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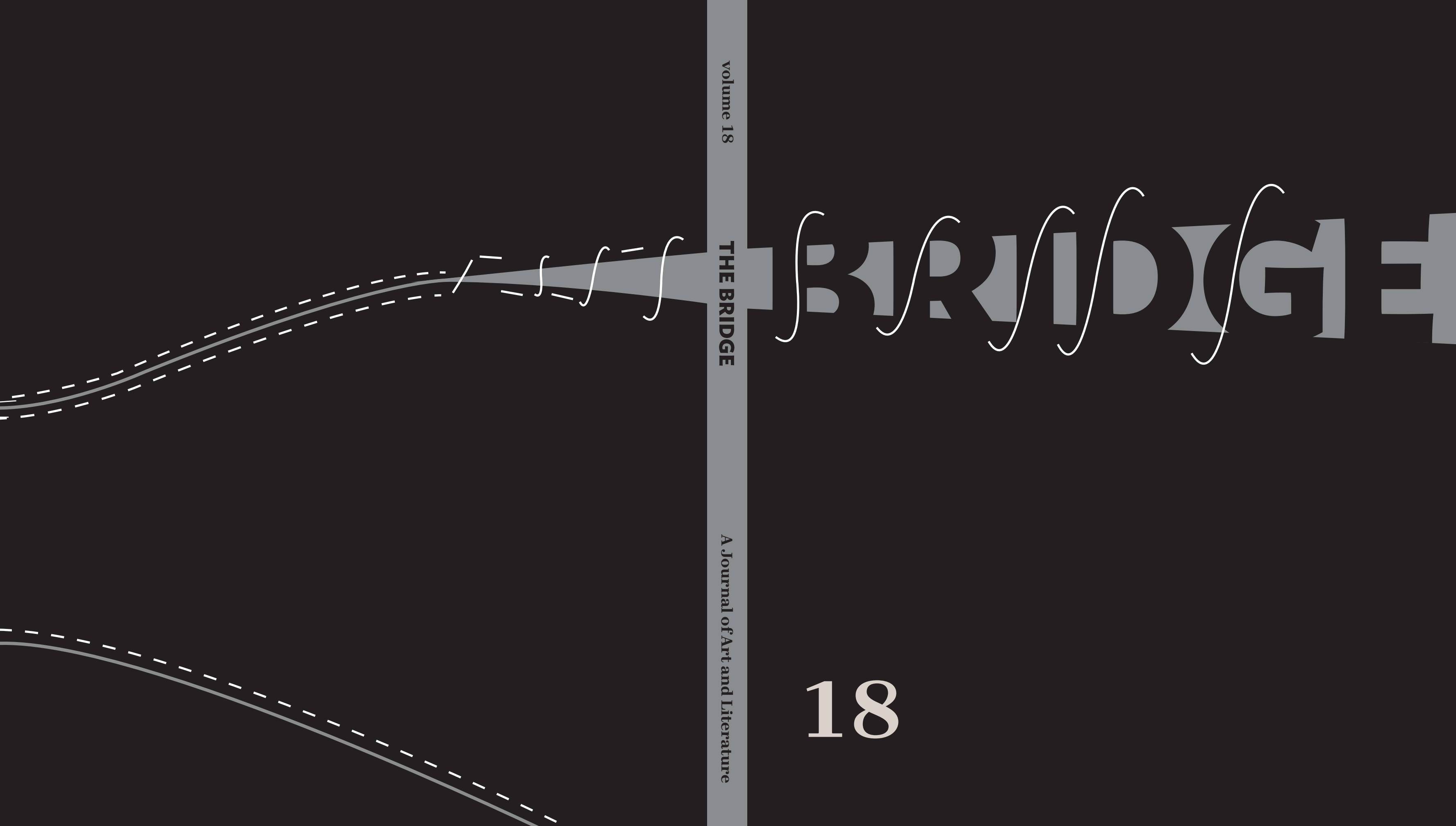


