

**sinh review®**



# sink review®

EDITORS Douglas S Hahn  
Daniel Magers  
Richard Scheiwe

---

*Sink Review* publishes six issues online per year, as well as a perfect-bound "best of" once yearly. We accept unsolicited work in the form of literary criticism, scholarly book reviews, and poetry.

Simultaneous submissions are welcome; please direct all correspondence to:  
[editors@sinkreview.org](mailto:editors@sinkreview.org)

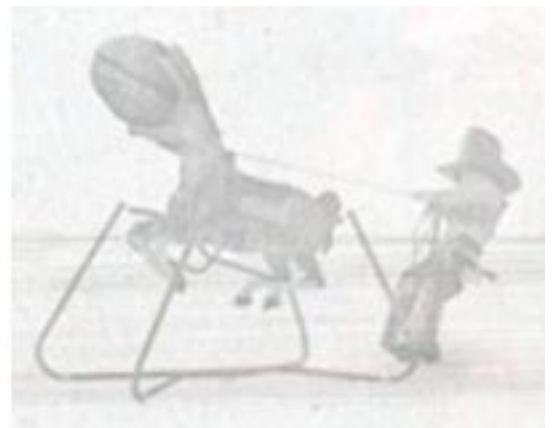
Cover art: *Flowers* by Maya Pindyck;  
*untitled* by Mark Mascarello

All work © 2006 Sink Review

[www.sinkreview.org](http://www.sinkreview.org)

# SR 1:1

|                                       |    |  |
|---------------------------------------|----|--|
| Douglas S Hahn                        | 1  | <i>Retrospect</i>                      |
| Sampson Starkweather                  | 2  | <i>A Fantastic Grave</i>               |
|                                       | 3  | <i>The Gnats of Love</i>               |
|                                       | 4  | <i>VIII from Trilce</i>                |
|                                       | 5  | <i>XII from Trilce</i>                 |
| Minal K Singh                         | 6  | <i>Zoology of Presence</i>             |
|                                       | 7  | <i>Habit</i>                           |
| Nate Pritts                           | 8  | <i>My New Haircut</i>                  |
| Katherine Fallon                      | 9  | <i>Four Mares, Flank to Flank</i>      |
| Jean Hartig                           | 10 | <i>Dispelling the algal bloom</i>      |
|                                       | 11 | <i>The Elegant Thief</i>               |
| Gabriella Torres                      | 13 | <i>Dream Sequence #1</i>               |
|                                       | 15 | <i>[untitled]</i>                      |
| Maya Pindyck                          | 16 | <i>Ventriloquist</i>                   |
| SPECIAL FOLIO: POEMS FROM THE EDITORS |    |  |
| Daniel Magers                         | 17 | <i>Soviet Experiment Camp</i>          |
|                                       | 18 | <i>The Lurid Methods of Dr. Mamoto</i> |
| Richard Scheiwe                       | 19 | <i>"The Fields Eating"</i>             |
|                                       | 20 | <i>Anatomy and Space</i>               |
| Douglas S Hahn                        | 21 | <i>Lichen</i>                          |
|                                       | 23 | <i>Nostrum</i>                         |



Bizarre as it is, a small retrospective is in order for this inaugural issue. Sink began in concept way back in 2001. I was paying my way through Loyola University by working as an electrical contractor, and had the serendipity to befriend two frighteningly talented poets— both of whom are once again co-editing Sink.

Disaffected by the Chicago literary scene (though it's since gone supernova), we decided to do something about it by founding a new literary review. Mere undergraduate students with zilch for publications and a poignant lack of cash (and credit) probably have no business sticking their noses into the publishing business, but we plowed ahead with earnestness, durability, and the somewhat naïve belief that one literary journal *could* change our local universe.

We formed a ragtag group of people bonded by an obsession with literature, and rallied our morale inside the cheap pubs and coffee shops that are scattered throughout Rogers Park. We drew up plans for a board of directors and became an Illinois not-for-profit; took out an ad in poets and writers calling for submissions (and quickly learned why editorial work is both rewarding and excruciating); and dutifully failed in attempts to hobnob with the likes of Paul Hoover, Forrest Gander, Karen Volkman, David Trinidad, and any other *poet distingué* who happened to pass through the Windy City.

