

# Absence

Penn State McKeesport's  
Literary and Art Journal

Spring 1999

Volume 3

Number 1

# *~ Absence ~*

## *Mission Statement*

*We, of **Absence**, are committed to producing a quality literary and art journal which provides the opportunity for Penn State-McKeesport students to publish their original work of interest to our campus community.*

*Our goal is to encourage student participation in these fine arts of creativity. This journal is primarily for students, yet submissions from faculty and staff are also welcomed.*

*In **Absence** lies the presence of pain, pleasure, dreams and realities which we believe represents our sole existence. There always seems to be something missing in our lives. In **Absence**, you may find what you've been searching for.*

*Take a walk inside and experience what you've been missing.*

© Copyright **Absence** 1999. All Rights Reserved

# ~ *Absence* ~

*PSM's Literary and Art Journal*  
*Spring 1999 ~ Volume 3 ~ Number 1*

## *Officers*

*Kevin Clark* ..... *Advisor*  
*Robert Beaumont* ..... *President, Editor-In-Chief*  
*Meghan Morgan* ..... *Vice President*  
*Whitney Lucas* ..... *Secretary*  
*Amber Vessels* ..... *Treasurer*

## *Staff*

*Amber Brooks*  
*Dane O'Brien*  
*Stefanie Foster*  
*Kimberly Muir*  
*Kahlil Smith*  
*Richard Washington*

# Table Of Contents

Robert Beaumont ... <i>Irony</i>	8
Robert Beaumont ... <i>Deuces Wild</i>	9
Robert Beaumont ... <i>Amorette</i>	10
Casey Alanna Brady ... <i>See</i>	11
Casey Alanna Brady ... <i>Life</i>	12
Casey Alanna Brady ... <i>Call</i>	13
Kevin Clark ... <i>True Fidelity</i>	14
Kevin Clark ... <i>Could'a Been</i>	16
Stefanie Foster ... <i>Should I?</i>	17
Jennifer Irwin ... <i>Daddy</i>	18
Peter Irvine ... <i>The Goat Man</i>	19
Julie Kurlfink ... <i>Dance Like No One Is Watching</i>	20
Julie Kurlfink ... <i>Empty Space</i>	21
David Lang ... <i>Drawing</i>	23
Kristy Longsdorf ... <i>Untitled</i>	24
Kristy Longsdorf ... <i>Untitled</i>	26
Steve Lucia ... <i>An Unbelievable Tale</i>	27
Steve Lucia ... <i>A Momentary And Forgotten Revelation</i>	28
- Jessica A. Nace ... <i>drawing</i>	29
Anonymous ... <i>Internet Love</i>	30
Dane O'Brien ... <i>2/14</i>	31
Dane O'Brien ... <i>Untitled</i>	32
Dane O'Brien ... <i>Uncle Ed</i>	33
Autumn Lynn Reed ... <i>Untitled</i>	34
Eric D. Rozzi ... <i>Pessimism '99'</i>	36
Eric D. Rozzi ... <i>Anticipation</i>	37
Eric D. Rozzi ... <i>Alpha She</i>	38
Andy Ross ... <i>Abnormality</i>	39
Andy Ross ... <i>Innocence</i>	41
Kahlil Smith ... <i>Looking Back</i>	42
Casey Sill ... <i>Untitled</i>	43
Casey Sill ... <i>Untitled</i>	44
Guo-Yuan Wang ... <i>Autumn</i>	45
Guo-Yuan Wang ... <i>Soul Food</i>	46
Guo-Yuan Wang ... <i>Untitled</i>	47



### *To You, Dean Beatty*

*Dean John Beatty was a great friend of this organization.*

*What you see before you is largely due to his efforts.*

*He was a fellow writer and contributor. He constantly supported us any way he could. He continuously gave us lessons, even though we weren't aware that we were being taught.*

*One of the things he taught us was how to be leaders, not followers. He stressed that we should never give up.*

*To this day, we do not know what giving up means.*

*Since he was taken from us last summer, a big part of this organization has suffered. Since then, we have struggled to find a way to help heal the pain. In the process of our healing, we have decided to make this issue of **Absence** a tribute to our mentor.*

*We can't thank you enough for everything that you've done for us, Dean Beatty. We'll never forget you.*

**Sketch of John Beatty**  
by Bruce M. Berquist, Penn State Graduate 1974

## Dean Beatty

When I was asked by a member of the ABSENCE staff to write a few words in tribute to John W. Beatty, my first internal reaction was *what words could I possibly choose that would do justice to this good friend and exceptional human being?*

I knew John Beatty for almost three decades. My memories of him are full of wonderful stories of many good times and a few sad times; *what words could describe them?* My memories include quick conversation in the hallway, longer talks in his office, and jokes; *what words could encapsulate them?* And my memories include the times we faced difficult situations — usually, but not always, involving students — that occur on any college campus. *But what words?*

But then it hit me that maybe *one* word would be enough. That word leaped into my mind as I recalled two totally unconnected events which occurred about a year ago, just a few month before John's death.