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volume 18

THE BRIDGE

A Journal of Art and Literature

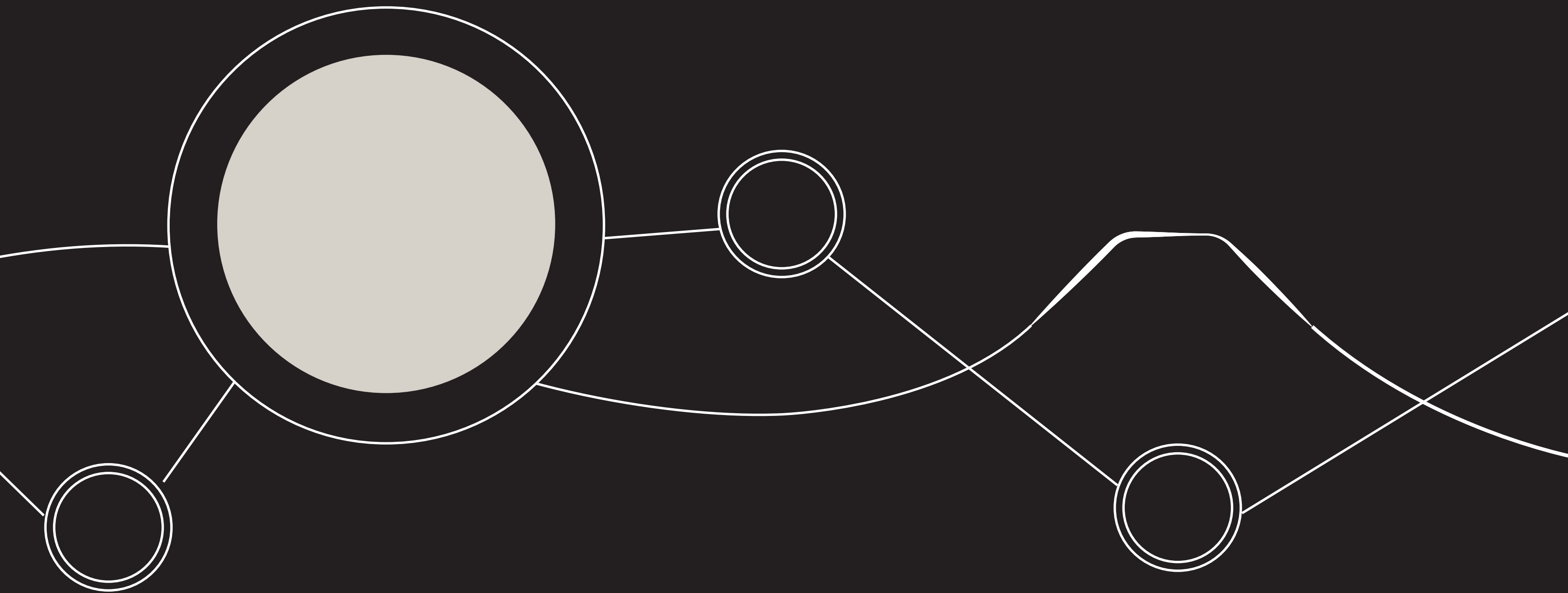
BRIDGE

18

THE
BRIDGE
VOLUME 18



A JOURNAL OF
ART AND LITERATURE



DEDICATED TO ALL WE HAVE LOST

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

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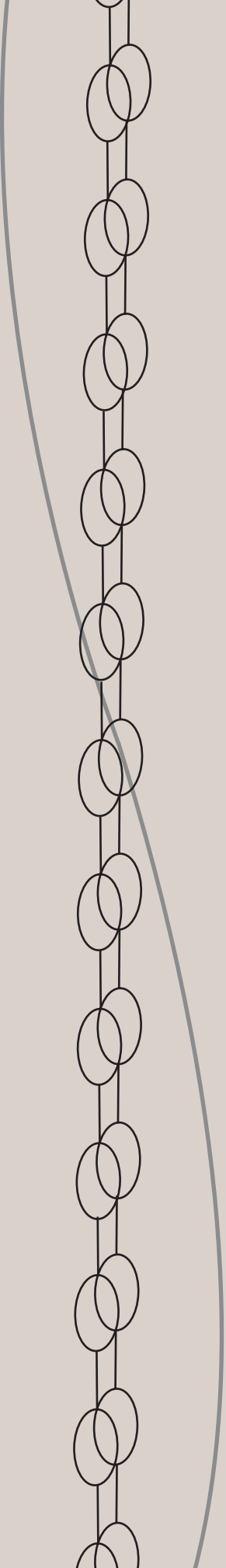
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A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The uncertainty of life has never been more apparent than it was over the course of this past year. Collectively, we have abandoned norms, practices, and the rituals of daily life in favor of staying safe and keeping our communities afloat. Fear set in as we lost access to the things we valued most: human connection, health, our sense of security. We were forced to grow and adapt to this world we still live in a year later, one which challenges the fundamental principle of human nature – connection to one another.

To bring ourselves peace, we started searching outside of our usual communities, which we had taken for granted as a constant source of entertainment and support. Many of us began reconnecting with nature when we couldn't connect with people. This time spent outside, surrounded by the natural world, also allowed us to cast our gaze inward. We began to reflect upon how we treat the earth, ourselves, and one another. Art and literature became an outlet for the outpouring of growth, grief, and love that many of us experienced.

In the way that any journey requires consideration to its environment, our design of the journal navigates the path that your art and literature have laid out for us. Thus, Volume 18 celebrates the ebb and flow of connection using thread as a visual metaphor to stitch these works together, with moments of pause for self-reflection.

Our advisors Evan Dardano and Alain Blunt encouraged us to see beyond what we thought was possible for this volume and pushed us to make our ideas heard no matter how ambitious. With Evan's expertise in literature and publishing and Alain's in art and design, our respective teams were able to work with experienced leadership. We thank them for their work and contributions to this project.

Volume 18 came to fruition in an unusual way, but we as editors navigated new methods of communication while remaining true to Bridge tradition. We bonded through our Zoom screens, laughing over various pet appearances and an unbearable amount of bear puns. It has been an honor to be entrusted with your works of art and literature that contemplate some of life's greatest challenges. We are overwhelmed by our community's talent and dedication to their craft, and hope that as you experience this volume you appreciate these works as much as we do.

