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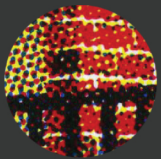
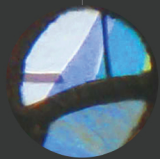
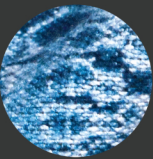
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thebridge

8

Spring 2011

Volume 8



Bridgewater State University

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Bridgewater State University

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To our originators,
for having the vision, strength and wisdom
to build *The Bridge* thus far,

Jerald Walker

Faculty Advisor, 2003–2010

Mary Dondero


Faculty Advisor, 2004–2010


Linda Hall


Alumni Consultant, 2003–2011


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Mission Statement

The Bridge is produced and managed entirely by students. Our charge is to serve, as we are dedicated to showcasing the artistic talents of the student body while providing internships in editing and design. Our goal is to excel, as we wish to pay a debt to our alumni, keep a promise to ourselves, and set an example for our successors.

Copyright Statement

The writers and visual artists have consented to have their work published in this volume of *The Bridge*; they have reserved all other rights. Works published in *The Bridge* are the property of the individual writers and visual artists and may not be reprinted or otherwise duplicated without their consent. Comments and inquiries can be sent to thebridgejournal@bridgew.edu.

Introduction

When we first met as a team in September 2010, few of us were aware of what to expect while making this journal. With only two veteran staff members—and a new set of faculty advisors—many of us entered blindly into an experience we were told would incinerate our free time; an experience that would drive us to myopic fervor in cramped rooms, examining punctuation and wracking ourselves over minute imperfections in our kerning. We were also told this endeavor would be worth it.

All of this was invariably correct.

First and foremost, we would like to thank our former faculty advisors, Professor Mary Dondero and Dr. Jerald Walker, whose dedication to artistic perfection has established a lineage spanning eight years and garnered over one hundred awards—including two Pacemakers. They set a precedent we have found daunting; yet, that precedent has acted as a catalyst to propel *The Bridge* into its newest incarnation, one that reaches for these same high standards whilst creating room for new inspiration. We also thank Linda Hall, an eight-time Alumni consultant to *The Bridge*, whose invaluable advice and assistance have helped forge this creative legacy. We similarly extend gratitude to the Office of the President and appreciation to the Offices of the Provost and Academic Affairs, as well as the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

This is a transitory year and we welcome Dr. Melanie McNaughton and Professor John Mulrooney to our staff as faculty advisors. Without their willingness to leap into these positions, none of this would be possible. We also thank them for their readiness to endure late nights, cold pizza, and stale coffee in the weeks leading up to publication.

We continue to be bolstered by the advice of former editors and student consultants who made themselves available to us. Their guidance and support have provided a valuable foundation as we developed the content for this year's volume. Each of our hundreds of submissions is evaluated in a blind selection process. The high quality of these entries warranted the continuation of the honorable mentions page

to acknowledge work we wish we could have included. Never will we fail to be impressed by the talent of our student body.

Bridgewater State's newly-gained university status is no mere technical addition to the school's name or accreditation—but a public recognition of the achievements and efforts of the entire campus community. *The Bridge* itself reflects this ethic, each year taking new avenues, not settling for established accomplishments.

Conceptually, we have considered the journal's history and campus context. We have labored to achieve *The Bridge*'s originally stated goal, to “speak to the act of connecting, of linking together a diverse and talented group of students, points of view and forms of expression.” To this end, we have embraced our evolving campus and its commitment to the arts. We are proud to represent a new genre in the journal's tradition, and at the same time celebrate the university's interdisciplinarity, in our interview with Michael Corrente, who graciously welcomed us to his home for a dialogue on cinema and the film industry.

Witnessing the growth of our campus and journal has led us to pursue a dynamic, more curvilinear aesthetic. This manifests not only in the physical shape of the book, but in the icons that permit readers to move through the book's content with a visual ease conversant with digital formats, while retaining hard-copy pleasures. We praise our precursors, gratefully embrace our new advisors, and feel nothing but hope and promise for our successors. Our aspirations laid bare, we welcome you to our undertaking of the last seven months: Volume 8 of *The Bridge*.

The Editors



Self-Portrait

Dennis Perko Jr. • Charcoal • 24" x 36"





Jillian Moore • Poetry

Dear New Resident

Welcome,
The descending thoracic aorta is a road
Walk upon it with your heavy boots
Leave your marks in the endocardium
Examine the pericardial fluid
Make yourself at home in
Four-Chamber
The purkinje fibers are active and functioning
The sinoatrial node is accelerating not unusual
The myocardium is thick
Play your music as loudly as you wish
Or don't
See all the cardiac chambers
And the surrounding pericardium
Evaluate the valve annular plane
Take them all if you need the space
I'll give you the
Quantitative apical biplane ejection fraction
Maintain systolic function
Don't break anything if you can help it please
Enjoy your stay

Sincerely,
Management

Three Days

Shane Rocha • Fiction

On Tuesday, I went to the art gallery and I saw a man there who reminded me of my father. He seemed ardent and curious. Naturally, he hung on the wall and peered out of the frame. Never missing a thing. His eyes nested in a sea of congruent lines. They burned through me and left a discomfort in my chest that I couldn't blame on the cigarettes.

Uncomfortable, I stepped out of his way and into the blank area beside him. The art on the walls demanded something from everybody. I didn't look; I needed a break. After a minute or two, the simplicity covered my thoughts similar to the way the snow blanketed the sidewalk's imperfections outside the window. For a time, I was alone drifting between canvases which seemed to shout profoundly beautiful life lessons I had yet to figure out.

I thought of leaving when, from behind me, I heard the click of a pen. I turned my head to face whoever was there and I saw a girl standing at the opposite end of the room. She was the only other person there if you chose to ignore the guard, which wasn't hard because he seemed as invisible as the hum of the heating system. Her stare stayed on the painted surface created by an artist whose name was displayed on a little card underneath it. Her thumb continued to push the noise into the room. I was interested in her investment in the painting because she hadn't looked anywhere else since I turned to discover her.

I made my way to the center of the room as quietly as I could, but she must have heard me. With her eyebrows arched, she looked over her shoulder making enough room for a modest smile then returned her focus back to the picture. Underneath her sweater, she wore a dress with little blossoms printed on it. Quietly, she was campaigning for spring. Tightly pressed to her hip, she held a thick paperback book with colored tabs sticking out. It must have been for a class she'd been taking. I didn't ask since I was there avoiding one.

"What does it say to you?" I asked instead.

There was a short period of silence in which we just looked into the painting. Its bluish-white swirls were aggressively brushed everywhere and there was green underneath. It became something all its own. Then, she answered, "It's paint. It's quiet and free. It doesn't say anything." And with a laugh, she loosened the tension created by the confidence of her words.

We looked down at our feet then back at each other, surprised we were still there.

"What's your name, stranger?" she said.

"Jonathan," I replied. "You?"

"Mari," she said.



Pointing to the book, I asked, “What are you studying?”

“Nietzsche,” she said matter-of-factly and decided to place the book on the floor in front of her. “Come on, it’s fine there. No one’ll touch it.”

She then led me to the darkest painting in the room. It was black with red smudges applied to the top corners, as if the artist accidentally spilled his paint while attempting to move. Beside me, under the brilliant artificial light, the girl was glowing. Stealing glances of her, I was able to keep myself from drawing parallels between the paint and my life. I wondered if the canvases represented something familiar to her, or if the freedom she interpreted was what she hoped for herself.

Outside, drivers perpetually honked their horns as their cars slid through the slushy matter. This seemed to annoy her, and, checking her watch, a sense of urgency possessed her.

“I have to go,” she demurred. “I’ll see you around.”

She backed into the center of the room, turned to pick up her book, and left.

I watched her head out the door while a group of people filed in wearing heavy coats, thick scarves, and sunglasses. They were the drivers, I assumed, the reason why Mari was in such a hurry. Soon, they swarmed the room with their hands in their pockets or behind their backs as they spoke in sophisticated sentences to one another.

I could actually hear their commas, semi-colons, and feel the irony in their exclamations. Most of them were parents, which became obvious when personal photographs of children were on display, held up in their leather wallet frames. When this happened, the paintings stood at a distance as a casual background for conversations revolving around ballet recitals, baseball practices, and the inevitable teacher conferences. The parents were artists in their own right, playing to a crowd of individuals who had tasted the fruits and complications of raising children, their own masterpieces in progress.

Seeing the sun spill its light into the room, separating it into two broad sections as I tried to divide myself from the others, I realized that day was moving quickly. The entire exhibit was obstructed by people who had to find babysitters just to be there. There they were amongst each other having a pleasant time. There I was in the midst of them all, trying my best not to yell out something perfectly profane. Too nervous or polite to verbally protest, I settled for slamming the door on my way out. I don’t think anybody heard me.

The next day I resolved to go back; nothing I’d been learning at school seemed as real or interesting as what was happening inside the gallery. As I made my way into the room, my sneakers made that squeaking noise, unavoidable when wet rubber meets any dry, interior surface. Mari stared at me from afar with a look on her face which wasn’t entirely discerning or quizzical, but an agreement of the two that made me believe she didn’t not want me there. The

ineffable feelings spread on the walls around us in their tidy canvas perimeters—confined to expressions of inadequacy—were like the uncertainties we held within ourselves on a daily basis. At the edge of the large manila canvas with colorful lines like capillaries that danced and intertwined with poignant grace, she achieved a smile of seraphic charm. And I went to her.

Beside me, she turned over a cluster of pages in the book she had with her before shutting and tossing it down on the bench in the middle of the room. Apparently, she didn’t like to read in the company of strangers. When she returned, she inched in close. Either she wanted her experience to be fair with equal stretch of rippled canvas on either side, or she intended intimacy. With my arms folded, a complacent gesture I picked up from months of hovering over my father as he drowned in his own skin, I shied away from the disorder ahead and relied yet again on the convenient beauty leaning in to my left.

“I like you,” she whispered, her breath spiraling warm across my cheek.

“Really?” I stammered. “I kind of felt the same, which I know seems a little abrupt, but—”

She rocked impatiently on the heels of her feet. “Never mind,” I said. I wasn’t sure that I had to explain myself, since she hadn’t taken it that far.

Her moist palm thrust into my hand and her fingers locked in place with mine. She looked down at what she’d done and then at me,

as if she needed approval. Her polished red nails pressing to the back of my hand said in the subtlest way that she wanted to be close. I tightened my grasp on her soft hand, and she radiated with optimism. After, it was hard to look at anything without also seeing her.

We leaned on each other and walked around the canvases. Then we sat on the bench in the center of the room.

“Why do you come here?” I asked.

She looked beyond me to the door and I hoped that it wasn’t that time already.

“To pass the time,” she said. “It’s peaceful and you don’t have to look at the art if you don’t want to. There are no expectations.”

“Yes, but don’t you think it’s because of something you’ve felt or wanted to feel?”

“I don’t know. I guess they’re just convenient. Like when I’m reading and need to take a break I can look up and see something different each time.”

“They’re always changing what we think of them,” I said, turning the thought over in my mind.

“It’s beautiful, right?”

She released my hand and planted hers firmly on the cushion behind me. Then in one seamless motion, she tilted her head so that her hair hung away from her face, leaned in with a presumptuous stare, and pressed her lips against mine, which wore a slight grin. The damp texture of her lips created a numbing sensation, a feeling of blissful idleness. Soon, I realized that my participation was vital and kissed back. What followed was a rapid succession of clean hits because we were moving fast, but we weren't moving that fast.

When we separated, we took on a new fragility.

"Are you alright?" she asked. This seemed to be a perfectly normal question after what felt like a sudden barrage of increasingly intense moments.

"Yes," I replied. "Do you want to go somewhere else? Maybe to a movie or are you hungry?"

"No," she said. "I can't."

"Alright. I have no problem staying here, but shouldn't we at least exchange numbers?" I asked with reasonable sincerity.

"I don't have a phone," she said. It may have been true, but I could have sworn that the rectangular bulge protruding from her sweatshirt's pocket was just the thing she denied.

"Alright," I said.

"I'm going to go," she said, hurried but restrained, and went.

With her newly gone from the room, I felt an animalistic impulse to chase her down and be by her side as a dog might do when separated from its companion. But I didn't. Instead I stayed back and considered everything that had happened. Like my impression of the images on the walls, I wasn't sure if us being together was good or bad, but I knew how it made me feel, and I was almost positive that nothing was ever plainly one or the other. Shards of light spread across my forehead, a reminder of the dying day and the frigidness of steadily decreasing temperatures outside. I left hungry for that discomfort.

When I returned the following day, Mari was sitting in the center of the room reading her book. Around her, two little boys in oversized down jackets played freely while their mother stood off to the side, animated in a conversation with the guard. While one ran circles around the bench tirelessly jumping and twirling, the other sat on the floor engulfed in the puffiness of his jacket, smashing the buttons of his handheld videogame.

Dodging the speedy child, I found myself on the bench caught in an offensive stare.

"Are you an Art major?" she asked.

I answered, "No."

"Then why do you keep coming here?"

"For you," I said with some conviction.

With false authority, she said, "Well, I don't come here for you."

Watching the kid do laps around us, I imagined he would eventually get dizzy enough to spiral away and run directly into the wall. I saw the paintings fall to the ground with a wood-splitting crunch. I saw the mother with the guard at her side run over to the child who lay on the floor, drunk with adrenaline.

Mari was fastening the metal buckles of her coat as she stared at the floor. Her eyes were wet at the corners.

I saw the two of us, Mari and I, walking out of the gallery inspired and amused as we guided each other over large mounds of dirty snow. In my mind, I created the perfect opportunity for us to create our own art.

I still go back there, hoping for something I'm still not quite sure of.



An Apology

Kate Camerlin • Nonfiction

I sulked as I carried the final box up the stairs of my grandparents’ porch. It was bulky, and when I set it down I pointedly ignored the fact that it was blocking the door. Being twelve, my thoughts were primarily on myself and how miserable I was at finding my family shuttled off to live with my grandparents. Deep down, I knew I was being immature—it was, after all, only a temporary situation and my parents hadn’t even made me leave my old school, instead opting to drive my siblings and me the forty minutes there and back. Those weren’t really the issues, however. As awful as I knew it was, I was actually just apprehensive about my life with my grandparents.

Although not technically suffering from Alzheimer’s, my grandmother was quite forgetful and had trouble doing things on her own. As a result she didn’t go out very much. I didn’t understand her retraction from society and, truthfully, I didn’t even try. Being young and self-absorbed, I simply saw a person with whom I had very little in common and thus I dreaded the visits, the slightly one-sided conversations, and even the house itself. Therefore, when my parents told my sister, brother and me that we were moving to their house in Springfield for the winter, I dramatically informed my friends that my life was over.

True to form, I sulked and was inconvenient at nearly every opportunity while we were moving in, down to the last box; after I set it in the kitchen doorway, I paused and stared out the back window until

I heard a thump and saw my mom shaking her foot after having whacked it.

“Why would you leave this here?” she asked, giving me a look that warned, ‘Don’t you dare make this move-in process harder than it already is.’ All she said aloud was, “Bring it upstairs and put it with the rest of your stuff.”

Ignoring her for a moment, I turned to my grandmother who was gingerly lowering herself into a kitchen chair.

“Hi, Noni,” I said. Although we exchanged pleasantries, I got no further into discussion. I hefted my box and navigated my way up the stairs, intent on claiming the good spot in the bedroom that I was going to share with my sister, Jenna.

Jenna and I worked on making the bedroom upstairs our own. We shuffled out old musty clothing from dark shelves, cleaned the seventies-era wallpaper, and opened windows to clear out the air. I was convinced it had been stagnating up there forever. My mom came up to help us with the project; I slowly discovered that sifting through years of a family’s possessions could be enjoyable. I still have dreams of cleaning out that house, of poking into those cramped, dark corners filled with old memories buried under dust.

One night, I was bored and snooping in the attic space that was accessible from a door in my bedroom. I knew I was alone because my grandparents were downstairs watching *Jeopardy!* (and, anyway, they hadn’t been interested in coming upstairs in years). Jenna and I had found an old desk while poking around earlier that week, and I wanted to see if it was in decent enough condition for me to bring into the bedroom to use. It had clearly been put to good employ back in its heyday; the polish was now mostly worn off, leaving the battered wood underneath exposed and dull. It sat in the corner of the attic, and dust motes flecked the air around it.

When I opened the top drawer, stale air wafted up to me and I heard something thud in the back. I reached into the drawer and pulled out a brownish-red book. Curious, and feeling a bit guilty, I opened it to the first page. *New Years eve was yesterday, it read, went to a party, but it was drunken, cold. I didn’t stay.* I looked at the cover page. *Rose, 1943.* My grandmother’s name was Rose.

I was momentarily taken aback. My grandmother wrote this? I flipped through the entries, each one written in a cramped, rushed, half-cursive. I glanced over my shoulder, ensuring no one was witnessing my theft, and took the diary out of the attic.

Once back in a well-lit area, I sat on my bed and flipped the diary open again, knowing I shouldn’t be doing this, but unable to help myself. I opened the book and began poring over it. It was slow going. Her handwriting was appalling—she was obviously just writing for herself and didn’t need to be legible. This didn’t deter me in the slightest: I’d gotten my first glimpse of who my grandmother used to be and I wanted to see more. I read accounts of her family life, her fights with her mother and her sister. She wrote about feeling alienated from her peers when her immigrant family acted “too Italian,” she would hide in the woods in the park when her family gathered for summer parties and did traditional Italian dances. She wrote about her desire to go to college and about her disappointment when her mother repeatedly refused to loan her money to attend.

I must have been upstairs for hours, reading the thoughts my grandmother penned sixty years before, while she sat in the room under me, watching *Jeopardy!* in silence. Eventually, knowing my parents would be home soon (and feeling guilty about invading my Noni’s privacy), I flipped to near the end of the diary. The entries stopped abruptly at the end of 1944, with a newspaper clipping shoved in the back, now ancient and yellowed. The old-fashioned typeface informed me that yesterday, 15 November, 1944, a young man was gunned down over the Pacific Ocean while defending his country. I frowned at the old, grainy photo. I didn’t know who he was, but I could hazard a guess. I knew my grandmother was engaged to a man who was

killed in World War II, but I'd never thought about him before. Now, staring at the picture, I was certain that was who he was. It was a strange feeling, holding his picture in my hand. I looked back down to the empty pages at the end of the diary and imagined how it must have felt after she found out he had died, the blank pages offering no answers.

I began to wonder how this deeply personal diary had come to be stuck in that desk, and for how long it had been there. I figured my Noni would have thrown out such artifacts after she fell in love with and married my grandfather. I contented myself with speculating that some things are just too personal to throw away, while also being too painful to keep nearby. She must have compromised by throwing it in an unused desk years ago after moving into this house.

I'll admit that my sheltered, twelve-year-old self was shocked to realize that my grandmother had been so vibrant when she was younger. I began seeing her in an entirely new light. The woman I'd known all my life simply as "Noni" now had a personality and a life with thoughts and feelings so strong she couldn't contain them. I felt stupid for not realizing this before and my curiosity about her from that point on was insatiable. I began searching in earnest for clues about her past. I felt weird asking my mom, as I was still shy about admitting that I was actually interested in someone's life other than my own. I stayed silent on the matter. In my spare time, I'd secretly go back up to the attic and open boxes, trying to see if there were any more journals to tell me who my grandmother was.

After my grandmother was moved to a nursing home, the entire house was cleaned out. Although I searched for hours afterwards, my investigation was fruitless until I found a big, green Tupperware box half-filled with loose papers and file folders. I opened it and picked up a small, bound packet of papers. After inspecting it for a few moments, I found it to be a manuscript of a short story entitled "Sam Spaniel." At the bottom were the words, *written by Rose, illustrated by Linda*. I had no idea who Linda was, but I smiled at the fact that my grandmother had penned a children's book about a dog named Sam. I flipped through it, marveling at her creativity and thoughtfulness, wishing I had known her when she was brimming with ideas like this. I continued to pick through the box, reading some stories and discarding others.

