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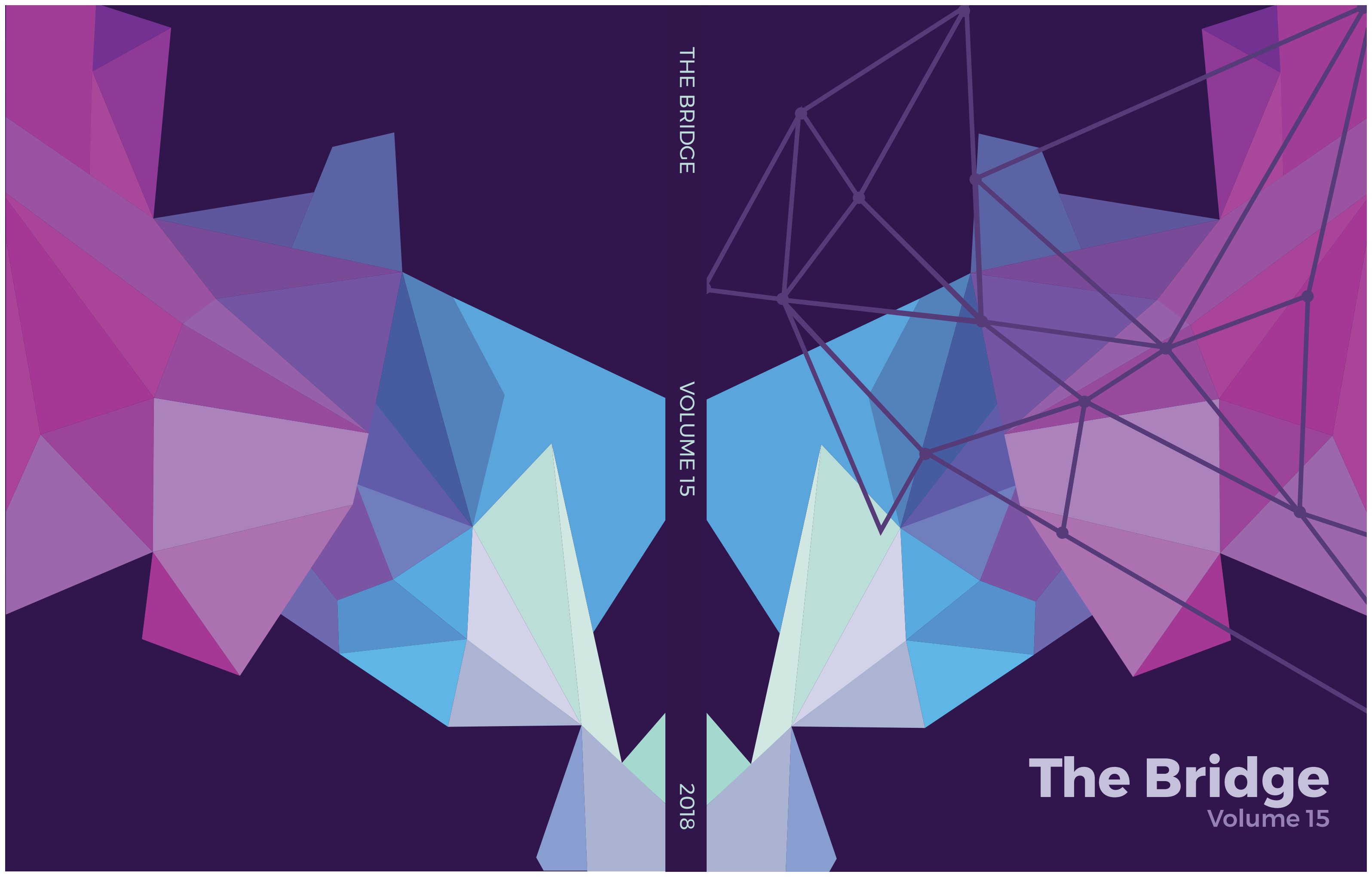


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THE BRIDGE

VOLUME 15

2018

The Bridge
Volume 15

The Bridge

a journal of fine arts and literature
volume 15

To our forerunners,

John Mulrooney

Faculty Advisor, Volumes 8-13

Katy Whittingham

Faculty Advisor, Volume 14

for their wisdom and guidance,
for their continued dedication to *The Bridge*
and the students it represents.

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Mission Statement:
The Bridge is managed entirely by students. Our charge is to serve, as we are dedicated to showcasing the artistic talents of our student body. 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.

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Letter from the Editors

Volume fifteen of *The Bridge* is the collective effort to celebrate both the fifteenth volume of this journal and the individual pieces that artists and writers in the Bridgewater State University community have entrusted to us. We hope that you, our reader, will turn these pages and examine the works of art with the same openness and tenderness with which we have endeavored to exhibit them. It’s been a long year with a lot of change. When we started we weren’t sure what our aesthetic vision necessarily was, or how exactly to broadcast that submissions were open—but we wanted something unique to this volume. Using the hashtag #TheXV, we started a social media campaign in conjunction with our usual two-part poster campaign. Artists and writers responded enthusiastically and this year we had an almost record number of submissions.

Within this edition of *The Bridge* you will find distinct themes that range the color wheel of life’s most challenging and rewarding moments. There is heartbreak and loss, but also hope and love. These are the things that make us human. Within the work of our vast community of creators, we see today’s significant conversations echoed through many artistic mediums. Though each piece of art and literature we’ve selected has a strength of its own, it is an honor to watch each one form organic relationships with the others and create the narrative of the journal. They are profound and inspiring works, and representative of our creative community.

This volume’s presentation of art and literature is unique compared to other iterations of *The Bridge*. We’ve avoided some two-page spreads of single pieces of art in favor of showing the pieces in full and then including numerous detail-shots in order to better represent the pieces as they are in real life, and we’ve made the decision to print the journal in full color, allowing more opportunities for design-play across our literature. The shared artistic space between art and literature opens up possibilities for unique formatting—and some of our best sources for inspiration have been past volumes of this journal. As ideas and art are reinvented, we commemorate those who have taken this same journey. The geometric pattern on the cover of this year’s journal pays homage to the traditional fifteenth anniversary gift of crystal.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work on the fifteenth anniversary edition of this award-winning journal. We look forward to seeing the impact we have on further editions and how they depart from our collective history to take their own bold new strides. We’re certain that both will happen, and are excited for the journal’s bright future.

We hope this journal, like the crystal, captivates in light and inspires in the darkness.

With sincere thanks,
The Editors, volume 15

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XV

Over the Sink

- D.S. Hooker -

that hair plumes like sawdust
whichever way it wants wind
comb or fingers be damned that
2xforehead those shrubs on the
brow the cut blends in well
wipe the red splash
water taste the grain drip
down the whiskers 2am graphite
only sags farther below those blue
tarp eyes bloodshot &
rickety in this yellow light

goddamn grizzly adams
maybe a shave will come for now
a face pillow will do

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER

Without You on Pier 5

- Kathryn Robenhymer -

I wish I could give to you
the moon, a holy host
body broken and nestled in
a veil painted charcoal blue

In its wake leaving
a trail of shattering tears
the street lights along Ocean Road
echo dull spatters in vain glory

And at a distance, past
the lighthouse beam, peeking
twinkling lights like blades cut
through the horizon

You could stand here at this time
but be in a different place entirely



Mother and Daughter

- Picabo Miskiv -

What You Don't See

poking.
prodding.
pinching.

my fingers poke,
jab
thrust

themselves into my sides searching,
yearning,
feeling
for bone
but only satisfying their hunger after several long moments of sinking into my skin, like
pressing into freshly risen dough.

my fingers prod,
dig,
bore
into my stomach,
wishing the heat from my anger and frustration would sear away the fat with every
touch,
leaving behind definition,
elegance,
leaving me thin.
but all i see is the destruction from the ongoing war i've waged against myself.

my fingers pinch,
squeeze,
tear
at my inner thighs.
pushing,
pulling,
contorting
my skin,
seeing what it would look like if i just do as She says,
if i could just control myself,
if i was beautiful.

If Only You Knew

Wishing.
Hoping.
Praying.

I see you
withering,
waning,
wilting
under the pressure.
And I am left
wishing with all my heart, that your skin would rise from your bones
like dough in the oven.

I see you,
howling,
hurting,
going through hell and back,
seeing the scars the flames left behind,
the fire in your throat as you vomit up the mistakes you made,
and I hope that when I see you again you're still in one piece.
Able to define yourself.

I see you
poking,
prodding,
pinching
at your body,
at your mind.
Being pushed and pulled toward what she says,
torturing yourself and calling it control,
making yourself smaller than the world already made you,
if you could just close your ears and cover your eyes for once
and see.
But all I can do is pray that someday you can see yourself as beautiful.



Under My Skin // Debra Marek // Oil // 15" x 20"

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER



Mandala Pendant // Taryn Shipp // Metals // 22"

Don't Call Him Dead

- Dominique Durden -

They tell me you're in a better place now.
Say that you were too good for this world.
Too good for this cage.
If you're not careful, this thing, this hood, will eat you alive.
It's funny, how you thought you were a man.
Until they called you one in the history book.
They keep calling all the neighborhood boys men.
Keep calling them noncompliant.
Keep calling them dead.
Keep calling them everything but what they are.

They tell me you're in a better place now.
Say that you were too good for this world.
Too good to be caged inside of my chest.

I plant you somewhere beyond the sea.
The waves swallow your body whole.
I'd like to think your mother left the light on for you.
Because she knew you'd always turn it off when you got home.

All black mothers do it.

In an alternate universe, the light is off when we wake up.
This cage, this jungle, has not swallowed you whole.
They call you king.
Call you brilliant.
Call you beautiful.
Everything but dead.

It Didn't Matter Why

- Carley M. Taylor -

“Papa, why is there a jar of teeth down here?” Lara asked, peering into the tin can she had found on his timeworn shelf. Mildew and decades-old dust infiltrated her grandfather’s nose. Ed sneezed and nearly dropped the wooden goose he was about to pack with the rest of his carvings.

No matter how many times she ventured downstairs, there was always something she hadn’t explored thoroughly enough, and he’d find her sitting in the same spot combing through every little knick-knack and screw. The smallest room in the basement held a glass case, filled with the antique guns he used to collect and sell, and a massive bookcase that held very few books. It was used for all sorts of trinkets, such as artistically-arranged shotgun-shell flowers. Ed’s World War II rifle, complete with bayonet, sat atop the bookcase in its own glass case. On the bottom shelf—almost as if he hoped she wouldn’t notice, stacked horizontally with their bindings facing inwards—were all his World War II texts, the ones that contained the newspaper clippings, documents, and graphic images released after the sinking of the *USS Duncan* in the Battle of Cape Esperance.

Lara was poking her nose into all the wrong places. Ed shook his head and placed the goose in its box. He tried to remember where he had hidden that damn can. Surely, he would’ve known to tuck it into some dark place rife with spiders. He straightened his back, cringing a bit as he did, and patted his bad knee as if to remind it to work before turning to look at his granddaughter.

"I misheard her," he told himself. "These hearing aids are always losing battery."

He felt his face grow a few shades lighter as Lara carefully stepped over his pile of old knick-knacks to show him the can. The wood stock of his M1 Garand shone under the single dim light bulb, shadows accenting scars that were gouged too deep to be buffed out. It distracted him for a moment, seeing Lara moving from under the bookcase’s shade.

“Papa?” Lara repeated, rattling the can a bit to get his attention.

His chest expanded in a quick shuddering breath as the rattling drew his eyes. The sight of yellowing teeth caused his stomach to clench and a wave of nausea left a faint

taste of bile on the back of his tongue. His arm reacted faster than his brain, knocking the can from her hands. Teeth shining with gold fillings exploded around them and clattered to the cement floor like hundreds of misshapen ivory pearls.

In 1941, when Ed first discovered the unpleasantness of boot camp, he received the standard M1 Garand that most Navy boots received. He looked down at the beautiful rifle and grinned. It had a cherrywood stock, which he proudly polished with raw linseed oil after a hard day's training.

Even in boot camp, guns were precious. They were what would keep you alive. The senior drill instructor insisted that each man name his rifle.

"If you name her, she'll become a part of you, a part you can't live without," he said, "and, believe me, you can't."

Ed named his Bella, because she was a beautiful piece of equipment. Within a couple of days, Ed could take Bella apart, clean her, and put her back together again with his eyes closed. In a few more days, half-delirious from lack of sleep and hard training, with his arrogance waning and his sergeant breathing down his back, he could disassemble and reassemble Bella in about a minute. The weight and smooth grain of the furnished stock felt natural—it became as familiar to him as his mother's face.

Ed had a solid year to prepare himself for the realities of war. It wasn't long enough.

He stood at the bow of the destroyer with three of his comrades, watching the fast approaching shores of New Guinea appear in the distance. The spray of white foam beat the destroyer's sides and the salty wind dried his skin. He had thought they weren't supposed to touch land when he first joined. Then again, rules weren't exactly concrete in war. There were all sorts of "gray areas" or "leniencies" suddenly open for discussion, such as the taking of life.

Nobody ever talked about how that should be wrong—at least not on Ed's ship.

Nobody explained how the greater powers that be could suddenly breach the code of humanity to deem slaughter "unfortunate casualties for the greater good."

His hands shook as his fingers curled around Bella's barrel, his arms naturally holding her half poised in front of him even though he knew he was supposed to be safe on that destroyer—at least in that moment. He glanced down, frowning at Bella's new pitted marks indenting the considerably less-polished wood and the healing red welts throbbing on his knuckles.

"We gave those Japs hell," his friend Sam said. He looked exactly how most people would picture a Sam—sandy blond hair, blue eyes, and a crooked beak of a nose, with a lightly pockmarked face that you'd only notice because of his pale complexion.

Ed smiled, revealing white canines which stood out like flares against his sun-weathered skin.

"Let's hope no gremlins strike, eh? I ain't

risking getting my head chopped off to save your ungrateful arse again."

"Ah blow it out ya barracks bag," Sam said, waving his hand dismissively. He looked down fondly at his battered Garand. "This girl ain't about to act up twice on me."

"You best hope she don't," Ed replied, leaning over the bow and spitting into the foaming white waves. He fixed his gaze on the rocky shores of New Guinea. He could almost make out volcanic rock and tropical foliage. "It's about time to ready our landing gear."

The third guy shook his head. "You don't think they're still beheadin' people, do ya?" He looked at his two comrades, who stared blankly back at him.

Ed considered the village he found in Honiara, leaned over the bow again, and spat.

"Yeah, I do."

They were under orders to take no prisoners. Ed crept forward, his pulse quickening as the deep rumble of distant bombs vibrated through the dirt. The sound of planes ripped through the air, and malaria-infected mosquitoes anxiously awaited their chance to taste his blood. Despite that, it felt quiet on the ground. Unnervingly quiet. His squad had disappeared into the forest, seeming to dissolve into the tall grass and thickly settled trees. He hoped he'd done the same. Sweat streaked down from under his helmet where his black hair was surely matted to his head. His ears strained to hear any sound of ap-

proach. The further inland he went, the more his feet fought the volcanic rock and the tall grass.

His precious Bella stayed true and faithful in his calloused and cut hands. Her loaded weight was comforting as his thumb ran over the deep gouge in the stock. The gouge was made when Sam slammed him out of the line of fire as they infiltrated the shores. It cost them both some bruised bones, but nothing that kept them out of the fight. It'd been two days since he last saw Sam or anyone in his regiment.

He spent days creeping through tropical foliage and hunkering down in trees with the faintest hope of a few minutes' sleep. He jumped at every creaking branch, every bird call, every little movement of grass—he thought it would make him trigger happy, and it did at first. He held Bella steady now. His hands didn't shake and he was starting to trust his trigger finger more than his brain. Sam was fine, he told himself. His buddies were fine. He'd find their base eventually and everyone would be there.

As he progressed, slowly and cautiously, a stench began to infiltrate his nose. His pulse quickened, bile rising to the back of his throat. He suppressed the urge to gag. If someone's body really was rotting somewhere nearby, he needed to confirm what flag they'd fought for. More importantly, he needed to know it wasn't one of his buddies.

