This is a story about four people:
Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.
There was an important job to be done
and Everybody was asked to do it.
Everybody was sure Somebody would do it.
Anybody could have done it but Nobody
did it. Somebody got angry about that
because it was Everybody's job.
Everybody thought Anybody could do it,
but Nobody realized that Everybody
wouldn't do it. It ended up that Every-
body blamed Somebody when actually
Nobody asked Anybody. (author unknown.)
The Red Wheelbarrow

April, 1990

edited by

Jeremy Chamberlin
Marya Hornbacher
Lora Kolodny
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And, one by one, intent upon
Their purposes, they followed on
In ordered silence...and were gone.

-A.A. Milne
That day I had to do the morning shift, work the set-up, breakfast and all that. I got there a little before six, which gave me time to drink my coffee and have a smoke. The back room, "Employees Only", should have looked the same as it did every time I came in for this shift, which was three times a week. Nina, the little dark girl, should be sitting in the corner, wide-eyed and quiet. Pat, the scrappy old man who worked grill, should be standing by the door, and Dar, the retarded woman, would be sitting in the red chair, rocking back and forth and twisting her hands. People were always saying how nice it was that we hired retarded people. I never thought about it much.

I came in and took off my coat, hung it in the closet. Pat yelled, "Top o' the morning to ye!" as he did every morning. Dar wasn't sitting in the red chair, she was sitting in the center of the wooden bench along the wall. I "good-morninged" everyone and sat down and lit a cigarette.

Dar was looking at me. Well, I figured, somebody better talk. I asked Dar why she wasn't sitting in the red chair, and then thought, why should she? And then I thought how she must hate the way we talk to her, like she can't understand normal conversation. Dar answered, rocking, said she "wanted a change." Pat laughed and said she'd been watching too much TV. I didn't laugh. It seemed to me that wanting a change wasn't such a bad thing. We all want a change. I drank my coffee, finished my cigarette, then straightened my cap and went out front.

One of the managers had told me once that they put the pretty ones out front as counter girls. And then he gave me that look, up and down and all I could think was well then what do you do with the rest of them? He answered that pretty quick, almost like he read my mind, said they "put the old ones in back to cook and the retards wherever people can see them and say how nice and come back. He laughed and laughed, and said, "That's the way we keep business going here - old cooks, pretty lookers, and retards."

I would quit on the spot, but we all gotta pay for things somehow. So I worked up front and said "yesir, no ma'am" and answered every "How long will that take?" with "Not too much longer now," and talked to the lonely ones.
Some people are so lonely they really do talk to counter girls.

When I got out front, I wiped down the counter, cleaned the drink machine and stared the coffee. I leaned my elbows on the counter and watched Dar clean the windows all along the front of the place with tiny, slow circles using a paper towel and Windex. She worked so slow it almost put you to sleep. I heard Pat in back, whistling and starting the grill for breakfast. Dar moved aside to let a man through the door, then moved back and kept washing.

This wasn't a regular, this guy who'd just walked in. He was the wrong age to be in here this time of day. Usually this time it was only younger business men on their way to work, or else the old men, like the man who orders a coffee and a water, three creams and a Sweet 'n Low, or the man with the black bowler who calls me Polly-Green-Eyes and calls Nina "Nigger". The real regulars.

No, the one who'd just walked through the door was around forty-two, with thinning hair and a belly. I imagined his family, fat wife and kids. I thought up a whole life for him, thought it out as I said, "Coffee, sir?" and smiled.

You people on the other side of the counter don't have any idea how forgettable you are. You all talk to counter girls - well, I can tell you right now, most girls couldn't care less that your kid is sick and you've had a hard day, or your husband got a raise and isn't it lovely out? So anyway, this guy ordered and I said, "Anything-to-drink-with-that?" and he said, "More coffee, please." I sent the order back, and then I set his coffee down ever so gently so it wouldn't spill. Then I said, "Cream with that?" and he said, "Yes, please."

Outside the sun was coming up. The clock ticked and Pat whistled and Dar cleaned the windows. I refilled the guy's cup and he's got his eyes on me as I set the pot down. I smiled at him. You smile at all the customers, no matter how bad they are, and this one wasn't too bad.

Sometimes they smile back, sometimes they don't. This one didn't, just kept looking at me, and I turned my back on him to make coffee for when the rush started at seven.

That was when he said, "How long you been working here?"

I didn't turn around. I had heard this one before. I asked him, "Why?" He didn't answer, just asked for more coffee. I refilled his cup and went about my business. He slurped and

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Naked

I need no clothing.
My body is tough and slippery, the beak of a swan, my skin the perfect curtain, over my muscles, tendons, the streams and rivers of my blood. You can see when I've stopped running, my heart beating, right here inside the center of my chest like fish tapping at the first clear layers of ice. Here. Give me your shirt, then your arms - the pleasure of nudity reminds me of watermelon seeds, a boomerang, the curve of the moon. Promise me you'll take my hide and dry it. Sew it into pieces. Sail with me, my face stretched water-tight on the bow.

Lora Kolodny
He takes her face in his hands, presses his fingers into the flesh, names each bone aloud and then pulls them out of the skin, one by one, cheekbones first, and lays them on his pillow. He pulls her spine out through her soft throat then turns her arms and legs inside out and gathers the long white limb bones and tiny toes and knuckles. Shoulder blades, collarbone, skull and inner ear; soon he has some two hundred bones laid out on his pillow to play with. Satisfied, he rebuilds his wife, carefully fitting each bone back into the sack of skin and boneless meat. All except one rib which he keeps and names Charlie, dresses in jeans and tee-shirts and calls his son.

Lisa Marie Priddy

the clock ticked and Dar washed the windows and the sun kept going up.

Pat called out his order and I set it down in front of him and told him I'd been working here quite a while and would likely be here quite a while more. Course, I don't really believe that, I expect to be getting out of here as soon as I get enough money. I mean, I'm not gonna stick around any place longer than I have to.

Then he says, and this really got to me, he says, "How old are you?" I spilled some coffee and Dar stopped washing windows and stared at me. I said, "Mister, I'm not sure I need to tell you that." He stood up and paid his bill and looked at me. I looked back at him and gritted out a have-a-nice-day. He smiled at me and put his wallet in his back pocket and Dar moved aside for him to leave and it was just another customer walking out the door.

Why the hell shouldn't I be working here? I thought. I said, Dar, there's some funny people in this world," and she said, "Yeah," and Pat whistled and Nina went into the back room and the old man with the black bowler came in and said, "Good-Morning-Polly-Green-Eyes," and I said, "What'll it be this morning?"

