editor’s note

Whenever I ask my father for advice he suggests I try a process he calls "drinking through time." The idea is a sort of nonlinear project list: try to understand ideas that have yet to occur but will influence the decision in question; let the future be your guide. Crystal balls are in Short supply, and the weakened job market is causing many Columbia students to re-think previously made decisions. But through the art we still have the freedom to imagine the future at will.

Consider the issue of Ithaca: in "Captain’s Leg," Erica Wasser deeply defines inconceivable middle age by inverting the familiar Peter Pan. The ripper in Peter Harro’s photograph, "Lemon," reminds us that nature is full of cyclical processes; there is a pattern. And in "omega Aaron," Celeste Leitmotif personifies the elusive time as the left photographed absence.

We can’t get too cozy; art will not unlock the future. And if it does too hard, as W. H. Auden warns, "time will say nothing but I told you so." But I promise the brief amount of your patron you spend with the literary and visual art in this semester’s Ithabuc will not be wasted.

Hannah M. Cepow
New York City, April 2004

ISN’T IT BLISS?
CHARLINE TETIYEVSKY
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
GENTLEMEN
LEEZA MANGALDAS
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

FEBRUARY 24
KAYLA JENKINS
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY
Greta Garbo had metallic fingertips
That traced in the sky the same lines
That traveled down the inside of her thighs.
Time has tossed off its camisole
But elements and dust still sing her praises--
They haven’t opened their mouths
Fearing the taste of her will spill out.
Unlike fruit, blood does not rot.

Scientists wonder why molecules tremble
It is her sweat that keeps them up
Keeps them shaking.

The weight of the air is almost as unbearable as
The weight of her black eyes that stare, stare, stare.
The weight is like a body
Resting on top of the sheets
my skin
A dark, hot body.
Unlike the cold limbs curled over my legs.

Greta Garbo stares
and Time continues its striptease.

Autumn, crisped like apples,
flecked with light on a table—
the sky spread low like a picnic blanket,
dappled by cloud crumbs,
which an unseen hand has thrown out for us
to circle under with gaping mouths.

The air in the room grows heavier,
Dipping like her stomach, her spine.
It kisses the tops of her hands that move there
move down
my hands.
Your hair, Marion, fell across my face. As it gathered, light shined through, between the strands in tall shafts; the image seemed to me like hallways.

You were of course on top. My mind did wander away at that moment, away from our physical act, and the thought of hallways, corridors, guided me into a peculiar memory, one of the aisles of an underground library; but though my attention did wane from your touches, gropes, Marion, it was not as distraction but rather as meditation—meditation on a memory that brought me to an even greater understanding of your contours, that brought me to even starker physical enlightenment.

The hair: sienna strands hallucinated into mahogany shelves—library aisles. I recalled my time in Vienna, the days after I had discovered the Academy’s Photographic Library. I had visited, insatiable in the last dwindling days of May, again and again, and I had wandered through those narrow aisles until finally finding myself between a particular pair of shelves; the expansive and collected efforts of the pan-visual artist R. R. Rowen; on my right: War Photography; on my left: Portraits of Brides in American Frontiersland. Through the vascular library corridors, blooming forth, I had come to these lexicons, monographs; and, my dear, as the memory of the books found me, with the Eucharist of your tongue in my mouth, I came again.

“Clasp me,” Marion demanded.

“Am I not?” I was unsure, enamored as I was. Took a firmer hold.

My fingers had tumbled over the uneven vertebræ of the books’ spines, hopping between each with a tailcoat of thin and downy dust. Your back is cleaner, yes, but perhaps less edifying, altogether less erudite, but sofer absolutely, more gorgeous objectively. Among the titles I had selected two, one from each direction. Hell-Hole Horizon: Atomic Blasts was starboard, Sierra Concubines, West.

Perhaps clairvoyant, Marion pronounced the initials of that artist occupying my mind, RRR, by rolling her tongue against my cheek.

I had seated myself on the floor and had queued random pages in each volume. Atomic Blasts was open to a photo of the Enewetak atoll of the Marshall Islands, spiked into a placid and rather plain mushroom cloud named Mike. A great deal of nondescript dirt, pale billows. In Concubines, there had been two girls on a frontier prairie’s edge, dressed, almost mummified, in full-body white. The caption identified them as mail-order brides, on their trek from Fredericksburg, Virginia to Virginia City, Nevada. A veritable symmetry. They had no knowledge of their impending husbands, only that they had paid in full.

Placed foot-to-head, these photos revealed a synonymy; the booming cloud and the burgeoning dresses were twisted mirror images. I had discovered in RRR’s oeuvre a cryptic thread, a truth I couldn’t lend an explanation. But there they were, in the same world as Marion.

The explosions, the expressions on the girls—vapid and vacuumous, the Earth around them flat or becoming flattened—neither looked more, neither looked less like Marion, you, like the girl bearing down upon my hips.
Our slipping eyes wet the light,
padding our steps and smearing orange.
our voices, shoots of froth
boiling at their roots in the flushed ground.

