

Spiritus
A Collective Memory
Mundi

Honors Literary Magazine
Spring 2011

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Colorado State University

Spring 2011

Cover Art:

Rachel Knoshaug

*“Study of M.C. Escher’s
‘Ascending and Descending’”*

Authors

Maya Benko
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Parker Malenke
Caitlyn Metzger
Natasha Pepperl
Cody Urban
Andrea Ver Meer

We hope you enjoy reading our 2011 Spiritus Mundi collection. This publication is dedicated to alumni of the University Honors Program from 1957 to 2010. Your commitment and loyalty has left a lasting legacy to the Honors Program and Colorado State University.

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On a Midmorning Run

Maya Benko

Purple Balloon
on a Red String-
water repelling
skin,

Amid the
bursting Peonies
of juicy,
dewy, Spring.

Purple Balloon
on a Red String,
some long
forgotten friend,

tangled in
sprouts and vines
and honey,
soaking in-

between the
pop of daisies tall
and rotting
Cyprus leaves,

Latex among
the scent of soil
all tucked beneath
the eaves-

Purple Balloon
on a Red String,
between sweet
Summer apples-

Yet, dappled and dewed,
that one Red String
and that Purple Balloon
eclipse everything.



Costa Rican Schoolgirl
Tara Reilly

Unknown Brothers

Jeff Geiger

His name is Rick Reynolds. Rick lives the “American Dream” in the suburbs outside of Manhattan. His gorgeous wife Mary and two children, Bobby and Lisa, live with him in their standard two story house with a white picket fence. They live peacefully and happily, never a worry any day. Rick is in the advertising business on Madison Avenue while Mary stays at home and watches the kids. The family believes their lives are perfect.

Every weekday Rick awakens around seven and walks into his bathroom to shave and clean up. He combs his dark matte black hair perfectly into place, nudging every strand gently to order. Rick then proceeds to don his suite and tie and check his image in the closet mirror. Nodding in approval of himself, Rick grabs his black leather briefcase off the bed and goes down the stairs, following the scent of eggs and bacon. Upon reaching the kitchen he greets his family. He kisses, hugs, and high-fives. He loves them. Rick starts to read the *New York Times* and begins to break fast when he glances at his watch. Noticing his tardiness, Rick quickly scarfs his remaining meal and apologizes to his family. He grabs his belongings, puts on his fedora and runs out to the garage.

Rick starts the '62 Ford Galaxie and speeds out of the neighborhood. He yells and curses at the traffic surrounding him. An accident. A cop. A red light. *The best laid schemes of mice and men ...* Rick thinks to himself. The New York lights blaze past him. A doughnut shop. A florist. A butcher. A gallery. Finally, his office. Rick quickly parks and rushes into the lobby. He yells at the elevator attendant. The doors close behind him.

The elevator doors open and the clacking of the typewriters fills the air and Rick's eardrums. Rick briskly walks past the rows of secretaries and bustling copywriters. He greets his secretary Marla and grabs a stack of papers off of her desk. After entering his corner office and sitting at his desk, he exams the various memos and one page ads in his hand. The office dulls

the outside clacking. Rick massages his temples, tosses the papers aside, and gazes out the window to the city. His intercom buzzes.

Marla tells Rick that the clients are in the meeting and that Matt and Jim are waiting for him. Rick enters the boardroom and shakes hands with the snobby moneybags that are filling his pockets. Matt fills him in and their current situation with the account. The clients want something new, everything offered has not been what they wanted, even though it's precisely what they asked for. Jim shows the clients new colored sketches that would fill magazines, newspapers, and billboards. Rick uses his silver tongue and spins slogans and catchphrases at the clients. He thoroughly and eloquently explains the meaning and drive behind each ad. The trio have done everything they could. They wait for a response. The young suits look to their leader in the center. The elder client lifts cane, scratches his collar, and nods at the young gentlemen. A sigh of relief. Celebration drinks make their rounds. Hand shakes and pats on the back are exchanged. Rick exits the room and heads back to his office. He pours himself another drink.

The remainder of the day plays out in similar fashion. Meeting and drinks. Meeting and drinks. Meeting and drinks. Most of the time everything goes smoothly with the account. Sometimes they fail and lose the account. With the day done, Rick leaves the office and drives past a clothing store and arrives at my establishment.