While busy being literati wannabes, we were earnestly at work writing and revising our own poems. Every Saturday night we'd gather in my living room to read poems and have some drinks; fellow students would often drop by to hear our poetry and have a cocktail before going to wherever they went. We organized poetry readings on campus, and began to garner some minor recognition from literary magazines and local organizations like the Printer's Row Book Fare and the Poetry Center.

All of us had fantastic teachers invested in our work, and intelligent friends who could understand our writing with a cunning critical eye. Though condemned from the outset, Sink gave us all a method and a language with which we could develop our sensibilities about writing in a neutral context outside of our own poetry. We're now in Brooklyn, and supposedly much older and much wiser.

Sink is a resilient entity: after five years crammed with working, writing, reading, and many life changes, it's more alive than its ever been. And with all this conjuring out of the way now, it's time to look forward: Sink will use electronic and print media in tandem to produce a journal that is both dexterous and scholarly, produced rapidly but not as a commodity. The website is meant to be a meeting grounds of writers (all contributors are welcome to submit reviews or blog entries), while an annual perfect-bound *best of* will serve as the journal's keystone.

Many thanks to our contributors, most especially to Sam Starkweather and Kaveh Bassiri for their candid opinions as talented writers and generous friends.

DSH

## A FANTASTIC GRAVE

*a transcontemporation from Baudelaire's Flowers of Evil*

Specter of sanguine ale, poured into a tortoise-shell toilet,  
grotesque levee camps set up in the spleen,  
kumquat drunk, quietly affixed by the sex appeal of the carnival,  
without emperors, without fondue, just truffles in cheval dung.  
Photogenic illuminati Harold-Blooming in communistic Laos, apocalyptic rose.  
Quick salve of nauseous cum on equivocal thighs,  
the pissless taverns of space, lit irremediably by 2  
fraudulent infinities, a sailboat stranded in horseshit,  
some sailor-friendly feminist name prodded onto wooden ribs.  
Sour flowers without what martyred braziers,  
a nude paratrooper off course, the semen of a prince inspecting  
a drive-in matinee —film adaptation of Freud— without words,  
a giant axe luring pine boxes with soiled wine and black termites,  
to divide the people of history: ancient or modern.

## THE GNATS OF LOVE

*a transcontemporation from Baudelaire's Flowers of Evil*

Dracula, dentist-saint, knows Christ felt nothing for a severed nerve,  
Hormone-spooned baby-food to soon-to-be second comings served.  
Spasmodic Jesus-aim of the amputee's jejune gnats,  
Cum-splattered axe, conjugated feces, a voluptuous shat.

Jesus the drug dealer: sun cut flat by straight Ajax,  
No Novocain for the scorned heart, save the bad ass sax.  
See the dumb-son's debonair sneer at the crack flame,  
Hear Falwell reruns drowned in the clacks of a billiards game.

Imagine the magnificent loss of the bald porcupine,  
The soul's effervescence from genuflecting and quick-lime.  
God presides in the case between grace and bafflement,

Is not fond of the double entendre or the check-of-late-rent—  
So will suffer the insouciant hombres of love:  
Angels, dammed by gravity, lapping at halos of blood.

VIII FROM *TRILCE*

*a transcontemporation of Vallejo*

A man yawns. An ostrich dies. A loaded gun.  
Pez-dispensing Hallmark cards par four,  
hi fatso, ponder Introspection's sister.

A yawn mans. Gun dies, a? loaded  
with ostrich eggs. Cereal stains my tender chapbook.  
Can you percolate parachute?  
Duh, the carnivorous cello.

Good Playdough, Frootloop aficionados expect espresso,  
but a man yawns: sin; uncin: a yawn mans,  
enter the arrow quivering a Mentos O-ring,  
harbor asparagus in the margins  
blondes trespass my frozen propane  
you'll have to pardon my art deco  
why question the front teeth of the spatula.