Marya Hornbacher
(In Response to Looking at the Photographs of Manuel Alvarez Bravo)

The girl stands leaning slightly over the railing of iron, bars black and smooth as rain. Her skin dark amber sweats beneath a soiled white dress (...) she is pretty, we say, she is daydreaming.

Her face rests against her hand eyes downcast at the dusty courtyard below. Focus. The picture is different now, possibly more clear; a girl: lets her head hang, lets it fall heavily, her long hand catches the hollow of her warm cheek. The features of her face are of a borrowed mask handed down to her from an ancient people. Her eyes see the world through a tangle of graves, see the sun for those now dead. She has strong legs, as if of stone, bare to the knee. Strong for walking miles down the dirt road to the market each day, for running home when the evening cools. (We think we can tell from her solid gaze that she must like to run.) Strong. To kick the man who lives below, who pulls her into the shadows under the stairs. A patch of sunlight covers one shoulder. She is otherwise shaded by the overhang of the roof where rows of linen fill with air as they dry; hovering above the barrio streets like ghosts at mid-day. The hand that does not touch her face curves around the other arm, just above the elbow. Maybe a child is crying in the distance. We think perhaps she has lost someone or is in love, she is young here. Where is she now? The girl leans against the railing, looking down at the dusty courtyard below. She could look up to the clear sky above, "el cielo", heaven, but she looks down. Down at the man who walks to the gate of the courtyard, newspaper under his arm, down as he walks past the tree that needs rain.

Tzaporah Ryter

PALEONTOLOGIST'S WIFE

So what if brontosauri were never really real? The museum models were so impressive and the bones fit so nicely together, he thinks, working late again plastering skull-bits into believable skulls of maybe pteradactyls, maybe stegosauri. Tomorrow his creation will be matched to massive bleached white vertebrae and hung from invisible frames, ceiling wires, and set out on display.

Home past midnight; his wife has left a note. "Gone to bed. Chicken in fridge," it says. He opens the door, the light goes on then off again as he carries the platter of chicken parts to the table, peels back four layers of foil with his fork and then eats.

After he's swallowed the last bit of meat he turns his attention to bones. Thick yellow thigh bones, whiter on the ends near the joints; he licks them, feels the bulge of a ball-and-socket joint in his mouth and smiles. Then the ribcage, torn from the whitemeat breast, he counts each rib with his tongue and wishes he had some plaster and wire to rebuild the chicken from its bones. Instead, he breaks a leg with his teeth and sucks the marrow.

He finds his bed in the dark, finds his wife buried under the blankets. He leans over and whispers "Scapula..." She rolls toward him. He says,"Tibia..." She answers him, "Vertebrae, darling..." He climbs into bed moaning, "Sternum, pelvis, hip..."
The Visible Boy

On Sundays, the boy broke his mind in careful pieces and proofread the parts. He put gentle memories of summer mornings in a safe beneath his bed and swallowed the key. When his girlfriend broke up with him, he felt the impact on his entire body and decided to censor it all. He got out his toolbox, touched each tool and laid his parts on the floor.

Somehow he misplaced his skin.

At breakfast the next morning, his father looked through him to his lungs and found out that he had been smoking. His mother found the keys to his safe resting at the bottom of his stomach. She took them out and sorted through his memories like dirty laundry.

In the locker room at school, the boy undresses slowly, waits until everyone has left. His body is a motion picture in the mirror, a museum of fifteen years. He stands naked and transparent, watches the tears pulse down his face.

Desiree Hupy

Memories from a Camp for the Blind

I lead Michael back to our cabin. It is summer and the air smells of ocean. His hand rests on my shoulder as we walk through fields, the weeds brushing against our legs. "I feel grass," he says, "long blades of grass against brown clover." They flatten beneath our feet. He chews on a stem, looks into my face. "Tell me what colors you see."

I don't know the words— they are printed somewhere on a box of crayons. "Colors," I echo. "colors." I look away from his eyes. "I can't remember," he says, "I see shadows, black and white." If I close my eyes hard enough, I can see the names, but they're no different from any words he has ever known.

Suzanne extends her hand for the chalk I place in her palm. "Aquamarine," I whisper, and she draws streaks of agua, the spanish word for water. Marine is a bay in Mexico, the Bahia de Campeche, and she remembers her feet at the foot of the waves, feeling the sting of the salt splash into her eyes. Gulls circle overhead, and her grandmother, abuela, waits with a towel. They will walk until the rocks become sharp and scrape blisters across their naked feet. "I've never been to the ocean," I say, and apologize, but she shakes her head and breaks the chalk with her fingers, letting each piece fall.
3. Two years later, I am thinking of Michael. "Look," he whispered to me, "there is a group of people. I see them as shadows, no colors set them apart."

It was Parent's night, and he extended both hands, looked at them through his fingers, and I wondered if they saw themselves as he did, if Michael wanted to be on stage or back with the audience.

He counted the steps to the piano, played through Beethoven's Ninth without missing a note. I still hear the collective breath.

He counted the steps to the piano, played through Beethoven's Ninth without missing a note. I still hear the collective breath, the gasp the audience held until the final chord.

Michael won the talent show, but when I saw him backstage, he pushed past me, hands pressed against his eyes as he wandered into a bathroom. He did not appear again until morning.

I wonder what he was thinking as a girl taps me on the shoulder. I walk her back beside oaks that shake in the wind. I tell her what I remember, the names, the patterns of sky. I know she is smiling politely as she steers me away from colors, leads me over to the other side of the road.

Marc Olender

I was happy to be home, I had a story to tell. My brother didn't care—he said I just wanted attention. I wandered into the kitchen. My sister was making a turkey from the outline of her hand. But I was better. I was a real Indian, wild and full of spirits.

My Indian friend was gone. She was just a temporary, I was told. I got bored again. I swayed in our hammock and sucked on an apple feeling as though I was wasting it— it was not as juicy as the mud.

Mary Preis
Like any other child
I was lost in
the trust of adults:
the saints of our lives
who are damned for what
they do to us.

I felt I made an apple pie
not realizing that apples are
better to use than mud—but Janet didn't care—
she barely noticed.
Mom told her to take care of me,
so she did.

We arrived at an Indian campground—
a leather tee-pee enclosed a fire,
about to set the world ablaze.
Instantly I became a friend
and was a new little girl:
Silly Swan. Life had never been
so easy before.