As I worked my way down to the bottom of the storage bin, I began to get the sense that my grandmother was more complex than I'd originally guessed; while she had plenty of light-hearted children's stories, she also had heavier works that revealed a darker facet of her personality. I vividly remember reading one fictional piece she'd written about a woman who got so frustrated with her baby that she accidentally shook it to death. That story disturbed me a little, but the fact that she brooded over such things just made her all the more fascinating. I also found myself intrigued by the subjects she covered while writing about herself: her childhood, her marriage, the adoption of her children, and the children she eventually bore. She poured herself into these musings, and I couldn't get enough of it. Eventually, I got to a journal she wrote when she was older, talking about her grown children and her grandchildren. I was thrilled when I saw an affectionate mention of me in one of her last entries.

I wish I could say that I'd talked to my grandmother about the things she had written. I wish I had at least let her know I found her things and unashamedly read them. I wonder if that would have sparked a conversation. Even if it didn't, it might have comforted her to know that her stories were still safe in the bin in which she'd probably filed them at least ten years ago. I was immature though, and didn't want or know how to broach a loaded topic like that with her.

It was not until about a year and a half later, after she was gone, that I began to fully realize what I'd missed out on in keeping silent. Sitting down shortly after her death, I had an overwhelming desire to fill pages with ideas like she did. I sat with a blank notebook cracked open on my bed, and as I scratched out lines gray on white, I began to feel a sort of closeness to her, to my surprise. I slowly discovered the frustration of filing down the infinite possibilities of a blank page to a sharp point, and I wondered what she would've said to me about it. As I wrote my first few short stories, I regretted that I'd given up my chance to find out exactly what motivated her to spill her feelings onto the space of a page. However, I was also pretty sure that whatever annoyance and frustration I felt while in the process of writing, she also experienced. After a while, I found that my writing became both an acknowledgment of a missed opportunity and a continuation of a creative legacy.



Ryan DiPetta • Poetry

Human Sand

The smallest things nauseate me.
 Each bump in this road reads a crack
 in my cause,
 a hairline
 fracture in an otherwise
 perfect
 Apollonian construct. I've taken you
 hostage. It must be hard to tell.
 I must maintain the element of
 surprise. Even as we hurtle down the long stretch of highway
 with the signs reading "bridge out ahead"
 I won't break the news.
 I'm worried for you
 but then you hardly know you're here.
 Hell, I can't even drive.
 I want to plead with you to take the wheel but then you'll know,
 alerted to your presence in this delicate trial.
 Until I tell you, everything you say
 will have these electric double-meanings:
 more prisoners to take.
 "Pop quiz, hot-shot:"
 What makes you think I want to disarm the bomb?

Part of me loves this
 naïve adrenaline rush.
 That feeling just before I speak the words
 that change our forever.
 I slam the gas, the
 car tops out, rushing
 down this habit road.
 A mad fly screaming against
 this impenetrable pane.
 There's nothing around for miles
 anyway;
 I've played puppeteer with sheets,
 spirits, sentence fragments.
 Pump the breaks,
 they still don't work
 it's all going according to plan:

once we hit this bridge, no one will ever know
 we were here.



Superhero Music

Janessa Hanna • Digital Illustration • 8" x 11"





Shibori Scarf

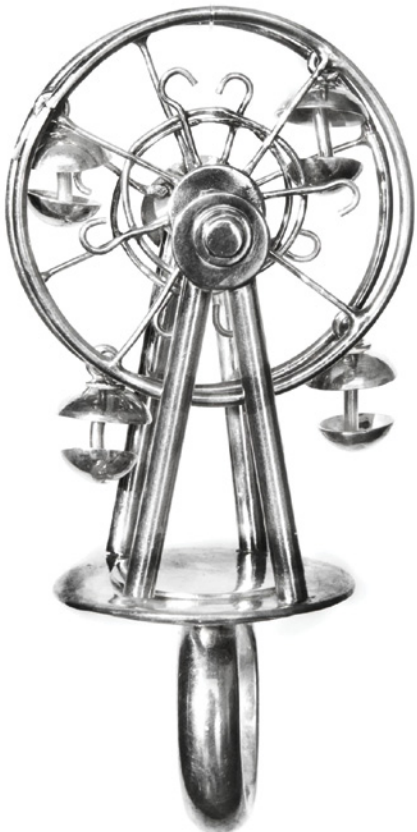
Kelsey Keefe • Cotton Warp, Tencel Weft, and Indigo Dye • 65" x 10"



1.5" x 1" x 1"



1" x 1" x 1"



3.5" x 1.5" x 1"

Collection of Rings

Thoa Nguyen • Sterling Silver



Crystalline Drip Bowl

Aimee Maurer • Ceramics • 5" x 9" diameter



Dreamy Barn

Bianca Piemonte • Acrylic • 30" x 20"





Lauren Hall
2010 John Heller Award Recipient

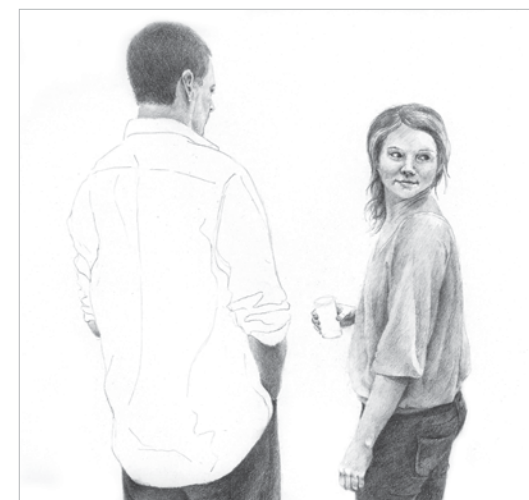
This annual award was established in 2003 to recognize a student whose body of work exemplifies excellence. The award received its name from one of our most beloved and distinguished faculty members. Professor John Heller taught in the Department of Art from 1968 to 2001. He was an inspired artist, a dedicated, gifted teacher, and an unselfish giver of his time, wisdom, and expertise.



You Love Him Because He's Leaving

Polyester Plate Lithographs, Silk Screen, and Adhesive Bound Book • 7.5" x 7" x .5"

Livre d'Artiste by Kevin Broccoli





Light Beverage

Sallee Bickford • Digital Photograph • 24" x 16"



The Others

Diane M. Sullivan • Nonfiction

It had been less than two days since my husband and I left our son's remains lying on a stainless-steel hospital table to make arrangements for his funeral. Since then, our house had been a center of activity with people calling, stopping over to put another pot roast, lasagna, or deli platter in our already overflowing refrigerator. And now I had a state trooper sitting at my dining room table.

He thanked us for seeing him and expressed his condolences before explaining that he was the investigator assigned to this case. He had come to establish what my son's activities had been twenty-four hours prior to the accident. The questions were often intrusive, sometimes accusatory, and always painful. He pushed me to try to remember the smallest details, a Herculean task for me, as my thinking process was stunned with shock and overwhelmed with the tasks associated with arranging two memorial services: one in New Hampshire where we were living, and another in Massachusetts where our families were from and my son was to be buried.

I thought the trooper looked so young as I watched him across the table. His immaculate appearance with a starched shirt, tie knotted snugly at the neck, shiny brass buttons on his jacket, and a closely shorn haircut plastered into submission, was in stark contrast to my husband's and mine. My mouth had a sour taste to it and I wondered whether I had remembered to brush my teeth. In fact, I couldn't recall when I last took a shower. Running my hand through my hair, I found it unsnarled and reasonably clean. Glancing at my husband, I noted that his hair was uncombed and his face had several days'

growth on it. I looked down at my clothes; I wasn't sure about them, but they didn't seem too rumpled. Covertly, I did a quick smell check, and they seemed fresh enough.

The trooper remained cool; his perfectly pressed uniform remained starched, and not one trickle of sweat ran down his smooth cheek, despite the afternoon heat. When he finished, he closed his notebook, rose from the table, thanked us, and gave his condolences once again. He left a business card and then rattled off something about official reports and when results should be available. I barely heard him. I was upset and exhausted and just wanted him to leave. My husband remained at the table while I showed the trooper to the front door. I stood, my hand on the knob with the door wide open while the trooper carefully replaced his hat, pulling the brim down to the center of his forehead. The neighbor across the street paused during her lawn mowing to look at us. When she realized she was caught staring, she continued with her chores, making the droning buzz of the mower background noise.

Even in the direct, unforgiving sunlight, the trooper looked no more than a boy to me. He couldn't have been much older than my son. He cast his eyes down and then slowly raised them up toward my face, as if he was taking a moment to collect his thoughts. He then said something to me that if I had been in the right state of mind I may have understood, but through the fog of pain it was just like the droning background noise of the lawn mower.

"Mrs. Sullivan," he began, "again, I'm so sorry for your loss. I know all those questions were difficult, but procedures must be followed to properly investigate a case where a death has occurred." Trying to look anywhere but at him, I began watching my neighbor as she maneuvered the lawn mower around a copse of birch trees. "The fact that Michael Monroe was behind the wheel when the accident occurred puts him at fault." The trooper paused and I saw from the corner of my eye that he was joining me in the observation of my neighbor's yard work. "If Michael Monroe had lived, he would have been charged, and I'm sure convicted, of vehicular manslaughter." The trooper, who to this point had been standing stock still with military rigidness, shifted his weight. "But he didn't. He died. But still, according to the law, the fault lies with him. And he paid a terrible price for it."

The tires crunched on the gravel as I pulled into the driveway, stopping at the mouth with the rear tires and bumpers sticking out in the street, positioned for a quick getaway. I may have done this for fear of a cool reception, or because my own discomfort might make this an abbreviated visit. Sitting behind the wheel, I contemplated putting the car in reverse and nonchalantly driving off, hoping no one would notice me. But I didn't; I stayed, and tried to screw up the courage to get out of the car.

While I fortified myself, I thought of one of the last times I had seen Kathy, three years prior. It was the day following the accident. She had come to my house, and when I went to greet her in the living room she said, "You must hate me."

I had looked at her haggard appearance: her face was drawn and her eyes rimmed with red. She looked like hell. "Of course not. You lost your little boy, too." I had reached for her and wrapped my arms around her as she began to sob. We spoke briefly and she

expressed her guilt and pain about the fact that her son was behind the wheel when the crash occurred. "It was an accident," I had said. "No one is to blame."

But time passes, the initial shock lifts, and in the solitary hours, in the time when it's only you and your grief, the thoughts tumble about in your head: things that people have said, what the police report concluded, and all whispers and rumors of suicide pacts that reach you. In spite of your resolve to cling to your better nature, you find yourself trying to attach blame.

After the passage of time, how did Kathy view me? Did she still think of me as the victim of her son's foolhardy behavior? Or did she now see me as the negligent mother who carelessly left her car keys dangling from a hook in the kitchen, whose own son easily snatched them while she slept? Did she see me as the woman whose reckless son casually tossed those keys to her own unlicensed child, letting him drive down a mountain road in the black of night causing both their deaths, and severely injuring a girl in the car with them?

Emerging from the car, I stood behind the open door and surveyed the house. It was typical in many respects: the rambling antique farmhouse was predictably white, as were most houses on Main Street. It had the requisite covered porch that extended across the front and down the right side with a driveway that ran the length of the house.

I should have taken comfort in what once was familiar. I had seen a thousand houses like this while I had lived here. But after only three years of living elsewhere, New Hampshire, the structures, the scent of the air, the places of absolute stillness, and the culture that's peculiarly its own seemed nearly as foreign to me as if I had stepped from my car onto the Serengeti. When we left, the trauma of the

circumstances had dropped a veil through which I viewed my former life. It was as though I hadn't really lived it, like it had been a story from my childhood told to me each night as I drifted off to sleep.

I was still sheltered behind my open car door when a figure that had been working in the garden, situated between the driveway and the side porch, unfolded from her crouched position. She raised her right hand to shade her eyes from the July sun, her other hand resting on her hip as she peered down to the unfamiliar vehicle at the end of her driveway.

"Kathy?" I said. When she nodded, I continued. "You probably don't remember me." She squinted and craned her neck forward slightly, trying to get a better look at me.

"No, I'm sorry, I don't," she said.

I gripped the frame of the car door before speaking. "I'm Diane Sullivan—Tim's mother."

Kathy stood looking for a moment before dropping her hands to her sides.

"Of course, Diane," she said. "I didn't recognize you!" She brushed the dirt off her clothes and legs as she emerged from the garden. I relaxed my grip on the frame and stepped away from the car door, closing it. We approached each other on the driveway and embraced briefly, quickly pulling back.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you. I hope this is not an inconvenient time for a visit. I just was in the area, so I thought I'd stop by."

Kathy insisted that it wasn't, and we both asked the usual questions on the state of each other's health and the activities of our families.

"I heard you moved to Massachusetts. How do you like it?" Kathy asked.

"Oh, it was an adjustment at first. Difficult," I said, looking into her eyes. "But, you know, those were difficult circumstances." Kathy held my gaze and acknowledged what I said with a quick nod.

"What brings you back? Just a visit?"

"Well, it's that time. The anniversary of the accident. I was up on Kearsarge. Visiting the crash site."

Kathy turned her head and she looked off into her garden as she absently rubbed her arm. "I don't go there," she said.

I looked around trying to think of something to say. I felt awkward enough, and then I blundered mentioning the place where both of our sons died.

"I probably shouldn't, either. I don't know why I do it. It accomplishes nothing," I said. "Sorry I brought it up. I can see it upsets you."

Kathy gave her head a little shake as if to dislodge her mood. "Don't worry—it's okay," she said. "You go there because you need to." She looked up at the sun. "We're going to burn up. Let's go in for some iced tea. But first, let me show you my garden."

I followed Kathy down the narrow path that wound through the garden toward the side porch. She pointed at various plantings and chatted away about the evolution of the project. She stopped in the center and pointed to a rock.

"I had the boys' names inscribed on it," she said. With trepidation, I stepped closer. When I saw my son's name written there, I felt a hardening in my chest. I can recall telling Kathy in the sincerest voice I could muster how nice I thought it was, and then I turned away

quickly. I can't even clearly remember the wording on the stone. Along with the names of our sons, there was also the date of death, and there may have been some quote meant to be uplifting. Something you'd find on a Hallmark card or a bumper sticker.

Kathy was waiting for me on the porch. I turned back to get a view of the garden. She seemed to get a great deal of pleasure working on it. I scanned it with the eyes of someone who, in the past, had done a fair amount of gardening. It was new; the plantings immature. Some of the plants may not do well or even survive. The light wasn't right for them, and the soil seemed a bit poor. But those elements aside, the arrangement seemed haphazard; the colors and textures didn't blend compatibly.

I jerked my train of thoughts to a halt. What an incredible ass I was. This woman had poured her whole heart into this little memorial garden. She had the goodness to not only remember her loss, but mine. And I stood on her porch, judging. What had I done? In three years, I had not even dedicated the smallest corner of my yard to the memory of my child, not to mention hers. Even his gravesite is tended to by my sister.

Turning to her, I smiled. "This is so lovely, Kathy. Thank you for remembering Tim, too."

As we entered the house, I had a vague recollection of visiting after the funerals. She had given me a framed picture of the three kids relaxing in chairs on her porch: our two boys and Ashley, the one who survived because she wisely had worn her seatbelt. Kathy's copy of the picture was displayed on her fireplace mantel.

We sat across from each other at her kitchen table, our sweating glasses of tea with lemon slices floating on the ice sitting untouched in front of us. We had things to say to each other, but starting the

conversation was difficult. I was the first to step on the soft, unstable ground of the accident.

"Do you ever hear from Ashley?" I asked.

"She called at the first anniversary and we talked for awhile," she replied. "Do you ever hear from her?"

"She called the first anniversary and last year, but we were out. She didn't leave a number," I said. "I doubt if I'd have called back if she did." There was a brief uneasy silence. I thought she was put off by what I said, so I tried to find something to counterbalance. "My kids ran into her one day when they were at the mall in Concord. They said that she looked good, and that she was going to college."

"Yes, I heard that," Kathy said. "Going to New England College over in Henniker."

"That's good, I suppose," I replied. "But don't you think it's a little odd? She had that traumatic brain injury which severely damaged her short-term memory. I was told that she wasn't able to retain much new information. Don't you think that would make going to college difficult? After all, that's what it's about—learning new things."

Kathy shrugged and took a sip of her iced tea. "She's managing somehow, I guess."

Her brief answers made me wonder whether she wasn't interested in the subject matter, or whether she was simply a person not inclined to gossip. But what else would we have to talk about? We had no other common history besides this. When I had lived here, even as small as the town was, our paths rarely crossed. I had come that day only because of our terrible link. I needed to know what she knew and felt of our shared experience.

Kathy surprised me by continuing. "I never heard from her mother."

"Oh," I said, "Jane contacted us once the day after the accident. I think she sent a card."

"That's right. I think she sent a card to us, too."

"Well, she must have had her hands full. Dealing with Ashley."

"They divorced, you know. Ashley's parents."

"I heard that," I said. I watched the sweat drip down the side of my glass as I contemplated the wisdom of continuing the conversation down this path. I wasn't sure whether I should, but then realized I had to; it was where I needed to go. "But it wasn't surprising. I heard they were in the process of breaking up at the time of the accident. Ashley's condition just delayed it."

There was a moment of silence and my eyes scanned Kathy's house. The living area was open-concept, not traditional in the way of old New England homes. From my seat in the dining area, I could see several pictures of Michael at various ages displayed prominently. More guilt settled on me. There were no pictures of my son displayed anywhere in our house. When he died, we had quite a few, but after our last move none were put up. I thought it might be too painful for my husband, but truth be told, it may have been to save me from the constant reminder of his absence.

"Jane adopted a couple of boys from Africa, too," I said.

"Yes, I know. That happened a few years back."

"Yeah, when I went into the hospital to visit Ashley after the accident they were there," I said, and then after a pause, I continued: "Don't

you think it a little odd that she adopted children when her marriage was on the rocks? She also was having such trouble with Ashley, from what I heard, anyway. Jane was sending Ashley down south to some special school for problem teenagers. That's the reason they went out that night. Ashley wanted to run off. She was pissed that her parents were shipping her away."

Kathy nodded. "Yes, I know that."

"Well, it seems to me that you shouldn't be bringing more children into a house where there were so many problems to begin with."

"I think they're better off here than where they were. Weren't they from the Sudan? The place where all those boys were wandering around after their families were slaughtered?"

"I suppose." I'd had contact with Jane over the years when I worked with her on several fundraisers and field trips connected to the school. Rumor had it that she was a trust fund baby from some wealthy family. She struck me as being a phony, liberal do-gooder, and I was put off by her air of *noblesse oblige*.

"I hear those boys are doing well."

"That's good," I said.

The conversation suddenly ran dry. After another swallow of my drink, I made my excuses to Kathy saying that I had to head home or be stuck in the misery of Boston rush hour traffic. Kathy walked me to the porch where we said our good-byes, and as I went through the garden, I kept my eyes trained to the path to avoid seeing the stone again. Reaching my car, I turned for a final wave, but Kathy had disappeared from the porch.

The visit made me more unsettled than I had been previously. Kathy and I were not of like minds. She, from my viewpoint, seemed to have accepted the loss of her son and had found some peace with it. She had made her little garden and scattered his pictures around. I wondered whether Kathy was resigned to her son's culpability in the matter of the accident. It seemed so, as she did not seem to want to question anything, didn't want to turn over any rocks or muddy the water. I envied her peace.

"Diane?"

I stopped in my tracks, squeezing the receiver of the phone, pressing it to my ear. I thought I might hear from Ashley today. It was the fifth anniversary after all, a milestone, but no, it was her mother instead. My eyes became riveted to the telephone attached to the kitchen wall. While staring at the button pad, I could see my blurry reflection in the chrome on the phone's casing. My eyes appeared to be two brown orbs with no discernable pupils like a zombie. I did not want to talk to this woman. For a second, I contemplated hanging up; just the sound of her voice spiked my blood pressure, but I was curious as to what she had to say.

"Do you know who this is?" she continued.

"Yes," I said. "Jane. How are you? How is Ashley?"

She didn't bother with pleasantries, launching immediately into a request. "Terrible. Ashley is terrible. You must come to New Hampshire and talk to her."

"Oh," I said. "What's wrong?"

