungry eyes,  
And to savor every chance I get to learn like it was the last  
meal of my life.

What I wouldn't give to look through centuries old eyes,  
So I can be reminded of how unselfishly my ancestors gave  
their lives,  
And be pushed to thrive just to be worthy of their sacrifice.

What I wouldn't give to look through centuries old eyes,  
And see that we no longer need to concede,  
That we can change our situation to suit our own needs.

What I wouldn't give to look through centuries old eyes,  
And to see first hand the struggle,  
So that I can be undaunted by the minor obstacles I juggle.

What I would not give to look through centuries old eyes  
Is the hope and faith, that has been passed down to me,  
That we shall overcome hardships we flee,  
That we will recognize we can define ourselves freely,  
And that we will find it necessary to create that definition  
With love,  
purpose, and legacy.

BRITTNEY TAYLOR

## SILENCE

My Ladies

Don't walk down that road  
Don't let no one take your heart and soul  
Don't be so blind to the tempting kind  
Cause it might end in destruction

My Ladies

Don't let no one tell you, you ain't lookin right  
Don't change your mind to conform to something that ain't right  
Don't let no man try to take your pride, cause you got so much to  
leave it all behind

To the Little Girls

Who feel like they don't fit in  
Hold your head up high, cause God made you to rise and shine  
Don't let no soul break you down, keep that song alive  
Cause your beautiful no matter how they lie

Though the tears may fall and the hope all gone  
Don't ever give up

Your life, your words, your smile, your grace  
Only from God  
Your spirit, your strength, your blessings  
Only from God

You were made to be strong  
You were made to give life  
You were made to soar above the sorrow and strife

You were made to rise and fall  
You will triumph

Cause ain't no valley too low or ocean too deep to keep you down  
From God you were made, and by God's grace you will

RISE

ANGELA TIERRA ANDERSON

## FORSAN ET HAEC OLIM MEMINISSE IUVABIT

Virgil says the time may come  
When we will look back on these things and laugh  
And I believe him more and more each day  
My ex-boyfriend used to snap his phones in half when he was angry  
He almost broke my wrist the same way and I would be left  
With bruises up my arm  
But hey, that's what restraining orders are for  
If you can't smile at that once it's over, what can you laugh at?

I met the love of my life at the Hong-Kong in Harvard Square  
That always makes me laugh  
But what makes me laugh more is when I told him  
I was too embarrassed to tell people  
We met at a bar  
He started telling people we met on JDate  
Or that we were cousins  
Or I was selling peanuts at the circus  
Finally I will come out with the truth: you win Iowa, we met at a bar.

When he gets dressed in the morning he puts on what I call his  
First date shirt, he calls it his  
"She'll be living with me in Dupont Circle in 8 months shirt"  
And graduation never looked as good as it does from this full sized bed  
With the window cracked and the spring air coming in.  
Because while each of those 40 odd days is long  
Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit  
Like the thick end of a long telescope lens:  
Out of arms reach, unimpressive, and part of the whole.

LAUREN MICHAEL ALPERT

## ENOUGH NOURISHMENT

Its funny that I write this poem about you, I mean I promised my self that I was never going to fall for someone again, that I was never going to feel for someone again but, You've got me feeling messed up. You've messed up my thinking, my thought process, my emotion, you've messed up how I look at your kind, cause you, you messed me up cause your one of a kind.

See I'm getting soft and I don't like it so don't get it twisted.

But my heart you have trampled but at the same time gradually up lifted

I mean I was happy with being emotionally starved and malnourished

Cause I was never disappointed, never attached, never caught, always maintained a strong conviction.

Moving from one person to the next, to me was a smooth and easy transition

Now you've screwed up my taste buds, and halted my inhibitions

Cause when I talk to you, I look at you, I smile at you, you feed me these feelings of internal happiness, of sincere emotion, of hope, one teaspoon at a time.

And when I see you smile, laugh, or roll your eyes

You let me know that you have added seasoning to a very bland soul

What am I doing, Ima stop writing cause this shit don't make no sense

The only thing that makes sense is holding you, kissing you, touching you

To the sound of pots and pans as you stir me in the right direction,

While adding the right amount of salt

Damn girl you got me feeling diabetic cause I know my blood glucose levels are already high

But I can not get enough of the sweet succulent sound of your voice as caramel like words

Drop, Drip by Drip from your bottom lip

Always thought my momma cooked the best, that was until you served me passion in a hot bowl of soup,

I mean I know good food is not suppose to make you sick, but you may have stricken me with, the Jones

and because of you, I never want to be alone

And if I ever am, I beg you to give me some tupper wear, so that I can take a plate of what you serve to go

Cause I want to make sure that I am always nourished, always full, always ready to fall in love once mo.