His name is Steve Redford. Steve lives in a Village apartment far north of Rick's place. He shares the apartment with various other free-spirited bachelors and bachelorettes who come and go as the please. He lives the activist's lifestyle, constantly protesting against "The Man." Steve owns an art gallery that houses countless underground works which is considered to be the epicenter of the young and urban activist's movement.

Every weekday Steve slowly awakens around eight. The night before is almost always a blurry haze of drunken and stoned stupor. He eyes the half-naked men and women lying around his bedroom floor. He cleans up, brushes his sandy

blonde hair, and puts on his signature black turtle neck. Once dressed, Steve leaves the disheveled apartment and walks to a cafe to meet friends for breakfast. He discusses the news and current events with his politically active and intellectual brothers-in-arms while munching on some French toast. Unlike Rick, Steve is never in a rush. The gallery opens whenever he feels like it should be open. However, he also has enough help that he doesn't need to be in the shop all of the time. Steve glances at his watch and realizes that he should get going and, apologizing to his party, he heads into town.

Steve gets into his '54 VW bug and drives out of the Village and into "the real world." He glides along the streets with Bob Dylan playing on the radio. He makes rude gestures at the cops and honks at some military men, but for the most part his drive is uneventful. Steve rolls along into the heart of the city watching the shops go by. A Ford dealership. A bar with great music and poetry. A department clothing store. A tall silver office. Eventually, Steve pulls into his modern art gallery. He parks the bug, greets his assistant Jane at the door and enters.

The new shipment of paintings and sculptures sit in the middle of the white, pristine gallery. Jane gives him the backstory on all of the new pieces: the artist, the materials, the message. Steve observes the pieces and orders his helpers to start installing the artwork. He directs them to place a massive brass bust in the lobby, place the other sculptures in between paintings. The major artists get their own rooms for their artwork while the newcomers are placed in various locations based on size and imagery. *All is quiet on the Western Front ...* thinks Steve.

With the gallery set up and open, Steve heads to his back office to take a break. He opens the top drawer of his desk, grabs a joint and lights up. It calms his nerves and opens his mind. He feels his needs to be open and relaxed to fully absorb the art around him. Jane pops in to join him, they exchange the joint and a few kisses. Jane came in to tell him that the gallery is full and that he should go to the lobby and do his job. Eyes blood-shot, Steve wearily makes his way to the front. He observes the sheep lazily walking around the various paintings and sculptures.

They look for only a brief moment, say, “That’s nice,” and move on. A few times throughout the day a Village friend stops by to say hello. Yet, like everyone else, they don’t purchase anything. The people who have the money don’t want the art. Those who want the art don’t have the money. Steve only has a successful day on openings, galas, or other special venues. Normally, he’s lucky for a purchase every few hours. This creates a backlog of unwanted masterpieces. More and more people want to speak their mind, yet no one wants to buy opinions.

Disgruntled, Steve decides to pack up and leave early. He has his employees to close up shop for him. He drives up the road to my place.

Around six, within ten minutes of each other, I see Rick and Steve enter my basement bar. It’s a simple and small establishment that’s hugely popular with the locals. A jazz quartet just finished and the audience claps. I watch, through the hazy smoke, the two sit at opposite sides of the bar. The pair enjoy listening to a poet rhyming about the current national problems. They both order an Old Fashioned and I give them their drinks.

Their eyes meet.



Human Form
Rachel Knoshaug

Mom
Colleen Canty

Your wrists as fragile as glass, veins pouring through with
paper thinness

I follow them down your arm to your fingertips

Your nails are always white like pearls, reflecting the light
of his ring

I follow them up your arms that reach so gently through
your blouse

What stories they hold there, your arms, that empty space
in front of you

Those veins, they run, so blue with blood and life down
your calves you always hide

Your calloused heels, your cracking skin, these creases
hold your stories like you once held me

A baby with eyes of blue, like the ocean waves, like the
dangling sky, like the petals of the iris

Blue like the veins of my mother.

I Smoke Occasionally
Natasha Pepperl

I exhale slowly and watch the smoke swirl up to the sky and reach for the silver moon. My worries and stresses float up, up and away, following the smoke where they are eaten up by the blackness of night.

I sink into the leather seat, melting and drowning in the present moment, drinking it all in and enjoying it to the fullest, instead of thinking through or weighing the consequences.