In the eternal and ineffable permutations of academic administration, old departments are abolished, new colleges are created, positions are eliminated, and titles are changed. It struck me that the title of "Dean of Students," a title John once held, had been eliminated years ago — long before this student had thought about coming to PSM (perhaps even before this student was born!). And yet he used the term "Dean Beatty" naturally, easily, automatically.

As I recalled that classroom event, another incident came to mind, one involving a meeting of faculty and staff members. There was one person in attendance who had been an employee for just a short time. During the course of the conversation, one of the long timers said something about a decision made by "the Dean." The newcomer look puzzled and asked, "Which dean?" I was struck not by the fact that this novice was puzzled *but by the fact that the rest of us in the room knew exactly who "the Dean" was.*

I had the word I was looking for: *Dean*

*What better word to summarize the life of this man and what he meant to all of us?*

“Dean” is a title bestowed upon someone in the academic world who is given important duties and powers; it is a title which connotes responsibilities and judiciousness; but most importantly, it is a title of respect and esteem. This is a title John Beatty once had, officially, but years later, even after it had been “officially” taken away from him, he continued to merit.

*Everyone* referred to him as Dean Beatty. It was as though his parents themselves had named him Dean John.

The title fit; it belonged; it remained.

For those of us who knew him, for those of us who worked with him as students or colleagues, for those of us who loved and respected him, he will always, forever, be *Dean* Beatty.

I think that word pretty much says it all.

## Green

I have a nickel ... hmm ... two for a penny spearmint green balls or spend the entire amount on a lime green popsicle which always made your fingers sticky ... no matter your technique or degree of carefulness ... choices ... life was full of choices ...

A tiny bookshelf filled with ancient dust covered books ... worn ... tattered ... many with dirty green covers ... discouraging all curiosity to discover what lies inside ...

Small boys playing alone all day in green woods ... with trees loaded with green crab apples ... eat one and you would get “carly marbles” ... a mystical ailment which would turn you green with stomach pain ...

The fields of childhood ... where green formed the backdrop for multicolored wildflowers ... grass and leaves sacrificing their own identity to pronounce the beauty of isolated pink, yellow, or blue flowers ...

The back shed with forest green trim ... paint peeling from two dirt covered small windows ... irregular ... misformed ... odd shaped ... belonging to the shed ... giving identity ... character to the structure ...

And now ... a lifetime later ... green pens etch memories onto the white pages of a journal ... so that years from now ... someone who remembered the man ... could read ... remember and perhaps understand why he found peace in green places ...

*This appeared in the first issue of **Absence**.*



## Irony

I dream of you  
Nothing sexual, yet  
Strangely still erotic.  
Used to be illicit situations  
But you changed all that.

Every time I look at you  
Every time I hear your voice  
The black hole yields a little  
To the soul that is trapped within  
My heart beats a little quicker, little stronger.  
Trying to break the chains that bind it.

And every time I remember what you once told me,  
What you once said.  
Freeing and trapping my heart at the same time.  
You told me you would never give me a chance  
To show you who I really am.

Because I wasn't perfect,  
Because I decided to have my own opinion.

I was crucified because I believed against the majority.  
I was crucified because I proclaimed to be something no one  
understood.  
Crucified because I am not Christian.

Seems I've heard this story before,  
Seems the ending is still the same.

## Deuces Wild

A pair of deuces wild  
Controlling and egocentric  
Timid and electric  
Hell-bent on himself  
Equality is the key  
Unconcerned for her feelings  
Wonder what he thinks he is seeing  
Darkness begins closing in around her light of day  
Doesn't care what happens, it just will  
She grasps at straws to hold onto it still

Together  
Apart  
Together  
Apart  
Together  
Apart  
Together, but for how long  
Even love can't be this strong  
Like a crack in a pane of glass  
Time takes them further away  
Slipping down an icy slope  
No picks or ropes to help them cope  
The frigid water at the bottom  
Not nearly as comforting as cotton  
Which is where they expected to fall  
Like the wounded call  
Of a hurt child  
When the deuces wild

## Amorette

A dark thundercloud rumbles through the air,  
I can't keep but thinking of the color of your hair.  
The wind pushes along keeping a brisk pace,  
The gentle brush, like your hair caressing my face.