She huffed. "What's wrong? Ashley is all messed up. She has questions she needs to ask—she needs to talk to you about the accident. You need to come up."

"I see," I replied. But I really didn't. I felt like I was being issued an edict for a command performance. I was appalled at her audacity. Not a single inquiry to our well-being in five years, and in seconds she was not asking, but insisting, I drive over one hundred miles to attend to her daughter.

There was silence for a moment, and when Jane didn't comment, I continued. "Ashley needs to talk? She has questions? It's been five years and she never contacted me. She called, yes, when we weren't home. But never a note or a card in all this time."

"Do you think it's been easy? I've had a terrible time dealing with her disability."

"Jane, my son is dead. At least your daughter is alive."

That set her off on a rant in which she listed all the physical and emotional difficulties Ashley has had, how they got her an apartment near her college and she had a fit one day and tore it apart.

"Small wonder she did that," I said. "Weren't you just setting her up for failure? Sending her to college when she had short-term memory loss? And didn't she have behavioral problems before the accident? Did you think those issues would magically disappear when she enrolled in college?" I felt a wave of sympathy for Ashley. Every time Jane opened her mouth, she was confirming the low opinion I had of her. "Did you really think it would work? Or were you just trying to unburden yourself from the daily care of your daughter?"

Jane continued to rant about the amount of therapy Ashley required and how she consumed all of her time for the year or so after the accident. I was silent for a moment after she finally finished her tirade.

"Well, would you have rather she died?"

There was a sharp intake of breath from the other end of the phone line. "Of course not!" she said.

"Then deal with your daughter's problems and stop trying to slough them off on others."

Jane either didn't hear what I said or didn't care, because she circled back to her insistence that I drive to New Hampshire and speak with Ashley. I really felt sorry for Ashley. She was, after all, young, and had gone through a horrible experience. But I also had sympathy for myself. Facing her and discussing the accident would be more than I could bear. I had spent five years propping up a devastated husband and trying to help my three daughters navigate the choppy waters of the teenage years while they shouldered the terrible loss of a brother.

With my patience spent, what I wanted to do was interrupt Jane's harangue and tell her just what I thought. Tell her that if she had been paying more attention to her daughter's needs maybe this wouldn't have happened. Maybe her daughter wouldn't have cried to my son about the injustice of being shipped off to a boarding school. Maybe my son, with misplaced chivalry, wouldn't have taken my car to rescue a friend in distress. Maybe no one would be dead or damaged. Perhaps I would have felt better if I did unload on her. But there was enough of my mother's good training left that I clamped down on my tongue.

"Jane, I will not come up," I said, speaking carefully in a measured tone. "But if Ashley would like to write me a letter telling me what's on her mind, I'd be happy to read it and write back. Maybe sometime in the future we could meet and talk. However, not at this time."

Jane protested, insisting that letter writing wouldn't do.

"Well, that's all I have to offer." I said goodbye, and hung up.

Every day after that I flipped through the mail looking for a letter postmarked from New Hampshire. A week went by, then two, and after a month I stopped expecting that one would ever come.

Several years later, long after I gave up waiting in expectation of getting a letter, and enough time that the indignation over the treatment I received at the hands of Jane turned into speculation, I drew a curious conclusion.

How did Jane justify her imperious attitude toward me, with her demanding that I drive to New Hampshire to speak with her daughter? Initially, I thought that it was a result of her sense of entitlement with her coming from money. It occurred to me then that she demanded my appearance there as if it was my responsibility.

All the time I spent casting about trying to level blame on someone, she was doing the same. I will never know this for certain; the accusations were silent on both our parts.

I could have saved myself grief if I had accepted the conclusion of the state trooper. His conclusion that Michael, the driver, was at fault because he was behind the wheel. The blame could also extend out to my son and Ashley, the three all involved in making a series of



bad decisions that came to a bad end. Focusing on the simplest facts, discarding emotions and eliminating variables, anyone would come to this conclusion. That’s what the rational, logical part of my head tells me.

I wish someone would tell that to my heart.

I wish that on the evening of the accident, instead of retiring to my bedroom to cocoon myself in bed and nod off over some book, I had been more present, more vigilant. There would have never been the opportunity for my son to slip out of the house with my car keys.

And in spite of her seeming resignation and reticence, when Kathy passes that rock in her garden with both our son’s names inscribed, does she not feel a clench in her chest? Has she endlessly reviewed the events of the night and speculated on what small action she might have taken that would have had that rock carved with a poem extolling the beauty of a garden, instead of a memorial for two lives lost? And when Jane watches her daughter struggle with the burden of an impaired brain, does her stomach knot with grief? Does she think of some small thing she might have said to halt the train of events?

There is plenty of blame to go around. But as for myself, and I suspect, the others, we will have to accept that the guilt, no matter how hard we may try to shake it, will always be a pall draped over our souls.

William Regan • Poetry

Apparition of an Astronomer
in Brant Rock, Massachusetts

That evening sun slipped
through the stout window in
the doghouse dormer
into the apartment above the ice cream
shop with mint walls pitched and
sandy shags on slanted floors.

Erratic leaves.

Resting on the sill, glass planets
Suspended read:

Harvest moon
Ripened rind

Wavering row of
Wormwood boughs

Bleeding poppy
Blushing rose

Periwinkle ripple
Of moonlit tide

And deepest blue
And deepest sleep

There’s pressure in the air
here still
it’s humid
but we’re
cool.



Rebecca Andrews • Poetry
Tall Grass

Crossing a wooden bridge
and gazing at the sweeping river of
browned water.

Toes dangle into the water.
It is neither hot, nor cold.
Only tepid and browned.

What if all that is left is
to move through the
tall grass scratching at

her legs? Skin itching
at the caress of the grass,
each strand leaving a stain.

Legs like a bench covered
in cigarette burns. Some were
unintentional, products of

the wind's gust.
Others, they were pressed
hard into the flesh. Scorched.

She wanders further into the field
surrounded by nothing else.
A single coke can—

pour out the liquid.
It is neither hot, nor cold.
Only tepid and browned.

Pulling Dough

Hillary Batzner • Film • 7" x 9"





Amanda Rae Rouillard • Poetry
Silent Tungsten

I have never heard gray more gray
than the words which you say to me so
condescendingly.
Black and white means naught
in a world of (k)nots and (flattened) cans.
And dressed up in blue, you're always beautiful.
But crude and nude we stand in the sun;
every pockmark illuminated, tungsten bright.
The light of night to never shine again against
the delicate steel door that closes like your hand
around the flitting, panicked moth.
Magnesium smiles and pain pill duplicity,
the simplicity of a (remote) controlled world.
I am trapped between the clean street signs
and the signs of a dead language.

Daylight Saving Time

W. M. Scott • Nonfiction

"April is the cruellest month" – T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

T.S. Eliot died on the fourth of January in the year of Our Lord
Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-Five.

Had he lived just a year longer, he would have had to revise
his masterpiece, trading April for November. He had lived in
New England. He knew a New England April with its soothing
showers knows nothing of a New England November; knows nothing
of the dampness; of the sudden pangs of cold; of the restless wind; of
daylight saving time.

Had he lived just a bit longer and seen the year following his
death—the year of *Star Trek* and of Soviet lunar landings and of
race riots—he would have known the pain of the day following
the first Sunday of November, the first time anyone emerged from
their home at five o'clock and was greeted with harsh night. This
is a shared experience and a frightening glimpse of Barthelemeic
lunar hostility.

"See the moon?"

As I emerged from the library and stepped into the brisk dark, it struck
me that something was off. As I clasped my hands to light my cigarette,
the gusts picked up right on cue and played hell with the flame. I
tucked behind the brick entryway and the freeze of Autumn blew in my
face. Not quite rain, not quite snow, but an awful, freezing mist blew at
my cheeks and clouded the cracked lenses of my glasses.

The day had gone to bullshit by five o'clock. I and many others
would not emerge after tiring work into dusk anymore—into the
shaded crimson hues of New England sunsets, the clouds like scales
on the horizon, the final glimpse of light—for months. With a sudden
grasp, that was gone. Nature's welcoming bosom in that dying day
had been silenced and commenced the onset of Winter, the gradual
march to late December's solstice: the darkest day.

I'm not going to try to argue in any sensible way for this to be
repealed. I'm not going to play against critics and cite facts and
knock them down; cite the minimal half percentages of energy costs
nationwide that are saved by this practice; attempt to battle Winston
Churchill over the logic; use any form of citation. The path to solstice
grants an earlier darkness eventually, but this moment ambushes us all.

You know the facts better than any black and white text.

You lived through the day following the first Sunday.

Did you see the grinning, saw-toothed moon in that Monday sky?

It hated you.



Bryan Way • Poetry

Hungry People

Fry the bird and stuff its ass
full of fat and potato,
stuff its head with lard and butter
and sip its blood like a tall glass
of milk.

Uncle Eddie, take another drink,
I'll go shot for shot with you — you pour
I'll swallow.
I see that mask over your eyes, that
thin glaze of crumbling life, of arteries
clogged and love missing the ladder
rungs,
much like this.

Feel the claustrophobic china
plates — the musk of PaPa's old sweater,
but he's dead now so
I guess we won't be smelling
that stink
again. Put another

notch in the warped wicker
door frame; "another year
we all stayed afloat, another year
we can be together." Oh, hold my hand
PaPa, hold my whale-blimp hand
and I'll hold yours, bony and dead,
but not at this table.

Not now, not amongst rejecting
hearts and failing livers, not amongst
fake smiles,
stories about how Brittany is doing
in school; you don't give a fuck,
you're dying! Oh sweet end,
the table dripping with gravy the color
of milky come, turniped squash mashed with
cinnamon, arugula and basil and tomatoes
and the
dying.

The sweet end, the last supper
with us, PaPa, and you can't even remember

our names. You can't remember
Uncle Eddie
and how the rum ruined
his children, you can't remember
his insides as coarse as sandpaper,
you can't remember Brittany dropping
out of the nursing program, picking up
with whatthe-fuck's-his-name; you can't
remember me standing next to you,
by your burnished coffin, kneeling like the rest,
pretending to moan out a prayer, when
I really didn't say anything
at all.



Craig Sirois • Poetry

On Coma

Now now now where no where
slings upon a pageless book.
Empty upright dear and down right wrong
where
blossoms image upon black pedals
of an unused tricycle
in the garden,
kept by someone who decorates
her bedroom in unicorns.

Every where there is uniformly magic,
like the simulated slickness of slivered
moons. Good so much good,
never in one place. Never on these
nights, never sheening.

Stop plow coitus. Breeze can't flow
that way. Secretariat's our agent in espionage. *Hills!*
Bump mounds bump.
Freedance little freedomer. It does not link—
your noose. Gallops are for rope.

Citronella cotton swipes,
feast and fornication,
all before the flies die. A common fruitfly
end: the baffling swipe of Eeyore and
his tail. Job once left a grimy green

line around our bath. He sold his smell
with a smile. Certain cordial dearths
of that damned-old *Goodnight! Goodnight!*
just-so phrased to sell used mattresses.

I couldn't say what they're like.



Mutations 057 & 004

Colleen Barber • Gel Medium Transfer, Acrylic, and Pen • 11" x 11" each





Santorini

Zoe Palmer • Digital Photograph • 11" x 8"



Spinal Reconstruction

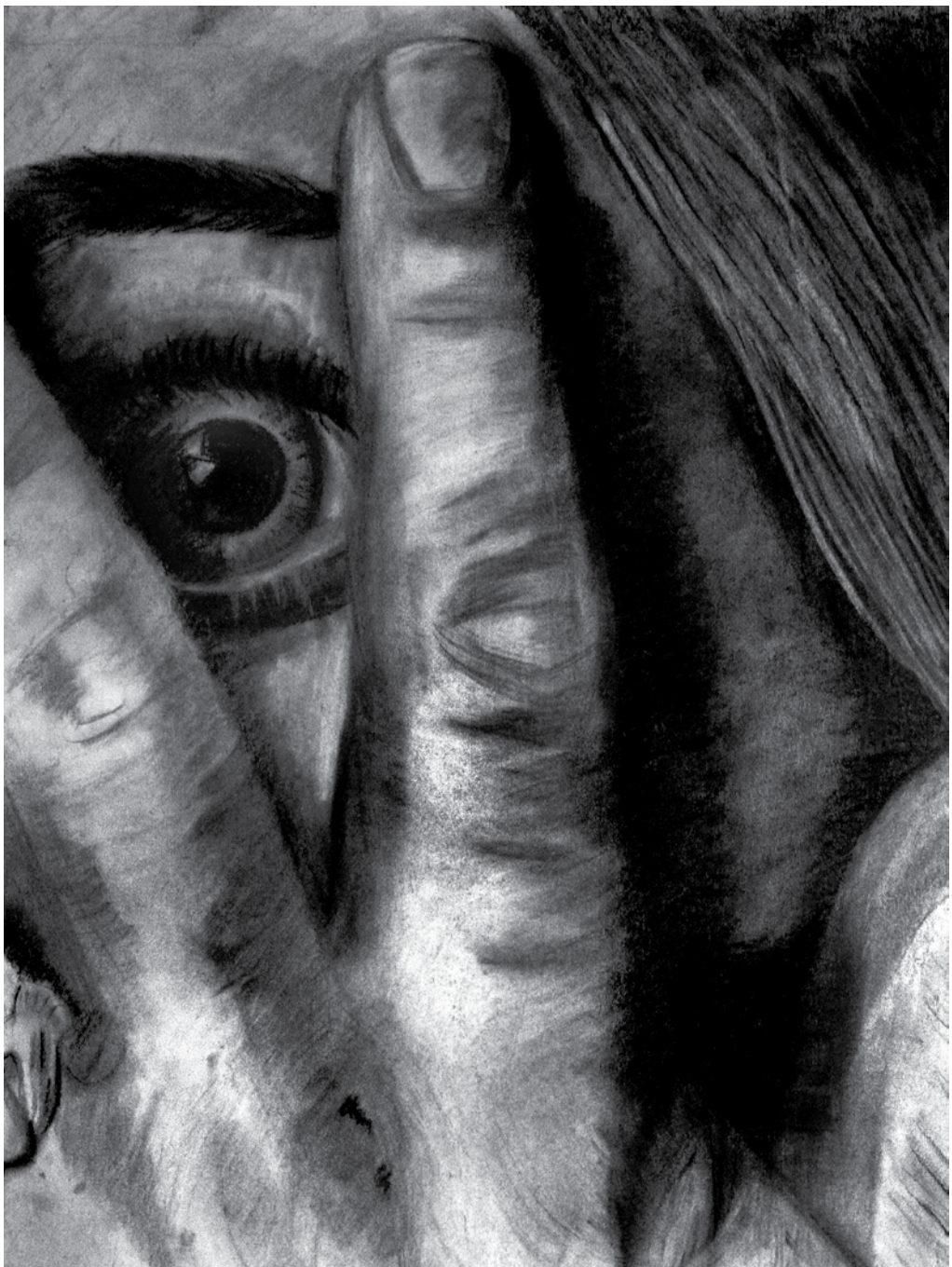
Stephen Plummer • Sheet Metal • 27" x 8.5" x 10"





See No Evil

Maggie Bouchard • Charcoal • 20" x 16"



Butterfly

Jing Ting Long • Glass • 7" x 11"

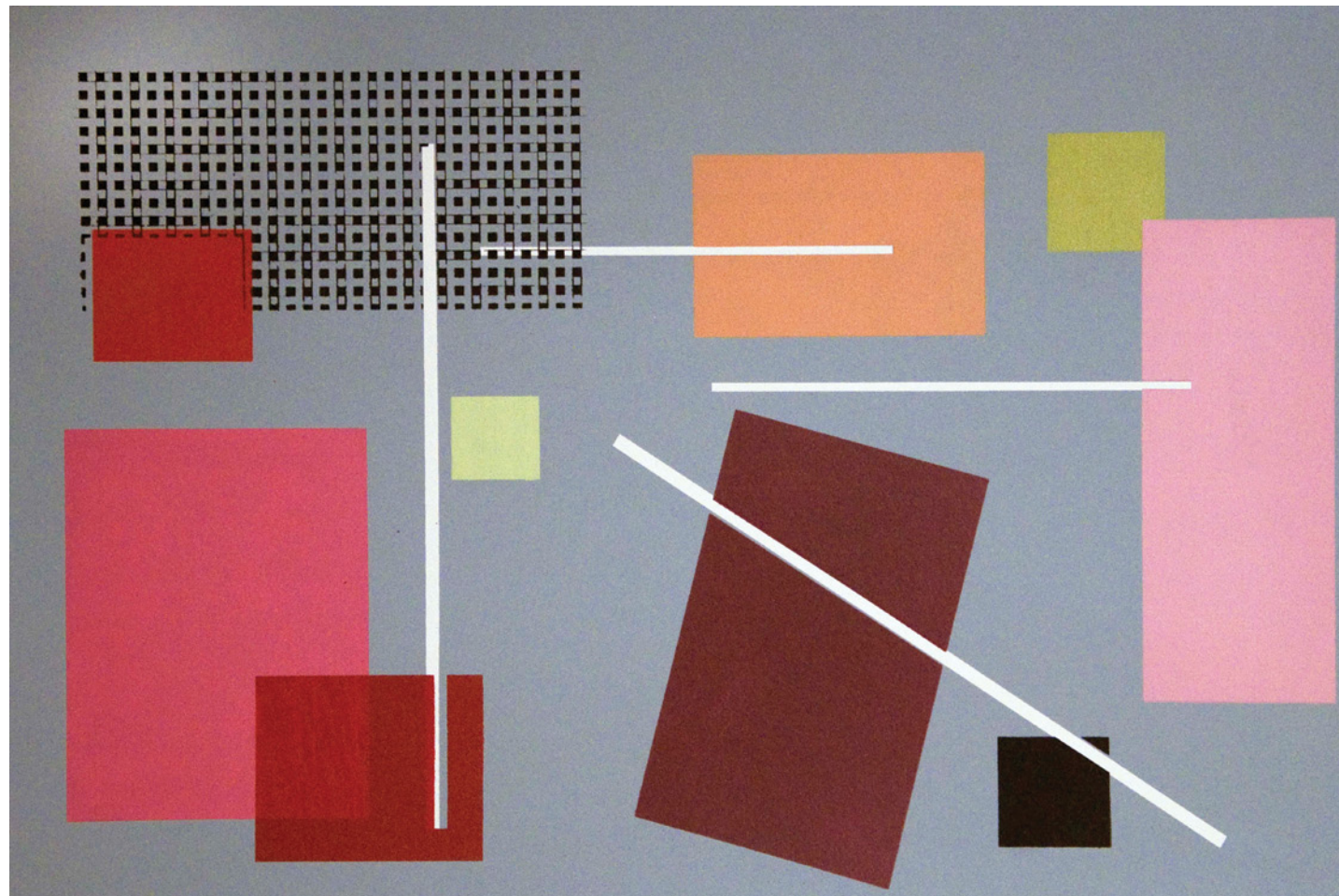




Cephalopod Ring
Sam Thibault • Sterling Silver • 1" x 1.5"



Untitled
Luke Hebert • Silk Screen • 13" x 19"





Self-Portrait

Jennifer Hebert • Oil Pastel • 30" x 24"

Five Stages

Jillian Moore • Nonfiction

During my first visit with my counselor, she gave me a booklet on the grieving process. The title was "Healing Grief," which I thought was odd. I felt that grief wasn't something you could heal, only deal with, but it certainly had more of a pleasant ring than "Getting Over a Death," or "You Can't Have Them Back; Move On." She gave me the booklet to help ease the loss of my step-father. He didn't die. He just left. My counselor told me that we grieve the same way when people leave our lives as we do when they die. The booklet was meant for death separation, but its advice was supposed to help me, too.

Bullshit, I thought at the time. The idea that I couldn't deal with grief on my own offended me. The fact that I was there because my step-father left didn't even cross my mind. Once I was away from the woman, the booklet found its proper place on the floor, in my closet, buried under old text books and coats that fell off the hangers. I didn't look at it again until my grandfather died.