I smoke occasionally, breathing in toxins and breathing out tension, allowing emotion to conquer reason.

Stealing a glance at my partner in crime, I watch as he taps his cigar on the cracked window and watches its embers fall to the ground.

I love escaping reality, if only for a few minutes. Sometimes I just want to run off into the sunset, without a good-bye and with no regrets.

If I ran off into the sunset, would he take my hand and come with me?

No, he would take my hand and convince me to stay.

One is strong. Two is stronger. Three is even better. We give each other the strength and courage to face and endure our lives.



Book Love
Andrea Ver Meer

Snow White Caitlyn Mezer

Prince Charming has blue eyes. All the more blue from the blue clothes he wears. They make his eyes stand out. They make her notice.

He sits in the row next to her in her morning class. At first she jokes she wouldn't have taken the course if she'd known how expensive the book was. She doesn't joke anymore. Now she wishes to swim in those blue, blue eyes. Her imagination does, at least. They fill the canvas of her mind, splashing color here and there, saturating the monotone days of school and study. He is the first real person to so starkly inhabit her thoughts. The others that have dwelled there are only fiction. Coming from the seven posters standing guard along the perimeter of her sparse apartment, they are the cinematic celebrities teens girls and tabloids covet. They are small men in their papered form, but they used to reign large, populating the stories circulating in her head. Actors in reality and mere personas in the posters, they transformed into any characters she wanted and any characters she needed. After all, her only encounters with the opposite sex beyond acquaintance had been with them.

Until those blue eyes.

Now her heart skips when she spots a flash of cerulean across the square, when she glimpses sapphire in the student center. When she sees him. A blush stipples her cheeks, and she can't help but shudder. She wonders, did he see me too? Does he feel that sensation of teasing lightning? Is he even interested? Is he even looking?

She tries to be beautiful for him, but she scowls before the mirror. It doesn't have to lie. It doesn't have to speak at all. She knows she is not the fairest in the land. Her skin wages war, so she layers on foundation thicker than normal. It is a pale liquid that gives her a porcelain tone almost like snow. She also applies chap

stick with a pink hue to give her pallid lips some color. Using an aging elastic, she pulls her hair back into a pony tail, though straightens long bangs to hide the blemished battlefield of her forehead. Then she hikes up her pants and pulls down her shirt. She is not perfect.

She is not slender, skinny, or stunning. She does not have sleek and shining hair that gleams gold when it catches the light. Her complexion has not been bronzed or even slightly sun kissed. She does not have dark, beguiling eyes that lure in others with promised secrets. She is not a beauty that turns heads.

A few times after class, she speaks to him, and he to her – though not without the presence of several friends. She smiles and chats, not trying to be strikingly obvious but hoping she is not too timidly subtle either. Then one day their friends are gone, vanished. Who knows where? They could have been snatched by aliens for all she knows, or cares. For that day she basks in blue. After class they talk, just the two of them. His eyes are lulling warm waters but shade a bit when they stop and say goodbye. This doesn't faze her. The chance to speak to him without peer supervision sends her spirit soaring for the rest of the day.

By the time she returns to her apartment, she is humming a love song. She plops down her backpack and sprawls across her bed. Her hand clutches an apple, the last of her lunch she was too buoyant to eat. Her imagination steals the color of those blue, blue eyes and dazzles it before her in a million scenarios as the skin of the blood red fruit grazes against her lips.

Then her imagination trips, falters. Fear snares her heart, and it beats as if trying to escape. What if he does see her too? What if he also feels the tickling lightning? What if he is looking and sees her blue eyes too? Isn't that supposed to be a good thing? If so, why does she suddenly feel so scared?

Intimacy is a strange and foreign thing she has never experienced. At least not in the real world. She never allowed anyone close because she never supposed anyone would want to be. Isn't she the one who would snort and say she did not need a man to make her happy? Besides, she is not in isolation. She has all the company a girl could want standing guard around her like solemn protectors. Her seven men are not scary or strange. They are under and a part of her spell. They are instruments of her imagination.

Her mind slowly drifts back to blue. She thinks how first Prince Charming's eyes were skies softened by clouds. Then at their parting, they seemed guarded by some invisible armor. Perhaps it was all in her head? Another figment of her imagination? It wouldn't be impossible. It is more likely probable. After all, who would be interested in Snow White?