Ed inched forward one scuffed boot at a time. The grass rustled softly against his fatigues. His senses strained for the slightest hint of intrusion. He shuffled forward, scanned the trees for any unnatural movement, and

shuffled forward again. Step, step, scan. Repeat. The stench was overwhelming. After a few paces, he noticed an indentation in the grass. He knelt, found a rock, and tossed it. If it was a poorly disguised landmine, he wasn't going to be the fool that stepped on it. When nothing exploded, he tried to take a deep breath before closing the distance.

It was undeniably a corpse, beheaded.

Ed looked down at the familiar blond head that had been positioned at his feet. He turned and retched. Sam had been left to rot in the humidity. He felt his mind tip then—a slight transition. The hum of nerves, the annoying birds and chattering insects, the distant bombs, the roaring plane engines, it all seemed to quiet. The world wasn't as bright—the humidity less bothersome. He forgot how irritating it was to have his uniform cling to every crevice and bend with salty, itchy sweat. Sam lay there—his blue eyes made bluer by the film of death. His lips, slightly parted and crusted red, were a similar blue. The gaping wound in his stomach where he was slashed open was filled with yellowish pus and maggots.

In that strange, quiet haze, Ed realized a bit too late that his senses were trying to tell him something. He felt himself side-step as a man lunged towards him. The bayonet gleamed off a stray beam of light and found its home in the soft inside of Ed's left arm, just below the armpit. Before the attacker could pull his weapon back, Bella was aimed, the trigger pulled. The .30 caliber round blasted through his forehead at point-blank range, speckling the grass with his blood. Ed's pulse loudly beat in his ears, his vision tapering to gray as he forcefully ripped the gun with the at-

tached bayonet from the man's hands. It was an unloaded American M1 Garand with the initials S.B. carved into the butt.

It wasn't 'seeing red' like in the movies. It wasn't really blacking out, either. It wasn't temporary enough to fit either of those clichés. It was a gray haze that veiled his mind and numbed him to the world. This phenomenon had been brewing deep within him since Bella's first human target dropped from her sights. It was a primal thing, lurking in the space between sanity and survival.

Ed stared down at the brainless Japanese man, with his face an unrecognizable bloody mess dribbling all over the soil. His eyes were still open wide in shock, his mouth gaping at his costly miscalculation. Ed knelt beside his enemy, observing from that gray distant realm all the gold fillings in his mouth. He hardly felt so much as a sting as he punched those gold-filled teeth out and shoved them into his uniform pocket. He sat down next to his best friend and began the process of salvaging his arm.

There might have been tears on his cheeks—or it could've been sweat. He wasn't fully aware of the change in himself, just in the way that most people aren't conscious of when their taste buds start to change, but in the back of his mind he knew it wasn't normal. The more he became aware, the more that animalistic instinct reared its head, the stronger his need became for proof of his survival.

Lara stood there, dumbfounded, her mouth

hanging on its hinges as the last misshapen pearl landed in her purple shoelaces.

"I'm sorry," he mumbled, looking down at the mess on the floor. It was somehow easier than looking into Lara's eyes. "I didn't mean that."

"It's okay," Lara replied, her eyes stuck on the morbid remnants of her grandfather's enemies. A few still had their roots intact, standing out like fangs. "But, why is there a can of teeth?"

The old man stood there a moment, staring down at the past he had hoped to neatly tuck away. His arthritic fingers curled into white knuckled fists as he remembered the stench of rotting flesh and the numbness that overtook him. At first, he was surviving—killing before being killed. Killing to go home, to save his comrades. Then, he was just murdering people and it didn't matter why. He started knocking the teeth out of enemy heads, with the intention of selling the gold fillings later.

In the sixty-plus years since his service, he never could bring himself to sell them.

He liked to tell himself it was because he rediscovered who he was—that once the war ended, so did his brief detachment from humanity. But he could never throw them away either. Perhaps it was because he was scared to forget what he had done. They were a terrible symbol of where he'd been, and a reminder that he never wanted to go back. He never expected to have to explain that to his granddaughter, nor did he ever want to. He didn't want her to know about that gray world her grand-

father had found—how it saved him and killed him in equal measures. She looked up to him and he didn't know if he could handle her seeing him the same way he saw himself.

There were faces to those teeth—faces he could remember, eyes he could see—broken jaws, dark eyes void of life, blood crusted lips drained of color, insects—

"Papa, are you okay?"

He cleared his throat and gave her a stern look. Her sweet face proved difficult to frown at and he swapped to a weak smile.

"I'd be better if you helped me clean these up." He knelt—careful of his bad knee—and started dropping teeth back into the can. After a moment, Lara joined him. He saw her hesitate before touching one, just briefly. They felt smooth and fragile pinched between his large fingers. Most bore the yellowish trademark of a smoker's mouth and a few were cracked or chipped with damaged crowns. They dinged off the bottom of the can like the sporadic ticking of a broken clock.

"If they're painful to you, why do you keep them?" she asked, careful to keep her eyes on the ground.

Ed considered the question. It was too late to deny his discomfort with them—if he'd wanted to do that he should have never knocked them from her hands. No, they were meant to upset him, meant to generate unease. He didn't deserve to forget what he had done, how close he had come to erasing the boundary separating survival from madness.

It's hard to cling to sanity when nothing is sane around you. He took a deep breath, wondering if there was a way to get Lara to understand. They were a relic of his past—a reminder of where he had been before he found his way home.

“Have you ever asked a veteran if they've killed someone?” he asked. He watched her blink the dust from her eyes and tilt her head. She furrowed her brows.

“No,” she replied after a drawn-out moment. “But I've wanted to. It just always felt wrong.”

“Well, these are to remind me that I have.”

Her hand froze halfway to another discolored tooth with a glint of gold filling peeking around its edges. Her eyes darted up to her grandfather's, as if she was checking to see if he was joking. He quietly picked up the remaining teeth and dropped them in the can.

Dancer, Wren Barger





Community // Valerie Nunziato // Intaglio Print // 5" x 6" each



Tree of Life // Julie Barrows // Hydrocal Mold & Acrylic Paint // 6.5" x 7"

Broken Knuckles

- Samantha Cole-Reardon -

I pray to a pen instead of my God, sometimes.
 I feel like ink is stronger than the invisible words I send up to Him.
 When my baby sister cries because she is broken-hearted
 I tell her to write
 put scribbled notes down on yellow paper pad.
 That will heal her.

I have found a faith in Him and I intend to continue to build on this new love
 but I have found God before
 in the scribbles in notebooks when I have written and rewritten a poem for my mother I
 never want to send.
 I have found God before
 in fingernail polish when I wanted to rip fingernails off
 bare
 skin with no rainbow or pot of gold at the end.
 I have found God before
 on the cold side of the pillow and fallen into deep appreciation of my bedspread.

I have found faith in my pen when I cannot hold onto secrets much longer before my teeth
 run away from my gums taking lies I wish I had not told with them.
 I have found faith in my words when no one will listen so I make them.
 I have opened road maps to find a Holy Cross when I needed it most
 and then carved my name into the feet of the Lord.

I am sorry.

I have been baptized in rose petals and cigarette burns but never holy water;
 maybe He can cool the wounds I have suffered.
 Actually
 I know He can cool the wounds inflicted on my paper skin.
 I found God in the spine of an old leather bible with someone else's name on the cover.
 God found me by sending someone else's teeth into the bed next to mine, in a place
 I nicknamed Hell.

I was scared that I was like the devil,
 that I was unable to be saved and I would continue to,
 like a cigarette,
 burn.

But God found me in a drenched pair of jeans on Comm Ave.
 He took broken knuckles and pointed them towards church.
 I believe he has healed a sinner's angry shoulders
 rolled them up and away from evil towards
 sunlight
 Heaven
 Him.

Sometimes I still pray to my pen.
 Sometimes I am scared that I am too devoted to words and not devoted enough to silence
 but I am not scared of a God I know is here now
 not scared of a God who has lifted my palms towards the clouds
 God put this pen in my hand and commanded
 Write me a winner, kid.

So here it is
 the best I have
 a new sort of prayer
 asking to find You in smudged ink on wrinkled paper.
There You are,
hello.



Dressed in Lights // Santiago Chaves // Digital Photography

Bones

- Kayla Marie Spagna -

When I die
 feed my bones to the flames
 or to the wolves
 because stripped of flesh
 I will no longer find myself confined
 within the expectations
 of organs and molecules
 be beautiful
 talk softly
 smile and apologize
 control your emotions
 be strong
 bulk up
 man up
 bones have no gender
 and sex is just biology
 and wolves don't care about
 chromosomes
 they'll crack open bones
 because we all taste the same—
 my life
 is more than the pressure to conform.
 I don't need to live by definitions
 because the dictionary changes
 with each generation,
 and the flames
 burn our corpses
 all the same.



My Father’s Sweatshirt

- Kayla Marie Spagna -

When War arrives
It chooses no sides.
It reaches in and
takes
and what It gives back
is like acid-etched glass.
 I kept a photo
 of my father
 with a mullet
 eyes crossed, tongue out
 our 90-pound Shepherd hoisted under his right arm
 and under his left a 20-pound bundle—me.
War gave back a stranger.
He was always cold
and had lost more than the use of his leg.
His sweatshirt was a shroud,
and when the hood was up
he did not speak to us.
 Sometimes I am too much of my mother’s daughter
 I talk too loud and
 go on and on and
 my mouth runs like a waterfall
 circling and circling around
 spilling over and
 sometimes I interrupt and—
 I would get a glass of water
 at 3 AM just to see my father
 watching TV. I’d wave and
 wished I had the courage to sit beside him.
 He’d wave back—

Last summer I sat sweating beneath the sun
my father sat shivering beneath his sweatshirt
and he took down his hood.
He told me about the roads
over there.
He told me about the heat
and the things *they* did to dogs.
He said
I hadn’t planned on coming home.
My mouth was a dam aching to burst
my waterfall words pressing up against the backs of my teeth
threatening to lift up that sweatshirt hood—
Don’t move.
 I’m going to hug you.
It was the first time my father hugged me
since coming home.

Silent Train

- Heather McKenna -

The first snowfall of the year is always interesting. The windows in my house are sheets of ice, ready to crack with just one flick, as cold as a dog's nose after a winter walk. I lay in bed as the train went by and shook the floor in my room. Its whistle pierced my ear as I fumbled to find my phone to see what time it was. My dog sat on top of me, completely ignoring the fact that she is almost seventy pounds. She wanted me to get up and let her out.

I walk my dog down by the train tracks almost every day. Across the tracks there's a pond called Dead Pond. She loves to swim there and always seems to stick her head in the water for just a little too long, coming back up in a panic, head spinning, shaking, and splashing everything in sight. She always gets me wet.

Dead Pond is a particularly accurate name for this pond, although the death seems to linger just outside of it. The first dead deer I saw near the pond about two years ago was hit by a train. Its head was on backwards.

The morning after the first snowfall, I walked down with my dog. The trees were

undisturbed and the snow felt as light as ever. With each step, my foot kicked a small amount of snow into my boots. Just enough for me to notice, but not enough for me to get annoyed. I loved seeing the footprints of the animals that walked through the snow. Their little tracks told a story that my dog takes in with every sniff of their path.

Just as I was turning to walk down the path along the tracks, I saw a deer laying still, its face covered by snow. It was laying perfectly on its side. As I got closer I saw that the back part of its body was ripped to shreds. Its intestines were strung out down to the end of its back legs, with its stomach completely exposed and protruding. Coyote paw prints circled around the deer and disappeared into the woods. There was no splattered blood around the animal, which made it more eerie. The deer fell before the snowfall. I called my brother.

"Hey, there's a dead deer down by the tracks."

"Does it still have its antlers?"

"No, it looks like a baby, it's really small. Do you want to come see it?"

"No, not really."

I tried to get my dog away from the corpse but all she wanted to do was eat what the coyotes left behind. If she was really determined, she could control herself on the leash. We both know she's the stronger one, but she usually follows my command. She pulled hard on the leash and managed to grab hold of the deer's ear. I got her away, but had to brace myself before pulling her back. I tried to get her attention. She was distracted by the smells from the coyotes.

I've gotten really good at listening for the train. The commuter rail and freight trains pass by almost every half hour. Usually, I'll listen for the train just before we leave the house and quickly make my way down the dead end so we can hustle over the tracks. Both trains have extremely loud whistles, but sometimes you can get one that doesn't blow its whistle at all. They creep up on us like a sickness, noticeable at the very last minute before it's too late.

The silent train came by when my dog was sniffing the coyote tracks. I held her leash tighter, fearing that she would run out in front of the train. As the train came into view it seemed surreal. Almost as if it was out of place on the tracks. How could these thin steel bars hold up such a heavy load? If they cracked, which way would the train fall? Both our bodies tensed up as the locomotive charged by. I caught the glare of the conductor's eyes and I held it until the train was out of sight. It was the commuter rail. I wonder how many people were watching me, standing in my pajamas and snow boots, mourning a dead deer.

My brother was yelled at once for being on the tracks.

"This is private property!" howled the train conductor.

My brother stayed quiet as usual and continued to fish. He's not big on confrontation or talking in general. I knew, almost through instinct, that he would react the same way to the deer as I had. He would look at it, something he couldn't take his eyes off, with wonder and pain. Staring into death is very one-sided.

As we walked back to my house, my dog walked behind a tree, making the leash awkward to keep straight without letting go. It was stupid that I had to keep her on the leash, but I didn't want the neighbors yelling at me again for her being in their yard. Still, I let go of the leash and she ran up the hill at the dead end. I yelled and whistled for her to come back but she disappeared behind more trees. Usually when she doesn't come back right away she's found something gross to eat. It was hard to get over the hill so I went around, walking through low branches and fallen ones, making my own set of footprints as I followed hers. Her tracks led me around trees and into a small clearing. Snow fell on my head and I started to get agitated that she wasn't coming back to me.

Continuing in her footsteps, I hoped to see her standing behind a tree sniffing the air or the snow beneath her. Instead I walked into another display of a life once lived. Another deer lay in my path. Its body was configured in a way in which its chin was resting in a sleep-like position. I could

only make out the top of its head and its torso through the snow. The remains of the creature were rotting except the muscle and meat on the rib cage was exposed, almost as if it had just been skinned. Upon further examination of the head, I realized that the antlers had been removed with some sort of instrument, definitely not by an animal. I started to shiver at this point, partly because of the cold but mostly because of the atmosphere. Where was my dog?

I circled back to the dead end and walked back toward the first deer. If she wasn't eating the second one she must have gone back to finish eating the first deer's ear. I walked much faster than before, almost slipping as the path declined into the tracks. Surprisingly, she wasn't there. The deer corpse looked dreamlike. The trees and tracks disappeared and the deer was lying on the snow with nothing surrounding it. I hoped to see my dog walk up beside it.

I called my brother again. "The dog ran away and there's dead deer everywhere. Can you come help me find her?"

"...Yeah, give me a second."

Three times I walked up and down from the dead end to the first deer. Each time looking at the lifeless thing lying before me. Every time I got close to it, I imagined it jumping from its final resting place into life again, scaring the shit out of both of us. Like watching nature shows: You want everything to live but something's got to be the prey. My phone rang.

"The dog is here, I guess she ran back home."

"Alright, thank god."