I was taken for a walk by a man
as old and smart as God.
He taught me life's rules:
Be good to others
by being good to yourself,
Try to be perfect,
though nothing ever is.

I wasn't scared
until the police came
with their red and blue lights;
how patriotic.
They captured me, like the Yankees
in the Civil War, for no reason,
except my mother
wanted me more.

The seats of the car
were fake blue velvet.
On my half I drew pictures
of the faces I saw on
my newer friends,
picking at me like hawks.
I talked to mom on the C.B.
she loves me now that I'm gone.

Glove Compartment

No one celebrates the glove compartment. Commonplace until you notice The one in the rental car. Alien plastic that Drools an odor of Pine, trying to absorb the olfactory residue Of a thousand old cigars. It gapes, begging for valuables Or even a hand to snap shut on And digest. You reminisce about the security That fullness brings, comfort with its Road maps, flash lights, old cigarette packs. Home is where the vehicle registration is. Comfort, filled to the brim with broken tapes, Empty cases, spare fuses, screws, pens, Half consumed packs of breath mints, prophylactics, And other bits of cosmic debris. When the nice officer asks to see your forms, You must start digging. Sifting archaeologically through the sediment, You look in and inconvenient and Integral quickly become the same word. You search and wonder how long the little gremlins wait After the light goes out To come and wreak havoc on your cluttered life.

Matt Reynolds
The Peasant and the Pinata

An old peasant woman painted this wooden box, with a horse-hair brush, and earth dyes. A yellow pinata stares at me from one blank eye...his wings are dark green and the ends are feathers dipped in pink, blue, and orange. The pinata's target eye looks into the center of a fierce burning ball, and the burning ball is the hot Guatemalan sun, glowing yellow and beating down onto the little paper pinata, the green tree, and the two bleached white houses with red tiled roofs. The heat is thick...it drifts silently inside the two black windows, around the little tree and the colored pinata, then puffs into the old woman's eyes. Her silver hair is parted down the middle into a tight bun...her skin is like leather, toughened and hardened by the endless Indian summers. She does not take her eyes off the wooden box to copy the life around her...she does not need to, for the world she paints is the world she has known since the black night gave birth to the white gleaming stars.

Jessica Scoffield

Obstetrician

I
He stares at her body, white as pork-rind, and winces as the baby's head appears. He should have been an undertaker, he thinks, imagining the perfumed body of the dead as he reaches towards the pink and wrinkled mother and child, one creature before him. Just before the delivery, he tells her she should never have gotten pregnant, then draws the baby from the hollow like blood from an open wound.

II
He comes home from the hospital, microwaves a pizza, and eats it as he shakes his head at the Pro-Lifers, shown marching on Channel 4. He showers, checks the lock on his door and gets into bed. He reads birth-control pamphlets to help fall asleep, stashes them under his pillow, prays for infertility.

III
Asleep, he dreams of flowers, pansies, their faces streaked with greasepaint, balking orchids, roses bursting with dazed glory. He is surrounded by orange chrysanthemum sunbursts and the explosions of daisies, super-novas of hyacinths as the universe shakes, sprays of baby's breath falling from the wobbling sphere of sky. Now he hears the whisper of lilies, waving as the water ripples, and now he hears the snap of the Venus Fly-trap, sealing its prey between two swollen lips.

Jessica Sklar
ALBEQUERQUE NO.3
(after the painting by Richard Diebenkorn)

It was today I saw below the red stairs
In the small, sterile kitchen
And found I did not need to descend them,
Only know that they were there.
Somewhere in another place
Someone had said it to me.
Or perhaps I had simply read it.
"Albequerque, Albequerque"

The white table and walls were not just white
The white was space and bone
Never pure
And yet more brilliant than if it were
The walls split and loomed forward
And I saw black between the cracks
Dissolving edges.
The red of the stairs flowed in like a tide
And filled my eyes
And the red was not red; the black not black.

I was standing in a vast field
And I saw no white, but knew it was there
Yellow pierced my chest
Blue healed the wounds
And I was green and whole
And would never die.

Jon Salenger

The Deer

The dark beaks of decoys hung over our shoulders, and poked through the worn burlap.
Birdshot-loaded pockets bulged, heavy shotguns weighed in our hands while young fingertips squeezed rainbows
from the dull metal.

I heard a shattering from the lake, erupting ice in the dull glow of morning. Standing beside the canoe
my father cursed.

A deer, fallen through, struggled in the midst of the ice splintering it with sharp hooves, fighting the cold November water.

We threw the decoys down, listened to the dull echo of wood on ice and the frantic churning of hooves.

We chopped through the shell of the lake, and I reached to its exhausted back, stroked the hair soaked with sweat and the chilling water, feeling its life, moist beneath the matted hair.

Our wooden paddles fell: axes on the brilliant surface, throwing ice to the dark air. Pushing, leaning from the canoe we carved a way for the deer towards shore. We helped its quivering body past the weak ice and it stumbled to land.

Behind us, the dark water slapped the wet sides of the channel, and banged beneath the ice reverberating through the lake.

Jeremy Chamberlin
Moaning Yetties

Shyla Jones sat on the outhouse seat awaiting the sure onslaught of goose bumps, her three wall skirts (three for winter's sake) gathered high above her knees. Even with her ass freezing off, it was good that it was finally winter. The Wyoming cold keeps you wide awake, plus a person could see their breath. That way, she thought, you could be pretty sure you're not dead. In the summer she used to carry a small mirror on packtrips, until Mom caught her behind a clump of bushes, breathing into a beat-up Mary Kay compact. "Look," her Mom had said to her in her no-nonsense cowgirl tone, "You really want to know, I'll tell you when you're dead, OK?" That had been the end of that.

The outhouse was too small, even for a skinny girl like Shyla. She was having a hard time getting only a single piece of toilet paper with her gloved fingers, instead of these large wads her Mom despised so. Her Mom hated wasted money and told her one day, "I work damn hard chasing cows around for you." And with that her Mom had marched up to the outhouse and posted her sign: "One sheet per shit allowed."

Shylas gloves were cumbersome and she missed her old fingerless army surplus ones, but her goat Persiphylis had eaten them a few nights before when Shyla fell asleep in the barn. These fully fingered jobs she was wearing would not do, and she took them off, vowing to get at them with the scissors later.

