

OUT OF THE MIDDLE

2011 POETRY JOURNAL OF THE MIDWESTERN REGION OF SIGMA TAU DELTA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Note

blur

Footprints of Worthy Measure

Mother's Gone Again

The Implied You

breakthrough

Oxford

Winter Wear

Museum of the Oceanic

July 4th

Credits

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

Congratulations to the writers featured in 2011's Ex Medio—the literary journal of the Midwestern Region of Sigma Tau Delta! This debut edition features just a sampling of the impressive talent of students from the Midwest with contributions from other regions. A special thanks belongs to this year's editorial board for their time and expertise in selecting poems—an absolutely unenviable job when one considers the high caliber of works submitted!

Watch for next year's call for submissions and an invitation to join the editorial staff for the 2012 edition!

blur

pencil-leg jeans
and too-big shoes
walk down Main Street;
nonprescription horn-rimmed
glasses pan over boarded-up
shop windows
sultry lips sip cigarettes,
cast tiny orange shadows

-
at the old folks' home
they wonder -
were we like this?
but nobody can remember

-
champagne nights and
tequila sunrises
not a care in the world

-
at the old folks' home
they say -
it's all fun and games
til somebody wraps his car
around a tree
and they laugh
and laugh
and laugh
because they've forgotten
what they're laughing about

-
black slacks and Chuck Taylors
stroll up church steps.
say hi to jesus for me,
says a
scraggly beard
winter coat
Rolling Stones t-shirt
stain on the sidewalk
and the slacks keep moving.

-
champagne nightmares and
tequila mistakes
half-remembered

...
somethings.

-
bless me, father, for i have
sinned -
says the black-slacks
Chuck Taylors
white shirt
shadow in the confessional
tell me more -
says the grate.
what do you have to confess -
says the grate.
i forgot.
get out.
say hi to jesus for me.
get out.

-
champagne toasts and
tequila eulogies
dearly beloved we gather here
today
to mourn
...
somebody.

black suits
black dresses
steep in rain and tears
granite headstones read form
psalms
proverbs
the gospels
somebody reads eliot -
the hollow men.
somebody lights a joint.

-
at the old folks' home
grey suit
black tie
coaxes a song
out of a beat-up Baldwin -
what a friend we have in jesus.
some sing along.
others can't be bothered.

Ian Matthews
Tau Theta
Olivet Nazarene University

Footprints of Worthy Measure

Bradstreetian finesse with the word.

Sublime spinstress of the golden phrase.

A discouraged, encouraged mouse in a maze.

Pen you mighty sword.

A valiant, dalliant dance between tree and ink.

Arranging those promised word bouquets.

I know what your mother would think.

What you have set forth as essential,

Now,

Is the rapture of being alive

With a new embryo of language life that is growing inside.

Your compassion for language grew genetically from a mother.

Contractually bound you adopted me, so mine came from another.

You are the Sheppard I always need to call mine.

Too late?

No.

Just in time.

Winding path met winding path.

Ignite my passion.

Correct my mistakes.

Expose my flaws.

Make me great.

I am never the lesser, yet you are always the professor.

On many terrains you have left footprints of worthy measure.

Too embedded to remove. Too thick to mop. Too caked to scrape.

I am of but one of their permanent possessors.

I have been a willing victim intoxicated by your academic sloe gin.

You have ensured that there is at least one other to put the flowers

Jennifer Spiegel
Alpha Eta Epsilon
Park University



Mother's Gone Again

There's a white-hot flash
and a storm at hand

seconds ticking on the second's hand

a brush with blues and blushes pink

a dragon breathing who never sleeps
and the house swivels on its seams.

Caroline
*Amy Horvat
Alpha Delta Omicron
Marietta College*

The Implied You

Please don't come before I am ready.

Please don't come at night
while my eyes are closed,
and my brain is busy
swimming down a meadow,
becoming river,
reorganizing my fruit in the
refrigerator
so friends I haven't seen in years
can come visit,
to say goodbye.

Please don't come while my mother
makes pancakes
for dinner, like
she used to.

Don't knock on the door dressed
as a young boy,
in a baseball cap,
when the batter is only half-
gone and dripping
from the spoon onto a hot griddle.

