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Bridgewater State University


THE
BRIDGE
Vol. 16

THE BRIDGE

A Journal of Fine Arts and Literature

Volume 16

Dedicated, in solidarity, to
Bridgewater State University's

FACULTY

and

LIBRARIANS

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Mission Statement:
The Bridge is managed and produced by students of Bridgewater State University. Our charge is to serve, as we are dedicated to showcasing the artistic talents of Bridgewater State University's student body while providing editorial and graphic design experience to our team. 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.

Volume 16 of *The Bridge* was designed using the Adobe Creative Suite. It is set in Cresta and Georgia.

Cover Design: John Davey © 2019

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

There is a tendency to find life even in the most unwelcoming places, to find creativity among the natural world even when it feels as if it's slipping away.

Throughout the creation of Volume 16 of *The Bridge*, we worked to try to find the intersection between the abstract and the concrete—to pair together the comforting messiness of the natural world, with oceans, and dirt, and forest, and a minimalistic kind of cleanliness, with stark lines, geometry, peace in order. We struggled with these two concepts in both design as well as in content. How could we dedicate a journal to order, without also including the reality of mess?

What lies before you is an answer to that question—the realization that life and art can be both: earthy and comforting, while also having a dedication to order and the contemporary design influences and values of geometry. The cover of this journal was inspired by the convergence between these two places; straight dark lines look almost like telephone wires, piercing through soft clouds or mountains. Perhaps they are a bridge that crosses between two worlds, to create a reality where even the most drastic differences can agree.

While we tried to determine where abstraction and order worked together in our own little bubble, the world around us seemed to have already figured it out. We discussed color palettes, unable to decide what best suited our content and vision. Eventually we found it: The Pantone Color of the Year, Living Coral, the bright pink you see on the cover. Living Coral drew together the themes emerging in the art and literature we received: it's striking but soft, almost unnatural, yet its origins trace back to a part of the natural world where we find comfort and humanity. Living Coral complements the natural blues, browns, oranges, and greens, spinning the harsh white pages into a gently tangled mess of color. Continuous lines run throughout the entire journal, connecting, breaking apart, changing color but always continuing forward.

We would like to thank Bridgewater State University's students and alumni for having the courage to submit their work to our journal for publication; we are glad to have the privilege of presenting your creativity in these pages. We would like to personally thank our faculty advisor Evan Dardano for his dedication, wise experience, and kind guidance during our often far too adventurous endeavors. We would also like to thank our graduate assistant Jill Boger for her editorial advice, eye for unique design, and grammatical expertise in helping us accurately fulfil our vision, and our design consultant Cady Parker for her patience in teaching us all things art and the precision of her advice.

Lastly, we would like to thank you, the reader, for being a part of this experience. For choosing to open this journal and engage with the creative works that our students have offered. We hope this journal accurately and diversely represents Bridgewater State's students and alumni while also challenging the expectations of what art and literature is or should be.

Sincerely,
The Editors of Volume 16

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XVI

Crash

Julia Gazzara | Oil Paint | 20 x 20”

SOMEONE DOMESTICATED FIRE

Kathryn Robenhymer

Wary it would wane away
wanting and more likely
needing the light to stay
lit to warm, eat, pray, see
Of boredom, desperation,
or selflessness, hindered
to preserve the flame
thought to keep it fed
Craved to watch the day sky
arrive and linger long so
he wouldn't have to wait and lie
leaving what he tends unseen

You're a sun curser and unlike him
prefer the night, cold and dim

Dragon

Jessica Andre | Papier-Mache | 20 x 9 x 22”

LEVIN AT NIGHT

Kathryn Robenhymer

Returned, resigned but fortified to find
impediments I bear, bear not on soil
or livestock, I continue toiling

But late and when alone
my mind teeters
between lucidity and dark
winter has not known
the cold which inflicts
me in the quiet
how many times I had imagined
you turning over in our bed
to lay your hand delicately
on my chest and in your slumber
hold dear to the linen between
our skin
your face, the face I see
a thousand times which seems
to have known me through
the thousand moments that
make a man in rotation
on the ceiling
above me
or in my mind's eye
like a child's mobile
for the child we will never have
in this house that will never be
your home, I'm most aware
you have given yourself to another

Icy Waters

Wren Barger | Digital Photography

Court of Owls

Jessica Andre | Papier-Mache and Feather | 11 x 10 x 13”

Nature's Work

Leonarda Vieira | Ceramics | 4 x 6”

SPIDER WEBS

David B. Orten

There was a time before all of this, I am sure of it.

A time when the reds were red, and the blues were blue. A time of vibrancy, before everything drowned in hues of gray. There was a time when your smile warmed the air around you, a time before I wanted to punch your teeth in.

There was a time when you held me, a tiny, wide-eyed baby, vulnerable yet attentive in your soft, loving arms. I don't remember the way the sun glowed off of your beautiful blonde hair, but I am sure that it must have. I don't recall the soft kisses you left on my forehead but I am sure they, too, were there. If I try hard enough I can almost feel their warmth on my face, slowly burning away into the ether.

Walking up the stairs of your house, I remember when I was only a child, running up the same steps after school with boyish anticipation, eager to show you all the work I had done during that school day. I don't remember your reaction to my proud work, but I am sure that it must have been one of adoration and smiles, the kind of thing you see in the movies. Perhaps you remember, Mom?

The house is nothing like I remember. The liveliness, the warmth, the distinct air of belonging that hallmarks one's home has vanished, stolen from my childhood home by time and the unfair decay of innocence—much like you were. The walls, once blue and beautiful, covered from floor to ceiling with Power Rangers posters, must have been painted over years ago; their now-gray surface peels and cracks in random places. I can almost see the blue behind them, can almost identify where pictures had hung and poorly-drawn stick figures were scrawled, where a part of my almost happy childhood was spent.

I try to let these images fade from my mind like passing thunder clouds, think to myself that somewhere behind all that gray is a vibrant, blue sky full of all that hope and life that I remember.

I should tell you now that despite it all, I still love you. I know that you tried—that, in your own twisted way, you are still trying. So I do love you.

At first, I don't think too much about the overflowing bathtub I see as I walk through the bathroom. Perhaps one of the kids turned it on while playing—surely, you would not have forgotten about it.

The water trickles through cracks in the floor, finding rotted pits between the tiles to take refuge in. Over time it will further the home's decay, rot it from the inside out, make it crumble on top its aging foundations. Looking into the overfilled tub, I see myself reflected in the irregular rippling of the bathwater.

I recognize the reflection at first, but with each tiny wave I see my face changing, skin

smoothening and cheeks filling until I am a smiling child—the almost happy child. And for a brief, fleeting moment, a moment I grab at with desperate hands to hold on to, I feel the happiness that must've been there. And I think of all the instances in which I must have spilled or splashed or sprayed water onto this very floor during my childhood games. In his haste to shoot a sibling with a squirt gun or drown tiny army men in his bathtub, young David forgot to consider the great the toll his actions would have on this place.

Am I to blame for the state of this house? Was it my childhood and the water that I threw to the ground to blame for its rot?

But then time ripples through the water again and my face is twenty years old, transported back at the whim of a wave.

As I walk through another room, the one that was once mine, I close my eyes and try to remember what it once looked like: bright, warm, new carpet soft beneath my feet. I see myself running around, a young blond toddler with missing front teeth and a wide, wild smile. He shakes with excitement, baby fat jiggling in each bulging cheek as he looks for a place to hide—he knows that his mother doesn't take long to count to twenty, even if he can't quite count yet, and she will soon be looking for him.

"Hide and seek," I whisper to myself.

As the Toddler searches for a haven, another David—several years older—enters the room. Not yet a teenager but no longer a baby, his front teeth have grown in and his blond hair is gone, replaced by a more mature brown. A smile is still on his face and the liveliness that permeated through the house still manifests in him. He has a movie camera in his hands—a gift from his mother, who looks on lovingly from the next room.

"The day I made my first movie," I whisper.

The two younger Davids move around the room, living their daily lives like images playing from a faded VHS tape set to fast-forward. They drift around and through me like ghosts.

And I realize that they are ghosts.

Each time I see them pass I try to feel their happiness. *Was it really there?*

I try to pull their warmth through time and decay and into the present, where I can perhaps absorb and feel it once more.

But it is of no use. That life, hot to the touch, slips through my fingertips like morning mist.

And then another David enters the room. He is older, in his late teens. The smile is gone and though I sense some warmth of life within him, I see it hemorrhaging, bleeding away into the spider-web cracked floor and chipped walls, swallowed hungrily by the dying home.

I—no, the Teenage Me—holds his disheveled hair in trembling hands and looks around. Something is wrong.

The ghost of Baby David shrieks with laughter behind me. His mother has found him and is tickling his husky belly with youthful vigor. Her smile catches me off guard and I almost forget about the Teen.

He is pacing around the room, his lips spitting silent words.

"What is it?" I think to myself.

The Teenager stops pacing and drops his hands to his sides. For the first time I see his eyes. I think—I know—I see tears in them. He rubs them dry with his forearm, refusing to let tears fall from his face. The Teen turns his head to the open doorway and raises clenched fists.

To my side, the Child raises his eyes from the camera, awestruck. He puts it down and opens his arms. His mother, years older now but still vibrant, meets his embrace.

I look ahead and see a woman approaching the Teenager. For thirty-nine years old my mother looks ancient. Dark bags hang from her hollowed eyes. Thick wrinkles run across her thin face and arms like misshapen spider-webs. *Is this really you, Mother?*

She drops a half-empty beer can to the floor and turns to the man approaching from behind her. The Teenager doesn't know the man's name.

I still don't know your fucking name.

The Baby wipes tears of laughter from his eyes. His mother, young and full of life, ceases her tickling onslaught. She looks at him for a moment, her face bright and responsive, and mouths the word "boop" as she pokes his nose. The baby shrieks with high-pitched laughter.

The Teen lunges forward, propelled by the unfamiliar hormones pulsing through his blood. He screams expletives through gritted teeth. The man behind his mother screams back, veins bulging out beneath yellow waxen skin.

Beside me, the Child picks up his camera and looks, dumbfounded, at his mother. She laughs and embraces him. She is still beautiful.

The Teenager reaches for the man, but my mother stops him. She looks at the Teen—*at me*—for a moment with disgust. Or is it confusion? Do you recognize me?

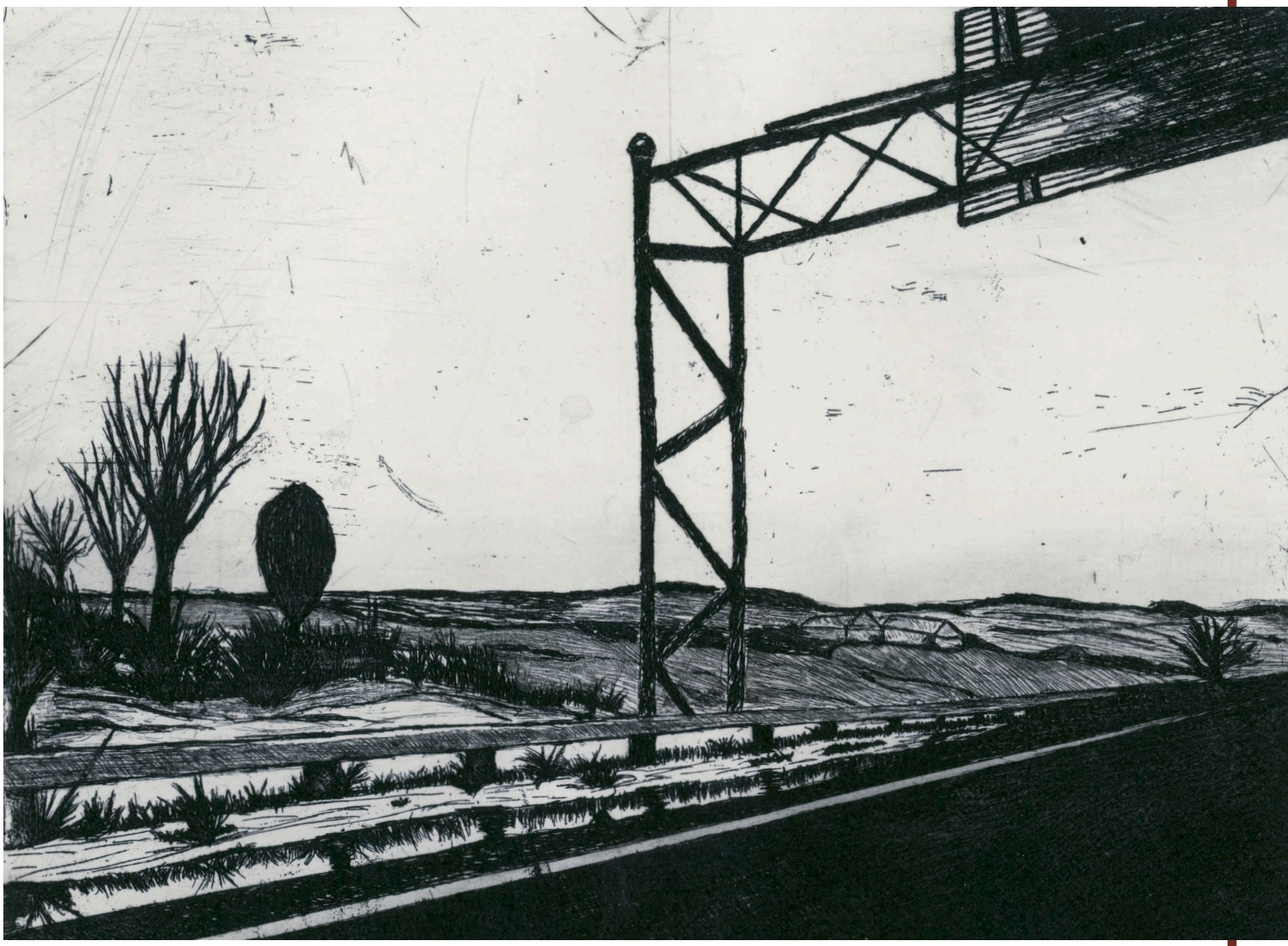
She raises a shaking finger and points to the door behind me. The Teen stares at his mother, puzzled. He whispers something.
I know what happens next.

