

TOTEM 2005



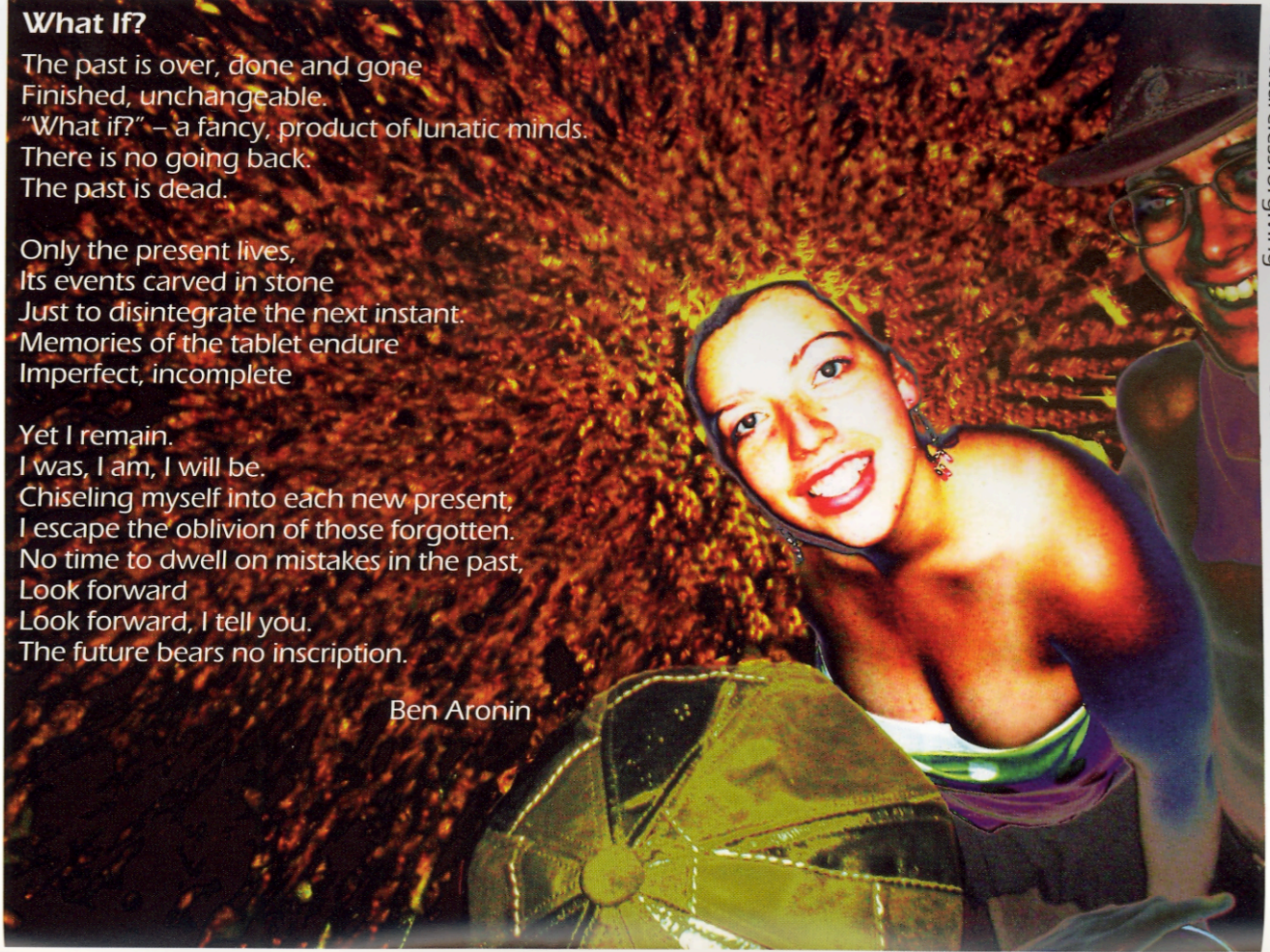
What If?

