



HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY'S

THE APOGEE Spring 2000

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

POEMS

Aisha Campbell	
Neighbor's Point of View	17
Scott Carpenter	
As the Rain Falls	4
Heather Cheek	
Heart Murmur	11
Verron Chue	
Laborers	3
Homeless	
Mike Graff	
While looking at the ceiling	10
Marion Hodge	
We're All Driving Down the Highway on a Nice Day	19
Shannon Larsen	
Nothingness	9
Quinton Lawrence	
Rhythm	12
Willow Miller	
To Bob Marley	15
Carpenter	
Courtney Mueller	
Daydreams	13

Nick Nowalk	
March Madness	1
Brooke Pennell	
[believer in love]	6
Chad Tedder	
100 Sheep	18
The Tiger's Answer	
SHORT STORIES AND ESSAYS	
Jason Blanford	
Coming of Age	20
Julia Nadal	
Essay	23
Alice Sink	
Aunt Mabel	25
ART	
Bryan Robbins	
[girl with lighthouse]	5
DMS	
Alphabet Soup	8

March Madness

Basketball in March, and I'm stuck in class? College tournament woes confound me, keep me up at night. Upsets galore and my bracket's a mess. Searching for scores. Vitale rants for days.

I find updates, and groan.

Roommates mock my bad luck and count my cash.

I begin to pray.

Carolina over Stanford? I'm broke.

The Tiger's Answer

Not God, but nature framed this symmetry from dire necessity and the poetics of need. My dread foot by no dread hand was made, only by growling centuries of slaughtering prey. While your forbears huddled in a smoky cave, my ancestors sought out life warm flesh to fill their hungry jaws. The lamb's maker was never minenature is my lord, but he belongs to you. That morsel by you has been wrought after centuries of being kept and tended and is now little more than a puff of wool that feeds and mews and cannot save itself. Keep your creator to yourself, I shall not worship any deity who gives to you, a slow, blind, clawless ape without grace or precision, mastery of this earth. I have earned the right; I have mastered all, vet am exiled from the jungle, kept and weakened in a zoo, while you dine with borrowed claws on the flesh of animals born and slain in stalls. I pant and pace, and measure the distance to you through iron bars; I watch their shadows creep across my flank at night and I know no God smiled to see me made. For if I am such a point of pride, why am I here punished?

Laborers

1. Laying Asphalt in Summer

Steamrollers flatten
Three-foot-high piles of smoking
Asphalt. They too smoke
And sweat under their bumblebee—
Yellow hardhats, their only shade.

2. Refacing Haworth Hall

They eat from brown bags, Then rise to haul bags of cement, Each weighing 15 pounds. Some lower faceplates, Ignite acetylene torches, burn steel.

As the Rain Falls

As the rain runs over my unbeating heart And the coldness runs through my skin, I feel the love that I could show Rush away with a shower of no's

And as I hear the threatening dog's bark the rain runs over his soaked ears. And while the mud starts to form around his feet I see him paw at the mud and I can feel the scratching as my heart starts to beat

And as the rain starts to fall more heavily I see her step out of the shadows with soaked hair My heart starts to beat faster with the falling rain And as I see her look away from me, my heart can feel the pain.

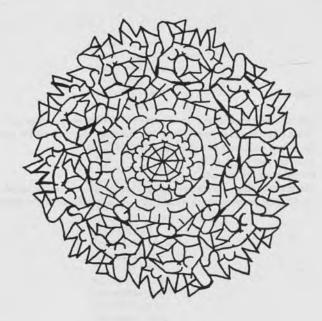
As the rain starts to lighten to a drizzle I feel my heart do the same,
And as I sink to the floor
I feel my heart beating no more_____.



believer in love i would dare to be wrong kindhearted affiliations eternal song governing bodies always confess letting opinions loving a mess indian beauty eating my soul i talked to a stranger he asked for my toll bathing in sunlight sent from above operating on affection ready for love kiss from an angel ever-present friend part of my being exploding within never-ending story nerve racking find exhausted feeling leader of mine longing for forgiveness breath on my skin nostalgic remembrance maybe a friend

Carpenter

His callused hands drop a 2x4 among sawdust piles and stray nails. Black dirt streams in sweat down his forehead, dripping off his nose. He thrusts his hands into the tool belt at his waist, Pulls out two silver nails. Gripping one in his teeth, Placing the other on a carelessly sketched pencil line on the wood, Striking his hammer down once, twice, a third time, he forms a frame.