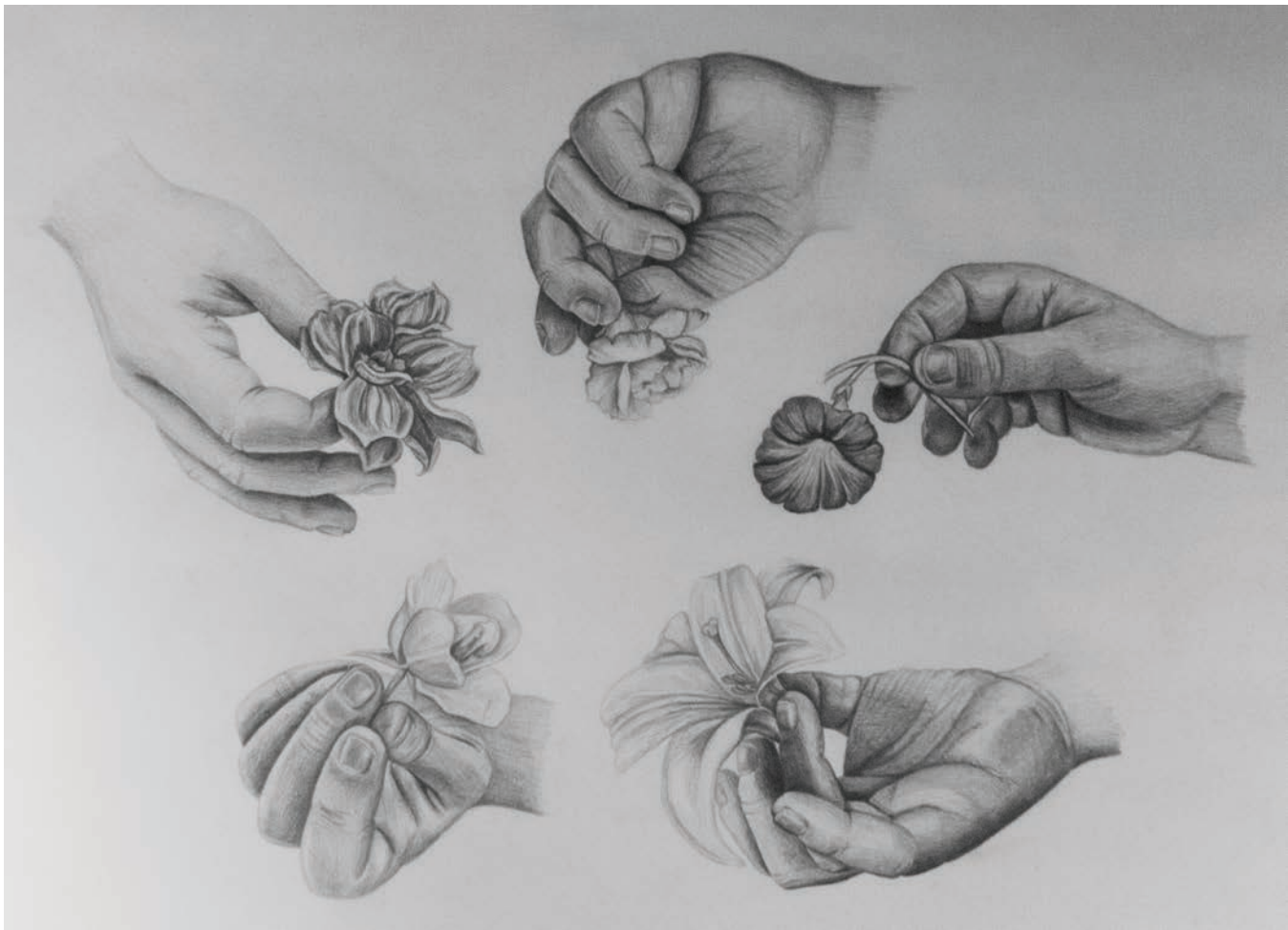
I started my walk back to my house and wondered how she circled around without my knowing. She is very quiet when she wants to be, but I would have always bet she would go back to eat the deer. I guess I was wrong. Even she didn't linger around death.



On the Walk Home

- Dominique Durden -

On the walk home, I hum to myself, “Blackbird.”
Blackbird singing in the dead of night, take these broken wings and learn to fly.
On the walk home, I count the steps it takes for me to reach my front door.
On the walk home, I count the stars in the sky.
On the walk home, I count the seconds it takes to say
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death.
Amen.
10 seconds.
On the walk home, 10 seconds seems like a lifetime.
On the walk home, I count how many cop cars are prowling—I mean patrolling the streets.
On the walk home, I count how many bones are in my body.
On the walk home, I count how many of those bones will be broken if the set trippers catch me in the wrong color, catch me in the wrong skin, sometimes I wish I could take this skin off, but that’s a metaphysical dilemma I have not conquered yet.
On the walks home, I count the seconds it takes to say
Hail Mary, full of grace, tell me is the Lord with thee?
Cursed are thee among women, and cursed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus made a spectacle.
Trayvon made a spectacle.
Tamir made a spectacle.
All fruits with strange skin, and inherently black, brown, bitter, unpalatable names made a spectacle.
Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us inhabiting black and brown bodies, now and at the hour of death.
If this is my hour of death, count the seconds it takes to say a Hail Mary.
On the walk home, wash me in whiteness, wash me in manhood, so the set trippers don’t find me.
On the walk home, count the bones in my body, watch how they form into armor.
On the walk home, count how many cop cars are prowling the streets.
On the walk home, 10 seconds feels like a lifetime.
On the walk home, it takes 10 seconds to say a Hail Mary.
On the walk home, count the stars in the night sky.
On the walk home, hum to yourself blackbird.
Why you wanna fly, blackbird?
You ain’t ever gonna fly.
Don’t you know there’s no place big enough to hold all the tears you’re gonna cry?
So, on the walk home, hum to yourself,
Blackbird.



Hand Study // Valerie Nunziato // Graphite // 18” x 24”

Cherry Cola

- Treina Santos -

Disappointment tastes like the flat cherry cola I bought at the store yesterday,

I expected fizz
and was left with only a lukewarm tickle
I might have imagined at the back of my throat.

Disappointment sounds like the time you said you would be back home

by 12 AM I fell asleep staring at the clock,
told myself it was possible to ignore the heaviness of my lids
at 4 AM,
told myself I could wait for you until at least
5 AM.
But I couldn't.

Disappointment feels like numbness.

The absence of feeling in my fingers while I am waiting for the bus
and it is snowing,
and I forgot my gloves.
I can only be mad at myself.

It feels like the built up sadness
that hurts so much it starts to not hurt
or maybe you just ignore it.

My disappointment in you grew in my unwillingness
to continue having expectations
and solidified when I learned to overlook it.
I ignored it when you returned home
with lipstick haphazardly wiped away from your neck.

I pretended you always came back
only smelling like my coconut oil shampoo.

I stopped expecting not to taste her
guava lip gloss on your tongue.

I stopped expecting the cherry cola to ease the pain so I moved to bourbon for a stronger
burn in the back of my throat.

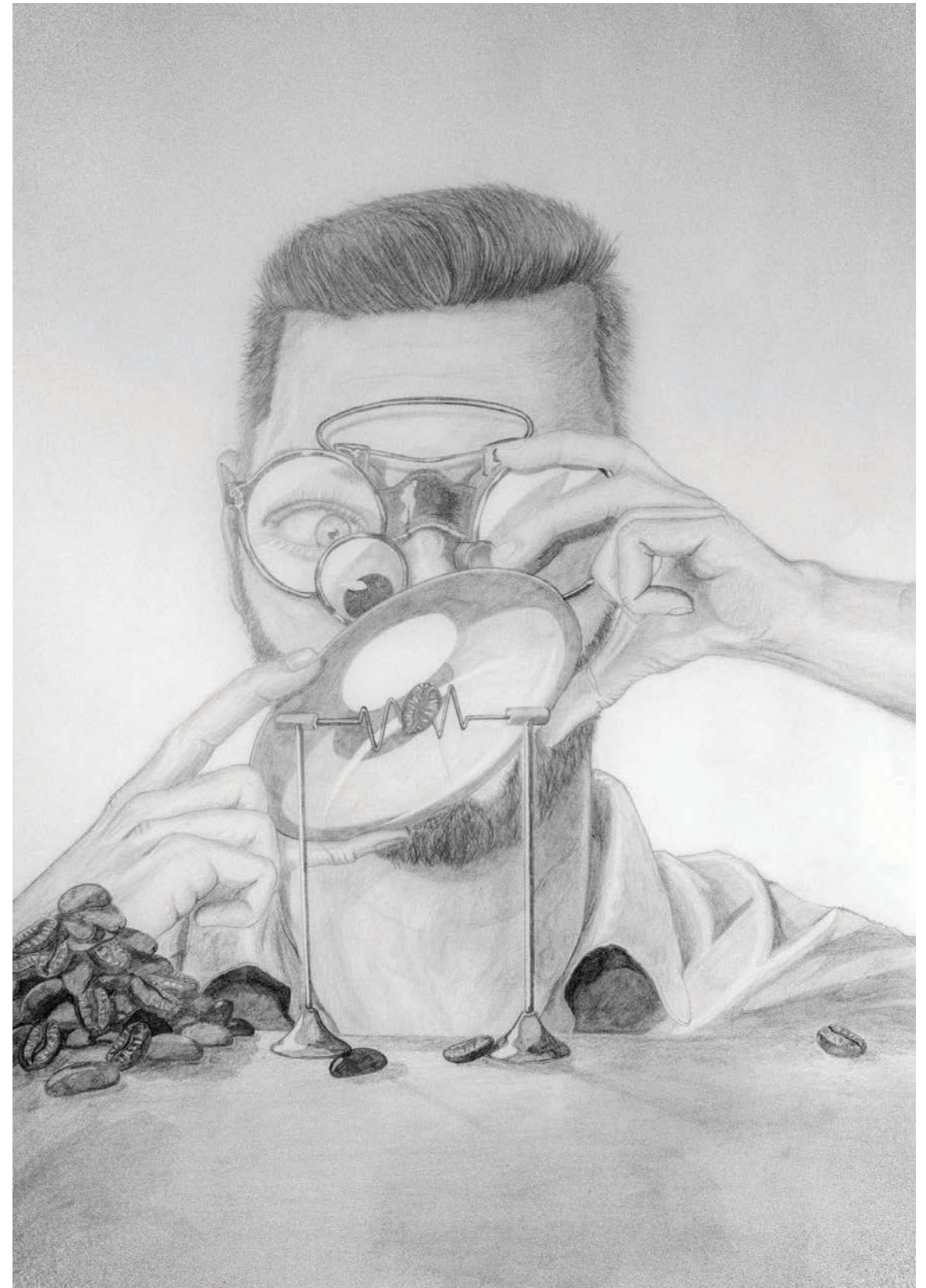
And when I kicked you out
I moved to a new person whose hands gripped my thighs
tighter than yours did.
Moved to replacing my memories of you
with liquor
and new bodies.

New lips
that didn't taste like you.
Or the cherry cola.
Or the disappointment.

New lips
that tasted like something new;
a cord finally breaking,
lips that felt like another chance to warm my cold fingertips
to a new flame,
(I wouldn't need gloves)
to keep me warm,
at least until morning.



Floral Waltz // Valerie Nunziato // Acrylic // 12" x 16"



The Better Bean // Pierre Dumoulin-Minguet // Graphite // 18" x 24"

Sugared Toast

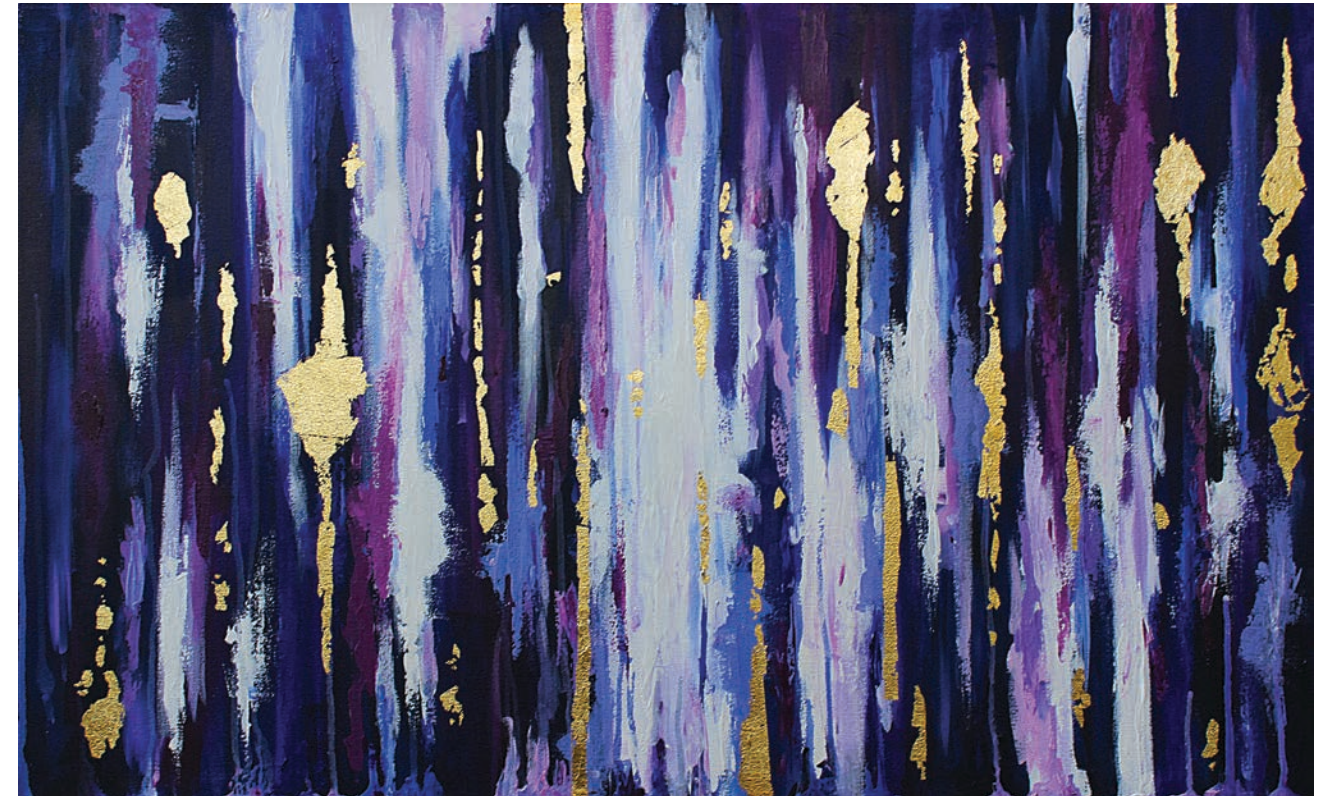
- Renee LeBeau -

Dear Wildflower,
i made you toast
buttered, sugared
and cinnamoned,
cut into triangles
and placed at the
head of the bed
next to the tea
you like, the one
with the ginger
and the honey and
a slice of lemon.

i will wait on the
other side of the
door and listen
to the stirrings
of your dreams.
when the sun reaches
your lips and when
you wake i will
sit at your feet and
peel oranges. i will
gaze upon the sweetness
of your sleep-mussed hair
and the soft puzzle of your
smile. you might mumble an

apology for your
unintended sleep but
i will make you laugh
because i like the way
the light hits your collar
bones and i like the way
my sheets tangle around
your calves.

i want to
hold you the way you
hold a cup of tea, with
both hands and breathing
deeply—but i
don't want to scare
you so instead i
will make you toast
and leave it as an
offering. and if you
come to the kitchen
asking for more, i
will lay out jelly
and biscuits and cream
and anything
you might want,
i will give.



I'm Trying

- Picabo Miskiv -

In me, I have a revolution waiting to unfold,
all it takes
is for my lips to utter the words
I love myself.
And I'm trying
every goddamn day
to ignite the fire
and let my love burn
like nothing I've felt before
powerful, frightening,
kinetic,
forcing my eyes open
and myself to expand
breaking out of the small cage
I have allowed myself to be confined in
and from my lips utter the words
I am trying.

Maura and Me

- Mialise Carney -

Maura was the kind of girl that dressed really tough but didn't have the personality to match. Like maybe she thought that all the black clothing would rub off on her personality. She spent more time trying to squeeze her smile into submission than she ever did spray painting buildings or getting piercings. Maura was the kind of girl that made straight girls gay.

Maura was my best friend. She was taller than me, with long black hair that swished when she walked. Maura was the kind of girl that was fake popular. She looked like she could turn the tide of the hallways in our school with just a flick of her skinny fingers. But honestly, the only power the flick of her wrist had was using a damp cloth to brush crumbs off the picnic tables outside of the hot dog joint where she worked.