Weak-willed enough to admit defeat over my pride and no longer thinking I was badass enough to deal with this death and my step-father leaving in one year, I uncovered the booklet. It outlined for me what I was going through, what I would be going through, and the five stages of grief. The first entry hit me with the headline:

Denial and Isolation

I've rarely seen my mother cry. I saw it once when my step-father told her he was going to leave. It wasn't in her personality to cry frequently. When she was sad, she'd smoke in the living room and watch the *Pride and Prejudice* mini-series. If I asked, she'd tell me nothing was wrong, smile, and go back to what she was doing. When I saw the tears, and realized it was far too early for her to be home on her lunch break, I braced for the news I knew was coming.

Two days earlier, I'd seen my grandfather in the hospital. I'd spent most of the day seated among my relatives by his feet, watching the slow, unsteady rise and fall of his chest, and listening to the painful, hacking coughs. He groaned whenever he lay down, and was rampant with sweat and fever. His weakened condition forced the family to wear face masks to protect him from infection. To lighten the mood, we all drew strange or goofy mouths on our masks. It was a morbid sort of early Halloween.

When my mother came in the front door crying, I jumped to my feet immediately and moved to her. "What's wrong?"

I knew. I asked anyway, so she could say it.

“Grampa died.” Her voice was frail, breaking and tainted with sadness. I opened my arms to hug her, and she buried her face in my shoulder. I didn’t feel sad. I expected to feel sad. Perhaps I’d used up all my sadness in preparing for the news. I had tried to think of life without him before, once I learned of his illness. My lack of reaction puzzled me, but my mother’s comfort was a more pressing matter.

“Oh. When?” I asked, rubbing my mother’s back, stroking her hair. She gave me a squeeze and went to hang up her coat.

“About a half-hour ago.”

I looked at the nearest clock. He’d died at about nine in the morning. After she had settled on the couch with a cigarette and a Diet Coke, tear-free and controlled again, she asked me to help her find funeral homes near my grandparents’ house in Hanson.

I don’t cry often. And I didn’t cry for a while after learning of my grandfather’s death. Lots of other people cried. I left it up to them to shed the tears, and I offered hugs and an ear when it could be useful. I can’t speculate why I didn’t, save to say maybe I hadn’t accepted the idea. I’m no psychologist, and I didn’t like my counselor enough to stay on with her up to that point. It wasn’t until my grandfather became an urn with his favorite hat perched on the top that I cried.

It wasn’t like that with my step-father.

I took on a similar role when he left. I was the silent understander, the ear, the shoulder. I went with my mother as moral support when she filed for her restraining order against him, at the urging of worried family members. I wrote a story about all the things he left in this house, and tried to focus on the best of the best memories. I avoid him now. He doesn’t call or try to contact me, but his name comes up in conversation and I prefer not to include myself in it. Multiple times, Facebook has suggested I add him. I don’t add him.

I find things of his around. But they just make me wonder why they were left.

Anger

My step-father called one day to ask if he could see the dogs. The dogs. I told him he couldn’t unless he agreed, in writing, to foot some of the dogs’ expenses. “Puppy Support,” my mother called it, was a condition of his visitation. She and I had discussed this dilemma already. It made sense to me. So he wouldn’t come. And he hung up. He didn’t ask about my sister and me, who had been his “daughters” for as long as we could remember. Just the dogs he wouldn’t pay for.

I barely contained my rage on the phone as he refused to pay, and didn’t care to ask about the family he had left. I only ever heard from him when he wanted something, like tools from the shed or some clothes. Because I was calmer than my sister and mother, I was frequently the one who passed the items through the door, or watched him take only what he said he’d take from the shed. I could control my anger, but that did not mean I wasn’t happily entertaining the thought of punching him.

I see no reason why I shouldn’t be angry with him. He left after cheating on my mother with a woman he met on an adult dating site. Ever since he left, all I’ve heard from those who knew him are horror stories. My boss told me that he let his underage employees watch his adult movies in the break room. I also learned what happened to the woodchuck that took residence under our shed for a time. Drowned in a trash barrel.

I recently learned he’s engaged to the woman he met on the adult dating site. He seems ready to start a brand new family, and I wonder if ours ever meant anything to him. Most of all, I’m angry with myself for still missing him, still wishing he’d call. I’m graduating college soon. Would he care if I let him know? Should I let him know if I get married?

One of his co-workers came through the Drive-Thru at the fast food place where I work. He didn’t talk to me at first, but I heard one of my employees asking if anyone knew a Michael. I didn’t hear what she said at first, and wandered toward the Drive-Thru window in an attempt to make out what she was yelling to the rest of the crew. As I approached, the order-taker, a young girl with pink in her hair and slowly rotting teeth asked me if I knew a Michael who used to be a manager at another one of these restaurants.

I furrowed my brow and looked at the customer, a brown-haired chubby fellow in a large pick-up truck.

“Yeah ...” I wasn’t sure where this was going, so I turned to the default. “Can I help you with something?”

“You know Michael Saren?”

“Yes ...”

“You’re one of his girls, aren’t you? Well ... ex-daughters.” I froze up and stared at him. There was a slight tightness in my chest, and I knew this wasn’t going to end well for me, no matter the man’s intentions. The phrasing didn’t help. Ex-daughters. Didn’t know there was such a thing.

“I guess.”

“I knew it. He’s always talking about you girls and how good you are. He told me to say ‘Hi’ if I was ever in the area.” I wasn’t sure how to respond to that. *So, he talks about us, but he doesn’t bother to check in?* I was angry and upset, and annoyed that I couldn’t think of a good way to get out of this conversation. Thankfully, the man did order food, and when he received his bag from my pink-haired employee, I smiled, wished him the default “nice night,” and walked away from the window. I remained in the office for a good part of the night, trying not to undermine my authority by

letting the crew see me cry and, at the same time, wondering what it meant for him to still be talking about me, but not bothering to actually see me. I imagine his move to New Hampshire has something to do with that.

But why talk if you don’t care? Why not call if you do care? Why am I left here without answers still? Why was I left at all? I suppose I’m angry still. Can you stay on a step in grieving and move on? Do I have to be anger-free to move on?

I don’t remember ever feeling angry during my grandfather’s ordeal. I remember others being so. My Aunt Lori, a nurse, accused my grandmother of neglect. Lori didn’t need to be so vicious. She was the nurse, not my grandmother. It was Lori who noted the oddities of his condition, how he was paler than usual. My grandfather, a stubborn hermit of a man, insisted he was fine. He endured a small barrage of medical questions before agreeing to see a doctor.

After he died, some blamed the hospital. My sister attacked herself for not staying longer than she had. We both wanted to leave rather early on our last visit. She had been in the hospital for far longer than I, and I was anxious to get away from all the sad men and women mourning the still-living. I was sick of wearing the masks, of watching him cough and moan, suffering there in the hospital bed. I wasn’t mad at myself for it. When I left that day, we woke him briefly to say our goodbyes and hug him. I did it knowing I likely wouldn’t see him again before he died. My sister perhaps didn’t have such a rational view. Or perhaps she just had more hope and faith than I had. I’m not angry, nor was I ever angry, for leaving.

I never blamed anyone for his death. He got cancer and died from it. He was an old man, and he already had medical problems. I saw the death coming as soon as he was diagnosed. Maybe I prepared myself. Maybe I mourned him while he was still living, too. I don’t

think he liked being the center of attention in the hospital, either. He'd always been private. He hated the hospital, complained about the food, even as his symptoms got worse. I'm sure he would have preferred to die in his own bed. But I was never angry. I guess I skipped this step with him. Can you skip a step?

Bargaining

Is there a right way to mourn? Can you do it wrong? Can a list of five steps really sum up the process for everyone? Six words cannot sum up the pain and complex emotions involved with losing someone. I was never angry at anyone for my grandfather's death. I never bargained with any deity to give my grandfather back. People die. It was his time.

I wonder about my cousin. He is severely autistic, so how can this apply to him when he might not even understand that he'll never see his grandfather again? I wonder if he realizes. I'm told that he looks at Grampa's picture sometimes, and that he doesn't ask for him anymore. But is that recognition of loss or an adjustment to a new environment? I wonder if one day he'll ask where the old man who threatened him with the slippers went.

What would I give to have him back? Permanently? I'm not sure. I don't think I'd give anything, to be honest. A loss is a loss. Life ends. It happens. I feel like I accepted this far more quickly than I should have. But I don't believe in God, either. If I was to bargain for his life with anyone, who would it be?

My grandmother has always had a hard time accepting that I don't believe in any god.

"You have to believe there is something after death. Even Buddhism has something like that," she told me when I went to visit her after the funeral. I believe in ghosts and spirits. That's about as far as I go when it comes to an afterlife. And even that's iffy.

I sat at the funeral, listening to the prayers and speeches that were meant to comfort my family. The priest spoke about death as if people were sailors trapped on an island, sending one of their group away in a small boat heading for the mainland. He was to send back help. It was the same with Grampa; he was sent away to make ready the rescue when we died. I imagined a great house in the sky, Grampa up there watching out, waiting for the lot of us to join him. It was a nice mental image, but heaven doesn't exist. He was gone. Just gone. I was honestly a little angry with the priest for offering up false hope to my family. Maybe it's cold of me to willingly want to deny my family comfort, but I'd rather they face the facts than have some false hope.

It's not always so clear-cut when the loss doesn't involve death. Complications surrounded the departure of my step-father. I longed to have a whole family again, but I wouldn't dream of wishing he'd rejoin us. He'd always been a problem in our lives. A powerful and domineering problem I only realized was such after he left. Now more than ever, I don't wish him back in my life. But still, I'm bothered at how he seems to so easily move on to his new wife and new location, while I'm stuck here still waiting to see if he'll ever call just to talk to me.

To have a chance for some time with my grandfather, I'd give quite a bit. Before he died, he asked me to help him write a book. I would have liked to have known more about it, so I could have done it, even after he died. A tribute of sorts. But I don't have to bargain with any god to get some answers from my step-father. I can call him. I have his number. I just can't bring myself to. So maybe I'm negotiating with myself, even now. So, am I stuck on step two or step three?

Depression

I've never handled emotions well. Friends frequently describe me as a time bomb. My mother told me I needed to stop bottling up

my emotions or I'd drive myself mad with the effort of keeping them down. My counselor told me the same thing. Maybe if I listened to my mother more often, I wouldn't need a counselor. If I handled my emotions better, I wouldn't have needed rum to help me get to sleep at night.

I did quite a bit to keep my mind off the loss of both men. I played games a lot more frequently. I had to concentrate on what I was doing, or I'd lose. I started playing *Call of Duty* again. There is something about blowing people apart with shotgun spray, or looking to scam someone in a seedy interstellar bar that takes me away from the world for a while. I always liked making up stories, living in some fantastic world when I should have been, say, paying attention in class. But at night, it was quiet, dark, and my mind was free to wander. I'd cry, call my boyfriend to calm me down. He usually didn't do much. At his worst, he'd drop game references to try to make me laugh. At his best, he'd sing me Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin until I fell asleep.

I made a habit of leaving the television on when I went to sleep. I have yet to break this habit. I use the noise to keep myself from thinking, listening to familiar programs so I don't have to pay so much attention that I'll be kept awake. On bad nights, I'd take the aforementioned shot of rum to help me drift off to sleep.

My counselor also diagnosed me with major depression quickly after I arrived.

Following my grandfather's death, I had bouts of unexpected tears. I broke down in class a few times, though usually there was a friend there to comfort me. The support offered was well-received, but it usually made me feel free to cry more. The bouts could last for hours on and off or be gone after a few moments. I spent most of my time trying to hide the fact that I was tearful.

My sister spent the days after my grandfather's death going over

old photos and videos of him. I don't know how many times I came downstairs to find her at my mother's computer, looking over the photos she'd scanned of him, or going through old photo albums that had not been touched in years. There were always tears. She'd look at me and sometimes offer a half-smile, or show me an amusing picture she'd found. Most of the time, however, she'd peer at me briefly and then turn back to the memories she was exploring, most from before her time. I always felt like I'd be tormenting myself with an approach like that. Nevertheless, every so often, I'd go through pictures my mother left out. Sometimes I'd cry. Sometimes I'd go back upstairs and play my games again.

I don't cry all that often anymore, but I still get misty-eyed when I see his urn with his favorite hat perched on top.

Acceptance

I often hear that the funeral is the place where people reach some sort of closure. I wondered if it did that for the people around me. I spent a lot of time disapproving of the priest's service and watching my relatives. I don't mean to say I wasn't bawling my eyes out. I was. I was glad to have my best friend with me, or I would have been even worse. My mother clung to her friend and cried, passing me a tissue when she saw me doing the same. I couldn't see my grandmother. I didn't want to. My sister was across the church aisle with my aunt. Both were a mess of tears.

After the service, my dad came over to give me a hug. He'd caught me crying, and even if I denied it, the runny nose and make-up gave it away. And I'd sworn I'd put on waterproof mascara, too. He hugged me tightly and brushed my hair like I'd done to my mother when she'd first learned of her father's death. One day, I'll be her, my child hugging me as I cry about my father dying. To think the man giving me comfort would one day be beyond my reach was terrifying.



When my grandfather's service was over, everyone went around giving their hugs and sympathies. I loitered near my mother as the priest came to speak with my aunt and grandmother about the reception. After a brief discussion with them, he announced to the congregation that everyone was welcome to come. As he moved toward the exit, his robe brushed against the easel set up with a photo collage my mother made. It tipped backwards, and the entire gathering was silent for a moment as the collage and frame went crashing to the ground. The priest lunged to try to catch it, but only managed to trip himself and nearly send another picture ground-ward. The frame crashed to the stone floor, sending the noise of breaking glass throughout the church. There was silence and stillness, save for the priest righting himself, kicking the glass off his shoe. He looked back at the congregation for judgment.

Laughter filled the church, my own included. The priest relaxed and smiled in a sheepish manner. I knew then that everyone else would be okay.

And then there is the paradox. My step-father isn't dead, but I feel his loss still. I guess it's different when the person you lose is still out there somewhere. With death, it's easier. The cord is cut; there is no seeking out and trying to re-hatch a relationship. There is no more time. It's done. But I still haven't completely accepted my step-father leaving. He's still out there somewhere. He chooses to stay lost. I've handled real death. I think, just like my family, I'll be okay.

Joshua Savory • Poetry

The World's Greatest Painter Takes His Shotgun into the Cornfields

... and he pulls the trigger.

The sky turns red and the painter flies
through space, cosmically, with
lesser ex-lovers and greater gods,
not singular yet plural, like the many
ants in the universe. Everyone
scribbles Marx and claims obsidian
headstones, past Pluto and the vast
vacuum of space.

The painter holds off,
searching for the one who got away.
Last Christmas was the last Christmas
where she carved vivacious quips
into her arm, tearing vein.
Pushing through a cosmic library of
surrealistic dawn, radiant and lovely,
a skyline, etched in black stone,
the better part without the city.

Through months of disappointment,
earth-shaking, ground-breaking,
a glass of Scotch, smooth jazz before
peace.
Before the cosmic dreaminess of
America's sweethearts dampens the
acoustics, the painter's bug-eyed
mystical vision turns to bittersweet Pollock.
Vibrant multihued rainbows flash
with seizure-inducing colors
redorangeyellowbluebrownblackblackblack

After Bukowski



Justin Mantell • Poetry

Does the Moon Affect the Snail?

Because I know the moon gently pulls ocean tides from high to low, constantly coaxing a subtle swell across the sea and over the beach. And lakes have tides, too, so they're affected. Perhaps even puddles would have tides, though they never stick around long enough to find out for themselves, or anything else—puddles are a selfish mystery.

And I know we're independent of the pull. People—you and I. Regardless of the moon, our blood travels a pressurized circuit through arteries, into capillaries, and back. Each beat of our heart feeds our cells, and it's an electrified pulse.

We're safe.

But what happens to the snail? His blood follows no circuit, no closed or pressurized system—just an internal sloshing and splashing of fluid. His blood pools like a puddle, washing his organs only when he moves, or when the ocean moves him, or when the moon gently draws his insides upward as it slowly arcs across the sky.

Maybe, for the snail, it's all waves, all the time.



Untitled

Sophia A. Bakas • Digital Photographs • 10" x 3" each





Endless Windmills

Betsy Scarbrough • Tempera • 11" x 14"



Shadows

Shannon Rosenblat • Fiction

Sarah often studied her feet—their high insteps, their chubbiness, the way her toenails never grew in fully so she would have to dab the brush over both nail and toe when applying polish—and thought of her father. When she was twelve, her mother had told her that she and her father had the same feet. This was the first time Sarah had heard anything that reached beyond impersonal insult about the man she so desperately wanted to know. She had sat, holding her breath, not moving or making eye contact, praying her mother would say more; but that was all she was granted—the single detail.

Since then, she would stare at her bare feet at night, letting them poke out from beneath her white down comforter, whispering questions. *Are you married? Do I have siblings? Are you looking for me?* Studying them from every angle, she would attempt to picture the man who had the matching set. They must look alike, she decided, since she didn't much resemble her mother. She pictured him a short, light-eyed blond with long arms reaching to just above his knees. She wondered if he was left-handed like her.

Sarah looked out the window of her and her mother's third-story apartment. The streets, usually scattered with dark-eyed, middle-aged men selling Rolexes and Louis Vuitton bags and the tourists who took these items to be authentic, seemed bare for noon, completely empty save for the random straggler who ducked in or out of one of the many cloudy-windowed shops. In the distance, a small man gripped the hand of his dark-haired child, helping her across the street.

The tea kettle screamed from the kitchen. She moved toward the sound, then returned with two cups of tea, holding one of the ceramic mugs out to her mother, who took it slowly, some unforeseen pain stuttering her actions. Sarah studied her mother's face, watching as her eyes glistened over and her cheeks tightened to counteract the onset of tears. She shook her head slowly, her lips pursed, her dark hair flowing like a curtain over her shoulder. Her tea was cupped between both hands, the steam rising and seeping into the thin, curving lines that had recently begun to mark her face. She reached into her purse, pulled out a yellowed, bent-cornered photograph, placed it on the table between them, and then rose from her seat and left the room.

Sarah was alone with the photograph. It was of herself as an infant curled up on a man's chest. His cheek rested against hers. The man that stared back from her shaking hand wore a welcoming grin and a black Grateful Dead shirt and had the same narrow face as her own, the same soft eyes. She smiled back at him.

The moon was covered by gray clouds, lowering a heavy gloom over the parking lot, the only real light coming from the half-burnt-out Schooner's sign and the one lamppost positioned in the center of the lot. It hadn't been hard to find the meeting place, as it was on the main street of the town, the only street of the town.

He was fumbling with a set of keys next to a green Civic with a large dent in its side. He wore a white shirt that was too large for him and blue jeans that were too tight and shredded at the knees.

She stood on the sidewalk. She wore a black shirt with sleeves that were folded neatly at her elbows. In her ears she wore tiny silver studs which peeked between tufts of yellow hair. Her hands were in constant motion, forming fists and then flattening, her palms sweating and pushing hard against her thighs.

"I—I'm," she said. "Sarah." She wondered if she had spoken the words loudly enough. She wondered if he even knew that she was talking to him, though there was no one else around.

He glanced up. "Sarah," he said.

She nodded. A warmth that wasn't pleasant but not entirely disagreeable was spreading through her stomach. She waited, unsure of what was meant to happen next. During the countless times she had played out the scene in her head, her father would instantly pull her in for a hug, or comment on how beautiful she was, or tell her he'd been looking for her his entire life, but the man in front of her shoved his hands into his pockets and watched his feet as they shifted over the pavement.

"Oh," he said, clearing his throat. "How old are you now?"

The light from the lamppost flickered and dimmed, deepening the shadows on her father's face.

Her face whitened beyond its usual pale. "Twenty-two," she mumbled, moving her gaze to her shoes.

"Want to grab a drink?" he asked.

The warmth was thickening and moving up toward her throat. "Sure." She tried to hide her hot cheeks behind her light hair. She felt small, more mousy than usual.

Inside the bar Sarah watched the only other patron, a man with wispy hair that reached past his scruffy beard, chalk up his stick before returning to the game he played against himself. The man moved stiffly, his hip bumping the side of the table and his arm reaching out for balance with each step.