Sincerely,
the Editors of Volume 18

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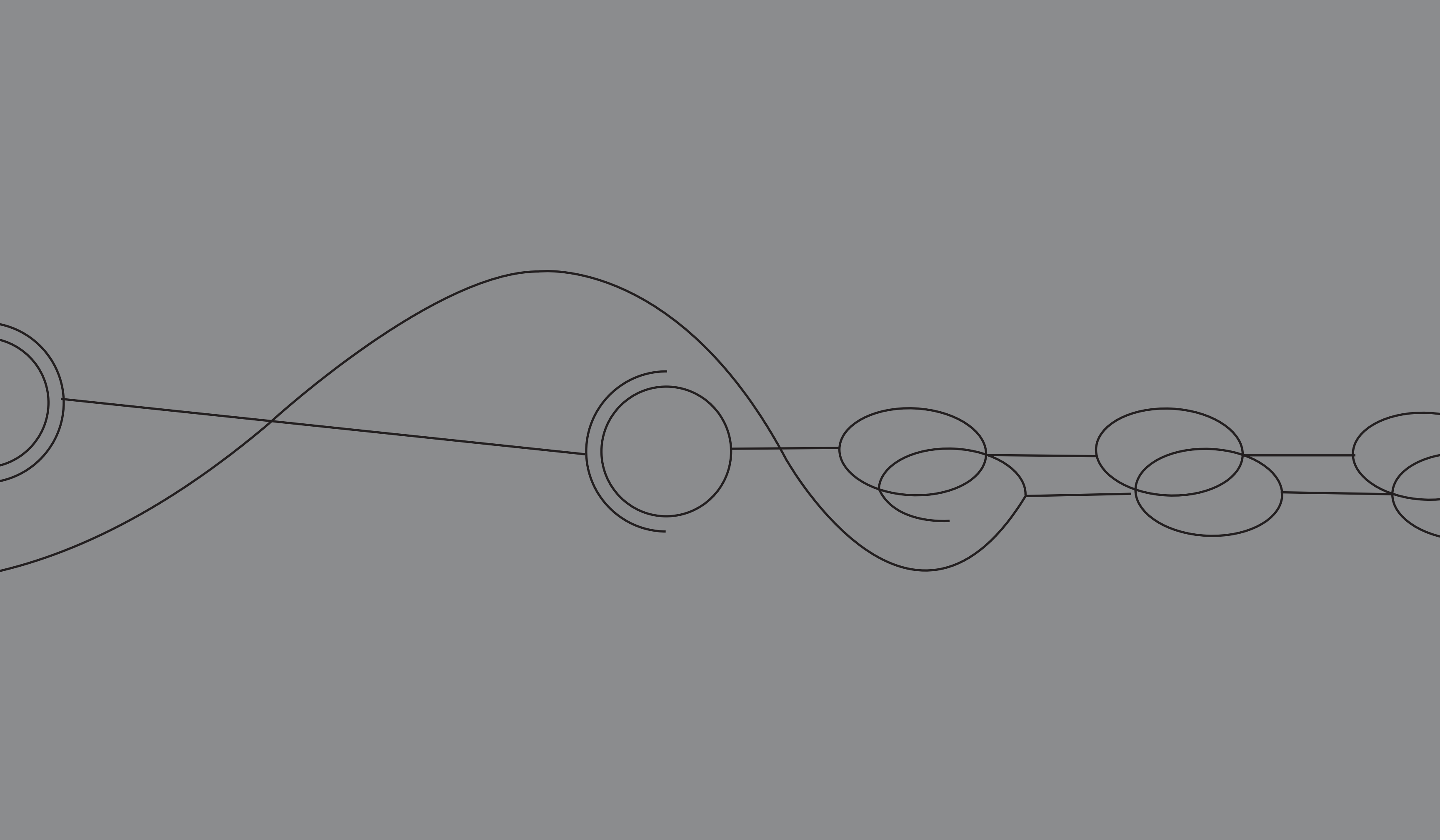
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**SAM ON
PENSACOLA BEACH**
Lisa Perakslis



ABSENCE

Clare Nee

You were my overprotective older brother,
the sarcastic punch line of every joke.

The light beaming down from that November sky
into three jagged streaks.

You were the strength of a cup of fresh coffee
and the tranquility of lavender.

You were more than the trauma that you endured in prison.
Prison — constructed in disguise as a home.

Your home,
your final resting space.

Silence inflicted
with every raised fist and deteriorating criticism.

My silence echoes off your tombstone and asks for forgiveness.
You, too, are silent.

Now,
you are the song that I can never quite get out of my head.

Your presence is the strongest cup of coffee that I lack.
Like air in my lungs —

Once in a while I can feel the shift in my breath
when I remember that you're gone.

Living in a world in which you do not.
There is no mundane address of residency

for where you rest.
Just a stone — overlooking a river.

All that I have are these words, your bracelet,
and sixteen years of memories carefully threaded through each bead.

Sitting heavily on my
pulse, like the weight of guilt on my heart.

Today, I am numb to the rain.
Searching for answers in puddles.

You are seemingly everywhere,
and nowhere.

The clock ticks

and —

ticks.

It is morning here.

And you are the strongest cup of coffee
that I lack.

SURROUNDED BY YOURSELF

Michaela Lefebvre

I can see you; I can see it all around,
The four walls closing in so slowly,
enough to make you go silent rather than to scream
I can see the voices in your head screaming from here,
it is written on your face,
the way you pull your hair, with too much strength and do not mean to but it all falls from
the grip of holding on to tight.
When you peel back your nails to try and dig into yourself,
digging for a diagnostic of discomfort.
When you look in the mirror and the person staring back with baggy eyes and pale toned skin
from the ghost of happiness.
You know that feeling when suddenly the biggest inconvenience is you standing in silence,
and slowly trying to get the courage to speak only to be stopped by
yourself.
Because your voice is too loud, and your shaking may make them nervous.

I understand you never learned how to control it,
they do not understand the trail marks on your hands,
it is not your fault; these things just happen.
They do not understand that you are paying for your sins with sirens in your head,
it does not make you less, it does not make you a waste
Let me take your hand, and not lead but walk beside you to the light,
until the walls start to open again,
until your fingernails grow back in,
and you let your breath catch up with the rest.
It takes time, patience, let us start with a breath,
then, we can take it step, by step.