The soft pink petals of a rose swaying in the wind.  
Sweet smile of your rosy lips forces me to wish that I never  
sinned.

Sudden flash of lightning crackles in the sky,  
Paling in comparison to your sudden anger's light.  
The smooth warmth of your skin gives me a natural high,  
As the feel of the sun as it returns post-night.  
Caribbean island water of sea-green  
Eyes filling me with the same warmth and beauty  
The sea, calm or rough, never as it seems  
Underneath the surface, it stirs us sooty  
The rains slows to a drizzle and a scent arises  
Honey, nature's surgery, golden gift  
Your sweet aroma one of many surprises  
Like all nature's gifts, this I'm glad I haven't missed.

## See

I am not normal and I don't see  
What is standing right in front of me?  
I need a purpose; I need a plan I need someone to hold my hand.  
Because life has been presented so easily to me.  
Now it is so hard for me to see.

## Life

A simple circle, three benches in it.  
I sit on the bench that faces away from the world.  
The one that I know is not facing anyone I know.  
I turn on the inside looking out but,  
Proclaim from the outside looking in.  
My bench faces trees. I want to run wild from tree to tree.  
No one actually is stopping me. Only obstacles stand in your way.  
But breaths of life are here to stay.

## Call

You call to me in the night.  
I reach out for your hand, but you are not there.  
I am scared to be alone. Scared to be by myself.  
But most of all I'm afraid you won't understand.  
For truly getting to know one self takes solitude,  
not someone there holding your hand.

## True Fidelity

Between the sentries of symphonic,  
twin speakers of a rosewood appliance,  
I spent the polyester of my younger years.  
A homage paid on the living room carpet  
of toy-truck parade. I wore knees shiny  
past the stereo console, that delicious hi-fi.

With its cyclops of a red eye  
indicating warming tubes,  
I parked my miniature fleet  
and held the deep breath for seconds  
before FM reception, a true fidelity  
with its promise of life, static-free.

We hungered for rock n' roll  
like a hop, like the glint of switchblade rumble.  
*West Side Storiéd,*  
The cats in my cars were way cool.  
Leaning on horns to sound approval,  
backseat couples made out to moldy oldies  
or their song, the "b" side of a Monkees hit.

And the stax of wax fell  
on a pancake sized platter.  
Scratching and hissing out  
James Brown's *Please, Please, Please!*  
Do-Wop, Mowtown, British Invasion,  
and my sister's Elvis.  
A record-changer name drop  
of Liberty, Sun, Chess, and Capitol.  
Playing Roulette with the Shondells;  
Date with the Zombies; Apple for the Beatles  
and Steppenwolf's ABC's.

Counting them down in those years of one-hit wonders  
with parents who did not know rock n' roll  
or the fashion of transistor radio earplugs.  
We drew distant late night rhapsody into our beds  
and dreamt dreams of forty-five revolutions  
per minute, waking to a simple three-chord melody.



## Could'a Been

We move through an old house  
and feel the creaking familiar of its floorboards  
I am watching you take it all in  
like air, like breathing, asking nothing,  
wanting it all.

We are capable of all of this and more  
dimensions of us under every rug,  
potential hung like the clay pottery in the kitchen.  
True strangers could not exist before  
the warmth of woodstove.

But memories of chestnut doorframes  
and the scent of newly cut and trimmed Michigan pine  
are lost before the car door's pulled shut.  
A cat named Murphy has leapt to her porch railing,  
and we follow a sinewy, falling creekbed home.

The land, the land, I say pronouncing its size,  
its influence, its pull of water, with Penn's Creek  
rushing like it has some frantic appointment with river.  
You're the quiet observer. Ducks, proud farmhouse,  
and maybe, a shy beaver. Could'a been.

I've taken a ride with the promise of sun dogs  
and got a rainbow of silk scarves, and pretty smiles  
from the birthday girl who listens and listens.  
It's a journey started and one that she's already  
stored, like a warm throw to blanket the snowy evening.