Her brow furrows as she screams, liquor-stenched spit spewing from her cracked lips. Her finger shakes as she motions again to the door. The Teenager shakes his head. She raises her hand high into the air, obscuring light from the room's only bulb. It casts a shadow across her son's face. Her hand blurs in a downward rush.

I open my eyes. The room is still dark. Long shadows stretch across the tattered carpet in the fading daylight. Soon the sun will set and the room will be left silent in the night.

I shake my head in disbelief.

I'm really home again.

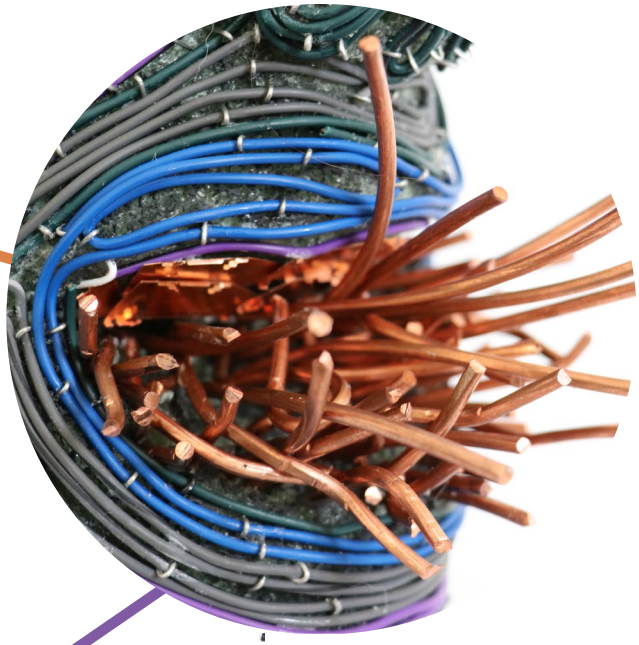


Highway

Simge Tunali | Intaglio Print | 12 x 14”

Wire Man

Hannah Gluchacki | Styrofoam, Wires, and Copper | 10 x 12”




NO
TRESPASSING

A Past Life

Wren Barger | Digital Photography

Flight

Julia Gazzara | Oil Paint | 24 x 24”

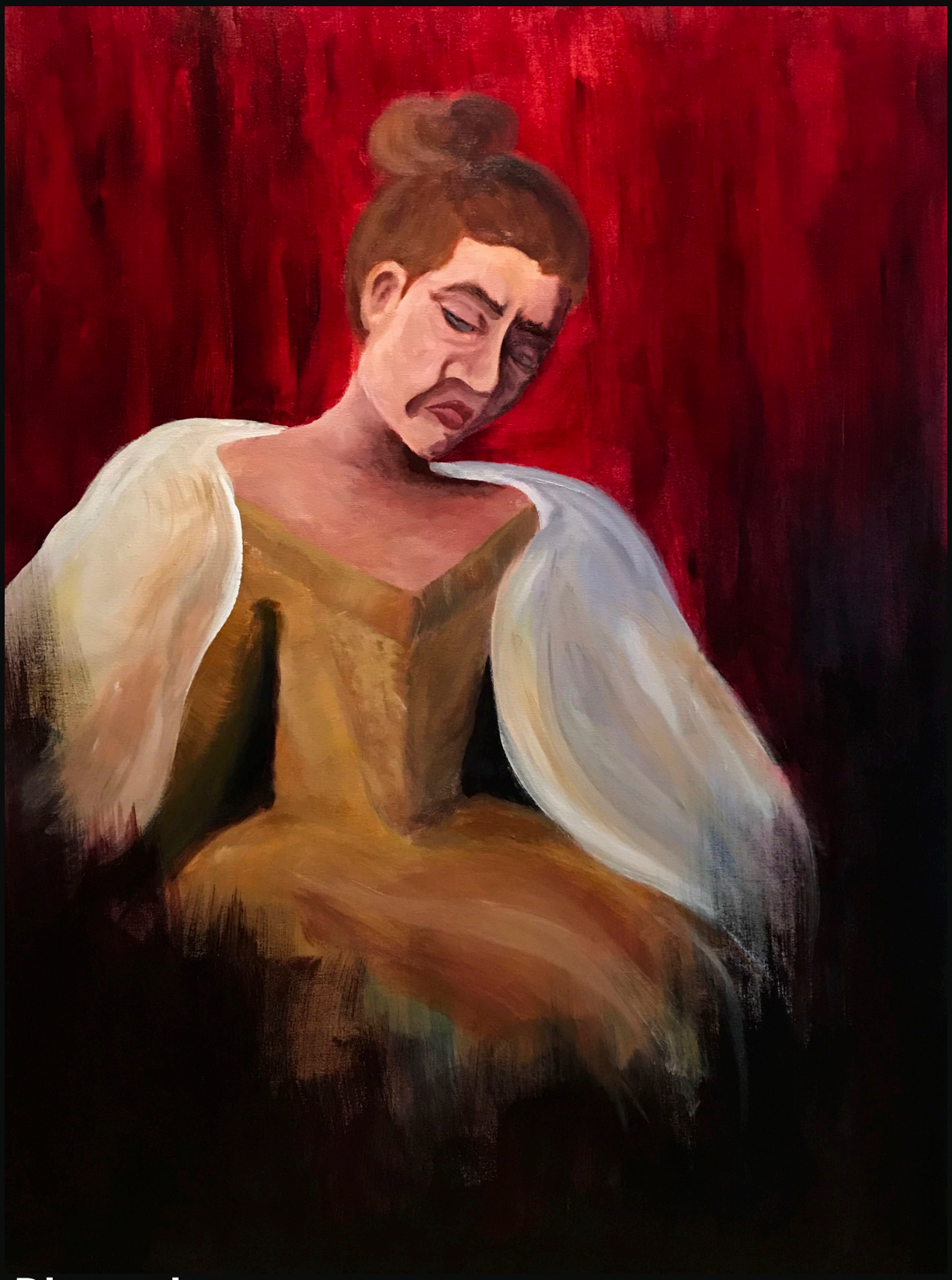
PATERNITY

Elizabeth Brady

my last name is brady.
it roughly translates to
spirited,
though my father says it's closer to
cunning.
it all makes sense, after all,
i come from a long line of
tricksters and
earth shakers.
but somehow i can't
seem to
shake the ghost
of a thousand ancestors,
a boundless line stretching
into a past
that i am meant to
uphold.

but i am destined to
surrender the name,
break the chain,
sacrifice a sliver of my identity
and embrace an unfamiliar one.
i am destined to
conceive and bear a child
whose name will not resemble my own.

my heart is already broken.
so is my claddagh ring.



Disappointment Nicole M. Seeley | Acrylic | 30 x 40”

YOU AND I

Shay Duchaine

We're the same, you and i.
We've both been left behind
in places that we were never
expecting to end up.

We're the same, you and i.
Your heart is as fragile as glass,
so easy to shatter,
and my skin is like fabric,
tearing under all kinds of weather.

We're the same, you and i.
Outfitted in tattered rags,
dresses carefully hand-picked and
ribbons tied with utmost care by
little fumbling fingers,
an attempt in preservation by the
ones who abandon us in the cold—
a displacement of accountability.

Maybe we're different, you and i.
You find sorrow in loneliness
due to lack of companionship,
and i am sorrowful because
companionship feels so close to
loneliness.

In the end we're the same, you and i.
We've both been left behind
in places that we were
never expecting
to end up.

Not My Monkey

Katie Sheehan | Ballpoint Pen | 14 x 17”

Distorted Flowers

Heather McGeever | Digital Photography

TEETH

Elizabeth Brady

i wake up at 3:43 am,
dragged out of slumber by fear.
my teeth are going to
develop cavities and fall out
right now.
i will never fall asleep unless i brush them
i will only feel better if i brush them
i will get up and brush them
and so i slide out of bed
and grapple with my doorknob in the dark.
the fluorescent bathroom lights are still on,
a premature awakening for tired eyes.
i avert stares from the mirror as
i smear white paste onto my brush.
the mint makes my mouth taste
foreign and sharp and not mine.
i spit.
i shut off the lights.
i go back to bed and never fall asleep because
i don't feel better.
i feel defeated.

FAKE FLOWERS

Shelley Whalen

Love can't take it, I know,
because I tried.
At least, our love couldn't make it,
because whenever I see you now
there is always a cold, sneering
"Hello"
that comes out of me
that is reserved only for you.
The rose garden I grew for us
wilted the day you asked me
if I loved you,
and I lied.
I tried to replace
real petals with ones made of fabric,
stems made of plastic,
but the thorns to hinder you from reaching them
stayed real all the same.
They say that
fake flowers last forever;
but they burn just as easily.

Wendigo

Jessica Andre | Papier-Mache | 11 x 5 x 13”

DRINKING LIGHTNING FROM A BOTTLE

Dajuan Frasier

I'm starting to suppose I'm not feeling how I'm supposed to,
as opposed to: unfettered wings, these clips is constant
and I'm walking with a chip on my shoulder and a demon on my back
and the Tony in my throat don't ever say jack.
He doesn't ever do himself any favors, impart words of wisdom.
Create bright ideas like capturing lightning in a bottle.
I drink the lightning from the bottle
and my mouth turns to glass
because my tongue is made of sand
and the blisters in my head lead to the hole in me
where my fingernails get dirty from digging for my soul
sifting through castles of dirt.
I wonder if I'm reaping something
something I don't know about
sown somewhere I've never been to
at the places I'm always too anxious to go.
South Carolina where my father stays
Ruggles Street where I find my aunt
anywhere else where there are too many people.
I want to be happy, but I'm always angry and I can't let them catch me
because they'll hold me down and call me crazy, like they called me
dumb, called me boy, called me sad boy, called me nigger.
I used to smile hard before that, mouth wide open,
Uncle Sam's sambo smile like it was a competition
like I'd win a prize when the pictures were printed out.
Before I was ever asked if I felt worthy

Changes

Leonarda Vieira | Digital Photography | 8 x 8”

Plastered

Julia Gazzara | Acrylic and Latex Paint | 22 x 22”

SUNDAYS

Morgan Scott

It was a Sunday when he came, and a Sunday when he left. It was raining, and my mother sipped her coffee at the kitchen table, a cigarette balanced carelessly between her first and second fingers.

"There's a man at the door, Mama," I'd said quietly, knowing better than to be loud around her in the mornings.

She didn't look at me or at the door. Instead, she flicked the ash off the end of her cigarette and said, "It's your father."

He brought me a pink stuffed elephant and a white envelope that my mother quickly snatched away, the contents of which I never knew for sure, but looking back I could only assume possessed a monetary value.

He was taller than the picture made him seem. He had brown hair and blue eyes. He wore muddy work boots and jeans with paint all over them.

I only ever saw my father three times, all in that same week. Once when he came, once a few days later when he took me to a Friendly's on Route 12, and once more when he left the following Sunday.

He didn't say a lot to me, but he was the only person I can think of that ever called me by my full name.

"Charlotte," he said, crouching down to my level, "I'm sorry." He placed a large, strong hand on my shoulder and turned to leave. He never told me he loved me. Instead, he got into his blue truck and drove away, and that was all.

I never really knew why he came, or why he left in the first place. I didn't desire an explanation, either. The way I grew up, it was better not to ask questions if you didn't really want an honest answer.

–

It was a Sunday when my Auntie Gia came to get me. It had been a long time since I'd seen her. I sat on the edge of my bed as I watched her take clothes off my floor and shove them into a yellow duffel bag. She moved fast and swore under her breath. After a few minutes, she zipped the bag and grabbed my hand, pulling me off the bed. Before we left, she stopped at the doorway and looked around the room one last time. I watched her eyes scan to the bed. She dropped my hand and walked back over, grabbing something out of the tangle of mismatched sheets.

"You want this, Charlie?" she asked, handing the pink stuffed elephant to me. I looked at its soft, plush face and hugged it under my arm as we left the house on Oak Street for the last time.

We drove for what seemed like a very long time. When we finally pulled into the driveway of a small yellow bungalow

with a chain link fence, two girls a little older than me were jumping rope in the dusty front yard. They looked exactly the same, hopping up and down in an identical rhythm. Up, down. Up, down.