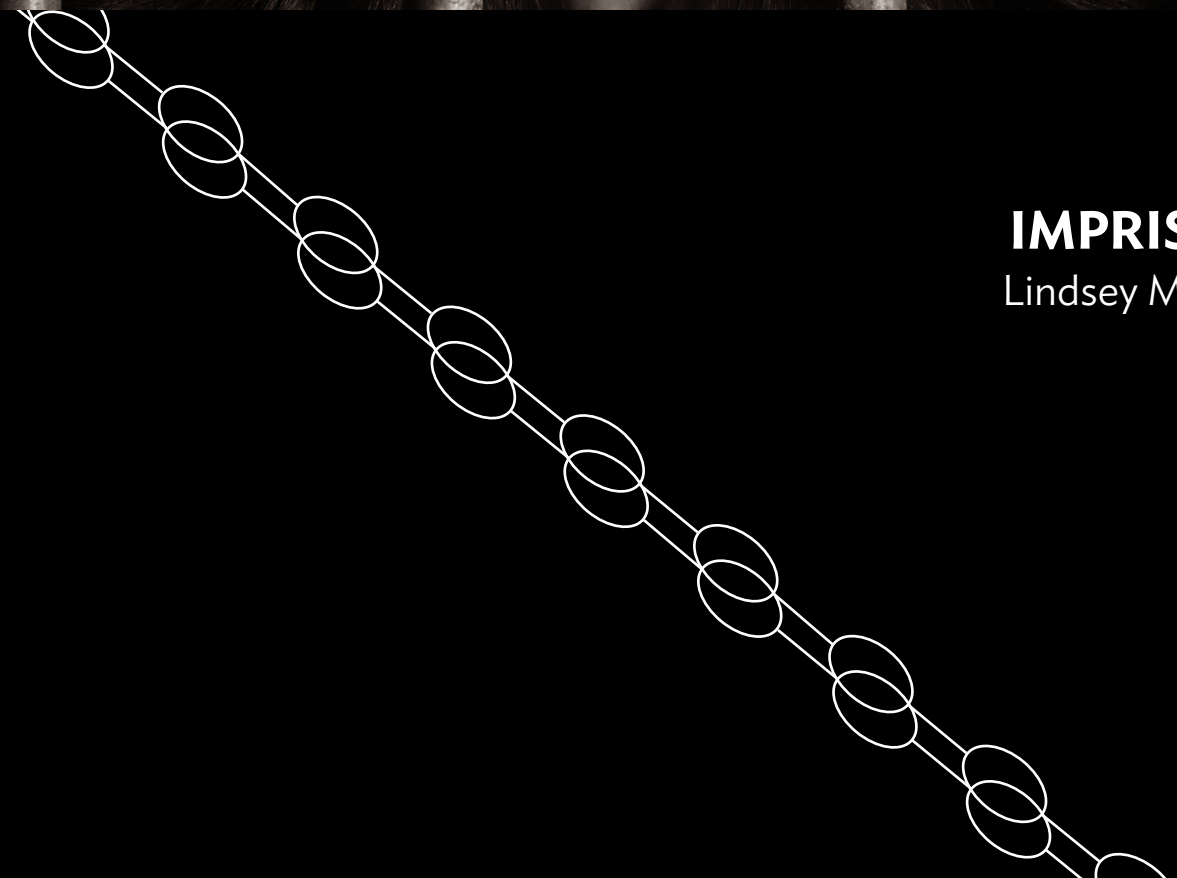
THE NEW NORMAL

Elysia Johnson



IMPRISONED

Lindsey MacMurdo



PANIC ROOM

Clare Nee

The raindrops bleed
the tears of
my siblings —

They unhinge the wreckage,
the abuse hidden within the belly,
and tell it that it has no place here anymore.

“I am calm and I am safe.”
Repeat after me,
this time, until you believe it to be so.

**WHEN THE CHILD BELIEVES SHE’S
UNWORTHY OF LOVE**

Clare Nee

When the child believes she’s unworthy of love,
please do not guess the origin of this belief is a lack of love,
but rather, a shattered image of that.

When she listens to the language of love that surrounds her,
she hears nothing more than a repetition of trauma,
broken furniture, slammed doors, and screams.

She learns to come back every time.
She learns to hate it and to spend her life doing so, this entity called “love,”
has been designed to confine her. Until she is no one. Until she is left alone.

Until she has to decide between her own safety and her children’s next meal.
Until she tries to call the police, but he is the police, as if to say, “Jokes on you girl, I got you.”
As if to say that love is a targeted movement. A demise.

The final collapse of safety and freedom. As if to say that “I surrender” or “I am surrounded” are
interchangeable for the woman who finds herself in this position
of love.

But love does not set the woman free, love throws kerosene onto the woman, and keeps her
burning, slowly. Until there is nothing more than a morsel of herself
to leave behind for her children.



UNNECESSARY LOSSES

Camille San Gabriel

REMAIN

Amy Palumbo

Flowers, they grew.
 Within her frigid but golden heart.
 But when the winter came and settled in.
 They wilted.
 Died.
 But they were still there.
 And there, they remained.
 Even with the frostbitten leaves of the past.
 The seeds of the forgotten remained.
 Untouched.
 They sprouted back up again though.
 When her smile shined the brightest.
 When her heart beat with lust.
 The icy exterior melted away.
 Dripping down her battered heart.
 Trickling down the vessels.
 They sprout.
 The vibrant colours leaving stains on the red artery remained.
 Only a tincture of sadness remained.
 Nothing ever remains.
 Nothing sad.
 Nothing good.
 But there is always good in the bad,
 and bad in the good.
 And flowers still bloom.
 No matter what.
 They remain.

AMERICA'S WAITING

Camille San Gabriel



BY A STRING

Lindsay Everson

May it be mountains, or let it be plains,
 or maybe big castles and lakes
 as I lie under my covers
 you lie under my skin
 embedded in who I could be
 late in the night
 I dream of your face
 every dip and divot
 escapes as I wake
 a string of fate
 has tied us two.
 We may never touch in this life
 but in the second,
 I'll be waiting for you
 for now, I will always wonder,
 am I wasting my time?
 do you dream of me too?
 The universe keeps me hanging
 by
 a
 string,
 giving me a lifetime to ponder
 about whom I would be
 if I was with you.



GRAVE OF ROCKY POINT

Joseph LaForest

WHO WILL SURVIVE IN AMERICA?