B.K.



RAYNATA RAMKHELAWAN

# SAILING IN MY SOLITUDE

The waves roll,  
Back and forth,  
Tide high, tide low.  
I drift.  
Through the swallows of sea.  
Ask me if im happy.  
I couldn't tell you.  
I drift,  
Destined for my determination.  
Without my anchor,  
My point of reference,  
I coast on cruise control.  
Weaving through waves,  
Easing through a daze,  
Sea sick with no sight of land.

My sails are useless,  
Sliced by too much self reflection,  
Tattered,  
Torn,  
Worn by the winds that blow me into  
oblivion,  
Oh believe me,  
When I say, I see why the sea always meets  
the shore,  
It's a little more stable, more sterdy.  
I wish she would have just heard me.

Now im in need of my anchor, her.  
Like sade's rock to swim to in a lover's  
storm,  
Something to hold me down,  
Coz I can't stop moving,  
Running, in flight,  
Dodging the fight,  
Was I right or wrong?  
Doesn't matter.  
The current pulls me al medio del mar,  
The middle.

Here I am lost at sea,  
Licking my lips coz  
Love left a bitter taste in my mouth,  
Im longin for a sweet life saver,  
A inner tube, a vest, a raft where I can  
rest,  
Come rescue me from this treacherous sea  
of my solitude.

Ive been at sea for over a month  
now,  
Who knows where Im headed,  
My nights are dreaded,  
And give me some credit,  
At least I made the decision to set  
sail,  
Rather than go back and forth,  
Rather than fail,  
I took the easy way out,  
And boarded my ship,  
Burnt the bridges and the pier and  
the dock,  
Leaving no place to return,  
Hoping that I would learn from the  
time alone,  
But at this point,  
I swear,  
Nothing sounds better than the  
sound of her voice over the phone,  
Well other than the waning memory of  
her whispering moan,  
If only I would have known,

If only I would have had the foresight  
to see that I would be sitting aship  
at sea, saying to my self that I wish I  
could see her again, and this 20/20  
hindsight vision is a gift and a curse,  
it hurts like the salt water battering  
against the wooden hull of my vessel,  
and the salt water battering against  
the flesh of my face. I hang my head  
over the deck and let it all mix. I  
wish that these tears reach her on  
shore, and she feels my sadness, my  
love sickness.

I am on my own middle passage,  
On a journey could nearly kill me,  
No food or water,  
Dire conditions,  
Trying to starve out the part of me  
that still loves her,  
Like some kind of emotional suicide,  
I ly on the deck and stare at the sky,  
The sun is so hot,  
And the salt water only makes me  
more thirsty,



Coz nothing quenches quite like water,  
And im in no sight of my well.  
So I dehydrate myself,  
Until I am on the brink of death,  
And the visions start to come,  
A self induced hallucination,  
Holding onto my belief in reincarnation,

But this revelation is only a rites of  
passage,  
Marking a new chapter in my life,  
The majors, no more little leagues,  
No more boyhood blind bravery,  
No more puppy love,  
Time for manhood,  
Its time to grow up and stop running.

As I loose my sight,  
The clouds above me swirl,  
The waves stop rolling,  
Complete Silence.  
On this spiritual journey,  
I find my nahual, my guide,  
Naturally,  
A seagull dives down from the sky,  
Perches on my deck.  
She speaks but all I see is her moving  
beak.  
Still somehow I hear everything she says.  
She speaks.  
I listen.  
Actively with no interruption.  
Her head nods and wings flap and just as  
fast as she arrived, she departs. I lay  
there and reflect on her words of wisdom.

She told me that I can't erase the past.  
That sometimes love doesn't last.  
She said that my time of traveling was  
near done.  
Not soon.  
I would drift a while longer but eventually I  
would find land,  
An new dock in a place I wouldn't expect,  
but that I can't run away.  
Even it is the very place I left.  
If so I would come back a different man,  
Developed and determined to display the  
details of a daily devotion.

She told me that its takes work, to  
make it work.  
Effort, commitment, security,  
consistency and most importantly  
love.  
If I was willing, I would never have to  
set sail again.  
My spirit guide told me if that time  
comes,  
I should break down my ship so I can  
build a home,  
Use the rest for fire wood.  
Use my stories of sailing as  
experience.  
Look to the waves for wisdom.  
She said that everything would be  
ok.  
So until then I will drift, patiently.  
I will wait until I hit land again.  
I am committed to use a compass to  
guide me,  
And sew up the slices in my sails  
with the shirt off my back.  
Let the wind blow.  
Show me the path and I will follow,  
And if that path is against the  
current, I will paddle.  
If my ship is too much to bring with  
me, I will jump out and swim for the  
shore.  
I will sacrifice the self that I was to  
be with you and become us.  
I will endure and persevere,  
Know that it will all be worth it in the  
end.  
Until then,  
I will patiently and passionately,  
Drift...