## Should I?

On this cold winter's night  
I sit thinking of you  
And wonder again  
If you think of me too

I have tried to tell you  
All of the things I want to say  
But before I get the words out  
You always walk away

What happens if you say  
We're only just friends  
Or you don't like me at all now  
And everything ends

Do I take the chance  
Of my heart breaking in two  
Or try once more  
To be just friends with you

## Daddy

(For George)

Daddy, you were the most precious thing that I could lose  
Your death has left our family so confused  
Daddy, you were too young to go  
Now you will never be able to see your children grow  
Daddy, you were my friend, my foundation, my hero  
Now I know that you have your halo  
Daddy, I can still feel your presence, and I can see you smiling at me  
As you ride off into the sunset on your big, red Harley  
Daddy, your love of small pleasures like motorcycles, cars, fresh  
    air, and the ocean  
Help me to realize why I have such devotion  
Daddy, I miss you with all of my heart  
I am so devastated that we are so far apart  
Daddy, I am tired of crying and I want the pain to go away  
When I think of your laugh, your big brown eyes, and your life,  
    I know that the smiles will be here to stay  
Daddy, I cherished every moment that we were together  
I want you to know that I will love you forever  
Daddy, I believe that we will meet again  
Until then watch over me, our family, and our friends

## The Goat Man

Every once in a while, in a very blue moon,  
The Goat Man used to make his wandering way  
Through the streets and byways of our town,  
Walking close behind his goat-drawn sleigh.

His hair was very long and gray and tangled,  
His beard was like a half-remembered saint's.  
From the harness of the goats there dangled  
A hundred tinkling bells to mark their gait.

Who was this apparition — gypsy, hobo?  
Where did he travel and where did he come from?  
A homeless spirit, always on the go,  
He neither spoke nor heard from anyone.

His grizzled face appears in dreams untold  
And makes me wonder where now sleeps his soul.

## Dance Like No One is Watching

Madeline danced beneath the clouds one night  
within an unseen reel.  
She leaped and plunged.  
Alone and true, she frolicked in delight,  
Her moves and spins not seen to be judged.  
She twirled and sang without melody or routine.  
Throughout the dance she remained sincerely she.  
The disappearance of the darkness was not foreseen,  
and beholding her shadow, sweet bliss did flee.  
She learned this sweet liberty is not to last  
with the presence of shadows eternally cast.

## Empty Space?

In the middle of the room  
between the couch and the TV  
and the carpet and the ceiling  
below the light fixture  
and above the coffee table  
there is nothing.

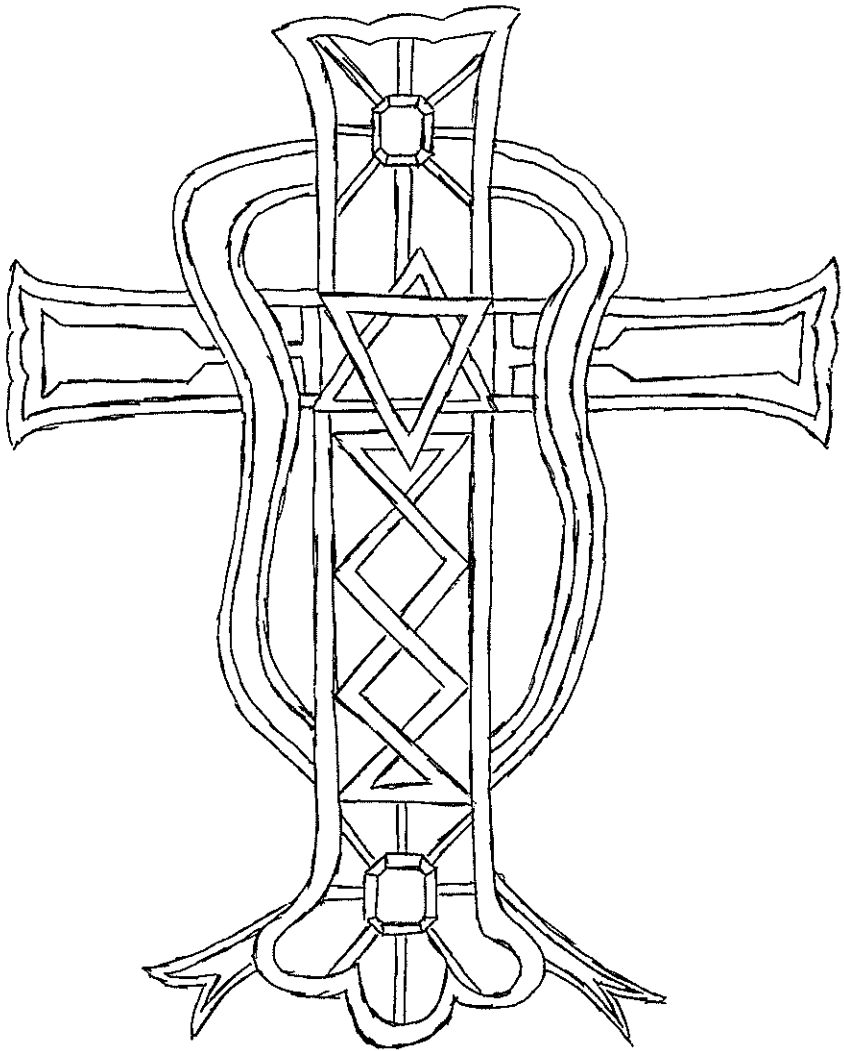
And I wonder as I sit  
staring into nothing, If there  
in the middle of the room  
is where my thoughts disappear  
when I don't write them down?

