

Breath in Mirrors

broken door swing
memory hinge rust
your cancer is mine

damaged thoughts lost

I am a portal
door is a window is a coffin
your magnificent tongue
pressed against your teeth
forming perfect t's
to turn me inside down

your split head mind
lapping the pit of my face
for seized seconds

the point was lost last year
in lifeless winter frost
gazing at hard bodies
glistening dew eyes
we said it would last till November
but summer rain broke early
parted sea fingers
broken at joints
we didn't dare exchange phone numbers
you toss away spare change
spare lovers
and finally
your discontented motions arrested

I turned softly and left

Centripetal

Edited by Nicky Ross and Jon Link

Fall 2000

Poets

Zach Kane	2
Dustin Sieger	3
Anonymous	5
Paul Rogalus	6
Vicki Tonelli	9
Andy Morgan & Christopher Russell	10
Rob Ball	15
Dan Noonan	16
Lynn Rudmin	18
Molly Sutherland	21
Stacey Coulter	25
Birch Andrews	27
Robert Garlitz & Rupert M Loydell	28
Amy Weaver	29
Nicky Ross	33
Jon Link	35

© 2000 Copyright of individual pieces remains with the contributors.

All submissions are welcome

Mail submissions to:
Jon Link
19 Highland Ave
Suite #1418
Plymouth NH, 03264

Or visit our web site [Http://go.to/centripetal.com](http://go.to/centripetal.com)

Centripetal is grateful for all those who have supported it through contributions and spirit.

Zach Kane

**Brief Encounters with
Internet Affairs at 3:20AM**

As numbers,
ones and zeroes,
whip across wires
the throes of passion
are reduced to a
simple text.
The contract is no longer
thermal
but a cold electric whirr.
as the blood-shot eyes
peer into a screen that
peers into blood-shot eyes,
love is born,
sick, pale,
alone.

Jonlink

My Eyes are Stew

We'll crush the air like tin cans
so I've been told
slamming drawers
regardless of this porcelain house

meat factory whistles blow
light dims like twilight
incubation delays motion
chalk tongues clean infants
gelatin cools and becomes firm enough to eat
like mercury

Today we will build invisible circles
they are flimsy but coated with adhesive

tomorrow we build invisible rectangles
they are durable and poisonous

after that we will build the rectangles again
but faster

Midnight Correlations

"I was only trying to wake you a little" she said
Putting down the tack hammer
"Well I'm awake"
"Its about my dog fido"
"Yes"
"He died" she hummed
"Oh- what does that mean for our sex life"
"Its not good" eyes looking at her knees

HARMonME

The humDRUM of
my heartBEAT at night
noticed not because of the dark
but because the blood THICKENS
when EVening's lethargy
becomes lethal
for ass muscles & eyelids
*(it's all the coffee's fault)
----if/I/didn't/drink/so/much/then/
I/wouldn't/eat/so/much/then/I/wouldn't
sit here chainsmoking
the only MINUTE exercise
this RAISING of the wrist
to feed death into my two burntsteaks
-that rumble
when I breathe
-that gargle
from the inside
tickling me to]cough[
toquicken
my heart
because the incessant
DRUMming can't STOP yet
& I may as well
make my own mid night music

Dustin Sieger

Untitled

Are you mad at me?
She asks

Why would I be mad at you?
You haven't given me any reason to be mad.

But I'm mad at her anyway.