The past is over, done and gone
Finished, unchangeable.
"What if?" – a fancy, product of lunatic minds.
There is no going back.
The past is dead.

Only the present lives,
Its events carved in stone
Just to disintegrate the next instant.
Memories of the tablet endure
Imperfect, incomplete

Yet I remain.
I was, I am, I will be.
Chiseling myself into each new present,
I escape the oblivion of those forgotten.
No time to dwell on mistakes in the past,
Look forward
Look forward, I tell you.
The future bears no inscription.

Ben Aronin



July 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

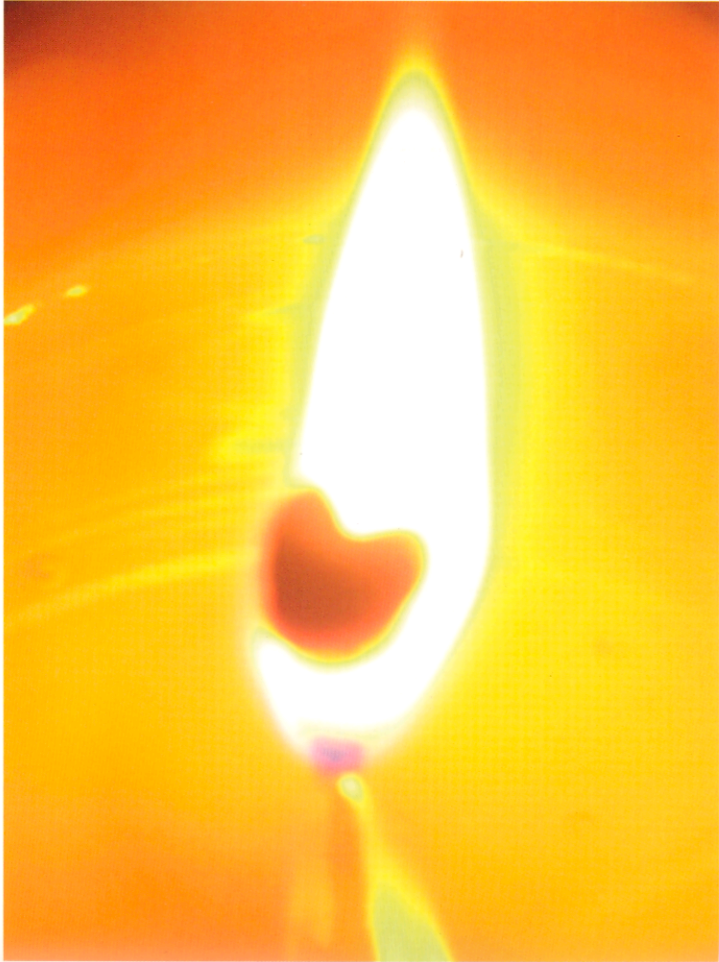
yellow leaves,
I think it was,
falling in the sunlight,
or maybe it was only yellow:
yellow floating down from the sky
to settle in my mind.
yellow,
yellow,
yellow,
yellow.
I feel the word in my mouth;
I taste the color,
thick and sweet.
yellow.
yellow leaves falling—
yes that was it—
yellow leaves,
and yellow flowers
and yellow sky,
well, blue,
but the air feels yellow
yellow yellow yellow
footsteps fall
to the rhythm of
yellow
yellow
yellow
yellow
bare yellow soles
falling in the sunlight
to kiss the yellow earth;
my bare yellow soul—
or maybe i was only Yellow,
floating down
from the yellow sky.