And I wonder if there  
between the couch and the TV  
where I see nothing  
Is there really something?  
Perhaps the memories of dreams  
I don't remember dreaming

And I wonder if there  
between the carpet and the ceiling  
resides the kleptomaniac  
who stole my understandings  
and past illusions to take within his transparent abyss?

And I wonder if there  
between the coffee table  
and the light fixture  
lives a witness  
to all the good intentions  
I never acted on  
and if he'd speak up now  
because isn't it the thought  
that counts anyhow?

So as I sit staring into nothing  
between the couch and the TV  
and the carpet and the ceiling  
above the coffee table and  
below the light fixture  
I imagine this intangible enclosure  
to someday shatter the forgotten  
and force me to face a past me  
and every me between.





I remember the simple dancing days  
Everyone would make a big deal about the recital  
No matter how awkward and off beat the dancers were,  
the parents waited for “their” dance.  
Even though she couldn’t stand it when the others got lost,  
She did her best and never stopped smiling.  
Always upset with her performance because there was that one  
miniscule imperfection that could’ve been improved upon if  
she had practiced just a few more times.  
But they didn’t care because they loved just seeing their baby girl  
on stage and in the spotlight.

As their baby girl grew so did her love for dance.  
She would practice for hours on end simply to decrease that  
chance of imperfection.

Now only mom came to the recitals, but that was okay.  
~Dad had to work that night and couldn’t take off — as usual~  
~Brother had homework or wouldn’t sit still — as usual~

She wanted to impress, not only friends with the fast-paced  
control and flowing movements, but anyone and everyone who  
would willingly watch.

To show them how smoothly music and motions go together as one,  
To tell her story through her passion for dance.

Not even the pain of a lacerated soul could stop her.

If anything, the pain made her stronger,  
Molded her moves and softened her features.  
It would be her last dance.

**And this time it was truly perfect for she shined like no star  
known in all the heavens**

Although she'll never admit it  
In form it was the essence of beauty and the true representation of  
    what every ounce of blood in her body told her — she was  
    born to dance and fly, fly forever ...  
Even dad was there with mom to watch their baby girl  
Dance her last solo

And when she felt she had failed after all those years  
Somehow everything she had gone through — whether  
Good or bad — didn't matter

Her dedication, her worrying, her tortures — *everything* — was  
worth it when her mom told her that as her dad watched his  
baby girl's last dance he was crying because he was so proud.

**And this time it was truly perfect.**

Wandering blindly in the cool night air  
Chest heaving with silent sobs  
    Traceable by the tear stained cheeks  
    She finds her path through memory  
    For vision is lost from her emerald eyes

Clumsily she runs down the staircase  
Hand gliding along the chilled metal of the dew-damped banisters  
    The rhythmic *slap-slap* of her old sneakers is a reminder of the  
    building momentum  
As she misses the last step, she takes in a sharp breath  
    That full-blown propels her upward and places her in the  
    water at the pond's edge  
    Her head cracks the cement once and returns to the ground  
    limply

    She does not move.

The waters surrounding her body are eerily still  
The unsheathed blade floats from her hand, it's purpose now  
extinguished  
    The ducks swim towards the object in their pond  
    Moved in some unnatural way, they cry in vain for this death  
    Their pure white feathers dyed pink from her blood  
    They cover her in their mourning.

One by one they silently fly off into the dark night sky just as  
mysteriously as they arrived  
When their ascent is complete, the body is gone  
    There is no trace of anything  
    There is but a single feather floating on the waters  
    It is not the brilliant white of the waterfowl  
    It is not the pale rose of bloodstained white

    It is but a soft, shimmering emerald left behind.