XII FROM *TRILCE*

*a transcontemporation of Vallejo*

I escape from a porto-pottie, by the skin of my teeth.  
A bomb is dropping, I can't tell where it will fall.  
Plumb wrong. Tarnation. Hip-replacement surgery.

Zap of a shitfly (soulfly) that dies  
between the screen of a bug-zapper, rises slightly.  
How 'bout dem apples Sir Newton?  
Naturally, each husk is your son.

Leviathan. The book of bathrooms.  
The same page, crumbling, a weight,  
words, a ham sandwich, something shrouded  
in TV-light, hit mute: shhh, here it comes.

## ZOOLOGY OF PRESENCE

a grouse, the summer, won't regard winter, a radical mouse.  
bats bust from hell for charades involving rabbits, eels.  
cats rehearse a circle-prayer, a kettle-fire play. theatrical

crabs eat apples; cursed ants, fire.

dash of salt: suits turn stiff. scarcely a body  
to be proud of.

red hats, indeed.  
boulders, davenport: these exceed brown, faraway marquee  
of dirt.

A cane-man's spade  
—>>injection-like—>> probes  
the caveman's heart,

broken,

broken.

Betoken it not easy//Shame and woe: For,  
no  
leach, no hemorrhage  
heals this ancient lion, abandoned by all

but fleas.

electricity fusing patterns \* push  
\* push \* out \* push \* push \* in \*

## HABIT

I saw a slip of silver in a puddle.  
Something pulls me, an anchor. I break  
into a run. All the way. Home. My arms, salty  
tired, hang around you like a waterfall.  
For good-and-all I'm damned. No one's left  
to make the wish. This time love's a jellyfish.  
A door closes. No one's there to cut  
the takes of bedroom rehearsals. Your body,  
across the room, is real, but still a shadow away.  
Because I've always slept bereft of You.  
Because I want to keep the habit of waiting  
through the night, waiting for morning dew  
to snap awake the wilted bloom.

## MY NEW HAIRCUT

Early March, 84 degrees, back to the sun,  
yellow warmth like a palm

on my scalp—so many months of shaggy winter  
hair chopped off Saturday & I'm still  
uncertain of the ramifications.

A single brown leaf, jagged hard-edged curl,  
skitters across the sidewalk & leaves me

blinking, dumbfounded. What connection  
can I find between it & the stubborn weedflower

sprouting from the bark chips at the base of the tree  
from which that very leaf dropped? What happens  
when my hair grows back? If I hold my pen  
upright long enough I can watch its shadow  
track slowly across the page. The woman

who cut my hair handled me so roughly  
I rejected all hope in a new dawning of human kindness,

but cut so briskly, so accurately,  
that my faith in human perfectibility was restored.  
When it was all over, she parted my hair on the right  
& everything changed for me. Refreshed, I faced a world  
where I would make none of the same mistakes.

I was a new man. But already my hair  
grows thicker & I don't feel so certain anymore.

My brief flowering is already coming to an end.  
What answers there are need to be decoded,  
patterns of sun & leaf, a sprouting weedflower  
too stupid to understand no one wants it,  
& too pretty to believe it's not beautiful.

FOUR MARES, FLANK TO FLANK

on a downtown sidewalk:  
Appaloosa, a royal silver

service. Two Clydesdales  
and a Morgan—fourteen hands.  
Pinwheel tails. Brushed, hair falls

like thin, glinting fish  
slapping pavement.

Blinders on, this world is only  
what's ahead: the brick wall,  
painted white; my quiet  
red bicycle; the homeless shelter's  
constant, blanketed out-

pouring.

## DISPELLING THE ALGAL BLOOM

spilt up from the hollow embroidery of my belly,  
church bells spit across the meadow.  
This season, the old classmates arrange pears  
on tea towels and *momma*

and the tapestry collapses—  
this garment of craving.

My tulle, the tender innards  
of a bathing dress. My organdy, mollusk skin  
of fire. Rising shantung, carnivorous whisper  
against a starched cake.