ALPHABET SOUP

Dus 80

Nothingness

I pondered as I stared out into the

Black nothingness.

I saw the lights of souls fly-by.

I wondered as I sat in the

Great nothingness

I thought of all the great lies.

I heard all the lies that created the

Black nothingness.

I let so many hurt me inside.

So, I sat there and protested the

Great nothingness.

And I thought, what good is living a lie?

While looking at the ceiling

Abrupt awakening without a sense that it was real. Want back those days of fun. Rewind before the night when I saw him under white sheet. His car cannot be crushed. Cop, don't...It's not...He can't...Not Jake...All right.

Four months have passed and still I see it all the same. A night which haunts most every dream. I try to think of pleasant times. A killed close friend stays. Stays with me until my time.

Heart Murmur

Mysterious Yet magnetic Unreachable Yet majestic These objects of my attractions A pattern of actions A thirst for a fairy-tale A mission that many fail Hopeful Yet insane Thriving On restraints These ridiculous illusions Of sweet-tasting conclusions A song for each moment A numb, clueless component The Beat Gets Tired And Old.

Rhythm

Fingers tap as dice tap on the blacktop.
The backdrop a strobelight's rapid flicker.
Drumbeats race a guitar's twang
Along the barrel of a gun.
Instant time, teeth chatter. Trigger clenched, the hammer clicks. Skin tears.
Dice keep skipping across cement.
Not a single eye blinks off beat. Clocks tick.
The boom of a gun—not strange,
no less constant than the beat of the drum.

Daydreams

Your guitar plays my heart's strings and entices me to dream about how you have turned my world Inside out and Upside down Until all there once was can't be found.

The lyrics you sing talk of leaps of faith—Yours into nothing but hope, all encompassing. Mine into uncertainty.

I want to know when the song will end?

Surely it will not last forever.

The smoke from your cigarette rests against the ashtray and clouds my judgement.

Thoughts of confusion enter my guilt-ridden mind while you stare, waiting.

I assume you will wait as long as it takes, for you do not Know what this is really about.

Coincidence, fate and life's meaning dance in my mouth Until I am finally convinced that I know what I'm doing.

I'll wake tomorrow to ponder those exact things, for I'm Starting to feel, as the guitar plays on, That I don't know what I've done.

For now, the melody entices me to dream.



To Bob Marley

Colors unite to become your blood. You chant to all a glorious revolution Where race has no authority. You enrich our souls through rhythm and sentiment, For sacred Babylon remains. Only its throne has fallen.

Homeless

Why don't you come and see what I look at Every night that I try to fall asleep. It will make you think twice about us "bums," And the hardships you do not endure.

No matter what season it claims to be, It always rains on my cardboard home. Hello! Please don't walk by like I'm not here. To spare some change—change is all I ask of you. Neighbor's Point of View

Poor, poor little brown girl, No one has combed your hair. Has your mother sung tonight? "No." Someone must sing this Neglected child to sleep. It ain't my problem 'cause She ain't my precious child, Poor, poor little brown girl.

100 Sheep

In business suites, bank dress, dark hats and shoes, middle class uniforms, itching them as they gather in the narthex. Tiny church:

OUR LORD REDEEMER NAZARENE OF GOD OF PROPHECY. The Bibles' spines still whole. They need someone to shout salvation in to them. Learn by rote the jargon of Christ, Fire insurance. Send up "Amen!" and "Lord!" Someone in charge might hear. Praise be to God and pass the rice. They will sleep well tonight.

We're All Driving Down the Highway on a Nice Day

We're all, like, driving our cylindrical vehicles down the highway on a warm sunny day after the biggest snowstorm in, like, several years.

We're all driving cars that talk to us and to themselves and to the highway and we're looking around at snow patches melting as they hear our cars.

We're, like, glancing at the sky blue again and the fields green again, except for the patches, and we're wondering if angels drive cylindrical cars.

I don't know. Do you? As we're driving along, we're all feeling very fine, we're feeling free. There's money in our pockets, big fat plastic money cards.

So we're driving to malls for a little R&R, now that we've dug ourselves out of the snow, to buy some interesting moments, bright, smiley little presents,

to buy some no-go, no-show: seedy cds, links of anchor-chain, disgust, a couple of tattooed brethren. Yeh, we're going to buy some cozy eternities.