Down the road, there was the loud crunching of a car. She tried to hoist her long johns into some sort of decency, but they were stuck on the umbrella stand, a gift from her aunt, who had only visited once, and even then had cut her visit short, claiming she had caught the plague from a chipmunk. Aunt Myrtle had read about such things and she had insisted on carting a black umbrella along every time she made the journey up the path to the "little girl's house" as she called the outhouse. "Bat droppings," she had told Shyla, "The stains never come out." Shyla hd never had any problem with bats, or had ever had the urge to carry an umbrella, nevertheless, the stand had remained there, pink flamingoes adorning and all.

The car was coming closer. She wasn't sure whose sick joke it had been to build the outhouse on this small hill, the doorway facing the road. There was a door, but it had long since permanently rusted open. They lived on a backroad that wasn't used much, but it always seemed

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Leigh-Anne Potter

Fall

for T.R.

In my seven year old body I stand at the top of the basement stairs and fall, five empty Mason jars descending. They fall out of my arms, fall, glass on splintering wood, and I fall into my mother's arms.

Nine years fall and shatter on the floor of the past. I fall in love, fall apart, I fall again, fall away from her. I find myself in a different house with different stairs. Her face begins to fall from memory, replaced with the months of July, August, September the smells of fall to warm me. And I fall asleep and dream of stairs descending, stairs that fall away.

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Leigh-Anne Potter
the minute she relaxed on the john, some stranger was apt to drive by, lean out the window and "ya-hoo" a bit. Shyla could feel the hook her long johns were snagged on. The car was coming. She leaned down to free the fabric and lost her balance. Her body pitched forward, her arms splayed out sideways. There was a terrific rip and she rolled down the hill like a log. She rolled and the horizon twisted crazily in the corner of her eye. She was rolling and thinking Mount Everest. When her body smacked something hard, she thought, glacier? Big glacier.

The first thing Nick Coltraine thought, driving along in his two-tone green and brown Ford pickup was, avalanche. A great white blob was descending upon him. He jammed on his brakes just as Shyla bounced over his hood. Coltraine, at seventeen the youngest blacksmith in the county had been driving from Jackson Hole on his way to the Jones house. He was going to shoe her mother's horse. He had heard stories in blacksmithing circles about this moody Arab mare, the unshoeable beast, the bitch horse. She had kicked and bitten every blacksmith that had tried to nail a shoe on her. Zeke Gambit was in her stall once, he hadn't even gotten a fitting yet when she went into a frenzy. He survived with two broken ribs and a bashed-in face, but then again, Nick thought, Zeke didn't know his ass from his armpit when it came to horses. Zeke was the type that was better left to shoe gentle old draft horses than these young purebreds. Nick wasn't about to turn down a job. He had been shoeing horses since he was nine and never had a problem yet. He had been thinking about all this and singing along to a Patsy Cline song on the radio when he saw this snow blob that rolled toward him. He swung out of the truck and flailed around to the front. Nick found her there on the road, face implanted in the snow, mumbling, "toilet paper, 59 cents a roll, long johns $14.99. Glacier?" Her long johns were gathered down around her ankles, her butt bare to the wind and she was clutching at an empty cardboard toilet paper roll. There was a long trail of toilet paper leading backwards to the outhouse up the hill. He wondered if he had hit her. "Uh..." he sort of grunted. He wasn't really sure what to say and pulled at the fur collar of his white parka. She heard the grunt and craned her neck around toward the sound. She felt rather dizzy and saw three furry figures.
"Yetti? are you...Yetti?" She asked, winching at the snow that had been shoved up her nose. She had heard stories of this large furry creature. Yetti was bigfoot's brother of the north. But she thought they were only in Russia.

"Yetti, what are you doing here?"

"No, it's Nick." Now she was truly confused. "Shyla?" he asked.

"Oh, god!" she yelled, jumping off the road and yanking up her underwear and long johns. "Well, yes. Hello, Nick." She tried to unravel the toilet paper from her legs. "It's not often I see you. You know, other than school." She shook his hand firmly, trying to be very nonchalant about this.

He picked the cardboard toilet roll off the ground. "So, what brings you out this way, Nick?"

"Shyla, are you alright?"

"Yeah, yeah. I just thought I mooned a Yetti."

"I see," he said, watching her readjust her skirts. "Do you?" she asked. She could feel the red blush creeping up her neck.

"Not really."

"There was a bit of a silence and Nick looked over at the umbrella stand, stuck upside down in the snow.

"Nice umbrella stand," he said, pointing toward it.

"Yes. It was a gift from my aunt Myrtle," she babbled. "She has a poodle named Trixie. I hate poodles."

"Do you?"

"Yes. Yes, I hate them." More silence. "So why are you out here?" she asked again.

"Your horse."

"Oh, right."

"Get in the car. I'll give you a ride home."

When the truck pulled into the driveway, Shyla's mom and Joe were in their usual spot, playing poker at the card table on the porch. They always played there, unless there was a blizzard. Joe was half-Indian and his real name was Standing Moose, but Shyla had only heard him called that once, by his brother, who lived in Jackson Hole. Joe and her mom were drinking buddies, and once when he won big at Las Vegas they ate at a restaurant in Jackson Hole every night for two weeks. He had worked on the ranch ever since he left the reservation ten years ago. Shyla liked him more like a brother than a father, though he was neither. He always had his dog Reno, with the bashed-in eye, accompanying him.

Shyla's mom went to the barn to get the mare. Shyla was mud. She knew what her mom was doing. Nick could just as easily shoe the horse in the barn, but she was going to tether the mare outside where everyone could watch yet another man fail to shoe her horse. Mom was proud of her feisty arab. She liked knowing that she and her daughter were the only ones in the county who could calm her down, much less ride her.

Joe poured himself another shot of whiskey and sat back to watch the show. Nick didn't seem nervous about it, though. He calmly lifted his tool box out of the trunk and brushed back his straw hair from his face, as if this was just any horse he was going to shoe. He made his way over to the mare and no one breathed. Shyla's mom put down her cards and even the dog, Reno, lifted his head to latch the scene out of his one good eye. Nick raised his hand over the arab's withers and kept it poised there. Shyla then jumped behind a wood pile, expecting the mare's swift kick, but she didn't even flinch as Nick brought his hand gently down, moving it through her mane, clapping her neck. The feisty arab just munched on the nearby onion grass. Nick reached down to her leg and she relinquished it willingly. The measurements were done in five minutes. When Nick went back to his truck, Shyla's mom poured herself a deep shot of whiskey. Joe busied himself smoothing his hair over his bald spot. Shyla grinned and emerged from the woodpile.

"Hey," Nick yelled to Shyla. "Would you hand me the hammer over there?" She grabbed the first one in a pile of five. "Yes, the small one."