Maura was a millennial that craved the freedom of being a teenager in the '80s. She did things like writing in notebooks instead of on her laptop. She rode her bike instead of getting a ride in her mom's green minivan. She found freedom in the childhood stories her parents had bottle fed her. Maura wasn't pretentious though, she just

thought that was what freedom was.

I thought Maura was the prettiest girl in the entire world. I didn't want to be just like Maura, I wanted to be Maura. I wore the same lipstick that Maura wore, the bright red kind. I bought the same shorts she did, I listened to the same records. I pulled my dad's orange mountain bike from the cobwebs in the basement, and I patched the clunky tires myself.

But I couldn't be Maura. I was a Kmart clearance version, the kind that got trampled during Black Friday and was thrown in a dusty, chalky pile over by the mismatched shoes. Maura didn't mind, though. She didn't mind that I wore shorts that were too baggy for my little butt. Or that I secretly liked Taylor Swift. She only smiled when I pulled that orange creaky bike up next to her soft yellow banana seat yard-sale-special bike, floating off ahead of me with her streamers cast behind her. I tried to keep up on tires too big for me on ground that couldn't seem to hold me up.

I had a crush on Maura. I had a big crush on Maura. But in the "friend-crush" way. The kind of crush where you think someone is so

cool that you just want to be their friend so bad. I really truly thought that. I thought that for a long time, too. Maura and me would go to the only drive-in theater left in the state, on our bikes. We shared popcorn we couldn't really afford and one blue slushie.

I started to think maybe I didn't just have a friend crush on Maura. I spent too long staring at her blue stained slushie mouth in the movie theater while she watched the actors spill their guts. I spent a lot of time staring at her butt, too. Especially when she was cleaning ketchup stains off the grainy picnic tables at work.

I got so caught up in loving Maura that I didn't have time to be scared of it. It started to snow late in the year I realized that I didn't have a friend-crush, but a Maura-crush. We shoveled her mom's minivan out to the sidewalk, Maura's face turned bright pink, the wet snowflakes making her warm face look slick. Her hair plastered to her face as the snow turned to slush. She didn't look like the *Maura* Maura wanted to be, but the *Maura* Maura actually was.

Once I realized that I didn't have a friend-crush, but an actual real crush on Maura, I started to investigate. I did this because I was a girl and Maura was a girl and I didn't get why I would have a real actual crush on Maura. I understood why I would have a Maura-crush, because everyone and anyone could fall in love with Maura, but I wanted to know if I was in love with Maura because she was perfect, or because I was gay.

So I started looking at other girls' butts. Secretly, though, because I didn't want to be called a lesbian in school. I looked at other

girls' mouths. I didn't really like them half as much as I liked Maura. I decided I was in love with Maura because she was perfect, not because I was in love with girls.

Maura and me sat in the cafeteria over dull orange chipped trays eating sloppy pizza. She was reading *Catcher in the Rye*, and I was reading it over her shoulder, skipping some words just to keep up with her page-turning. Maura liked *Catcher in the Rye*, I did not. I thought Holden said "damn" too damn much. Maura thought Holden was dreamy. I thought Holden was annoying and pretentious, but that's what made him perfect for Maura.

Maura told me she had a crush on a guy named Dixie. Dixie was a guy that she had World History with. They had to do a project on western civilizations, and she thought he was cute. Dixie was the kind of guy that Maura would like. He had hair that was in an awkward stage. It was half short, and half long, like he was trying to grow it out but just wasn't there yet. He wore braided pink bracelets on his arm and sometimes his ankle. He had a lip ring. When I met him, I asked him if he was named after Winn-Dixie, or Dixie Cups. Maura laughed, he didn't.

Maura and me played hopscotch in the spring outside her A-frame house. The pink and green pastel chalks flaked off the sidewalk when she jumped hard over it, her low-rise shoes dusting the chalk towards me. She had those annoying crab apple trees that drop seeds and rotted fruit all over the driveway but we avoided them and kept playing. I lost track of how to play the game; I was watching Maura's hair. Swish, swish, swish. Her fishtail

braid kept losing strands. I wanted to reach out and touch the strands. I didn't.

Maura won the game, which I didn't think was exactly fair since I didn't know how to play, but I didn't say anything. Maura and me drank lemonade outside on the driveway, burning our bare legs on the pavement. She told me her and Dixie were going on a Real Life Date tonight. At the drive-in theaters. They were going to get blue slushies.

I wasn't exactly jealous of Dixie, but I wasn't excited. I told Maura I was excited. I told them to share one blue slushie. She winked her long black eyelashes, her eyes disappearing in a smile she finally stopped trying to squeeze away.

That summer I didn't get to hang out with Maura half as much as I wanted to. Maura and Dixie were a thing. He let her ride his skateboard and they went to local shows, drank alcohol and smoked cigarettes. She was trying to be cool. I told Maura that she didn't have to try because she already was cool, but Maura just laughed a real live Maura laugh, and dove back into her above-ground pool.

I wanted to make Maura jealous. Not crush jealous. But friend jealous. The problem with that was I didn't have any other friends to make Maura jealous of. So I had to make Maura jealous some other way.

I did probably the wrong right thing. I told Maura I had a crush on her. We were sitting on her periwinkle carpet next to her bed. She was painting my nails black. She looked up at me. She told me to get out, and not to come back. She told me that I was creepy. I

told her I wasn't creepy. She screamed at me. I left with my nails still wet. I rode my bright orange bike back to my house in the dark. I wished a car would hit me, but none did.

Maura told Dixie that I was a lesbian. His uncle was the town bigot, the kind that hung around gas stations and said things that made all the cashiers uncomfortable. Dixie told Maura to tell me that if I ever came near her again, he would tell his uncle I was a creepy lesbian. I told Maura I still had a crush on her. She hung up.

I joined softball. I didn't like softball, but I wanted to rub it in Maura's face. I wanted to be the Lesbian that Maura thought I was. I started listening to Melissa Etheridge. I wore my long muddy hair in a French braid with a baseball cap on backwards over it.

Maura and Dixie broke up in the fall. I still didn't have any friends because I was the Tenth Grade Lesbian. I was the bad kind of lesbian too because even the theater kids didn't want to hang out with me. I didn't want to be The Lesbian, but I was also still mad at Maura, so I sat in the back of the cafeteria and ate sloppy pizza by myself. When Dixie and Maura broke up, I hoped Maura would come back. But Maura sat on the other side of the cafeteria from me, by herself, reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The Daily Grind

- Antoine Trombino-Aponte -

My ears have been made so oblivious
to the incessant, tectonic grinding
of enamel landsliding across enamel,
that the only remaining reminder of the phenomenon
is the chronic, aching pressure in the mantle of my jaw.

My dentist takes more note of the matter,
viewing the weathered erosion of my oral landscape
as reason enough to issue a night-time mouth guard,
and condescendingly conclude after each visit
that since the problem persists, I must not be wearing it.

Accurate in assumption but not in diagnosis,
for even if I did wear it, she would remain just as baffled
upon my eventual return with even more damage than before,
because a night-time mouth guard would be of no practical use
to a grinding spanning all hours of the day.

Perhaps that is just the naturally disastrous product
of a mouth which has grown too long accustomed
to the habitual eating of my words,
with nothing left to occupy it but the chewing of my pride
so that it may finally be crushed enough to swallow.





The Temporary States of Everything // Emma Stratton // Digital Photography

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER



Tastes Like Mint // Erin Cregg // Gouache & Ink Illustration // 4" x 6"

Apathy

- Katherine Nazzaro -

We walk wide circles around the things
we don't want to talk about,
 like museum exhibits,
 we've learned to stand back.
Do not touch.

Someone has wrapped police tape around our kitchen table,
and now no one will sit there
 —won't even look at it.
If you pretend something hard enough,
it becomes true,
 and that space has always been empty.

I've removed all my ribs and laid my heart out on the counter,
something too messy and overflowing
to keep inside myself.
Blood seeps onto the newspaper,
 soaking it through, like water on a sponge.

That's fine, anyway,
it's not the sports section.
These pages were destined to make arts and crafts less messy,
 eventually.

Outside there are gunshots,
and we call them firecrackers.
 If we don't acknowledge it,
no one needs to call for an ambulance.

We light a stick of dynamite and call it a candle,
don't worry,
 it will burn itself out,
 eventually.

I don't want to have to pretend these things.
I want the candle to be a candle,
 and not the hospital trip we won't return from.

Wildflowers

- Julia Constantine -

Brushing up against my pale, rosy cheek,

is the sweet perfume of spring.

Warm, and safe, like our first kiss.

Storms come, thunder roars, and rain falls.

But the bees always come back.

Buzzing about as their furry little bodies hop

from wildflower to wildflower,

gathering the sweet nectar,

until next season.



Heart Surgery

- Craig DeMelo -

I walk my heart into the abattoir,
naked fear dressed up in April rains.

I lay it in the center of the room
upon a wooden table streaked with stains.

I sit with arms wrapped tight around my knees
against the wall, in shadow out of sight.

From here I see, quip-quopping in its way
unevenly, it glistens in the light.

It is filled with sorrow-laden platelets
round and red with plasma drops of mirth,

and with starkest memories of iron
it's been filling steady since my birth.

Pacing round the table casually,
into the quiet room the faceless stir

with pointed fingers or a chin in hand
they watch and scrutinize and then confer.

One wonders if the little thing might bounce,
another picks it up and checks the weight.

One squeezes it and holds it to her ear
and like a Christmas gift gives it a shake.

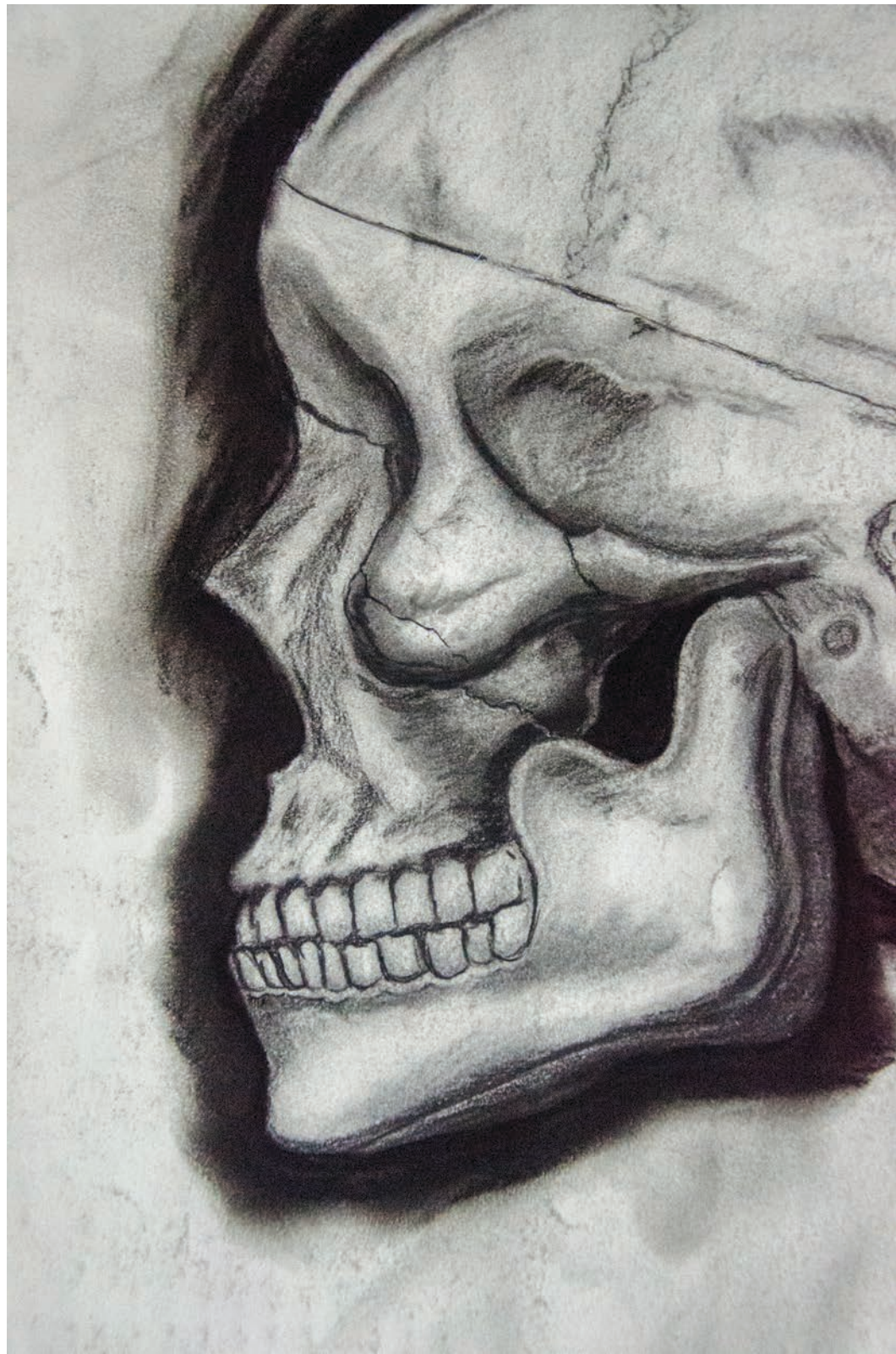
Another pokes it with a grimaced look
and then he leans in close enough to smell

and promptly wipes his hand upon his jeans.
They leave it lying still after a spell.

Whimpered beats, sallow flesh and drained
with pinkish splatters on the table thrown,

it's beating still, with sharp and rhythmic pain
but stronger like the flesh had turned to bone

I carry it back out into the rain
Whatever it may be—it is my own.



Skull // Pierre Dumoulin-Minguet // Charcoal // 18" x 24"



Purple Fuck // Nancy Pope // Acrylic & Gold Leaf // 9" x 12"

Chaos + / -

- Craig DeMelo -

On my TV remote there is a button
which moves channels forward and back.
A small, oblong piece of rubber flicks,
tossing pictures across the screen effortlessly.

I cycle through an assortment of stimuli,
colors and sounds assail my eyes and ears,
interspersed by only a moment of blackness
as my thumb delivers its commands.

I stop my mindless clicking and find myself
looking at fire. People are crying and screaming
as a well-dressed woman, with her finger
on her ear, relays the details of some ghastly atrocity.
The capitalized headline reads of bodycount—
and lesser news scrolls innocuously beneath it.
The woman's words become a dull drone
as pictures of children take the screen.
Without thinking, my thumb propels the horror
away, jettisoned back into
the obscurity of an unvisited channel.

Now I see a blonde girl playing a violin.
Her eyes are closed as she gesticulates through
a song that is equal parts grace and sorrow.
The girl. The song. The moment. It's all beautiful
and I don't want to change the channel—
but my thumb pulls me backward

to chaos.



