

A photograph of a woman lying on her side on a wooden floor. She is wearing black lace lingerie and black high-heeled shoes. Her legs are raised and bent at the knees. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting her skin against the dark background.

Spiral

erotica

Volume 3, Issue 1.5
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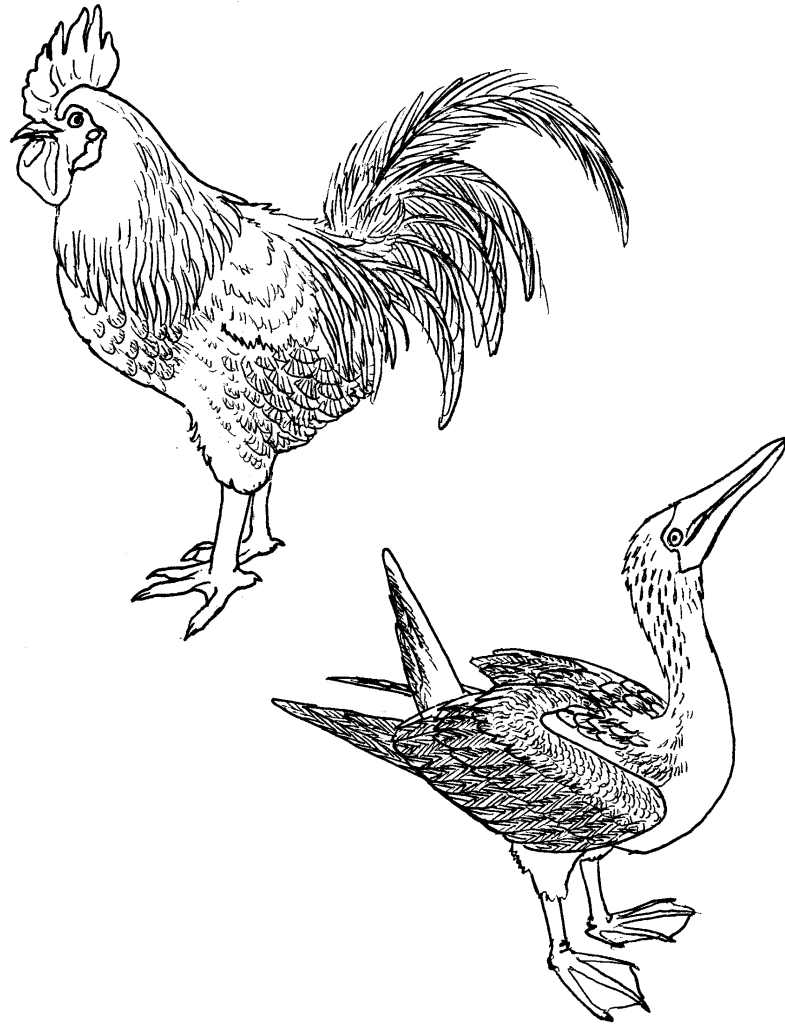
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Dirty Ornithology
by Kira Fath

Letter from the Editor

You may have noticed that this edition of *Spiral* is a bit different from the others. This is not the usual, quarterly edition of *Spiral*; this is a special edition devoted exclusively to the erotica genre.

There are several issues which I feel must be addressed when publishing this edition. The first is a necessary warning concerning the subject material. This is a sexually-themed magazine. Every piece contained herein is suggestive or explicit in nature. If you do not feel comfortable with this particular genre, please direct your attention to the concurrently published edition (which contains our regular smattering of genres).

Secondly, why did we decide to publish an erotica-themed magazine? The staff of *Spiral* felt that erotica was a genre which was underappreciated. And considering that we publish a genre magazine because genre pieces are underappreciated, that says a lot about the extra-underappreciated-ness of erotica. So the staff wished to publish this edition to raise awareness for the genre.

Thirdly, the staff has struggled with the division between erotica and pornography. This is an age-old debate and not one easily answered. Though it is not perfect, the staff's definition is: erotica is pornography with an additional layer. This layer may be anything from characterization to emotional impact, but erotica must contain something beyond explicit sexual representation.

Before I send you on your way to fully enjoy our magazine, I wish to remind you that our regular edition is also available for your reading pleasure. And please continue to submit your excellent erotica!

—**Bryn A. McDonald**
Editor-in-Chief

spiral@oberlin.edu
<http://www.oberlin.edu/stupub/spiral/>

Latreia, or Adoration

by Justin Murphy-Mancini

To worship at the font of love
Would you join and drink, my dove
We are disrobed but for our nerves
So simple but to trace the curves
The easy peaks and hidden coves

As Eros our desires limn
With fire sparkling on our skin
And living as our passion serves
To worship love

At last, embrace, our hallowed dance
Terpsichore's illumined trance
When we delight in softest touch
Or savagely our bodies clutch
And when through us such pleasures lance
We worship love

An Elf's First Health Class

by Greg Schram

Elven schools had a reputation for prudishness, but this, Eleyond decided, was beyond acceptable. Three years since entering Seven-Leaf High he had been waiting for health class, three years of silently agonizing over just *what* all his upper-level classmates now spent all their time discussing with stupid grins smeared all over their stupid faces. Sometimes they'd brag about finding a copy of *Morning Woodnymphs* or *Mermaid Magazine: Swimsuit Edition*¹ under a sibling's bed but they never showed Eleyond a peek, the selfish dragons. Finally, one auspicious day in Castien's Shop'N'Go, Eleyond saw an unfurled adult scroll that had fallen off the top shelf. Alas, by now Eleyond was at least mildly heterosexual, and the centerfolds in *Dwarfs Without Standards* just didn't really project the beardless femininity with which he'd recently become enamored.

The first thing Eleyond noticed on the first day of health class was Gruarg, the petite² half-orc transfer student who kept her hair in pigtails and wore orc-boy's shorts. She also was, despite many appearances, one of the more gentle humanoids at SLHS, and thus the exact opposite of Mrs. Cromloth, the health class and East Gnomish Studies teacher. And it was Mrs. Cromloth who announced that starting now, non-elven anatomy and sexuality would no longer be included in the health class curriculum. Prudish curriculum aside, Mrs. Cromloth was now withholding knowledge that had, since Eleyond's infatuation with Gruarg, gone from a curiosity to *vital information*.

As the year progressed Eleyond and Gruarg discovered that they shared a fondness for adventure books, lambas naan, recreational drugs and, ultimately, each other³. Eleyond never felt quite sure how Gruarg felt about him until one day, when the Varsity team was done practicing after class, she took him out behind the Bloodrush field. It was a notorious make-out spot and nothing more. Eleyond felt he could barf up his heart at any moment as they settled into a shady spot beneath the bleachers in shy silence.

There are certain parts patricular to orcish anatomy that only orcs know the secrets of navigating. Eleyond was yet to be familiar with most of

¹ How this got billed as a special feature, Eleyond never figured out.

² Relative to her mother Shuzug, at least.

³ D'awww.

them, but for now it was hard to ignore the immediate intricacies that come with tusks⁴. With some perseverance and a little acrobatic skill, Eleyond got his first kiss. The next day, he got his second. The day after that was their day off from school, which encompassed kisses three through twenty-five and a bit of staring as Gruarg showed off her new boy shorts that fit *especially* well, if how one looks while she's walking away from you is any unit of measurement⁵.