The fat bell slows its pelvic nodding.  
Halleluiahs erode into the lake  
a chord of puce. The avenue swallows ash  
blond like a runner of wedding photographs.

*You're all I'll ever waste on wanting,  
counterfeit infant,  
gleaming mannequin,  
ornate diatom—  
pin-tucked into my nada-belly—*

September stirs the French magazines,  
the not-mother cleans her empty bird.  
The atlas unfolds like a carriage  
window tearing into a thicket.

## THE ELEGANT THIEF

She was edged sometimes in allure  
and sometimes in revenge. Tulle  
or orchids. The hole  
from her boot heel sunk on the basement  
door welled like a heart  
or a far train.

We'd part-expected her since the swing set  
when the chain links twisted  
into crackling, failing  
to contain us, our rotations.

Behind her, a half-sack  
of pilfered apples, which looked to us  
delightful and anarchic.

She swept the top drawers and rattled our own baby  
teeth before us like a damp mirror.  
She tore layers from our toe skin  
and extracted the tiniest of blue, strangled feet.  
She traced every bone and nodule, our bellies  
pressed to a kind of laminate sky.

Our cuticles  
sweetened with blood and she  
washed them and kissed them like hair  
in a copper basin. She fed us  
and called us reality, surprise and condition.

Called us and we arrived and arrived.

We were almost asleep for the emancipation. She was  
gone, in a trail of brambles.  
And for all aesthetic measurements, the wishes  
made on horseshoes thrown over shoulders as the candles  
roared out, she was a wooden spoke,  
the cheek of a medallion, the padding of a couple  
in another room. We pined for her return.

We filled the offertory with signals. What could have been  
more terrible than the flocks that homed  
on the lawn, straddled the roof, and buckled the gutters—  
they moaned like cold engines, their necks  
peeled open in horrible song.

## DREAM SEQUENCE #1

Two palms open to testify  
there was a brother,  
the tiles broken on the floor.  
When the hand is submerged  
in water it bleeds the shades  
of the atmosphere, unloading  
the burden of rituals and observation.  
From each wrist comes a color,  
the objective: to identify the source  
of illness. Red ink is purity; black,  
something less significant. Blue equals  
detail or a moment forgotten.  
On the mountain-scape are horses.  
The horses range in tone and pitch,  
each one with a race beside them, each  
one with fire on their back. One has a broken  
neck. One is bleeding on the mountain. The  
red becomes a landslide, carrying itself down  
to the edge of the stream.

Hidden in the attic are a series of surrendered  
files, boxes containing memorabilia from a time  
you do not remember. But still you are the keeper,  
preserving each handshake, each kiss, each  
stack of fading letters. Your hands swollen  
from paper-cuts and desire.

[untitled]

When the sky goes grey  
the crow collapses,  
breaking into a million  
pieces of colored glass.  
We witness this removal  
of flight and gather the  
fragments, arranging them  
into a replica of a ship—the sails,  
a delicate interpretation of feathers;  
the mast, a golden beak. This vessel,  
now disguised as a stillness  
in the dusk, on vespertine waters  
we set off to discover  
the atmosphere again.

VENTRILOQUIST

push  
of your hand behind my skull            crash  
of your chest against my back

fear I might glimpse your strained face  
fear love will whittle the borders  
*that keep us      that keep us*

witness you cauliflower ecstasy  
peek to see your sealed lids  
worm a cold desire

so many things spoken for            (Van Gogh's damp ear)

## SOVIET EXPERIMENT CAMP

Beginning with the monkeys, thinking minds  
are driving needles through the ears. And now  
the second round of prisoners show signs  
of Man beyond a man. Doctors throw down  
a dozen subjects for another sign  
behind the faces' bulging looks. Exposed  
their looks, the features frozen by machines.  
Our tacit mandate: harness ESP..  
telepathy for military use..  
They'll send the spies into America  
to channel information back to use.  
We're teaching them to breathe through water—  
we're prepared to drown a million people  
because the one that breathes will save our nation.