Ashley Lima

Drowning in pain,
in debt,
in the silence.
And my mind is
working overtime
just to keep swimming.
I don't know what it feels like
to be winning.
I've lost every race I've ever entered.
I hope I'm the turtle,
but when does this end?

BRIDGE
AWARD

ASHLEY
LIMA

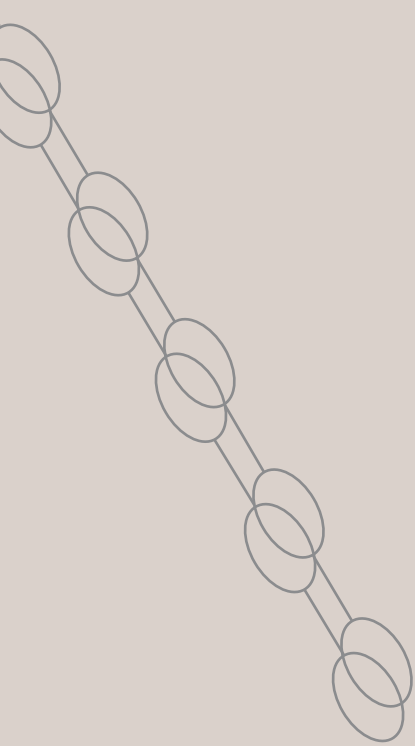
UNOBTAINABLE

Hanna August



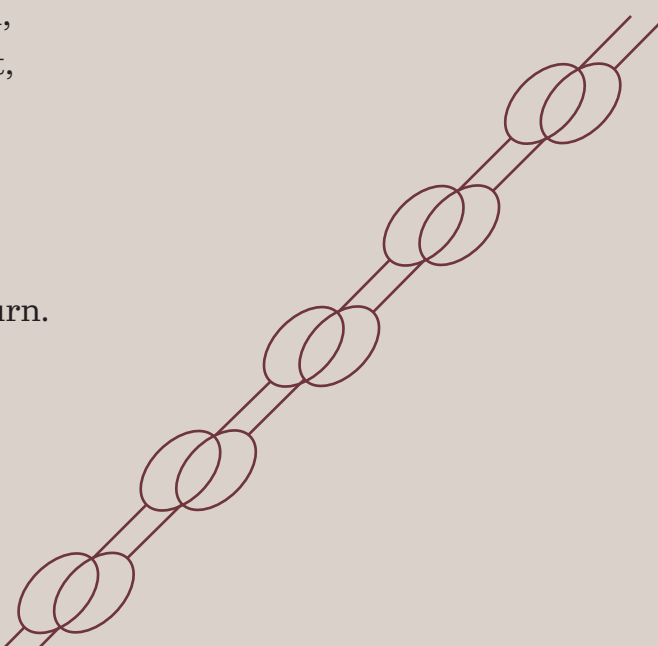
CLENCHING

Bridget Immar



I try to let go
while I wait for you to return.
I look for you in every guy I meet,
something to remind me of you,
of the feeling you gave me,
to know what we had was real.
I search for you
even though I don't want to see you.
I want to hear about you
while I cover my ears.
I try to fill the void without you,
meaningless relationships,
activities I don't even like.
I know you're not coming back,
I know you don't care about me anymore.
I somehow still love you,
I still wait for you.
I'm trying to learn to live without you,
while I hold a tiny piece of hope
we could be together.
I think about you all the time
while I probably never cross your mind anymore.
I smile when I'm near you,
trying to convince myself I'm moving on, but my heart still aches.
I'm not happier,
I just pretend I am
while I cry myself to sleep,
night after night after night.

I'm a memory to you now,
someone who maybe once meant something to you.
I'm sure you don't miss me,
I'm just another person in a world of seven billion souls.
But here I am,
wondering if you miss me,
the way I painstakingly miss my version of you.
I wish alcohol would numb the pain,
but even then I still think about you.
I can't think straight,
my mind wonders over to you.
On days when I finally feel okay,
somehow my mind wonders back to us,
and I'm back at square one.
You promised me you would be there,
you said there was no one else,
but you lied to me,
straight into my tearful eyes.
You broke your promises, you broke my heart.
Now I'm stuck,
trapped in my own mind,
trapped in my own heart,
holding onto false hope.
You're gone,
I'm here suffering.
I try to let you go,
while I wait for your return.



THE NEEDLE

Alyssa Asci



DECREPIT LAND

Sunnie Souza

Sullen skies
of misty gray
Dusky nights
and gloomy days

Bumpy branches
on broken trees
Twisted thorns
and crunching leaves

Trodden earth
scarred by feet
Muddy holes
and rooty pleats

Blistered bones
of fallen deer
Ivy vines
and brambles blear

DROUGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA 2018

Mei Fung Elizabeth Chan



THE SHAPELESS UNEASE

Mei Fung Elizabeth Chan



RED

Shelley Whalen

The door is red, a request that Detective Jerry Raka had made. The first request on his list of must-haves, actually, although Cheryl didn't see why the door had to already be red. He could easily paint the front door of his new house red.

Cheryl and Jerry stepped through the front door with shining, ornate glasswork that caught the sunlight and threw it into the entry of the two-story colonial-style house in the suburbs of Colorado. The midday sunlight bounced off Cheryl's red hair in an inferno of pigment around her head as she turned to face Jerry, her arms opening wide in a grand flourish. "Now, this is an entryway!" she exclaimed, spreading her painted lips into an uncomfortable smile.

Jerry stepped onto the original (but beautifully restored) hardwood and it creaked under his feet. He nodded silently, as though not really paying attention to the house with everything on his list, in the neighborhood he loved, and that comes in at only slightly over- budget. In other words, this house was a dream come true, and Cheryl had to pull all the strings she had (and call in some favors to pull the strings she didn't) to get Jerry the opportunity to see this house. She'd been trying to get him to buy a house for months now. So his spacing out and not paying attention to Cheryl's gold mine of a find was really starting to piss her off.