Don't wedge your way
between me and the door, eager
for pancakes
like all young boys.
My stomach growls for that
family meal, summer evening,
six o'clock, more-play-time-later—
the very essence of pancakes.

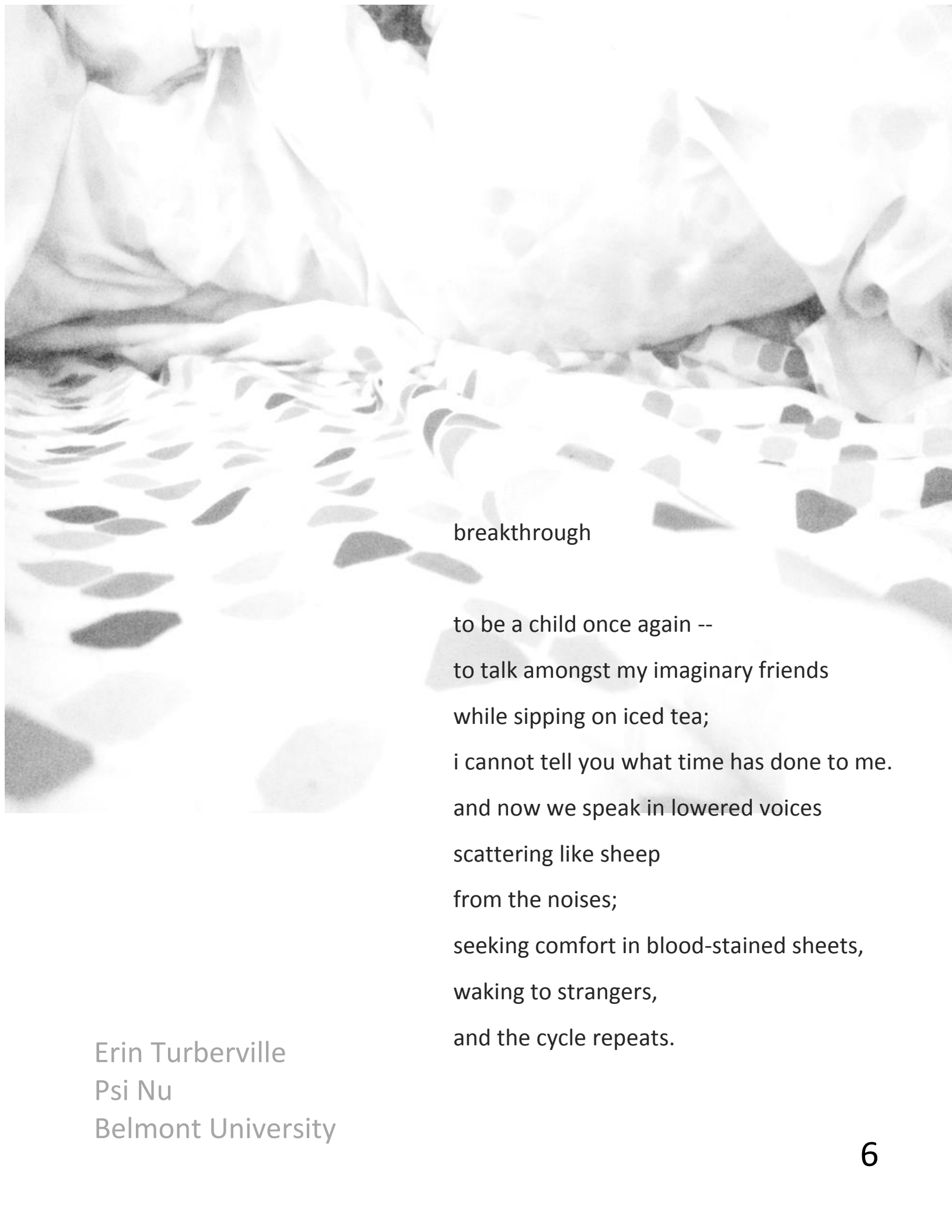
But if you come I have to share,
I might find myself sitting in some
stranger's house having to eat
another meal. Their curry.
Their out-of-a-box stuffing.

Come, instead, in the morning,
messenger for the sun.
Slide through the curtain blinds
squeezing between the slats
and land on the blooming bells
of my Shadow Dancer Betty.
Crawl over the boy next door,
skin freckled, and onto my face.
Prize open my eyelids at just
the right time. Become the dream
yourself. Be the alarm
I never set.