"Go on now, get out and play with your cousins," Auntie Gia said from the driver's seat. I unbuckled and walked towards the girls. I hadn't seen them since the Christmas we went to Uncle Tony's house and ate maraschino cherries from the jar until our fingers and teeth were stained a sticky blood red.

They let me jump rope with them. I jumped in and out, over and across, never letting go of the elephant.

I knew that they didn't have a father either. But not like I didn't have a father. Their father was in heaven and mine was someplace nobody knew.

It was a Sunday when I went to church for the first time. Auntie Gia made me wear one of the twins' old purple dresses. The lace itched my armpits like crazy and I didn't even hear what the priest was saying. I just itched and itched until it was over and Auntie Gia took Chloe, Jamie, and me to get donuts.

It was a Sunday when we went school shopping. It was my first time ever school shopping and Auntie Gia let me buy two folders, a backpack, and a pencil case. She told us we could get crayons and Chloe and Jamie tried to buy the 64-pack but Auntie Gia told them they would never need all those colors. We all got the 8-packs instead and I drew a picture of the yellow house and the twins and me when I got home. I was in third grade now and third grade was new. Second grade was Oak Street but third grade was the yellow house.

–

"They're my big sisters. Sorta," I told Emery Hannigan when she asked who those two girls I came to school with were. I felt silly telling her I lived with my Auntie and my cousins.

"Sorta?" she asked. Before I could answer, Emery was already chasing after Debbie Burns in a game of tag. "*Yeah, sorta*," I thought to myself, fiddling with the dandelions on the grass beside me.

–

It was a Sunday when I really missed her. I stared out the window of my and the twins' bedroom and looked at the moon. It was late and they were asleep and I was awake. My mind flashing pictures of my mother. My mother in her ripped blue jeans. My mother with her hair wet, smelling like coconut shampoo. My mother coming home late and smelling like the bar when she kissed me goodnight. My mother taking out a partial tooth to make me laugh when she stuck her tongue through the empty hole. My mother with me in her lap, reading books again and again until I was tired enough to sleep. I needed my mother, and I wondered if she needed me too. It was a Sunday when I cried and cried until I was tired enough to sleep.

–

It was every Sunday that I sat on my bed and read books. Books that took me to a place that was not here. Books about fairies and magic and a world that I did not know.

Auntie Gia always gave me books. Books for my birthday, books for Christmas, and books just because she thought I'd like them.

–

It was a Sunday when she called. I was in middle school and I was angry and wearing hand-me-down Abercrombie and Fitch. The phone rang. I waited for Auntie Gia to pick it up. She wasn't home. It kept ringing and ringing. I ran down the hallway, annoyed, and picked it up myself. The cord tangled and twisted around my arm like a snake.

"Hello?" I said.

"Charlie?" she said.

"Who is this?"

There was a long pause.

"It's me," she said, "It's me, it's your mom."

I had everything and nothing to say. "Oh," I said after a little while. She was crying.

"Charlie?" she asked, her voice raspy like I remembered. "Charlie, I'm sorry."

I breathed heavy and tried not to cry. I didn't want to cry because she didn't deserve to hear that. Instead I wiped my eye with a pink cotton sleeve, leaving a cakey smudge of cheap black mascara on the fabric. I had played the same memories of her over and over again in my head and they became exhausted. I had drained all the pulp out of them and now I didn't know her anymore.

"Charlie, I never meant to hurt you. You know that, right?" she said. "You believe me, right?"

There was a man's voice mumbling in the background, muffled, but definitely speaking to her. "One fucking minute," she said to him in a whisper loud enough for me to hear.

I swallowed hard. In my family, you don't ask questions if you don't want an honest answer. "No. I don't believe you," I said, surprising myself when the words came out. "I know. I know you don't. But listen Charlie, I'm better now, okay? I needed a lot of help and I'm better now," she said. The man in the background scoffed something to my mother again. "Charlie, I gotta go, baby. But listen, tell Auntie Gia I called, okay? She knows, okay? I'll see you soon, baby." And then there was a click.

I was angrier now. When Auntie Gia got home I waited for her to take her white nurse clogs off before I told her.

"My mother called today," I said.

Auntie Gia walked to the fridge and took out a package of chicken breasts. She paused and rested her forehead on the cold white freezer door. She sighed.

"Charlie," she said, turning to face me, tired purple bags under her eyes.

–

It was on that Sunday that my Auntie Gia told me about my mother's problem. I had always known, but pretended that I didn't. We sat in the kitchen for a long time that night, the chicken breasts sitting raw on the counter behind us. "She wants to see you," she said. I pulled at a string along the hem of my shirt until it unraveled all the way around to the point that I couldn't stop it. I wrapped it around my finger until the tip turned blue

and then I pulled hard, the string breaking free from the now jagged hem.

"Okay," I finally said. "I'll meet with her."

Auntie Gia reached across the counter and squeezed my shoulder. "But don't expect too much, okay?" she said. I couldn't remember the last time I expected too much.

–

A week later, I went to Chili's and waited in the car with Auntie Gia until my mother pulled up next to us in the passengers seat of a silver sedan. A man was driving. She thanked him and waved to him as he drove off. She stood in the empty parking space for a long time, looking in the car window at me with her hands over her mouth. Finally, Auntie Gia rubbed my arm and I got out of the car. My mother hugged me. Coconut shampoo.

"Charlie," she said, holding my face in her small, cold hands. Her hair was blonde and curly just like I'd remembered. Mine was curly and blonde too, but her eyes were brown and mine were blue.

Auntie Gia waited in the car the whole time me and my mother ate at Chili's. We talked a lot about nothing at all, mostly my mother talking because she was nervous. I had nothing to say. My mother asked if I liked guacamole and ordered the endless bowl of it right away. She said, "No, no," when the waitress pointed at the margarita list. She kept telling me that she was sorry and kept telling me how happy she was to see me.

I thought about all of the times I'd wondered about her, and needed her, and then I felt empty again.

"You're so tall now," she kept saying, even though the kitchen door frame at home proved I was four and a half inches shorter than the twins. "You're just so tall now!"

I barely ate any guacamole while my mother told me all about her new apartment. It was real nice with four windows and a big bedroom and a couch, big enough for me to visit sometime.

I didn't hold my breath.

"You heard from your daddy?" she asked, biting on the straw to her water. Two half-melted ice cubes bobbed on the surface, barely surviving.

I swallowed hard. I thought about the letter I saw on Auntie Gia's desk the year before when I was looking where I wasn't supposed to be looking. It was in a coffee stained envelope addressed from Sand Haven Rehabilitation Center and I got a lump in my throat when I read it. He wanted to see me, it said. He wanted to see his daughter. I quickly shoved it back in the envelope when I heard Auntie Gia coming back upstairs.

I shook my head.

I hadn't heard from my father.

After, she left two crumpled twenties on the table and we walked out to the parking lot again. She hugged me and told me we should do this again sometime. She never told me she loved me. Instead, I got into Auntie Gia's car and waved weakly to my mother as she stood in the Chili's parking lot waiting for her ride, watching us drive away.

That was the last time I saw her.

BEER DRAFT

Adam Blowers

She's tried bottling up her loneliness
and drowning her sorrows in alcohol
but the carbonation in her solution
had caused her most sour secrets to surface.

Between numbing ales and sharp exhales,
confessions dripped down her tongue—
her deepest desires for warmth and affection,
which she's tried to water down with ice—
how she's chased sobering memories of lost lovers,
car keys, and nights of her life.

She convinced herself she could stop
the sadness with her two hands and solo cups—
if she took it to the head, there'd be no more,
she thought she'd be better off that way
but she kept coming back to the taps.

She spent so much time on the rocks
considering giving love one last shot
but vomited her most vulnerable emotions
and promised herself that she would never
drink to it—or think of it again.

Untitled

Samantha Cushman | Mixed Media | 6”

Oni

Jessica Andre | Papier-Mache | 8 x 5 x 10”

ASHES TO ASHES

Shelley Whalen

He is dead and I am alive
despite my fire being
ashes in my hands and ashes in my eyes.
I have been like this since the day we died.
His ashes to my ashes
are the representation of my grief.
I've been taken by sleep, lost inside my burnt dreams.
Ashes of motivation are a constant motif,
but I promised him I would live his life
walking through fire, worth the reminisce
because my love was his final wish.
But his wish will only fade
because I'm carrying this ghost in his place.
I kindle his memory, my source of flame,
but his death burned my love to ash.
Death burned my chances and death burned my drive;
death burned away my life on the day he died.
But ruin inside ruin,
I am still not afraid to meet their eyes.
I'll be smoldering before the end of the night.
I let his blaze replace mine
but ashes to ashes, every fire dies.

Fading Memories
Sophia Rustemeyer | Acrylic | 24 x 36”

A World of Dots

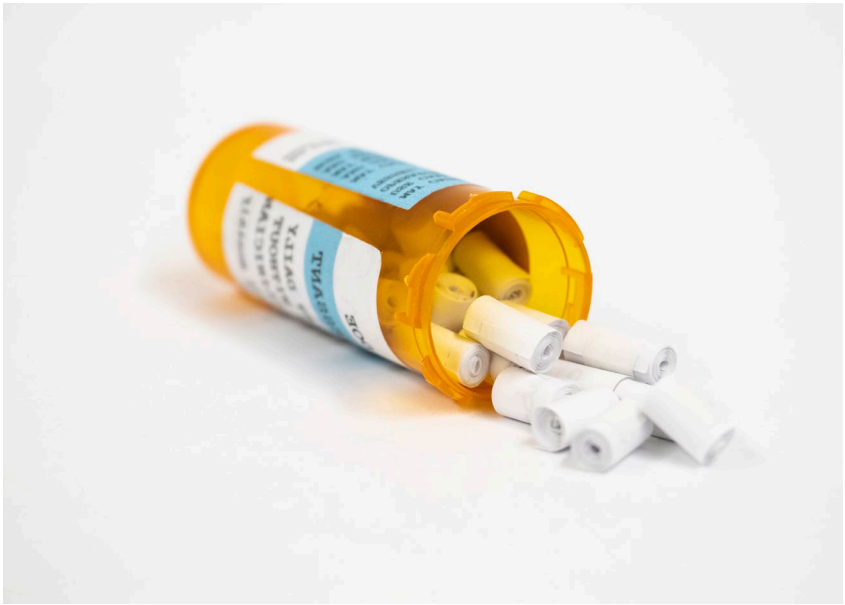
Aliyah McGibbon | Ink on Paper | 9 x 12”

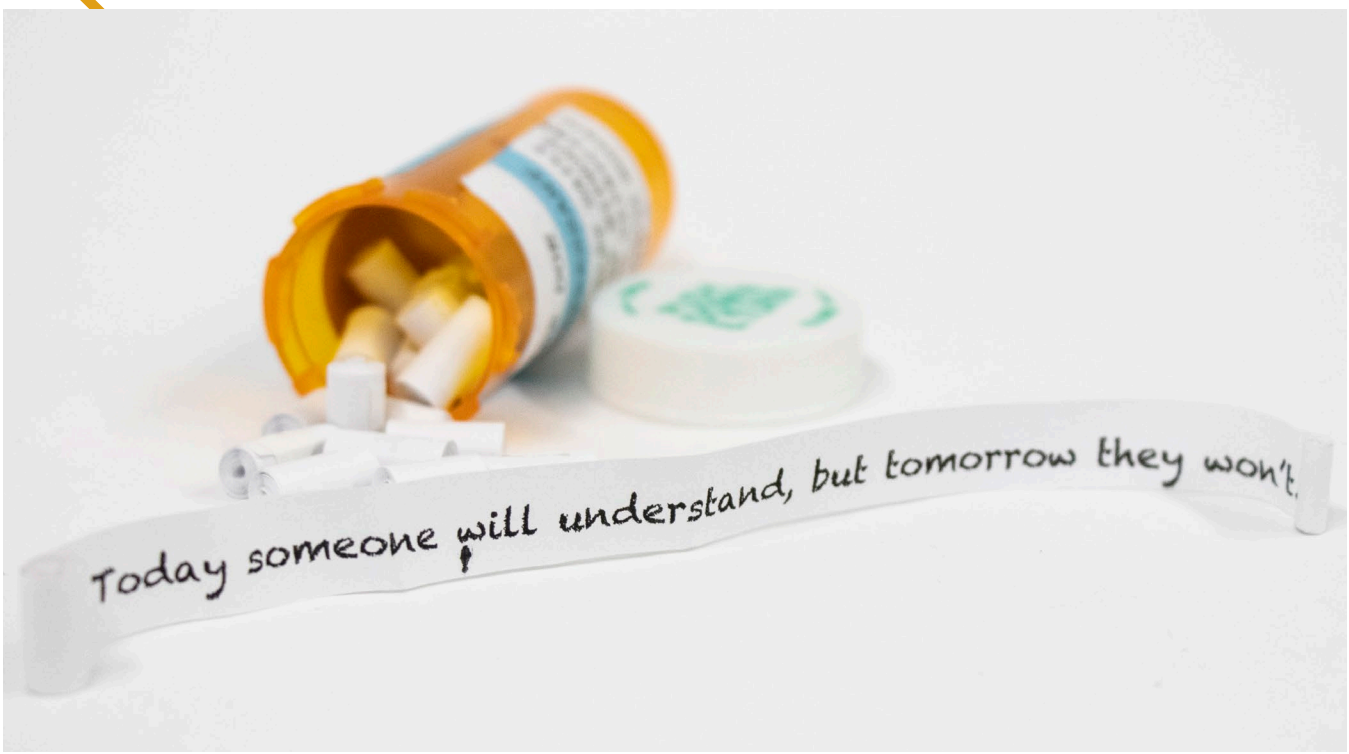
Come Whale Away

Pierre Dumoulin-Minguet | Oil Paint | 18 x 24”

Prescribed

Samantha Cushman | Book Arts





THE VERY THINGS THAT HARM US

Shay Duchaine

anger is an easy thing
to hold in the hand,
it burns like hot coals
searing into flesh.
we clench it tighter
as it scorches our
fingertips,
oh, how we love,
oh, how we love to
hold onto the very things
that harm us.