JOE TRUSS



CRYING TREE

JAHN SOOD

## UNTITLED

I, me, my, mine  
Not...or maybe  
He, him, his  
Alone. Afraid. Uncertainty of tomorrow.  
No physical communication  
No immediate reply  
Confusion, Hurt, Anger, Resentment  
LOVE!  
The idea of it perhaps an infatuation  
Or at least a consumption,  
Of my thoughts,  
My heart  
Longing to be love...  
Only by him  
Feigning for his touch  
Inhaling to recount his smell  
Dreaming of his face,  
His eyes, his lips  
Pressed against mine,  
His tongue, his ticket into my world  
Halfway inside  
Hands explore my northern and southern hemispheres  
MY equator is scorching  
Screaming, in heat  
His ice cube enters,  
So cold breathing ceases,  
Slowly then rapidly melting  
The liquid builds  
Flows into my equator  
Fully entangling him into my world  
A permanent resident

ANONYMOUS

## HAZARDOUS DREAMS

Last night, I had a dream,  
I dreamed that you were here with me,  
But this morning, when I woke up,  
The sheets where I thought that you had slept  
Were smooth, creasless, bare, naked

So, I closed my eyes once more,  
And again, I saw your face,  
Pressed up against mine,  
As you slept so comfortably next to me,  
The alarm clocked sounded and I struggled to shut it off.

I turned my head to you  
and you were not there.  
But again I see that the sheets  
Were smooth, creasless, bare, naked  
And once again, I had been caught in my  
Hazardous Dreams.

ORLA THOMPSON

## A MESSAGE

The weight of oppression is so crippling  
That even when the weight is lifted,  
The oppressed are still hunched over.

They have gotten so accustomed to darkness  
That now that they see the light,  
They are blinded.

They have been kept in cages for so long  
That even though the door is open now,  
They remain inside, for it is all they know.

But they must be brave, adjust, and rise up  
Or be left to face the fact  
That they are their own oppressors.

BRITTNEY TAYLOR

## IF YOU WERE A FORTUNETELLER

if you were a fortuneteller, my fortune would be something else  
a musical with broadway lights and full costume and makeup, about a girl who tries to find  
herself  
the princess alone in her castle, with a moat around it, and she's chained in the dungeon  
alone  
perhaps that girl is me  
but i can't be released from the chains as long as you are neglecting and ignoring me  
if i was a fortuneteller, your fortune would be something else  
like a 3 million page novel with a gorgeous cover, that's never been opened or felt  
and at chapter three thousand and nine, where his heart is broken, i come to save the day  
but the sky has already turned to black  
no one will ever even read the book, because the cover spells the end  
and i ignore you like a professional whose job it is to just not answer the phone  
so you start calling someone else  
you are the manager, i answer to you, and you make me do whatever you want me to  
but today, i say i quit  
i'm surprised that i am being this strong, it's really unlike me, it doesn't make sense  
we went wrong somewhere, on one of those detours there, and unfortunately i think this one  
leads to a dead end  
if you were a fortuneteller, my fortune would be something else  
a pretty girl who just owns the world, who really has no idea about herself  
an unsinkable ship, that manages to sink, and no one knows where it has gone  
all things must come to an end  
and if you really read this and try and understand  
you'll see that i'm just trying to comprehend you  
and why you still remain  
i'm surprised that i am standing up, it's so weird for me, i can't understand it  
we really screwed up somewhere, during one of those fights, and i think the injuries are fatal  
i guess i should stick to my day job.

