



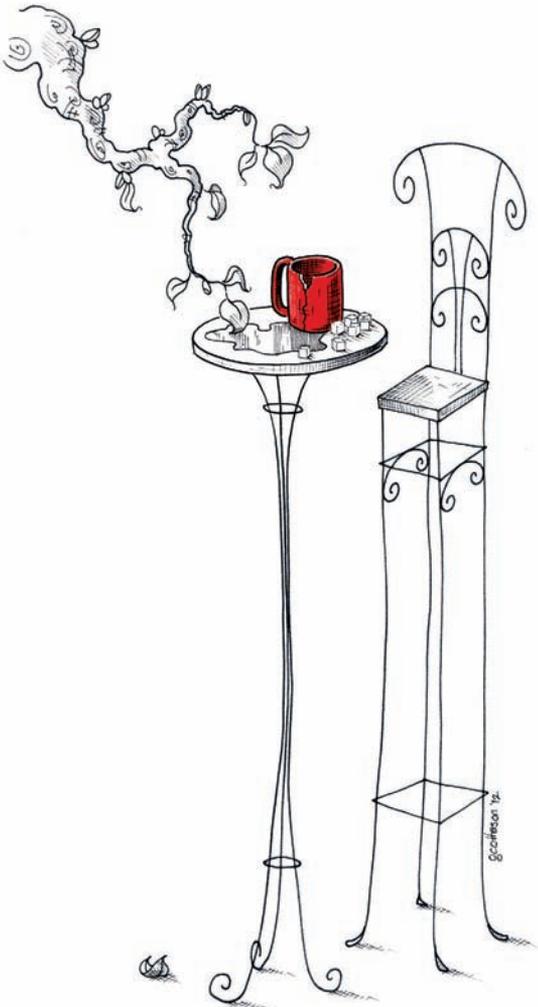
SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW

#6

SPRING / SUMMER '12

\$7

# SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW



## POETRY

### Featuring:

Steven Cramer

Kate Greenstreet

Carl Phillips

Joshua Marie Wilkinson

## ON THE BANKS OF FORGETTING

Women where I'm from were caged by Jesus. In 1995, as my neighbor drove her minivan beside the canal, some young punk with a black mohawk mooned her from one of the spillways, his white buttocks refracted by the moss-green water. In spring, before it was hot enough, the water pulled by current sucked us into it even standing on the bank looking at our blurred selves looking back. The canal was dredged in 1916 by horse and pulley, long after Joseph Smith had declared this continent filled with His other sheep. I always wondered if his disciples arrived here suspended somewhere between the shelf of wind and low-hanging clouds, the ones that always sent me digging for old movies I'd seen fifty million times. Old was 1986. In 1916 it was spring, too, but sound came in low, refracted mercilessly in the cottonwoods, what the Indians called the leafshakers, the heat-ribbed dirt waiting for asphalt to ripen and rip its skin beside the path the canal would take. The path I would take, touching the bare leg of Nicole under the water with my toe—the neighbor's niece, busty and freckled, who could've been my first girl friend, but got knocked up a year later by a Mormon boy instead. Trying to say a *fish* right, but it never coming out right, and her just staring down and past me at her own reflection. Past the cow pasture, and the neighbor's house, the pain skips on the surface of remembering what happened. I dripped on the carpet watching the green spark of Patriot missiles on television. My mother told me to go dry off but I wouldn't yet. Instead I would bang my elbows into the edges that didn't fit, the light glancing low and fatal at the corners of the window in my bedroom and outside the hammock twisting, its reflection caught in cousin Nadine's window next door. Does that wind still exist? Does it falter up to the faded blue rims of mountains or the slowly scripted responses of everything that left no impression? The angles of shadows the shakers cast, why do they come back? A stone skipped in a dream state that won't go straight because dusk is twisting outside again. My father is watching *The Dead Pool* in the living room, which has nothing to do with water. His feet twitch when he sleeps and that reminds me of never seeing him that peaceful again, of twitching my toe beneath Nicole's black eyes, of forgetting.