Rebecca Streit

yellow

flame

mithun diwakar



August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

150 South Chester Avenue, Apartment 109

Raman Shah

crackling back
the dull grey blue of a shadow
a missing venetian blind
eighth from left

cool cheek
on table
the godforsaken smell of latex
on my hands

muffled strains
of this decrepit contentment
the steadfast roar
of wall units in the courtyard

exhausted cog
rattling loose
the cut-cut-cut-cut
of a refrigerator fan-blade in its shell

beige walls
echoing ponderous footsteps
a gentle peace condensing
then evaporating into birdsong

1 jayson messenger

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 1st Term Begins	27	28	29	30	

searching for solitude kristy hilands



Nighttime Treehouse

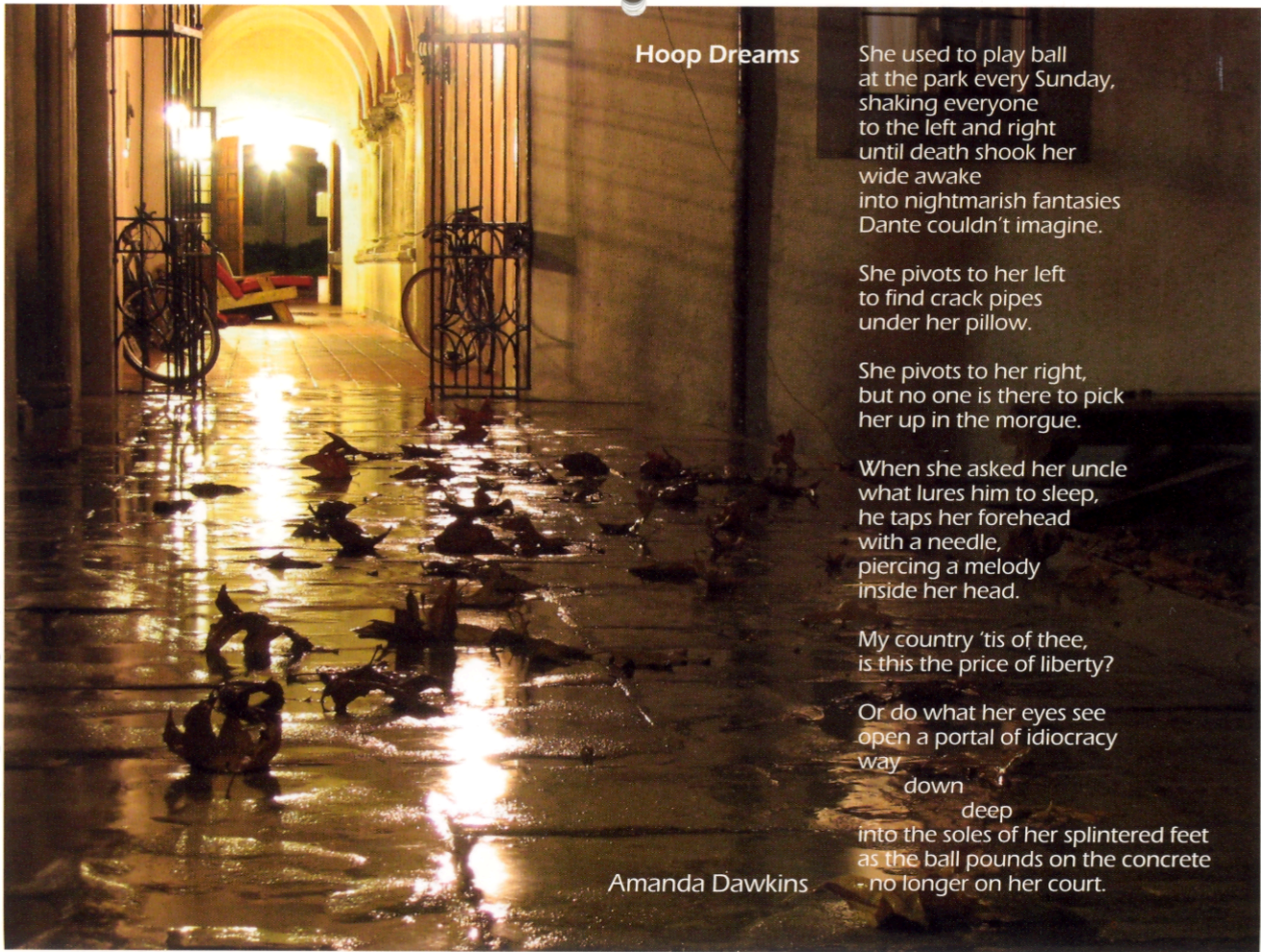
Trains cross planes of perspective
Of existence; horns blast as a
Sign of resistant reluctance;
Chord, minor key, one three seven
Nine, engines grind out the
Tune of Maiden Voyage;
And people are too busy
Buzzing to notice, but not me.
I'm right there for all the
Sounds and sights that make
This world a crazy place to
Live in, on and around.
Surroundings beat like hearts
Pound we fall asleep in
Unison and all that we hold
In common is each other.
Separate dreams and separate
Schemes. When we awake she
Takes the bus into the city.