It turned out that Mrs. Cromwell's lectures on sexual behavior sucked all the glory out of the nudity Eleyond had been anticipating all these years, but as the syllabus marched toward increasingly lewd behavior, curiosity replaced disappointment. He started to catch Gruarg giving him suggestive looks across the classroom as Mrs. Cromwell waxed on about the different kinds of touch and just where you could stick what.

Gruarg took Eleyond home after school one day. She lived alone in an apartment complex in one of the taller Ents, since her family hadn't moved with her. No sooner had they walked in the door than Gruarg tossed the elf-boy onto her oversized sofa and tore off his pants in a previously well-established consensual manner. Slipping her shirt over her head revealed to Eleyond the advantages to dating a girl two heads taller than you. Without a word Gruarg had slid down to waist-level and proceeded to put a day's worth of learning to good use.

What Mrs. Cromloth hadn't taught in health class is that while they may be a nuisance for kissing, tusks are quite the asset for a creative lover. In fact, it was one of a many things that Eleyond learned that night, and by the time it was all over both he and Gruarg agreed that it would be well-justified to skip P.E. the next day, as the time would be better spent finding a better-built couch. The next day, knowing they'd never learn in class, Eleyond made sure to tell his friends just how great tusks are. The information took to the high school winds and from that day on, Mrs. Cromloth's class overflowed with never-ending questions about how elastic gnome orifices are or whether dwarfs should shave⁶. Mrs Cromloth hated her students' newly expanded curiosities and eventually resigned to a remote island location where sweaters were mandatory dress code. On the other hand, life was suddenly quite peachy for that new gay freshman orc boy...

⁴ Those human kids with corrective headgear don't know how lucky they have it.

⁵ Which it *is*.

⁶ An appalling thought to all the tickle-fetishists in the room.



Carmen

by Stephen Burrows

1.

Poems aren't songs, Carmen. Not any more
than songs are poems. And all poets
are lying bastards—not just me.

(Lies, damn lies, and
poetry, is what it should've been.)

And lying here again as you wrap your arms slender
around me, I say you're the muse I never wanted. You leave me
hanging and wondering like we're in a country song. But this
is a poem, Carmen. It could only hurt if I loved you.

Disinfect my hands; I'm leaving you

to write again,
naked as a night fire.

How can you murmur that life is sweet
(your hair wisping closed lids)
when most of it lies

forgotten

Just turn the bedsheets down, Carmen.
This is not a song.

Untitled (opposite)

by Kira Fath

2.

Open,

the field of flowers. Yellow five-petals. Names
are unimportant, but Jack

knows them.

Stone pillars rage from the earth, inimitable
in their unchanging memory, and this
is where Rome died. Only windpalaces
left for his striding
photography to capture
faintly echoing. See the spaces

between the picture
and the soul? Poetry rises there
and falls. Pulsing

the wrathful night shows him
the age of the city,

the eyes

of mewling cats shining
among the fallen puddled stones.

Light and blue-skyed this day
he visits you in Rome. Wine in a
bus, and down to the river walk. Jack knows
how to hold you closer in the bones
of the old city. Curses the plague
and arrows that riddled into

obscurity

the center of the world. Praises be

to the nineteenth century
and the pillowed mounds they dug
the city from. Something is elegant
about a lost

memory

before you clear the stones
and read them.

This is idleness — 1:15 AM
in a strange city waiting
for pizza and a man who
will never come
while they clean the elevators.

3.

Are you bored, Carmen? I can hear
you lying in the bathtub.

The door wide open

even in this weather. Just another stanza, Carmen. Just
one more.

Just one more book
and then I'll lean
against the doorframe. Watch!
I'll watch you smile and

pop
each
concealing
bubble.



La Petite Morte

by Sam Power

The moon reflecting over the lake looks like a production company logo. More than one, actually; it's a familiar image. Beautiful enough to attract attention, and gone before anyone notices that it's saying nothing. Night in and night out, it's the same to Dawn. In daylight, she's walked again and again along the path, seeing people laughing, talking, even swimming once or twice. The latter never ends well; it's too cold and there's no good place around here to go in the water, much less come out. Still, they can't help but jump in, not when the water's that perfect, impenetrable shade of blue. The wind has stopped.

The wind stops; the night stops. Absolutely still.

It's nothing like the blur of daylight's playfulness, but no less beautiful. It might be more so. The moonlight glancing off the water— well, there's a reason it's an image everybody knows. The day has blinding ripples in the water's surface; it has the autumn colors and endless leaves. In the day, the lake radiates life and joy like a siren. After dark the colors and sound are bound up, quieted. The night has quiet contemplation, self-awareness. The night only warms her from the inside. The night is about the silence. But she's never aware enough of the silence when she's alone.

She needs someone else's presence to notice their absence. She needs a ragged shred of breath, the touch of lips, of bodies. She needs the moon reflecting off the water, a lover's hair, her eyes, until she's so lost she can't find the source anymore. She needs to hear her own gasps and the rising counterpoint that she can only find in another girl. Even if you can understand the silence when you're alone, it isn't beautiful that way.

Tonight's the first night in a long time that she's been able to find somebody.

You can't take every girl you meet, Dawn. That's what she's always telling herself. That pragmatism, that simple chiding, forms a shield, a mask that part of her always finds a way to throw off. There are things she always wants,

(opposite) After

by Laura Bellis

but she's usually smart enough not to open herself up too easily. Throwing those precautions away led her to this party, nothing but an address overheard through bar chatter and the promise of liquor and a crowd. Across town from her usual comfort zone, Dawn couldn't help but feel out of her element at the house party. How much younger than her were these people? Five years? More? Dawn scanned the crowd again, wondering if this was going to turn out to be a wasted night after all. Something caught her eye, and she regained some hope that her days of waiting for an opportunity hadn't been in vain.

The girl was tiny, a pale, waifish thing in a blue dress. That was part of the allure. Dawn could almost feel the girl's body getting wrapped up in her arms. She wanted to fold over her like a warm blanket. Dawn blushed when she saw the girl already staring back at her. Had she noticed Dawn checking her out? Then again, it looked like the girl was sweeping her eyes over Dawn in much the same way. She approached her smiling, not quite dancing through the party that had all but lost Dawn's interest. The girl was forward; that was nice.

"Jenny," the girl said, thrusting her hand out.

"Dawn," she responded, or tried to, as Jenny used Dawn's extending hand to pull them together. Dawn stiffened for a moment, but relaxed as soon as she had a moment of thought. She liked this girl.

She liked the way she moved, the way the light scattered off her skin. She wanted to see what Jenny would do next, how far her forwardness would go, and how long it would take to get her to leave with her. Dawn thought about that idea for a moment. Maybe it wouldn't be such a chore to go out and meet girls if she could just let go and enjoy parties like this one. She gave a last, cursory glance around the room and realized that she didn't recognize a single person. This sort of adventure didn't exactly invite familiarity. Parties might not be a good fit for her, but Jenny could be a different matter.

"Sorry," Jenny said, and started to pull away, "I didn't mean to—"

"Oh, no," Dawn responded, and smiled back at Jenny, "I— well, I guess I just haven't been out in a while. I liked that, actually. I like women who..." she pulled Jenny back in, "take charge."

"Liquid courage," she responded, shrugging and gesturing towards the countertop bar. They stood there, and she smiled sweetly. "So, Dawn, what do you like to do when you go out? We ought to make the night special if it's such a rare occurrence."