Come then, when I can hold you
in my brain. Hug you,
let you fall out all over the desk.
Come when there is
pen and paper and

I will shower you
into being.

Amy Horvat
Alpha Delta Omicron
Marietta College

A black and white photograph of a bed. In the foreground, a blanket with a dark, leaf-like pattern is spread out. Behind it, a white sheet is pulled up, creating deep, soft folds. The lighting is soft, casting gentle shadows and highlighting the textures of the fabric.

breakthrough

to be a child once again --
to talk amongst my imaginary friends
while sipping on iced tea;
i cannot tell you what time has done to me.
and now we speak in lowered voices
scattering like sheep
from the noises;
seeking comfort in blood-stained sheets,
waking to strangers,
and the cycle repeats.

Erin Turberville
Psi Nu
Belmont University

Oxford

It's cold and raining colleges:

Corpus Christi,

Balliol,

Magdalen,

Oriel,

Christ Church .

Use your skeleton key to open the large iron gates

where a short spectacled man named

Godfrey serves tea at three

They don't tell you but

there's an ale crusted pub in every college

so most mornings you'll wake up hungover

from too much lager'n lime

finding it hard to study art or literature and

when you go to the famous Bodleian Library

you'll discover it has no books.

In the ominous Examination Hall

entrants wear black caps and ball gowns.

It's said they had a séance calling up Lewis Carroll

to read *Alice in Wonderland*.

I'm not sure if he came.

*Cathy Amboy
Alpha Theta Gamma
University of Michigan-Flint*

A photograph of a winter scene on a university campus. A wide, paved walkway is covered in a thin layer of snow. To the left, there are tall, multi-story stone buildings with many windows. To the right, there are bare trees and some evergreen shrubs. A black lamppost stands near the buildings. The sky is bright and hazy, suggesting a sunny day. The overall atmosphere is quiet and cold.

Winter Wear

I was too broke
to buy earmuffs,
and you lacked the cash
for a scarf,
so we grew them, like farmers:
crops of string-curls
clapping over my earlobes,
itchy brown chops
wrapped 'round your chin.
But I'm chopping off
my hair-hat,
and you're shivering
for a shave—
so when it snows,
you'll have to hold
my hand tight,
like a glove.

Sarah Haas
Alpha Nu Omega
Southwest Baptist University

Museum of the Oceanic

Legs firmly planted
in a rolling sea
high above the sky
when the world was dark
and my mind was light

Winding through the rooms
of a dark oak museum,
meet not the ancients,
but the vague exhibits
and the roof
which holds the salty sea

The knowledge of its
curious placement
remains unknown
Unless to find people
in vastness where once
there was no one at all

The sea of my dream is
as small as it is large

On the first floor,
there's a reproduction of
the echoing sounds of a hallway
that exists in another time.
On the second,
a photo gallery
of photos not yet taken

Grand staircases of the museum
lead to its rushing rooftop
and its overhang of water
that never falls
into the green valley below

The sea of my mind is as small as it is large
Its charging waters require unwavering legs
and unwavering feet
firmly planted on the shingles

*Ericka Cherry
Sigma Mu Gamma
Rockhurst University*

July 4th

I stepped from my cookie-cutter chrysalis
and felt gravel crunch under my bare feet.
Curling my toes, I shouted into the cracked
bell of the world "I think
therefore I am someone just like you!"

No one replied, so I walked down to the
corner Cream and Bean for a cone.

My flabby breasts flopped on my chest.
I pulled stray urticating hairs wrapped in silk
from my cheek. A girl laughed.

I crawled into the grave, rubbed
mud through my hair. I picked up a maggot
and inserted it into my ear.

I told George Washington the world needs him
again. He cracked his back. "The world
is too late to mean much to me."

Then rigor mortis set in.



Amy Horvat
Alpha Delta Omicron
Marietta College

May 4, 1699.

Art Credits

blur

Mother's Gone Again

breakthrough

The Implied You

Museum of the Oceanic.....photography and design by Emily Spunaugle

Oxford.....photograph courtesy of Tim Stephansen, design by Emily Spunaugle

Footprints of Worthy Measure

Winter Wear

July 4th.....photograph courtesy of Tim Stephansen, design by Ian Matthews