Her arms dropped to her sides in defeat. "What's wrong, Mr. Raka? Is the chandelier too ornate for your taste?" Cheryl pouted and pointed up, indicating the crystals seemingly suspended in the air, sparking in the sunlight as if they were giving off fire.

Jerry shook his head slightly, mumbling "No, no, it's fine, Ms. Thana. The entry is beautiful." He twisted his hands together, and stared at the floor. "Can we see the rest of the house?"

Cheryl inwardly sighed and headed towards the kitchen, modern and sleek, but with a rustic edge, an exposed wooden beam running the length of told Jerry about the brand-new stainless-steel appliances, the gas-powered stove (that are so hard to find in this part of town — Cheryl swears electrics are taking over because no one knows how to properly cook anymore and we all worship the microwave and Lean Cuisine dinners) and the black and white subway tile backsplash that just so happens to match the shower tiling in the ground floor bathroom.

The house pulled out all the stops that the detective could want in a home, but Jerry kept staring out windows, at the floor, into space.

Cheryl gave up at that point. She put away her real estate persona and switched to therapist. "What's wrong, Jer? A week ago all you wanted to do was look at houses. You kept e- mailing me pictures of what you wanted in a house and now you look like you're not even interested."

Jerry scratched the back of his head. "It's..."

he looked like he was searching for the right words, but they didn't come, so he ran his hand over his face. "It's nothing, really, Cheryl. Just work stress."

Cheryl slowly walked over to the lovely black metal barstool and sat in front of the granite breakfast bar (staging, ladies and gentlemen — chairs don't come with the house, unfortunately). "You're a detective, aren't you?"

Jerry nodded.

"If it would help to talk about it a little bit, I'm all ears," Cheryl continued.

Jerry visibly hesitated for a moment, and then slowly sat down next to Cheryl. He didn't look at her, but at his hands, while he spoke.

"I'm sure you've heard about Dr. Gildred Mallory. The man who disappeared a few days ago?"

Cheryl nodded. "I read about it online. I don't live in this area but I keep up to date on the areas that I sell homes in."

"I've been assigned the case, and it's my first as a detective. I just recently got promoted, like I told you over e-mail. It's only

been a few days and this case is already kicking my ass. He disappeared after waiting to meet with a former client at the hospital where he works during his after-hours. Something about a baby he had delivered that died due to complications.”

“What complications would those be?” Cheryl asked, trying to keep sneering malice out of her voice. She seemed successful, as Jerry didn’t seem to notice.

“Most likely from over confidence that the woman didn’t need a C-section. Apparently it’s happened to him a few times before. The paperwork was gone, probably taken with him, and the receptionist couldn’t remember a name or a face. Only that the woman had blonde hair.”

Cheryl casually twisted a strand of hair around her finger, eyes wide with focus.

“We know he left the hospital about ten minutes after he met with the patient, but no one has heard from him since. His wife reported him missing when he didn’t come home that night and wasn’t answering his cell phone.”

Jerry sighed, and then met Cheryl’s eyes. He looked tired. There were already bags under his eyes and a weak pallor to his skin, and she didn’t need to be a detective to see the stress that lingered in his exhausted gaze.

Cheryl said no words, only reached out and squeezed Jerry’s hand and her red fingernails reminded her of fallen rose petals, the ones that littered her daughter’s grave.

He smiled at her, a real one, a moment of revival. “The house is beautiful, Ms. Thana. I’ll take it.”

* * *

Sweat slides down her face and stings her eyes, but that pain is nothing to the blisters on her hands as she grips the wooden handle of the shovel that bites into the earthen floor. Dim light filters in from the single lightbulb above the staircase of the basement, and dust swirls around in the halo of light that falls around her.

Cheryl breathes out in heavy huffs, working muscles real estate agents never really have to use.

She lets go of the shovel and it falls to the floor with a heavy thud, making a cloud of dirt dance upwards. Wiping her forehead with the back of her arm, the hairs falling out of her ponytail tickle her skin. Rolling her shoulders, she turns to the bag a few feet from her. Shiny, black and heavy, she grabs it and drags it to the swallow hole she has dug. She straddles the hole with her legs and slides the bag in.

She arranges it neatly and covers it

with some of the dirt she unearthed. The crawlspace is slightly larger than most, and Cheryl makes the most of it.

She picks up the shovel and throws it over her shoulder, balancing it in her blistered and dirty hands. They look strange to her, compared to her manicured nails, now with dirt underneath them. She begins to go up the stairs, and glances back at her handiwork. Only a small bit of the bag was visible in the light, the shiny black plastic almost completely covered by a thin layer of dirt.

She starts climbing the stairs again, and her hand hovers over the exposed light switch, and she smiles to herself.

“Sayonara, you bastard.”

* * *

A little more than one month later, a beautiful two-story, colonial-style house in the Colorado suburbs will be marked off from the rest of the peaceful neighborhood with bright yellow police tape. After a couple days of living there, detective Jerry Raka will discover the body of Dr. Gildred Mallory decaying in the crawlspace underneath his home. The newspapers and the police department will say it almost fooled them, the trick of the head detective being the murderer. But after the discovery of the body, the murder weapon was found in the shed of his home, the hammer still crusted with dried blood from the blunt force trauma to the doctor’s

head. There were no fingerprints but his own, no sign anyone else but him had ever used the hammer. They decided his promotion was motive enough. He needed an important case, so he created one himself.

The headline will read The Entrance to Hell, a blatant gesture to the red door, a key and standout feature of the house. Jerry had wanted the door red as a symbol of power and authority, most likely related to his new position of power. It was similar to men wearing red ties to interviews, as if the color made them seem more competent.