Smells of a burning dawn crackle
and trail in our thinning stream of pattering toes.

I like emptying our spaces,
even if they thicken as I spill into them.

I swallow our rolls of silence
and feel them clamber inside me from bone
to bone.
but my words keep crawling
up
and tangle in my hair,
knot in the blotches of rosy air that stain my scalp.

I cannot unlace myself as you all do.
I am still a dusky, hollow form,
still carved from our orange, empty spaces.
The children inquire about syllables. The children are small units who need to be controlled. Tiny wrists, tiny spines blow smoke from the tops of their heads. Tiny red eyes are manic. One of them makes its way toward me. I accidentally think about the best ways to make you spread my legs.

The wood house cowers around me like a smell. Bridges line the town. Their jaws are swans, arching grown-up backs to rainfall. I suspect the children know you can’t be aggressive in bed without laughing. I know you represent the storm. Children know there is a trick about the wind, twelve seconds before it rains.
1. Your great-aunt carried your baby-teeth around her neck for protection. Tricked into ponds, she called them turtle food. In her wake you twisted molars, drilled them earthward; puckered mounds.

2. Your soles are soiled by snail shells you crushed in the garden. On Saturday nights you dreamt of mucus trails untraced.

3. Your family collects haloes from the earth: water stains footprints tumored seeds. In December, high on roses, you repent last Easter: eggs dropped on your bowed and backlit mother.

these are things you pray about

patricia sazani
Mine is a passing-house,  
the women pass, the men –  
a rental. You look at me like I talk  
sadly? Gifts between friends,  
and strangers. A little temporary  
scarlet in the apples of cheeks  
and men; whose apples are caught  
in their throats, in the  
fall of their lives, mostly. High earners, too –  
you aren’t surprised. Real  
beauties who know  
what they’re doing; they’re wise,  
they’re saving up. One time  
this twelve-year-old came up  
to see his mother, that was a day.  
For him and us! Of course she said  
no, but she knew how much  
he’d saved up, just to try it. That day  

she said she’d quit. But she hasn’t,  
I see how much she loves it.  
A good man makes her day. It’s not  
like work here, I make it  
nice for them,  
protect them, nice clean house to live in.  

Gloria goes on, says she feels  
safe as houses, don’t like that.  
Says she could live with us family.  
I love them – so I want them to go.  
Can’t tell them. I’m all  
they got, in ways they can’t imagine.  

Me? I’m just the boatman,  
I’ll never work again!
All grown-ups are pirates in the end—we all have our Jolly Rogers and feathered hats, our Indian princesses and arch-nemeses: mine is the gyro vendor on 86th and Amsterdam.

It's as if we hit middle age and suddenly we can play Mr. Darling and Captain Hook with only a costume change in between.

Greying, folding into ourselves, becoming predictable—our hair hangs lank in greasy coils.

I sit at the kitchen table, writing poetry and polishing my massive hook—this is because there are right and wrong ways to being evil.

How can a villain take himself seriously, when his cuffslinks are not just so?

I make a risotto and laugh from the pit of my stomach—pausing only to record in elaborate cursive in my cracking Captain’s Log that time drives me from its rotting plank, and at night I wake, fearing the armored crocodile with a clock ticking in his bestial belly.

His favorite noise was the clunk-thud of a large rock dropped on another.

Graph paper was always too familiar: not two lines crossed, but square on square on square.

His building didn’t have an elevator, and twelve stories up he knew his floor was a ceiling.

In a ViewMaster soundtrack to the Old West he heard an owl hooting and felt its smooth thick fall.

Her earliest memory was in a field. Her father said, if you’re quiet, the forest will forget you’re there.

She tilted backwards into the grass, heard the pressing hoo of an owl and her second memory: She is three years older and the sun is in her eyes as she feels her way out of a bush.

Her skin is yellow-green, and she peels away leaf skeletons.
divide by four: this is how many love poems it takes to screw in a lightbulb

i wrote you a poem about a tree.
it goes:
You are like a family tree,
barky and tall.
I like your roots.
You were one sturdy fellow
before Ice Storm '90.
i wrote you a poem about the directionality
of ladders and elevators.
it goes:
You are the vertical brain of plot,
mechanical cliche' in sheep clothes and indecisive.
I like the bends in your character structures.
You are the only surviving Foil to Holden Caulfield.
i wrote you a poem about poems you'll never read
it goes:
You are my best poem after a car accident
hungry for pancakes and suffering from night terrors.
I like the memories you never tell me about.
You are the abridged collection of everything
wrong with addictions.
i wrote you a poem about the one time your dad
got drunk
and threw out all of your mother's dresses and
made her stand outside
in her night-gown until she admitted to being a whore.
i wrote you a poem about getting away.
it goes:
When eye contact is made with a Lobster
in a tank
in a store
it moves back with the look in its sagging bulbs
that recognizes people getting further apart,
that determines the period of time necessary for someone's death to sloth
from emotion to science.
Lobsters are oversized mosquitoes, bloodthirsty hums
alone on a floor,
alone in a tank, rubberbanded.
Lobsters are Capulets and Montagues with lemme at 'em in their blood,
who model world peace efforts in their tendencies
to form pyramids of escape from a goldfish bowl—
someone's always on top.
They shuffle inside their rectangle in a mathematical pattern,
said the smartest of Lobsters, W.E.B Dubois, before
skipping class
to fuck in a bed with butter and lemon. A Lobster love story is anti-climatic,
constructed from untouched boxes of valentine candies:
Lobsters are allergic to chocolate,
afraid of the dirty commitment knee.
When eye contact is made with a Lobster
in a tank
in a store
you move back despairingly with quicksand feet. You
go home
and read poems about having whale for dinner, wake up
hungover
take a shower in salt water and implode
into yourself—decay
into wafer skin.