FAITH CUMMINGS



REFLECTION OF WEST HALL

MEENA L. BOULCHARI

## PURPOSE

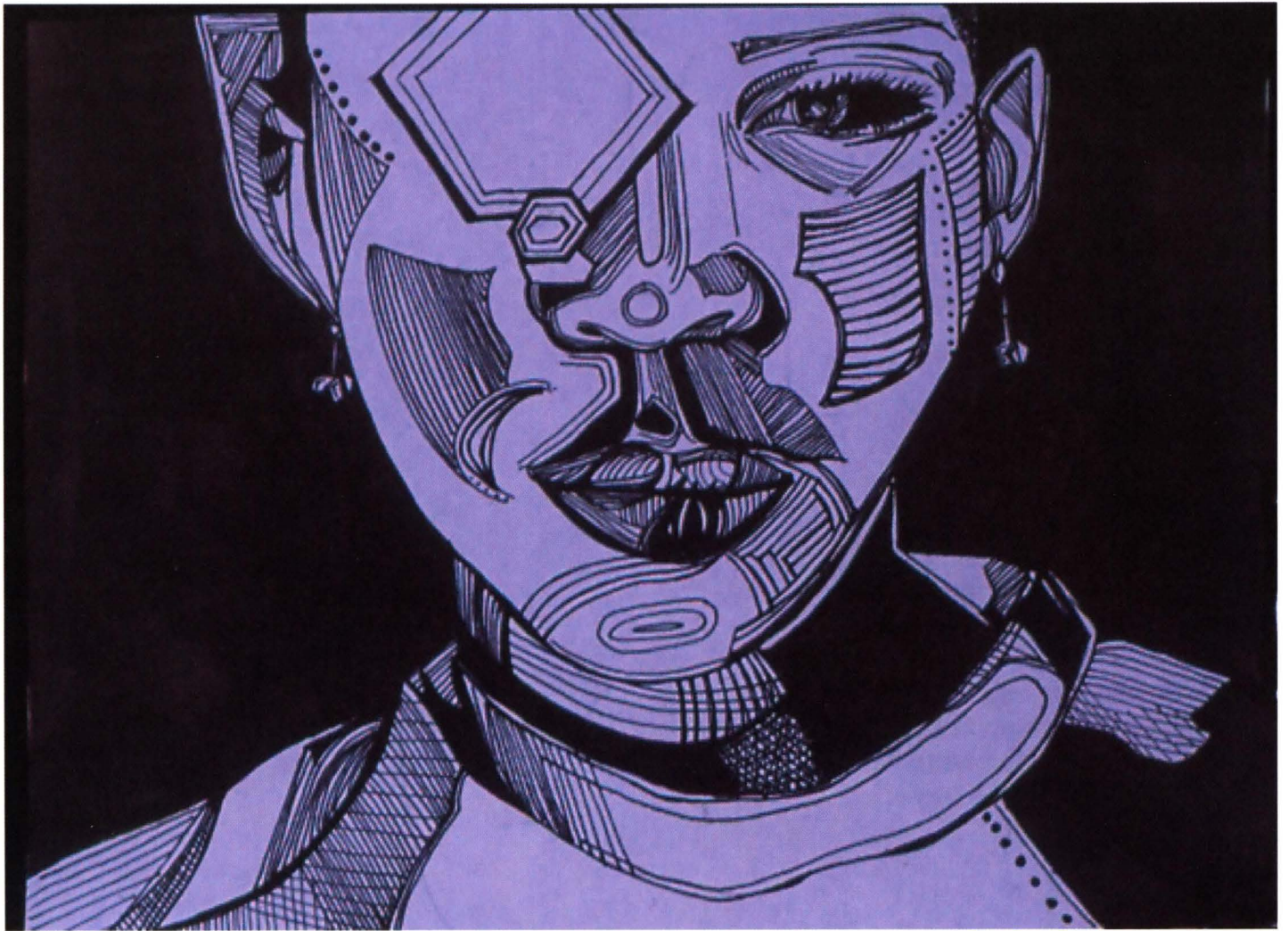
The romantic soliloquism of my passionate effort  
Forces me to ponder on the causality of my existence  
I think, I think, I think  
Of a time when you and I walked the waters of the Nile  
Where we were dined by kings and queens  
while being blessed by the light of Osiris  
I wading in the Wisdom of Solomon  
You basking in the beauty of Nefertiti

Yet as reality encroaches I am parched by the harsh dry whip of the desert  
For you only exist in my dreams  
So when I wake up I no longer have an oasis  
What is the basis,  
Of my visions  
For the prisms of light reflecting on my brain  
Puts me in a spiritual prison  
Making me want to go insane

So I wonder  
Are you that void?  
Are you that black whole in my soul that evaporates desperately the emotional dew  
drops delivered to my heart  
Are you the romantic soliloquism of my passionate effort?  
Defining the causality of my existence.

B.K.





LATOYA HANKEY

# PARENT

Oh I see now  
the world is as simple  
as two drops of water  
rolling toward one another

I don't have  
two cars, two cameras,  
a house and a lawn,  
a job and a fever

I have only this power  
and this blessed inclination  
to hold back from using it  
and not to crush the delicate  
between my two finite fingers

Anyone can strangle a child  
it takes real strength to lay your head  
upon her chest and hear her  
breathing fire to the sky

EZRA FURMAN

