The Bayou Review

Spring 1996
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Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to Dr. JoAnn Pavletich, Dr. Catherine Civello, Patrick Farrell, and Natalie Martinez for doing a wonderful job selecting the submissions to be published. Your time, patience, and effort will not be forgotten.

Lastly, I will always appreciate the opportunity I've had to be a creative part of this university.

Jon Pulcini
Editor
For Maria

In gentile, c'è la speranza;
in la speranza, c'è la liberta;
in la liberta, c'è comprensione;
in comprensione, c'è la pace.
# Contents

## Poetry & Prose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alchemy of an Evolution*</td>
<td>Andrew Schultz</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse</td>
<td>Vittorio Bonomi</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danger Zone</td>
<td>Loren Lancaster</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re Robbing the Bank Today</td>
<td>Antonio Soria, Jr.</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Winter Spring</td>
<td>Vittorio Bonomi</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildflowers in the Rose Garden</td>
<td>Anita Hunt</td>
<td>9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The TV Blues</td>
<td>Karen Farrell</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than a Walk</td>
<td>Antonio Soria, Jr</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Still</td>
<td>Justin R. McLendon</td>
<td>14-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Best Submission Award-Student awarded $50 for best submission; chosen by judges.*
The Stillness of War  
Antonio Soria, Jr.  
18, 19

Dear Psychologist  
Antonio Soria Jr.  
22, 23

San Cristobal  
Andrew Schultz  
24, 25

The Circles  
Karen Farrell  
26

La Familia Soria  
Antonio Soria, Jr.  
27, 28

Not Again  
Loren Lancaster  
29

Frozen Morning  
Andrew Schultz  
30

Dichotomy  
Vittorio Bonomi  
31, 32

The Seeds of Faith  
Andrew Schultz  
33, 34

Fabric, Clothes, and Bed Quilts  
Vittorio Bonomi  
35

The Ruins  
Karen Farrell  
36, 37

Artwork & Photography

Sunflowers  
Monica Kressman  
Cover Photo

The Eyes of Texas  
Yuliang Cui  
x

Aftermath  
Jon Pulcini  
4

Drip  
R. Keith Elliot  
20

Reflection  
Monica Kressman  
21

vii
Sponsors

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Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas, 
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum 
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis 
avari.

Virgil (Georgics 2.490-92)

(Blessed is he who is able to win knowledge of the 
causes of things, and has cast beneath his feet all fear 
and unyielding Fate, and the howls of hungry 
Acheron.)

translated by H.R. Fairclough
The Easter stars are shining
above the lights that are flashing--
coronal of the black--

    Nobody
to say it--
    Nobody to say: pinholes

Thither I would carry her
among the lights--
Burst it asunder
break through to the fifty words
necessary--

    a crown for her head with
castles upon it, skyscrapers
filled with nut-chocolates--

    dovetame winds--
stars of tinsel
from the great cornucopia
of glass

*William Carlos Williams, from Spring and All*
Alchemy of an Evolution

primal rage on a mortal page; follow the tides not the sage.
geophysics edge-walk the line; ask me how i feel- i feel just fine.
we have lost our meaning in syntax; vernacular doorway and
computer fax.
drifting-a continental sifting; lifting-a wallet, now its grifting.
the scene of my time is a biological crime written in slime.
the book of ages is the history encrypted as a conqueror’s
mystery.
the prophet blinks and unlocks a key; clear as hell-the life of a
tree.
color-coded messages to human life; classified-preordained with
the scales and knife.
the cutting edge and alpha black; move through night’s putrid
cellar sacks.
rotting decay-the forward decline; it is the first of all the signs.
set the fire, intense the flame; burn all your luggage-burn your
name.
seeping prisms slowly gray; the wind only knows what i am
about to say.
ascending high up into flight, the darkness lifts and all is white.
the visions surpass the land and sea, past the disease that is
humanity.
cylinders, cones, and rods allure like the truths we flush down
the sewer.
the watchful eyes adjust the water; make it colder, now make it hotter.
golden arrival and i am fed; the moment of the crux and i see red.
liquid measure-philosopher's stone; see if the distance is what you are shown.
we have reached the eye of disorder; crystal-ball chaos and a power-hoarder.
if all the creatures that are right now seek just to rob the cradle and kill the plow,
the world will know its modern era, a common fall- a tilting trend.
then the planet will consume us all like a cat eats fleas, and all the honey from all the bees.
the earth will soon eat who it feeds; all the money-all the papers and all the deeds.
the word was spread and torn to lies;
confusion and fear-international spies.
believe in your ancient, hidden heart, and practice a life as pure as your art
for the survival of our species' sake is a must: the gathering of nations into dust.