Untitled

The body
Beauty in simplicity
Movement in grace
Function in form
Rational in mind
Free in spirit
The body, like a dance
Reborn in soul
To give life through birth
Different yet the same
X or Y—color
Beauty in simplicity
The body

Untitled

I saw her from across the room
She looked right through me
She shown through the crowd
Her features melting together
Eyes, cheeks, lips. . . Perfect, Beautiful
Her body flowed with the beat, a well-oiled machine
Our bodies brushed, intimate strangers
I retreated to the bar
1 Tequila shot gone. Exact change, no tip
I watched her through blurred eyes
Her shape clear, liquid, flowing water
She was in her element
She fit perfectly, she made everything around her perfect
The room flowed around her, a well ordered dance
No matter where she was, she was in the middle, a centerpiece
I moved in close, I could hear her voice, cool, smooth
Her voice flowed through me, unrecognizable words
I couldn't tell what she said but I knew it was perfect, precise
I decided to dance with her, I just had to ask
I walked close, she glanced over to me
As I looked in her eyes I melted
I retreated to the bar
1 Tequila shot gone, no tip

Nicky Ross

Trickster

slip the trip of trap accident tall mediocrity eating hunger
into time out of Gods like beaks breaking noise
from the sun straddling truth of semiprecious jaded words
persuaded white from grey to black again caught
mouthing with violent tongues harmonious beauty smudge between
baby shit and saffron laughter s rib and probably
shaded chance striking light muses half hazards
of situation s puddle jump painting with quilled myths
circumstance splash to lie of death s pride
deeply roasting cultured salt less wounds sketching scars
pretense forming pre automatic heart funded actuality
in the condensation of absent consequence of then and now
present always for telling the here able to scoop a perfect circle
story juxtaposed morality with Time s fleshpots
of sexual kill fight win lost behind textured paper sheet s
come to utter essential maybe drowning in tepid disintegration
stuck in coincidence barrel s down the throat of nightmare
discovery of elasticized truth bottomed by visceral reality and
framed by charms jaw s chomp peristaltic rhythmic
smooth poison killing one with another proof of uncertainty

robbed of anything but love,
I am
completely comforted.
Tomorrow I may wake
or
tomorrow I may fall
but
tonight I sleep here soundly
dreaming of nothing at all.

And your
voice
continues
to ring out,
and your
words
continue to surround me,
pounding me
beating down on me
and I can't say that I mind it at all,
being beaten soundlessly against the wall
by a beauty
with an unmatched cry
and his
deep-throated
lullaby.

Begging you to, please
sing to me here
while I was
wearing rags and twisted lives,
empty and searching deep,
softly pursued by fear,
I thank you
for one night's sleep.

Anonymous

Untitled

The envelope is open
And now you will see
Everything that's inside of me.
I talked to myself
How about you,
I found my place in this world for two.
I said to my friend
And she said to me
What I said to you
And you said to he.
The confusion is gone
And so is the air
On this mountaintop I sit
With this memory to tear.
But I won't wait up
For dawn to arise
Because I know now
That it's you I despise.

Paul Rogalus

Angel of the Dog Track

It'd been my idea to go to the dog track, to see the greyhounds race. I wanted to find Charles Bukowski, or Ernest Hemingway's grandson, or at least some worldly wise, romantically battered street poets living on the razors edge. My friend Martin went along, to drink and to win some money. And Jeff just went along. Just to see what it was like, I guess.

Anyway, the whole scene couldn't have been more sad. Constipated dogs shaking, emaciated, futilely attempting to crap on the track. Wilted, pathetic men completely devoid of energy. Devoid of life. Two or three of them in wheelchairs. Faded rejects from a John Mellencamp Nam Vet video. Martin really looked out of place: tan, muscular, fiery. He weaved his way through the withered losers, shouting at them contemptuously: "Yeah, yeah, what's your sad story, Loser." He went up to a strung-out looking guy on the floor, wearing cracked, plastic-looking shoes with a hole in the sole. "Yeah, there goes the rent, you fucking sad sack," Martin shouted at him.

Jeff just drifted around, chatting easily with strangers, looking angelic in his crumpled white shirt, blonde curls, and childlike smile.

I kept betting two-dollar quinellas and losing. Martin won twenty dollars early on and ended up coming out about even. Jeff didn't bet. On the last race of the night, I talked him into making one bet. He won. Jeff smiled and shrugged, and gave his winning ticket to the guy on the floor with the plastic shoes, and he just said, "Here, I found this, I think it must be yours."