Eco

Alex Dickey | Book Arts | 5.5 x 10.5”

ROSES FOR MRS. ANDERSON

Morgan Scott

The first time I saw her was that unbearably hot, sticky summer before my junior year. Ziggy had asked me to start working for her, and sent me out on my first delivery. 4 Sunnydale Drive. I stepped out of the fluorescent green van with a plush bouquet of seventy-five long stemmed red roses and a shirt that clung to my back like plaster.

The Sunnydale Estates were a collection of twenty-six perfectly groomed mansions with circular driveways and marble fountains. They were the kind of palaces you see on MTV with bowling alleys and movie theaters, and buzzers that open gates to stamped concrete driveways. I'd always had a fascination with the Estates and the pleasant lives which inhabited them. I'd never even stepped foot on a Sunnydale driveway until that first delivery.

It took her three slow minutes to answer the door, and when she finally did I was not surprised to see the embodiment of an Estate lady standing before me. Tall and thin with freshly styled dark hair, designer clothes still starch stiff, and a French manicure brand new, un-chipped.

"Mrs. Anderson?" I asked, referring to the card Ziggy had wedged into the middle of the expensive red petals. She nodded, eyeing the flowers, uninterested and unamused as if I was selling magazines.

There was an awkward pause, and still new to the whole thing, I cleared my throat. "They're for you," I said.

It was obvious that the roses were for her, but she hesitated to take them for a moment too long. My face turned crimson with the type of embarrassment that only comes from when a person makes you feel small. She was staring at my chartreuse uniform, wet under the armpits in the least flattering way, and I could sense her pity for me, an intrigue with the flaws of the less fortunate perhaps.

It was Mrs. Anderson who was *intriguing*. Intriguing in the way that she was attractive, but not stunning. Just pretty enough to marry someone rich. Intriguing in the weird way she propped the door open with her hip. The peculiar smudge of fuchsia lipstick just under her bottom lip. Too much perfume that lingered in my nostrils, stinging.

Something was off by just a degree and it was fascinating.

"From Christopher, aren't they?" she asked a minute later, extending her arms towards me to reluctantly accept the bouquet. She turned for a minute, but then spun back around and shook the flowers in my face. I flinched, thinking for a second that she was going to beat me with the flowers.

Instead, panting, she brushed a piece of hair from her reddened face.

"Goddamn it!" she said. A single ruby petal fell slowly from the bouquet towards her feet.

"How many times will he waste his money on these things before he realizes they just end up in the garbage? What can a fucking *flower* do to fix a marriage?"

I stood blinking at her uncomfortably.

Silent. She blinked back at me.

"No…really. Tell me, what do flowers fix?" She looked at me, as if she was waiting for a reply, but instead I took her question rhetorically and swallowed against my dry tongue. I quickly turned to leave, now embarrassed for both Christopher and myself, and quite honestly a little scared.

I was almost at the putrid green van when I heard her shout, "Stop!" from the mahogany front doors. "Wait, please stop!"

Because I couldn't help myself, I turned around to see her pressing her palms against the doorframe, the flowers already shoved out of sight, high heels pressed firmly to the foyer floor. She smiled at me now, her personality switched in a matter of seconds.

"I'm so sorry," she said, pressing a palm to her powdered forehead. "Please. Why don't you get out of the heat for a minute, come in for some water?" she asked. Her tone was now soft and inviting, apologetic. Although it was probably ridiculous to even consider her invitation, I gently swished the idea around in my head like mouthwash.

On one hand, this was probably my only chance to snoop inside a Sunnydale Estate. An opportunity, really. I'd always wanted to see what it was like inside an actual mansion, and growing up downtown I never had that chance before.

The Estate kids had mothers who wore Louis Vuitton and packed their lunches with homemade muffins and orzo salads. My mother wore Walmart t-shirts. The Estate kids had in- ground pools and big green yards. We had the YMCA. So to say that I'd never been inside one of the Estates was implied, but to say that I'd never wanted to was plain wrong.

Standing in Mrs. Anderson's driveway, her eyes drilling holes through mine, I got a little excited thinking about her invitation. How I could steal the bathroom's chamomile soap that was probably unnecessarily in the shape of swans or doves, and eat the pastel colored after-dinner mints from the crystal bowl in the hallway and pocket some for later. It wasn't really that weird to go inside, probably. It was just water and I was hot and I'd always wanted to peek inside the lives of the first class flyers and Tesla drivers and now was my chance.

But then I glanced again at Mrs. Anderson's chemically whitened smile and I started to decline. Because on the other hand, she could kill me. She seemed unstable, clearly, but that drew me in with a curiosity that yearned to be satisfied. It could be curiosity that killed the Caroline, and if that was how I was going to die, so be it.

So I stopped myself from declining, and I walked back up the extravagant staircase. There was a flutter in my stomach as I noted the way Mrs. Anderson seemed to draw me in with her strange grin and giant diamond ring. That was that. I was going inside a stranger's house, and if she killed me it would be my own fault.

–

She held the door open, I looked Mrs. Anderson in the eye, and I felt a little sad for her. A housewife. She looked lonely, not like the type to murder the flower delivery girl.

We sat across from each other at a long glass table, the sweat of my glass leaving a dark, wet, ring on the cocktail napkin. "You're new?" she said, rubbing out the inevitable lipstick stain on the rim of her glass. I watched her anxiously rub at the stain, then roll the corner of her napkin in and out, in and out. Faster, then slower. Antsy.

"Excuse me?" I said.

"You're new to delivering the flowers?" she said, pointing a thumb over her shoulder towards the front door.

An elaborate kitchen was behind her with marble floors and empty countertops that sparkled in the mid-afternoon sunlight. Everything was empty. On my way in, I'd skimmed the tables in the foyer and kitchen for a bowl of mints. None. There wasn't a single picture on any of the walls, just a pair of boring paintings hung on either side the empty China cabinet. Flowers, ironically.

In the middle of the glass table was nothing but a pitcher, awkwardly sitting between us like an offering, yet too inconvenient for either of us to reach.

I nodded slowly. The ice water hit my teeth with an aching pain as I sipped from the glass. "Just started today."

Mrs. Anderson nodded. "I don't believe I caught your name," she said, tilting her right ear towards me.

"Caroline," I said.

She nodded again. "Pretty."

I couldn't figure out what she was doing. She stared blankly at me now, her bright lips still pointed upwards, left foot shaking side to side, up and down. Her nervousness was intriguing.

What she wanted from me was a mystery. She was twice my age so she wasn't exactly looking for friendship. She clearly didn't have any children so it was impossible she needed a babysitter. *Dog walker?* I wondered, glancing to a dried up water bowl on the ground beside the refrigerator. But no dog. No anything, just a surrounding sense of emptiness that prevented me from finding out anything more about her.

Mrs. Anderson stood up and her high heels clicked with an echo against the marble floor. She reached for the water pitcher to refill her own empty glass, mine still nearly full.

"We're in the process of moving," she said, as if she knew what I was thinking.

It was my turn to nod. Mrs. Anderson stared at me a minute too long, her right eye twitching just enough for me to notice.

"I'm sorry if I insulted you earlier," she said softly, "with the flowers and everything. I didn't mean it. They're beautiful, really, it's just." She trailed off, gracefully returning to her seat.

"He sends them every week, and it doesn't fix anything. It will never fix anything, of course." She looked towards me, searching

for something in my face that I couldn't decipher.

"Oh," I said, because that's what I sometimes say when I don't know what else to say.

The sheer white curtains by the sink drifted up with a dense, warm breeze that disappeared before it reached us. Right beside the sink, a singular chef's knife lay alone on the empty counter.

"Roses?" I finally asked, meeting Mrs. Anderson's blue eyes.

"Sometimes," she said. "Sometimes he sends lilies or hydrangeas, even peonies. I love the peonies. Those I never throw out. But if it was really bad, he sends roses."

"If what was really bad?" I asked, having lost her gaze by now.

"Can I get you any more to drink?" she asked, standing to reach for the pitcher again. A blatant evasion of my question.

"No, thank you. I should be going. But thank you for the water," I said, pressing my palms to the table as I stood. I was starting to get uncomfortable in the Anderson's giant house, bare of any photographs and practically un-lived in. It was becoming clear that Mrs. Anderson was trying to show me something. Trying to let me in. And I wasn't sure I could find the key to unlock it.

—

Six more days passed and on Tuesday the order came in. Three bouquets of roses. One red, one white, and one pink. To be delivered to Mrs. Anderson, 4 Sunnydale Drive, on Wednesday. Ziggy wrote neatly on three tiny cards, one for each bouquet.

For Mrs. Anderson,
I'm sorry.
Love,
Mr. Anderson xx

Then, on Wednesday, I anxiously waited for the gate to open. And when it did, I drove the van up the driveway and parked it right in front of the steps. I'd have to make more than one trip, because the bouquets, though not to be appreciated, would have to be carried one at a time.

Clutching the first bouquet, the white ones, I rang the doorbell and waited for Mrs. Anderson to answer.

She did not answer.

Six minutes passed. I rang it again.

"Come in!" a muffled voice finally called from inside.

I stood on the steps apprehensively for a minute, one hand clutching the roses, the other resting on the cold door knob, before I finally pushed it open.

"Christopher and I are in here," Mrs. Anderson said cheerfully.

There was music, which is the thing I remember the most. Classical, loud, and jubilant, blasting through the empty house.

I traced her voice and the song through the foyer, past the kitchen and into the living

room where blood coated the walls and rug like paint.

I shrieked. The roses fell from my hands as I looked up and saw Mrs. Anderson smiling at me. She held the chef's knife, dripping red, by her side.

Limp and covered in his own blood was Christopher, laying on the carpet beside her.

Mrs. Anderson sighed. "All fixed," she said, dropping the knife on the rug before smoothing out her navy blue skirt with a pair of perfectly manicured hands.

I began to get lightheaded as she stepped towards me, raising a knee to step over her husband's lifeless body.

She stopped right in front of me, and reached towards my feet to collect the flowers. "Oh, Caroline."

My feet were frozen to the carpet. I felt fear and vomit creeping into my throat. I waited, expecting her to pick up the knife and kill me, too.

Instead, she turned her back towards me, arranged the flowers in an empty vase on the coffee table and said, "Darling, these are expensive roses. Be careful."

Neon Lights

Wren Barger | Digital Photography

Layers

Jessica Zeoli | Digital Photography

GARDEN OF TRASH

Dajuan Frasier

I sit in my garden of trash banging on my invisible drum
the words on the wall hear my wailing and rocking back and forth
they say “thorn” and “dirt” and “soil”
but nothing ever grows here.
No roses from the concrete that cracks when my voice does,
no grass because I eventually had to eat it all,
the leaves here are made of tin foil.
My wailing gets louder
because I want the words to say
“spring” and “petal” and “water”
and I want it to rain the right way.
Not plastic-swims-down-the-road rain but,
I’m-5-again-with-no-vices rain
and angels hold me under the arms,
so I splash in the puddles instead of drown.
And I want that beautiful woman to stop looking down on me,
we’re the closest thing to God and the Devil in this garden
and I don’t know where I fit in that equation.
But this garden doesn’t work like that
and now I can’t find my drums or the sticks
just empty hands, blistered,
forgotten by the late shift cats who dine in alleyways
and are ignored by the hands who feed them.

Implied

Sierra Yard | Acrylic | 36 x 24”

Getting Close to Nature: Water Leaf

Arthur Kopellas | Digital Photography

ICE

Rachel Greer

The ice that covered this particular pond was the perfect thickness
unyielding on the banks, but prone to crack in the center
a cloudy white ice that you couldn't see through
but you could imagine the water that swelled beneath
crystal clear, light blue depths
the color that spearmint tastes
I stand on the bank, long red hair whipping haphazardly in the biting wind
it would not matter that I hadn't fixed it
the time that I did not spend on my hair, I spent on my face
a pink rouge on my cheeks, a deep red on my lips, and mascara
the waterproof kind
with the ice now under my feet, I imagined how they would find me
my hair will be spread out on
all sides in constant, lazy movement
crystals will take the place of my eyelashes and brows and oh!
how they will sparkle
and I'll be gone but then I'll float
face up encased in ice and blanketed in glittering frost
perfectly preserved and almost certainly
tragically beautiful
I imagine the ice cracking like a gunshot and people surely running to see
too late to save me but early enough to watch
handsome men probably
they'll drag me out and mourn the beautiful stranger gone too soon
they'll probably see me whenever they close their eyes
I won't be forgotten
the ice grows thinner below my feet
I think of how absolutely poetic it will all be
me, floating in the crystal water
the sun will hit my auburn hair and it will burn brighter than ever
more vibrant than it ever was in life
my cheeks and lips will hold their color
and I could be sleeping
the ice starts to crack but it isn't so loud
the kind of sound that might go unnoticed
and then I'm slipping through and the chill of the water stabs my flesh like a million tiny needles
and it isn't spearmint
it's dark and murky and I don't float
I sink.