Andrew Schultz
Refuse

Life is a stage
so I've been told
I then choose to be the potted plant.

Vittorio Bonomi
Danger Zone

Dark Dark Despair
Dungeon hole in Deep Black Purple
Nonexistent walls close in
Pounding energies creeping in
In the Dark
In the Deep
Dungeon of Despair
Through a hole, a face peers in
A shining Light to show the way
The Beauty face of my Angel Child
No, I will not give up today;
Perhaps tomorrow.

Loren Lancaster
We’re Robbing the Bank Today

This unity will be our train to the Bahamas,
no more robbing big-time birdcatchers for their wrens,
no more jacking people for money, rings, and chains.
Allies, we’re going to add a little class to the crime today;
we’re going to rob the bank my friends.
Martin will be the clown walking down Main St., Letty the old lady pulling the check. (heard Wig Plaza has got some pretty good threads.)
Make sure you get enough balloons to cover the gats,
take out the security with a whack to the head.
Moses and I will be down the street to drive you away,
the others will create wrecks to block police routes.
No killing if possible; avoid publications. Faces, no moves will be made if I see any doubts.
This toast is to that dream of one day having it all, swimming pools in our living rooms, billiard balls reflecting against liquor bottles,
one more win on our obituaries,
and relax ourselves of these crime-mind throttles.
We’re Robbing the Bank Today (cont’d)

We’re going to steal the only richness that we don’t have, 
the one that makes their world rotate; 
we’re going for it all this evening, 
we’re killing the queen on her final date.

This corrupted world will ride with us Horsemen, 
to be treated and tossed in and out of the jails, 
feeling the coldness we felt through probationers’ view, 
ridding ourselves of these nails that pin us against 
poverty’s trails.

Antonio Soria, Jr.
The Winter Spring

The sirens invade relentlessly
my concrete canyons
my car
and my ethereal Bach.

Echoes and people
exhaust and laughter
an exotic blend
dispensed by the local Mac Donalds.

Splashes of color
screechin' brakes
whining bus screams
all infuse the Spring glare with agreeable discontent.

Vittorio Bonomi
Wildflowers in the Rose Garden

We were the wildflowers, they were the roses. We had weeds, they had none. We started out in separate gardens, then somehow, we were all in one!

The gardener looked across the lot, shook his head, “what is this I see? Wildflowers in the roses? Get out! OUT! Don’t mix with these beautiful roses! You’ll ruin the soil where they grow!”

The wildflowers drooped and paled, as beautiful flowers they had failed. Now the roses smirked and laughed, “We belong in his beloved garden! You! Get out! GET OUT!”

Now and then, he glanced our way, but mostly, we had to wait... and wait, for sun... for rain... for admiration that never came.
Loving him still, and shading his grave.
Our colors paled, our petals fell,
crashing to the earth below.

Oh, now and then the gardener walked
along the wildflowers edge,
and every time they perked right up,
“Pick me! Pick me!”, they each would beg,
But he always picked the roses.

They had no choice, the wildflowers grew
forsaken for roses, another man’s land.
Some are still waiting for the gardener’s hand
to pick one of them, maybe this time?
Poor little wildflowers, left again.

The gardener’s season is over now,
returned to the soil where wild things grow.
The roses all gone, but the wildflowers live on
where the gardener sleeps forever.

“It’s gentler now,” the wildflowers say
of the gardener’s requited love,
as his tears rain sweetly upon them,
they grow and at last... they know.

Anita Hunt
The *TV* *B*lues

What I’d like to see,
I said
Is you turn off the TV.

But watching it is free,
they said
It’s what we like to see.

It’s a favor to me,
I said
Please turn off the TV.

Not even NBC?,
they said
It’s what you like to see.