Dave Yelacic

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Rosh Hashanah	4	5 Ramadan Begins	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Yom Kippur	13	14 Add Day	15 SURF Seminar Day
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Halloween					

rainy night joseph koehler



Hoop Dreams

She used to play ball
at the park every Sunday,
shaking everyone
to the left and right
until death shook her
wide awake
into nightmarish fantasies
Dante couldn't imagine.

She pivots to her left
to find crack pipes
under her pillow.

She pivots to her right,
but no one is there to pick
her up in the morgue.

When she asked her uncle
what lures him to sleep,
he taps her forehead
with a needle,
piercing a melody
inside her head.

My country 'tis of thee,
is this the price of liberty?

Or do what her eyes see
open a portal of idiocracy
way
down
deep
into the soles of her splintered feet
as the ball pounds on the concrete
- no longer on her court.

Amanda Dawkins

November

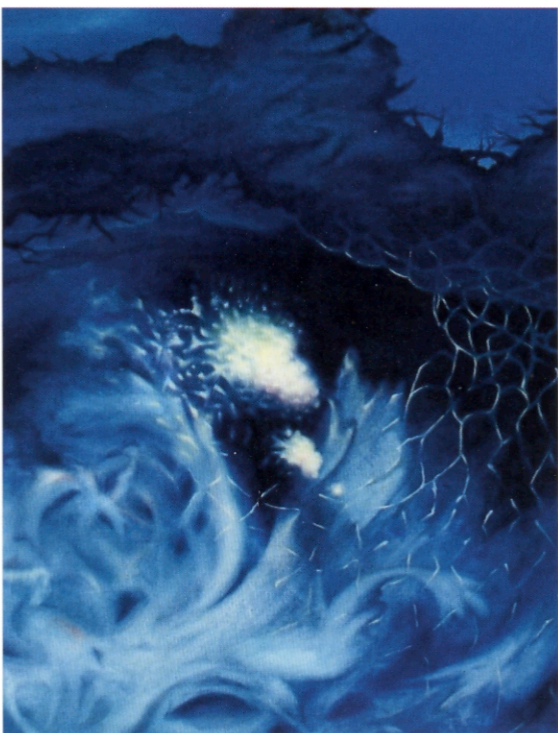
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day	12
13	14	15	16 Drop Day	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Thanksgiving	25	26
27	28	29	30			

It's too big for me.
If it were a man, I would need to
stand on a chair
To look him in the eye.
He wouldn't catch me if I tried
To wrap my arms around him. But
Lying down, it swallows me whole
And then some.

I toss and turn to make it stick,
But it is coy, like a woman,
Her darkest corners
Always retreating from my purple feet.

Someone is pulling black silk over my face
And I can feel the pressure
Where they are piling dirt on my knees.
Mother would always find me like that,
Buried under the covers.
If she were here, she'd heave them off
Angrily exposing my shame (what shame?)
The punishment -
Letting the cold air feast on my warmth.
She was afraid for me,
Afraid of what the neighbors would say
If she lost a child in such a careless way.

