Forté
A Journal of Poetry, Prose and Art
by the Students of Illinois College
Fall 2000
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Editors' Remarks

Forté, n. Peculiar talent; strong point; chief excellence.

It has been a long, hard road this semester as we learned for the first time how to be editors. We dedicated our time and effort to making the Forté new and exciting, giving it a different look from previous years. We are proud to know that we have succeeded. The large number of contributors, staff members and students whose works were published for this issue was truly remarkable and a challenge that we hope to live up to. The job was all made worthwhile by seeing students who had never before been involved in the process take part. We hope that all our readers enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed and appreciated putting it together.

Megan & Elizabeth

Cathy Heckenkamp  Untitled
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* Denotes best submission contest winners, as selected by respective department faculty
Kelly Payne

Looking at Me

I look at you looking at me
and I wonder.
What is it that you really see?
Someone not too short, but not too tall
Not a supermodel, but not a troll.

So will you take some time and know the real me?
The girl who hates big crowds
And lots of strange faces.
Who seems to have everything under control,
But secretly fears that it will all fall apart.

The girl who cherishes the friends around her,
yet fears being alone,
Who realizes that perfect isn't easy
so will settle for the best she can be.

The girl who knows that in a few years' time
She'll be cut in the REAL WORLD...
And then what?
So she counts her blessings and hopes real hard
that somehow she'll land on her feet,
dreams intact.

Don't be afraid...
Look real hard...deeper than you normally would.
See the scared, anxious, hopeful girl inside...
And see that she's looking at you too.

Jill Staunton

Astral Psyche

astral psyche invading my mind, that empty space in
my head. bone of my skull thickening. fluid transparent
seeping through the cracks. whetting my appetite for more.

More. digitalizing the world. All green and blue and black.

Seeing the sun set through Windows [95]: Synthetic. Artifi-
cial. can't break through the skin surrounding me. surround-
ing the globe. what happened to spring I wonder, walking
through this wasteland of wintry winds and bitter frozen life.

Wrens flitting about, singing as if they were larks. Content-
ment is a dream. Move forward, don't fall back. Why are
sideways always ignored? Dialogue written well before-hand.

practice til perfection, rehearsed endlessly, honed so that
maybe things will go your way. Spanning the diameter of your
ball-point pen, but no one else knows what grows inside your
brain. your imaginings will remain imaginings. Unless you

suddenly grow a set of balls, brave all odds, and tempt fate.
what have you got to lose? Your pride? Well, why didn't you
say so? That changes everything. Well, let's see... peer up at
the stars and marvel at the speed of light. Close the shades so
no one can see. Draw the drapes around to protect your
Jill Staunton

fantasy world from intrusion. all you need is a little inspiration, a little imagination, and viola! an entire nation all for you. And what do you know - it turns out you actually are the center of your universe!!

Brian Sherwin

CAR, CRASH, CONFUSION

I punched the wall, my hand fractured
Like the song, hometown child thrown through the window of my car
It was broken, and hurt to move
Like the arm of the man who was drunk and hit us,
Numb, Damaged, and without Movement...
Waiting for the doctor to arrive, I was mad
As mad as the mother who would soon find out, he arrived fast
As fast as it took to pass by the small town the child and I lived in.
My hand was put in a cast, the child a bag
And the drunk a holding cell.
Kristin Clinton.

Longing

Reaching out to touch the hand,
finding nothing there to grasp.
Stroking gently the chiseled face,
but I open my eyes and see it is a dream.

Feeling the embrace consume and devour me,
yet I look around and realize it is a phantom.
The sweetness of the kiss caressing my lips,
I feel the softness but find nothing is there.

Wishing and waiting, yearning and praying.
Longing to see and touch again.
With every connection I fall harder,
every exchange my heart races.

Looking towards the future,
all the mysteries it holds.
The word “forever” suddenly applied.
Yearning to wear that band and carry that name.

My love is so strong,
my heart is aching so.
Awaiting the arrival,
two hearts finally one.
This is the composition of my longing.

Kelly Payne.