We're driving along feeling American again, finally, O feeling, like, free and, like, revolutionary, whipping along to buy some gardens with our money.

Our loud radios and imperial Gucci thermostats warm us up toasty. Our cars are daydreaming about stuff we're all going to do back home—woodgrain stuff

like esurf ethe eNet, echat, etrade, ewrite email, echarge enice estuff, shelve the old cold snowed-in folded-up slowed-down sold-out days for egood.

We're all cruising down the smooth American innerstate, scanning cool ebbsites. We're happy our cars have decided to let us attend Heaven or a gunshow,

Whichever we want. Know what I mean?

COMING OF AGE

Jason Blandford

HEN I WAS A CHILD, MY FATHER USED TO TAKE ME ON CAMPING EXCURSIONS
THAT would last for days. I grew up in Michigan, so Canada and the Great
Lakes were very accessible to us. When my dad came home from a long trip, he sat me
on his lap and planned the expedition on which we were about to embark. We hardly
ever visited the same place twice and rarely engaged in the same activities. Sometimes
we would hunt or fish, while other times we would simply photograph the beautiful
scenery. One trip stands out most in my mind.

When I turned of thirteen, my father had me plan where I wanted to visit and decide what provisions we needed. When I asked if we were to hunt or fish, he simply replied, "It's your call." As for my other questions, he answered them in the same riddled fashion. After a few days of planning, I finally decided that we would drive to Lake Michigan and take our canoe up river where we would then head down a small tributary that was known for its great trout fishing. The journey would last for three days beginning early one Friday evening and ending the following Sunday.

After I finished planning the trip, I drew up a list of provisions that I felt might be necessary and gave it to my father. When I gave him the list, he glanced at it briefly and said, "Be packed and ready to go Thursday night; we will head out early Friday morning." To be honest, I walked away from the conversation with a sense of disappointment. I had worked hard to plan a trip for the two of us and I expected a little more of a response from my dad.

By the time I went to bed on Thursday, I was packed and ready to go. My dad woke me up at three o'clock Friday morning, so I changed and headed outside to the car only to Coming Of Age/Jason Blandford

find it packed and running. As I stepped outside, my dad followed close behind saying, "Come along now; there is no time to waste." The next thing I knew we departed for Lake Michigan. I slept most of the way there, and when we arrived, my father, in a very solemn mood, helped me unload the car and prepare the canoe for departure. I found his mood very peculiar and at first I did not understand why we only loaded my equipment into the canoe. Then my dad told me, "Have a seat in the car, and I'll be with you shortly." I nervously sat, waiting for him to join me, not knowing what was going to happen. When he sat down next to me, he handed me a black bag, which contained a small transistor radio (for emergencies), a flashlight with numerous packages of extra batteries, and a new Swiss Army pocketknife. He then explained, "When I was your age, my father sent me off on an expedition of my own." He felt that I should take the same steps. Next, he began to explain the meaning behind the flashlight and the extra batteries. He explained that at times the trip may get rough. If I ever strayed from my path I should use the flashlight as my guide to find my way back. He then told me that he loved me and handed me a map with a designated spot on it where he would meet me at approximately six o'clock Sunday night. With the map close in hand and my flashlight on, I headed off, not knowing what great adventure lay ahead.

For the next three days, I paddled up river towards the designated spot. I fished when I got hungry and slept when I got tired. I ate the fish that I caught along with some canned vegetables that I had packed in my backpack. Each day I found solitude along the quiet tributary, and each night I sought comfort among the campfire as it burned and danced in the fresh night air. For those three days, I lost myself in the great wilderness that surrounds Lake Michigan and found an unparalleled clarity about my life, nature,

and the journey on which I had embarked. The euphoric epiphany that took over my imagination well surpassed any fears that I had encountered at the start of my trip.

When I arrived Sunday evening, I found a well-prepared camp and a picnic blanket filled with some of the most extravagant food any one could possibly cook by an open flame. My dad had roasted a turkey and dressing over the fire, and he had brought some pies from home. As I docked the canoe, I saw him, followed by my mom and my older brother, walk out from behind a group of trees. They all welcomed me with opened arms, and a great sense of pride flowed over me. The four of us feasted on the meal that my dad had prepared, and I told the story of any adventure. After the meal, my dad pulled me aside and asked if I had ever needed to use the flashlight; or if I had ever given any thought to it. When I replied that I had, he smiled and said that I had done very well. He continued by saying that he used the flashlight as a symbol for the sun and the moon. He pointed to the sky and said, "Jason, that is eternity, our ultimate goal. If we use the light that the sun and the moon give us as a guide, then we will never stray from our path."