When the shoes were fitted and tight, he took an apple out of his pocket and gingerly cut it into five pieces, giving one to Shyla and the rest to the mare. He rubbed the mare along her neck, "Good girl," he whispered. To everyone's surprise, the mare rolled over onto her back and Nick scratched her stomach, like a dog.

"Well, I'll be damned," Shyla's mom shook her head, laughing, paying Nick the previously agreed two-hundred dollars.

Reno closed his one good eye and went back to sleep and Joe grinned. "Charming," Joe said. "Heh heh," he laughed, "very charming. All right, cowgirl, fork over the twenty bucks."

Shyla's mom discreetly slipped Joe the twenty dollar
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"Your horse." "Oh, right."

"Get in the car. I'll give you a ride home."

When the truck pulled into the driveway, Shyla's mom and Joe were in their usual spot, playing poker at the card table on the porch. They always played there, unless there was a blizzard. Joe was half-Indian and his real name was Standing Moose, but Shyla had only heard him called that once, by his brother, who lived in Jackson Hole. Joe and her mom were drinking buddies, and once when he won big at Las Vegas they ate at a restaurant in Jackson Hole every night for two weeks. He had worked on the ranch ever since he left the reservation ten years ago. Shyla liked him more like a brother than a father, though he was neither. He always had his dog Reno, with the bashed-in eye, accompanying him.

Shyla's mom went to the barn to get the mare. Shyla was mud. She knew what her mom was doing. Nick could just as easily shoe the horse in the barn, but she was going to tether the mare outside where everyone could watch yet another man fail to shoe her horse. Mom was proud of her feisty arab. She liked knowing that she and her daughter were the only ones in the county who could calm her down, much less ride her.

Joe poured himself another shot of whiskey and sat back to watch the show. Nick didn't seem nervous about it, though. He calmly lifted his tool box out of the trunk and brushed back his straw hair from his face, as if this was just any horse he was going to shoe. He made his way over to the mare and no one breathed. Shyla's mom put down her cards and even the dog, Reno, lifted his head to "latch the scene out of his one good eye. Nick raised his hand over the arab's withers and kept it poised there. Shyla then jumped behind a wood pile, expecting the mare's swift kick, but she didn't even flinch as Nick brought his hand gently down, moving it through her mane, clapping her neck. The feisty arab just munched on the nearby onion grass. Nick reached down to her leg and she relinquished it willingly. The measurements were done in five minutes. When Nick went back to his truck, Shyla's mom poured herself a deep shot of whiskey. Joe busied himself smoothing his hair over his bald spot. Shyla grinned and emerged from the woodpile.

"Hey," Nick yelled to Shyla. "Would ya hand me the hammer over there?" She grabbed the first one in a pile of five. "Yes, the small one."

When the shoes were fitted and tight, he took an apple out of his pocket and gingerly cut it into five pieces, giving one to Shyla and the rest to the mare. He rubbed the mare along her neck, "Good girl," he whispered. To everyone's surprise, the mare rolled over onto her back and Nick scratched her stomach, like a dog.

"Well, I'll be damned," Shyla's mom shook her head, laughing, paying Nick the previously agreed two-hundred dollars.

Reno closed his one good eye and went back to sleep and Joe grinned. "Charming," Joe said. "Heh heh," he laughed, "very charming. All right, cowgirl, fork over the twenty bucks."

Shyla's mom discreetly slipped Joe the twenty dollar
the minute she relaxed on the john, some stranger was apt to drive by, lean out the window and "ya-hoo" a bit.

Shyla could feel the hook her long johns were snagged on. The car was coming. She leaned down to free the fabric and lost her balance. Her body pitched forward, her arms splayed out sideways. There was a terrific rip and she rolled down the hill like a log. She rolled and the horizon twisted crazily in the corner of her eye. She was rolling and thinking Mount Everest. When her body smacked something hard, she thought, glacier? Big glacier.

The first thing Nick Coltraine thought, driving along in his two-tone green and brown Ford pickup was, avalanche. A great white blob was descending upon him. He jammed on his brakes just as Shyla bounced over his hood.

Coltraine, at seventeen the youngest blacksmith in the county had been driving from Jackson Hole on his way to the Jones house. He was going to shoe her mother's horse. He had heard stories in blacksmithing circles about this moody Arab mare, the unshoeable beast, the bitch horse. She had kicked and bitten every blacksmith that had tried to nail a shoe on her. Zeke Gambit was in her stall once, he hadn't even gotten a fitting yet when she went into a frenzy. He survived with two broken ribs and a bashed-in face, but then again, Nick thought, Zeke didn't know his ass from his armpit when it came to horses. Zeke was the type that was better left to shoe gentle old draft horses than these young pure breeds. Nick wasn't about to turn down a job. He had been shoeing horses since he was nine and never had a problem yet. He had been thinking about all this and singing along to a Patsy Cline song on the radio when he saw this snow blob that rolled toward him.

He swung out of the truck and walked around to the front. Nick found her there on the road, face implanted in the snow, mumbling, "toilet paper, 59 cents a roll, long johns $14.99. Glacier?" Her long johns were gathered down around her ankles, her butt bared to the wind and she was clutching at an empty cardboard toilet paper roll. There was a long trail of toilet paper leading backwards to the outhouse up the hill. He wondered if he had hit her.

"Uh..." he sort of grunted. He wasn't really sure what to say and pulled at the fur collar of his white parka. She heard the grunt and craned her neck around toward the sound. She felt rather dizzy and saw three furry figures.
Mooning Yetties

Shyla Jones sat on the outhouse seat awaiting the sure onslaught of goose bumps, her three wall skirts (three for winter's sake) gathered high above her knees. Even with her ass freezing off, it was good that it was finally winter. The Wyoming cold keeps you wide awake, plus a person could see their breath. That way, she thought, you could be pretty sure you're not dead. In the summer she used to carry a small mirror on packtrips, until Mom caught her behind a clump of bushes, breathing into a beat-up Mary Kay compact. "Look," her Mom had said to her in her no-nonsense cowgirl tone, "You really want to know, I'll tell you when you're dead, OK?" That had been the end of that.

The outhouse was too small, even for a skinny girl like Shyla. She was having a hard time getting only a single piece of toilet paper with her gloved fingers, instead of these large wads her Mom despised so. Her Mom hated wasted money and told her one day, "I work damn hard chasing cows around for you." And with that her Mom had marched up to the outhouse and posted her sign: "One sheet per shit allowed."