Songbird

Her footsteps echoing in the deserted hallway, Angela approached her salvation. Taking a deep breath, she grasped the doorknob and walked inside the darkened room. The smell of instruments and sheet music assaulted her nose. As always, the familiar scents of the music room eased the ache within her heart.

It's been almost one month since we moved to Baylor, Angela thought, and I still feel as if I'm all alone. Walking over to the lightsswitch, Angela began to hum one of her favorite songs, "Ave Maria." The lights flickered on as the deep and rich sounds of Angela's voice erupted out of her. People who had actually heard Angela sing, and there weren't that many who had, were always astonished that such a powerful sound could come from one so small. Although eighteen years old, her diminutive five foot frame frequently got her mistaken for someone much younger. Abruptly Angela stopped her singing.

"Why can I never sing like that in front of an actual person?! Maybe I'll be okay. I'll just get up on that stage Friday for the talent show and be perfectly fine. Yeah...sure you will, Angie."

"I don't know why you'd ever be scared to sing with a voice like that!" a deep male voice replied.

Angela gasped and whirled around, all the while praying the voice she just heard was a figment of her overactive imagination. But no, she couldn’t be that lucky. Angela’s green eyes traveled up the visitor’s athletic six-foot frame to connect with a pair of blue eyes. Blue eyes that belonged to none other than Conor Mackenzie, Baylor High School’s volleyball and swim star. Oh why did it have to be HIM?! Angela wondered. I’ve liked him since we first met. Even after a month of seeing him in classes and in the hallway I still can’t form a complete sentence whenever he’s around.

"Wh----What are you doing here?" Angela asked.

"Oh, I ran into Mr. Hammond and he asked me if I could drop this music off for him. So, here I am...and imagine my surprise when I hear this beautiful voice, coming out of...you."

Angela felt her lips twitch at the unexpected compliment.
“Thank you.”
“I meant what I said before. How can you possibly be nervous when you have this amazing talent? All you have to do is get up there and open your mouth and you’d have the place mesmerized.”
“Don’t you get even a little nervous before a volleyball match or swim meet? Or are you just this sports god that never has to worry about losing?!?”
Angela’s eyes widened in dismay as she realized what she had just said. Hands clasped over her mouth, Angela mumbled an apology.
“I really am sorry. I’m a bit defensive about my singing.”
“Yeah, I kinda noticed. But I do see your point. I do get anxious before a meet and stuff, but I just try to forget about it. Maybe you could do the same.”
“How----”
“Just imagine you’re the only one in the room. It’ll be dark in the auditorium anyways, so you won’t even be able to see anyone.”
“I don’t know----”
“Oh c’mon.. just try,” Conor coaxed.
“Maybe. You know, I just had an entire conversation with you and I didn’t even stumble over my words once!!”
Horrified, Angela realized she had practically admitted that she liked Conor and that his presence made her nervous.
Great Ang.. just great. Care to screw this up any more than you already have?!
Nervously twining her fingers in her long red hair, Angela stammered, “I mean...I didn’t...oh, I don’t know what I meant! So much for me not tripping over my words!”
Conor just chuckled and gently untangled Angela’s fingers from her hair. Shivers ran up and down Angela’s spine from his touch, causing goosebumps to appear all over. Their eyes connected and Angela forgot to breathe. Conor’s hand came up to trace her jawline.
“Why don’t you try singing with just me in the room. If you can do that, the talent show on Friday won’t be a problem.”
“I guess so...”
Angela moved away and put on the CD with the music to “Ave Maria.” Taking a deep breath, she began to sing. Her voice echoed throughout the room, the deep power of it caus-
No Talent

no talent allowed
in this place
there's no room
we've got enough problems of our own
we don't need you
to make me feel inferior
or
to drive her out of her mind
we do that well enough on our own
we have enough talent
just between us

Cry

You cry in the hall,
while the lights are on
Show the world how you feel.

I cry in my bed
in the middle of the night
so no one else can see.

The other,
she has no tears
or fears
that we know of.