## An Unbelievable Tale

The beautiful blue breeze sweeps  
Through my auburn mane and,

With the birds in time it keeps,  
While laying still does the golden sand.

My clear, drifting eyes begin to spy,  
A midnight raven out for its walk,

When suddenly all becomes a lie,  
And the winged one begins to talk.

He starts to spin yarns of days of old  
And all the times of which he's been,

He then became grave and wind grew cold  
Turning to me he says, "You my friend, can never win!"

Pondering, deciding, I remain here still.

Pondering, deciding, I remain here still.

## A Momentary and Forgotten Revelation

Red lights blink  
Striped boards halt traffic,  
    A train screeches past  
In the early morning haze.  
My mind wanders off ...

“Early this morning in the city’s 500 block of Washington Avenue, two teens were found shot to death. They were the apparent victims of a drive-by shooting”

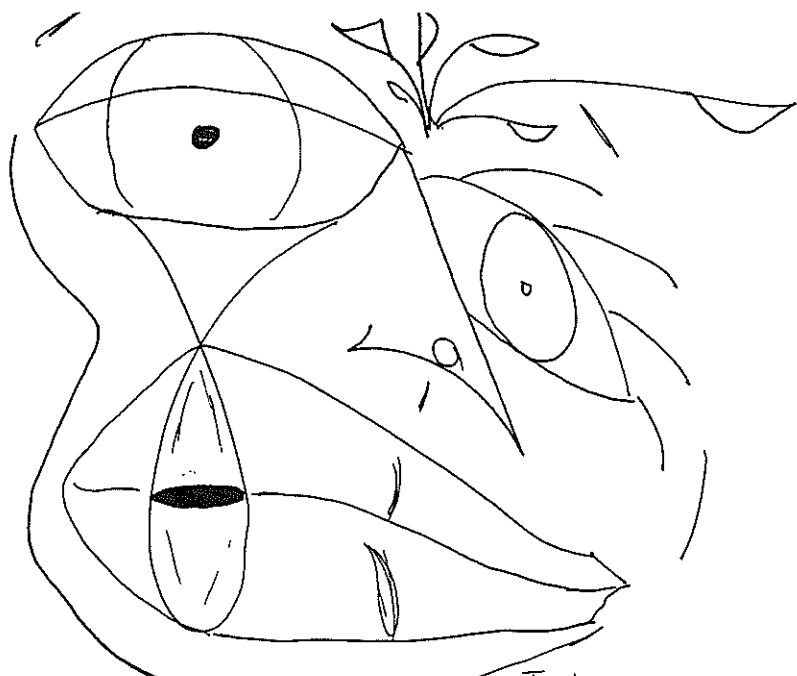
read the headlines.

    It’s only the thousandth time I’ve heard that.  
Life is so fragile,  
    so unappreciated.  
Life’s here one second,  
    gone the next.  
The train continues roaring past.  
    Is life like that train?  
Moving so fast, screaming past.  
    What is it carrying?  
Where is it’s destination?

You can only guess when it will end.

    You never know how long your train is, and suddenly it’s gone.  
The lights stop blinking,  
    The screaming stops.  
The gate rises and you are free to go.

A car backfires and I am sucked back to reality,  
and I realize it’s my turn to pass over the uneven rails and  
all of these thoughts of a dull moment,  
are here  
and gone.



Torture and terror,  
Power and chains...  
Tears and Raindrops,  
Why all this  
pain?

Imagine my  
heartache, Imagine  
my links,

Why are they  
there,  
I put them  
there me  
thinks

For in each link is safety  
And in each piece I weave  
A little more of my heart -  
lest I forget to breathe.

## **Internet Love**

My internet love, we have never met  
And yet I feel you near.  
You type your words to me and let  
Me think my thoughts so dear.

We may never see each other face to face  
And though that makes me sad,  
I feel somehow your warm embrace  
And knowing that makes me glad.

And so my love, this chat session ends,  
And though I hate to part,  
To some we know the rules we bend,  
But you will always be in my heart.

2/14 ...