Metropolis // Andy Lavery // Woodcut // 24" x 48"

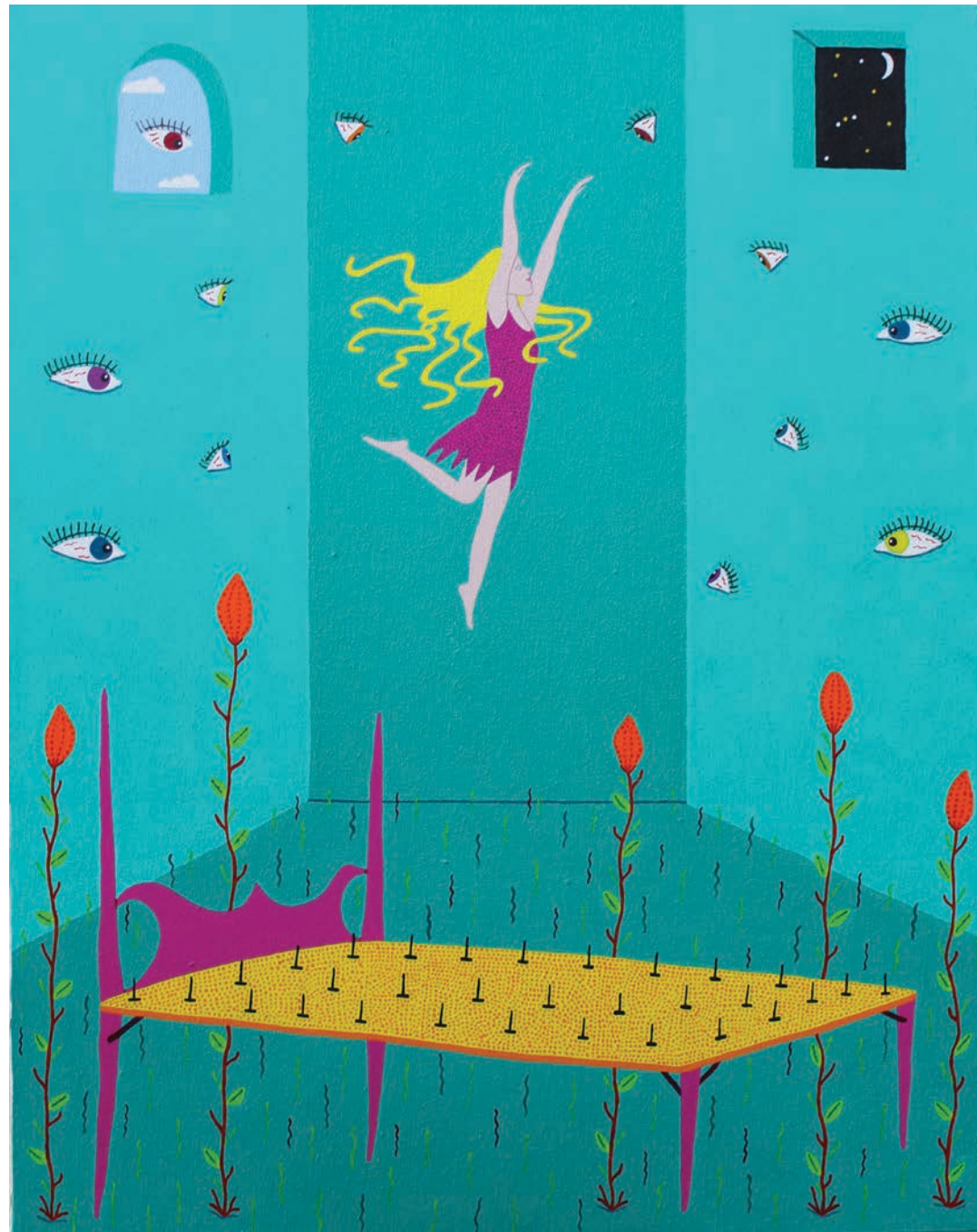


The NORMANDIE Ocean Liner

- Katherine Nazzaro -

The line of the bow cuts through the center,
 like Jaws, rising out of the water,
 mouth gaping, perilous.
 Something dark and sinister
 with malicious intent,
 more mountain than ship,
 the water around it looks as immovable as a continent,
 more land than sea.
 The fluorescent lights shine harsh on the poster,
 highlighting the railing like sharp teeth.
 There is nothing comforting about it.
 Harsh lines bring cold metal out of the water,
 higher than a city office building.
 This is what it means to mechanize the sea.
 It's easier to shift a glacier than it is
 to change course.

In the doorway,
 my father stands as still as the statues we passed earlier.
 There can be no man overboard,
 a fall from this height hits the water
 like concrete hits bone.



Decision // Kristine Solgard // Acrylic // 26" x 30"

an excerpt from

The Monarch

- Ryan Wentzell -

The afternoon of October 4th,

"It's like getting the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, but finding it empty. It's just a sick joke."

Tamara reclined in the chaise lounge; Dr. Morgan sat adjacent and upright in his own chair, scribbling down notes on his clipboard. Looking at the balding doctor, Tamara liked to imagine that (for a hundred bucks an hour) he was recording notes for a make-believe biography about her. The sort of biography that wouldn't shine its subject in a beaming light, the sort of biography that wouldn't focus on the extraordinary feats she'd accomplished throughout her life, but more so on the embarrassing little interludes sprinkled throughout her everyday commute. She'd spend the night beating herself into a mental pulp over cringeworthy mannerisms or conversations.

Tamara had been meeting with Dr. Morgan every other Thursday evening to discuss her nightmares. All her life, these terrors were few and far between. That was normal; nightmares like that came and went. First

came the panic that woke her out of a tortured slumber. Next came the contemplation of what it all meant as she worked her way from the bed to the shower. Then, by the time she prepared breakfast, the terror started to fade into memory.

The trouble for Tamara began several months back when the terror refused to fade into oblivion. She initially dismissed her restless sleep as a result of the June heatwave that had swept New England. They were calling it one of the hottest summers in recorded history, reaching as high as 101 degrees. There were even several cases of people passing out in the streets of Elmwood from dehydration. But as Mother Nature decided to turn down the furnace, the nightmares didn't diminish. In fact, they got exceedingly worse and vastly more real. It got to the point where Tamara couldn't function during the day. She woke constantly to find her pillow damp with sweat and her cheeks glazed with tears.

The sleep deprivation was aging her rapidly. The purple bags under her eyes gave the impression of a skull, and her tired blank stare only amplified it. She was short with people, and the littlest things would infuriate her. She

was aware that she was being an asshole to the people she actually liked, but her body was so strained that she knew her standoffish attitude was something she couldn't overcome. If it wasn't for her circle of friends, she never would have considered therapy, but she knew if these dreams didn't stop, she would be lucky if her friends remained. And so, on her sixth appointment, she discussed the latest with the doctor.

Though the room was filled with cushions, carpets, paintings, and other knick-knacks, there was a sterile atmosphere that loomed within it. At a glance it was homey enough, but the Febreze air freshener overpowered any sense of comfort. It was almost as if the doctors prepared the office for each new patient, to mute the tortured words that were still circling in the air from the previous session.

Dr. Morgan continued to write as he questioned Tamara. "Can you find any solace in the fact that you found your mother after all these years?"

Tamara sat with her legs crossed. She was a timid woman in her mid-twenties. Though she desperately needed answers from the doctor, she wasn't the sort of person who invited attention. She fantasized about being the center of conversation, but in the real world she barely spoke. "I mean, I've spent months talking to you, trying to get some understanding of why I have these nightmares."

Dr. Morgan countered, "Like we've discussed, it's very possible that these nightmares are repressed memories resurfacing."

It was Dr. Morgan's persistence in their earlier sessions that spurred Tamara to locate her biological mother in the first place. His diagnosis of some early childhood trauma convinced her that finding Meghan Vaccaro would lead to answers.

"That's what I'm saying. I was hoping that my mom could tell me something, but she has dementia and can't remember a thing."

Dr. Morgan stopped writing for a moment. "Could the doctors at the home explain why the two of you were separated?"

"She pretty much turned herself off and stopped caring. They said she was dangerous and neglectful, so the state took me away. They wouldn't give me the details."

The doctor furrowed his brow and put his attention back to his notepad.

"I've never needed a real mother. I just need answers," she said.

"Did you make any journal entries since our last session?"

Tamara raised herself off the lounge. The bare skin of her arms snapped off the leather like Velcro peeling. She walked over to her jacket, which dangled on a hook next to the office door. She pulled from the pocket a little black book. It was kept closed with a hair elastic. Inside were the scribbled entries of psychosomatic evils that haunted Tamara in the late hours of the night.

"Why don't you read the last one," said Dr. Morgan.

Tamara removed the band and opened to the last marked page. Her handwriting was messy and scrawled, the entry written between sleep cycles.

October 3,

A long, narrow hallway. At the far end is a strange X shaped figure that I can't quite make out. The X is writhing. I don't want to approach it but the only exit in this hallway is behind it. When I get in front of it I see that the X is two large stakes of wood that intersect, with a child (a boy, 9 or 10) crucified on it. He struggles. The doorway behind the child opens and out comes the Monarch. Her ponytail reaches the back of her knees. Her face is old, but she has young, crow black hair. She pulls a razor blade from the sash around her waist and holds it up to the child. The boy is in tears. He screams, "I love you mommy. Please, I don't want to die!" Over and over. The woman makes incomprehensible hissing sounds and spits in the boy's face. She carves into his flesh. I want to look away, but my sight is fixed on the scene. I can't move. Horrible screams. The boy writhes from side to side as the blade cuts into him, but goes limp as it's retracted. She's skinning the crucified boy alive until he's nothing but bloodied muscle.

The woman turns to me. I'm aware that she hasn't noticed me until just now even though I'm standing just feet away. Her pupils dilate and change from a spangled blue to a soulless black. She holds a slab of the bloody skin in one hand and the razor in the other. "Lost cause, want a taste?"

The crucified boy. It was not the first time that his death had cropped up in Tamara's

dreams. Never the same death, but always murdered by the Monarch. That was the name Tamara gave to the woman with the long black ponytail and the old face. She had made appearances in her dreams often.

During their sessions, Dr. Morgan advised giving the recurring woman a name. The idea was that a name would humanize this boogeyman and the threat would lessen. Tamara kept her disbelief in that strategy to herself.

Tamara wouldn't give the woman a name. However, she did settle on giving her a title. Monarch seemed to fit. The Monarch's domineering presence, which filled Tamara with hopelessness when the woman entered any one of Tamara's nightmares, showed that the Monarch was in charge.

She didn't dare give the child a name. What sort of name could you give a boy that the Monarch deemed a "lost cause"? Even after the dream, the Monarch held her influence over Tamara.

"How can something like that be a repressed memory?" Tamara asked after reading from the journal.

"I imagine it's part of a bigger whole," Dr. Morgan said. "Like strands in a massive tapestry. I think a lot of your anxiety comes from your relationship with your mother." His eyes lowered. "Or lack thereof."

That sounded reasonable enough. Somehow, though, it didn't seem to fit. After all, she hadn't been without a mother. She was fostered young enough to remember having a great relationship with her foster family.

She had a wonderful home-life growing up. She played field hockey for the Elmwood Panthers, was an honor roll student, and graduated high school with flying colors. Her foster parents pushed her to succeed and she was thankful for that.

"I don't buy it."

"And I'm not selling it." Dr. Morgan sighed and gave a friendly smile. "You're like a duck in water, my friend. On the water's surface, you're just floating along. But underneath your feet are splashing like crazy."

"Well, what do you suggest?" Tamara raised a brow.

There it was. She was making her annoyance known. She was too tired to care. First the annoyance, then came the shame. He was only trying to help. Dr. Morgan wasn't fazed by her attitude. He was very understanding of his patients. Tamara guessed that sort of thing came with the job. Then in the back of her mind she wondered, *how far could he be pushed.*

"Well, from that last journal entry," Dr. Morgan said, "I wrote in my notes some phrases that stand out to me. When the boy says, 'I love you, mommy' and where the Monarch denies him and says 'lost cause,' there's some fear of rejection at play here. I think maybe you see your biological mother as a phantom. You don't know anything about her, and the staff at the home only gave you vague reasoning as to why she had to give you up. I think you should spend time with her."

"I think you can handle it." Dr. Morgan's eyes held deep-rooted sympathy. He had

an almost fatherly belief in his patient. He wanted her to succeed. The paternal connection between the two was making Tamara uncomfortable. She chose to avert her gaze and focus on a Rorschach test on the wall behind him. Dr. Morgan took note of her wanting to change the subject, so he played along. He made a gesture towards the ink blot and asked, "Thoughts?"

"I think it looks like a demigod practicing Voodoo, or a dog."

"I call bullshit." Dr. Morgan smiled.

"You read me like a cheap novel."

The night of October 4th,

Tamara ascended the staircase that wrapped around the interior of the tower. Each foot planted was a strain on her legs. It was as if weights were tied to her ankles, limiting her speed. The threat of leaning backwards and toppling down the stairs was always on her mind. There was no floor at the bottom, but instead a vast abyss—black and empty.

The world changed. Tamara stood atop a platform with six sides. There was no barrier around the hexagon's edge. If Tamara chose to drop off the platform, she would get lost in the starless space that surrounded her. Nothing above and nothing below. The only thing on the platform was a small crate. The crate jolted, almost tipping itself over. "Help me!" A cry erupted from the box. It sounded like the heartbreaking squeal of pigs at slaughter. Someone was trying to break out of it. Tamara shivered when she heard fingernails scratching at the inside. They

were scratching so fast and so furiously that Tamara dreaded that the person's fingernails would snap off. The cries for help were becoming more stifled. Instincts prompted Tamara to get to the crate as fast as she could.

Tamara rushed forward and pried the lid open with a godlike ferocity that surprised even her. The lid was propped open on a hinge at a ninety-degree angle to the crate. What she saw made Tamara grip the crate's edge so tightly that the wood shavings got stuck under her fingernails. Inside was a small immobile child. The body was shriveled and bruised. Tamara thought it looked like all the blood had been drained from its body. It bore a striking resemblance to a mummified infant. Squirming all around the body were dozens of different colored snakes, trying to remain warm by slithering amongst each other. Some were digging their way into the stiff body through its mouth and eyeholes.

Tamara acted on instincts a second time. She reached into the crate to retrieve the child and that's when she was interrupted by the Monarch. She slammed the lid shut, locking Tamara's hands inside. The old woman smiled at her. She kept a single hand on the lid, not allowing Tamara to remove her hands. Tamara could feel the snakes rubbing their scaly bodies against her fingertips. They weren't slimy, as Tamara imagined they would be. Anxiety took hold and she anticipated the snake bite that would inevitably doom her.

The Monarch stroked Tamara's left cheek with the back of her bony knuckles. They were icy cold, but Tamara couldn't back away when her body told her to. The Monarch slid her tongue along her teeth and let loose a slew of hissing sounds. Tamara could smell the sour sting of the woman's breath. It burned and made her eyes water. Snakes were starting to wrap themselves around

Tamara's forearms. She could feel her fingers begin to tingle as the circulation was cut off. She used all her force trying to free her arms from the crate. She could feel tendons tearing. Sinews snapped like elastics. One final pull backwards and Tamara ripped her hands off like ripping the wings off a fly. Splintered bones protruded from the bloody stumps of her forearms. She wavered on the hexagon's edge and fell off. The last thing she saw was the Monarch lean forward, remove the child from the crate, and cradle the dead thing.

Again, she was falling in the dark—falling in the abyss.

The morning of October 5th,

"So, are you in or out?" It was late morning. Tamara's friend Whitney had called her to see if she wanted to go out for drinks when Whitney got off work. She had gone out with a guy she had met a few times, and was anxious to introduce Tamara to him.

"Maybe. I need to go to Willow's," Tamara explained, "I'll let you know when I'm done."

"To see your mom again?" asked Whitney. "I thought you said that was a lost cause."

The Monarch flashed a grin in Tamara's mind's eye. "I don't know, there might still be something there."

"Well good luck. Hit me up later. I get out at six."

Tamara arrived at Willow Health Care around noontime, a stressful forty minutes

away from Elmwood. With butterflies in her stomach, she addressed the woman at the front desk. This felt more like an obligation than anything else. Not for her mother, but for herself. Nevertheless, when the mind is backed by will, miracles will happen.

“What’s her name?” asked the secretary.

“Meghan Vaccaro.”

“She’s at a group outing right now,” the secretary said, “but you can wait in her room if you want. They should be back in half an hour or so. Room 347.”

Tamara thanked her, ascended the staircase, and came out on the third floor. The room was only lit by the rays that were sneaky enough to break through the slits in the curtain. Tamara flipped the switch next to the doorway and the room was illuminated by the cruel fluorescent lights. It was a small room; in one corner, there was a bed pressed up against the wall. The center of the mattress sagged into itself, leaving an imprint. In the other corner, next to the bed, was a recliner with three different remote controls resting on the arm. Tamara wondered if her mother was the type of old person who called the remotes clickers. There was a collection of paintings on the walls that Tamara thought looked tacky. Something you’d pick up just to give the room some color.