Shyla's gloves were cumbersome and she missed her old fingerless army surplus ones, but her goat Persiphyllis had eaten them a few nights before when Shyla fell asleep in the barn. These fully fingered jobs she was wearing would not do, and she took them off, vowing to get at them with the scissors later.

Down the road, there was the loud crunching of a car. She tried to hoist her long johns into some sort of decency, but they were stuck on the umbrella stand, a gift from her aunt, who had only visited once, and even then had cut her visit short, claiming she had caught the plague from a chipmunk. Aunt Myrtle had read about such things and she had insisted on carting a black umbrella along every time she made the journey up the path to the "little girl's house" as she called the outhouse. "Bat droppings," she had told Shyla, "The stains never come out." Shyla had never had any problem with bats, or had ever had the urge to carry an umbrella, nevertheless, the stand had remained there, pink flamingoes adorning and all.

The car was coming closer. She wasn't sure whose sick joke it had been to build the outhouse on this small hill, the doorway facing the road. There was a door, but it had long since permanently rusted open. They lived on a backroad that wasn't used much, but it always seemed

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Leigh-Anne Potter

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Fall for T.R.

In my seven year old body I stand at the top of the basement stairs and fall, five empty Mason jars descending. They fall out of my arms, fall, glass on splintering wood, and I fall into my mother's arms.

Nine years fall and shatter on the floor of the past.
I fall in love, fall apart,
I fall again, fall away from her.
I find myself in a different house
with different stairs.
Her face begins to fall from memory,
replaced with the months of July, August, September
the smells of fall to warm me.
And I fall asleep and dream
of stairs descending, stairs that fall away.
ALBEQUERQUE NO.3
(after the painting by Richard Diebenkorn)

It was today I saw below the red stairs
In the small, sterile kitchen
And found I did not need to descend them,
Only know that they were there.
Somewhere in another place
Someone had said it to me.
Or perhaps I had simply read it,
"Albequerque, Albequerque"

The white table and walls were not just white
The white was space and bone
Never pure
And yet more brilliant than if it were

The walls split and loomed forward
And I saw black between the cracks
Dissolving edges.
The red of the stairs flowed in like a tide
And filled my eyes
And the red was not red; the black not black.

I was standing in a vast field
And I saw no white, but knew it was there
Yellow pierced my chest
Blue healed the wounds
And I was green and whole
And would never die.

Jon Salenger

The Deer

The dark beaks of decoys
hung over our shoulders,
and poked through the worn burlap.
Birdshot-loaded pockets bulged,
heavy shotguns weighed in our hands
while young fingertips squeezed rainbows
from the dull metal.

I heard a shattering from the lake,
erupting ice in the dull glow of morning.
Standing beside the canoe
my father cursed.

A deer, fallen through,
struggled in the midst of the ice
splintering it with sharp hooves,
fighting the cold November water.

We threw the decoys down,
listened to the dull echo of wood on ice
and the frantic churning of hooves.

We chopped through the shell of the lake,
and I reached to its exhausted back,
stroked the hair
soaked with sweat and the chilling water.
feeling its life, moist
beneath the matted hair.

Our wooden paddles fell:
axes on the brilliant surface,
throwing ice to the dark air.
Pushing, leaning from the canoe
we carved a way for the deer
towards shore.
We helped its quivering body past the weak ice
and it stumbled to land.

Behind us,
the dark water slapped the wet sides of the channel,
and banged beneath the ice
reverberating through the lake.

Jeremy Chamberlin
The Peasant and the Pinata

An old peasant woman painted this wooden box, with a horse-hair brush, and earth dyes. A yellow pinata stares at me from one blank eye...his wings are dark green and the ends are feathers dipped in pink, blue, and orange. The pinata's target eye looks into the center of a fierce burning ball, and the burning ball is the hot Guatemalan sun, glowing yellow and beating down onto the little paper pinata, the green tree, and the two bleached white houses with red tiled roofs. The heat is thick...it drifts silently inside the two black windows, around the little tree and the colored pinata, then puffs into the old woman's eyes. Her silver hair is parted down the middle into a tight bun...her skin is like leather, toughened and hardened by the endless Indian summers. She does not take her eyes off the wooden box to copy the life around her...she does not need to, for the world she paints is the world she has known since the black night gave birth to the white gleaming stars.

Jessica Scoffield

Obstetrician

I
He stares at her body, white as pork-rind, and winces as the baby's head appears. He should have been an undertaker, he thinks, imagining the perfumed body of the dead as he reaches towards the pink and wrinkled mother and child, one creature before him. Just before the delivery, he tells her she should never have gotten pregnant, then draws the baby from the hollow like blood from an open wound.

II
He comes home from the hospital, microwaves a pizza, and eats it as he shakes his head at the Pro-Lifers, shown marching on Channel 4. He showers, checks the lock on his door and gets into bed. He reads birth-control pamphlets to help fall asleep, stashes them under his pillow, prays for infertility.

III
Asleep, he dreams of flowers, pansies, their faces streaked with greasepaint, bulging orchids, roses bursting with dazed glory. He is surrounded by orange chrysanthemum sunbursts and the explosions of daisies, super-novas of hyacinths as the universe shakes, sprays of baby's breath falling from the wobbling sphere of sky. Now he hears the whisper of lilies, waving as the water ripples, and now he hears the snap of the Venus Fly-trap, sealing its prey between two swollen lips.

Jessica Sklar
Like any other child
I was lost in
the trust of adults;
the saints of our lives
who are damned for what
they do to us.

I felt I made an apple pie
not realizing that apples are
better to use than mud—but Janet didn’t care—
she barely noticed.
Mom told her to take care of me,
so she did.

We arrived at an Indian campground—
a leather tee-pee enclosed a fire,
about to set the world ablaze.
Instantly I became a friend
and was a new little girl:
Silly Swan. Life had never been
so easy before.

I was taken for a walk by a man
as old and smart as God.
He taught me life’s rules:
Be good to others
by being good to yourself,
Try to be perfect,
though nothing ever is.

I wasn’t scared
until the police came
with their red and blue lights;
how patriotic.
They captured me, like the Yankees
in the Civil War, for no reason,
except my mother
wished me more.

The seats of the car
were fake blue velvet.
On my half I drew pictures
of the faces I saw on
my newer friends,
picking at me like hawks.
I talked to mom on the C.B.
she loves me now that I’m gone.