February fourteenth where was I  
Walking frigid Pittsburgh streets maybe  
But that's no surprise  
Wishing for soft skin for comfort  
Again  
No surprise  
Skin soft and smooth and warm and all those beautiful  
Adjectives that come so close to the superficial  
But describe the contact of flesh on flesh  
And intimacy of a cold winter night  
Shared under blankets snuggling warm  
Imitate unsuccessfully  
With useless words  
An antithesis of a loving caress  
And you might take a cold walk down a Pittsburgh street  
Numb fingers clinging to a thin coat  
Dragging frozen feet to an empty bed  
Awaiting no one  
And waking alone on February fifteenth



Looking down the steps  
Dirty walls years old  
And the light string sways with the air  
My ghost is coming to visit  
Spirit listen a minute while I bore you  
Like frustrated masturbation  
Useless  
Maybe I'll sleep it off  
And nothing's on  
Except Jerry what's 'is name  
A girl smiles and seconds later I realize it's because my zipper's  
down  
So what's god have to say for himself  
Lately?  
Give'im a message for me will ya?  
Tell'im  
He should try this for a bit

## Uncle Ed

Blind Ed he sings his words  
Day in day out  
His white cane finds its way  
Blind Ed he preaches his book  
Blind Ed he earns his keep  
Providing for the little ones  
Sheltering them with his love  
Blind Ed hears the music no one else can  
Sharing his strength from within  
Blind Ed sees what we'll never understand  
Blind Ed found his way  
Guided by invisible hands  
Let him lend you his sight

Yes I have many fears.

To just name one would be much too hard.

I fear losing.

Losing control,  
losing my friends,  
losing my mind. Though perhaps that is not quite such a loss  
after all.

I fear pain,  
heartache,  
rejection.

I fear being held too high.  
what goes up must in time come down and

I fear falling.  
falling at all is bad  
but falling in love is far worse.

I fear blindness.  
Not seeing with my eyes would be hard,  
not seeing with my mind, that is  
walking into something blindly, is hell.

I fear knowing people too well  
so well that they, in turn, know me.  
Knowing what my name is is one thing,  
knowing what my thoughts are is quite another.

I fear confusion,  
failure  
the present and the future.

I fear hopelessness.  
Losing hope about my life is despair,  
being a hopeless romantic is damnation.

I fear being lonely.

I fear intimacy.

I fear contact.

I fear touching,  
breathing,  
thinking,  
talking,  
writing,  
walking,  
seeing,  
watching,  
looking ...

I do but wish that this was the sum of my fears, but alas there is  
one more.

I also fear him.

He is the creator of my fear.

How is this possible? I ask myself. Why fear him?

I fear him because just by touching him,

breathing him,

thinking about him,

talking to him,

writing about him,

walking with him,

seeing him,

even looking toward him

makes me want him with a greater passion than I have felt in so  
long.

It is this passion for him,

this longing,

this wanting him

that I can not seem to control.

*So this too, I have learned to fear.*

## Pessimism '99'

Too many words to describe  
    The too few shades of color  
    In this 1640 x 1280 panorama.  
Too many diversions to distract  
    The too few pure emotions felt  
    In this on line age.  
Too many perceptions to cloud  
    The too few clear thoughts  
    In this 30 second soundbyte society.

We call it progress:  
As we are led down the highway  
Full speed ahead  
As the future comes to life  
On our high-definition flat screens  
And all words of caution are lost  
To the pro-logic digital surround  
Of windblast in our ears.

## Anticipation

two questions no answers will falters traces tear  
follows two questions no answers numb senses mind restless  
wait endless two questions no answers room spinning pulse  
flutters world fading two questions no answers

## Alpha She

SHE  
of the night —  
cold Autumn,  
harvest moon.

SHE  
Obsidian eyes —  
mystical knowledge:  
ancient answers to  
modern myth.

SHE  
to desire her —  
natural instinct:  
child to mother,  
moth to candle's flame.

SHE  
to possess her —  
fool's quest:  
to catch the western wind  
in the palm of a hand,  
to embrace pure sunlight  
as only a lover could.

SHE  
between the borders —  
reality and fantasy:  
ethereal beauty  
astral knowledge  
primal power.

SHE.

## Abnormality

When darkness comes  
And the shadows fall victim to lightlessness  
I feel the loneliness set upon myself

As I sit and wonder  
How I ever made it though nights like this  
Before you came along

And truthfully  
I can't imagine how  
I ever did

I just sit  
And stare out a window  
And wonder, what is really beyond it

Just the outside  
I tell myself  
But that can't be it

I think the future is beyond that window  
Suddenly I see past it  
A vision so bright with happiness

You said that you hoped this time apart  
Would make us appreciate each other more

Understanding what you meant  
Knowing that I won't see you  
For what seems like an eternity

Understanding how much I need you  
In my life



It seems like it has been so long

I miss you

I need you

I love you

You are me.