"Well, there's one place I like for... special occasions," She paused, seeing if she'd piqued her interest. "But let's save that for later. Tell me more about you. I want to know about Jenny."

"If you insist. Can I get you something to drink?"

Two hours later, a few drinks each, and they were off. The drive passed in an uneventful blur. Dawn was as careful as she could be. The last thing she needed was a DUI. Even so, it felt like moments before she was leading Jenny along the lakeside path, then off it. With an old army blanket from Dawn's car and a comforter of leaves, the two were ready to start groping in the dark. Jenny had begun to say what a beautiful place it was: the dirt path, practically a deer trail, just hidden by a curtain of foliage from the cement-covered track higher on the hillside. Dawn didn't let her finish.

The first kiss is supposed to be tentative, careful. The first kiss is supposed to be about drawing someone in, but Dawn pressed into Jenny and nearly knocked her down the hill. The first taste was like cinnamon, the vague hint of flavor from Jenny's lip-gloss dissolving into her mouth and the easy response of her tongue. They broke apart.

"You," Jenny panted excitedly, "are so—"

Dawn wasn't about to let Jenny start talking now. She kissed her again and dragged her down the path, gripping her arm but not looking back. She let momentum and memory carry them along, only wavering once or twice from her lingering alcoholic buzz until they reached the closest point to the lake. Jenny opened her mouth once or twice to speak, but Dawn wasn't paying attention. She threw the blanket on the ground, not caring if it lay flat or straight. She let her purse fly after, hardly caring that it was already part-way opened, and paused. She wasn't thinking about Jenny or what she was doing. She forgot.

She remembered. Sarah had been Dawn's first and Dawn had been hers, tangling up the sheets until the awkward bundle fell right off the bed. Dawn never would have brought anybody down by the lake if it hadn't been for Sarah. She remembered Sarah. She remembered Lauren, Jackie, and Denise. She remembered their touches, the light on their bare backs and thighs. Dawn could still see them laid out, could feel sweat running down the smalls of their backs under her hands. She could touch them and let her hand drift lower still over the pulsing bodies of her memory. The visions flickered in the space under the trees, the variegated flesh of past lovers washing out to pale under the moon. Her thoughts returned to Jenny, paler than the rest, almost glowing while shivering in her skin.

Dawn knew that Jenny was still standing behind her, unsure in the dark as seconds stretched to fill the air. She felt tightness growing in her chest but did not turn. She couldn't remember, couldn't think of what came next. Because beyond the passion, beyond their embraces, beyond fighting the cold in the best way imaginable, she would leave. Because despite everything they were about to feel, even leading up to that one moment when Dawn could make her lose all thought... Jenny wouldn't stay. They

had left before, and it was always the same. Dawn and Jenny would have their lovemaking, their sex, fucking, or whatever Dawn would think to call it afterwards, and they would have a few moments to lie, sated, afterwards. But as soon as Jenny spoke or stood, it would end. The silence would break and Dawn would know that it was only a matter of time before she was alone again. She turned to the girl and kissed her, gripping Jenny's face and shutting her eyes too tight to allow tears, just tight enough that she could imagine she was kissing someone who might stay, someone who didn't exist.

Jenny kissed back eagerly and drew herself up against Dawn. She was still on the edge of gasping, drawing deep breaths through her nose even as she tentatively ran her hand over the front of Dawn's blouse. Dawn pressed back into Jenny with equal force, letting the tiny woman pull her in close and run hands down her shivering back.

Jenny broke free from her lips and trailed kisses down her neck, working open the buttons on Dawn's shirt with one deft hand. Dawn started to let herself go, to leave behind control of the situation and let Jenny take over the encounter along with the blame for how it would end. Without even realizing it, Dawn found her chest laid bare. Her eyelids fluttered and her mouth gaped open as Jenny's fingers brushed a nipple, drawing Dawn further out of herself. Jenny ran kisses down her neck again, weaving a serpentine pattern across her collarbone and down her chest until she found purchase on Dawn's exposed breasts. Dawn slipped farther.

But as quickly as she'd lost herself, Dawn recovered, gasping for air above the Jenny's ministrations. She could still change her mind, could still back out—oh, God. Dawn would do the same thing she'd always done. This night would end the same way as any of the others, but it had to be, would always be, a choice. It was hers and no one else's.

Dawn gripped Jenny by the shoulders, pulling her off for the moment it took to twist her around and start sliding off her dress's straps. She ran her lips over Jenny's bare shoulders. She cradled the younger, smaller woman in her arms like a spider and felt out her pulse as she reached slowly up Jenny's skirt. Jenny gasped as Dawn's tongue brushed her earlobe. She pushed back into Dawn's body, into her hand, breath ragged and racing with need. Dawn obliged her.

It took only a few moments to rid Jenny of her remaining clothes. Her dress, manufactured to look artificially frail and torn fell to the leafy floor, suddenly authentic. Dawn's skirt followed quickly, along with her underwear. Jenny's didn't even make it all the way down. The faintest touch kept Dawn from rising from her knees.

Dawn shifted on the blanket and began, giving herself to Jenny. She felt her reaching out, whether to draw her closer or to attempt to give Dawn

pleasure in kind, she couldn't say. She didn't care. She heard Jenny urging her on, but shut out the empty words and encouragements. They didn't mean anything. What Dawn wanted to see was still on its way.

Jenny screamed, her back arching, her hands clutching at air in her ecstasy, and she was spent. She barely kept her knees from buckling long enough to lay down on the blanket. Dawn crawled up until her head was level with Jenny's. She waited, breath held, skin cold, for the moment when Jenny's eyes would open. She felt the cold air and shuddered. Seconds passed and her body heat faded into the atmosphere. There. That was it. Their eyes met as soon as Jenny's opened, and Dawn saw what she was looking for, the closest thing to love that she'd ever get to see in Jenny's eyes. They paused just like that, naked under star and leaf and branch, until Jenny reached over and touched Dawn. There. That was it.

For Dawn, that was the final confirmation that nothing would change, that everything would go on as business as usual. She knew that the night could go no further except in pursuit of its end, but it was sweet of the girl to try, to care.

Jenny curled up against Dawn, closing her eyes and nestling into the other woman's embrace. Dawn took in her steady breathing and still-flushed face, her pale white skin and deep brown eyes. Dawn thought of how Jenny had screamed and of the part of her that wanted nothing more than to do the same. She remembered the other girls, just like this. She remembered them clinging to her, lying in her arms, looking at her like they thought they'd never leave. Lying to her, not out of malice, but because they could do nothing else, because the wall people raised around the truth was impenetrable. You couldn't even come near, except when their brains were close to turning off entirely; like Jenny's had just been. Dawn hadn't wanted to feel like this.

Why did she have to feel like this? She couldn't just be normal, no. She had to look into Jenny's eyes, and see the gratitude there, the longing, the affection and that indescribable thing that was not quite love and feel nothing but hatred and her heart breaking again and again and again. Why did they have to do that to her? It wasn't just Jenny; they were all the same. Even Sarah—Sarah who'd been with her longer, who knew her better, who actually said the words but still didn't have that love in her eyes. Had they thought that Dawn hadn't known, that she wouldn't find out? Had they really not known how disgusting Dawn felt, seeing them lying to her, crawling in the dark? Dawn took a breath and tried to calm down. Jenny wasn't those girls. She could only remember those girls, but Jenny was with her now. She remembered those girls' eyes. She remembered cool breezes, warm bodies, frigid metal, hot blood.