You’ll get bent over my knee,
I said
If you don’t turn off that damned TV.

Then their faces grew quite heavy
and they shuffled off to bed
to learn what it was like to see
Something other than that damn TV.

*Karen Farrell*
More Than a Walk

Another morn has risen from her bedding
giving the pedestrian his shadows against bundled rocks,
the boulevards and freeways are hollering with a million people
on board,
someone footsteps the back streets of the Irvington blocks.
Accompanied by friends, a hatred merger within the breezing of
our legs,
along with the memories when I walked my girlfriend home,
the Burbank schools when our parents forced the launch,
sweaty foreheads causing the uptight tone.
Today, destiny has placed and left me without choice,
searching for backways and shortcuts to establish a presence with
my colleagues,
the trip on foot so thoughtful compared to the boredom before,
every moment of glancing has me deeply intrigued.
Somebody up there has given me a chance to start over,
a loan to appreciate the little freedom taken for granted,
my hood is convinced to set higher standards,
based on the torn down facilities where my infancy slanted.
More Than a Walk (cont’d)

The houses passed include friends with families and wives, standing on their porch pushing me on, nothing beats walking the sidewalks of Janowski, where the kids declare rockfights and make the will strong. Everyday my bewilderness crashes with a couple holding hands, who are graced passively with a smile in the frost, cars pulling over questioning the response when morally soaring; No, I don’t want a ride from these fifteen minutes lost!

Antonio Soria, Jr.
Alabama Still

The road slipping into Montgomery
drifting by Granddaddy’s old house
at the front of a dead-end street
the house empty even when it was full of us children
my Brother and I, my Dad, and Uncle Don before
playing with the rat traps and pull-string trains
the house away from home- it was a peach
it was a plum- it was commiserate
like the quiet in the backyard garden
with the road that stank of burning tar
the taste of it stuck on the roof of my mouth
like a Miracle Whip and banana sandwich
I can taste it-
still
like I can remember my footprints stuck in
the fresh asphalt street
a little hollow in the solid mix
but that’s always me in the end
with no respect for my omnipotence
Alabama Still (cont’d)

I am king of my dead-end street
and its only subject inside Montgomery
just like I used to play a while ago
now that the tar isn’t clogging my voice
I still can’t breathe a word
that deserves to be listened.

I am alive and beaten
the result of my brethren
the end of the means
and just another hollow in the mix

-I am still-

My Grandmaw’s lakehome
standing cinderblocks
painted lime green like the water
if the sun struck it right
the pier stretching itself out
of the seawall and red clay shore
slithering by the tin-roofed boathouse
like the copperheads, cottonmouths, and water moccasins
ended by the lake too dark to see through
that I swam in anyway
holding my breath
to see how long I could stay under
the weight of the water- I sank like a brick
straight into the black-slime bottom
in the ease it held me in
and that I am sinking in that silt
still
freshwater sharks
the kind that live in swimming pools
and snapping turtles, alligators, and large-mouth bass
tickling my big toe
make me kick loose of that mud
and sent me scampering out
looking over my shoulder expecting
a toothy grin and a wink
-I never saw one-
does it mean it was not there?
I determined myself to not forget my nerve again
until the next day when I went for my swim
Grandmaw always waited for me
with a beach towel bigger than a sheet
fresh out of the dryer and smelling like the heat
to melt the chill out of my neck
Alabama Still (cont’d)

she was always there
with a look on her face of a question
or a prayer
and were they always the same
to me playing in the lake
somewhere in my half-forgotten game

-I am still-

Justin Ryan McLendon
The Stillness of War

Here are the guns you requested Aguelito, to continue the war that Carter started, the only soldier left of your army, the others have gone back to Mexico as the dead exported. "Shhh, don't tell anybody that we've ended up on the enemy side, they don't notice a distinction for I'm often fed by them, across the room lies a woman claiming to be my wife, with Mexican names as their cover-up pens."

"Look, look out the window and tell me what you see, yea, they got the "changos" working for them now, late at night they trade ammunition for money, each killing the other with movements of the clouds."