## Innocence

Innocently sitting, absorbing the sounds that sooth  
Relating every word to life experiences  
Appreciating the irony in line after line

Innocently laying, scenes flashing in our heads  
Moving closer as the minutes pass  
Sweet caresses of your faces  
Exchanging glances, smiles, and laughter

Innocently exchanging a show of affection  
Each predecessor more involved and containing more passion  
Holding each other tightly, never wanting to let go  
Passions flow as restraint losses its control

Time has no boundaries when I am with you  
No one else exists in this time and place  
We are alone in our world of make believe  
Free to be who we are

## **Looking Back**

In my never ending strive for perfection,  
I'm learning many lessons and see  
the other sides of me  
while drowning deeper in my psyche.  
It's impossible to fight me  
I never lose or win  
Just do it all again  
and find a newer way to sin  
The day that I gave in was the beginning of the end,  
but all is well now,  
because I've recognized the trend  
Now I'm serving my time  
paying for a precious life I treated like slime  
without a second thought,  
like this soul is yours and not mine.

Moon rises over seas of shadows tonight  
Never to collide with the hazy  
sun's hot tongue flicks  
At this cool moment I open  
my eyes fully to embrace the  
moon's intriguing stick-like arms  
Sun, Moon, and Earth clutching  
the breasts of those who adorn them.

In a ballroom with  
portraits hanging from a droopy  
ceiling.

Portraits haunting me like  
ghouls slipping up my back.  
Meaningless laughter  
and meaningful screams.

Down the hallway  
dusty clocks full of  
restless time that's  
hard to catch.  
My hands are full of  
paralyzed energy.  
My fingers race with  
the minutes.  
Magic spells of boredom  
slow me down.

Reverse

Outside  
Paper clouds sway  
in a gewy sky.  
The tin ground  
shakes with tranquil  
chuckles.

My visit to this  
peculiar setting  
shall meet up with  
me in the end.

## Autumn

A piece of leaf falls ...

A piece of leaf falls onto the soil and she falls in love. She dresses in golden yellow and apple red, with a touch, with a touch of jade green on the sides. She dances and sings with the wind. Like a fireball burning from inside out. Holding on, touching, kissing, and seducing the earth, until sparks turn into flame. Melting into the soil day by day, naked, natural, and fearless, without a pause until winter arrives. She will be warm in the arms of her love, under a fresh coat of snow. Morning lights will not surprise her; dark nights will not scare her. Days come and go, another piece of leaf falls.

## Soul Food

Thinking of you by the candle light  
I saw a shooting star across the sky  
I wish for you to love me  
I believe it will come true if you believe it too

You are my soul food  
I am empty without you

Cannot sleep tonight ... thinking of you ...  
Sitting on the back porch ... thinking of you ...  
Whisper to the dark sky ... thinking of you ...

Singing a la la bye ... wishing you were here ...  
Looking into candle light ... want to see your smile  
No longer alone under the dark sky ... with thoughts of you ...

Don't know if I'm in a dream or is this real

holding that picture of you  
your smile and those roses led me home

no matter where I go or what I do  
you are always number one to me

the only cure for my loneliness  
the only love that will never die  
the only home I have ever known

I miss you, Grandma  
I miss that brick house  
I miss your rose garden  
most of all, your smile

many seasons I spent with you  
many days of warmth  
there's so much memory  
I think of you every day

I was never a perfect child  
but you never loved me less  
like a mother you cared for me  
like a father you protected me

my only desire is to be with you  
you are my whole world  
I want to share each new day with you,  
Grandma



# *Patrons of Absence*

*The following individuals have made a contribution to our journal. We are grateful for their support of Absence.*

*Elsie M. Boucek  
Tom & Judy Bruney  
Sharon Bryner  
Kevin Clark  
Delia Conti  
Daniel E. Ferrence  
Linda Fordian  
Paula Hutsko  
Richard Hyde  
Dottie Ikach  
William L. Nicholson  
Ron & Debra McKeever  
Cathy Schwab  
Darrell G. Thomas  
Joanne Vidnovic  
Lee Vercoe*

*The staff of Absence would also like to extend a special thank you to the Penn State McKeesport Bookstore for their generous donation.*

◆◆◆◆  
*Penn State McKeesport*  
*4000 University Drive*  
*McKeesport, PA 15132*

◆◆◆◆  
Printed With Soy Ink  
Cover: Recycled Paper