THE PROCESS

Briana Crockett

I don't know how to write a survivor poem
maybe it sounds like anger
or splintered glass
I don't know how to write when I am ashamed and I know I shouldn't be
but tell me how you feel when your attackers walk free
like a ghost in The Goonies
I don't know how to write from a place where the wild things haunt me
and somebody will always be there to say that he was a boy
who does what boys do
like steal your toys
pull your hair
or hold you by the throat when you're gasping for air

He was a smooth talker
dressed in a suit he was a loaded gun walking
the type of brother that made you ask your mother
how did you know you met daddy
how did you know he could hold your sugar like caddies
what tipped you off that he was worth the risk
and if your risk caught you by the wrist, how did you know you were in danger?
how did you know out of the sweetest fruit he would become a stranger
and you'd end up bitter
with the most elusive ideas of love throbbing in the scars he left you
how was I supposed to know
he'd leave me hollow in my own body
with nothing to come home to
Momma teach me how to know demons from how easy they come, and how evil they
laugh as they play with you
I am ashamed that I wanted him to want me
although I knew he lacked the understanding behind being a man
I made myself into something that lies slack
wiped transgressions on my skin and name me dirty
and name me aggressive
like all of the bullets in woman's temple
he does not pray to the God of my temple
but he swears he's found my virtue enough to desecrate it
colonize it in the name of black toxic masculinity
regurgitate sacred script spattered in our trembling tango
maybe there is a heaven for women's agency
maybe there is a hell for men's supremacy
I'd be the first one to send him to the flames he's ignited in me
hell hath no fury like a woman harmed
and my God, She believes in reciprocity

I don't know how to write a survivor poem
maybe it sounds like healing on a bad day
the spot on my floor where I hold myself together is damp with rivers of tears
my voice stutters like disbelief
my thoughts burn and blend violently
I bend at the waist waiting for answers
waiting for God to lift my chin and call me by my healing and not his shame
some nights that voice never answers
some nights it whispers how I am not alone and pain does not define me
but his anger seems to find me and confine me to this memory
the ghosts of women's virtue spills from his mouth attached by a single chain
as he says he will have a black queen
with some black ass kids
as I'm reduced to pink matter between his bones and the floor
the black spine to hold up his dreams of the perfect woman he'd never disrespect
he'd never hold her like me
maybe she was worthy.

There are holes in me that match the shape of his hands
he holds all of the forgiveness he does not deserve
all of the forgiveness I haven't been able to give
all of the forgiveness I have to give
to myself.

Pop of Flowers

Wren Barger | Digital Photography

THESPIAN

Adam Blowers

Life with Asperger's is like being put on a stage.
I've rehearsed my lines countless times,
and I'm expected to perfectly perform
the part of "a normal boy."
I nailed the audition, bright eyed with a carefree grin.
The casting call calls me back to
see me reprise the role, see me improvise
new lines in front of a crowd.
There's some days where I have clarity, despite all the
awkward pauses, trembling hands,
legs and body, I make it through the scene with
some help from the director.
Some days, after the curtains close on the matinee,
and I've stunned the crowd with my charm,
I find myself absolutely drained, craving
seclusion, quiet and peace.
I go lounge in the library, where I can turn off
my mind, put on my headphones and
get lost in what some call "A world of my own."
I open up my notebook
and I begin writing my next favorite poem.
I'm at an inner peace until
the daydreaming stops and I remember I'm
made to play my role for you.
So suddenly, the spotlight is shining on me, this time
I'm stumbling across the stage,
searching for stage exit or the director
to lead me through this scene that
I haven't rehearsed yet. I see a crowd filled with
comedy and tragedy masks,
covering the friendly and familiar
faces I once knew so well.
They are all expecting me to perfectly perform
the part of "normal boy" again.
But I can't handle the pressure today.
Do they know it's all an act?
Can they tell from watching my movements, or listening
to my monotonous mumbles
that I'm just an Aspie thespian acting out
the part of "a normal boy?"

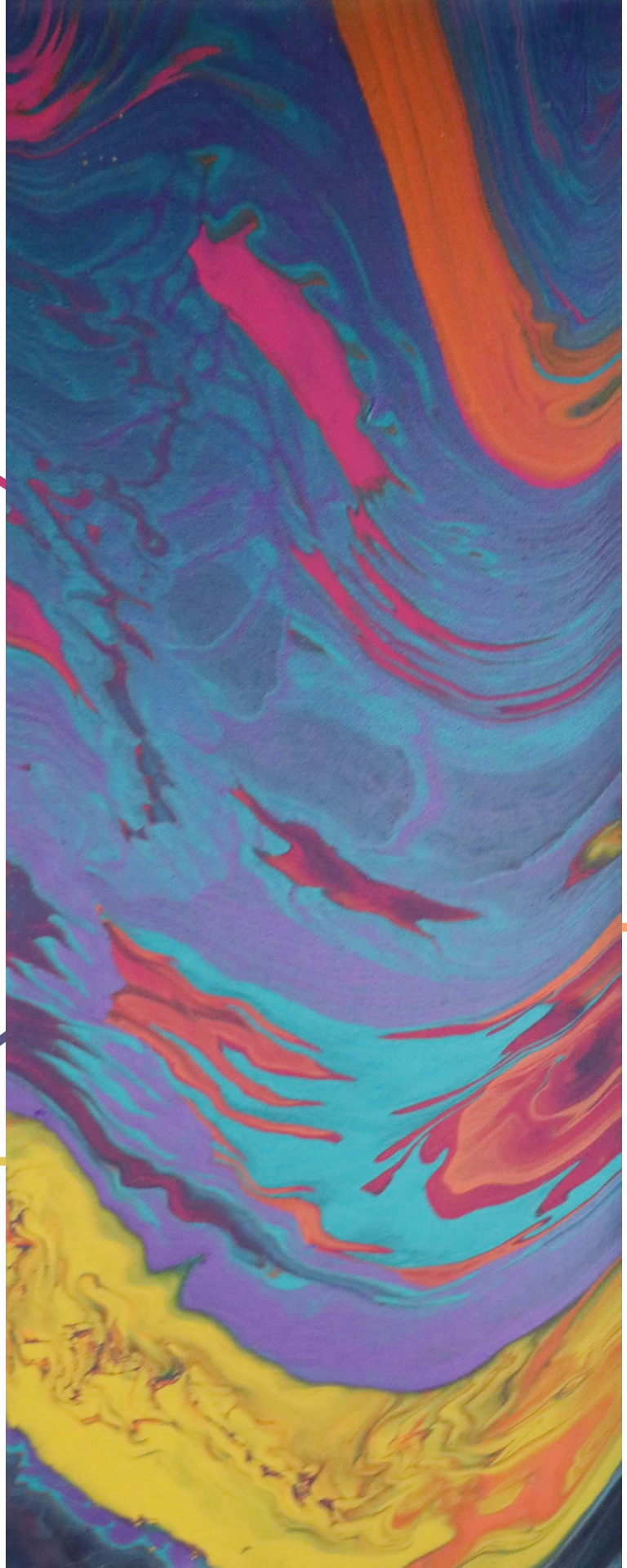
Pinecone

Colleen Alm | Watercolor | 20 x 14.5”

HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH TABLE

Dakota Lopes

31 minutes, our deliverance,
a vessel of companionship
and a distraction from common sense.
Stories and jokes of which we take ownership,
this is the basis of our relationships
but in no way is it the extent.
Childhood slips from our fingertips
and to keep it with us is our intent.
The realities of existing circumvent
the bureaucracy of the folding table.
We discuss gossip, life, the present
with ideas to change them when we're able.
The lifespan of that fake wood may be longer than ours
but it didn't feel like it for those half hours.



Flow

Sierra Yard | Acrylic | 16 x 40”

CIRCLES, CIRCLES

Mik Ellis

Walking blocks in the freezing cold,
taking corners I don't know,
because I sold my soul
to the vomit in the snow

Taking corners I don't know,
and on my hands and knees I pray
to the vomit in the snow,
but never had much to say

On my hands and knees I pray,
Goddamn my body's mutiny
but never had much to say,
while slumped under the maple tree,

Goddamn my body's mutiny!
Thinking makes my stomach hurt,
while slumped under the maple tree,
my blood is thin, my lungs are burnt

Thinking makes my stomach hurt,
walking blocks in the freezing cold,
my blood is thin, my lungs are burnt
because I have no soul.

Boston in Motion

Wren Barger | Digital Photography

Dragon

Julia Gazzara | Oil Paint | 12 x 12”

OUR SONG

Elizabeth Brady

you dance like
you're drunk
regardless of whether or not
you're sober.
rhythm only registers meaning to you above
the neck.
you shuffle your heavy feet across
the concrete
and wildly swing your hips completely
off-beat.
still, somehow, i find stability
in you,
wrapping my arms around your
wide shoulders,
nuzzling my face in your oil-stained t-shirt
inhaling a dizzying symphony
of high-pitched cotton
and rounded detergent
and the brassy hum of grease
and under all of that
i inhale you:
the simplicity of a man
without cologne,
just existing.
you only step on my toes
gingerly and accidentally,
mumbling apologies,
mumbling that you can't dance anyway,
mumbling that we could stop but
"i don't wanna dance with someone good,"
i say, "i want to dance with you."

Untitled

Rebecca Walls | Silkscreen | 26 x 20”

Mosquito

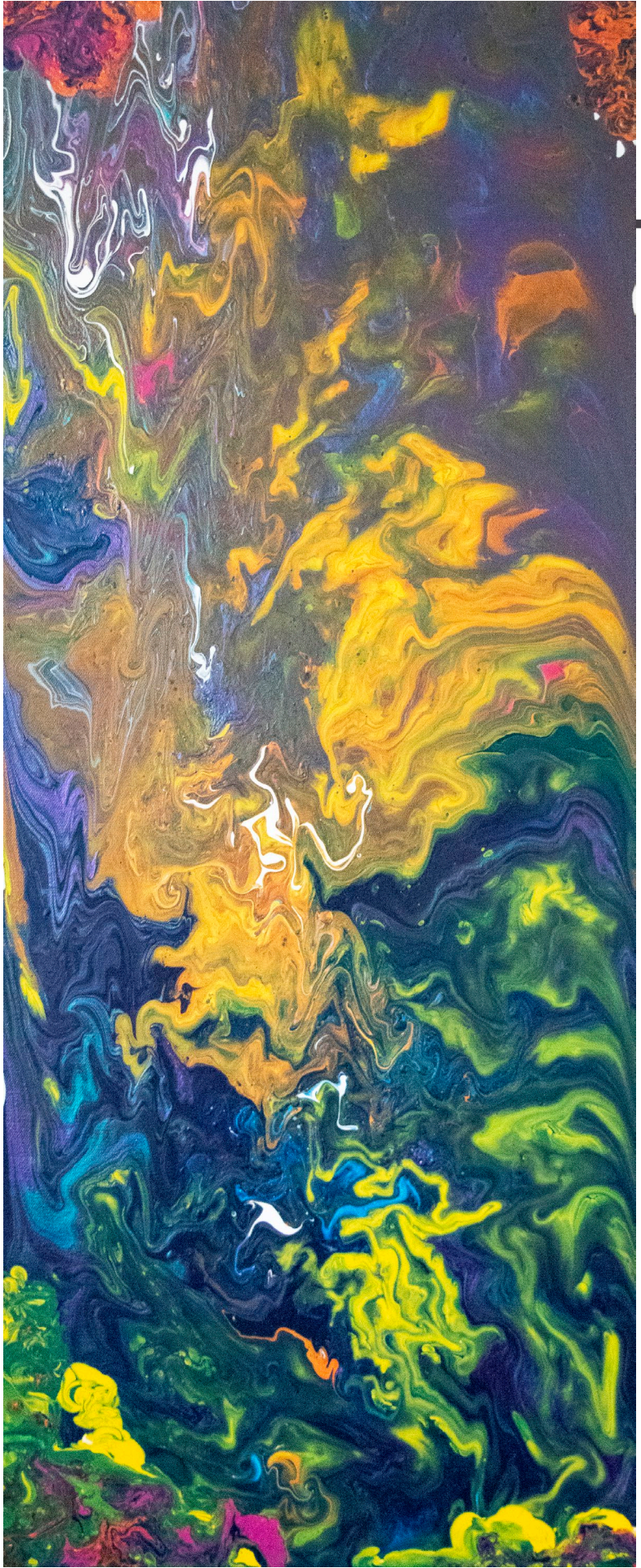
Katie Sheehan | Pen and Marker | 9 x 12”

Snowflake

Heather McGeever | Mixed Media | 11 x 14”

Drip

Sierra Yard | Acrylic | 16 x 40”



THE UNKNOWN

Lauren E. Munroe

He clings to science,
the cold code of zeroes and ones
and I
to nature and possibility
still, he assumes that I grow weary,
from him denying the existence of the Soul

unnecessary energy
trying to create a hereafter
fearing the inevitable end
entities arising from our last breath?
We should just enjoy our time in the flesh

I remain silent
his eyelids narrow before widening
leaning in uncomfortably
intimidating
and angry because the masses believe in the unseen
demanding humanity abandon
all belief in the Soul
accept the science and cold code

I thank him for his point of view
yet, I remind him that we don't possess
absolute answers
I recognize science and the Soul
the human mind seeks truth within knowledge

and perhaps existence seeks the same thing
to get closer to the unknown of itself
existence extended as Souls
carried around in flesh
gathering feeling, experience
knowledge

to gather what we can
before time abandons us
we burst forth from the flesh
and return to the unknown
our Souls etched with proof

Intergalactic

Nicol M. Da Silva | Acrylic and Glitter | 36 x 48”

BLOOD, IN RETROGRADE

Dominique Durden

Mercury is in retrograde,
My uterus is in retrograde,
My mind is in retrograde.
I keep forgetting the past and remembering all the wrong pieces.
I keep remembering the future I planned with someone the world forgot.
I remember a future with a ghost,
and he is jealous.
So he doesn't let me love anyone except him
and the daughter my uterus prematurely remembers every once in a gibbous moon.
And I, too, am jealous,
of the ground,
the casket,
death,
my forgotten future.
I am jealous of all of them.
They kiss your face gently the way I wish I could.
I wish I could tell you I miss you.
I miss you.
I think you know, but I'm not sure.
I think I forgot all I am now
is an open wound
bleeding all over everything I've ever loved,
everything I could ever love.

