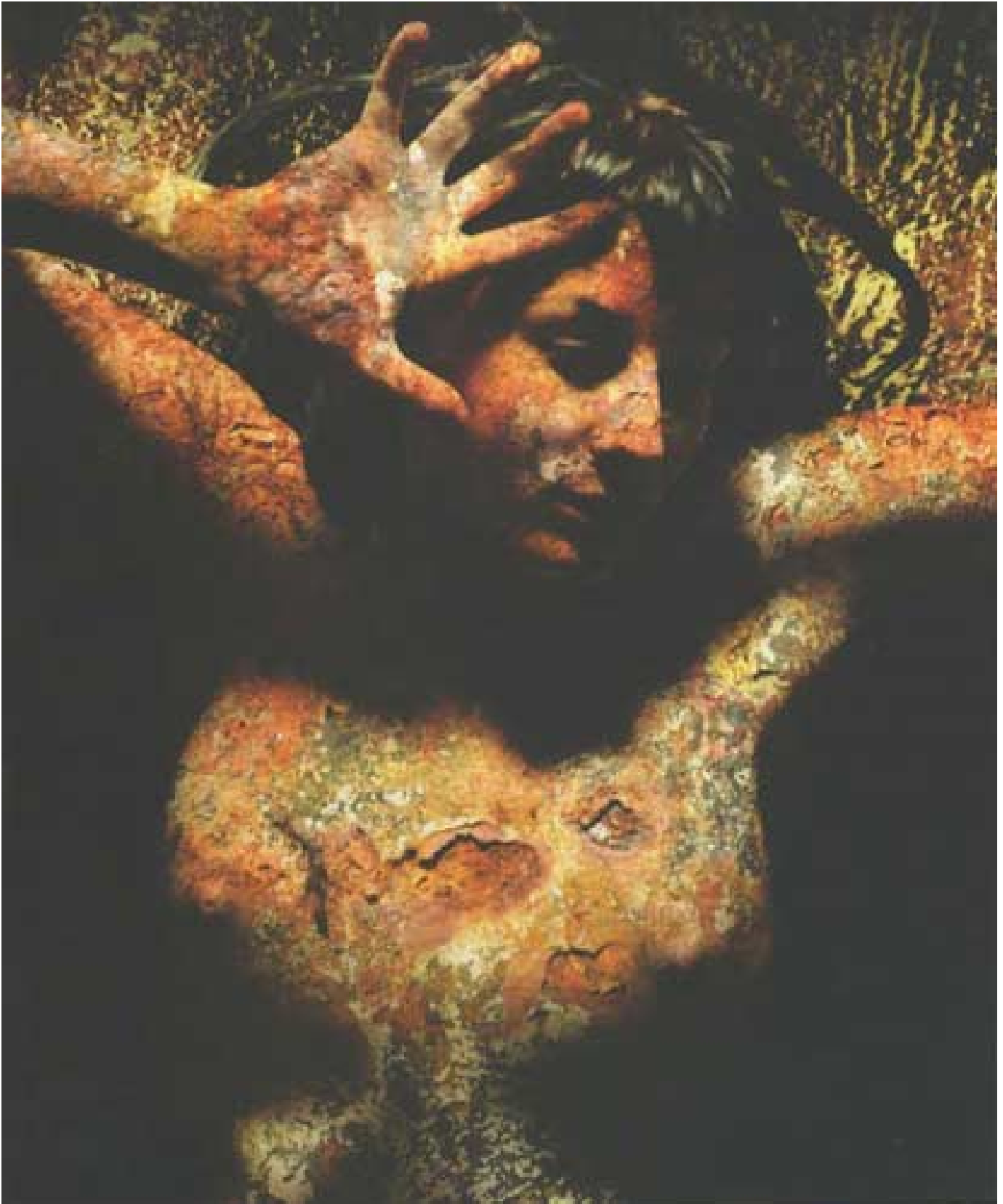


Slipstream



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Annual

Review by [Travis Laurence Naught \(/faq/reviewer-bios\)](/faq/reviewer-bios)

Rust, dust, lust is the three-pronged theme carried in the pages of this year's *Slipstream*. Poems start on page 5 of this issue and continue, unrelentingly in all the right ways through page 92. That's 87 consecutive pages of notable work!

Janet Warman and Margo Davis do an absolutely amazing job, separately, in weaving a compelling link between all three themes in a short space. Warman's poem "Tin Man" uses familiar subject matter for the most part and left me cringing in anticipation. School plays, for their derision among parents, foster a necessity for creative ingenuity and a waypoint for future childhood memories. The lines "She made us rust, / and I was to grab his legs / as he told his Beautiful story." showcase this perfectly.

And Margo Davis in her poem "Squall" writes of Oklahoma dust, the conjured up images of pickup rust, and the undeniably evil lust in opportunistic men. There is urgency about the subject matter while at the same time maintaining descriptive force with its imagery. I especially enjoy this section, "Red silt blows so thick I mask my face with a wet blouse."

The poem "Lot's Wife's Daughters" dealt most directly with the dust and lust themes and was contributed by Jody A. Zorgdrager. She uniquely presents a point of view based on one of the more famous Old Testament scoldings. Readers who may be unfamiliar with biblical references can go ahead and skip this one I suppose, but there is enough flavor added to this well-seasoned story, that I think everyone will find it palatable. Here's a sample of the fine writing, "She was statuesque. A pillar / of the community. Salt / of the earth—our drunken / family joke, centuries old."

In another entry, "Hercules in Retirement," Alison Stone also works to shift focus from dust to rust with lines that remind us of an aging hero. My particular favorite is, "It takes a different strain / of courage not to drain // each river that reflects / my shrunken shoulders." I love the way it combines ancient historical myth with the realities of aging period.

Max Shanley gives the theme of rust its full comeuppance. One of the few writers to get multiple pieces in this issue of *Slipstream*, both "Tonight" and "Jazz Records in the Attic" carry copper hinted lines. Shanley hits readers with "What I will not remember is her ripple of hair being lit by the sun," and then swings again with, "not absence will walk upstairs and in and out of rotted attics."

That brings us to lust. Most of the poetry in this issue angled at least somewhat in this direction. Very little of it was dirty and none of it was uncomfortably descriptive, but there is some randy writing in these pages! "Peeling an Orange" by Andrea O'Rourke, was a very fun, somewhat graphic, sensory experience early on in the issue, and can be comparatively juxtaposed against "The Panties of the Mistress" by Gerald Locklin. Sexual dynamics are set squarely at the center of both pieces, but one is daringly public while the other is shrouded in secrecy.

Other standouts in this category include "Mannequins" by Rachel Squires Bloom, "Commercial" by Paul French, and "A Queer Activist Love Story" by Lockie Hunter. Definitely worth checking out!

As is true so often, I am left thinking back on a collection of poetry with an outlier that will stick with me beyond most others. *Slipstream* did a wonderful job compiling work for their rust, dust, lust issue, and fans of any of those themes will not be disappointed. They also snuck in a poem or two to simply make the issue stronger. "Alejandrina Garcia" written by Mather Schneider is a poem about work, loving memories, and continuing to put one foot in front of the other. Out of all the wonderful writing in this issue, I will remember this poem the most.

This issue of *Slipstream* allowed me to rediscover my poetry passion to hit the page for some writing of my own and may inspire other readers to do the same.

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