Across the room and under the only window was a shelf crowded with photographs. She walked across the carpet and looked at them, noticing that there was a good layer of dust. Legions of faces looked up at her, smiling through their frames. She guessed that these were her forgotten family members, people

she didn’t particularly want to meet. She imagined how awkward it could potentially be thrusting herself into a new family, even if it was her own blood.

While she was imagining what these people might be doing today, she saw it. There was a picture that screamed out to her at the far-right end. In the background of the photograph, perched on a hilltop, was a faded red house that looked like a tower. It was six-sided and had a flat rooftop. On the front porch sat a black dog. Its eyes were piercing. Even through the picture, the animal seemed to acknowledge that it was being watched. Three people were smiling in the foreground. A mother was holding a baby; Tamara had only met her mother once before, but she was sure that this was a younger version of her. But it was the third woman that caught her attention. Her bony hands clasped around Meghan’s shoulders. Her jet-black hair was tied back into a ponytail. The Monarch. There she stood, smiling up at Tamara through the years.

*A repressed memory.
A strand in a massive tapestry.
Humanizing the boogeyman.*

She could see it all through her four-year-old eyes.

She was playing with the dog on a hilltop, the autumn breeze carried a crisp aroma of fallen leaves from the surrounding woods. Her mother and grandmother sat on the front steps of the house, watching her. It looked to Tamara like they were talking in secret. Tamara’s mother got up, walked over

to her, and knelt to pat the dog. She smiled and used her free hand to stroke Tamara’s left cheek with her knuckles.

“I got to take off for a few hours, hun,” she said. “Nana-Sheri’s going to watch you. You mind her, kay?”

Tamara nodded. She loved spending time at her grandmother’s. She had such an unusual house, it was like something out of a fairy-tale. Rapunzel’s tower, maybe.

Her mother kissed her on the cheek and nuzzled her ear affectionately. The tickle made Tamara laugh.

The memory went dark and what came next was Tamara being led by her grandmother into the house. The dog followed behind. Candles were lit inside; they smelled of pumpkin.

“Do you want to go play in the basement?” asked Nana-Sheri, “I got some new toys I think you’re really going to like!” Tamara’s excitement rose.

Nana-Sheri unlocked the basement door with a key she pulled out from the sash around her waist. When they both entered the stairwell, with the dog following closely behind, Nana-Sheri about-faced and locked the door behind them. Tamara thought it curious that Nana would do that but her childish excitement about what kind of surprises were downstairs overpowered her inquisitiveness. Nana-Sheri propelled Tamara ahead down the creaky spiral staircase. There was a strange smell coming from the bottom. It was an oily sort of scent that reminded Tamara of the bathroom aisle at the grocery store.

As she planted her foot from the last step to the basement floor and took in the room, she felt a twinge of unease. The stare of strangers shot through her, and she instantly wished the basement door wasn’t locked. Nana-Sheri blocked the doorway to the staircase and ushered her into the middle of the room. Tamara stood, a frightened little child.

As quickly as the vision came, it was cut off like a light switch. Tamara tried picturing what she saw in her grandmother’s basement. A Saint Andrew’s Cross? A crate? A group of men with their shirts off?

It was all very fuzzy in her mind, but there was enough to know that the basement was at the heart of Tamara’s nightmares. A hollow feeling deep down in her gut brought on the waterworks. Tamara wasn’t ashamed to let the salty tears flow out. It was like she was releasing a heavy load that had built up inside her. A terrible truth, getting fat off her ignorance of it.

All that remained was the Monarch. She was out there, no longer a dream but a living entity. She was walking the Earth, or at least had been at one time, making for an easier adversary. She pocketed the picture and made to leave the room. Under the archway, she turned and looked back at her mother’s room, like Lot’s wife looking back at the destruction of Sodom. Her mother, the dementia patient. Another victim of a forgotten past. Lost memories, a lost cause.

The Shadows

- Kayla Marie Spagna -

Shadows crawl
in alley ways
where catcalling
echoes
like sonar

here I am—

here I am—

my feet are heavy
pounding on pavement
but shadows lurk
in doorways
leaning
whispering

hey honey—

hey darling—

white where my knuckles
clutch my keys
neck craning
eyes shifting
but shadows prowl
in parking lots
and I bend to see
that space between
car and asphalt
wondering—

is that something shadow
a someone waiting?



Teardrop Pendant // Taryn Shipp // Metals // 15.5"

Hydrangea Wallpaper

- Kathryn Robenhymer -

I sat on my bathroom floor
crying because my brother said
if he didn't use the ring
who would?
But the logical conclusion
to that statement
wasn't the point

What matters is you won't
be here then

When you said you had
found a fabric for me
you'd decided to save
for my wedding day,
you gave me a nautical quilt
for the interim to
remind me of home

Ever since I was little
watching Charlotte's Web in the den,
you always made sure
I was never cold

Then while trying to decide how to erase
the tear stains on my glasses
I noticed the walls in their
hydrangea wallpaper you had found
to match the obscure
crimson and gold colors I'd picked
for my bedroom
you made everything beautiful

Even that bathroom,
right down to
the toilet paper holder,
since even the most
base of tissues
has just the right place

I smile because
that was your sense of humor
after so many surgeries, you'd say
God is taking me home
one piece at a time

And now I'm crying because
that's how He gives you back to me
one piece at a time
through discarded rings and
hydrangea wallpaper

Purple Fuck, Nancy Pope





Carnival // Nicol M. Da Silva // Acrylic // 48" x 60"



Timeless // Santiago Chaves // Graphite // 8.5" x 11"



Galactic // Andy Laverty // Linocut // 5" x 11"

Solar

I thought I'd seen the stars.
I thought I'd already seen
every single fleck of soft white
that coats the night sky.

But then I saw you.

You were blinding
in some kind of
lovely way.
All bones and
sizzling skin,
with a voice that
painted the air
in shades of gold and
a gentle halo of blonde
in a mess of
chestnut brown.

I was just a girl
with clanking knees
and sad gray eyes.
But even then,
I knew you were never
going to leave my mind.

Recovery

- Elizabeth Brady -

I used to leave
my skull unhinged,
my thoughts exposed
like bare rock at
low tide:

Warm showers
with blood
sliding down
the linoleum.

Roses
tangled with
poison ivy.

But you.
You wanted everything there
pretty.

You plucked every rose
from my scalp.

Stitched me
back together
like a ragdoll.

You took away the pain.

Alive

You became a
lucid mind
locked away in
a static body.

I could almost
see you in there.
I could almost
reach inside
and pull you out.

Your eyes
fluttered open.
Your lips
curled up at
the corners
in such a
familiar way.

You slipped through
our fingers like
smoke,
but your fire
was not buried
with you.

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER

A Queen for Summer Love

- Jeffrey S. Davidson -

The bumblebees flew switchbacks in the wind.

If they had been birds, or something else with weight proportioned to their bodies, they would have flown single file. Instead, they flew drunkenly through the breeze in a formation that could be called, at best, windswept. Winding along on a course determined by randomness or dumb luck, they crossed river, wood, and meadow beneath drenching rain. They paced out miles by the inch and looked to pace out still more.

Halfway through the valley, they'd come to a mud plain on the far side of the river. Higher ground on the west bank stole the afternoon sunlight each day, leaving it lush and fertile. The east bank lay some twenty feet lower, sloping gradually. A victim of run-off and shade, nothing grew but the mud's depth. It was flat and featureless other than the slope and moss-covered rocks spread sparsely across its face where wind pushed the puddles and running streams from right to left. It felt like a leaching field: saturated ground biding its time until more could be absorbed. It looked like a half mile of misery. To a soaked bumbler

laden with eggs, a half mile might as well be a million.

Number five wasn't in charge; she was just in front. The others followed her, or they didn't. She rested a moment on the lower bank, dead-root and stones thrusting up through the ground. When the others caught up, she asked what next. Staying was not an option, nor was going back up the west bank. Wind kicked along the river fast enough that, when momentum stopped carrying them over the other bank, they'd gone farther and faster downstream than they had across it. Nobody dared go back. There was nothing to go back to; a cuckoo queen bee had usurped the colony. They left with as many female eggs as they could carry.

When she'd rested enough, number five took flight. She stayed low to the ground—low enough to avoid the worst of the wind, high enough to stay out of the mud when turbulence struck. She saw trees in the distance, their green giving them away. Between and perhaps beyond them, something brown stood out that she thought might be sufficient shelter against the storm. Beneath her, muddy puddles and

rivulets streamed past. Great washes stretched out along the ground, foam at their edges. The occasional tuft of drowning grass or a dying sprig reached up for her.

In an hour, coated in mud despite her attempts to avoid it, number five rested in the lower branches of a sickly scrub pine some two-and-a-half-feet tall. What remained of the others joined her, five of them. Fourteen more were dead, killed by weather, birds, bad choices. Number twelve had fallen ill on the trail. She'd complained of abdominal pain. The fly larva ate its way out through her back.

Rain ran across the pine, making even rest require effort. Sap stuck to their wings, its sharp acidity biting into their olfactory antennae, the sting of a pinch to the nose. Wind bounced them against bark and branch and needle.

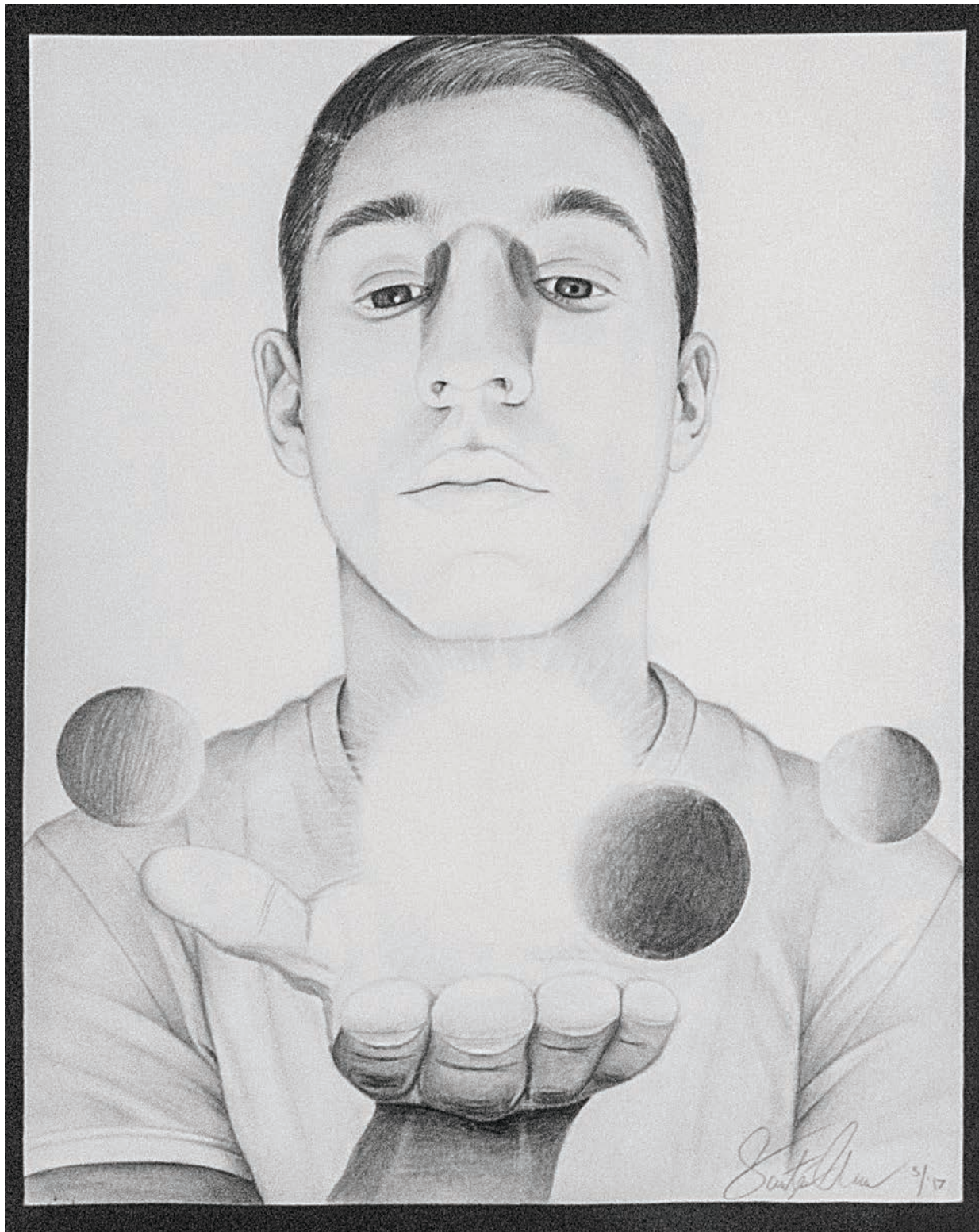
Number five took flight again, this time zigging and zagging her way from trunk to trunk. Her suspicions about the brown mass proved correct as she came to a ruined log cabin lying in an overgrown yard surrounded by a rock wall. The crevices of the wall itself seemed inviting, deep furrows unravelling as far as her eyes could see. Unfortunately, the moisture inside precluded the possibility of waxing together a hive. They struck on to the cabin.

"Summer Love," the wooden sign read, pinned against the crumbling wall like a carving on a transom. Half the roof and a corner of two walls lay on the ground, ripe with the smell of rot. Jagged ends of broken logs stabbed at the

sky in every direction. Inside, abandonment reigned. A photo book filled with pages of a boy and a frog, blown and scattered around the one room, offered images to any eyes that might see. A moldering reading desk, broken beneath the weight of book and lamp, gave its front legs to the years and rested, a perfect isosceles, above the battered floor.

In the calm of a rear corner, number five found a place for the hive. The rusted wood stove's door stood ajar. Beneath it, sod-like rotted logs formed a bed as fertile as the detritus of the forest floor. Beneath them, the cabin floor itself had softened. She landed between two logs that formed a V with a burrow beneath them.

Here, she told the others. We shall build here. One shall be queen when nature says it's time. She will be the queen of summer love.



Nova // Santiago Chaves // Graphite // 8.5" x 11"



The Temporary State of Lollipops // Emma Stratton // Digital Photography



Self Portrait // Samantha Cushman // Aquatint // 20" x 18"



Anachronism // Kristine Solgard // Acrylic // 26" x 30"

Nordic Roots

- Mialise Carney -

We called it Siberian Winter—
North East girl you were born and bred for this.
Creaking hardwood floors resign to the pain of
hot water running through them.

This is not a metaphor for the winters we spent
Suffocating
under three childhood comforters.
No heat seeped through,
arms wrapped around white torsos
colder than the melting ice cream in the fridge.
I’ve never felt cold like that,
a phantom limb
settling over us,
Siberian girls.

Genetics failed me;
Scandinavian Helga should’ve been ready to
wrestle a bear
or surrender to Hitler—
I guess my gene pool was never able to let go of the
six months of darkness;
I feel it running through my bones.

Papa tells me we’re irrational,
blowing hot air onto his white knuckles—
sit crouching around the wood stove,
pellets clinking against its iron insides.
I watch his father’s knees bend together,
wonder if he ignores the pain as
he turns the thermostat down to 58.

The Message and the Fall

after Haruki Murakami

- Marcus Frisbie -

Whether it was a nightmare or some sort of dream I couldn’t be certain, but its importance was certainly grave. I was asked to deliver a message, though the dream was not clear as to who would be receiving it. I usually didn’t remember my dreams. They all seemed like islands far away from me, but this one was fresh in my mind. As clear as day I could see that girl running up to me. She moved as if she was skipping across water. She leaned into my ear and whispered this phrase: don’t let me forget that I danced.

I didn’t know when I would find the time to search for the message’s recipient, because work had gotten very busy as of late. I worked at a factory where my administrative job was to inspect stamps that had been placed on letters. I measured their length, width, mass, and weight, and recorded the measurements in a large database. My boss, Mr. Watanabe, had recently put me in charge of my former coworker’s input as well. He worked in the cubicle next to me, but I never learned his name; if I recall correctly, he jumped out of the 4th-story window.

