

# Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge

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Volume 7

Issue 5 "If I touch the depths of your heart ... ": The  
Human Promise of Poetry in Memories of Mahmoud  
Darwish

Article 21

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1-1-2009

## American Idols

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### Recommended Citation

Peseroff, Joyce (2009) "American Idols," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*: Vol. 7: Iss. 5, Article 21.  
Available at: <http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol7/iss5/21>

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## *American Idols*

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*(The Antikythera Mechanism, discovered more than 100 years ago in a Roman shipwreck, was used by ancient Greeks to display astronomical cycles. Its system of gears and cogs never appeared in a machine or weapon.)*

For ancient Greeks  
gears creaked

not in machines but toys.  
They cared

who danced hardest,  
who played best,

who told the old  
story with a twist—

gods lofty  
on a pulley.

Beautiful youth  
still engage

agora and stage  
as their white teeth

approach, retreat,  
in tabloids racked

by Lex High juniors  
for minimum wage.

Javelins they hurl  
on practice fields

beside the Town Pool  
wobble and prick

fresh turf. Those old  
Greeks didn't

labor-save: slaves  
in harness hauled

Achilles' entourage  
to war without a cog.

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Joyce Peseroff is distinguished lecturer of English and director of the MFA Program at UMass Boston. Her four books of poems are *The Hardness Scale*, *A Dog in the Lifeboat*, *Mortal Education*, and *Eastern Mountain Time*. She has been managing editor and associate poetry editor of *Ploughshares*, and edited *The Ploughshares Poetry Reader*, *Robert Bly: When Sleepers Awake*, and *Simply Lasting: Writers on Jane Kenyon*. Her poems and reviews appear in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Southern Review*, *New York Times Book Review*, *The Women's Review of Books*, and the online journal *Slate*.