She slides the apple's skin across her lips then takes a bite.

Claustrophicode
Cody Urban

I need to breathe. No more air left. Suffocating,
crisp pain now and death later. Fresh unbearable
dread; keeping a grasp on my sanity is killing me
slowly. Judgments forsake revealing the slightest
truths now lost, unknown. The key to forever sav-
ing myself buried in words, like sand sinking fast.
I'm in a box while walls shrinking
telling me that survival won't hap-
pen. Isn't that all our air? or
only killing without purpose

.....
now a breath
being saved of
– moment of clarity –
.....

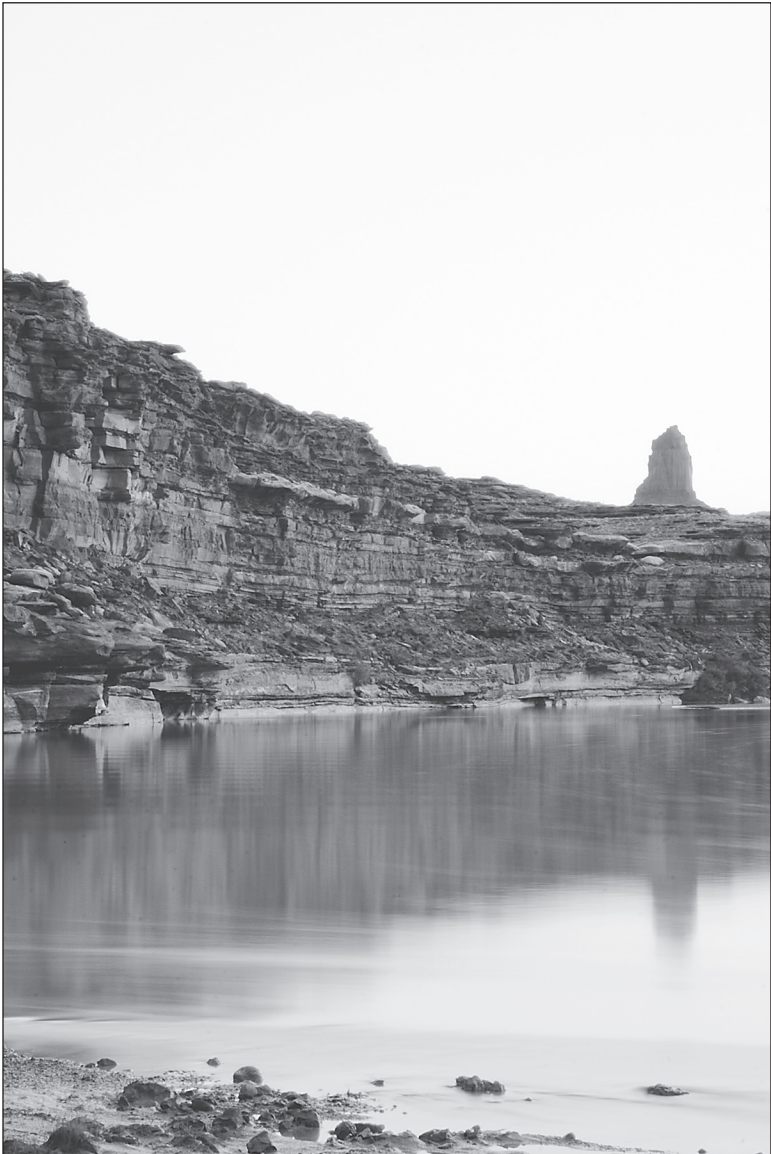
I breathe air, crisp and fresh air. Keeping on is slowly reveal-
ing truths unknown to myself. Words sinking in while telling
survival isn't our only purpose. Breath of clarity.

Help!
.....

Green Pastures
Caitlyn Metzger

The grass is not always greener on the other side,
Because the field across the fence is covered in blackberry
bushes,
And a cloud passes over, casting the land in blue shadow.
At the field's edge is a jagged precipice that drops a
hundred feet.
In that chasm your voice gets lost,
Drowned out by the whirring and whistling wind.
Who are you then, when no one can hear you?
When you are pricked and bleeding from the bushes'
thorns
And stumble off the cliff a hundred feet down?

I think this pasture's plenty green.



Canyonlands NP
Parker Malenke

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