Bethany Gilson

Untitled
James Krick

Sitting comfortably in a clutter as though it was my own
As though I was at home, allowing my thoughts to roam
Sipping MGD while relaxing to Jimi
  Taking a load off after a long drive
Patiently waiting for my hosts to arrive
Ready for whatever they have prepared for me
Closing in on a moving date and I know there will be
  Far from here, it is my fear
  That we will lose touch
Though I'm confident we will never lose love
  For it has grown too much to be misplaced
  Or lose its way
It can see over all our roadblocks
  And it can pick any heart that had been locked
So I see there is no need for me to worry
My fear was irrational like fire,
But now is rationally extinguished
  I'll receive a new thought
  With a new bottle
  This one
  Is
  Finished

Jill Staunton

Looking Inside

Looking in from the inside, the inside of it. Of everything. Inwardly deploy all of the missiles until you've completely purged yourself. then take a break, because we all need a break. Maintain your energy all day. Refuel with granola, maybe someday. align the stars for yourself because didn't you realize that we are at the center of the universe? skin tight, slick, skin tight. Oh yeah. hey buddy, tell me that I'm your pal. Maybe even that I'm your friend - that you and I are one. One big lie. Fibbing and fleeing - you and I. My boy, you are so effervescent. Completely asthetic. Always perpetuating myths of me. Why? Symbolize logic with synthetic synergy, then fall. What always precedes a fall? beat to the rhythm. Pulse. Pound. Even prance. Plus dance. This is my time - so stop getting in the way. I've come to my height. Now you've got a lot of catching up to do. Reflections, I'm on the other side of the mirror. Away from you. And that smile creeps onto your face. that self-satisfied smirk. Well, we'll just see about that, guy. Climb up the walls, pulling at the paneling. Fingers on the floor. Bottles everywhere, what to do with those bottles? Long green shag carpeting that can hide so much (wink wink nudge nudge) Innuendo and double entendres flying about the room. that's what happens when we get together. And everyone doubted us! The world did, but they will see, if they haven't yet.

I only have a few good friends
  Who love me even when I don't make sense
Test, hell yes, hard pressed to make the best of stress,
Open chest broken, hopeless, focused, emotions
  Pretty potent lyrics, critics cheering same time fearing
The spirits, stop trying to hear 'em venonous serum
  And whodewho to you too
Cassie O'Connor.

Emergency Landing on I-70

Let me fall then,
Catch me dear, catch me dear
With the engine screaming
And the stewardess who seems to be seeming
Smiling at the scampering and the last second 'I love you'
    pampering
To be with no fear

'I love you, Pennyworth,'
Cocktails in the cockpit would be nice
'I've always loved you Rutherford,'
I've been craving a bit of strawberry flavored shaved ice
Since the connecting flight in Boston,
Where I caught a homerun when I was nine.
If I clutch my amulet then I will stay alive.

And if I breathe ten seconds more
The Red Sox will even the score
Please keep the porch light on for me, Dear,
For I have been out traveling.

If I cry out before I die,
please think I say I love you.

I love you, I love you,
I am hovering above you
Watching the oxygen mask falling.

I am sorry that I hurt her
Even though she didn't cry
I am sorry that I hurt her, Dear,
I swear she shed no tears.
She would like that I am scared.

She would point and say loudly in the supermarket aisle,
    'Look at how his trousers in the middle have grown wet,
Look at how he bites his nails
And clutches his amulet.
Look at how the monster shivers and tastes his mouth turn
dry.

Cassie O'Connor.

Look at the poor baby, poor baby, you said stop,
But you wore those lovely trousers, dear,
So it's really quite your fault.'

Please remember the porch light, Dear,
By then I should be dry
I sampled just a little bit
With my ham and Swiss on rye
And a bit of cellophane flavor.
The tranquil ceiling panel voice is saying
After my own mask is in place
Then I must turn and help my neighbor.

She is a red haired woman braced in seat 27 C
I never thought I'd die alone on a plane full of strangers.
Her ten-year-old is home alone
And Papa's never been there.
Dear, please leave the light on, she really mustn't die

The seat back is shaking,
Foot imaginary braking, palm
Is bleeding from the amulet I wear.
'I love you, Rutherford'
I love you, I love you,
In a seasick way I love you

And how shall I think to know you love me too?
'Oh, God, Pennyworth. I must die with you.'
Tires shrieking, car horns bleating,
Stewardesses sardined in yellow emergency landing gear,
Clutched chest heaving, eased to be beating turbulence
Against the amulet I wear.
Watching ambulances bolting, yet still grip my fear of
Your porch light doting.