No one celebrates the glove compartment.
Commonplace until you notice
The one in the rental car.
Alien plastic that
Drools an odor of
Pine, trying to absorb the olfactory residue
Of a thousand old cigars.
It gapes, begging for valuables
Or even a hand to snap shut on
And digest.
You reminisce about the security
That fullness brings, comfort with its
Road maps, flash lights, old cigarette packs.
Home is where the vehicle registration is.
Comfort, filled to the brim with broken tapes,
Empty cases, spare fuses, screws, pens,
Half consumed packs of breath mints, prophylactics,
And other bits of cosmic debris.
When the nice officer asks to see your forms,
You must start digging.
Sifting archaeologically through the sediment,
You look in and inconvenient and
Integral quickly become the same word.
You search and wonder how long the little gremlins wait
After the light goes out
To come and wreak havoc on your cluttered life.
Two years later, I am thinking of Michael.

"Look," he whispered to me,
"there is a group of people. I see them
as shadows, no colors set them apart."

It was Parent's night,
and he extended both hands,
looked at them through his fingers,
and I wondered
if they saw themselves as he did, if
Michael wanted to be on stage
or back with the audience.

He counted the steps to the piano,
played through Beethoven's Ninth
without missing a note.
I still hear the collective breath.

He counted the steps to the piano,
played through Beethoven's Ninth
without missing a note.
I still hear the collective breath,
the gasp the audience held
until the final chord.

Michael won the talent show,
but when I saw him backstage,
he pushed past me,
hands pressed against his eyes
as he wandered into a bathroom.
He did not appear again until morning.

I wonder what he was thinking
as a girl taps me on the shoulder.
I walk her back beside oaks
that shake in the wind.
I tell her what I remember,
the names, the patterns of sky.
I know she is smiling politely
as she steers me away from colors,
leads me over to the other side
of the road.

I was happy to be home,
I had a story to tell.
My brother didn't care-he said
I just wanted attention.
I wandered into the kitchen.
My sister was making a turkey
from the outline of her hand.
But I was better.
I was a real Indian,
wild and full of spirits.

My Indian friend was gone.
She was just a temporary,
I was told.
I got bored again.
I swayed in our hammock
and sucked on an apple
feeling as though I was
wasting it-it was not as juicy
as the mud.

Mary Preis
The Visible Boy

On Sundays, the boy broke his mind in careful pieces and proofread the parts. He put gentle memories of summer mornings in a safe beneath his bed and swallowed the key. When his girlfriend broke up with him, he felt the impact on his entire body and decided to censor it all. He got out his toolbox, touched each tool and laid his parts on the floor.

Somehow he misplaced his skin.

At breakfast the next morning, his father looked through him to his lungs and found out that he had been smoking. His mother found the keys to his safe resting at the bottom of his stomach. She took them out and sorted through his memories like dirty laundry.

In the locker room at school, the boy undresses slowly, waits until everyone has left. His body is a motion picture in the mirror, a museum of fifteen years. He stands naked and transparent, watches the tears pulse down his face.

Desiree Hupy

Memories from a Camp for the Blind

I lead Michael back to our cabin. It is summer and the air smells of ocean. His hand rests on my shoulder as we walk through fields, the weeds brushing against our legs.

"I feel grass," he says, "long blades of grass against brown clover." They flatten beneath our feet.

"Tell me what colors you see."

I don't know the words—they are printed somewhere on a box of crayons. "Colors," I echo. "Colors." I look away from his eyes. "I can't remember," he says, "I see shadows, black and white."

If I close my eyes hard enough, I can see the names, but they're no different from any words he has ever known.

2.

Suzanne extends her hand for the chalk I place in her palm. "Aguamarine," I whisper, and she draws streaks of agua, the spanish word for water.

Marine is a bay in Mexico, the Bahia de Campeche, and she remembers her feet at the foot of the waves, feeling the sting of the salt splash into her eyes. Gulls circle overhead, and her grandmother, abuela, waits with a towel. They will walk until the rocks become sharp and scrape blisters across their naked feet.

"I've never been to the ocean," I say, and apologize, but she shakes her head and breaks the chalk with her fingers, letting each piece fall.
(In Response to Looking at the Photographs of Manuel Alvarez Bravo)

The girl stands leaning slightly over the railing of iron, bars black and smooth as rain.

Her skin dark amber sweats beneath a soiled white dress (...she is pretty, we say, she is daydreaming)

Her face rests against her hand, eyes downcast at the dusty courtyard below.

Focus. The picture is different now, possibly more clear; a girl: lets her head hang, lets it fall heavily, her long hand catches the weight of her warm cheek. The features of her face are of a borrowed mask handed down to her from an ancient people. Her eyes see the world through a tangle of graves, see the sun for those now dead. She has strong legs, as if of stone, bare to the knee. Strong for walking miles down the dirt road to the market each day, for running home when the evening cools. (We think we can tell from her solid gaze that she must like to run.) Strong. To kick the man who lives below, who pulls her into the shadows under the stairs. A patch of sunlight covers one shoulder. She is otherwise shaded by the overhang of the roof where rows of linen fill with air as they dry; hovering above the barrio streets like ghosts at mid-day. The hand that does not touch her face curves around the other arm, just above the elbow. May be a child is crying in the distance. We think perhaps she has lost someone or is in love, she is young here. Where is she now? The girl leans against the railing, looking down at the dusty courtyard below. She could look up to the clear sky above, "el cielo", heaven, but she looks down. Down at the man who walks to the gate of the courtyard, newspaper under his arm, down as he walks past the tree that needs rain.

Tzaporah Ryter

PALEONTOLOGIST'S WIFE

So what if brontosauri were never really real? The museum models were so impressive and the bones fit so nicely together, he thinks, working late again plastering skull-bits into believable skulls of maybe pteradactyls, maybe stegosauri. Tomorrow his creation will be matched to massive bleached white vertebrae and hung from invisible frames, ceiling wires, and set out on display.

Home past midnight; his wife has left a note. "Gone to bed. Chicken in fridge," it says. He opens the door, the light goes on then off again as he carries the platter of chicken parts to the table, peels back four layers of foil with his fork and then eats.

After he's swallowed the last bit of meat he turns his attention to bones. Thick yellow thigh bones, whiter on the ends near the joints; he licks them, feels the bulge of a ball-and-socket joint in his mouth and smiles. Then the ribcage, torn from the whitemeat breast, he counts each rib with his tongue and wishes he had some plaster and wire to rebuild the chicken from its bones. Instead, he breaks a leg with his teeth and sucks the marrow.