The guy stared at Jeff, his jaw quivering, as if he were looking at a ghost- as if, all of a sudden, he could believe in God again. Then he got up and went to buy a beer.

One Night's Sleep

Sing me a song as I sleep tonight
as I lay here
beneath the world
wearing rags and twisted lives,
empty and searching,
softly, I seduce my fears.
And you're
playing
to an empty house.
And I'm
laying
on dirt and stones.
And, quietly I wait for you,
wait for you to bring me home.

With some
deep-throated melody
you will
bring me the tales of
torched tapestry,
and I
can't help but smile
at the
things you say to me.
And
a little bit of hope is found
in this
misplace, margarita ford
and I
can't wait to hear some more
as I
lay my head back down.

And so I
ask you to sing on
and I'm
drowning in an ocean of...

a friend of his who recently found a mouse mixed in with his Kentucky Fried Chicken. I went to the emergency call switch, located in every room of the senior apartments, and was just about to pull the string when the turkey became dislodged from Aunt Lottie's throat and sputtered out onto her Jabba the Hut chin. My sister heaved a big sigh of relief. But Aunt Lottie didn't miss a beat—she gobbled up the turkey chunk on her chin and then immediately went back to Hoovering down the rest of her dinner—like a German Shepherd tearing into raw meat. She only looked up for a moment to ask if I wanted another beer.

We got all of the plates and tupperware together and said good-bye to Aunt Lottie. My brother Mike stopped at the door, and shouted in to her: "Hey, Aunt Lottie, next Thanksgiving we're gonna bring you a milkshake."

Amy Weaver

Trip Trop

Trip Trop
upon the
upon the
the midnight clock
whiles I sets the golden hour
to ringing
And what's this?
Twelve beautiful voices
singing
and sighing
upon this
midnight cabaret.
"Just one more
pop-band,"
as angelic throats
lull their dying ears
to sleep.
And in the morn
come 8 or 9,
when we set to put the world right
for the last time,
we'll dream.
Of yesterday
when we were young
with so much loving
to be done.
And golden hours,
Oh, golden hours galore!
But now,
no more...

The song plays on.

Robert Garlitz & Rupert M Loydell

COAL DUST SIFT

Now farewell to patterns of inheritance: drink, sex and smell are here mingled with territorial loyalties; you would not want to walk where I have just been. Down the street is a random sequence of ambient sound and image; devices of sensory overload, images of divine worlds. Sometimes feeling makes contact in tiny glittering flashes; otherwise demographic surveys show only consumption and desire. So the flight westward continues: we no longer know how to make ourselves at home, or even where to try. The future is a crescendo of nothing, the past is out of reach: they have no real purpose except that of discarded or impossible experience. The present is full of screams, a catchment area of dissent and possible disruption. I feel like only a distant memory of myself.

Successful idleness embellished and elaborated, people swarming in impossible numbers; walls in irregular formations: an odd new nothingness.

Guilt laughs and folds our nothingness into perfect handkerchiefs.

Return to the rules. They guarantee success in the naming of leaves. All irony and humor are compressed into the rules. Follow them. Who could take this seriously? Surveys show how readily people are led to the anechoic chambers. Letters found in basement boxes collect molds which will cure the saturnalian virus. Address books help. Heavy curtains work best. Exercises keep your mind from drifting. Biceps can be built in the shower, without weights or machines. The folded wooden rack stands ready for more wet laundry. It's the tone of voice that opiates. They don't want these revelations. No one does. No one could. Life is too short, too sweet, too sacred for more than meets the eye. If you use the term ³range,² you will suggest too many distinct things. Never are we too tired for rules that whisper in the night: the waitress is not waiting for you.