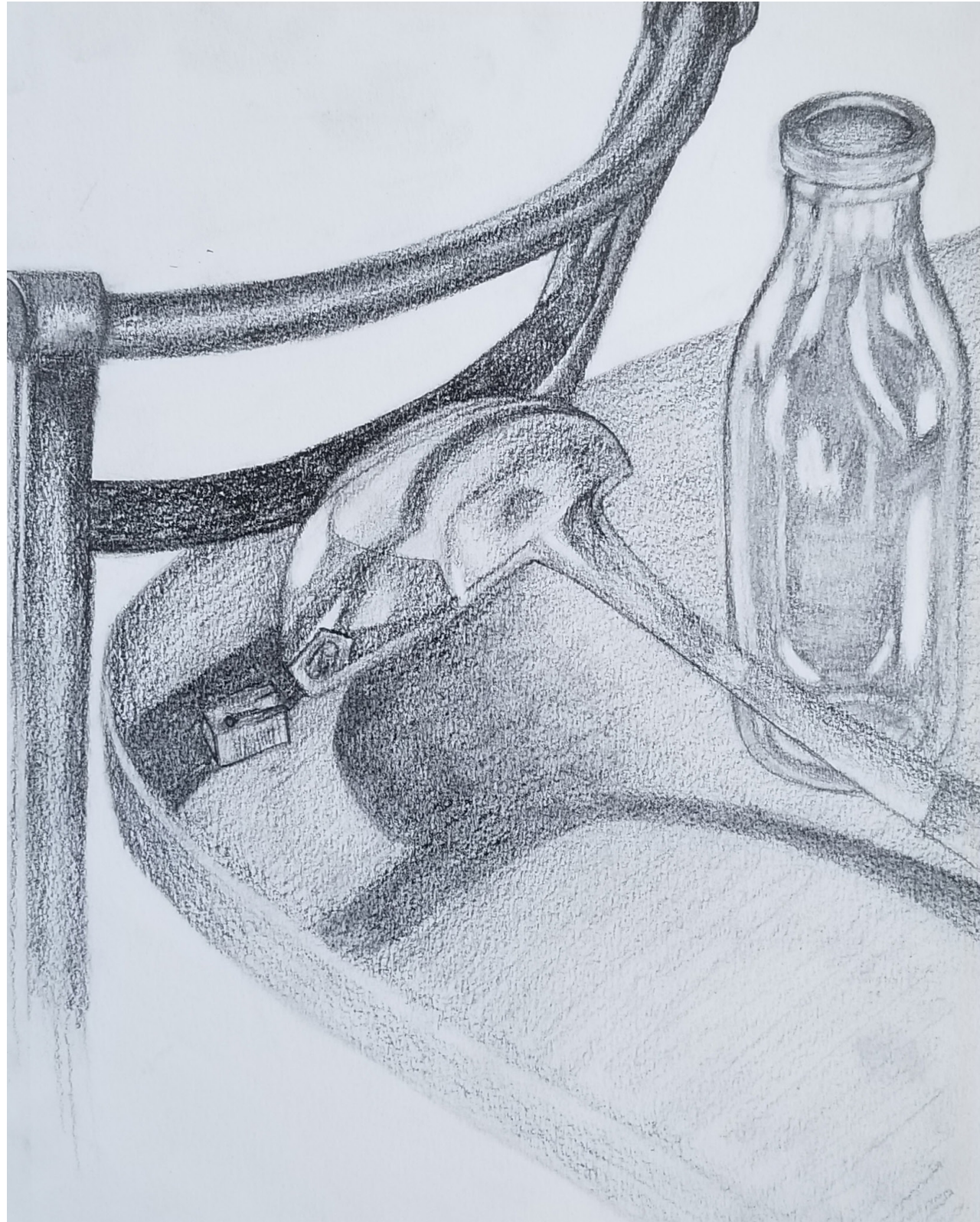
Jerry Raka will be found guilty of murder, although he will claim to be innocent until the end of his days.

The night the story breaks, Abbey Real Estate agent Cheryl Thana will be watching the

news. She’ll see the live footage of Jerry Raka being dragged away by the officers that were once his brothers-in-arms.

She’ll clearly see his bloodshot eyes, and she’ll smile a wide smile, fingering the spare key to his house with red nails that look like drops of blood.

“Sorry, Jer- but you really should have gone for a more subtle colored entrance.”