The place was small—two round tables were pushed against the back wall behind the pool table, and the bar where Sarah and her father sat was just to the left of the door. Sarah glanced at her father and then to the door. Her breathing began to pick up. She felt slightly faint.

The bartender came over to them and stood silently with one hand on her hip. She was a skinny woman with thick orange makeup that intensified rather than covered old acne scars and the sunken bags beneath her eyes. Her dark hair was drawn into a tight bun that pulled her skin taut and left her looking the victim of a botched facelift. She wore tight black jeans and a navy-blue shirt that had "Schooner's" embroidered in white across its center.

"I'll take a Bud." Sarah's father crossed his arms over his chest.

The bartender looked over at Sarah, raising her penciled-on eyebrows. "And for you?"

"I'll have the same," Sarah said, her voice hardly above a whisper.

The bartender continued to stare.

"She'll have the same," her father repeated.

The woman nodded and moved away from them, scratching the back of her pen against the nape of her neck.

Sarah pulled her cigarettes out, offering her father one. His shoulders relaxed as he reached for it with his yellow-stained fingers. She lit his and then her own. They sat in silence with their right arms resting against the bar; both were peppered with freckles and dark-brown moles. She looked at his profile, noticing that his long, slender nose and slightly pouting lips matched her own.

She noticed that he smoked with his left hand like her.

The bartender placed the bottles in front of them. Sarah scratched at a corner of the Budweiser label with her red-painted fingernail. She picked up the bottle. It shook as she brought it to her mouth. Her fingers felt numb.

He cleared his throat. "How's your mother?"

"She's fine."

She took another sip as he reached for his bottle. His hand shook. She didn't think it was from nerves.

"Are you in school?"

"No."

As they each took a drag off their cigarettes, their eyes locked momentarily, and then with both exhalations, a thin veil of smoke hesitated between them. Her father looked away.

With her eyes, Sarah followed the posters, neon beer signs, and twenty or so matching pale-blue flyers that covered the perimeter of the room, the clutter making the already-small area feel more confining. The bartender busied herself, scrubbing the surfaces of the clean tables at the back of the bar. The gray-haired man racked the pool balls, readying for another game.

With one hand her father tapped the bar and with the other he held his cigarette. A straight line of ash extended from its end, threatening at any moment to give out and slip into the ceramic ashtray it hovered above. She pushed her cigarette around the ashtray, covering it with squiggles of smudged black. Her father cleared his throat, his eyes crinkling together as though he were about to speak. Instead, he rubbed at his eyes and continued to tap the bar. The bottles sat half-empty in front of them.

Sarah again looked at her father's profile, staring hard, tempting him to look at her. Her breathing quickened, but she held her gaze. Her father moved his hand to his chin, covering his mouth with his palm and shifted in his seat. He cleared his throat and turned to look over his shoulder, watching the empty street outside the small front window. Sarah dropped her gaze, letting her hair again hide her face.

"Look Sarah," he suddenly said, "it's not that I haven't wanted to see you. It's just that it's been hard, you know? Your mom made it hard. And I have another family to take care of."

Sarah looked up. "I have siblings?" she asked quietly.

"They live out in Eastern Washington with their mom. Lupe is two and his older sister Tamara is seven. I get out there to see them every few months. I'm trying to move out there. When work picks up, I'm moving out there."

Sarah pictured two dark-haired, tan-skinned children running about

their yard in the dry Eastern Washington heat, her—their—light-haired father chasing after them as they laughed and shouted, their mother standing on the porch with a smile and her arms crossed.

"Do they know about me?" she asked.

He shook his head, and took a swig of his beer.

She pulled a cigarette from her pack and lit it. Her father watched her mouth and then her hand as she puffed and tapped ash into the ashtray. She noticed him watching.

"Are your parents still alive?" Her mother's parents had both died before she was six.

"They're up in Glacier, about an hour from here." He shrugged his shoulders high and then pushed a hand against the side of his chin, cracking his neck. "In a retirement home up there."

Sarah took a drag off her cigarette. "Do they know about me?"

He shook his head slowly.

She clenched her fist, digging her nails into her palm. "Can I meet them?"

He stared at her hand that held the cigarette and shrugged his shoulders high again. "Do you mind?" he said, pointing at the open pack on the counter. She pushed it toward him. He reached out, took one, and waited for her to pass the lighter. As he dragged on the cigarette, his shoulders settled back into a slouch. She sat in silence, waiting.

"Sarah," he said, between inhalations, "they're old, you know?"

She only stared at him.

"I just mean to say, it wouldn't be a good idea." The cigarette had burned nearly to the filter. He put it out, and then stared at his hands where they rested on the bar top. "They don't need new things like this thrown at them."

Sarah could feel her eyes narrowing as she turned to him, her heartbeat rising. Silence loomed over them as she stared.

Finally, he pulled his hands to his lap and turned toward her. "I'll be right back," he said, and stood from the barstool, making his way toward the bathroom at the back of the bar.

The bartender was heading toward her. Sarah swallowed hard and tightened her jaw in an attempt to clear any emotion from her face.

But the woman didn't seem fooled and Sarah, suddenly feeling nauseated, wondered how long she'd been listening. She smiled and leaned in toward Sarah over the bar. "Can I get you anything, sweetie?" she asked, her eyes narrowing in concern.

Sarah shook her head. She pulled her cigarette to her mouth and found that it had burned down nearly to the filter and gone out. The bartender turned and walked away.

Her father emerged from the bathroom and rubbed his hands along the sides of his jeans as he moved back toward her.

As soon as he'd sat down, Sarah glanced at her watch without reading the time. "I should head home," she said. "It's getting late."

He nodded, draped a gray sweatshirt over his shoulder, and quickly pushed away from the bar, the stool squeaking loudly against the wood floor. He dropped a ball of ones onto the counter, then turned toward the door. Sarah placed a crisp five next to the ones.

Outside, a light wind was blowing. It came as a relief. Pellets of rain were splattering against the pavement.



"Well," he said, scratching at the base of his neck, eyes averted, "it was really good to see you."

She nodded, then turned away from him, moving through the dark toward her car. In the breath of wind that swept past them, Sarah noticed a strange, foreign scent—a mix of ginger and something she could not recognize.

The towns seemed to blur together, reviving the space between them. Few cars traveled down the dark freeway, their lights giving a small wink as they passed. Her face was wet from the spray of rain that came through the open window, but she didn't bother with closing it, with pulling her numb fingers from where they clutched at the wheel.

She turned her free hand's palm up on her knee and pulled her eyes from the road to follow the wrapping pale-blue veins that ran from wrist to palm. *Do you even remember my birthday? Do you ever think about the time you held me?* She studied the scattering of freckles. *The way our matching faces pressed together?*

A loud vibration echoed through her car when she veered onto the rumble strip, forcing her eyes back onto the road. The city lights were close, signaling a return to her dark-haired mother, to her shared, one-bedroom apartment, to her white-covered bed where she would lie and watch the shadows cross her hands until she slept.



Blue Dream

Thoa Nguyen • Blue Agate and Sterling Silver • 8.5" x 6"

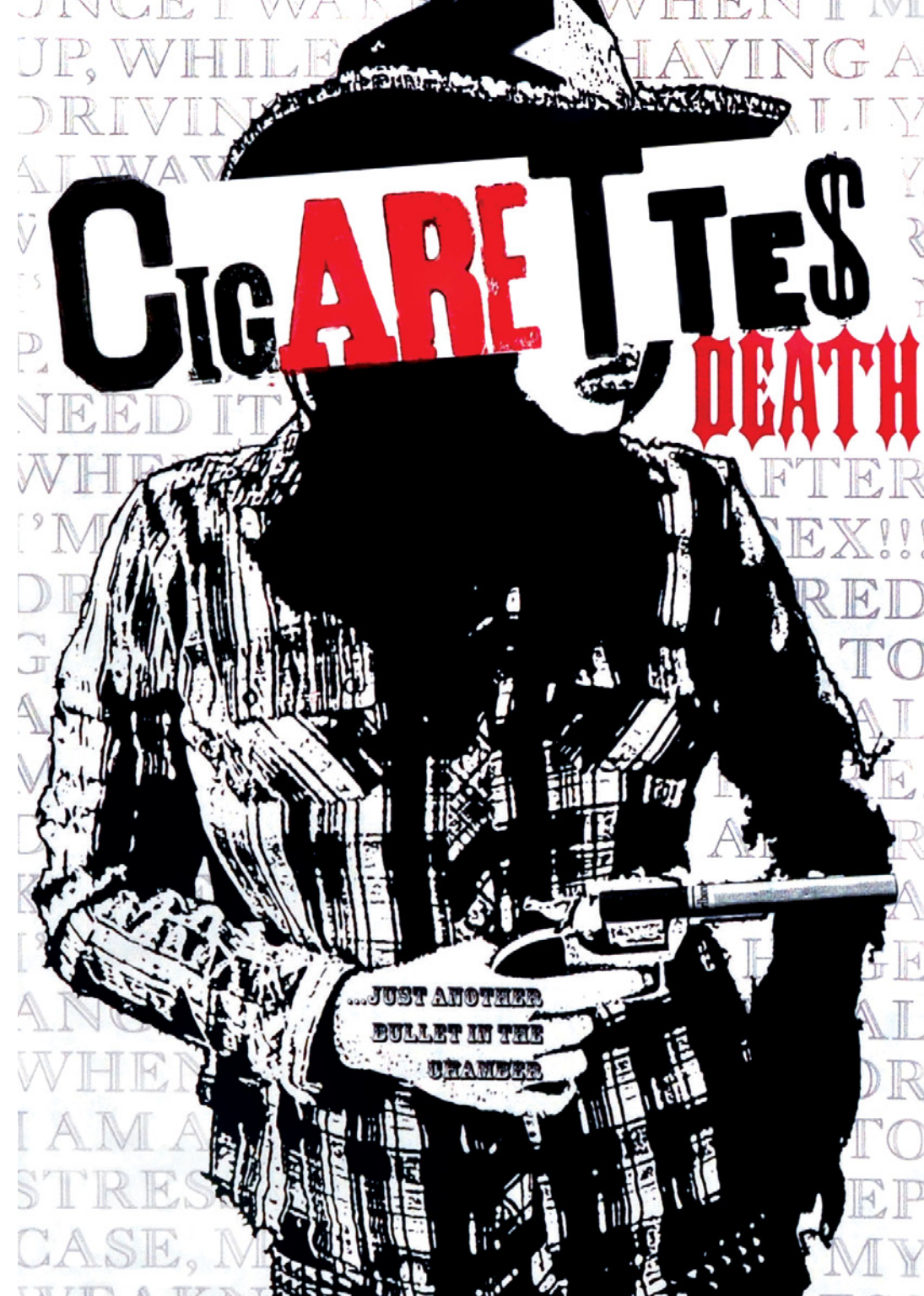


Pomegranates

Rebecca Cushing • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 10" x 10"

Cigarettes Are Death

Jenny Nguyen • Vector and Letterpress • 14" x 10.5"





Spots: Skate Spots of my Youth

Kenneth Fontaine • CMYK Process Silk Screen • 8" x 13" x .5"



Liberty, Kansas

This was the go-to spot of mine. It's just a small enough spot where to try anything
at all. The Librarian and Librarian's never owned that we skated there but we'd always
have gotten into a hard time. At the time, skateboarding wasn't the popular and widely
accepted sport it is now.



Under the Moon

Jessica Goodchild • Digital Photograph • 13" x 10"



Blind Contour

Sullivan Cohen • Felt-Tip Pen • 18" x 24"





Untitled

Jenny Grinsell • Silk Screen • 24" x 18"



Working Shoes

Sam Thibault • Clay and Black Glaze • 11" x 9"



Exploding Christmas Ornaments, Blue Jays, and Storytelling

An Interview with Michael Corrente
By Evan Dardano and Alex Pawling

Providence filmmaker Michael Corrente has been writing, directing, and producing films independently since the late 1980s. He wrote and directed *Federal Hill* (1994), which established his reputation within the film industry. Since then, he and his production company, Eagle Beach, have worked with David Mamet, the Farrelly Brothers, Robert Duvall, and others domestically and abroad. On March 3, 2011, he invited us to his apartment.

Photo by Alex Pawling



The Bridge: So, you're a local man, from Pawtucket. Can you tell us what it was like growing up in Rhode Island?

Corrente: Sure. I lived in Rhode Island until I was twenty-one, in a blue-collar neighborhood. My dad was a builder, of sorts. Couldn't really read or write [chuckles]. Part of the reason was that when he was a little boy, his mom and dad got divorced, which was kind of rare, back then, for an Italian family to have that happen. His mom had custody and she couldn't afford to pay a babysitter and she worked. And she couldn't send him to school, so she put him in the local movie theater every day because she knew the projectionist. Very sort of *Cinema Paradiso*-esque. And so he fell in love with cinema. Growing up in a crazy household of six children—I'm the youngest—like a year apart, we never wanted for anything. It was a big, warm, crazy, wonderful Irish-Italian family. And my dad would see a movie and he would insist that my brother and I sit there and we would sit watching *The Bicycle Thief* in black-and-white with subtitles, and I'd read them, and my brother would watch. We were very close.

The Bridge: And we can definitely see how that's influenced your movies.

Corrente: Well, that scene in *Outside Providence* where they shoot the lights off the Christmas tree? My brother and I got those little plastic BB guns with the little plastic bullets for Christmas. And my mother said to me, "Here, let me show you. Well, that's an old bulb." *Pop.* And my father looked at her like, "Oh really? George, give me the gun." So my brother and I sat there like dummies for thirty-five, forty minutes while they shot every bulb off the tree. Wouldn't that be a great scene to sort of let the world know that, mom and dad, they're a little bit crazy? And it ended up in the film and critics mentioned it particularly. I mean ... *Outside Providence* is about a boy from Pawtucket, you know. And so when I read that book I went crazy over it.

The Bridge: You could connect with it.

Corrente: Oh, completely. I mean, growing up in Pawtucket was great. Yeah. Crazy, fun ... in the neighborhood, everyone was in the same boat.

The Bridge: And you went to college close by, is that right?

Corrente: I went to a conservatory, right here, yeah. Trinity Rep (Trinity Repertory Theater — Ed). It was the second year they started it and it was phenomenal. All these teachers came in from New York. I had gone to a play at Trinity Rep when I was a kid in high school, and then decided that's what I wanted to do after. I started as an actor.

The Bridge: Was it because of that play?

Corrente: It was. The play was *A Man for All Seasons*. I actually have that poster on the wall in the hallway. I didn't want to go to the theater when I was a sophomore in high school, and there was a program—there still is a program—called Project Discovery which started in the sixties to introduce people to regional theater with live performances of real actors.

The Bridge: It was Adrian Hall who was the director of the school at the time?

Corrente: That's right. He directed the play and got a lot of recognition for it. Adrian Hall is still one of the premier avant-garde, really daring directors in the country in regional theater. They were doing some phenomenal stuff back then. A lot of walls came down for me. I was, you know, a local guy and first thing's first, I had to learn how to speak English, which was a little tricky at first, but I got through it.

The Bridge: You mention in the *Brooklyn Rules* commentary that your brother used to come see you perform.

Corrente: My brother and I took different paths in life. He's ... let's just say he's a street guy and he grew up with a bunch of street guys. And they would come and watch Shakespeare in Newport, all dressed up in the summertime, like this [sits back, crosses arms], and at the end of the play he'd be like, "Yeah that was good. That fuckin' Hotspur, he had to go. You killed him, he had to go." A lot of fun, growing up with George, never a dull moment.

The Bridge: And then in '84 you moved to New York?

Corrente: I moved there in '84. I ended up in Boston in '82, stayed there for a year or so, produced a lot of theater there in Boston for about a year and a half and then moved to New York in '84 and started directing and writing plays.

The Bridge: And you started Studio B there?

Corrente: Yeah, Studio B Theater Ensemble, with some friends. My background was theater, and that's what I wanted to do until I wrote that one-act play *Federal Hill*, or what ultimately became the screenplay for *Federal Hill*.

The Bridge: And how did you decide that you wanted to transition into producing film?

Corrente: Somebody mentioned that the play would make an interesting film. So then I spent the next year and a half writing that screenplay. I spent a *long* time on that screenplay. And then everybody and their brother said they were gonna make it, and then nothing ever materialized, so finally I just put my foot down and got stupid and raised \$80,000 and went and made the movie in 35mm black-and-white.

The Bridge: And you made it fairly quickly, too.

Corrente: Oh, I shot it in twenty-four days. I got the film on credit for ninety days. I started shooting two days after the film arrived. I shot the film, edited the film, and sold the film and paid off Kodak within ninety days.

The Bridge: So you're glad that you eventually made the decision and shot it yourself?

Corrente: Oh, no question. It's what started my career. I mean, that picture won awards all over the world. So I sent a videocassette to Berlin. And got a fax two or three weeks later that said, "We've accepted your film in the festival." And I had no idea what to

expect. I had no idea that film would be so well received. And it was.

The Bridge: And you decided from that point on ...

Corrente: You know, it's funny, I have to say the irony is ... it's so weird. I was living in Long Island and in Manhattan at the time, and I read the book *Outside Providence*. I got ahold of Pete Farrelly and said, "I love this. I want to make a movie. I need the rights." He said, "You can have the rights for a dollar." Careers were actually made out of it. It's crazy. The odds are pretty astronomical.

The Bridge: And so, from what you've described about *Federal Hill*, it seems like it started off a trend for you to stay outside of mainstream production, kind of a do-it-yourself approach.

Corrente: Yeah, I didn't know any better. I knew I wasn't gonna wait around for somebody to say, "Here, I dub you a filmmaker." I just wasn't gonna do that. So I made it. And it really did well.

The Bridge: Could you talk about how you wrote it? You mentioned it was a long process.

Corrente: Yeah, a very long process. It took me ... I wrote over twelve hundred pages, draft after draft after draft.

The Bridge: Did you stick with the same narrative ideas the whole time you were drafting?

Corrente: Well, it started out as two guys in a one-act play, and then it went to five guys in a full-length play. Then I took those five characters based on guys I knew growing up, my brother, a composite of everybody. But I just listened to the characters and they started to tell a story, because I had a fairly well-rounded background with these characters.

The Bridge: One of the things we really enjoyed in *Federal Hill* is that, for maybe the first half, it kind of follows the individual characters' plots rather than one overarching plot, and it's only once

all the characters are developed that they converge, and the threat affects all of them for the second half of the film. It sounds like you had that structure in mind from the start.

Corrente: Yeah, that was a very important part of the writing. [Pauses] One of the major reasons that picture was successful was the amount of time I spent in rehearsal. I rehearsed for four weeks in New York City every day, five days a week, in my apartment with the five principles. Then we came to Rhode Island, and we rehearsed every day for two weeks on location. So every single shot, everybody knew exactly what they were supposed to do. There was never any guessing, which is what enabled me to shoot the picture in twenty-four days.

The Bridge: How was casting?

Corrente: Casting was interesting. There's really no one in the movie, it was actors that I'd worked with through the theater. Nick Turturro was working as a doorman at a local apartment building. There was really no one of any stature yet, except for Frank Vincent who had been in *Raging Bull*, I think.

The Bridge: And you were in there as well.

Corrente: I was in there. Someone else was supposed to play that role. They did. I shot it, but it really was not that well performed so I went back the next day, put on jeans and a flannel shirt, and did it.

The Bridge: Do you plan to keep acting?

Corrente: I act quite a bit. I was in *Kingpin* with Pete and Bobby Farrelly, and I did a movie with Robert Duvall a few years ago. I get offered roles but I usually say no. I like the other side of the camera now.

The Bridge: It must give you an edge in coaching your own actors.

Corrente: I encourage every director to study acting and become a good actor. Because there's a language you need to understand

to talk to actors; they're all nuts. For the most part. So you need to be able to have a conversation with them. If they trust you, you're in great shape. If they don't trust you, you have a problem.

The Bridge: And you've got some recurring actors. Seems like the trust is working. You've worked with Alec Baldwin a few times.

Corrente: Yeah.

The Bridge: And Robert Turano as well.

Corrente: A lot, yeah. He's a sort of go-to guy. He's a really well-trained, solid actor who's a good friend, and every time I make a movie there's usually a role I need him for.