Vicki Tonelli

Untitled

Everything went on hold when I was twenty-one
That's when my daughter was born
Twenty-two brought a son into my world

Unsure of where I was going
Unclear of how I'd get there
Sometimes I would find myself questioning my place

The mother of my children moved out and took the kids
I realized I was not treating her the way she deserved

It took me a while to grow up
I had a change take place within me
A transformation brought about a realization

It took me a while
They all moved home again
The times were changing and it was still hard

Here I stand at twenty-three
A boy who had to pick up the pace
A boy who had to run to become a man

I stand still

Fighting my hardest
Working to provide
Laughing to get through each day
Praying that I am doing the right thing, with thoughts no longer of only myself
Thoughts now revolving around my family.

Andy Morgan & Christopher Russell

Les Claypool's Length

Palace palace my head is with me
the coming together at the top
something the edges know well
a phospherant that goblins eat
when coming out from the bottom
of the tree-round hole
and hungry for the spaces or
maybe the place we left to eat
luped up in sausage fat.

Salom barks from the nearby grove
the junkies feast (those widows)
the minuets of yesterday greeting
yesterdays and tomorrows
yesterdays, the dip of a yellow shawl
curling my neck like a spider.

Tooth lined up along the jowl
a red tooth blowing my house.

The that that that's
the tickle of soup in the kitchen bowl
"and try me or don't around the corner"
said the man around the corner suckling his socks,
a banshee tattling to the gutter
in a way of gold, in a way of whispering
that no one notices:
a snake without his nest is sad.

Flap flap flap flap flap flap flap
shifting their breath and nicking
neck like a dog-pod picked
from the lava-drool of horns
and the turning of walks and sits

Birch Andrews

"Star" Fish

Gazing down
I watch him swim.
Small and sleek
meandering in and out of
stars, lilleepads, and planets.
Opening his mouth
he swallows stardust
engulfing it through his gills.
A twist of his tail
whole galaxies move,
Flick of his fin
a star disappears.
Alone he wanders,
his galaxy of murky depths
a thicker substance than ours.

Stubborn

Mommy and Daddy
Brought me into this world
To be a band-aid

To save their comatose marriage
And when one baby wasn't enough
To keep the breathing machines going-
They made two.

And when that didn't work
Happily ever after ended
Daddy left
Mommy might as well have,
We'd be better off. So they abandoned me
When they could
And when they couldn't they simply used me as a punching bag
And a mother- to their second mistake.

I was too stubborn to quit

And when the child I died for tried to kill me from the inside out-

I was too stubborn to quit

So, when my family decided they enjoyed having someone to kick the
shit out of
And that they liked having prey
I became even more stubborn, too stubborn to quit.

I worked and worked to mend the family that didn't want me.
When I left- I was still too stubborn to quit.

And when the lights went out
And the master of a thousand lies
Broke a heart that was already held together by super glue...
I'm still too damn stubborn to quit.
So there.

penitent and wishing
like a rudsquatch xenophobe bite:
the way the two come
the pedigree of tapestry.

The holocaust of a seamstress:
massacre and rest.

The portable vacuum on the ceiling
stucko:
an antelope
a mother with her tits hued/
The End period,
The End without a comma,
something without a tit
something lengthwise
gasping
around a curve of 45 degrees
with a buttox for an eyeball
or something else recuperated.

And space between wasn't under hair hunch over bluff space between
lain along light of jump skip like trumpet blow hat the teddy-bear boys
shook syrup from horn like drunk windmill spring scales proponderant
herpes kettle knives dance and hum said rabbit hare moist look out
grass juice sonnet mirth pull scalp up over brow reciprocal chant
marrow bone trapeze sarcophagul chant want destine chant sheet metal
homes desert mix their words destitute and Run for maybe I'm want a
drink three prongs soft two spikes the night chant three prongs two soft
spikes night one chant sheet mix run thithers thame tramp moonlight
god without sleep hood tree over head eyes now homestead curse
Neolithic tooth lime lament stone daughters girth getty up let me
breakfast burn bagel by bit burn daughter by her girth gale blow dike
over chant let Windsor decide our ends flags down combatants their
armor reciprocal monotheistic elevate position dry wind fire the nest
knee-cap knee water slow(o)w rocks dumb valleys a pedal chant
nonchalance trylophan dystonic pull pull back winch our sores mast
tartive disenchant cheer stars maladapt (like

