

Molly Listen  
ENGL 2002

Selected Poems from Creative Writing – Poetry

**THE MAP** curls at the edges. Lustrous laminant separates slowly and exposes raw fibers. Preserving the work of the colonists who arrived in search of gold. They scooped nuggets of corn into their woven cotton knapsacks, stained with blood. Clutching a piece of the whole world, gently rolled into a scroll.

Now it's evidence of lands explored, lands stolen. I can't seem to find the people...where did they leave to? Small bullet holes like thumb tacks pierce the names of cities – the circles of light shine through, forming a refracted starscape on the table. The colors bleed, warped after years of sun bleach and neglect. Still preserving what once was

the world with its open prairie fields; flat and expansive. A symbol verifying civilization smashed like pottery. The vast landscapes and oceans home to more than a compass rose. Each small saturated shape marking boundaries along the curves of rivers and mountains. They claimed their land in a box using sharpened colored pencils.

### **(CHEAP) FRILLS**

Putting cream and sugar in my coffee  
until it's opaque and beige.  
Spending hours at museums,  
watching documentaries,  
going to breakfast with my dad  
(on Mondays),  
and eating sprinkled donuts.

Reading a new book  
with an unbroken spine.  
Staying up until 3:00 in the morning  
for no good reason,  
making to-do lists I'll never finish,  
and looking at old pictures.

orange juice with no pulp

The place in Lawrence with the vanilla lavender cream soda  
The tiny enamel box that I got in Morocco  
The pink umbrellas that come in decadent drinks.  
Extra thick paper

## **GRENDEL**

I had lived in a Mere, a swampy marsh,  
With my mother.  
Everything was quiet, -- ready to avenge,  
Twisted vines and darkness rolled in.  
When your mighty sword was before me  
And a dangling arm,  
Cast off of my body, seen on the ground.

Two glassy yellow eyes, and tufts of matted fur  
Peeped through my lifeless leathery hide.  
A mother has lost her son forever now.  
Nothing could ever replace me.  
Not even a victory could satisfy her empty heart,  
Nor replace the light in the wetland.  
The tears will always streak, and will not dry.

But you took my mother's life too.  
The Danish countryside will never again be filled with beasts  
Deep in the shadows.  
And my severed head will stay here watching  
Over the mead-hall for all to see,  
My eyes empty as a cave, searching for a different ending,  
Our legacy forever remembered.

**FEBRUARY**

My dad took me to see a movie in Denver at the Mayan theatre and we took pictures against the brick outside of the Walgreens

**MARCH**

We sipped hot drinking chocolate out of blue and white pottery and watched the cinnamon stick to the sides of the horchata glass

**APRIL**

The red and yellow flowers looked like paint ball bursts against the blotted grey sky

**AUGUST**

We went to a fancy restaurant and ordered caramel chicken that was cooked in a clay pot. My brother complained about how expensive it was but ate all of it and the rest of everybody's food.

## **Presidio**

I see green lawns trimmed, fog  
Tiny rock pebbles scattered across the asphalt driveway  
The red bride a speck in the distance  
Tiny cars whizzing by (but you can't see them)  
A giant red brick building in the middle of a plaza

We sat in the shade under the yellow umbrellas and  
ripping the white paper bag at the seam  
Our laps covered in flecks of powdered sugar

As soon as you tell people you're cool, you're not

## The Train

chugs

overtop

a manicured bed of fresh flowers  
made into a smile.

It curves around the asphalt street

filled

with people

dodging horse-drawn carts and trolleys and  
passing up souvenirs.

Ignoring sweet aromas of

fresh

dipped corn dogs,

candy apples, and fizzy root beer.

Not pausing to step in-

side the cinema, acknowledge

the

cigar store

Indian or listen to pennies

plinking inside the well.

Wishing instead to encircle

a

pink teacup

or ride alongside life-like pirates

until the crowd narrows

with the crackle of fireworks.

Grand

finale

signaling the end of a day but

the continuance of

an antique era preserved by

the

blue lamp

perched in the windowsill like a mouse,

still. Drop another coin

in slot and I will tell you more.