Jenny didn't scream.

She couldn't have. Dawn had pierced her larynx, driving the knife past that point even before she felt it on her skin. She'd drawn it out of her purse quietly, her intentions masked by the advent of a fresh breeze through the leaves. Dawn didn't watch her flail and find blood on her hands, didn't see her futile attempts to draw breath or get up. She didn't wait for Jenny to turn to her with eyes asking "Why?" She couldn't have told her why, not really, only that it always went the same way. Dawn didn't run away either, she simply shut her ears to world and held the girl down, her knife and arms pinning the body until the end.

Soon Dawn would slide gloves and a black-light from her bag as unobtrusively as she had the knife. She would comb Jenny's body and eliminate all the traces she had left. She would retrieve weights, hidden days before, and roll Jenny into the water to let her rest. Dawn would pick up her things and leave, recovering bloody leaves in a plastic bag. Dawn would move on until she felt the ache again. She would keep quiet and still and out of sight and trouble. Soon Dawn would leave behind the anger she felt towards Jenny for how she'd made her feel, and the hatred towards herself for what she'd had to do in spite of it. But until then, Dawn just waited.

Dawn stared at Jenny, at the glistening in her hair and in her blood. She stared at the light and shadow glancing off the knife and again wondered whether or not to take it with her. She knew she wouldn't need the reminder. Every time she readied herself for another night like this one, she would picture the weights, the light, the gloves, the bag, and especially the blade. She might hesitate, might think that she could leave the house without a knife in her purse. She might think that she could find something real. She would put the knife in her purse anyway, knowing how the night would have to end, whatever her hopes. She had never taken a knife away once used, and would not start now. It completed the picture, after all.

Jenny's prone body caught the moonlight like none other, pale skin soft and cold in the moonlight. Dawn watched her and waited for her to be ready to go. She looked into the blood and wondered at how thick it was, at what hidden depths remained undiscovered in it. Dawn looked across the water and knew that there was nothing left that she hadn't seen. All she had were the honest eyes in front of her, which would remain unclosed. Her questions could never be known, much less answered. The wind stopped. The night stopped. Dawn took in the silence.

She wouldn't be alone as long as Jenny was there.

Love Poem No. 9

by Justin Murphy-Mancini

As I surveyed her glorious bust
And my eyes wandered downward, thus
Her legs, they rose to meet me.

But nestled 'twixt those divine thighs
Was most delightful, a nice surprise
It seems she had a...dear me.

I'd heard some talk of in-betweens
Of those who vacillate, I gleaned
However, that they must be

Hideous.

But she, my angel radiant
The choirs, they sing, the poets, they rant
Of beauty, goddessesque, she.

I must admit, I must confess
That I, at first, would not profess
A love like this, for beauty.

So pure, so fresh, and so unique.
I knew that all others, antique
Could never satisfy me.

And thus, I fell head-first in love.
So very, very much in love.
With a *hermaphrodite*.

I Want Candy

by Jackson Kent

Candy bounded down the stairs of her house in exceptionally good spirits. The day promised to be a good one, maybe even a great one if all went according to plan. The night before she had made plans to have dinner with Steve at the really nice Italian place downtown and her recent promotion to regional manager still gave her a rush whenever she thought about it. An early riser, she always took the time to cut through the park on the way to work and today it was looking especially gorgeous. The pale green of the leaves was captivating against the wafting clouds and bright sky; every root stood out triumphantly amongst the grass and nothing was quite so soothing as the smell of wildflowers.

Under the north bridge *It* awoke. Feeling around *itself* cautiously, *It* prepared to enter the final stage of *its* life. The cocoon had been difficult to break out of and energy was now a precious resource: a nearby puddle of water and some rats provided a bit of sustenance but *It* needed more. More than dirty rainwater, more than subsistence, more than a veritable bounty of food, *It* needed to spawn. Like a raging fire of instinct, this one need drowned out all others and drove *It* to fall into the behavior patterns of *its* ancestors. Searching tendrils burrowed beneath tall lush grass and waited.

Candy hummed just under her breath as her favorite song came through her earbuds. Her breasts bounced slightly as her pace increased and a slight spring came into her step. Candy had heard that attitude was everything and she was determined to make the most of the surging confidence within her. Today she was going to pass right under that bridge. Every day her favorite road led her right under that damned bridge, and everyday she went out of her way to avoid the almost sinister darkness and averting her eyes from its dark dripping maw. Clenching her hands into fists she charged into the dim underpass.

The pounding of footsteps drew *its* attention immediately but *It* dared not be too hopeful - only the producers would suffice, the others were but chaff. As the figure drew near, specially adapted tendrils raised slightly and began processing the particles floating in the air. *YES! The scent was there - this one was perfect.*

Candy's foot thudded heavily onto a cobblestone as her fate was sealed.

Pulsing green tentacles shot out with terrifying speed and coiled sinuously around Candy's wrists and ankles. *It* drew them back quickly with instinctual speed; Candy's joints screamed with agony as her limbs were pulled outwards and she was held spread-eagle in the air. Her mind began to race wildly but all thought was cut short as a fifth tentacle slowly made its way up her right leg, almost delicately stroking her calf and thigh as it made its inexorable way upwards. Candy renewed her struggles but *its* strength was unimaginable and she was barely able to twist in *its* grip.

The tentacle continued its slow climb; specially engineered secretions were already seeping through her skin, acting viciously on her brain. By the time the member passed the hem of her skirt her own secretions had begun, much to her surprise. "NO," she thought to herself in a mix of confusion and terror. "This ... it can't be... *turning me on* ... Can it?" *It* felt a deep satisfaction as a slight delicious dampness met *its* questing tentacle. Candy gasped and squirmed but *It* didn't even notice—it was time. The pulsing tendril wrapped hungrily around the delicate cloth of her panties and tore them away with ease. The scent of her exposed sex struck deep chords within *its* being and the throbbing tentacle thrust mightily upward past the delicate petals of her tender flower, twisting slightly as it forced its way in. Now it had begun; the tentacle pumped in and out, swelling slightly to better fit her innermost contours.

Candy shrieked in pain as her inner walls stretched past their previous capacity. She had never felt so *full* and yet, through the pain, a hint of pleasure was beginning to make itself known. Her mind rebelled against these unwelcome feelings but *It* was far from finished with her. Two more tentacles shot out from the darkness and slid up her blouse. The buttons ripped quickly and easily as the twin limbs flexed powerfully. Candy's breath had become labored and heavy as the aphorismatic chemicals continued to assault her brain. All resistance was drained from her now and she found herself unable to do much more than moan as the new tentacles began massaging her tender breasts and yet another delicate tendril slid up her other leg and began to gently flick her clitoris. Her gasps became heavier and her moans deeper, her head slammed back as a wave of pleasure rippled through her body. This *thing* had made her come—the thought came through faintly as the orgasm concluded. She wanted to be disgusted, outraged—surprised at least. She wasn't, though; she was hungry—hungry for more, desperate for more.