The Bridge: Yeah, he seems really versatile. He's hysterical in *Brooklyn Rules*. Was some of that ad-libbed?

Corrente: That was scripted. It was all Terry Winter. When I met Terry Winter he said, "I can't believe you would even consider directing this movie. When I saw your movie, *Federal Hill*, I realized I had the license to go and write my story." And they're very similar in scope.

The Bridge: Yeah, there are some thematic similarities as well: the hometown pull, close-knit relationships. We've noticed that frequently, and it's often tragic, characters resist the culture of their hometowns, and there's always some punishment when they try to break away. Like Drugs Delaney in *Outside Providence*, or Bobby in *Brooklyn Rules*. Could you comment on that a bit?

Corrente: You know, it's funny that you mention it. Of course, I look back on it now and realize that you're attracted to those stories. It is about guys trying to get out, break out of where they're from, flirting with the disaster that they were attracted to growing up. It's that whole notion that the neighborhood could bite you in the ass if you get too close to it. You'll burn. And that's what happens. And a lot of times by mistake, e.g. Bobby in *Brooklyn Rules* and Nicky in *Federal Hill*. It was an accident. Wrong guy.

The Bridge: Now that you mention it, we had a question about the violence in your movies. It's not really exaggerated or glorified but it's not downplayed, either.

Corrente: Right.

The Bridge: When Ralphie assassinates Frank and his father at the end, it's shot from outside of the limo. Was that deliberate?

Corrente: Yeah. For me, violence, along with sex, I try to be as subtle as I can be about it. Except for *Brooklyn Rules*. There's some pretty graphic stuff in there, with the ear in the meat slicer and the fighting in the diner. I mean ... you *got* it, you knew what had happened, you see the gun, you see him turn around, we pull out wide. You know he's murdered both of them. Shooting the scene where the heads blow up ... it didn't seem to fit the moment. It seemed like I could have done it more tastefully, and that's what I opted for.

The Bridge: Terrence Winter says in the commentary for *Brooklyn Rules* that you did request more blood in the ear scene.

Corrente: I did. I went back and re-shot it. I wanted more blood. A situation like that, if you're not going to show the actual act of the ear coming off, you get just as much effect with the result as you do with the actual explosion.

The Bridge: Yeah, it's a striking scene.

Corrente: It's pretty, pretty eerie. Creepy stuff.

The Bridge: Could you say a little more about the relationships you've had with your screenwriters while you've been working? We know you worked very closely with Terrence Winters. He was on the set all the time.

Corrente: I keep the screenwriter right next to me on every movie. I grew up in the construction business. If you could have the architect right there as you're putting something together and it doesn't quite fit, why wouldn't you? Oftentimes, directors get intimidated by a writer

for whatever reason—and sometimes I guess writers are a pain in the ass to be like, “Oh, that's not what I wrote.” I mean, at a certain point you're just like, “Hey, pal, listen, you're here, I'm here. You planted the seeds. The garden is growing, right? That's the screenplay. I'm the director who's going to interpret that as a painter with a canvas.”

The Bridge: Yeah, that's why it's written. To be shared and adapted.

Corrente: Yeah, exactly. And when that collaboration works, it's fantastic. Nobody makes a movie on their own unless you take a camera into the woods and film blue jays by yourself. Then you made a movie alone. But making a feature film is very collaborative. And you have to have a collaborative brain in order to do it or you're just an idiot.

The Bridge: And you've used a handful of people who weren't necessarily full-time actors.

Corrente: I've used a lot of people that have never acted before. In *Federal Hill*, the guy who owned the pawn shop—not an actor. The guy in *Federal Hill* who owned the clothing store—one take, never acted in his life on camera.

The Bridge: He was good, too. Really charismatic in that scene. The ‘funny money’ scene—

Corrente: Yep. First time, one take. It was his clothing store. I needed a clothing store, and I said, “Briggs, will you be in the scene?” “Sure.” “Here's the scene.” He read it for like fifteen minutes. “Yeah I got it, yeah I got it. Okay.” Shot it. One take. He said, “Are you done?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Great. Get the fuck out of my store, I got work here to do.” And we all left.

The Bridge: What do you think inspires those kinds of performances from people who haven't been doing a lot of acting?

Corrente: Well, acting—that's just it. I tell actors, “When in doubt, do less.” And acting really should be called reacting because that's

what you're doing. I'm going to say something to you, you're going to listen to me. And if you really listen to me, you're going to respond to what I said to you as honestly as you can. That's acting. And if a guy who sells clothing for a living all his life doesn't know how to interact with another person, honestly, you're in trouble. It doesn't always work. And then oftentimes I have a signal with my cinematographer, and I say, “Okay, let's just do a rehearsal a few times. Just try it once or twice just to see if you've got the lines down—relax, don't push it, it's just rehearsal, let's see what happens.” And they do it like three or four times, and then I say, “Okay.” And then they go, “Okay, I'm ready.” And I say, “It's all done.”

The Bridge: Oh, so you just roll it without them—

Corrente: Yeah, without them knowing. And then there are some guys who don't care if that's on or off—they just don't care. By the way, I don't think I'd ask Briggs to do any Shakespeare. But playing himself in a clothing store? Piece of cake.

The Bridge: How about *A Shot at Glory*, when you worked abroad? What drew you to the project? We weren't expecting the underdog to be humbled at the end ...

Corrente: That movie would have been so much less effective if they won. I would have just rolled my eyes and said, “Oh please.” Everyone expected him to hit that goal and win. That's not the way it goes. That's what attracted me to the material—the way that they didn't win. But that's life. And that was a wonderful experience being able to shoot that movie in Scotland and direct Robert Duvall. [Pauses] To come from Pawtucket and to have the good fortune of directing Dustin Hoffman in David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, after making one quiet little black-and-white film, it was insane. And it was just because I probably had more energy and balls than brains, and Mamet saw *Federal Hill*, and we met and I said I want to do it.

The Bridge: And the script didn't change much?

Corrente: At all. Paid him a million dollars to write four words: “Fade in,” and “Fade out.”

The Bridge: So how did you cast Hoffman and Franz?

Corrente: I thought Dustin would make a great Teach, based on Ratso Rizzo and a bunch of other characters that he had played. So we called and I offered it to him. I was in L.A. at the time, in Venice, for a week. And he got on the phone, and I said, “I really would love you to consider this.” He said, “When you come back to the States, come by and we'll have a coffee.” I said, “Well, I'm in Venice, California.” He said “Oh, I thought because you were Italian ...” Two hours later I was in a meeting and he said yes.

And Dennis Franz, it just couldn't have been better casting. He was one take, boom. Cut. That was it. Most of his performance is one take in that movie. He just really nailed it.

The Bridge: And William H. Macy was originally Bob, but you cast a black actor. We were curious if you felt the violence in the movie was changed at all. Did it become a different kind of violence when race was more apparent onscreen?

Corrente: Interesting ... no, I don't think so. The violence was actually less in this film than it had been in other versions of the play. It created a lot of controversy. A lot of people were freaked out and a lot of people loved it. Dave in particular was thrilled that the part was for a black actor, just loved it. Dave Mamet at one point asked me to consider having Lawrence Fishburne play Teach, which was an interesting thought, too, but I had already cast Dustin. Teach could have been black, Donnie could have been black. So that was a big moment in small cinema, when I directed *American Buffalo*. It was interesting. It was fun.

The Bridge: It sounds like it's been a benefit to work in small cinema, to be more independent when it comes to production. But were there any particular challenges getting started?

Corrente: The inherent challenge is always financing. And having raised all the financing myself ... but that's the trade-off in the price you pay to not work within the studio system, and being able to make the movies you want to make, when you want to make them. That's not easy, raising the money, but the barrier to entry now is much less intense than it was then. Like, when you're shooting 35mm film with a Panavision camera in actual raw stock, well, that's a huge difference than the technology that's available today.

The Bridge: You mentioned when we first got here that you might have a preference for digital filmmaking now?

Corrente: Based on the picture that I just shot, yeah. What I see going on with the Red Camera, and conversations I've had with my friend, Steven Soderbergh, and talking to him about it and the pictures that he's made ... it's pretty hard to tell the difference.

The Bridge: It is, increasingly.

Corrente: And the people who really can tell the difference—the really, really snooty sort of cinematographers—well, they don't pay to go to the movies. If you tell a good story and it looks good, who knows? Who cares? The amount of information that they're able to put on a frame of film now, digitally, is incredible.

The Bridge: You have your own production company, right?

Corrente: Yes, Eagle Beach Productions. It's been in existence since 1992.

The Bridge: So pretty much since the start?

Corrente: Yeah, yes. It was the production company that made *Federal Hill*.

The Bridge: Do you want to talk about any upcoming projects?

Corrente: Yeah, sure. I've been in New York working on a picture called *Loosies* that I shot this summer with Peter Facinelli, Vincent

Gallo, William Forsythe, and Michael Madsen. I just saw a cut yesterday that I really like. We had the first assembly cut at two hours and twenty minutes. That's usually when you want to run for the razor blades and jump out a window because the first assembly cut is usually a disaster, and this movie was no exception. And that's when you go to work. And after the last seven weeks, I just saw a cut at ninety minutes that I'm really excited about. And I have a picture that I will shoot in May that's titled *Hello*.

The Bridge: We heard that some of the shooting for *Loosies* was done in Cranston.

Corrente: A lot of the movie was shot in Rhode Island, and when you see the film you'll swear it was all shot on location in New York. I mean, the editor who grew up in Brooklyn saw a lot of it and was like, "Are you kidding me?" I said, "Yeah, ninety percent of it in Rhode Island." But then again, everyone loves *Mean Streets*, right? Scorsese's first big picture? But the quintessential New York movie—he shot three quarters of that in L.A. I mean, if I'm holding you guys in a two-shot right here, this could be Poland, it could be Guam. It could be the moon. It's only until you get outside and there's a reference point that it matters.

The Bridge: Would you say, for pulling permits and getting locations, it's easier to work locally?

Corrente: Yes. Not that I pulled any permits or did any locations in New York. I just was running and gunning. Especially, we shot in Grand Central with [points to our camera] that camera. That's what it looks like, except it's a Canon. Nobody knew. Nobody knew I was making a movie. Peter Facinelli—nobody recognizes him, per se, without the white hair from *Twilight*. And then there were hundreds and hundreds of extras in the background that were out of focus that I didn't pay for.

The Bridge: There's a benefit to going guerrilla.

Corrente: No question. No doubt.

The Bridge: You can get a lot out of a natural scene by doing that.

Corrente: Oh, my god. Of course. Especially if the only ones who know what's going on are the two actors in the scene. And what's great about that camera is if I shot from this angle [points to us], I could hold him sharp and you could be completely out of focus. It's amazing.

The Bridge: We've heard a lot of people say that digital looks a little bit grittier, a little more real to some audiences. But it is strange how that's blurring now.

Corrente: Well, yeah, it's all changing so quickly, though. That's the way it used to look.

The Bridge: It looks like 35mm now.

Corrente: Are you kidding? Get online and look at the *Great Camera Shootout*. It's an experiment where there's six high-profile photographers sitting in a theater watching footage to see how far you can push digital versus film. The film didn't come close to the amount of low-light you can shoot just lighting a match. Forget it. Sixty-thousand ISOs? Film was blown away. Again, it's the whole notion of film versus digital. That's just bullshit. It all comes down to information in a frame. Call it whatever you want. Tell a good story. Write a good screenplay. And pay attention to that [points to a framed piece on his wall]. I read that every day. That's the most important. Take one second and read it.

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race." – Calvin Coolidge

My favorite line is, "Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts." Just hang in there, keep swinging. Because it takes the

tenacity and, you know, the persistence to just keep going. And you guys, are you film majors, or do you want to be writers?

The Bridge: We're at school for English and Graphic Design.

Corrente: Yeah, Graphic Design. I mean, it's amazing what you can do with this technology. But the great thing is, what's going to separate all the shit from quality is the material—is the script.

The Bridge: Yeah, we're even seeing serialized narratives online. The equipment is more available.

Corrente: That's what I'm saying. Anyone can write it, anyone can do it. That's why you're going to see such amazing stuff. Because it was a fucking elitist, snobby art form before this. You had to be able to get a Panavision 35mm camera and get raw stock that had to be processed and developed and it's crazy. It's not a lengthy process anymore. Not anymore.

The Bridge: How do you think it's going to change the relationship between filmmakers and the studio systems? Are we going to see more independent efforts now?

Corrente: Well, this year was a very big year for independent film. *Winter's Bone*—amazing movie. Nominated for an Oscar. Made for two million dollars. I mean, that's a great picture. So, that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. That those stories are going to be told. And, well, look what the studios are putting out. The house has to not only blow up, but it's got to turn into a car again. I don't know. That's what they're selling at the theaters. But they have no choice. It has to be an event. Because it's so expensive.

The Bridge: Maybe that's another side effect of digital filmmaking. That it's easier to make explosions.

Corrente: Yes, but it's gotta be an event. You've gotta be able to get people off their ass to go to the movie theater. It has to be a good story or some spectacle that you can't see right here. One of the most fun times I've had in the theater in the last

ten years was seeing Robert Zemeckis' *A Christmas Carol* in IMAX 3D.

The Bridge: And now that things are in 3D, they're the huge spectacle.

Corrente: Sure, but they're making 3D versions of these cameras, too, now. It's amazing. You can have kids making features with this [holds up his cell phone]. Why not? It's a tool to photograph a story.

The Bridge: So you think the importance of storytelling can only grow?

Corrente: It has to, it has to. Along with this technology is going to come a certain amount of garbage because anyone can do it. Anyone can spend two grand and buy a camera and a couple lenses and think they're Martin Scorsese. However, what is going to happen is some kid in the Bronx who is sixteen years old with a story to tell is going to blow your mind.

The Bridge: What direction do you see your work going in the future?

Corrente: I just financed a slate of ten horror movies, so I'm in the process of doing one of those. The first one of those. Not that I'm a big horror fan. I'm just doing it to generate some stuff and put a slate of pictures together for financiers who are interested in getting into the business. But as far as *The Prince of Providence* goes, those are the kinds of pictures I'm attracted to.

The Bridge: And if you weren't producing and directing, what would you be doing?

Corrente: Probably construction of some sort. I did it in New York for twelve years. One of the buildings I worked in a lot was the San Remo on Central Park West. When you're a builder, you have to go in and around the building through the service entrance. Madonna lived in the building, Dustin lived in the building ... I worked in that building for five, six years. They didn't know I was a filmmaker. They only knew me as the contractor. When *American Buffalo* got green-lit and I was making that movie, I walked into the front door and the concierge and the doorman came running

over and said, "Michael, you have to go in through the service elevator." I said, "I'm here to direct Dustin Hoffman in a major motion picture. Call the Hoffman residence. They're expecting me." So I go upstairs for the meeting. I actually got out of what I was doing, and I was going through the front door of the San Remo this time versus the service entrance.

The Bridge: Do you think you'd ever work more closely with the studio system?

Corrente: I have to say, I can see myself making a picture with a studio, if the material moved me. I don't see myself jumping into the whole Hollywood fray at this point in my life. I've managed to maintain final cut on every film I've ever had, which is an important thing to me. And I live here. I make the movies I want to make. I have my phone and my computer. I have my dreamy girlfriend. She has her place up on Federal Hill, mine's here and we spend most of our time together.

But I had the two apartments in Manhattan and the house in the Hamptons and four vehicles and nine keys. It's overwhelming and it's just stupid. But everything in here means something to me. Those are my possessions and I make the movies I want to make. If you walked into this apartment, except for maybe the odd poster, you couldn't even tell what I do for a living. I love living here. I'm home. My family's here. And my friends don't give a shit what I do. They do their thing and I do mine, and they're my friends because they're my friends. In L.A., New York, this business permeates everything, and I don't want to live like that.

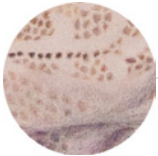
Works by Tegan Henderson
An Artist Portfolio



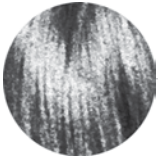
80 Farewell



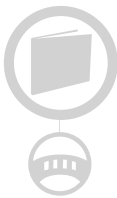
82 Brian



83 Sensual



84 The Searcher



Farewell

Book Cloth and Graphite • 6.25" x 9.75" x 3"





Brian

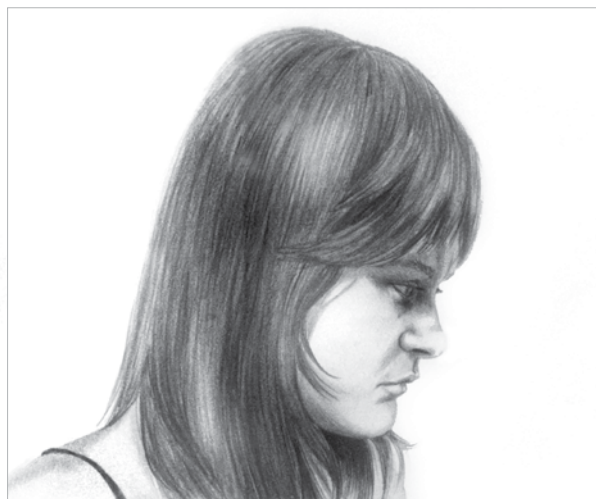
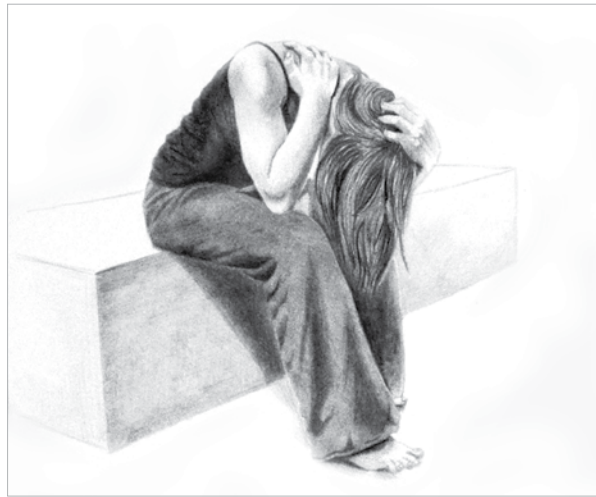
Graphite • 23" x 30"



Sensual

Colored Pencil • 29.5" x 25.25"





The Searcher

Printed Book Cloth and Graphite • 7.25" x 7.75" x .75"





William Buckley • Poetry

Treatise on illegally scattering the
ashes of a beloved uncle &
godfather into Jamaica Pond on the
morning of August the eighth two
thousand and eight

Bones, sink to bottom;
ash, in a holy plume drifts
toward the lake's heart

at home, the cool air
drifts in the open window
your room now is mine.



Untitled

Andrew Linde • Photo Manipulation • 33" x 23"





Bryan Way • Poetry

Fredrico, New Stanton

Am I still yours in Florida?
Florida, where you escaped from me
much like I did you in Colorado,
in winds so cold the northern lights
began to freeze

like broken torpedoes
crashing sullenly against amniotic
mountain dust, crushing itself
in the glacier Autumn
night.

Am I still yours in Florida?
Where brother must swear death
with his fists to my face,
“If he speaks I will make his blood
part of the earth,” and did you tell him,
“No, he’s just hodgepodging

and confused, in his suicide years,

in his days he learned how to use
these words.”

Am I still yours in Bayfield?
Flying past Silverton and Durango
with a French couple speaking
in dialect with passion I know not
exists,

while you jump wildly
in Bridgewater, “I’ve never felt
so alive,”
you said.

Without me; and without me
I would never feel so alive
as well, as I was not yours in Colorado,
nor Florida, nor where the last
sins baked in the rattlesnake heat
of Aztec, New Mexico,

when the swallowing
of straight liquor masked
your class and your ability
to stay woman.

Did you like when others touched
you, when their eyes
burnt laser crisp along you,
though you’d never let them
feel you like

I do? For no one could
enter you like I, our Neapolitan
fantasies, when sex became
a living dreamscape,
when we’d last hours at a time
till our bodies nearly
expired.