He finds his bed in the dark, finds his wife buried under the blankets. He leans over and whispers "Scapula..." She rolls toward him. He says,"Tibia..." She answers him, "Vertebrae, darling..." He climbs into bed moaning, "Sternum, pelvis, hip..."
He takes her face in his hands, presses his fingers into the flesh, names each bone aloud and then pulls them out of the skin, one by one, cheekbones first, and lays them on his pillow. He pulls her spine out through her soft throat then turns her arms and legs inside out and gathers the long white limb bones and tiny toes and knuckles. Shoulder blades, collarbone, skull and inner ear; soon he has some two hundred bones laid out on his pillow to play with. Satisfied, he rebuilds his wife, carefully fitting each bone back into the sack of skin and boneless meat. All except one rib which he keeps and names Charlie, dresses in jeans and tee-shirts and calls his son.

Lisa Marie Priddy

the clock ticked and Dar washed the windows and the sun kept going up.

Pat called out his order and I set it down in front of him and told him I'd been working here quite a while and would likely be here quite a while more. Course, I don't really believe that, I expect to be getting out of here as soon as I get enough money. I mean, I'm not gonna stick around any place longer than I have to.

Then he says, and this really got to me, he says, "How old are you?" I spilled some coffee and Dar stopped washing windows and stared at me. I said, "Mister, I'm not sure I need to tell you that." He stood up and payed his bill and looked at me. I looked back at him and gritted out a have-a-nice-day. He smiled at me and put his wallet in his back pocket and Dar moved aside for him to leave and it was just another customer walking out the door.

Why the hell shouldn't I be working here? I thought. I said, Dar, there's some funny people in this world," and she said, "Yeah," and Pat whistled and Nina went into the back room and the old man with the black bowler came in and said, "Good-Morning-Polly-Green-Eyes," and I said, "What'll it be this morning?"

Marya Hornbacher
Some people are so lonely they really do talk to counter girls.

When I got out front, I wiped down the counter, cleaned the drink machine and stared the coffee. I leaned my elbows on the counter and watched Dar clean the windows all along the front of the place with tiny, slow circles using a paper towel and Windex. She worked so slow it almost put you to sleep. I heard Pat in back, whistling and starting the grill for breakfast. Dar moved aside to let a man through the door, then moved back and kept washing.

This wasn't a regular, this guy who'd just walked in. He was the wrong age to be in here this time of day. Usually this time it was only younger business men on their way to work, or else the old men, like the man who orders a coffee and a water, three creams and a Sweet 'n Low, or the man with the black bowler who calls me Polly-Green-Eyes and calls Nina "Nigger". The real regulars.

No, the one who'd just walked through the door was around forty-two, with thinning hair and a belly. I imagined his family, fat wife and kids. I thought up a whole life for him, thought it out as I said, "Coffee, sir?" and smiled.

You people on the other side of the counter don't have any idea how forgettable you are. You all talk to counter girls - well, I can tell you right now, most girls couldn't care less that your kid is sick and you've had a hard day, or your husband got a raise and isn't it lovely out? So anyway, this guy ordered and I said, "Anything-to-drink-with-that?" and he said, "More coffee, please." I sent the order back, and then I set his coffee down ever so gently so it wouldn't spill. Then I said, "Cream with that?" and he said, "Yes, please."

Outside the sun was coming up. The clock ticked and Pat whistled and Dar cleaned the windows. I refilled the guy's cup and he's got his eyes on me as I set the pot down. I smiled at him. You smile at all the customers, no matter how bad they are, and this one wasn't too bad.

Sometimes they smile back, sometimes they don't. This one didn't, just kept looking at me, and I turned my back on him to make coffee for when the rush started at seven.

That was when he said, "How long you been working here?" I didn't turn around. I had heard this one before. I asked him, "Why?" He didn't answer, just asked for more coffee. I refilled his cup and went about my business. He slurped and

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Naked

I need no clothing.
My body is tough and slippery,
the beak of a swan, my skin
the perfect curtain, over my muscles,
tendons, the streams and rivers of my blood.
You can see when I've stopped running,
my heart beating, right here
inside the center of my chest
like fish tapping at the first clear layers of ice.
Here. Give me your shirt, then your arms
the pleasure of nudity reminds me
of watermelon seeds, a boomerang,
the curve of the moon.
Promise me
you'll take my hide and dry it.
Sew it into pieces.
Sail with me,
my face stretched water-tight on the bow.

Lora Kolodny
That day I had to do the morning shift, work the set-up, breakfast and all that. I got there a little before six, which gave me time to drink my coffee and have a smoke. The back room, "Employees Only", should have looked the same as it did every time I came in for this shift, which was three times a week. Nina, the little dark girl, should be sitting in the corner, wide-eyed and quiet. Pat, the scrappy old man who worked grill, should be standing by the door, and Dar, the retarded woman, would be sitting in the red chair, rocking back and forth and twisting her hands. People were always saying how nice it was that we hired retarded people. I never thought about it much.

I came in and took off my coat, hung it in the closet. Pat yelled, "Top o' the morning to ye!" as he did every morning. Dar wasn't sitting in the red chair, she was sitting in the center of the wooden bench along the wall. I "good-morninged" everyone and sat down and lit a cigarette.

Dar was looking at me. Well, I figured, somebody better talk. I asked Dar why she wasn't sitting in the red chair, and then thought, why should she? And then I thought how she must hate the way we talk to her, like she can't understand normal conversation. Dar answered, rocking, said she "wanted a change." Pat laughed and said she'd been watching too much TV. I didn't laugh. It seemed to me that wanting a change wasn't such a bad thing. We all want a change. I drank my coffee, finished my cigarette, then straightened my cap and went out front.

One of the managers had told me once that they put the pretty ones out front as counter girls. And then he gave me that look, up and down and all I could think was well then what do you do with the rest of them? He answered that pretty quick, almost like he read my mind, said they "put the old ones in back to cook and the retards wherever people can see them and say how nice and come back. He laughed and laughed, and said, "That's the way we keep business going here - old cookeys, pretty lookers, and retards."

I would quit on the spot, but we all gotta pay for things somehow. So I worked up front and said "yes, ma'am" and answered every "How long will that take?" with "Not too much longer now," and talked to the lonely ones.
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And, one by one, intent upon
Their purposes, they followed on
In ordered silence...and were gone.

-A.A. Milne

Cover Art --- Mary Preis
P. 14 Artwork --- Jon Salenger
The Red Wheelbarrow

April, 1990

edited by

Jeremy Chamberlin
Marya Hornbacher
Lora Kolodny
The Red Wheelbarrow

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Jeremy Chamberlin
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This is a story about four people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when actually Nobody asked Anybody. (author unknown.)