Dear, please turn the light on.
I cannot take your doldrum smile that circles once
About the island and leaves me there to die
I love you, I love you,
I clutch my amulet of you.
Cassie O'Connor.

I have been out traveling,
Counting receipts and airline seats
And a gentle change in skyline
And staring at the stewardess seeming to be seeming
That I should fall, I should fall,
I should fall, Dear, and if you love me catch me
Let me fall.

Megan Venz.

This poem is dedicated to my little cousin who was born with many medical problems. When she was born she had lack of oxygen due to a knot in her umbilical cord. She also has a chromosome disorder. From the lack of oxygen and the disorder, she is unable to walk, talk, eat or do any other actions as normal as other children.

A Fight for Life

Life is so precious and so wonderful, many take it for granted.
Everyone assumes, that a child is safe inside the womb of their mother, but they are not.
Sometimes the monster gets inside.
Some mothers can feel this monster, others can’t. Doctors try to help, but sometimes they can’t. This child must come into this world with the monster.

The child is born, not breathing, because this evil monster tied a knot in the cord.
Doctors save her, but the monster is still there.
This little girl lies there with machines all around her, but she keeps on fighting.
Parents bring this little one home, who is still fighting the monster.

As this little girl grows, they discover that the monster does not let her walk, talk, chew, or be normal in any way.
Doctors say she has no hope of fighting this unknown monster.
Parents don’t accept this answer and find other alternatives. This little girl keeps on fighting, parents keep on working with her, and family keeps on praying and hoping.

One day it happens... this little girl fights back, she walks, not a normal walk, but she walks.
She keeps on fighting to overcome the next obstacle that the monster gives her. Hopefully, she will learn to talk. As this child keeps on fighting, just remember... life is precious, and wonderful.
Brian Sherwin

Studio Work
I paint for hours that seem like minutes.
Draw for two that seem like none.
Take a break and real time revisits.
Start again, the day is done.

The Painter
Immortality,
Just a few brush strokes away,
Only to decay.

James Krick

Heard a bell sound
As I fell down
Spell bound
Feet crossed
  Couldn’t walk
Tongue tied
  Couldn’t talk

Oryssia Sokolska  A Ukrainian Church in the Carpathians
Whispered Truths

Like dogs on leashes they’re led  
To the place where no should go.  
The icy metallic machine takes lives  
Brutality and hatred their only friends.

Yet she rise from the ashes of a people  
Buried and destroyed.  
Refusing to hold the hand that holds her down.  
No longer will the thick air of oppression  
Suffocate the people any longer.

Cesar and Martin float in her dreams  
Whispering truths.  
Those with the bulging pockets rob  
Humanity and innocence.

She follows their lead  
Not allowing the souls of her people  
To be raped again.  
So from these ashes she rises  
With the new day she will fight the battle  
That must be won.

The struggle has only yet begun.

Elizabeth Jenkins.  

Pickings of “A Final Love Letter for Angel”

My Angel  
you know and that’s all that matters  
they don’t have to understand  
I remember when you giggled at the poster  
ordinary and unnoticed by the others but beautiful to me  
our own exclusive game  
only we knew  
but the memories won’t wash away with tears  
I won’t tell you though  
you are so proud of me for the way I have handled it  
when I told you NO  
you apologized and kissed me  
but I still hurt you and I’m sorry  
you told me that you loved me  
(but it wasn’t the same thing)  
you said I was so quiet  
but it was only because I couldn’t speak  
gasping, moaning  
I can still see the coy smile on your face  
as if it were embedded deeply within and won’t escape  
wouldn’t they be shocked?

“Do you remember when I stopped you on the hill in the sunset and cried and told you that even when I was an old lady with grey hair and had forgotten everything of my life, I would always remember that moment, right then? Oh God, my God, how I loved you. . . . .”