I went to work every morning by riding the train. I would usually bide my time by doing

Sudoku puzzles in pen. I had never successfully completed a puzzle. For the first time in awhile, I decided to look up from my newspaper and saw a young girl wearing a school uniform. She must have been around sixteen, but her movements were very mature. She wore bright scarlet heels with her uniform. I assumed it was not regulation, but I was not certain of what school she was attending. My eyes scanned up her legs and torso, eventually making eye contact. She flashed me a knowing smile and I moved my newspaper closer to my face. I spent the rest of the ride scribbling shapes into the squares of the Sudoku game.

Arriving at work, I took the elevator straight to the 4th floor. I walked past seven cubicles to my own, much larger now that I had taken over my coworker’s space. I sat down and began to measure the first stamp ahead of me. Length of 3 centimeters, width of 2.5 centimeters. I needed to measure the weight of this stamp, so I began the procedure:

1. Remove the stamp from the envelope
2. Weigh the envelope in grams
3. Apply the stamp to the envelope again
4. Measure the envelope with the stamp in grams

5. Subtract the original weight from the new weight

As usual the weight of the stamp was too low to mark down, so I put a 0 in the computer. Before I could begin work on the next letter, I was called into the office of Mr. Watanabe by the voice on the loudspeaker. I walked past seven cubicles to the elevator and took it up to the 6th floor. I stepped out of the machine into the waiting room, where Mr. Watanabe's assistant sat behind a desk.

"Wait just one minute please," she said while pushing her brown hair behind her left ear.

I sat in a chair, which creaked ever so slightly. I listened to the music playing on the radio; it happened to be David Bowie's 1983 single "Let's Dance." I used to be a big fan of Bowie's, though since I got that job I hadn't had much time for any hobbies. The music skipped on the line where Bowie says, "Put on your red shoes." The assistant turned off the radio after the line repeated six times. I picked up the newspaper to hopefully find a game of Sudoku, but found that all of the boxes in the puzzle were scribbled out. I looked across to an empty chair.

"Mr. Watanabe will see you now."

I nodded to the assistant and walked into Mr. Watanabe's office. The double doors swung open to show Mr. Watanabe's small room. It always looked more like a principal's office than a manager's.

"Have a seat, son," Mr. Watanabe said jovially.

"Yes, sir," I responded.

"I understand you've been under quite a bit of stress lately. I know that it must be hard dealing with the workload of two people."

"It really is no trouble, sir."

"Now, now. There's no need to lie. It just makes sense that you'd be stressed out. It's no easy task and I'm not faulting you for it. The increase in workload and the death of a coworker would get to anyone; especially a coworker like Noboru."

This was the first time I had heard his name. For some strange reason, I was filled with rage. I grinded my teeth and breathed in deeply.

"If I could be honest with you, sir, I never knew Noboru. In fact, I'm just learning his name now."

"Well, that's no surprise."

Mr. Watanabe stood up from his chair and removed his glasses. He walked over to the foggy window that looked over the factory.

"How long have you worked at this job, son?"

"Sixteen years in July, sir."

Mr. Watanabe breathed deeply and paused for about seven seconds.

"Have you ever been out into the factory, son?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know what they do out there all day?"

I opened my mouth but stopped myself from saying anything. I realized that not once had I ever wondered what this factory was for. I didn't know why I measured stamps all day long.

"No, sir."

"Well then this will make my job much easier. Son, there's something you should know about this place: it's a trap. You work here, and soon you find you are losing all sense of self. Before you know it, you forget why you even wanted to work here in the first place. Once you forget everything, the only thing left to do is end it. Noboru was dead on arrival. He stood no chance, but you, son, you still have something left. Consider this a mercy."

"Sir," I said, horrified, "what are you talking about?"

"Son." Mr. Watanabe turned around. "You're fired."

I sat in silence, staring at Mr. Watanabe for a full minute. I stood up and left through the double doors. I walked past the assistant toward the elevator. I took six floors down.

I rode the train home. I had no newspaper to occupy my time. I looked down at my feet and I grinded my teeth as Noboru's name echoed between my ears. I heard a soft purring, and I looked up from my shoes to see the young girl across from me, holding a cat.

"Hello," said the young girl.

"Hello," I responded.

"I found this cat."

"Shouldn't you be in school?"

"I was sent home because my shoes were not to regulation. Shouldn't you be at work?"

"I was fired."

"Why?"

"I'm still not sure."

The girl stopped stroking her cat and a smile gleamed across her face.

"I know how to cheer you up," she said.

"How?"

"Follow me."

The young girl placed the cat at her feet and walked her red shoes toward me. She extended her hand, and I grabbed it. She pulled me up, my hips moved into hers, and we began to dance the blues. We danced in perfect unison, like gears moving together. We spun around like a cyclone. Her movements were hypnotic, like I could watch our dance from outside of my body. We moved in rhythm with the clacking of train against rail. In this moment, my mind was empty. We stopped and panted while holding each other closely. I was transfixed.

"Have you noticed how this train is always empty?" asked the young girl.

I looked up, seeing rows of empty seats.

“I haven’t,” I said. “I try to stick to my Sudoku puzzles.”

“Well,” started the young girl. “If you had stuck to your Sudoku today, you wouldn’t have met me.”

“Would that be good or bad?”

“It depends on how you see it, I guess.”

The emotion I felt was something different. I felt different, and I thought that was the sign I needed. I knew what I had to do.

“No matter how I see it, I needed this,” I said.

“Why?” asked the girl.

“Because I’ve been needing to tell you something. Something very important.”

“What?”

I pulled her closer and leaned into her ear. I whispered, “Don’t let me forget that I danced.”

The young girl pushed me away. She looked up into my eyes, her jaw hanging low. The train stopped and the motion caused us both to jerk to the left. She fell over, her right shoe broke, and she began to breathe heavily. As she got up, the door in front of her opened and she ran through. She left behind her broken shoe. I stared at the door and watched it close behind her. She ran with one shoe into a station that I’d never seen before. She’s gone.

The train was still empty, except for the cat the girl had left on the floor. The cat moved

like a black shadow toward the red heel. It sniffed the shoe and mewed gently. I bent over to pick up the broken shoe, but the train started up again. It jerked me forward and I fell headfirst onto the metal floor. My vision faded around me as the train moved.



Years from now

- D. S. Hooker -

Years from now
I imagine our pale
& pink dentures floating

in the same glass
while our wrinkly
blue & pale

bodies snap
& pop
like a new year.



Cotton Candy Bubbles // Wren Barger // Digital Photography

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER



Fire and Ice // Nicol M. Da Silva // Acrylic // 30” x 40”

Rhetoric

- Arienne Annati-

I wonder when
I learned to
dislike myself

Was it the first time
a boy
called me ugly
[age 7]
or
fat
[age 10]
or
laid a hand on me
with any intention
other than love
[age 14]

Or was it
the first time
I started to think
that maybe
they're right



Four Leaf Clover // Hannah Powers // Ceramics // 4" x 6" each

Fleas

- Kathryn Robenhymer -

As she stood on the center platform at Park St., Izzy was debating whether or not Angel really needed to go to the vet. Her eyes were still adjusting to the dim, fluorescent lighting while she stuffed Angel’s ESA registration back into her bag.

Angel probably didn’t have fleas. The five-year-old Maltese had never had fleas before, and Izzy wasn’t sure how she could have gotten them. She never forgot to apply Angel’s monthly dosage of Frontline. She had been out sick Monday and Tuesday with a stomach bug and they had missed their weekly doggie meetup at the Commons, so in the past couple of days, Angel had only gone outside to do her business. Nonetheless, Angel had been scratching herself non-stop, and once or twice Izzy was sure she had seen a speck, probably a small brown bug, leap up from Angel’s bed, remain suspended for a moment, then disappear. Better check, just in case.

She felt her phone buzz—maybe it was him, maybe not—but decided to let the unread message marinate. She didn’t like to bring Angel on the T, but it was too far and too cold of a walk in March. Angel was never a problem, but Izzy despised the attention she

drew from other passengers. Usually Izzy took preventative measures—she made sure to speak loudly while alerting the transit authorities of Angel’s certification, and she tucked the certificate halfway into the front pocket and left her purse angled just so the words *registered emotional support animal* were clearly visible.

Precautions wouldn’t have made a difference that day. It was just her and Angel in the station, a lull between the morning commuters and the lunch rush. She analyzed the advertisements posted on the wall of the opposite platform: before and after photos of people eating bright red strings of licorice dangling in front of their faces. She then stared for a while at the tiles below her feet. She wondered if anyone had noticed when exactly the grout had changed from white to taupe. She checked her phone:

How are you feeling
Better
I’m taking Angel to the vet
I think she has fleas
Good :)
Oh no how did she get fleas
I don’t know I’m not sure
she has them but I want to be safe
Better safe then sorry

But everything is ok?
Yes I’m fine
Glad your feeling better
Thanks

Lately, John had been making her anxious. She believed in setting personal goals, and he seemed too content with spending the rest of his life at entry level. It was always unsettling to hear him talk about his work experience: a couple years in the Peace Corps, a couple years canvassing, a couple years taking online courses. It all added up to an incoherent skill set.

Drinks tonight?
Maybe
Movie night?
If you clean your bathroom
Anything for you :p

Now he was selling solar panels and going out once a week to celebrate his coworkers’ promotions, or what Izzy called celebrating a high turnover rate. One that he never thought to take advantage of. But that wasn’t something he would care about. That didn’t used to bother her. She liked that easiness, craved to have it, actually. And she was fairly certain he cared about her. That’s what made this difficult. Maybe he just knew how to care.

Are you still
Late

Angel perked up and took a couple of steps toward the escalator, where a four-foot parka began to descend. Izzy assumed there was an old woman somewhere inside the waddling green puff, but it was hard to tell since the only visible human features were a protruding forehead and two gray eyes. When the eyes noticed the dog, they filled

with consternation. Izzy tutted, tugged the leash, and led the dog to a spot farther down the platform.

Still?
Yes
Are you going to get it checked
It checked? lol
I don’t know
Whatever you do

She wanted him to stop bringing it up, stop talking, and stop asking questions for her. She started pacing toward the escalator, remembered the parka, and turned around. She looked again at the licorice ad and thought about how she would hate to have her nose tickled that way. No one really smiles that way about licorice.

I’ll go with you
If you want

He thought it would be fine if she didn’t feel alone. But he didn’t know what it was like to want to see red coming out of his own body. To really want to bleed because bleeding is normal. She didn’t need him. She didn’t want him. She just wanted to bleed.

As the train pulled into the station, she saw the little brown bug emerge out of Angel’s white coat. It leaped onto the tile floor. She watched it for a moment, then stepped onto the train.

Don’t worry
It’ll be fine.

Jailhead

- Alexandria Machado -

They say heat rises: Dances.
Bare feet slap split wood—
where dirt hides.

Glaucoma-glazed eyes
I watched her creep down hallways,
casting suicide nets.

Explosions of vessels in fingers,
identity swivels—
the tango commences.

Fracas spins and dips my
five senses morph to raw limbs—
Inertia steps in,

kindly taking my hand to
eat. Filth and bone digest
humanity. Still moving?

Retrofitted in cranial confusion,
lies I tell myself in convincing salutations, like:
Good Morning, lonely.

Disgorge the Sunday acrimony
of years building this bridge
to saunter, swiftly—

Suddenly, you're back in Mother's kitchen
fighting for the coffee cake or mescaline
or last word.

Then the ladder gives
way to cool—
rose specks.



Indecision // Kristine Solgard // Acrylic // 26" x 30"





Imperfectly Perfect // Carly Goldin // Acrylic // 16" x 20"

Advice to a Struggling Artist

- Rachel-Beth Gagnon -

People want things complicated
 so make them simple:
 you can't paint with all the colors of the wind
 because Crayola only makes 86.
 but you can sketch a unicorn with the plastic ring of a Pepsi six-pack twisted around its broken
 horn while it bleeds oil onto 86 uniquely colored flowers,
 and people will say
 it's art.
 draw a girl in a bathtub slitting her wrists with a Discover card and they'll shake their heads
 and say *so true*
 just make sure the cuts are horizontal and you hide her nipples behind the edge of the shower
 curtain,
 model her after the girl at Starbucks that always spells your name with an unnecessary a,
 I think her name's Aashaely and she wants to be a hairdresser or something—
 I was just trying to math out if I got double-charged for that bagel when she told me.

Anyways.

It's all about taking an easy belief and covering the naughty bits and putting it in a frame or a
 glass box, where it's at a distance,
 where half the room sips merlot and judges the half drinking moscato but
 everyone is thanking god that they're looking at something they can get,
 that someone else believes what they believe,
 that they can wear a *save the turtles* t-shirt and still use plastic bags because those reusables are
 so gosh-darn-easy-to-forget,
 and there was that one time they brought a Market Basket bag to Stop & Shop and the cashier
 gave them this look
 and besides, Paul DownTheStreet does the same thing and he wears a Reuse Recycle Repeat
 hoodie,
 it's now safely wrapped in a frame
 where other people can get it
 and Martha WithTheBMW can stop lording it over them that her daughter went to Yale and
 got a job right away while theirs works 50 hours a week at Papa John's
 shut the fuck up Martha we all know she took out a 6,000 dollar loan
 to buy that boob job and it was a better investment than the 120k tuition.

Make it simple
 so that maybe even Martha and Paul can look at the art,
 and take their fears and add them into the frame,
 where someone else can get them,
 and be afraid,
 and do nothing.



Above and Below // Joe Near // Digital Photography

Inheritance

- D. S. Hooker -

Pepe's clothespins hang
from his workbench. Pine
pieces pinning

his work flannel
to the tool board, holding
his absence in place.

I hold his clothespin—pine
he sanded smooth,
trace the shape he shaped
from a dowel

& remember once slingshotting
a similar pin
into the air like sawdust
& stumbling

to catch it.

Pepe took a drag, cracked his brow
watching the clothesline ricochet
as the pine pin passed
my kid fingers
onto the concrete walk,
splitting in two
& pinning me a talking to.

I grab another pin. Rough
in its shape,
I can feel its grain & burrs.
I begin to sand
it smooth. Dust ricochets
into the air, past
my fingers
& onto my work flannel.

I hadn't thought how a groove
came to be in a piece of pine,
never wondered why grime
didn't cover the pins,
only told I was *lucky*
there's enough to break!

Yard Sale

- Katherine Nazzaro -

Take any book for a dime,
pages yellowed,
 lines highlighted
—or take the whole box for five dollars.

Over there is the armchair I was given
the first day I moved in.
 The floral pattern matches nothing,
but it's comfortable.
15 bucks and it's yours.

There's glassware on the table
that I never knew I owned,
but I dug it out of the cabinets, regardless.
I'll give you any of them for 99 cents.

This is all the stuff I don't want,
 stuff I should get rid of.
There's too much anyway.

The Playmobil set I used
as a kid,
the broken jewelry that used
to mean something,
scratched CDs no one can play anymore,
the heart I can barely stand to look at,
an out-of-date mixer, and
about a million stuffed animals.

One day only.

Everything must go.

XV

Contributors' Notes

ARIENNE ANNATI // *Rhetoric*

Arienne Annati is a psychology major at Bridgewater State University. The cultural and societal pressures that women are subjected to inspire the majority of her artistic works, as well as her career path. She hopes to one day work with women who have suffered from domestic abuse.

VALERIE ANSELME // *Faces of Haiti, ORIGINS*

Valerie Anselme is currently a senior studying photography and graphic design. Anselme is working towards becoming an art director for an ad agency while creating her own artwork. She was once a pre-med major, but switched to art after seeing how her work impacted people. She hopes to continue to inspire people positively through her art.

WREN BARGER // *Cotton Candy Bubbles, Dancer*

Wren Barger is an art major at Bridgewater State University with a concentration in photography. Photography to her is a beautiful photo in real time, taking a moment and holding it still for a lifetime. The little moments in life are the best ones and capturing them is what she loves to do. Her first time with a camera was at camp at 9 years old, and she never wanted to put it down since. One of her goals is to start a photography program for special needs children. She has worked with special needs children since she was in the fifth grade, and thinks it will be amazing when her two passions come together.