AFTERTASTE

Kathryn Robenhymer

Wintergreen mints don't compensate
for duck fat fries and metallic homebrews and
our last pillow talk plays back through static
like a rain stick, innards shifting, sifting
side to side he broke me ever so lovely
with the hammer I gave when requested, never
understanding why it was necessary as
piggy banks have holes in the bottom anyways
I'm spent like coins in an arcade
$21.75 on a yoyo and a pixie stick,
quarter after quarter, spending becomes
just as mechanical as the game itself
roll after roll there's no taking it slow
more accurately, I'm telling myself
for trusting cruise control
because it's easier to accept
what you're used to, like the kind-of
love that reminds you how much
naproxen costs, notices when you've put on
weight and leaves before the final bow
because he's seen your part and that's all
he's obligated to see because you've come to
know yourself in the confines of his space,
learned how to stretch in it so you're not
too cramped to walk through another day,
anything more would leave you uncontained
you'd turn from solid to dissipated,
unstable like a scarecrow without a post
any other kind of affection is tainted
with a bit of uncertainty, uncomfortable
because you'll never know yourself as more
than the object of the love that taught you
how to wash your hands.

Passion

Nicol M. Da Silva | Acrylic and Glitter | 36 x 48”

FLASHPOINTS

Jessica Rinker

Tell me, what do you do when you love him?
—Unromantically.
The man who hurts you can be anyone at all.
He can be the man who loved you first.
First, after God.

Tell me, what do you do when he's angry as a flame?
—Flashpoints.
It only takes 80 degrees for 80 proof to ignite.
Caught in explosions.

Tell me, what do you do when he doesn't mean it?
—Honestly.
He never smells his own smoke.
He just coughs.

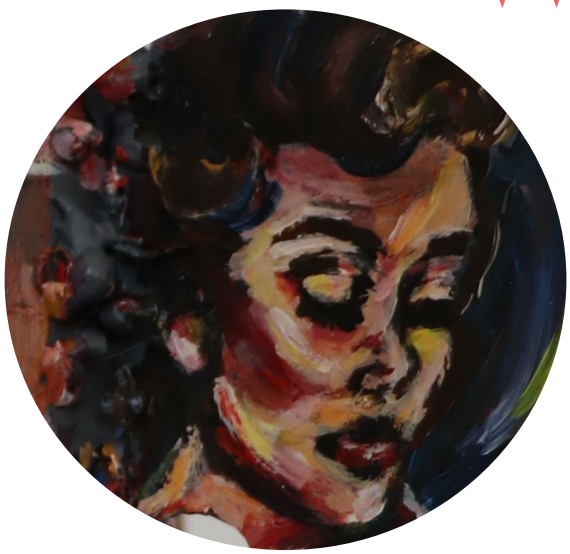
Tell me, what do I do when there's nothing to do?
—Helpless.
The smoke makes me cry.
I just cry.

Tell me, do tears extinguish flame?
—Hopefully.
Either way, the fire eventually runs out of fuel.
And he is left in ashes.
I sweep up.

Metal Rocket

Hannah Gluchacki | Acrylic and Metal | 4.5 x 18”

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER



Mother Earth

Julia Gazzara | Oil Paint | 24 x 24”

ATLAS

Laura Fredd

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER

because if I don't then plunging spastic neural nagging and desire salivating, it's been eight months since and five months out I didn't know he'd be around, I thought maybe Mom'd cleaned out my toolbox but I guess by some destiny I hid it well in the closet crawlspace, what d'you know, I left myself a clean pack; the flimsy plastic package crinkles and my trusty sterling bumps against the shallow wooden wall of the box, it was only a little he didn't even charge, just the surging sorrow his voice provoked when I heard him come in through the front door, not sure when the assembly became robotic but, just like Dad taught me, it's cooked and packed just sitting there, my thumb's tender from catching on the flame, I didn't want to come back here but I wasn't sure I didn't.

–

She often said she was doomed.

She first learned the word from a movie, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Mom and Dad had it on VHS. It was her favorite in the trilogy.

"What's doom, Daddy?" she asked.

"It's when there's no hope, baby."

–

"If there's grass on the field, play ball," she overheard a boy say in a small cluster of seniors as she passed by them in the high school halls. The other boys chuckled, some without the machismo their letterman jackets coerced, only because they knew how it'd look if they didn't react to the alpha. The girls cringed at the thought of unwanted body hair, some because it represented their own involuntary demotion to that pair of tits, that round ass, those pouty plump lips that'd be better off fellating than talking. She walked faster away as those words regressed to memories of second grade.

"So soft, like baby down," the bus driver had said to her several years before, calloused, worn hands caressing. The school bus smelled like wet metal and melted cherry lollipops. Friday afternoons, driving just slightly faster in camouflaged anticipation, he'd take the dirt road down to the old water treatment plant. He never took so long that anyone would suspect anything; but then there wouldn't be anyone waiting for her to get off the bus anyway. Mom and Dad were busy.

That was the thing about grass on the field. The blades sprouted before the grass would start flowering dandelions. Pubic hair, fledgling curves of breasts and hips, all before the age of ten. Bases loaded to third on the field.

–

Mom and Dad fought a lot. There was love, but there was chaos, and drinking. She thought there really was special water in Mom's glass one weekend afternoon when she was six. Mom usually got *really happy*

right after Mom started drinking her special water. She wanted to know what that kind of happy felt like. The special water burned her tongue with a venomous bite. She'd spit it out all over herself, unaware that she'd just acquired a taste for it. She'd gone and cleaned herself up while Mom and Dad argued over watching their glasses. Mom and Dad fought so much that Dad was in and out of the house until the last fight, when he was just out, and went back to the island. She bounced between the island and the cul-de-sac. Too bad she spent that winter there when she was seventeen. She'd never forget the day she arrived. She'd tied his tourniquet that night.

"You wanna try?" he asked her, thumb on the plunger.

"What d'you mean by try, Dad?"

He motioned with his drooping head to the baggie on the table next to him.

"Try's when you've got nothin' t'lose."

—

The lot across the street was washed out in orange light from the lamp on an electrical pole. Midnight on Barlow's was quiet; no cars sounded nearby, no noises from animals echoed in the distance, all she heard was the chatter of the rest of the group behind her and the wispy whoosh of the breeze. She turned back around. "Hey, does anyone know where Esther went?"

They'd taken a smoke break out in front of the church. Its steeple towered above them. Ray's father was the after-hours caretaker; their house was on the lot right next door. He and Roman used the chapel some nights to play guitar, the acoustics were majestic. With Ray's father in Hawaii he was less hesitant to have other people come by.

It was a warm summer night of rye for some and mushrooms for others; their buzzes lessened at the later hour. Ray and Roman began drinking around 8PM, around the time Esther, Carlota, Josephine, and Lily joined them, just beginning to peak.

"No," recited everyone else in near perfect unison, looking around.

"I'll go look for her," said Lily.

She walked across the street, through the small convenience store parking lot, into the darkness of the baseball field. She searched the dugouts, softly calling Esther's name. Perplexed, she went back to the road.

"Did you find her?" called Carlota from the front of the church.

"No," Lily called back. "Where the fuck is she?"

"I'm right here. You walked past me like, three times," emerged a voice from the flowerbed several feet to Lily's left.

"What're you doing?"

"Just lying in the flowers."

"You're a real Alice right now."

"That's the point. I just want to lay in the flowers and look at the stars." Down the rabbit hole was better than the dregs of the island. She was glad she was neither there nor the cul-de- sac.

"Essssstheeeeeeerrr!" cried Carlota from across the way. "Come back here, bitch."

"Shut the fuck up," Esther said, rising, a mischievous smile adorning her face. She and Lily walked back over to the church. "I was just trying to be Alice in Wonderland and lay in the flowers."

"Did they talk to you?" asked Carlota.

"I wish."

"Yo, dude, you wanna play any more tonight?" Roman asked Ray.

Ray paused a second. "Nah. My fingers are thoroughly blistered."

"Too blistered for *Mortal Kombat*?"

"Hell no."

"Can we go to the beach?" Esther protested. "Can we please go to the beach? Can we lay on the sand and look at the stars? There's less light there. Don't play fucking video games, let's hang out."

The boys were at first hesitant, but the eventual unanimous response bore them all, one foot in front of the other, a mile down the road. Esther ran ahead of the rest and plopped onto her back in the sand. "Oh my god, you guys it's so beautiful. Get the fuck over here! I want to share this with you."

Esther wiggled sand between her toes and stared up into oblivion. She could feel her pupils dilate as far as they could go. She swore she could see Sagittarius A and the cluster of matter at the center of the Milky Way.

–

Translucent brownish water damage marks fanned out across parts of the ceiling above her dealer's bed. They looked like exploding clouds of cosmic dust. She focused on them while she was thrust repeatedly into the creaky mattress. All this for a dime bag. Just to get her through the dinner rush at work on the other side of town. She'd be back after her shift—with cash—to stock up for the next few days. Friday nights were usually good for tips. It'd been seven years since that first time on the island. Her dealer had agreed to "pussy" to trade for a fix. Good thing he was quick.

It was nine at night when the off-duty cop saw the baggie slip out of her shoe as she scurried between tables. He picked it up with his napkin and used the payphones by the bathrooms to summon his colleagues. Even she was perplexed by the flashing lights that parked right out front of the restaurant, even more when they came inside and reached for her wrists.

The diner patrons hushed and stared as she was cuffed and escorted outside. But before they got her through the door, her manager placed a light hand on her arm. The expression on her face screamed disappointment; Esther had trouble looking her in the eyes. It'd only been three years ago Esther called her from County, crying.

"You knew this was your last chance, Esther. You're fucked. And fired."

–

She'd drawn with graphite on notebook paper, something she hadn't done since

long before the cell. She'd taken to art from toddlerhood, her abilities encouraged by her parents. Despite their absence, their lucid moments proved supportive. Art was there before it all. She had always preferred painting: elaborate, vibrant colorful canvases on which she manifested wild dreamscapes and evocative impressions. But for so long she'd not been restricted to lined notebook paper and a simple No. 2 pencil. The officers on her block lent her the supplies for two hours after lunch. She hung some up, but most of them were tucked between the pages of gifts from the outside: Bradbury, Hawking, Bradley, Vonnegut, and L'Engle, which were propped up on her small dresser. Her last drawing was destined for Lily, who'd gotten in touch Esther's second week in jail.

A young woman with a Mona Lisa ambivalent mouth and eyes searing with sorrow, sat on the ground with her back against a large oak stump at the foreground of a barren forest. Her long sleeved, round neckline maxi dress covered most of her, and in her outstretched hand was cradled her own beating heart. She swore she'd heard *Kali Ma Kali Ma Kali Ma* whilst she drew. She'd turned the paper horizontal to have a wider lens for the scene. Even her subject was behind bars.

When she'd got out she returned to painting. But not even exorcising herself through art could keep her tethered to Earth.

—

"**B**efore I came up here I thought I was ready to do this. I'm not ready to do this. I don't think anyone is ever ready to do this. I don't think Esther would want us to dwell on our sorrow, even though that's one of the easiest emotions to access right now. I wish she had been more open to accepting help; but I can't confidently say that I believe she wanted any help at all.

"We lost touch for a long time. *I* severed communication. I couldn't watch her do that to herself. But when I found out she was incarcerated again I reached out. I had to reach out. I would write to her, send her books. I thought reminding her of the good on the outside would make her want to stay in it longer once she got out. But, I can't confidently say she had any real intention of staying. I don't know if you're supposed to be this honest at someone's funeral service, but, I think, of anything she would want from us, honesty with each other is somewhere at the top of the list. She was always so brutally honest, even if it meant walking out of a room mid-conversation because she just did not want to be around someone anymore. Unabashed, unapologetic honesty. And love; ferocious love. I don't think I've ever met someone who loved as strongly as her, especially despite the overwhelming shadows of her doubts in loving herself. I remember one time a few of us were out and some guy got in our face. I think she probably would have attacked him had we let her. Esther was always the one to put herself between us and everyone else. She probably could have taken on the world under different circumstances.