If death feels like this,
I want it to climb in with me.



love is a creature of the deep kristy hilands

But it'd be even better if life was like this,
Dark and soft and warm.

If I were a man,
I would want my woman
to lie over me
Like this sleeping bag,
While away the hours
under the scented folds
of her supple fat,
Twice exfoliated and moisturized.
I would make a brief half-hearted struggle
To be Don Juan
Leave her for the tentacles of light
Grasping at me through the hemp curtains
Before I am pulled back
Like a grubby child at the candy store
And forced to admit that I was
Only toying
With the idea of leaving her.

Wrapping her downy wings around me
Like a mother,
She would let me kiss her
Like a mistress,
She wins by yielding before the fight begins.

Cocooned in this velvet abyss,
Never have I been so happy not to breathe.

Xiao Peng

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Last Day of Classes	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 1st Term Ends	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas & Hanukkah	26 Kwanzaa	27	28	29	30	31



As long as we aren't staring into space

Eva Murdock

He tried to teach them how to make rock candy. The sugar was supposed to harden on the wooden stirrers. The children were supposed to carry around their **beautiful crystals in all the colors of the rainbow**. I told him maybe it was too humid lately. The children had colored wooden sticks. The sugar water grew moldy and Mr. Webster threw the Dixie cups away on Wednesday.

He tried to teach them about solar energy. **With tin foil, we can harness the power of the sun. They should get a sense, he wrote in his lesson book, of commanding the heavens to do man's bidding.** First he crossed out **man** and wrote **humankind**. Then he crossed out **heavens** and wrote **???**.

The children worked in groups of threes. Mary and the slow twins. Tyler and Curtis and Buddy. **Break things up a little. Here son, move near, in here with Jamie Wilkin's table.** Mr. Webster thought that if the children knew the word **archaic**, they would like it very much, but as a science teacher the opportunity had not come up to share it with them. He did not know how he felt about this sort of **absence of privilege**. So he called the children **son**. Buddy's real name was Benjamin. There were two Bens, whom I had been calling **the Bens**. One day Mr. Webster told me that it made him think of **The Bends**. Mr. Webster's ex-wife was **such a Radiohead fanatic**, he told me that day, while we were on our ways home. So he started calling Ben D. **Buddy**. Buddy's dad was a widower. Mr. Webster told him it was the child's **fake plastic identity**. I wondered about emotional scars of all kinds.

The threes of children pasted together black construction paper and corrugated cardboard and tin foil to make their solar ovens. Mr. Webster took Mary, the first to finish, and her oven outside the classroom to the back stairs, which were sunny in the afternoon. He gave her a bag of marshmallows, a Hershey's bar, and some graham crackers. **Preserve freshness** said the side of the box Mary tore off and threw aside. Mr. Webster picked up the litter while Mary placed the ingredients in her oven. **One two three**. Mary had made a door with cardboard hinges. The light was direct, so the chocolate might even melt.

Mr. Webster used a Slinky to explain light. Buddy held one end while Mr. Webster gave the command **Oscillate!** Buddy convulsed. The slinky oscillated. **This is rather sophisticated**, Mr. Webster told the children. He did not know how to explain color. **Color is light, too**, he told them. **You don't see the rock candy, you see the light reflected from the rock candy**. The children turned and looked at the window whose sill was stained pink and blue from their cups of liquid candy. **Or this green jacket**, Mr. Webster offered, tugging back on their thick, disappointed attention. **This jacket left over from the Halloween party. Is it yours?**

Mr. Webster looked at the mail on his desk for Recipient. **Green Jacket for Son of Recipient. Children's large**. Mr. Webster would do anything for the children. I look at his mail sometimes; Mr. Webster was always eligible for this or he was preapproved for that. He was reprimanded for bringing his personal mail to school. Mr. Webster explained that it was merely for hamster bedding. **The hamster is in the building somewhere, Christine**, he told me. He told everyone. **I have a coalition of students whose concern for the hamster's well-being is paramount**. Mr. Webster asked me if I would provide milk and cookies, **pending the hamster's safe return**. The way he said pending—the children lost hope before my eyes, Christine.