It was only too happy to oblige. The main tentacle renewed its assault, increasing its tempo as it continued to work her now soaked sex. The twin members working her breasts were now flicking her hardened nipples as the tendril wrapped about her clit began to slide heavily back and forth,

sending waves of pleasure through Candy's sweat-drenched body. Another throbbing appendage forced its way into her mouth, making her gag with each thrust as it throat fucked her helpless mouth. It was almost complete now; the last tentacle raised itself from the main body. It was thicker than any penis or dildo Candy had ever seen; the bulbous, throbbing appendage terrified her even through the haze of forced pleasure. The tentacle reaming her vagina withdrew and this new monster forced its way in. Candy howled in pain as it rammed repeatedly into her, filling, stretching, *invading* her most private flesh.

The removed tentacle did not remain idle long. Soaked in vaginal juices, it drew back behind Candy's suspended form. Once positioned it moved steadily forward, pushing against the tight opening of her nether bud. Candy had no strength left to resist and merely moaned at this new violation. The questing member moved in and out, sinking itself further within her with each powerful motion. It didn't take long before it was buried completely in her, rubbing against the monster in her birth canal and racking her with new waves of sensation.

These horrid intrusions continued for what seemed like an eternity, Candy came again and again, drooping in her bonds, moaning involuntarily in ecstasy. Then the members tensed, a brief spasm ran through them and a rush of white fluid poured over body and into her every orifice. The thick viscous substance dripped off her battered frame in slimy globs. Their purpose served the tentacles slid away into the darkness, leaving her prone in a puddle of slime. *It* was finished ... with this one.

Take Me

by Sam Power

Glistening steel spires form an
Urban panorama around my life,
But they can't compare to coming home and
Falling into your
Digital embrace.

You are my waking dream,
The mistress that frees me from
Everything that I can't take
Outside.

I run my systems check,
Generate beliefs,
Load the fantasy
That takes me to you.

Cyberspace reaches far beyond
These walls, or even
My imagination, but I still find you,
Your screen name calling out from the void.

Clacking keys are our tender caresses.
Infinite pixels form our sheets, our bed.
Who knew that one's and zero's
Could be so beautiful?

Roses, chocolates, diamond rings,
I'll send them all from right here,
In this room, where the lonely electric hum
Reminds me I'm safe.

I've never seen
Or felt you, but
This cold floor, this harsh light
Could never make me feel like you do.

Every day I wait through the day,
All the sights and sounds like failing
Life signs beside a hospital bed,
Until I can find you and say:
Please, take me away from here.

Bug.

by Julieanne Lopresto

I was running late to class when I saw True Beauty dash across the quad.

She was dressed in black and gray, with a skirt, tights, and flat shoes like a French schoolgirl. Her hair was a mass of pale blonde ringlets that fanned out as she ran. I was late because I had a stomachache; the pain increased as she ran past me, a sucker-punch under the ribs.

The ancient Greeks thought that fortitude lay in the liver, the Egyptians believed that we thought with our hearts. We believe that the way to someone's heart is through their stomach. Two organs for the price of one in that.

Humans have strange ideas about innards.

My only idea about them at the time was that they were causing me *pain*, my stomach tied up in knots. Even though my eyes threatened to tear up from the ache, I still focused on her as she passed, wondering idly where she was going and why she was heading there so quickly.

I have never been one to let my feelings guide my brain, even though, when you look at it scientifically, my brain and my feelings are one and the same. The limbic system, hormones, and the hypothalamus combined, rebelling against me and my conscious desires. My subconscious was shoved down and away, and I disregarded it for the majority of my teenage existence. It was only as nineteen dawned that they became a problem, as did the Bug.

At least, I thought it was a bug—a stomach virus. I ate Tums by the ton and sat in my bed, trying to work and failing miserably. The only thing which consoled my suffering insides was fresh air, and I held my quivering frame up against an open window in the hallway. *I've got to get out of here*, I decided, and I did.

And there was True Beauty, again, lounging in the sun and the glory of the late summer day, her French legs stretched in front of her, crossed at the ankles. My stomach lurched, and I gagged.

I held onto a bench for support and I heard footsteps approaching. I stared blearily at True Beauty, looking down at me as a mother to a small child. I immediately blushed. You would blush too if True Beauty was looking down upon you.

"I'm fine," I said, anticipating her question. "I'm *fine*," I said, as if that

made it true.

"Are you sure?" her voice was kind but contained the slight jingle of someone who was making fun of me.

I nodded, once, as strong and forceful as I could manage. "Fresh air," I groaned.

"A walk will do you good."

I agreed, and indicated that this was my intent.

And so we walked, weaving in and out of the stone buildings that housed seemingly endless classes, walking to the grass of the quad. We sat in the shade of a tree and I inhaled deeply, enjoying the respite from pain at last. "Feeling better?" she asked. She was in the same position as me, legs splayed in front of her, hands behind her, supporting her weight. Somehow, she made it look more beautiful than any other possible pose.

I nodded, and she smiled.

There was a rustling in the grass—a quiet noise like that of a leaf being moved by a breeze. Her hand, which I could see out of the corner of my eye, was heading towards mine. I responded, my own leaf moving with my own breeze. She repeated, and our forefingers, the first veins of our maple leaf hands touched slightly. She placed the pad of her finger on my nail and moved it slightly: up and down, right to left.

I sat on the chair in the corner of her room while she sat at her desk. We were utterly relaxed—she had her chair angled towards me, while I used it for a footstool. She rested her hand on my ankle. Her hand was slender and freckled, brown spots standing out starkly against her pale skin.

"*Glory be to God*," I quoted, stroking the back of that hand with my fingertips, "*for dappled things*."

"What?" she said.

"It doesn't matter," I replied. "It doesn't matter," I repeated, as if that made it true. Her red lips touched my corresponding, duller pair, and she moved from her chair to mine, placing her weight on my lap. She brought her hands up to frame my face and then her lips met my chin, my neck, and descended, slowly, lower and lower.

That week had to end, though. The day our first break began, I awoke in True Beauty's bed and scuttled away to my own room, managing not to wake her roommate or mine. I collected my things, arrived at the airport, got on the plane and felt like I had left my intestines on the ground below. As my insides sputtered and gurgled, I remembered being a child, about eight or so, resting my head on my mother's midsection one night after dinner. I looked up to her in amazement: "Your stomach is making noises," I said.

"It's supposed to," she replied. "If it didn't, you wouldn't be living."

Is that how we're supposed to tell if we're alive or not? By listening to if our stomachs speak to us? What a strange way of proving life. I'd rather listen to my heartbeat.

You must understand this: we weren't 'dating'. We had just somehow gotten stuck together in some strange parody of a relationship. We had almost nothing in common except the same college, and we had no underlying friendship to support anything we had, and no friends in common. When we spoke, it was almost like we were having two different, simultaneous conversations. She would get frustrated with my words, and I always thought she never fully grasped anything I said. The only time we truly worked as a pair was when our lips were connected—we were a marriage of convenience, especially to her—nothing more. I would always turn to her, and she would always come to me when there was no one else.

Of course, along with all of this, there was still the Bug. I would occasionally retch and gag when she placed her attentions on another. I blamed this on a lingering virus even though I somehow knew that it was all tied to her and her alone—were I to walk away from all of this, to make myself forget her, the sloshing of my gastrointestinal juices would cease and I could live as normally as I once had.

Despite all of this, True Beauty sent my heart beating like no other thing on this planet had done and I turned to her willingly. The difference between us was too great, though. We were drifting apart, and no other week would ever be like that first week.