Each family celebrates the coming of age in a different fashion; my family has celebrated this way for six generations.

ESSAY Julia Nadal

HO AM I BECOMING? ONE OF THE THINGS THAT comforts me most is the earth itself. The trees come up from the earth like antlers from the head of a deer. Colorful and green, the leaves dance with the wind as they bathe in the sun's heat. As time passes, the leaves change from green to yellow and as if under direct orders from the rainbow, they turn red, purple, orange, and then brown as they fall to the earth's floor. Over time the trees, cold and naked, slowly clothe themselves.

The sun lights the world with its colorful smile and awakens the world with its fiery lights. It says goodbye with a whole new glory and drags behind it the blanket of darkness. The moonlight and the stars take their cue as they flicker and bounce and symbolize the universe's soul. Crickets sing the steady beat of the night. The sun pushes the night with slow, smooth precision, and once again breathes color into the earth's surface. Here is the rhythm of nature, the beauty of nature. I am nature; everything is.

Our relationship to the universe is so plain and still such
a mystery. We were set here for a purpose. A mother
holds her baby close, supplying it with all its needs. She
Essay/Julia Nadal

soothes her crying child just as the rain quenches the desert's cracked, dry ground. The child then becomes a mother, and in her the cycle continues. She nurtures from instinct. In her lies the answer to survival. In her there is a love for her child that flows with the deepest of rivers. In her beats the same rhythm as in the earth and the sky. The mother nurtures the child just as the earth nurtures the mother.

We are born, we live, we grow bonds, we give and take, and then die. But that is not the end because, like nature, we carry our own circular rhythm. A circular pattern has no ending. You live, you die, you transform. You become your mother; you find in yourself the earth mother that made you. The cycle lives on. The soul of the earth is the soul that rests in you.

THE APOGEE

AUNT MABEL

Alice Sink

Mabel as the short, friendly woman who, until a decade ago, made her daily pilgrimages up and down South State Street. Chances are she was walking to for from one of her many volunteer duties at First Methodist Church. I used to joke with her. "Auntie," I'd say, "I can see it now. When you are old and feeble, newcomers to town will say, 'Who is that ancient little lady walking the streets all hours of the day?" She'd laugh and admit that possibility did exist.

This, however, was not to happen. She lived her final years, not walking, but sitting in a wheelchair at the Methodist Home in Charlotte, North Carolina, her "chosen" residence. When I visited her there, she insisted, "This is my new home." She seemed happy, and although she could not recall what she had eaten for lunch that day, she could describe in minute detail a trinket she had bought forty years ago at McLellan's Five and Dime or a conference she had attended at Lake Junaluska in the early Fifties. Her mind saw my three little girls (one of whom she had nicknamed Miss Idol) seated on the end of her hospital bed. She told me about their childish chatter. I didn't have the heart to tell her they were all grown women.

From Aunt Mabel I inherited my love of learning and my passion for the written word. She also instilled in me the philosophy that it was okay to be a maverick. March to the tune of a different drummer. Pay my

Aunt Mabel/Alice Sink

dues when and where I chose, not where society deemed I contribute. Some things she could not teach me. She tried to mold me into a musician, but my tone deafness and short attention span over-rode her patience during my piano practices. She'd grimace and then we'd go outside and construct a miniature golf course in her back yard. After our game, we'd toast to you's with ginger ale in two of her best crystal sherbet glasses. I never missed the piano.

We spent our summers in the old Davidson County Court House. Aunt Mabel liked murder trials best. While she listened intently, she would knit long shapeless rectangles "for the soldiers overseas." Once, when the proceedings got rather morbid, the judge suggested adult discretion for attendance at the upcoming afternoon session. We were back in our seats after lunch. "You might learn something," she told me.

Maybe it is ironic that my novel-in-progress is based on one of those murders. Recently, during an afternoon of research, I had a chance to revisit that same court room. Without hesitation I picked out "our seats." For an instant I was back in the early Fifties—an impressionable young girl with her Auntie—but then I quickly moved on. My project beckoned. I had something new to learn.