JULIE BARROWS // *Tree of Life*

Julie Barrows is a lifetime student who dove head first into the field of art and eventually hopes to encourage future elementary students to do the same.

ELIZABETH BRADY // *Solar, Recovery, Alive*

Elizabeth Brady is a sophomore English major at Bridgewater State University. In the future, she plans on doing whatever feels correct at the time.

SANTIAGO CHAVES // *Dressed in Lights, Nova, Timeless*

Santiago is a senior at Bridgewater State University majoring in art with concentrations in graphic design and photography. His future endeavors are to use his skills and creativity in the arts to make a positive impact in the world.

SAMANTHA COLE-REARDON // *Broken Knuckles*

Samantha Cole-Reardon is a senior psychology major who has always loved creative writing of all kinds, but has special place in her heart for poetry. She plans on pursuing a master's degree in higher education and student affairs in the fall, and she's only slightly panicked.

JULIA CONSTANTINE // *Wildflowers*

Julia Constantine has a strong passion for singing and creative writing, and is looking forward to her next three years on campus. She is hoping to follow a career in forensic psychology or possibly a job with the FBI. She also loves photography.

ERIN CREGG // *Tastes Like Mint*

Erin Cregg is currently a junior graphic design student at Bridgewater State University, and hopes to continue her work in design following her graduation in the spring of 2019. She continues to pursue her love for illustration and writing alongside the work for her major, and would love to publish her own graphic novel one day. When she's not doing homework or working, you can probably find her petting her dog and drawing cartoons.

SAMANTHA CUSHMAN // *Self-Portrait*

Samantha Cushman is a fine arts and secondary education double major. She concentrates in printmaking and hopes to one day be a high school art teacher.

NICOL M. DA SILVA // *Carnival, Fire and Ice*

Nicol Da Silva is double majoring in art and social work. She wants to use art as therapy to help children heal when she starts working in her field.

JEFFREY S. DAVIDSON // *A Queen For Summer Love*

Jeff Davidson is a M.A. candidate in English, slated to graduate in December of 2018. Creatively, he focuses on transforming the mundane into the surreal, on turning the everyday into days to remember. The mind's vision should challenge the fingers to tap out new perspectives for the world to see.

CRAIG DEMELO // *Chaos +/-, Heart Surgery*

Craig DeMelo is an English teacher by day and a musician by night. He has recorded several albums and played shows all around southern New England for almost 20 years. When he's not shaping young minds or serenading at local bars, clubs, and restaurants, the 35-year-old enjoys writing and he recently completed a novel which he is set to publish in 2018. He has put together a poetry collection he hopes to release as well. His poems are from that collection, which is titled *Finding the Bones*.

PIERRE DUMOULIN-MINGUET // *The Better Bean, Skull*

Pierre Dumoulin-Minguet was born in France and came to America when he was 19 to go to college. He is a psychology major and aims to become a therapist, but he has always had a passion for drawing.

DOMINIQUE DURDEN // *Don't Call Him Dead, On the Walk Home*

Dominique Durden is a 20-year-old psychology major with a double minor in Middle East studies and music. She has been writing poetry since she was 14 years old, and has also written for both *Step Up Magazine* and *Affinity Magazine*. She is the sitting Vice President for Seeds of the Poet-Tree and Piece for Peace for the 2017-2018 academic year. Dominique plans to have a career in the mental health field and open a group home for underprivileged youth, focusing on the arts as medication.

CZARR D. FREEMAN III // *Beads by Trokon*

Czarr D. Freeman is a sixth year philosophy major. He was born in Cambridge, MA, but raised in Brockton, where he still lives. Philosophy had always interested him and he knew that he wanted to study it in school. As a hobbyist and a creator, Czarr has found a great mode of expression through beading since he started over five years ago. Recently, Czarr started selling his unique works under the brand ‘Beads|ByTrokon,’ the motivation for which being simply to share a truly special and unique form of expression with as many people as possible.

MARCUS FRISBIE // *The Message and the Fall*

Marcus is a sophomore majoring in communications. He hopes to be at least 21 after college. Marcus spends his spare time writing the warnings at the bottom of the screen in pill adverts, and he is also in a committed, one-sided relationship with whoever runs the Arby’s Facebook page.

RACHEL-BETH GAGNON // *Advice to a Struggling Artist*

Rachel-Beth Gagnon graduated from Bridgewater State University in the spring of 2017 with a M.A. in English. Her goal is to pursue a career in technical writing.

CARLY GOLDIN // *Imperfectly Perfect*

Carly Goldin’s focus this year was on abstract work. As she had never painted abstractly, this piece pushed her out of her comfort zone and took her on an adventure. She is a fine arts major with a painting concentration and she has always thought of herself as a "realistic detail work" kind of girl. She looks forward to delving further into the abstract world of art.

D.S. HOOKER // *Inheritance, Over the Sink, Years from now,*

David S. Hooker is a cursive writer, poet, baker, cinephile, and critic from Fall River, Massachusetts. He holds a B.A. in writing from Bridgewater State University as well as an associate’s in film studies from Bristol Community College. He has studied under poets Megan Falley, James Bobrick, and John Mulrooney. David's work has appeared in various online and print publications including the *Prevailing Wind*, *The Observer*, *Steal Company Paper Write Poems*, *Swansea Public Library Annual Poetry Slam*, the *Undergraduate Review*, and *The Bridge*, volume 14, where his poem “Grandpa Jim” was awarded "Best Overall Piece."

ANDY LAVERTY // *Galactic, Metropolis*

Andy Laverty received his B.A. from Bridgewater State University in 2013 with a concentration in graphic design, and went on to get his M.F.A. in printmaking from UMass Dartmouth. He worked as an editor on *The Bridge* volume 10. His instagram is: @namebrandcloth.

RENEE LEBEAU // *Sugared Toast*

Catherine Renee LeBeau, better known as Renee, is a senior majoring in English. She is also minoring in Middle East studies. Her interests include reading, singing poorly, writing poetry, talking to her cats, and complaining about colonialism. She is a member of the Middle Eastern Dance troupe, Alwan. Ideally, she'd like to spend her future travelling and writing poems.

DEBRA MAREK // *Under My Skin*

Debra graduated summa cum laude from Bridgewater State University in 2004, with departmental and Commonwealth Honors. She completed a one year intensive post-baccalaureate at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tuft’s University and earned her M.F.A. at Lesley University. She has taught studio art at Bridgewater State University since 2008.

HEATHER MCKENNA // *Silent Train*

Heather is a sophomore majoring in social work. She likes writing short stories and hopes to work in gerontology or clinical social work after college.

PICABO MISKIV // *I'm Trying, Mother and Daughter*

Picabo Miskiv is a junior at Bridgewater State University. She is a geography major with a minor in both geographic information systems and writing. In the future, she plans on pursuing a job in environmental journalism.

KATHERINE NAZZARO // *Apathy, the NORMANDIE Ocean Liner, Yard Sale*

Katherine is a recent graduate from Bridgewater State University. She has poems published in four editions of *The Bridge*, as well as *The Comstock Review*, and *Massachusetts’ Best Emerging Poets*. She plans on working towards an M.F.A. in poetry.

VALERIE NUNZIATO // *Community, Floral Waltz, Hand Study*

Valerie Nunziato is a third year art education major. She hopes to become a high school art teacher after graduation so that she can pass along the knowledge and skills that she has acquired from her education to the new generations of artists.

NANCY POPE // *90s, Harmony, Purple Fuck*

Nancy Pope is a fine arts major with a concentration in painting, as well as a special education major. In a perfect world, after college she would become an accomplished painter and be able to teach on the side, but really it is the other way around. She can foresee doing art therapy with children in her future to have the best of both worlds.

HANNAH POWERS // *Four Leaf Clover*

Hannah Powers is a senior majoring in art with concentrations in crafts and graphic design, and minoring in management. One day, she hopes to open her own ceramics business and studio. She loves Bridgewater State University but can't wait to graduate.

KATHRYN ROBENHYMER // *Hydrangea Wallpaper, Without you on Pier 5, Fleas*

Kathryn Robenhymer is an English M.A. student. Kathryn graduated with her B.A. in English and American literature from The Catholic University of America in 2015 before teaching abroad for a year in Spain. After graduating, she plans to pursue a career in professional writing.

TARYN SHIPP // *Mandala Pendant, Teardrop Pendant*

Taryn Shipp is a senior art major with a crafts concentration, specifically metals and ceramics. After graduation she plans to pursue a career in jewelry design as well as pottery work. Originally just a metals major, she found a previously unknown passion for ceramics in her senior year at Bridgewater State University. Her metal work as well as her ceramics include fine line work that draw from floral or mandala-like patterns.

KRISTINE SOLGARD // *Anachronism, Decision, Indecision*

As a graduate of Bridgewater State College in 1993, Kristine majored in fine arts with a concentration in acrylic painting. She enjoys painting in all mediums, and also pen and ink drawing where she can focus on details.

KAYLA MARIE SPAGNA // *Bones, My Father's Sweatshirt, The Shadows*

Kayla Spagna just completed her Master of Arts in English. She recently accepted a full-time position with a dog walking/training company where she will be working with the dogs and taking over administration responsibilities. This wonderful opportunity will allow Kayla to follow her dream of writing children's and young adult literature.

EMMA STRATTON // *The Temporary States of Everything, The Temporary State of Lollipops*

Emma Stratton is a senior art student concentrating in both photography and graphic design. She is interested in creating a method of communication through art that gives one insight into the life of another in a way that may be more easily interpreted, to aid in the relief of cruel judgement. Graduating in May of 2018, Stratton plans to continue to pursue this idea of softening the communicative blow of judgment using graphic design by day, and fine art photography by night.

CARLEY M. TAYLOR // *It Didn't Matter Why*

Carley Taylor is a graduate student in Bridgewater State University's M.A. program and currently works as a graduate assistant for the Office of Women and Gender Studies. She mainly functions as the copy editor for the *Journal of International Women's Studies*, which has been a very inspirational and unique experience. Carley has been a long-time fiction writer and dreams of becoming a famous author. She would love to work for a publishing company some day.

ANTOINE TROMBINO-APONTE // *The Daily Grind*

Antoine Trombino-Aponte is an English major with a concentration in writing and a minor in history, with the hopes of eventually studying historical linguistics. For now, Antoine cultivates his interests in general bardic pursuits as a practicing writer and musician.

RYAN WENTZELL // *The Monarch*

Ryan Wentzell majors in English with a concentration in writing at Bridgewater State University. His goal is to become a published writer. He currently lives in Mansfield, MA, where much of his inspiration comes from.

Editors’ Notes

JILL BOGER // Graduate Assistant

Jill Boger has, after working on *The Bridge* since volume 12, developed superpowers: she can tell the difference between an en-dash and em-dash from a distance of 100 yards, and she can hear comma splices in spoken English. She can also read the thoughts of most birds but has never disclosed their secrets. She cries when she sees orioles in their natural habitat.

SYDNEY CABRAL // Editor, Promotional Manager

Sydney is a senior studying English and public relations. She hopes to have a career in Student Affairs after she graduates. She is an RA, the Vice President of Retention for Program Council, and she has a cat named Cabbage who shoves himself under blankets when he’s cold (it’s really cute)!

JAKE CAMARA // Editor, Photo Editor

Jake is a communications major with a double-minor in management and public relations. He’s also a graphic designer and the Program Director for 91.5 WBIM-FM and almost knows what any of the above words actually mean. He wishes to either become a writer, film producer, or a firefighter. Whichever is easiest.

MIALISE CARNEY // Editor-in-Chief

Mialise Carney is a junior English major who plans to figure her life out after graduate school. In her spare time, she enjoys complaining about the weather, forgetting the names of her favorite authors, and changing her mind every 30 seconds. She was an editor on volume 14 of *The Bridge*.

CHRISTINA CARTER // Editor

Christina Carter is a sophomore English major who wants to pursue her master’s degree in English and then become an editor. She is reserved, but really loves to talk once you get her going! She also loves to edit (see her if you need a peer editor), play video games, and go on outdoor adventures.

JIMMY DARDANO // Adorable Dog, Mascot

Originally hailing from Puerto Rico, Jimmy made his way to the mainland United States in May of 2017—when he was rescued by faculty advisor Evan Dardano. He’s settled into his new life and has demonstrated a love for treats, chewing on hats, and sleeping. Photos of him provided the editors with much joy and peace of mind on long workdays, making him an indispensable part of the team.

CARE DESOUZA // Editor

Care is a senior at Bridgewater State University. Currently double majoring in English and communications. She runs on Dunkin', literally, and firmly believes that all dogs do go to heaven.

ALEX EVERETTE // Managing Editor

Alex is a senior studying English at Bridgewater State, where he participates in various writing and reading focused clubs and groups, along with his fraternity, Phi Pi Delta. He has published poems in several places, including *Into The Void Magazine*.

GABRIEL HAZELDINE // Editor

Gabriel Hazeldine is an invisible and persistent draft writer. When he’s not staying up late contemplating if any of the drafts he's worked on the past week is worth being shared with anyone other than his inner critic, he’s daydreaming and brainstorming scenes, characters, plots, sequences, and prose architecture for the next draft. When he isn’t in a self-deprecating creative nirvana, he’s comparing his unseen work, critically reading the literature of others, and entertaining the exaggerated reactions and personal criticisms he may one day receive from readers of his fiction pieces, if he ever overcomes the dread of uncertainty.

KARINA LAGSTROM // Editor

Karina is a senior studying English with a concentration in writing. She enjoys writing poetry and lyrics, singing, recording original music, listening to rock and roll and hanging with her two black cats who keep her feeling consistently at maximum level of witchiness.

ALEXANDRIA MACHADO // Editor

Alexandria is a junior English major with a minor in sustainability. She seeks to one day combine her passion for writing and the environment. When not at school, she enjoys making cocktails, practicing yoga and obsessively pricing flights around the world.

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Emily Melo-Coppinger is a junior English major with a minor in Portuguese. In her free time she enjoys procrastinating, sleeping, and drinking coffee.

KATIE MCPHERSON // Editor, Photographer

Katie McPherson is a senior at Bridgewater State University, double-majoring in English and secondary education. This is her first year as an editor for *The Bridge*. She enjoys photography, poetry, and animals. Especially dogs!

JOE NEAR // Editor, Official Shawn Mendes Fan Boy

Joe is a junior English major who plans on one day being an airline pilot for United Airlines. In his spare time he enjoys flying, cars, and wearing rainbow suspenders.

CADY PARKER // *Lead Designer*

Cady Parker is a junior elementary education and art major who hopes to work as a second grade teacher after graduating. She loves graphic design, music, and pictures of pups.

HARRISON RYAN // *Editor, Time Lord*

Harrison is a junior studying English and political science, and this is his first time working on *The Bridge*. He is an RA at Durgin Hall and enjoys taking his residents to the gym.

SORAYA SANTOS // *Editor*

Soraya is a senior at Bridgewater State University studying English. Her passion for literature and community service has lead her to pursue a career in education. Upon graduating, Soraya will be teaching high school ELA in South Louisiana where she will pursue her mission in education equity, all while sharing her love for reading and writing with future students.

TREINA SANTOS // *Editor, Art Guru*

Treina Santos is a first-year editor for *The Bridge* and currently working on their undergraduate degrees in anthropology and art history at Bridgewater State University. Treina spends most of their spare time visiting art galleries and museums, working on embroidery and photography projects, and collaborating with friends on their podcast. Treina is a self-identified "art aficionado", breakfast enthusiast, and book nerd.

JOHN WILSON // *Editor, Light Diffuser*

John Wilson is a junior majoring in English and minoring in art history. Originally a math major, John has counted all of the numbers. In fact, he counted most of the numbers in the form of birthdays he had in the first three months of 2018. He hopes to either edit novels or edit for journals. John has a cat and wants a lobster. He also has a garden and uses coffee grinds instead of soil.

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