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Untitled

Craig Bromley

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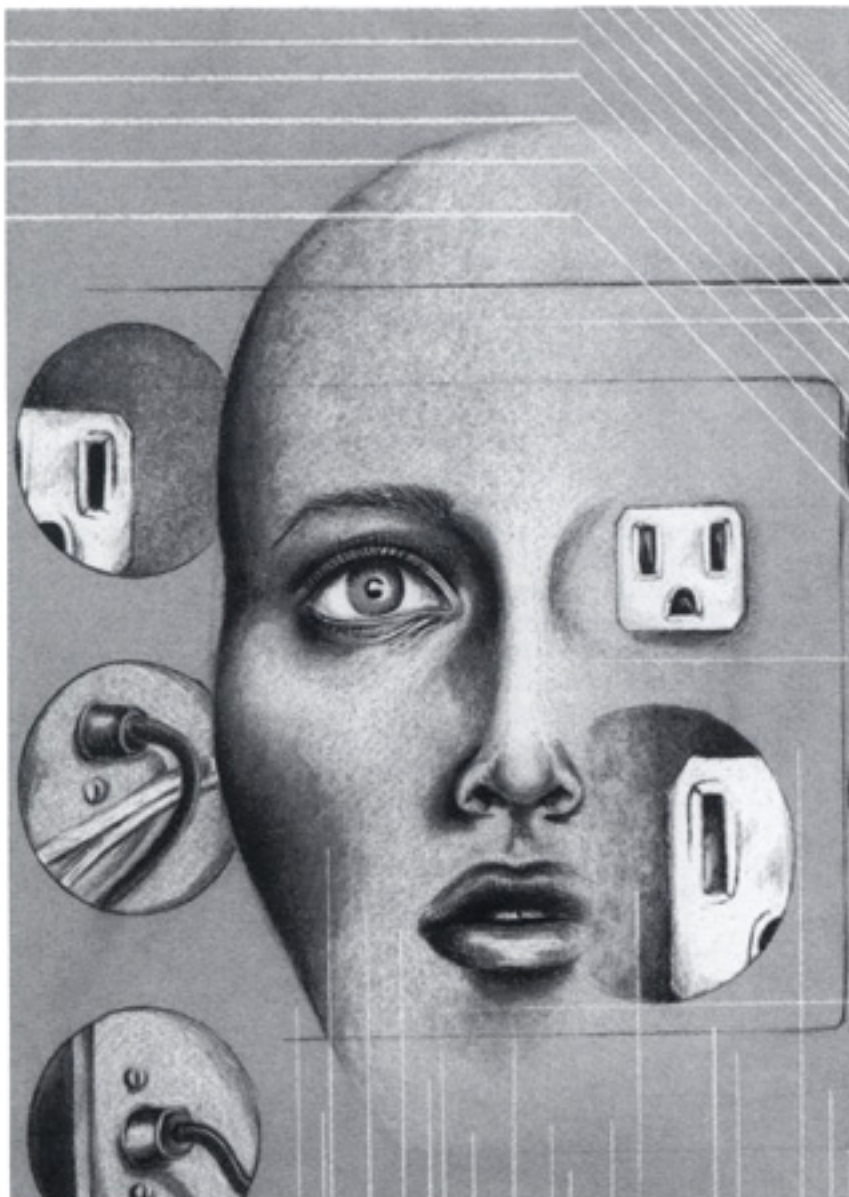


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CRAIG BROMLEY } UNTITLED

LAURA NAZIMEK } AT THAT SHE IS CALLED
(Nominated, Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry)

Grape jelly is smeared across her wide face
as she greedily grabs at my beloved papers.
My thoughts and privacy are at once crushed up
against her soft flesh.
And they stick there like feathers all around her indulgent mouth.
One by one, she tears off the dates and the names and the pictures
of my most precious dreams
and stamps them harshly with a smoldering iron.
With mad laughter and cruel indifference
she stuffs them all into a used envelope
and tosses it into the deep pocket of her coat.
Her balding head and her blackened teeth hobble off into the sunset
where she finally sits beneath a sappy tree and thumbs through
my stained journals.
Unimaginable colors and sounds swirl from her breath
as she pastes stars and seeds and flower petals all over my words.
With a grubby pencil in her hands she sighs and coughs
until the dwindling moonlight is a mere stub of wax and no longer burns.

And so I wake from the unrest to meet her again.
She is coated in the syrup of the woods and grass of the fields.
My papers smell like the exotic indulgence of a sweet tooth
and I am nearly sickened.
I pay her, and she gives me change from her musty purse.
She stares at me as if I am the changing weather,
and sways mysteriously to some distant music.
There is a familiarity in her milky skin and wide feet.
I am intrigued by her crystal eyes, and yet frightened by
her extravagance.
I remember myself.
I clutch my papers and run from the madness
of late night crumbs and ashes.
There couldn't be one as horrible as she.
And yet she has read my words,
Written them as if imagination.