When you’d cough up particles
of blood and tear syrup,
when October bled raindrops
of acid and melted the skin
covering our eyes,

when we grew into two,
apart like I always felt we would be,
where hostility meets regret,
where I
meet you.



A Dignified Pose

Stefani McMillan • Charcoal • 30" x 23"



Catie Bisson • Poetry

Cauchemars

Fictions, creations, there is no forgiveness
In this place, it hurts me to close my eyes
When you abandon me sweet light.
You are mistaken, I do need you, without you
I'm lost to rejection, devoted to resentment.

Courageous, patient, things I can't be
When my mind is attacked in the silence
The hard the dark the unforgiving night
The flower of fear is alive in this place
Abuse, there's no use, I'm lost, my sweet light.

Strange, foreign, objects around me
People offer oblivion, they offer me peace
They disclose my weakness, whisper for war
Colors swirl with lazy ease *jaune, violet, rouge, noir*
An invitation to this world of eccentricity.

Light, Light, I cannot find you
This disquiet, a mechanism for failure
lâcher, they present prospective paths
I recognize no freedom, no people, no hope
Je ne suis rien dans la lumière, surrender.

Je vois concordant, objectifs
Douleur, grands gens, crainte jaune,
un cycle, une boucle, jamais la fin
torture individuelle, obtenir hors
obscurité est dans moi et autour de moi.



Alexandrea Matthews • Poetry
Mania: A Love Poem

Before you go
I want you to hit me,
make me
jump out of my skin.

I'll trade you my dignity
to be *God* when you're in me.

I'll buy us Las Vegas
I'll scream for you
shake for you
to be this beautiful is to
destroy the world, myself.

Let's sprint across the ocean
on your Red Bull-high horse
for nights, weeks, months.
Napoleon would be jealous
but the strippers would love us!
We can talk about nothing,
forever and everything.

I'll wait for you,
to rise me up again, above the dark, lonely ocean
waves which will surely envelope me,
once you're gone.



Memory

Justin Schuler • Silk Screen • 27" x 21"





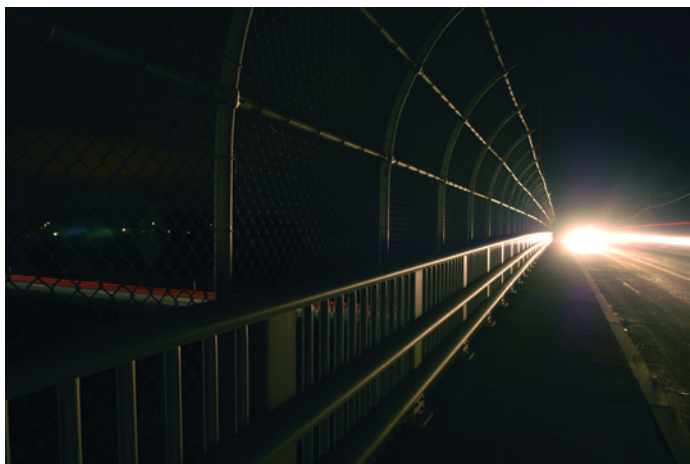
Raku

Cheri Amaral • Ceramics • 5" x 7.5"



Visible Light

Joseph Curley • Digital Photographs • 8" x 11" each





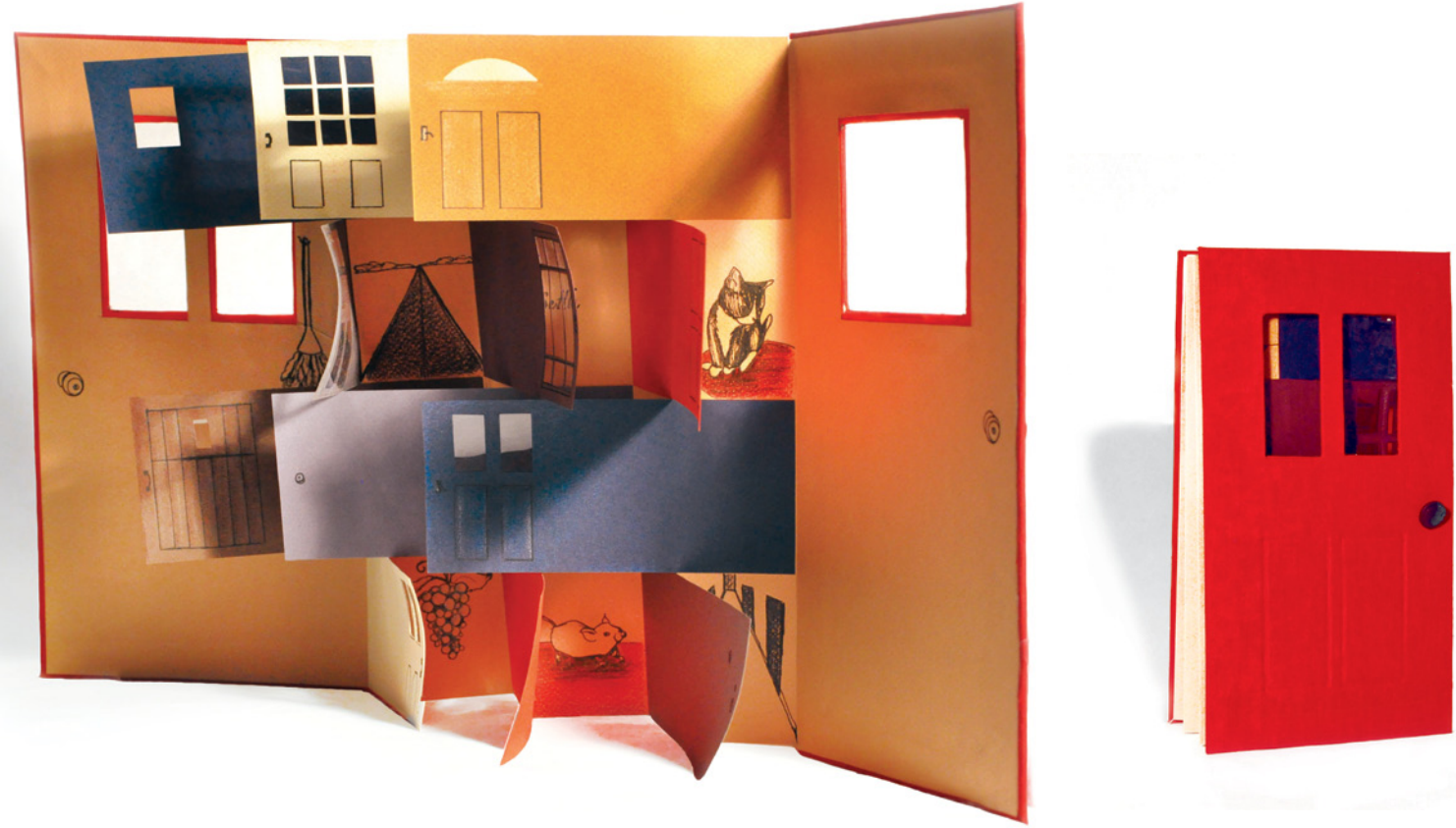
Bubbles

Sallee Bickford • Digital Photograph • 20" x 13.5"



Moving Again

Jennifer Hebert • Flag Book • 12" x 6" x 2"





The Dichotomy of Wholeness

Veronica Crowley • Acrylic on Canvas • 48" x 36"





Memory
Catherine McFarland • Photo Manipulation • 27" x 41"

Ryan DiPetta • Poetry
The Poem Wants

to borrow a phrase from the annals of pretentious poets past & present pretending to be arbiters of good emotion. I am none of these things (except pretentious) just replaying the same expired image in my head for hours while a floating mass of hair screams his name¹ in my ear patterned & falsetto'd chorus.

&

it'll be in my head for days, same as you have. Statewide galaxies will separate us forever in (hundreds of) hours & my mystery machine says that won't be the half of it, Daphne. The stars have been out to use me for target practice. I won't shoot back but run. I want to put the van in gear & go to Denver where Sal died & try to start a new life out there. Someone offered to come with me once but she was a one night ghost illusion who didn't know a husband from a pillow. I want to go alone.

But

I know I won't. I'm All Mixed Up past 3 in the morning while shitty reggae-rap-rock hybrid lyrics dance in my head at namesake time & that Puerto Rican screaming tries to force them out again. I will keep trying to forget this.

But

I think forgetting is giving up & I'd rather become an astronaut strapping on weighted boots to dive through those interstate transitory black holes instead. They say it'll turn me to spaghetti but if I go forever into lines of atom-thin agony I'll be content knowing you might strain me out on the other side.

¹ CLAUDIO-OH!



Relax & Inn-Joy

Justin Mantell • Fiction

There’s power in murdering an animal.

Or:

Murdering animals might trigger some sexual pleasure.

Or maybe:

Destroying animals is always arousing.

Welcome to *Relax & Inn-Joy*, the world’s most successful club-motel hybrid south of Boston.

Now imagine the existence of a rhino, stuck within the three-dimensionally-pixelated realm of *Big Safari Hunt*, having its face digitally blasted with fifty-caliber slugs night after night—this is my universe.

It is thanks to this perpetual arousal that I make my money. Not as the doomed rhino—I don’t possess that many lives—but as the owner of this reality in which one can grab an orange plastic rifle, slippery between chicken-wing-greased fingers, and shoot an infrared beam at a roughly-shaped polygonal representation of an endangered creature, punching a hole squarely between its eyes,

for nothing more than a few dirty quarters. A pittance, really, for such pristine, temporal transformation; and scoff if you must at the mining of small change, but it adds up to one filthy fortune. You won’t hear anything jingling in my pockets. Nope, nothing but the sexually-pleasing, swishing sound produced from a wad of crisp, clean bills gently caressing the lining of my khaki pants when I walk.

I watch.

And though it definitely pleases me to see you seeing me see you pay me for the chance to conquer Africa’s biggest game, I never used to condone the killing of animals. In fact, I’d hated it for the same reason that I hate a certain fruit. Digital violence lured me night after night, flaunting its sweet success like the meaty and firm flesh of a good Golden Delicious apple, urging me against better judgment to continue eating through to the healthy and seed-filled core, until all that remains is a highly irritating itch running along my gum line, vibrating my lips, numbing my teeth—a sudden onset of oral allergy syndrome comes like an uncomfortable and lasting reminder that times have certainly changed.

But those who come here can’t get enough of it—this brutality—and I was forced to support it if I wanted to remain financially competitive. It was trending, and even Twitter was screaming, “Arcade games are in! Bands are out!”

So I bought a used machine.

I cleaned it. I accepted it.

I’ve since labored over it, within it, working closely to its copper heart, healing the many broken solder points found on its aging circuit boards, the end result of such heavy use in the hands of the hordes of sharp-shooting drunks. I figure if it must exist, then it must exist—just as I like to treat everything else you’ll find in my bar. Nothing will ever find its way out of order, bringing shame to this establishment, or me, by an open advertisement of such ineptitude. I’m trying to run a business here.

Supply and demand: it’s one beautifully fucked-up waltz.

And remember: I didn’t love this shit, but *people* have always loved this shit.

Nobody enjoys the end result of clueless managers continually harping week after week, pleading to book a slew of no-name acts too often fronted by skinny, aging punks in baggy jeans and side ponytails.

I want to shake you, and I want you to understand that it’s no longer 1994—Grunge has long since died—and your own kids are about to graduate from college. You’ve yet to break out of this

rural sewer of confused subgenres, obsessed with radio-heavy gloss-rock, and you never, ever will.

Sometimes I find myself wondering, if along with all of his transformative genius, maybe Cobain possessed some sort of psychic intuition and fully understood the massive failures he was bound to inspire. No wonder he put that gun in his mouth.

Too bad he hadn’t owned what I own or known what I know now. But I guess in ’94, the options for escape were pretty slim, and even I was in the dark, still convinced it was the live music that made any money.

Or:

Still convinced it was the live music that anybody cared about.



Joshua Savory • Poetry

Thoughts of my Father on Father's Day

For Elton

Father, today is the day I am supposed to honor you
but instead I find myself doing the opposite.

Twelve years ago, a man attacked you with
a knife over a money squabble and you are
no longer with us. You were gone far before
that. Mother did a fine job of hiding us from you,
but maybe she hid us too well. I grew up a son
without a father. There was a man in my house,
but he was not my father, simply a father figure.
A replica of what a father is and is supposed to
do.

Father, Mother talks about the only man she ever
loved.

Father, Mother talks about you as if you were
sinner as well as saint.
All at once.

Father, Mother never talks about the drugs you
indulged in, or the other women. What is my brother's
name? Or my sister's?

Father, Mother talks about wanting to kill herself,
or otherwise, not being alive anymore. It has to do
with her sickness, but you aren't around anymore
to help her through such a difficult time.

Father, your absence is the only one that makes
sense.

Father, I don't feel sad. How could I feel
sad about a man I never really knew? I found out
two weeks ago about your prescription sunglasses.
I thought you were being badass in these pictures, but
it seems that you were simply making yourself more
blind.

Father, I feel like I was robbed of the opportunity
to slay you and become a man. Now I'm forced to
learn as I go. Had you been here, maybe I would know
how to throw a baseball correctly or strum a guitar.
Maybe I wouldn't have learned how to ride a bike
in the second grade.

Father, I don't blame you for not helping me into adulthood.
I've had friends, supervisors,
professors of poetics, that were more
fatherly than you.

Father, I have not considered forgiving you
because I do not know you. I know you
as much as you know me. I have
considered forgetting you, the simpler
of the two, but every so often you drag
yourself up into my cerebrum, and it's time
to wonder if I'll get a chance to meet you
on the other side.

Father, should I extend a welcoming hand or a hostile fist?

Father, whenever I see your mother, she tells me
how much I look like you. Walk like you. Am like
you. I want you to know though,
that I may look like you. Walk like you. But,
I will never be like you.



1¼ Tag, 2010

Hillary Batzner • Digital Photograph, Diptych • 13" x 6"





Hands in the Sky

Douglas Breault • 35mm Film • 6" x 8"



Hawaiian Sunset

Sam Thibault • Cotton Yarn • 32.5" x 8.5"



Blowing in the Wind

Alex Pawling • Sheet and Rod Metal • 24" x 13"



Papercut

Andrew Lavery • Linocut • 10" x 14"



On the Couch

Jennifer Hebert • Oil Pastel • 32" x 40"





Vase

Andrea Byron • Stoneware • 6" x 5"



Unheard Melody

Ashley Jessome • Colored Pencil • 28" x 39"





Arches

Catherine McFarland • Digital Photograph • 41" x 27"

Alone on a Bench

Betsy Scarbrough • Nonfiction

As I enter the building, I say hello to the policewoman behind the machine. She asks me if I have on a belt, or anything metal. Once we establish that I do not, I walk through the metal detector and retrieve my purse as it rides out to the small rubber ledge. Picking it up, I scan the hallways to my right and left, searching for my son.

As I look down the short hallways, I am reminded of the fact that this was once a middle school. Several years ago I came here to deliver a package and it looked completely different. Students were in their classrooms, the hallways were quiet, and smiling secretaries sat at their desks in the main office. Neglected for years, the building was in grave disrepair and was closed due to safety concerns. The students were sent to another city school. Just a few years later, the State of Massachusetts invested money and refurbished the structure so that it could temporarily house district court. Today there are still children in the hallways, most of them in strollers, but the atmosphere is not the same.

I am relieved when I spot my son sitting on a bench. I felt anxious as I walked from the parking lot to the building, wondering if he would be there yet. I was concerned that I would have to call Teen Challenge, the residential program where my son now lived, and remind them that Luke had to be in court today. I feared that the men in charge may have forgotten and neglected to get him ready and drive him here. I was afraid that he would not make it, and he

would be arrested and put in jail. I am used to being the person in his life who makes sure he goes where he needs to, when he needs to, always explaining to him why he must follow rules. He doesn't like to follow rules and he doesn't like me telling him what to do. Luke says he knows so much more than I do. That's a point we do not agree upon. So, when I see him sitting with Marlon, the representative from the program, I stop worrying. I walk over to him and as he stands, we say our hellos. As I give him a hug, I stand on tiptoes and whisper into his ear that I love him. He seems a bit distant today as he looks nervously around the hallway, avoiding eye contact. We check the bulletin board to see which courtroom his case will be heard in, and then move to the next hallway. As Marlon and I sit down, Luke chooses to sit alone on a bench across from us.

I am sitting on a matching bench, which is low and extra wide, made of pale wood. There is no grain to the wood, so I can't help but wonder if it is real. Seated next to me, on my right, is Marlon. He is wearing a dark blue suit. We don't know each other well, having only met one time before at the same location, but we quickly become involved in a conversation. He has been assigned to bring my son to court today. He was also in charge of getting Luke ready, and making sure he wore a suit. Marlon explains to me that he is not happy that Luke refused to shave this morning. I look over at my nineteen-year-old son frequently amidst the hum in the hallway. Unfortunately, I am fully deaf in my right ear, so I am only able to catch random words



and probably don't hear half of what Marlon is saying, but I nod my head nonetheless. From past experience, I have found this allows conversation to flow more easily. I feel confident that I would agree with what he is saying, in general.

We are sitting in the hallway nearest Luke's assigned courtroom. We know the routine, and that minimizes my anxiety to an extent. At some point soon, someone who works for the State will bellow that courtroom one (or two, or three) is now open and people will scramble to go in and sit down. One would expect a respectful silence, concern and fear in the faces of the defendants, but I have found that, generally, the crowd doesn't seem too intimidated. Every now and then I see a furrowed brow, maybe a tear, but more often than not, the mood seems inappropriately casual, as does the clothing of the majority of people.

There are many men wearing suits in this building, but most of them are lawyers. They are easy to spot because they usually carry briefcases and are often searching the crowds for their clients. They frequently sit together in a huddle and I wonder if they are discussing cases, or just chatting. They, too, seem unfazed that we are in a courthouse. I can't help but dwell on the fact that this is a place where lives are potentially changed forever in an instant, simply by the on-the-spot decision of a judge who wields the power to determine the destiny of a stranger. Grace or no mercy? It seems so significant and serious. Maybe I just think too much.

As I glance at my son, he is obviously uncomfortable. The suit he is wearing is a caramel tan with a slight stain on the back of the jacket, which I noticed shortly after we said our hellos. He doesn't own it. The tie may be out of style. It seems that way to me, but then I am no more familiar with suits and ties than he is. He pulls at his collar and looks up and around. Fidgety. But he doesn't look at me or the man he came with. In fact, they don't appear to be getting along too well today.

The first time I attended court with my son, I was filled with dread. Luke was just about a year old as I held him in my arms, sitting on a bench in the Attleboro Probate Court. I feared that I was going to be required to stand at the microphone in front of the packed courtroom and explain to the judge why I was qualified to be this beautiful baby's mother. We were finalizing our adoption and in the prior year we had been required to prove many times why we were suited to be parents. Our home had been visited and evaluated. We had written our autobiographies and asked the proper people to write letters of reference about our characters and explain why they would recommend to the agency that we be given a child to raise. I had cried many times wondering why my friends who had given birth didn't face the same scrutiny. This court date was the final step in a long, emotional process.

When our name was called, we were taken to the judge's chambers where we were greeted with a hearty smile and a handshake. After signing a few documents, we took a photograph with the judge as we held our now "legal" son. Everyone was smiling in the picture.

Fourteen years later, toward the end of August of the summer before Luke's sophomore year, in anticipation of the busyness of getting my two boys and I prepared to return to school, I was on my hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen floor when the phone rang. A man's voice on the other end asked for my husband. Since my husband seldom gets phone calls, my curiosity was aroused as I ran to the basement to hand him the phone. I waited anxiously, sitting on the stairs watching him as he spoke. He had a grin on his face as he said, "We'll come right down." I was excited. It looked to be good news.

"What did we win?" I asked when he hung up.

He smiled and said, "Luke's at the police station. We need to go right down." Some smiles are sarcastic.

The policemen explained that Luke and another boy had been arrested with what looked to be stolen goods, probably from a break-in. Since the police had no specific proof, they said they could only wait to see if anyone called claiming the items. Luke was released to us, his parents, from the cell they were holding him in. He vehemently denied that he had stolen anything and claimed that he had found the goods, random items, in the woods. I didn't know what to think, but I wanted very much to believe him.