Here is how the last time happened:

It was a freezing night, early into December. We wound up in her room, as we often did. We were standing close together, and we touched, lightly, shoulder against arm, fingertips on back, mouth on mouth. Her slender hand reached over and easily flipped the light switch, bathing us in darkness. Hands moved up and down backs, fingering belt and bra straps. It was then that my stomach first uttered a noise. Without pain, a rumbling came from between us. I blushed darkly and looked away, afraid that her keen eyes would detect it in the dark. She laughed, placed a hand on my cheek and brushed hair out of my eyes.

We moved slowly, a strange four legged beast joined at the gut, collapsing on her bed. She was lying down and I straddled her, my knees pinning the fabric of her skirt to her ratty blanket. I threaded my hands in her ringlets; we touched at as many places as it is possible for two humans to touch, but the gurgling just *would not stop*. "I'm not hungry or anything," I said, pulling away. I had just eaten. She just smiled and kissed me again. Then a noise rose again from between us, startling her away.

"Your stomach," she said, "is *bilarious*."

"Shut up," I replied. Her hands slid up my stomach, under my shirt. I discarded the garment, acquiescing to her silent request. Her hands never left me, and slid under the cloth of my bra to my breast. As she palmed the flesh, I wondered—does this feel pleasant because I've been taught by years of reading and viewing that it should, or because it just does naturally? Of course I didn't voice this; the time for speaking had passed. Her other hand snaked around to my back, hunting for a clasp. I leaned down to her, catching her neck between my teeth. She met her goal and she, while still fully clothed, went about the business of removing the rest of my clothing, slowly. I didn't dare touch hers; she was always in charge of that and removed it in her own time.

The last layer of my clothing removed, she unceremoniously shoved me aside. She climbed off her bed and stood in the center of the clutter in her room, illuminated by the moonlight streaming in through her window. Her long golden hair seemed silver as she unbuttoned her blouse and threw it aside. Off came her bra, followed by her tights. She unzipped and stepped out of her skirt. She idly scratched an itch on her back, stretching as she did so, and I admired her frame, her closed eyes, her breasts, her stomach, her knees, her elbows. True beauty.

Really, though, in the end, it was always me. Despite the fact that it was her ruby lips that bent close to me the first time we kissed, it was always me. Always my knees pinning her skirt to the chair; me softly pressing her to her bed; my arms holding her down as she lay over me. My eyes, like my stomach, became my betrayers—I never saw what I should have: this, like hunger or pain, was physical.

My ears betrayed me, too: she never gasped my name when she came; she never said anything at all. I never allowed myself to hear the fact that she never uttered anything after the removal of shirts and skirts. So deaf I became mute: I never said her name, either.

Two weeks later, she found a Boy. Not someone else to go to as she went to me; an honest to goodness Boy.

Honestly, this shouldn't have been a surprise. She had a life, after all. She had things she did and people she knew, and I knew nothing of her life other than the moments she spent with me. Of course she would find someone else—someone who actually had things in common with her. Still, my stomach acid rebelled to hear tell of True Beauty and her Boy.

When I first saw them together, she waved at me, as cool as can be, her other hand nestled neatly inside his. I smiled and continued back to my dorm. I entered my room, blissfully without roommate, and I sat on my

bed.

And I stared into space.

My stomach gurgled.

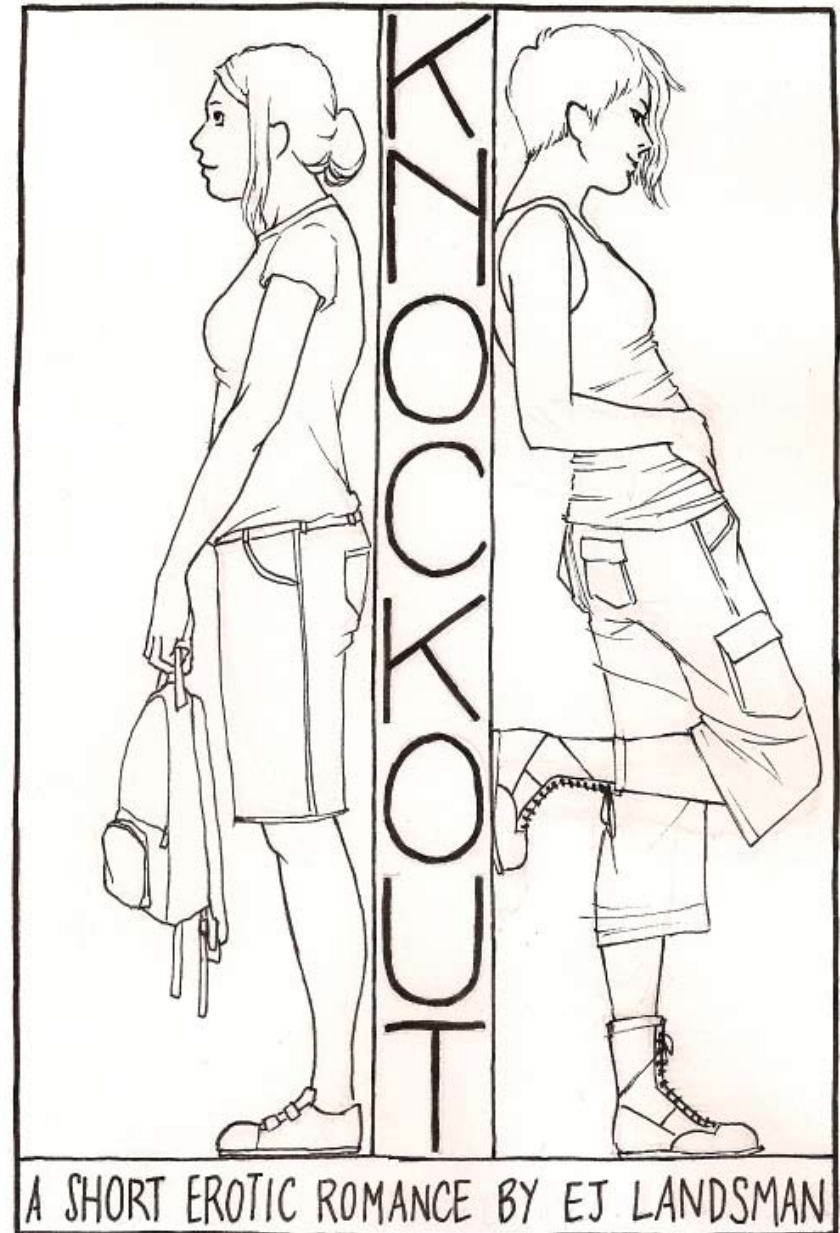
I crawled fully clothed into bed and did not emerge for the next fifteen hours.

I spoke of this to no one. Few people knew about my obsession with True Beauty, and so when she made her formal debut with her Boy, no one batted an eyelid. My stomach curled into a ball and I gagged at regular intervals—whenever they passed me.