"She constantly called herself evil, consistently claimed she was damned. I know many of us tried to convince her otherwise.

"But I also remember the soul and emotion in her voice when she sang, always uninhibited. I remember many instances during which she'd disappear from the group and throw her headphones on and just start belting out Nirvana. I could never see how someone evil could sing like that

because she wasn't. She had her darkness like we all do, but I wish she could have seen what we saw: someone who, though her life was plagued by circumstances that were out of her control and choices she made that were not in her favor, was one of the most loving, loyal, caring people whose worldview trampled even the most vocal, narrow-minded skeptics. She had so much more to offer especially so much more to offer herself.

"I tricked myself into believing she would overcome her demons. But I am reminded by her death that she was only human, and as vulnerable as any of us to succumbing. I will take away the best parts of Esther as we return her body to the earth: her love, her loyalty, her fervor, and most of all, her complete disregard of what anyone thought of her. That was always my favorite part of her. She was shamelessly her, and she did not give a fuck what anyone else thought of her. I hope we can all take away with us a part of Esther that emboldens and empowers us, and each in our own way allow her legacy to continue through our own remaining years."

Lily hesitated as she started to leave the podium, stepping back towards the microphone. "And while I'm brave enough in my own honesty to say it," she said, locking eyes with Esther's mother, "Roberta, I will never forgive you for letting her drug dealer back in the house."

—

Outside my bedroom window the moon cracked a Cheshire cat smile, the playlist switched to "Rape Me" by the time the rubber noose knot constricted my veins, old brown pocks in the crease of my elbow they look like what impact craters look like on the moon from Earth, rust didn't dull the pipes yet they're like turquoise rivers running up my forearm, I didn't even remember retrieving the syringe from the bedside table top but it was in my hand full one-quarter with liquid gold, I was trying not to but the vodka wasn't enough, I just wanted to run back away to New York, my demons are there too but not as much, especially not since Dad died last year; what I really wish is that I could go back to Sydney, the water is turquoise there too and the sun sets over Botany Bay washing out the sky with orange and purple, I should have never come back from there but here I am the needle's inserted at forty degrees, gentle enough not to impale the other side of the vein, crimson tendrils shoot into the barrel as I pulled the plunger back and slowly push down the golden brown until the plunger meets the adapter.

he tampered with my dose, this was different than that last time on the beach, the first rush was sweet, but I felt a thickening hollow can't tell if the bedside analog was busted or time stopped, wouldn't that be something, like a universal remote to pause the passage of time to better cope with its unobservable infinity and the briefly allotted slot in which life was by chance allowed to consciousness—

VINDICTA

Kayla Roy

When I was little,
I spent my summer days
in the back garden
of the house my father grew up in
with my grandmother,
the most beautiful bloom of my life.

Cornflower blue eyes,
softly weathered skin,
like the petals of white roses.
Lavender sprigs tucked into
the sleeves of her sweater—
the most perfect flower.

When I was little,
I would sit beside her
and pull the flowers from the ground.
wanting to keep each one forever.
She would pull me into her lap and
take my hands,
chubby, little palms blossom in
withered old ones.

She would wipe the dirt from my hands
and tell me not to pull the petals,
for it was like pulling the hair from
Mother Earth, stealing her favorite children
away.

And tears rained from my eyes
because I had never meant to hurt Mother
Earth.

From that day on,
I never pulled the blossoms,
never stole a petal,
because I feared that if I made
her mad that she would stop sharing
her blooms with me.

But one day,
Mother Earth took her revenge
and the tears rained again—
splattering against the earth
as she withered and died,
and Mother Earth took her most beautiful
bloom from me.

Today, I couldn't help myself.
I pulled peonies and pansies,
I ripped rhododendrons from the ground,
I tore tulips and tiger lilies
because Mother Earth had broken her
promise, stolen my bloom.
If I could not have mine then she would never
again have hers.

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER

Commute

Alex Dickey | Book Arts | 10.5 x 11.5”


DIS
ABL
VETERAN

Lost in Time

Wren Barger | Digital Photography

Euphoria

Julia Gazzara | Oil Paint | 20 x 20”

INVISIBLE SHAPE

Rilee Granger

BRIDGE AWARD WINNER

I tilt my head
like a puzzled dog
equally confused
by the painting before me.

Shape upon shape
layer after layer
indiscernible.

What is the shape of love?

The shape of a babe
on her father's shoulders.
The shape of
intertwined hands
as they pass me by
on this empty shape of a bench.

The shape of a goblet
sipped by a sacrificial carpenter
surrounded by friends.
The shape, known as the "Holy Grail"
by time turned myth
only visible to the worthy,

invisible to me.

Doubting the myth.
After all,
paintings try so hard
to convince

they are made of anything
but paint.

THE BRIDGE

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CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

COLLEEN ALM | PINECONE

Colleen Alm is a freshman at Bridgewater State University. Her major is currently undeclared but she plans to change it to communication with minors in history and Irish studies. Colleen has exhibited artwork at the Attleboro Arts Museum and currently has handmade jewelry for sale in their gift shop. Colleen enjoys making up-cycled jewelry out of broken jewelry, buttons, etc. She sells her creations at various boutiques across Massachusetts. In March 2018, Colleen received a Gold Key for painting in Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Colleen aspires to become a genealogist or a historian.

JESSICA ANDRE | WENDIGO, ONI, DRAGON, COURT OF OWLS

Jessica Andre is a senior and one of the last students graduating in the new media arts concentration. She originally came to Bridgewater State University to become a video game concept artist, and slowly changed her gears towards both animation and sculpture. In the future, she plans to further her study in both animation and creating sculptures, either masks or movie props. She one day hopes to move to or visit Japan, and places around the world where nature and mythology inspires her works.

WREN BARGER | LOST IN TIME, PAST LIFE, POP OF FLOWERS, BOSTON IN MOTION, ICY WATERS, NEON LIGHTS

Wren Barger is an art major at Bridgewater State University with a concentration in photography. Photography, to Wren, 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. Wren's first time with a camera was at camp. She was 9 years old and they gave her a camera and she never put it down. One of her goals is to start a program for special needs children to teach them photography. She has worked with special needs children since she was in the fifth grade.

ADAM BLOWERS | THESPIAN, BEER DRAFT

Adam Blowers is an English major with a focus in creative writing. He hopes to write poetry and novels for a living. Unfortunately, his name doesn't rhyme with flowers.

ELIZABETH BRADY | PATERNITY, TEETH, OUR SONG

Elizabeth Brady is an English major is graduating in spring 2019. She enjoys writing poetry, short stories, and short films. She plans on pursuing a graduate degree after graduation.

BRIANA CROCKETT | THE PROCESS

Briana Crockett is an English major at Bridgewater State. She has been writing poetry since the fourth grade and wants to be an editor in the book publishing industry, while also writing and performing poetry.

SAMANTHA CUSHMAN | PRESCRIBED, UNTITLED

Samantha Cushman is a senior majoring in fine arts and secondary education. Her concentration is printmaking and she hopes to one day be a high school art teacher. Samantha was awarded the Adrian Tinsley Grant this past summer and through this grant was able to build a collection of artworks based on mental illness. She hopes to bring visual representation to mental illnesses and help non-sufferers gain a better understanding of mental illnesses through her work.

NICOL M. DA SILVA | INTERGALACTIC, PASSION

Nicol M. Da Silva is a double major in art and social work. When she starts working in her field she wants to use art as therapy to help children heal from traumatic events. Her main focus in art is abstract painting, which pushed her out of her comfort zone and inspired her to let the paint do its thing.

ALEX DICKEY | COMMUTE, ECO

Alexzandra Dickey is a senior elementary education and art education double major with a minor in studio arts at Bridgewater State University. Concepts of self-reflection as well as contemporary issues and real-life experiences influence a lot of her artwork. Her favorite medium to work with is paint, but she has recently had the opportunity to experiment in bookbinding arts. She hopes to one day teach and inspire a love of art in young artists.

SHAY DUCHAINE | THE VERY THINGS THAT HARM US, YOU AND I

Shay Duchaine is a writer and a Massachusetts native. Her work primarily consists of fiction and poetry. When she isn't playing video games or reading a good book, she often frequents local coffee shops and cafes. She is an alumna of Bridgewater State University, where she majored in English with a writing studies concentration, and psychology. She is beginning her MA in English in the spring of 2019.

PIERRE DUMOULIN-MINGUET | COME WHALE AWAY

Pierre Dumoulin-Minguet was born and raised in France, and he came to the United States when he was 19 to go to college. He has always had a passion for drawing. Pierre really enjoys working with graphite and finds whales to be very graceful animals, which he never gets tired of drawing.

DOMINIQUE "MO" DURDEN | BLOOD, IN RETROGRADE

Mo is a 21-year-old poet studying psychology with a double minor in Middle East and African American studies. She has been writing for almost 8 years, and has been featured in many online media outlets such as *Repp Magazine, Affinity Magazine, Cauldron Anthology*, and *Umbel and Panicle*. She hopes to use her platform as an artist to speak for those who are unheard and to create social change. She believes that as an artist, it is her duty to respond to the world around her, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

MIK ELLIS | CIRCLES, CIRCLES

Mik is an English major. He likes being barefoot, writing songs, and playing banjo on the sidewalk. In the future, he hopes that people will give him money for playing banjo on the sidewalk.

DAJUAN FRASIER | DRINKING LIGHTNING FROM A BOTTLE, GARDEN OF TRASH

Dajuan Frasier is a senior, majoring in sociology and minoring in writing studies. Dajuan was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts hailing from both Dorchester and Roxbury. Dajuan has been writing poetry for two years, he loves music, and swears by Hulu. Dajuan wants to work with young people, helping high schoolers find resources to access higher education and find the tools to advocate for themselves both socially and politically. Eventually, Dajuan hopes to work in higher education either in administration or policy in hopes of making education more equitable and increasing standards of diversity.

LAURA FREDD | ATLAS

Laura Fredd is a Bridgewater State University senior and English major whose work might be seen in print again at some other time, in some other place. Of three things she is certain: procrastination is one of the best motivators, world peace begins with the consistent use of turn signals, and, when gazing at the stars, one is never looking up—one is looking out. Her submission to this volume of *The Bridge* is dedicated to Kirstin.

JULIA GAZZARA | DRAGON, MOTHER EARTH, FLIGHT, EUPHORIA, CRASH, PLASTERED

As a painter there is a relationship that forms between the artist, the viewer, and the canvas. Julia has always been inspired by Mark Rothko, who said that paint evokes a different experience when seen through the eyes of each individual, the reaction of the viewer is based on their own personal experience. She challenges herself with every blank canvas to create something that not even she has seen on a canvas before.

HANNAH GLUCHACKI | WIRE MAN, METAL ROCKET

Hannah Gluchacki is an art education major and hopes to not only be an art teacher in the future, but also work as an artist. Her passion for painting and drawing led her to finally pursue a career in art after initially working toward a communication disorders major. She is a senior at Bridgewater State University and got first place in sculpture at the student art show here last spring.

RILEE GRANGER | INVISIBLE SHAPE

Rilee Granger is an English major who loves all things fiction. Regardless the genre or form, they believe all written word has something important to offer. They are working towards a career that encourages their writing in the hope that what they offer might resonate with others in the way that literature has resonated with them.

RACHEL GREER | ICE

Rachel is a transfer student at Bridgewater State University, her third college in three years, and she hopes this one will stick. She wants to become an editor one day.

ARTHUR KOPELLAS | GETTING CLOSE TO NATURE: WATER LEAF

Arthur Kopellas is a first-year student in the elementary education, special education, and communications majors. He hopes to become a teacher in the future. In his free time he likes to play tabletop games, Dungeons and Dragons, and take pictures, as well as mess around with other forms of art.

DAKOTA LOPES | HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH TABLE

Dakota is a freshman studying theatre arts at Bridgewater State University. He hopes to teach theatre after he finishes his higher education, but really he's just going with the flow. He has been writing poetry as a hobby for years but has never attempted to have his work published before this. He hopes that you find something in his writing that helps you to be more human.

ALIYAH MCGIBBON | A WORLD OF DOTS

Aliyah is majoring in elementary education and fine arts. Art has been a passion of hers for as long as she can remember. She hopes to become a second grade teacher or art teacher.

LAUREN E. MUNROE | THE UNKNOWN

Lauren E. Munroe is a philosophy major, with a minor in global religious studies and a minor in writing and writing studies. For the spring 2019 semester, she will begin her internship through The Washington Center in Washington, DC.

HEATHER MCGEEVER | SNOWFLAKE, DISTORTED FLOWERS

Heather McGeever is an art student with concentrations in graphic design, photography, and fine arts. She will be graduating in the spring of 2019. She plans on becoming a freelance graphic designer/photographer after graduation. In her spare time, she makes art with antique watch parts and gears, paints, and takes photographs. She is remarried and has two sons who are young adults.