divide by twenty-seven: this is your projected FICO score

Last week a cup of coffee spilled on my brand new carpet.
Last week I fell in love. Fernando
Spilled the cup of coffee. His elbow knocked it
While lighting a cigarette. He didn’t ask if he could
Smoke inside. We had met just two hours prior. At the
Grocery store I couldn’t reach the breadcrumbs. I asked him if he
Could “Please reach” and he said “Yes.” Later we were both outside
When the rain clouds moved like big blue whales across the cold sky.
He told me his umbrella was broken. Then he said “Your eyes are
Like two sad oceans.” Last week I reupholstered a vintage chair with
Sheepskin. Fernando had a dog with him. A soft gray mutt with enormous
Grandfather eyes. “He is called Sabio and I Fernando.”
“Your dog looks old like he needs a rest” I said “You can bring him
To my apartment until the rain dies down.”
I never invite over strangers.
The walls in my bedroom are white. Sabio sits on a mat in the corner.
The socks on my carpet are dirty. The coffee stain on the carpet makes
The shape of a ship. Frida Kahlo hangs lopsided from a frame above
My bed. “I like to think she surveys my bedroom like it’s part of her
Painted existence.” I tell him. Fernando whispers “The fruit in the bowl
Look like painted glass perfect like you.” I want to scream that my heart is
Glass and that I am painted and that this room is too small and I have too many
Un-facings to ever be loved. Then I rest my chin on his shoulder. Last week
I fell in love.
Man, I overdrank. Skilled ladies made smooth fire sound Morrocan...“Come up our chute, and drink.”
Let us overdrink some more, dawdling language—park and stand stellar on land.
Belligerent horsemen strut sarcastically, wildly willing to start spring. Jet-men, clock-coordinated, will wait.
They roar, creamy custard cement, as they lap lusciously, meliorating the torrents with their tongues.
Dollar bill plates verify rhythmic stutters. Dare I forge gator data?
Sternly cast shrugs scatter. Scraps of formaldehyde paint many tan, miserably trapped like plaster in wax.
Some of the men cope for Judah’s vengeance:
“Crude clan, make your return. Sullen beggars, ravenous, split plans for families who linger,” and the gods, they bashfully smile.
ARINN AMER wants you to get down and be free. She would love to eat a very cheap and delicious meal sometime soon with Sarah and Patricia.

RAHUL ALEXANDER was born in Kerala State, India and moved to the states when he was 10. His utopian landscapes will be featured in this summer’s Bushwick Biennial at NURTUREart (Brooklyn, NY) and the AIM 29 Exhibition at the Bronx Museum of Art (Bronx, NY). Alexander lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

ELISA DE SOUZA is from Brazil. She is a freshman at Barnard College. Her favorite words are ‘bubble,’ ‘iris,’ and ‘milk.’

JACKIE GIANICO (TC ‘08), a native New Yorker (and long-time migraine sufferer), is currently an adjunct lecturer for Columbia University’s American Language Program and NYU’s American Language Institute. She has been teaching English as a second language for three years.

PARIS HABER CC ’12 revels in exploring the unknown through the medium of the lens. EMILY HALL (CC/Wellesley ’10) is going to major in English and Music until the Man thwacks her in the jaw with a forest green gumboot.

KATRINA KOSTRO has lived in New York City her whole life with her two brothers and a siamese cat, Tango.

LEEZA MANGALDAS is a sophomore from Goa, India. COLETTE McINTYRE was a terror since the public school era—bathroom passes, cuttin’ classes, squeezin’ asses. She plans to major in Biggie 101: how to tote a gun & have fun with Jamaican rum.

MORGAN PARKER is a junior from California who likes apples.

NORA RODRIGUEZ grew up in San Francisco with her parents who are funny. Actually her whole family is pretty funny.

CHARLINE TEYTEVSKY would rather have been born a house sparrow. GABRIELLA THEISEN wants to quote a line she carries around with her from one of her favorite artists, “don’t lose the dreams inside your head/they’ll only be there ‘til you’re dead.”

ERICA WEAVER CC ’12, loves words, dresses, and drinking too much coffee.