"Bring me the ringer, Mijo, so I can call Carter at his house, we'll make a treaty at the will of my lands, don't let the outsiders see you bringing it in, or we'll both be executed by American hands."
“Better yet, here’s another plan sketched, I’ll fool President Carter then kill him myself, set up the meeting in Mexico and bring the chariot, we’re going to use the American flag as our belt.” the same corruption that killed him. Every time the blankness closed, “Is Gramps still living on his crazy stories?” Actually, it’s hard to find a craziness in the great man’s limbs, he feared the chaos now found in the world, the same corruption that killed him.

Dedicated to Vicente Aguirre

Antonio Soria, Jr.
Dear Psychologist

Prize me, prize me, Miss Kimberly Donalson!
The Antonio of the bipolars at his extreme,
our compromise meant you would keep me away from these somatizations,
damn nurses come in every second applauding my dreams.
Return the four walls that those klux took from me,
slapping my posters into my sexual desires,
these fools get into pulmonary incidents when barely breathing my feelings,
Imagine when I crawl the ceiling without my attire.
After seeing all the planting that designed this green house,
possibilities floated to conquer their problems,
my words have made love to all of your patients,
but after the ecstasy, it’s right back to the solemn.
You promised me nature, you promised me wings,
over a victory to my suicidal thoughts,
it’s been two years since my love poems to the after,
yet you won’t release me because of my worth to the slot.
Dear Psychologist (cont’d)

“Doctor, you have no right to keep me here!” never once could you convince me I was crazy to hold, this jar has trapped me with the base of pure lying, injecting me with ‘Anti’s’ supposedly to pick up my lows. Turn off the recorder, Kim, psychologists should not play with their patients, let me show you once again how to steal the dimness from this home, or go ahead and record a poet’s mastery, to show your scholared staff the real reason why you haven’t let me go.

Antonio Soria, Jr.
San Cristobal

Let me open with a nightmare: just some stuffing from my pillowed head...

anticipation; the wordless month now gone. vanished into boundless eternities.

The snow blew in with harsh winter realities.

the somber mountains

and hills giving way first to the golden warning of autumnal celebration,

and then on into bare-limbed slumber. the days drift by with the possibilities of December.

the ‘ands’ ands ‘ifs’ of a holiday in Texas. finalization.

fragmentation.

I drift with the days from vegetables, rice and beans to chocolate, candies, and ice cream.

rich sauces wake me in the deepest hours of my slumber.

the pen is thick, but willing: I cruise the streets of my mind taking notes, photographs, and eye-witness accounts of the carnage and of the construction.
San Cristobal (cont'd)

the zen-like Arroyo San Cristobal flows steadfast over rock spillways
sounding off against the dead calm of the snowlit-quiet-white day.
and through the night, the depth of the peace is disturbing amidst the calls for war and destruction in our world.
we move beyond what we really know.
and thus the dream ends with prayers for a quick departure whenever the time may come.

Andrew Schultz
The **Circles**

(a Haiku)

orbs vary orbits  
the elliptical clashes  
with the eccentric

*Karen Farrell*
La Familia Soria

Biographer; this small hut is where we became what we now are, where our father created a dynasty too strong to control, chiseled us so alike that we could never bond together, from there, we fell easily into the witch’s spirit hole. Step into the block paneling, exposure of Daddy’s magic, the old brown rug where as kids we played with blocks, the flowers watching carefully from their favorite vase, a collector intervenes in the battle of two fighting cocks. That long line of frames, those are us as tamed children perfectly sequenced from the young to the old, Mayra, Rene, Liliana, Noemi, and me, dressed nicely for picture day because mother never failed. No one could say wrong things of my sisters, without getting slapped or fearing my response, overprotectiveness prayed for the best after the suffering, just so immature hunters would catch my blood fawns.
The long hair that strings the trimming, occupying her space rightfully as the queen of her throne, often looked as the weak, yet is the heart of all members, overwhelming pureness into the gate of carved stones. We, we are not that united family who eats dinner with prayers at the table, hard struggling has forced our own admiration to reign, although we may never be like others fortunate depending, our shoulders are to the world as the strong links to the chain.