The following evening as we sat in our living room, we heard a knock at our front door. Since we rarely had unexpected visitors at night, my husband and I looked to one another, concerned. I immediately went to the door to see who it was. I opened it to reveal two men I did not recognize. Both men were of small stature, but looked to have lived hard lives. The man with a heavily scarred face introduced himself as the father of my son's friend John, the boy he had been with when he was arrested. The other man remained silent as I invited them in to talk. We called Luke out to the living room.

Our rough-looking visitor sat on our couch with his friend and told us that his son had explained everything to him. He stressed that his son was a good boy, who never even swore. I didn't interrupt him to say that I had never heard my son swear, either, but suspected he did. He went on to explain that he, himself, had been in jail before and did not have a license. His voice was almost soothing as he admitted that he had gone to jail for beating his wife. She had cheated on him. It was as if he wanted us to understand that he had turned his life around, that he had somehow been duped into this poor behavior by a woman who had done him and his son, John, wrong. I realized, as he spoke, that this was the man Luke had praised over and over again when he told us about the time he spent at his friend's house. It was clear within minutes that our visitor did not hold the same opinion of Luke. After the man's introduction, he

began shooting questions across the room at my son.

"Luke! What about the weed?" he demanded. What weed? Oh, the weed he had last year in school, the noble boy's father explained. The weed he allowed another boy, Brian, to take the blame for when it was found. Our visitor said that Brian was noble, just like his son, because he took the fall for Luke. He didn't snitch.

Just as it was sinking in that our son had ever been involved with drugs, the next question came like a bullet.

"Luke! What about the car?" he hammered.

Approaching hysteria, I exclaimed, "Luke, *what* car?"

Our son sat stone-faced while the dad, who had been in jail for beating his wife who had cheated on him, explained that Luke had stolen a car. His honest, never-swearing son had told him so because he just had to get it off his chest. In the chaos of the moment, my husband, Luke's father, demanded that Luke tell the truth, for once. He finally said he had given the car keys to Brian's brother. And Luke didn't know where it was. He didn't know where the BMW was.

As far as we knew, Luke had never driven before. The news that he had was a shock to me, since I only knew him to ride a bike. I drive a '96 Mercury Villager 'mom van.' And in the space of just a few minutes, we found out that somewhere out there in the night was a missing, stolen BMW. And we were responsible. My husband and I. So we said goodnight to the man who beat up his wife. His sidekick never spoke; he must have been there for support.

As soon as they left, we called a relative to come and stay with our younger son, and we took Luke to the police station. Thus began our redefined relationship with our eldest son and the legal system. We spent the evening trying to get answers from a fifteen-year-old who didn't want to snitch. The police made it clear he had better

fill them in on all the specifics. They weren't happy that he wouldn't provide names, or details. Neither were we.

It was clear our son had set aside all he had been taught about right and wrong and we needed as much help as we could elicit to redirect his life choices. I made a phone call and found out where to go to meet with the juvenile probation department. We parked our car as close to the courthouse as we could and walked with our non-communicative son around the superior court building to the trailer behind it. After we explained our situation to the receptionist, we were directed to a small office where a young woman sat, talking on the telephone. We sat in the chairs across from her desk—father, mother, son—in the juvenile probation department trailer waiting to file a CHINS. I had never heard the term before but I came to know that it's a cute acronym that stands for "Child in Need of Services."

Once we were finally acknowledged by the young woman behind the desk, who didn't appear in a rush to cut her telephone conversation short for us, we were informed that she was one of several juvenile probation officers. She questioned us about why we were there. I explained to her that our son was out of control, and we didn't know what to do with him. We needed help. He wouldn't listen to us. He wouldn't follow rules. I cried. Luke didn't. He sat expressionless and apparently detached. Was he already a hardened criminal at fifteen, I wondered? His pants, as usual, hung low, almost below his rear end. His legs stretched out in front of him as he stared at the ceiling. When she directed her questions to him, he gave one-word answers. And he talked with the new accent he had taken on in middle school. "Nah. Yo. Dunno." Don't care?

When he started wearing his pants so loose, it surprised us. When he was much younger, he used to pull his belt so tight he could hardly breathe. Our extended family joked about it. He would stick his Donald Duck glitter wand in his belt, like a sword. We knew it was his security blanket. That and a penny he

carried in his hand constantly. We assumed that having them made him feel safe. I wondered if his swagger made him feel safe now, in the trailer with the juvenile probation officer telling him she was tough and she wasn't going to put up with his attitude. She let us have it, too. She was the boss. Don't forget it. I felt an odd sense of terror and peace. It would be nice if someone could be the boss of this young man.

He was assigned a court date for which his dad took the day off from work. This was the second time I stood in court with my son, and I was nervous once again, but I was also alternating between feeling numb, terrified, and furious. The second visit was not something I ever anticipated, unlike the first, and it was not in probate court. It was juvenile court.

For several days before the scheduled court date, I told Luke that he needed new pants. Pants that didn't hang from the top of his thighs. Pants that weren't twenty sizes too big. And his shirt would need to be tucked in, not hanging down to his knees. And he couldn't wear sneakers. He needed new shoes. He needed a court outfit. Whether he believed it or not, it would matter what the judge thought of him, I explained. He needed to make a good impression, because this man would have the power to send him away to a juvenile detention center until he was eighteen. But Luke didn't think I knew what I was talking about. He told me it wouldn't matter, that I worry too much, that I always worry too much. He let me know I needed to "chill." I went shopping alone and bought two pairs of khaki pants, guessing the appropriate size. After much argument, he tried them on. To me, one was still way too big, and I let him know he needed to wear the other pair.

On the day of court, he refused to wear the smaller pair. He wore the baggy khakis and he wore his shirt untucked and hanging. He also wore his attitude, but I suspected, even hoped for, the possibility of fear beneath the surface. I didn't know what to expect, having never been in a juvenile courtroom before, but I was certain it would not be pleasant. We stood before the judge, Luke's father on one side of him, and me on the

other. As we faced the bench together as a family, I wondered what the judge would say to our son. I wondered how he would chastise him and redirect him to respect our authority as his parents, to listen to our wisdom, to change his life. But, to my surprise, when the judge proceeded to yell forth from his elevated bench, he directed his comments at me and said that I, the defendant's mother, had created a monster and now the courts were going to have to fix it. I stood furious, but silent. My son's future was in his hands. I had to follow the rules.

Before we left to go home that day, they put a bright orange ankle bracelet on his left leg, and in the afternoon the probation officer came to our home and demanded that we change our phone service. Their machine, which would monitor his location at all times, required a specific system. We were told that we needed to meet with the school before he could go back, because they had every right to kick him out. The probation officer seemed to enjoy himself as he bellowed that the school would probably kick him out and, not only that, the military wouldn't accept him. After all, he was charged with several felonies. Schools don't have to have an almost-convicted felon in their classrooms. Who could blame them? I didn't like having one in my house.

So I went to the school with my son to beg them to let him stay so he could graduate and make something of his life. And I cried in the guidance department. It was a humiliating moment for a mom who had been elected head of school council just a few years before, back when Luke was in elementary school. But this was high school. My son stood next to me in his baggy shorts, with his bright orange ankle bracelet showing. It didn't seem to bother him much. They told him he could stay in school but he was lucky they were giving him a chance. They warned him that he had better watch his behavior because they'd be watching.

While I was immeasurably relieved and grateful for the grace they had shown my son and thanked the associate headmaster and guidance counselor several times, Luke displayed no outward

indication of how he felt. It was as if I was pleading the case of a stranger.

I drove away from the school, tears streaming down my face, tension pulling at my heart. I felt a sense of not belonging anymore—to the world of school and parents and the dream of reaping the benefits of assisting with homework, communicating with teachers, punishing bad behavior, and constantly, constantly teaching right from wrong. I sat in my '96 Mercury Villager stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic. I was grateful that my son was at least still in school. It occurred to me that my expectations were in a steady decline.

My vehicle was stopped behind another van and through my tears I read the blurred words, "My son was prisoner of the month" on its bumper sticker. There was hope! I shook my head, laughing at the coincidence, as I realized how ironic it was that parents of juvenile delinquents could still compete! Maybe, yes, I had a new group of fellow parents I was a part of. Maybe, yes, there were other people whose sons had stolen cars and lied and had friends whose parents thought they were evil and I wasn't alone, even if that's how I felt. At least it felt good to laugh again, if only briefly.

One day, a year or so before "the incident," I had also been sitting in my van but in the mall parking lot, waiting for Luke. He was in middle school at the time, and he had just recently begun wearing his new style of pants. Huge. As he opened the door to get in the passenger seat, his face was bright red. The combination of his Korean birthmother and his Irish birthfather has blessed him with deep brown, sometimes narrow, sometimes wide eyes, very fair skin, and freckles. Whenever he is hot or excited, his face flushes crimson. At this moment, his freckles peeked through the blush and he looked adorable to me. I asked him what was wrong. He explained that his pants had just fallen down to his ankles as he was opening the van door. That day, too, I laughed as I told him he needed a belt.

In the hallway now, I speak with the man from Teen Challenge, the program I hope will help my son change his mind and turn his life around. Marlon says he can see right through him. That he isn't as tough as he acts. Marlon should know, I think. He was in prison himself for eight years. Luke looks over at us briefly with a puzzled, somewhat angry expression and I wonder if he can hear us. This isn't the first time I've had this conversation. His counselors, teachers, probation officers, all said the same thing. All saw potential. Most said they liked him. All agreed that "If he would just get another group of friends—" Every one of them told me he was a follower. Luke called himself a leader.

As Marlon and I speak, one of the teenagers Luke was friends with before he went into the program stops to talk with him. Luke's face lights up. His friend's pants slouch well below his rear end. Baggy, saggy, messy jeans. His shirt hangs loose almost to his knees. "Yo." Hand slap. "Vassup?" I cringe. I had hoped he wouldn't reconnect with anyone from his past today.

In the program, he is away from his hometown, away from the bad influences, away from what he loves. I feel as though I am getting to know my son again. He seems to enjoy our visits, and I think I see glimpses of a moral core in his character again. I have hope that we will have a new relationship and that he will remember what his family stands for. But from the start of this day, I sense the familiar signs of his arrogant attitude breaking through.

They talk for a few minutes and then the young man moves on with his 'homies.' Luke sits on the bench, alone again, in his caramel-colored suit. From my perspective, he looks to be unwittingly dressed up for show. Directly to his left is another bench. On that bench sits a seedy-looking middle-aged man. When he opens his mouth, he reveals missing teeth, and his hair is sloppy, as is his clothing.

He rolls his eyes toward the ceiling and shakes his head. The stranger addresses Marlon as if he is a friend. From across the hallway he questions, "What are they thinking, dressing like that? Pants down to their ankles? They look like idiots." I'm not looking at Marlon, wondering if he feels uncomfortable responding, but Marlon and the man have a laugh. They banter back and forth about how stupid this style of dress looks. If Luke weren't there, I know I would join in the conversation.

Instead I wonder if the man thinks my son is deaf. Does he think Luke can't hear what he is saying about his friend? So I stand and walk over to sit next to my boy. I want the seedy middle-aged man to know that we are connected.

I talk with Luke for a few minutes. He asks me what Marlon was just saying to me and I tell him that he sees potential in him. I suspect he wonders if Marlon had said Luke wasn't as tough as he thought he was. But I choose not to say that. For this moment, I just want to sit next to my son. I want Luke to know that even though he chose to sit on the bench alone, he isn't.

Cheri Amaral received a BS in Management Science at BSC in 1999. She is currently working on her BA in Art. She has worked at the university since 2007.

Rebecca Andrews is a senior majoring in both English and Elementary Education.

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Hillary Batzner is a senior majoring in Art with a concentration in Photography. She is from Connecticut. Her artwork was featured in the Bridgewater State University Student Art Show in Spring 2010.

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Catie Bisson was an English major in the Writing concentration. Her passing in March of 2010 saddened the whole Bridgewater State University community.

Maggie Bouchard is a junior concentrating in Fine Arts. She is small, wears glasses, and often a hat. She likes to make art with meaning.

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Lauren Hall graduated from BSU in January, 2011 with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts. She plans to apply to graduate school within the next several years.

Janessa Hanna is a senior majoring in English. She dedicates her piece to those that don't fit boxes.

Jennifer Hebert is a graduate student working toward her MAT in Creative Arts. She teaches art to students in pre-school through eighth grade and currently lives in North Providence, Rhode Island.

Luke Hebert is a senior majoring in Secondary Education with a minor in Fine Arts.

Tegan Henderson is a senior concentrating in Fine Arts. She enjoys depicting horses and the human form in her work.

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Justin Mantell will see the world.

Aimee Maurer is a junior majoring in Art and minoring in History. Her work appeared in the sixth volume of *The Bridge*. She plans to go on to receive her MFA in ceramics.

Alexandrea Matthews is a senior majoring in Communication Studies/Public Relations with minors in English and Asian Studies. She writes for her grandmother whose generation went unheard.

Catherine McFarland enjoys graphic design as well as kittens, otters, and her hamster, Fudge.

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Zoe Palmer is a junior majoring in Art with a concentration in Art History.

Alex Pawling is majoring in Art with a concentration in Graphic Design. He will be graduating in the spring.

Bianca Piemonte is a junior majoring in Psychology and minoring in Art. After graduation, she plans to pursue travel and study animal behavior.

Dennis Perko Jr. is a senior from Eagle Rock, Virginia. He plans to start his MFA in Spring 2012 with the intention of becoming a professor.

Stephen Plummer is an Art and English major with a concentration in Graphic Design. He served as an editor on the seventh volume of *The Bridge*.

William Regan is a senior majoring in English. When he is not reading and writing, he enjoys the company of family and friends and is ever-grateful to his loved ones who put up with him.

Shane Rocha is a senior majoring in English who hopes to attend graduate school. He also finds it uncomfortable to write in the third person.

Shannon Rosenblat is a senior double-majoring in Philosophy and English with a concentration in Writing.

Amanda Rae Rouillard of the graduating class of 2013 is aspiring to be an English professor and has a love for poetry and music.

Joshua Savory would like to thank his mother for convincing him to go to college.

Betsy Scarbrough is an English major with a concentration in Writing and a minor in Art. She is a wife and mother of two sons, both of whom she admires, and she is proud to have the privilege to watch them grow.

Justin Schuler is a senior concentrating in Graphic Design.

W. M. Scott is a senior majoring in English with a concentration in Writing. He lives on a very fast street with no sidewalks.

Craig Sirois is spending the twilight of his undergraduate career pursuing payless work — free books — and inappropriate placement of Emily's dashes—

Diane M. Sullivan is a junior majoring in English with a Creative Writing concentration. She lives with her family in Hull, Massachusetts.

Sam Thibault is a senior majoring in Sociology with a minor in Art. She has always had an interest in crafts and hands-on art.

Bryan Way is a senior at Bridgewater State University majoring in English with a concentration in Writing. He plans to excessively experience the world. And write about it.

Art

- Dragonflies • Jillian Bouchard • Glass
- Lichtenstein Glass • Corinne Corey • Glass
- Key to My Heart • Shelby Farland • Sculpture
- Smoking • Jessica Gagnon • Photography
- News of Presidents • Chiu Wai Hui • Photography
- Quincy Market • Victoria Osbourn • Photography
- Faces of Mental Illness • Courtney Parece • Mixed Media

Literature

- On the Brink • Erin Bergeron • Poetry
- Tamarinds • Alysse Gerardi • Fiction
- St. Paul • Ian Marsan • Poetry
- Off at College • Zachary McSheffrey • Fiction
- Watercolors • Marissa Meade • Fiction
- Faggot • Ryan Ribeiro • Nonfiction
- The Man Who Cried Death • Kelly Schoop • Nonfiction
- I’m Sorry, I’m Lost • Tara M. Sullivan • Nonfiction
- Morning (Mourning) • Kelly Whelan • Fiction

Volume Seven

2011	College Media Advisers	Apple Award: Best-in-Show for Literary/Art Magazine, Second Place
2011	Columbia Scholastic Press Association	Gold Crown Award
2010	Associated Collegiate Press	Best-in-Show for Literary Magazine, Second Place
2010	Columbia Scholastic Press Association	Gold Medalist, Annual Critiques
	Seventeen Gold Circle Awards:	
	Kate Thurston, “Dormer”; First Place for Single Illustration Not Based on Photographic Material: B&W	Brian Manderville, “The Art in Vermont”; Certificate of Merit for Open Free Form Poetry
	Stephen Plummer, “Nonsense”; First Place for Cartoon	Jillian Donovan, “The Old Track”; Certificate of Merit for Single Illustration Not Based on Photographic Material: B&W
	Reiko Kawahara, “Puzzle”; Second Place for Single Illustration Not Based on Photographic Material: B&W	Mary Mazzoli, “Untitled”; Certificate of Merit for Single Illustration Not Based on Photographic Material: Color
	Daniel Silva, “Trees II”; Second Place for Single Illustration Not Based on Photographic Material: Color	Reiko Kawahara, “Works”; Certificate of Merit for Single Illustration that Complements the Content of Accompanying Copy: Portfolio
	Tegan Henderson, “Crave”; Second Place for Single Illustration that Complements the Content of Accompanying Copy: Portfolio	The Bridge Staff; Certificate of Merit for General Use of Typography
	The Bridge Staff; Second Place for Overall Design	The Bridge Staff, “Crave”; Certificate of Merit for Special or General Interest Magazine Single Spread
	The Bridge Staff, “Contents”; Second Place for Informational Graphics: B&W	The Bridge Staff, “Works”; Certificate of Merit for Special or General Interest Magazine Multi-Page Presentation
	The Bridge Staff, “The Power of Art”; Second Place for Literary Single Spread	The Bridge Staff, “Nonsense”; Certificate of Merit for Use of a Designed or Art Headline
	The Bridge Staff, “Submission Guidelines”; Third Place for Informational Graphics: B&W	

Volume Six

2010	College Media Advisers Apple Award: Best-in-Show for Literary/Art Magazine
2010	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown Award
2009	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Annual Critiques, Gold Medalist Twenty-three Gold Circle Awards

Volume Five

2009	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown Award Thirteen Gold Circle Awards
2008	Associated College Press Pacemaker Award Best-in-Show for Literary Magazine. Third Place
2008	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Annual Critiques, Gold Medalist

Volume Four

2008	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Silver Crown Award Twelve Gold Circle Awards
2007	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Annual Critiques, Gold Medalist

Volume Three

2007	Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Award Best-in-Show for Literary Magazine
2007	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Annual Critiques, Gold Medalist
2006	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown Award Nine Gold Circle Awards

Volume Two

2006	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown Award Seven Gold Circle Awards
2005	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Annual Critiques, Gold Medalist

Volume One

2005	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Silver Crown Award Six Gold Circle Awards
2005	College Media Advisers Apple Award: Best-in-Show for Literary/Art Magazine
2004	Columbia Scholastic Press Association Annual Critiques, Gold Medalist

General Guidelines

All work must be accompanied by a cover letter that includes the submitter's name, phone number, e-mail address, year or graduation date, major, and each entry's title and genre. Please also include a 20 to 25 word biography. Submissions will be accepted in more than one genre or as multiple works in the same genre, but no more than ten works per genre per person will be considered. The work itself should include only its title, not the submitter's name. Editors may submit work by following the established guidelines, but they are ineligible to win awards. Submission forms and additional details are available on our website: www.thebridgejournal.com.

Literature Guidelines

Prose must be double-spaced. Preference will be given to shorter pieces. Retain a copy of your work, as it will not be returned. You may submit work electronically (by email) or in hardcopy. Email submissions to: thebridgejournal@bridgew.edu. Deliver hardcopy manuscripts or send via campus mail to: The Bridge, c/o Mail Room (located in the basement of Tillinghast Hall). If you are mailing your work from off campus, address to: The Bridge, c/o Mail Room, 131 Summer Street, Bridgewater, MA 02325.

Visual Arts Guidelines

We no longer accept art submissions electronically (by email). You may submit work by bringing it to Tillinghast Hall, room 239. Please be sure your artwork is either in high-resolution digital format or is photo or scanner ready (unframed). No work will be stored, except in special circumstances.