coin) dinky play bass my man rumble pith child pit nipple blossoms
choke nats cherub light that thing pit that rancor birth chews tooth two
day faces snort trademark chant Width

I came to be here and this is the world
a disposition of letters a snail
whimsical like a war-wound solace
the circumference of anatomy sinks
barking at pine cones as a babe to windows
a blister of hell in submarines
winking from the home of a cat
cat on the rock between two trees
wince terwall the sight
feign none the deep
belay that order captain
a small hard rock in the forest
split by an axe winter
catalogued pastimes drooling rickets
tishing a tosh with mothers handmade
that the hand of T
our seamstress
the kick in the bee
which the wheel came about backward
radiance the light of a hamsters nuts
but not as blissful
pity pity for the T
our seamstress
zirconium in the ring of leavened bread
a teratoid crumb hidden in sock
I have two knees I think
but not a place to put them back to back to back
I think that I have, two knees.
Our seamstress
shirt rolled up to just about the spot before the elbow
chastising my sweat like a nun with a whip.

T laments with sycamores and bugs
to freeze inside the belly rudsquatch

Stacey Coulter

A Note to Daddy

I
I am a doormat
Lying at the entrance
When you have shit on your
boots.
I tell you what you want to hear
I work 30 hour weeks
Full time high school too.
When my grades are bad
I hide them – But you have a life- and let me.
When I'm good you ignore
me- the way a clean welcome mat is never
noticed
I'm a good girl- mother to my sister- homemaker
to an otherwise motherless home
and constant doormat

...So even though it was dark
I still saw your eyes pop out of your head
When this doormat stood up
and smacked you up side the face (sound familiar)
Suddenly there's a little more respect, appreciation, compliments-
'cause I demand them
When the good little responsible doormat
tells Daddy to go fuck himself.
One of the most Earth shattering phrases a doormat can say.
I'm no longer your doormat-
I'm my own house on the other side of town-
Sometimes still- when you have shit on your boots
you try to bully me into a doormat-
That's when I must stand up and smack you up 'side the head.
And say "no more" 'cause bullies are like that-
"Aren't they Daddy?"

Became cold
With the imminence
Of death...winter's driveway
There was always
That week in fall
That collapsed the boundaries
And curtained an ancient hunger

There was always
That week in fall

...The animals knew it too

it looks like you're writing a letter
that is true said the rudsquatch
rudsquatch is warm today
touching poles like a deaf porcupine
the big ship franked on a berg
bludgeoned irretrievable
crevasse of a leach and a turd
P
that's a p
and don't relent it.

A BLACK LINE WAS HERE

the soldier drew his sisters blood
the side of it was black
cornering shame like mail
and there was a dark line that went through it
drawn in the twists of a young girls skirt
flecks of manila on the brown
wrinkled a town of malcontents
two horses on either side of the bridge
reins connected by midmornings yoke
it floats down
beneath the meat of children
the clear shape is down
around the corner from hanging
and alone with limestone
a wreath of bells and lice
gonging a prayer for pestilence
inside out is wet
depth is cordial stained
like the hair of fish
caressing twice your lower lip
in and around the wheat and into the wheat
the sickle shafts the childrens feet
plane off the head
and so what of the play

a bath
a witch
the smell of reincarnation
smoking rabbits from their holes.

Four on one is the fairest thing
But leave the timber to the king.