Antonio Soria, Jr.
Not Again

Feeling so unsure
Each step I take seems more
Like treading water than stepping forward
Wavering in the wake of each new instance
Disappointment waits around every corner
I wait for it like an expectant mourner
It always shows itself in stages
I never have to wait too long
Like an unwelcome guest it arrives on time
Just at a point when I think
Perhaps it’s past, it will not show
Soon all my hopes will sink
As the knock comes at my door
If only once a week would pass
With no signs of regression
Disappointment hiding its face at last
Just one week feeling nothing but passion
Feeling so unsure
Too ready for “the other shoe to drop”
Just once I’d like to be disappointed
In Disappointment not showing up

Loren Lancaster
Frozen Morning

december mornings cold with a chill wind blowing all around - quietly, but with conviction. the clouds crash into the mountain peaks above without a sound. a blanket of gray and white and an eternal flame for the afternoon. a sprinkling of snow. the unhurried pace of nature - teaching, always teaching. (whether we care to learn or not).

frozen breezes and vigorous sneezes. the bleak skyline is everything - beauty and the beast. it engulfs the psyche and dissolves the mind. it is morning meditation music throbbing forward with a delicate thunder. a cacophony. an orchestra. space whisper. and in deafness, a shout.

the light snow sends icicles down my house’s spine and mine. and now in time, the world revolves - man evolves - and dangerous, murderous thoughts drift from peak to peak from resort to resort, tapping our pocketbooks and personal religions.

come, jagged creek, show me the way home.

Andrew Schultz
Dichotomy

Images haunt my soul
with flashes of emptiness
where lonely voyagers are chilled
by echoes of solitude and darkness
living the forever-yesterdays
at the never-tomorrows
dreaming of empty houses that flow,
out
in
orgasmic
waves
at
2
a.m.

Dreaming of flying boats of wonderland
of Augustinian love
of letterman jackets
of fine! China figurine on the window sill
and of crystal carrousels
that ran forever in circles on bedroom tables.
Dead poems are unfortunately docked on the river Styx. 
Arias for their part leave us hollow 
And inspiration is a fast escalator ride down into nowadays.

Transitory madness
Precious gifts emanate from smiling, radiant brown eyes
who cares if Beatrice and the Gentile Knight have slain dragons
All they do now is drink Ensure
the elixir of predictability.

Vittorio Bonomi
the seeds of faith

the attic doors, the life-giving chores, the work we’ve done and have yet to do.

all the motions of the axe. the cracking whack.
whittling pieces of a tree - a trunk - a log into a night’s warmth.
crackle. crackle. roar and sputter.
the sulfur-tipped seeds of faith insure my comfort for another night.

whooshing up the valley, sending treetops into a wonderful synchronization of ballets and ballroom dances,
the wind creates serious eyes staring within their cores.
the seeds of faith... leaping out of narrow streets and winding drives.

the path of two gates: one up high and one down here.
clear as a bell. an old cement mixer, a rusty car frame.
The cool collection of cans and bottles held fast to their ancient mother.

my eye jumps. my eyes widen.

the fury and the witness of the arroyo leaves me parched and dry.

the seeds of faith pouring from the sky:

tumbling, tumbling unique and exotic.

flitting, flinging occasionally erotic.

the tantalizing powder melts upon touch.

all these seeds of faith licking their chops ready to eat.

Andrew Schultz
Fabric, Clothes, and Bed Quilts

My mind wonders in awe
in and out of dusty
dark
unvented hallways
shaking loose the specters of time,
opening the cobweb curtains
that for so long had refused the light.

The dust
scratches, scrapes the marble floors
as a child's footsteps crunch and crackle with laden weight.

Nonna e Teto eternally pursuing Melvillian pleasures
clothes and laundry unravel with the fabric of time
as do dreams and everydayness
while images leave a crystal Oscar
that people see through with closed eyes
straining to move
cracking
chipping
its skin
leaving me with bloody hands
unable to hold back and suppress the tide.

Vittorio Bonomi
The *Ruins*

they eat with pieces
of themselves scattered on the floor
with the roses

the empty kitchen
serves only thought and fear, little taste

how many others have asked,
is this a bed
or a boxing ring
(they must ask the person in the mirror,
then they can rest)

the warmth of the blood-red walls
enrages
the passion from the easy chair
surrounded by the antique
volumes of self-taught knowledge
gathering dust
The Ruins (cont'd)

the sewing machine is purely ornamental
and off on a side track, death
and emptiness

Karen Farrell