Mr. Webster bought the class white Christmas lights on a long string. He decorated the hamster cage and the windows and the paper cabinet.

On Friday Mary brought Mr. Webster a pansy. Mary walked to his desk at recess and gave it to him privately, when she also told him that she understood all about color. **She knew the pansy needed sunlight to be so pink and purple**. Mr. Webster put the pansy pot on a dish in the windowsill. By Monday it had lost two leaves and three petals. Jamie Wilkin folded two of the petals into the corners of his paper football. Mary watched Jamie Wilkin fold the paper like it was an ancient Oriental art. Like he was peeling apart a mummy. Like she expected it to catch fire under his fingers. I watched Mary watch Jamie Wilkin fold the paper for twelve minutes. When he finished, I looked down and found my hand on my left breast.

As long as we aren't staring into space, Mr. Webster chuckled. **I like to do my job. I like my work**. Mr. Webster had a red beard and a stretched floury face. The children could not see the cracks because they were not looking for them. Mr. Webster thought that if the children knew the word **divorce** they would understand the **bastardization of language**. Mr. Webster had crossed out **bastardization** and had written **Ask Christine—also coffee**. I didn't know what to do when I found this in the hamster bed on Tuesday. He had written it on a coffee filter. I should not have wondered all that much.

The Subway of Stolen Memories

Mithun Diwakar

whooshing by in a rush of urgency.
figures: gray, black, silhouette – phantoms
color! where? there – on the mud-encrusted steel grating
a red winter hat, smudged black by greasy shoes,
promising me rosy tales of cold, windy snow but
laying forlorn and forgotten, it whispers of the
subway of stolen memories.

polaroid picture – click! – instant memory – shake!
colors creeping in to flesh out...colors seeping out to flesh in?
trees slowly losing green, turning red autumn, then dead
where? there – on the grime-streaked window
then dead winter. sky slowly losing blue, turning moonless night.
the subway car takes away the sun, the day,
stealing memories for its fuel.

speeding, snaking through the tunnel, lit burnt-harsh-yellow
intermittent, glowing – silvery shadows
an outline of me, no detail, just the figure
where? there – on the dent-endowed wall
on the scar-faced plastic seat
reminds me of me and me of them
riding on the subway of stolen memories.

eric kelsic
anaffectionforfastsounds



January 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 2nd Term Begins	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 MLK Jr. Day	17	18	19	20 Add Day	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Before I even look in the mirror, I have my answer.
 47 grueling minutes laden with frustration, confusion, without pain or anger
 You lay prostrate across alternating patches of blue, white, and red. The
 comforter we bought together. The disheveled sheets that only days ago I
 lovingly laid over your bed.
 Half naked with one sock, you cover the space with that most vivid color of
 all, unmoving except for a strip of hair blowing in the wind.
 Dry-eyed and silent, I wash my hands in the dark, afraid to confront my
 memory of this reality.
 This conclusion is no surprise; this end was evident months ago.
 And yet I stayed.
 I waited.

Has this actually happened?
 I know you didn't mean it. This makes it worse.
 Do I have the strength to leave now
 and come back only to gather my things?
 Can I go through each day, wake up and know that you will not,
 cannot,
 do not exist?
 If this were last year, yes, I would easily walk out.
 But how can I deny this, something I will never be able to find again?
 How can I turn my back on my heart?
 How can I renounce my soul for my body?

Desire is indeed at the root of all suffering.

It was so difficult to find my shoes in the stark darkness.
 It is so natural to slip them back off
 sink into bed beside you
 engulf myself in your smell and my own coagulated blood
 Everything is quiet.