When I left you last I wept with disgust for you  
my cold stiff body, cringing, pulling away from your embrace  
I hated you, but more myself  
It made a liar out of me.  
Will you touch her like you touched me?  
Tell her that you only love her and want to capture a shimmering star and all of her dreams only for her.  
Tell her to “dream thoughts most radiant”  
You said it to me. You have said it to others. Might as well keep sharing the love. . . .
Elizabeth Jenkins.

"Don't forget everything that I have told you and shown you— it is my complete self, all of me that no one else has seen before. I gave myself to you because I loved you, and I always will. And when I go to Heaven, I will look to the hill and see you there, my Angel. I will run to you, and weep for joy. And I will remember that moment and live in it eternally."

Kristin Clinton.

The Fall

Searching and longing for something unknown, trying to find a heart to call her own. The good and bad come and go, frightened and scared she knows there is more.

Holding on to the past but looking towards the future.
What about the present?
Her present... happiness?

Always looking ahead instead of in the "now."
Clinging to the one she can no longer possess she sees herself sliding further into oblivion.
Kristin Clinton.

Then, a ray of hope,
A push on this and a click on that,
brought one that was unexpected.
A difference...yes. A change...uncertain.

Words of love and voices calming,
grasp her out of the sheltered darkness.
A new falling begins.
A familiar feeling yet changed with time.

Wiser, more cautious...
Unwilling to fall, yet yearning to hit bottom.
Mind and heart quarrelling over rights and wrongs.
The physical smiles where the emotional conflicts.

Slowly, mind and heart becoming one.
The sight of you still to be sought out.
The windows to the soul have already been opened.
Waiting for the glass to break...

Touches, caresses longing to exist.
Patience, a virtue, hard to control.
Her love yearns to be set free,
on the top of a bridge preparing to plummet.

The feeling more mature,
intensity almost stronger.
Questions, thoughts, words, feelings.
All in combination produce the future.

Jill Staunton.

Smooch

smooch. i'm not going to be angry anymore. throw it up in the air. complete and utter forgiveness. screw all of those people. I won't waste my time and my good energy on them again. I'm going to smile and say "fuck you!" let it go into their atmospheres and out of my mine. it isn't completely their fault. they don't understand. and that's sad. pity those who cannot feel my passion. those sorry individuals who do not notice the clouds. those poor souls who do not realize all of the life around them. i will be happy in my own and the world's imperfections. that's all that is asked of me, and that's all i will do. no more ire to weigh me down. my body will soar over the shining blue waves, like in my dream. and i will wake up when i die - open my eyes to see the true reality - that it was all a dream after all. eons of sleep, but meanwhile, i have one eye cracked open, so that i am glimpsing a bit of each, and that's the way i like it.
My Grandfather

I was so young when He took you away,
But I remember it as if it were yesterday.
He took you just months before the war,
I guess He decided you were ready to soar.
You never knew that the war called for your son,
My father went to that war. He fought for you and won.
I know you wrapped him in your protective arm,
To keep him from all of war's harm.
You made sure he safely made it home,
So all of us wouldn't have to be alone.
You left this world to protect him,
It was your way of saying, "I love you Jim"
So for protecting my father during the war,
I give you all, I wish it was more.
Although six years have passed,
Our love and memory of you will always last.

Dedicated to my Grandfather, Edward Theodore Beavers.
Born: April 12, 1929
Died: June 16, 1990
Megan Cook

Hiding

Her fake smile
doesn't sell
the excuses that she tells.
She is hiding.

He calls them up
but doesn't chat;
they talk but he won't speak back.
He is hiding.

Her voice is soft,
she stays at home
and never seems to be alone.
She is hiding.

She laughs at jokes
with tears in her eye
and I can tell her attitude's a lie.
She is hiding.

Elizabeth Jenkins

Meet Me Where the Door Lies

Tell me all I need to hear
and I will meet you where the door lies
I say "I have a secret"
so meet me where the door lies
whispering and waiting
all for you, my beloved

Bewildered but not misguided
Anxious but at peace
I give you my hand
please meet me where the door lies
for I have three esoteric oaths
all for you, my beloved

Underneath where the door lies
you give me your hand
kisses "soft and many"
sing Beethoven's Opus 73 to me
as I tell you "yep" and beam and glow
all for you, my beloved