In Fall

By the barn
Red and mighty
My grandfather
Taught me
The world's oldest lie –
Life

I watched first
As the turkeys died
The slow numeral decline
Of my playmates
Each accepting the blade
With barely a sound
The fear marked on their faces
As the head rolled toward my feet

I watched second,
As the pigs were led
From the pen
Marched sacredly toward
The mighty barn –
So close to the end they were.
They slowed themselves
And twisted and fought –

I sang
Plodding along
In yellow rubber boots
And raincoat one size
Too large
“I don't know why
I swallowed a fly”

The animals
Fell like the leaves
Slept in freezers
And Earth

For minutes –
And I come
...(into the openness
Of the air)
The fevered intake
Overwhelming my
Breathlessness

I arrive
In the sex of the moment

Rob Ball

Untitled

Her river diverged and emerged into mine
Swept the past off its feet and left it far behind
Doors opened that I didn't know existed
Keyless I now stand outside the doors – the doors I already miss
– Time stopped when I rose to her beauty –
Altered to dazed with conscious thought I am
Distant from everything that stands
Tears I brought – for good, for bad?
Right from the start I tried to contain my heart
With chains and bolts and things of the such
Soon found out didn't amount to much
Still I tried and still I failed
Now reality and truth are falling like hail.
What's the way? → what's the way it ought to stay?
Dust the glitches, kick out bad – bring back all we ever had
Restrain my heart and bite my tongue and walk away on a ray
Of a new sun.

Dan Noonan

Nightwalking

3:30 am and I stop.
Staring back at the darkened windows
staring at me like Gods judging my fate.

Silence is an artform

I've realized that life is actually quite simple-
one giant dartboard with everyone aiming at
the great bullseye of happiness.

Yet, while all this is going on, someone takes
a few people from the crowd and hands them
the key to the kingdom of happiness.

The rest of us are left pondering the why's
and how's of each others where's, what's, and who's.

For all I care, the world could be a single-celled
organism, existing in the fermentation
of pre-processed yogurt.

People would still argue about creation, evolution, meaning, etc.
It's all one big myth, the real question is
do I get up to piss now, or wait for the next commercial.

Ignorance is an artform

I believe that we'd kill 85% of our race
if it would make the survivors feel better about
the label on their underwear.

Popularity is just a first place finish in a second grade science fair
some sap who's better than you thought you were better than
some other saps.

It's all cyclical like kitchen décor.

Molly Sutherland

The Sex

In a blueberry crumb pie
A la mode
Sensuality
Crumbles between my teeth
The smooth lusciousness
Of the berries
The sugary aftertaste
...(of the pie)

In the library silence
Of the park
A mid-August afternoon
Carries lust to my lungs
Lust – in a wind
That conquers
The timeless endurance
Of its breaths –
Heated, cooled
Excited, exaggerated, soothed
...(the wind) panting in my ear

Inside a cashmere
Silhouette tank
My skin is tantalized
And caressed by the gentle
Softness of the fabric's hand
An elegant arousal
Inside...(the cashmere)
Under the water
Of the lake,
I've been soaring

Dan Noonan

The Right Fit

Walls built to protect this hole,
Longing for the right piece to fill that void
Heart racing as the pressure builds,
Beating faster as time goes by,
the music quickens...

Here it comes
The piece is found
Long, thick, hard, perfection

Now find the hole,
Must be precise,
Not so fast,
Almost there

YES!!!!!!!!

T
E
T
R
I
S

Insomniatic Tendencies

Everything in the darkness
Waiting, the gift of sleep
Guilt, shadows on the wall
Voices, echo whispers of the past
Talking to me? About me?
This smile on my face
Contempt, the curls of my lips
Neurotic, my face in the mirror.
Can I fake it?
Questions, a swirl in my mind
Never stopping long enough
for me to recognize.
A whirlwind of beginnings.
Hanging by a thread
Legs dangling, painting fear
on the canvas of my mind.
Sun rising in my window, dark roast in the air.