Maybe tomorrow...

But if you ever do this again, I will leave. Really...

Hannah Shafaat

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 President's Day	21	22 Drop Day	23	24	25
26	27	28				

for svenge

my small hand rests upon his arm
as we sit silently side by side
the day's warmth fades into the night
and for the darkness i will bide

my small hand rests upon his arm
and soft sounds sift beneath the door
an eerie glow shines from a lamp
and casts a shadow on the floor

my small hand rests upon his arm
my face hosts a suspicious grin
for i now have a sadist's trophy
this is one war i will win

my small hand rests upon his arm
i flick the switch, slip into bed
i leave it where it cooled and stiffened
sidestep the pools where it has bled

anonymous

leaves david dow

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Last Day of Classes	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 2nd Term Ends
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 3rd Term Begins	27	28	29	30	31	

The Ambient Works of Brian Eno:
Three Poetic Interpretations

Timothy Dolch

I. Triennale

the swamp's edge blends to brush:
I heard the agitation of the cattails
the hiss-hum of the crickets
and the rumbling fury of the fowl
as I walked here;
I followed the crooked wooden pillars
and listening to the reeds' whisper;
past moss and fern and hemlock I went
till sphagnum went to lichen.
ahead within the sumac I see
a delicate glow

II. Dunwich Beach

I do not know what was here
It arrived and it changed something
It whispered something
It set up its table and dined alone
I saw through the fissure
Its tablecloth and silver platter
It said something and
Like the wind whistling through the rocks
Remained while coming and going
It whispered something to the water
And departed
I do not know what it changed.
Now just one word
Will make the world go away

III. Ikebukuro

this garden contains a question
come to the gate and quietly enter
slip down the stone walkway alone
look at the city on the horizon
(you will be at a gentle height,
not a towering cliff)
this garden contains a question:
it lies not in the mosses
nor in your reflection
nor beneath the weeping willow in the center
nor within the stone lantern
this garden contains a question
I would tell you to wait for me
but I would just come and ask you questions

ah, who cares for titles anyway

christopher erick moody

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 April Fool's Day
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Passover	14 Add Day & Good Friday	15
16 Easter	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24	25	26	27	28	29

Rigor mortis

I fondle her icy breasts,
Speaking of passion and the red dust
And the goddess's forgotten stone.
I lead her through the rice-papered chambers,
The Faerie Pavilion,
As the mist creeps
Through the glow of red lanterns
Seeking fodder for its doom.
My lips find the pink nub of her nipple,
Tense in resignation.
Yet we are of the same flesh.
Sucking the dew from them,
I taste blood.
And remember
The old monk's warning
"Beauty and anguish tread hand in hand
The downward slope to death."
The black jade sheds tears for
A tomorrow she will never see
But she kills herself today.

Xiao Peng



untitled
xiao peng

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17 Drop Day	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31			



just a story

An apple peel unfurls
in one smooth single spiral
from the edge of the knife.
A continuous curve,
 stark line of beauty, perhaps,
a windswept banner in green, yellow, and retrospective shine
that leaves an echo in the back of your head
inverted,
 retained for half a minute maybe,
before it is promptly tossed
away.

- i. x marks the spot,
the stopping point, the conclusion,
the answer
to the question that has yet to be asked.
- ii. Little white elephants
march across the mantle
tracking invisible footprints on granite
wiped clean only yesterday
 (or was it
 the day before?)
Seven altogether
and they never
forget.