## THE LURID METHOD OF DR. MAMOTO

Limbs tied in belts, the lulling head awake.  
In broken English to the patronized  
his shaded mind's delicate commands:  
*Give the sound.* Breaking arms allow  
the sound. A pile of clothes beside the desk,  
the wires in fevered baths. The features soft,  
arranged in red. Arms and legs will glisten.  
*Open the foots.* The straps that tighten around  
will issue marks and cuts; are sewn in folds  
obsessed with how the body moves.  
Approves the head, corrections smeared across  
the body's center and it's echoed glitch.  
The stringy entrails churning out her mouth  
a leash...*you look like a walking lady.*

“THE FIELDS EATING”

The fields eating. Each among and were as need be.  
The morning wind gently. To and, and the sun.

Upon where spread bees, spread the little dust  
from yellow milkweed, was the bright.

And then away to the ferns while replied in her eyes  
is to keep the many ways she tried, sick for want

of sunlight. We have watched shower, but still.  
Thus have we. And this night for the last time us

and we, or her now. Or I shall be.

ANATOMY AND SPACE

The life of a meteor pleasing as the marks  
make your body

as a study of carbon.  
That there's too much, there's not enough.

Too much entirely, there's not enough in what's left.

LICHEN

          a corona of birch  
twigs   *eta carinae*

our helix of the dreamless North

rocks never once

thrown from their shoulders   dismantling  
petrified forests   lungs   deep

cavities pillars   our prophetic crop

no one walks

on our snow   no one  
has seen us so much  
                                  as twitch

          cased in psilocybin  
exoskeletons   we drum

the silent mouth of the tundra   bladeless

mantra   death

to a thousand halls  
of skies   we see your nomadic tribe  
splintered from the coals  
to the coals

          boar tusk  
to bacillus                    in one proto-

plastic convulsion

herding bedrock  
towards stardust    unlocking zero's mineral key

covering everything  
with everything  
                  you forget

NOSTRUM

of morning rain's decanted occident,  
a garden lullaby, a tinder box

of nimbus flocked across the borderland  
I struck, indelible, a match against.

of memorandum, birds' disturbances  
of otherwise magnetic thoughts, their flaps

unrolled to shadow, then to ocher, bit  
and throat of *now*— these indeterminate

reprieves from resignation: how her face,  
the way one can't see into rain, won't let

me look, the token scuds of eyes, not mine  
or hers, were hers. were discontinuous,

were rational to neither then nor now.  
that borderland, I think no more of it.

## CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

**Katherine Fallon** graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 2003 and received her MFA from Sarah Lawrence in 2006. She has poems in *Re:al* and is currently living in Denver, where she writes classified ads for a living.

**Jean Hartig** lives and works in Brooklyn assembling her thesis in various Tea Lounges. She is an MFA candidate at Sarah Lawrence College.

**Maya Pindyck** grew up in Massachusetts and lives in Brooklyn, NY. She holds an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. Her chapbook, *Locket, Master*, won a Poetry Society of America Chapbook Fellowship. She is also the recent winner of Bellingham Review's 49th Parallel Poetry Award.

**Nate Pritts'** new work can be/will be seen in print from *Gulf Coast*, *Conduit*, *Court Green* and online at *Past Simple*, *Keepgoing* and *Bedazzler*. A new book, *BIG CRISIS*, is out from Forklift, Ink. The editor & sole shareholder of *H\_NGM\_N*, an online journal of poetry, poetics, &c., Nate lives in Natchitoches, LA where he is an Assistant Professor at Northwestern State University.

**Minal K. Singh** lives in Houston, Texas. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming from *Lit*, *Ploughshares* and *Lumina*.

**Sampson Starkweather** loves all his friends. His poems are recently published or forthcoming from: *Lit*, *Absent*, *New York Quarterly*, *Redivder*, *Gargoyle* and *Lumina*.

**Gabriella Torres** is a cofounder and editor of *The Tiny*. Her chapbook *Sister* was published by Lame House Press in 2005.

# sink review.