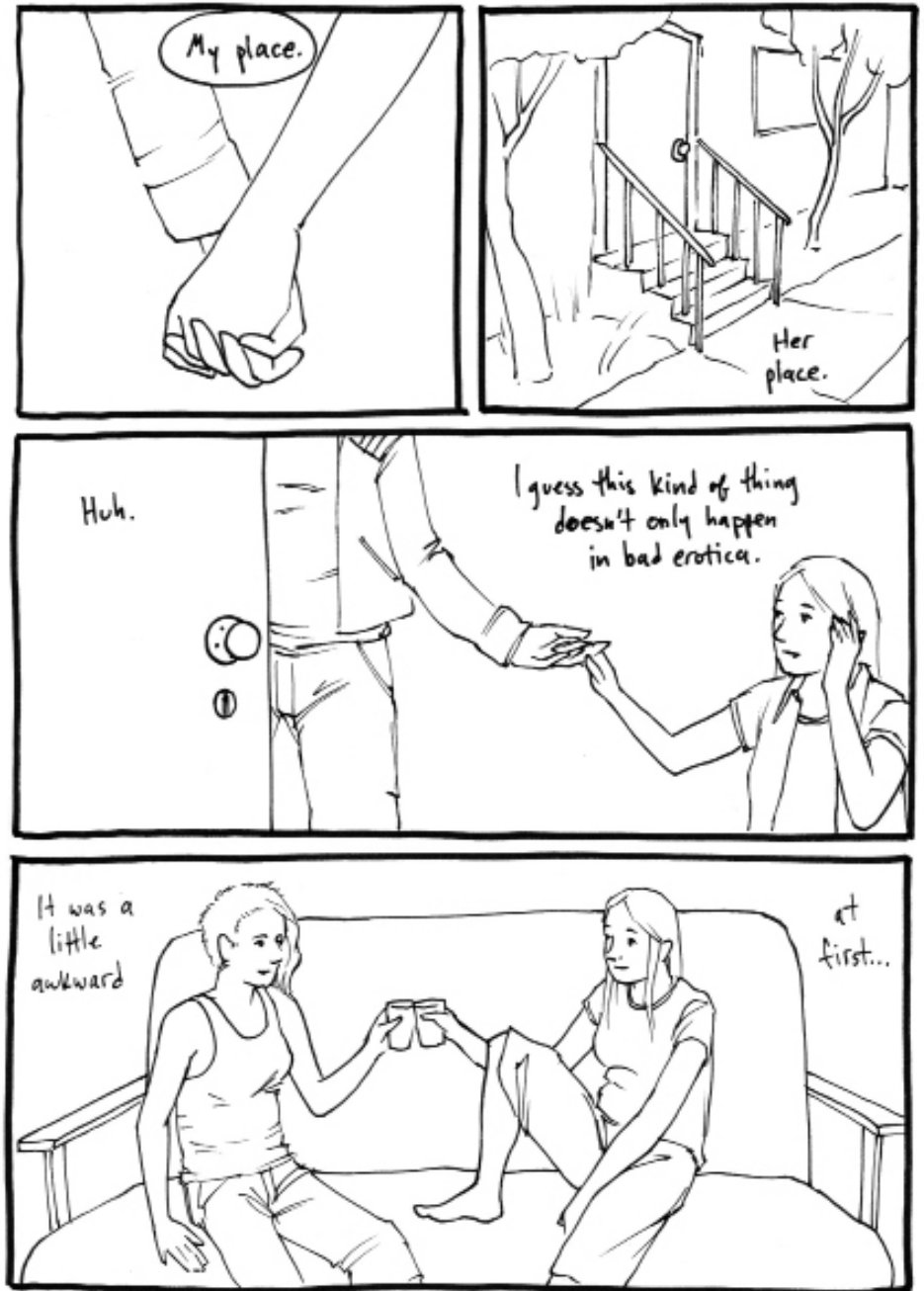
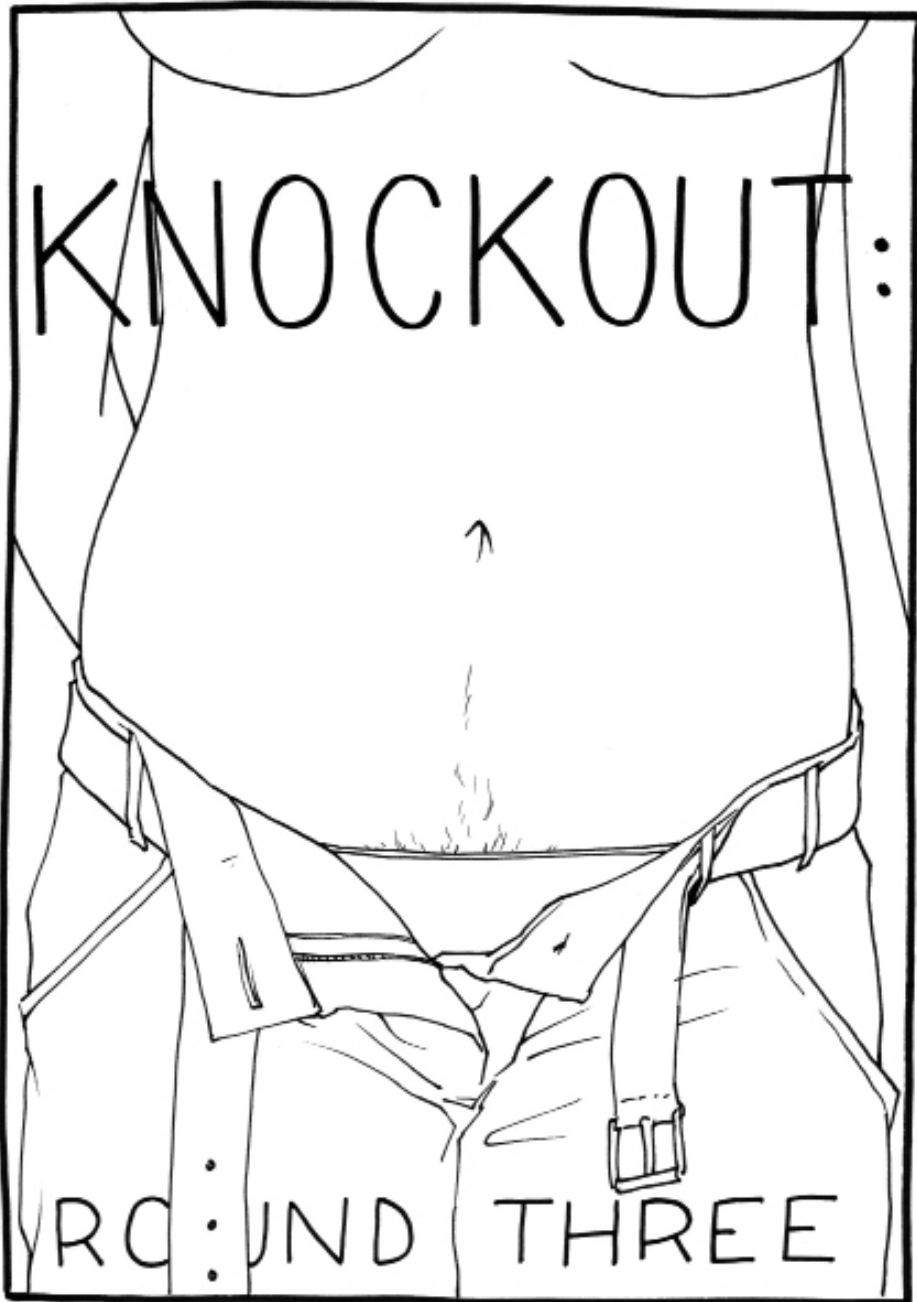
We were cordial, I suppose. We spoke when we met. We were by no means friends. Acquaintances. The acid in my stomach sloshed. When I tried to stop the lurching of my insides, my heaves of breath were visible in the air and I huddled in my sweaters and scarves. While I stood clutching onto the wall of the nearest building, there was True Beauty, standing inches from where we first spoke, staring off into the distance.