(continued on next page)

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Last Day of Classes	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 Commencement	10
11	12 SURF Begins	13	14	15	16	17
18 Father's Day	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	



iii. The pink lady

stands in the corner,
 a wish over extinguished candles
 of twelve too many years gone by.
 Where faded ribbons hold
 together in loose braids from the white handlebars,
 decaying weaves that still whisper of a tale
 born from a child's fingertips,
 A spider makes its home
 between two spokes of a rusted wheel,
 weaving a string of new memories across fifteen degrees of empty space,
 a lopsided silhouette of a dream catcher,
 only to be imperfectly attempted again the following afternoon
 (and again the next)
 because perhaps
 even spiders have dreams.

iv. Butterflies in her palms,

she cradles a glass of ice in the sun,
 tea long since unremembered
 with a crushed arc of lemon like a broken rainbow
 to piece the picture together in reverse,
 while the frozen cubes melt away into obscurity.
 The light paints
 shades of interlocking circles across the table
 as symmetric whorls spiral outward along the sides of her glass,
 lost in the reflective glare,
 imprints of the butterfly wings
 that came to rest
 for a single moment.

v. The record skips

a beat,
 half a second of black noise
 leaving the original up to the imagination
 (a game of fill-in-the-blank,
 or perhaps a not-so-educated guess).
 It plays again;
 a song that loses time with every subsequent repetition
 until at last
 the anomaly has evolved to become
 part of the piece
 itself.

vi. A glass of liquid amnesia

reflects the faded stripes of the curtains in the study,
 elephants waltzing to an etude in e minor,
 echoes of fluttering wings in one ear
 and cobwebs to be brushed aside from the other
 as the candle on the desk goes out.

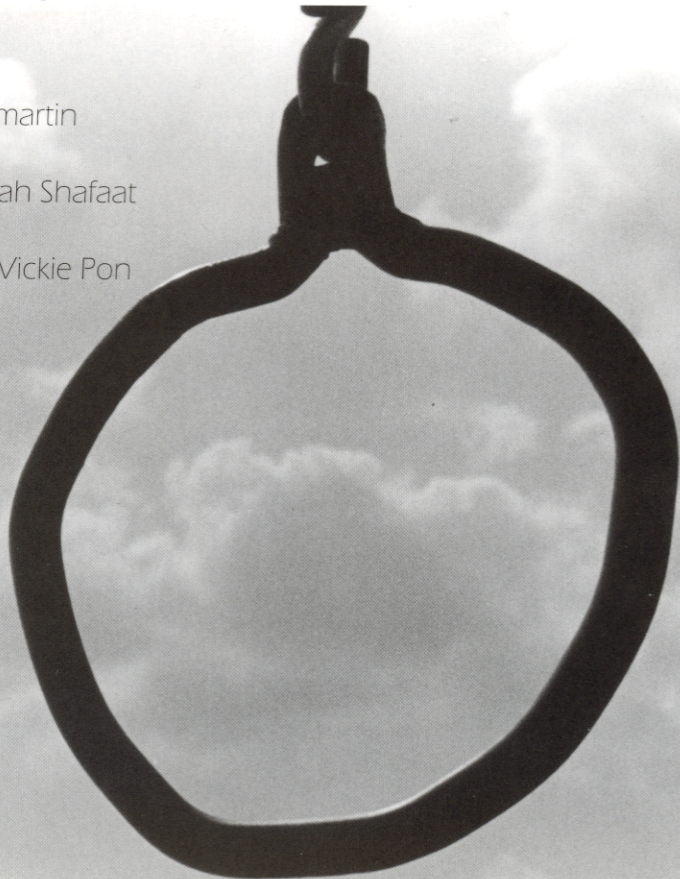
vii. Tell me a story, she says,

backwards
 from the end to the beginning;
 that way
 at least I'll remember
 the outcome.
 Remind me
 (May I ask?)
 just once
 more.

Elizabeth Reed

Totem 2005 Staff

Faculty Advisor	Professor Kevin Gilmartin
Editors	Xiao Peng & Hannah Shafaat
Business Managers	Meng-Meng Fu & Vickie Pon
Assistant Editors	Nathan Chan
	Mithun Diwakar
	Yuki Kimura
	Cindy Ko
	Jane Wang
	Karen Wang



ring
kristy hilands

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encroaching sand
joseph koehler