DAVID B. ORTEN | SPIDER WEBS

David is an English and secondary education major and filmmaking enthusiast, and storytelling has always been his primary passion. He was inspired at a young age by the words of Lovecraft and King, as well as the moving pictures of Cronenberg, Carpenter, and Argento, finding cathartic solace in their dark worlds. David now aims to use his own words to spread discord and disillusion, hoping to create a world rife with despair and ready to welcome back the glorious Cthulhu. All hail Cthulhu.

JESSICA RINKER | FLASHPOINTS

Jessica Rinker is a sophomore secondary education and English major. She has been an avid reader and hopeless English geek since a very young age. As she grew up, she learned that imaginary friends are socially unacceptable, but writing about them as "book characters" is totally cool (it is a writer's greatest life hack). Although words are powerful, Jessica believes teaching is even more powerful. She hopes to share her passion for reading and writing with future middle school students, and more importantly, support them as they pursue their dreams.

KATHRYN ROBENHYMER | LEVIN AT NIGHT, AFTERTASTE, SOMEONE DOMESTICATED FIRE

After earning a BA in English and American literature at the Catholic University of America in 2015, Kathryn worked as an English Language teacher in Cadiz, Spain, before beginning her graduate studies at Bridgewater State University. She graduated with an MA in English in 2018 and now works in the Alumni and Development office at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

KAYLA ROY | VINDICTA

Kayla Roy is a new transfer student, coming to Bridgewater State University in her junior year. She is an English and secondary education double-major, who looks forward to teaching teenagers anything from Chaucer and Beowulf to Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison. She has been writing since she was nine years old and hopes her goal of being a New York Times Best-Selling Author will one day come true. When she's not scribbling in a notebook with a cup of tea somewhere, you can probably find her at the bookstore where she works.

SOPHIA RUSTEMEYER | FADING MEMORIES

Sophia Rustemeyer is a senior at Bridgewater State University majoring in art with a concentration in education. She is planning on attending the secondary education graduate program in the fall of 2019. Recently her artwork has been focused on exploring memory and loss, processing the passing of her mother during high school. She intends to develop her scheme further over the summer of 2018 through a series dedicated to her mother.

NICOLE M. SEELEY | DISAPPOINTMENT

Nicole M. Seeley is a double major in secondary education and studio art with a fine arts concentration. She is working towards becoming a high school art teacher, and hopefully with all her hard work, she will be able to become a professor later in life. Nicole M. Seeley is focused on becoming a strong artist, working to share her story, and to teach others the tools to do the same.

KATIE SHEEHAN | MOSQUITO, NOT MY MONKEY

Katie Sheehan is a freshman planning to study graphic design during her time at Bridgewater State University. She has aspired to be an artist ever since she was young but it wasn't until high school that art became her major focus and she started to develop her skills. Now her primary medium is pen, ink, and pencils using lines, texture, and shading to show definition. Her pieces of art focus on a more dream-like aspect of the imagination, where she explores different ideas in a more surreal setting. The subjects are sometimes disturbing, but the viewer is invited to bring their own interpretation to the meaning of the subjects.

SIMGE TUNALI | HIGHWAY

Simge Tunali is a senior at Bridgewater State University studying graphic design. She discovered her interest in visual arts while she was studying on Aesthetics at Akdeniz University. In 2001, Simge earned her first award in Akdeniz University Annual Trash to Art Contest, for "The Picture of Language." Between 2011-13, she has conducted many social campaigns and actively participated in recycling projects such as, "Recycle! & Keep Our World Young!", "Clean, Create, Act!" and "New Friends for Lonely Toys." In 2013, her "Urban Life" photography exhibited in New Acropolis Annual Turkey Photography Exhibition. After graduating from Akdeniz University with BA in philosophy, Simge attended to visual arts major at Quincy College and then transferred Bridgewater State University. After completing her studying at Bridgewater State University, she plans to pursue a master's degree in design innovation (MDES) program and continue to research and develop ontological design theory.

LEONARDA VIEIRA | NATURE'S WORK, CHANGES

Leonarda Vieira is a senior at Bridgewater State University. She is getting her degree in art with a crafts concentration; she is also minoring in management. Leonarda's future plan is to own her own business where she sells her art and to help younger kids express themselves through art. Leonarda enjoys working in pottery and painting.

REBECCA WALLS | UNTITLED

Rebecca is a senior studying fine arts and printmaking. She hopes to one day be able to use her print skills in a job setting and do what she loves for a living.

SHELLEY WHALEN | FAKE FLOWERS, ASHES TO ASHES

Shelley is an English major focusing on creative writing. She plans to continue her education and obtain a master's degree in the arts.

SIERRA YARD | DRIP, FLOW, IMPLIED

Sierra Yard is a secondary education and art major with a concentration in education and painting. She also has a minor in math. She plans on teaching art or math at the high school level. She enjoys both abstract and portraiture.

JESSICA ZEOLI | LAYERS

Jessica "Jessy" Zeoli is a studio arts major concentrating in photography. Alongside art, she is also studying writing studies and art history as her minors. She hopes after graduating in May to use her many areas of study together and work for a digital media company. In her spare time, Jessy enjoys modeling for herself and designing images for clothing. Her work was inspired by combining her interests of modeling and fashion with her artistic abilities to add work to her portfolio for future employers.

EDITORS' NOTES

JILL BOGER (BA '16, MA '19). Endor Lake Camp Counselor. Terrified of snakes. Presenter, Georgia State University "New Voices" conference, '18; "Feminist Approaches to Horror" Panel Chair and presenter, PCA/ACA National Conference, '18; "Gothic Horizons" presenter, PCA/ACA National Conference, '19. Editor, *The Bridge* vol. 12-13; graduate assistant, *The Bridge*, vol. 14-16. She can't believe she's been here this long.

SYDNEY CABRAL is a Bridgewater State University alumna currently working as a customer service representative and trying to "adult" her way through life after Bridgewater State University (not an easy task). She was the Promotional Manager for Volume 15 and part of Volume 16, and received her degree in English and public relations. She loves sushi, naps, and furry friends.

JOHN CAHILL is a senior at Bridgewater State University graduating in May of 2019 with a degree in communication and English. John can often be found biting his nails and scrolling through Twitter for far too long. This is his first year as an editor for *The Bridge* and he hopes to one day finally grow a full beard.

JAKE CAMARA is a communications major, film editor, and an incredibly muscular man. When he's not combating space-aliens, Jake general-manages 91.5 WBIM-FM and runs his own radio show with fellow *Bridge* editor, the devilishly handsome Ian Mello. Jake wishes to one day utilize his talents to become either a writer, film producer, or firefighter–whichever is easiest.

MIALISE CARNEY is a senior English major graduating in the spring of 2019. In her spare time, she enjoys stealing antique silverware from museums, staring at blank word documents, and preparing her application to become a professional hermit. She was editor-in-chief of volume 15 of *The Bridge*, as well as an editor on volume 14.

JOHN DAVEY is a senior art major with a concentration in graphic design and a minor in studio art. This is John's first semester designing and editing *The Bridge* and his final semester at Bridgewater State University. When not working on the journal, John's interests include illustration and ghouls. Currently, John is producing his first self-published graphic novel as well as managing the social media of local nonprofit start-ups.

KELLIE DELANEY is a senior graduating in May with an undergraduate degree in English and a minor in history. She is a first-time editor of *The Bridge*, a consultant in Bridgewater State University's Writing Studio, and an RA in Weygand Hall. Kellie is a frequent patron of Applebee's, enjoys drinking too much coffee, scrolling through memes at 2 am, and writing illegible notes that she thinks she can decipher later.

ERICA DEVONISH is a first-time editor of *The Bridge*. In her spare time, she enjoys writing creatively, advocating for survivors of domestic violence, and giving credible feedback at the Bridgewater State University's Writing Studio.

ALEX EVERETTE is a barista who hates making cappuccinos. He lives under a bridge and collects lost socks and library books. Sometimes he drinks oat milk. His work can be found in *Abstract Magazine, small poems for the masses*, and *Marathon Literary Review*, among others.

GABRIEL HAZELDINE is a ghost writer who still aspires before the shifting challenges ahead. As his time as an undergraduate dwindles and bi-weekly paychecks stare him down with their frugal tidings for time sacrificed, he is nonetheless determined to make the most of what he has learned as an undergraduate and as an editor on *The Bridge*. In his spare time, he's at his word processor with the future in mind or slowly retiring old hobbies and pastimes for new ones.

SETH JEFFERSON is a senior majoring in graphic design and photography with a minor in art history. In addition to being a designer and editor for *The Bridge*, he is also a graphic design intern at Bridgwater State University's Information Technology Division, and is responsible for creating logos, publications, and other material to help better promote IT services. Other than art, Seth has also been an active runner throughout high school and college, and is currently the captain of the Bridgewater State University's Men's Cross Country and Track & Field teams.

LINDSEY MACMURDO is a senior at Bridgewater State University and is a studio art major with a photography concentration as well as an art education major and art history minor. She spends most of her free time working on building her creativity and learning new techniques to improve her photography. In addition to photography, Lindsey is interested in interior design, painting, baking, and more.

KATIE MCPHERSON is a senior at Bridgewater State University, majoring in English. This is her second year working on *The Bridge*. When she's not napping, she enjoys photography, writing poetry, and watching videos of dogs for hours and hours.

IAN MELLO is a communication major at Bridgewater State University. When he's not staving off hunger at his food service job, Ian is the program director at 91.5 WBIM-FM and co-hosts his own radio show with fellow *Bridge* editor, the slightly less handsome Jake Camara. In the future, Ian wishes to become a voice actor, or to do anything with his silky smooth voice. Or as a sad, sad back-up, work in fast food forever.

HAILEY MULVEY is a senior studio art major, with a concentration in graphic design. This is her first year designing and editing *The Bridge*. In addition to her studies at Bridgewater State University, she is an exhibition producer and design intern at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She also loves cats, Bauhaus design, and hardcore music.

CADY PARKER recently installed the Adobe Creative Suite directly into her brain instead of her computer, in an attempt to ward off ennui. Since then she has been mostly the same, but now finds the sight of certain birds inexplicably depressing.

ERIN RYAN is a junior majoring in English with a concentration in writing. She loves going home and hanging out with her cat. This is her first year as an editor for *The Bridge*. When she grows up, she hopes to edit novels.

BECCA TODD is a junior majoring in English. This is her first year working with *The Bridge*, but it has already inspired in her to pursue a career in editing after graduation. She is a self-proclaimed magnificent writer and yoga master. She loves her dog more than any human, a cliché that she recognizes but lives into gladly and intentionally.

HANNAH WHITE is a junior double-majoring in English and psychology who hopes to figure out what she wants to do with her life sometime in the near future. In her spare time, she enjoys drinking coffee, watching *SNL*, and spending time with her pets.

JOHN WILSON is a senior majoring in English and minoring in art history. This is his second year working on *The Bridge*, though he has only been captured in three and a quarter photos. He is often disappointed by the lackluster taste, in comparison to the smell, of berry flavored seltzer water. John has revised his plan for his aquatic legion; now he wants an octopus and koi fish—he still has a cat. Going forward he would like to build a house constructed from shipping containers, and own a café bar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors of volume 16 of *The Bridge* would like to thank a number of people for their roles in making the publication of this journal possible. Throughout the years, faculty and library staff have been constant supporters of the students and the journal. Previous faculty advisors, through their wisdom and dedication, have lit the path for student editors on the journey of creation since 2004. It is thanks to them that *The Bridge* has been able to grow and change with the artistic vision of the student body.

This past year we have been fortunate to work with Evan Dardano as our faculty advisor. His passion for the arts has inspired a drive in us that helped us find our way to the finished version of the journal, while his experience in publishing kept us on track when we needed direction. We've also been able to work alongside graduate student Jill Boger, who has spent years as a member of our staff and provided constant, vital insight throughout the editorial process. Evan and Jill have left their mark on the journal and the students they have worked with, for which we are grateful.

The publication of this journal would be impossible without Lori LeComte, whose unwavering support and diligent work has been vital to creating *The Bridg*e, and both Ann Brunjes and Kim Davis, whose guidance keeps the English department moving forward.

The faculty of both the English and art departments play a vital role in the creation of *The Bridge* and we are grateful for the time spent helping students complete the work featured in the journal. The art created at Bridgewater State University is a reflection of the passion of both students and faculty, and we are honored to be a part of their artistic journeys. We are especially grateful for the support that Kathi Brazil, Rob Lorenson, and Alain Blunt have offered us and our contributors.

We also extend our thanks to the administrators at the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, and Academic Affairs, particularly the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Rita Miller and, from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean Arnaa Alcon, Interim Associate Dean Michael McClintock, Madelyn Dias, and Robin Costa-Sullivan for making it possible for us to continue creating.

For their role in helping us to amplify the visual and tactile experience our readers experience with the journal, we thank Jaime Knight, Assistant Director of Creative Services and Publications, and Cady Parker, our design consultant.

We are grateful for the help of Donna Balkcom and Sarah Wood, whose industrious work at the copy center allows us to edit everything from our first drafts to our final copies before print, and to the Mail Services and Maxwell Library staff, who make it possible to organize and distribute *The Bridge* when it is delivered each year.

To our readers and contributors, we say thank you for providing us with the opportunity to experience the art and literature included in this journal. It is a privilege each year to view your submissions and share them with our community.

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