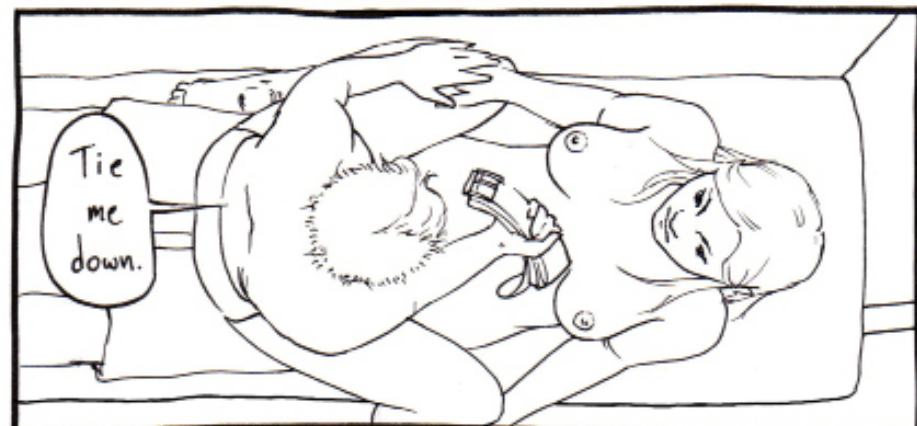
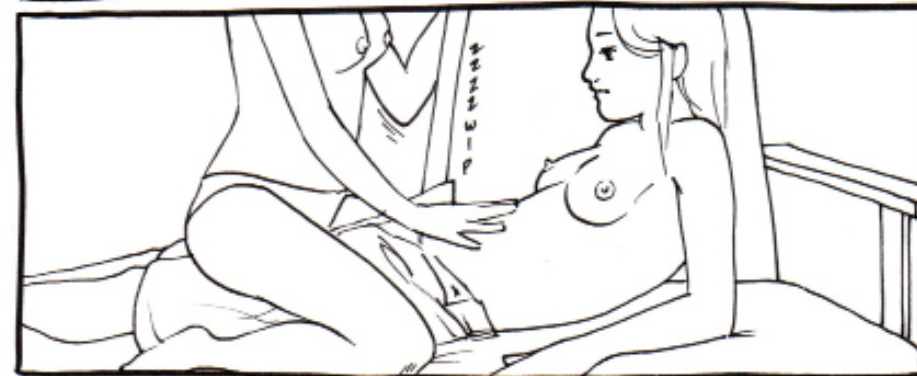
A figure appeared. Black coat against the black of the night sky, only illuminated by the light swirl of flurries—her Boy. I tried to sink into the background. He didn't know me; it was easy. She ran towards him, the same elegant steps I had so admired many months ago. Her pale hair fanned out in the wind and she threw her arms around him. They joined hands and disappeared into the distance. I breathed deeply, once, twice, but it did nothing. The pain returned and was worse than it had ever been. I bent double, clutching my midsection and groaned.

It was at that moment that I did exactly what I had been threatening to do for months: I heaved yellow bile into the white snow. It steamed in the cold air and I went to bed alone.



* This piece is the third in an indeterminate series. Please read issues 2.1 and 1.3.1 of *Spiral* for the other parts.





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Contributors List

Anonymous (College '11)

Laura Bellis (College '11)

Stephen Burrows (College '10)

Kira Fath (College '13)

Faith Hays (College '12)

Jackson Kent (College '13)

Julieanne Lopresto (College '12)

EJ Landsman (College '09)

Justin Murphy-Mancini (Double Degree '13)

Sam Power (College '12)

Greg Schram (Double Degree '13)

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spiral@oberlin.edu

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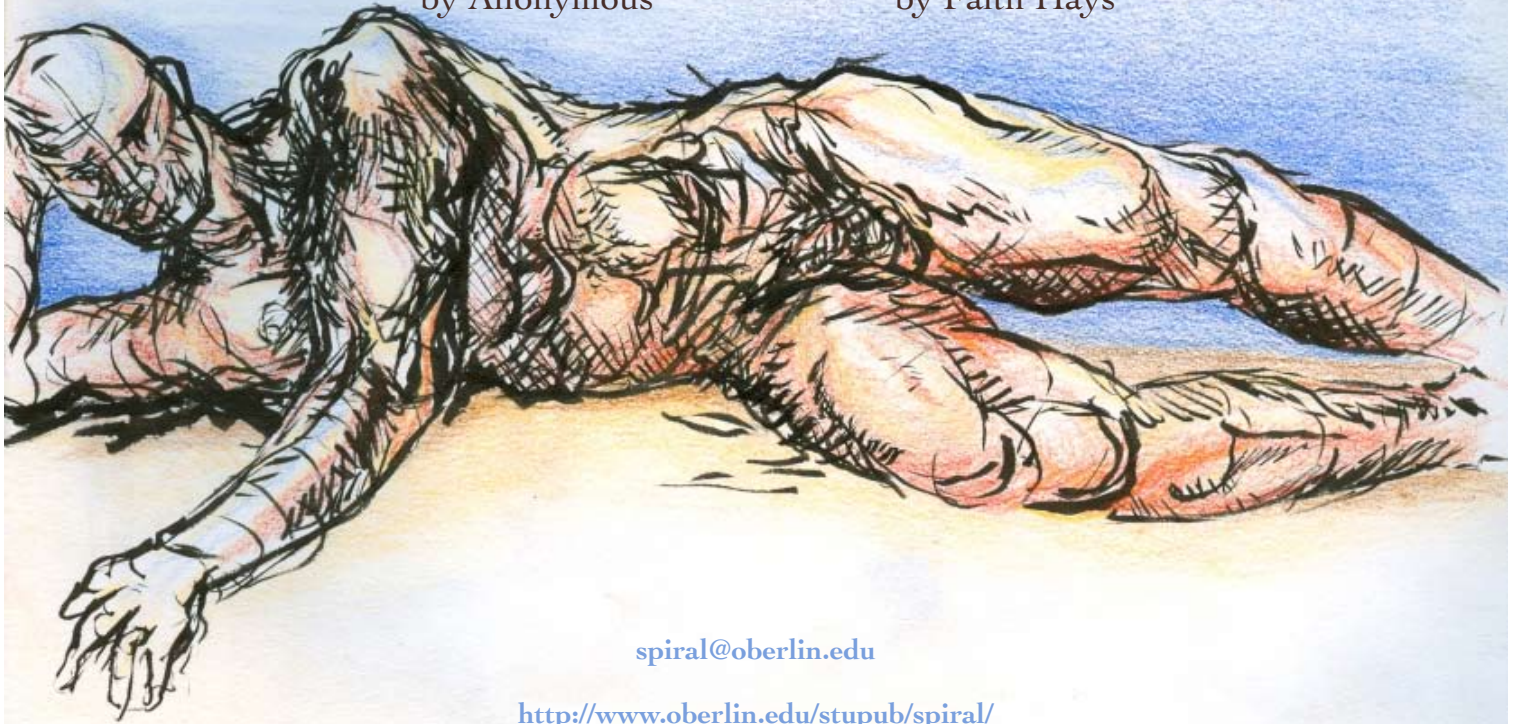
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spiral@oberlin.edu

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