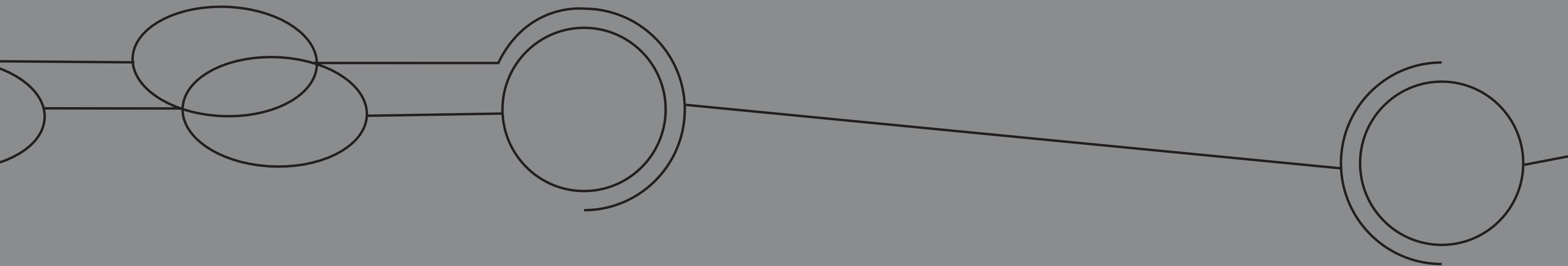
METAL AND GLASS

Lydia Theriault

BURNT TOAST

Lindsay Everson

Our love is the burnt toast
 she makes early on Sunday mornings
 as the birds decide to murmur their gentle tune
 contradicting the bellowing blues they sang previously that
 morning perched up on the dark green bushes
 that sit in the front yard lining our small ranch.
 It is the quiet wisp of passing paper plates
 and open windows bringing in the north river air
 making us thankful for the lingering smell of smoke
 coming from the toaster oven,
 light and fragile as it breaks apart.
 My mouth consumes its rough edges
 and absorbs the grittiness of the dark dusk left behind.
 It is the cold butter on top that begins to melt
 as we gently smooth it with our knives
 making the dull piece shine.
 Quiet voices begin to boom after the clinking
 of hot coffee mugs slows filling
 our early morning mellow minds
 with big plans for this little world.
 On Sunday mornings I do not question love,
 I sink my teeth into the consequences of her busy mind
 as she gazes at our yellow crooked cabinets
 that never shut all the way,
 which so often keep her eyes captive just long enough
 to burn the toast.



PORTRAIT OF SAM

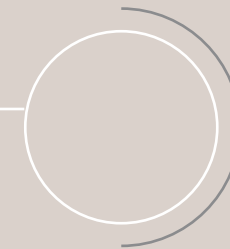
Amanda Merola



LOVE NOT LUST

Shaley Ronan

I don't kiss your cheek and graze down to your neck for the goosebumps.
I don't touch your arm with my fingertips to feel your skin.
I don't twist my hand through your hair to feel the softness.
But I do all of these things,
For the hair that was mistreated,
the skin that was bruised,
the body that was not grasped with gentle hands.
I do these things,
because I love you.



AN ABUNDANCE OF GRATITUDE

Kylie Swenson

My heart, a teacup
shattered and repaired.
Of stone — from Earth. I am.
Stratified, conscious.

Pain is but stained glass
Cracks become valleys
caressed by gold and
bronze, silver, precious
love

that flows abundant.
Alloy and tea leaves
my

cup

runneth

over

despite my time of
need. This tea is made
of Gold.

MASSASOIT STATE PARK

Mollie MacDonald



AUBURN WOOD

Alyssa Asci

**TILLY**

Erika Fay Greenwood

a mirage in the courtyard of a postcard
 you could see through her
 she was warm even on the coldest new england days
 she encompasses boston in her institutional lights
 every sunrise
 every sunset
 lived within her
 she wasn't the early bird
 nor the night owl
 but she was there
 she brought unity through the stomach
 and comfort through her essence
 i fell in love with her on a warm september day
 and found love in her on a cold october's night
 a love like tilly's is never lost
 it exists in those who tasted the world in her walls
 to those who venture to taste the cultures that encompassed
 her and to those that love and lost together
 legends say she will come back some day
 others aren't as hopeful
 but i think hope and tilly are friends
 because they're two halves of the same heart

THE LONESOME DEATH OF ELLA ROBERTA

Ethan Child

Ella Roberta Adoo Kissi-Debrah passed away in February 2013 due to acute respiratory failure caused by severe asthma and air pollution exposure. She was nine years old . In December 2020, Ella became the first person in Britain to have air pollution legally listed as a cause of death. For more information, visit

ellaroberta.org

“But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears
Take the rag away from your face, now ain’t the time for your tears”
—Bob Dylan

Ella Roberta
(whose full name is Ella Roberta Adoo Kissi-Debrah)
lived and died in Lewisham, in London,
where the air is full of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter.
A life lived near a road of pollution
is not a life lived.
Undeveloped lungs get fed poison
from a spoon so big they can’t even touch it,
like a daisy planted, delicately,
underneath a cinder block.
It kills.

A mother can’t explain
to a child gasping for air
what it’s like for the other people who breathe.
How could she ever explain
why air is afforded or not afforded
to people like them?
A nine-year-old girl
dreams of one day becoming a pilot
and flying far above the air full of nitrogen dioxide
and particulate matter.
She also plays ten musical instruments.

Zanzinger’s tobacco farm of six hundred acres
has exploded into a million pieces,
floating all around us in the air that we breathe.
Both material and immaterial.
But whether you write it down or not,
it’s in the air.

When will we stop pretending?

VITALITY
Hanna August





DEWY BLACK-EYED SUSANS

Lindsey MacMurdo

WINDY DAY

Bridget Immar

They always ask me—what does grief feel like,
I respond in one word: wind.

Some days are gusty,
the wind is loud, strong, and dynamic.
Grief is the same way—there is no escape.

Other days are calm.
The wind is still there but not very noticeable.
The grief is still in you but very imperceptible.

Then most days are breezy, evident but
not forceful—just in the middle.
These days you can feel the wind in your hair, on your face
but it's not overpowering, it's just there.
Grief is the same way; it will always be there because
there is no escape from the wind or grief.

THE WAY OF THE SQUIRREL

Sara Gifford



QUARANTINE AND SHAKES (THE LEWD WASSAILS)

Doris Nau

05/02/2020

Dear Diary,

It has been a long time since I kept a diary, but, since a pandemic has forced the world to a grinding halt, my life has evolved from a sitcom to a Shakespearean comedy and we are currently at the part where the eminent threat is revealed. So, I thought it would be prudent to catalog some of the events and, like with the diaries I kept in the past, I imagine my diary will be an artifact found in the rubble that will enable future archaeologists to piece together how life was in the beginning of the 3rd millennium.

By May 2020, between the incessant natural disasters, extraordinary tension across the world, and the tragic threat of a virus-born apocalypse looming in the distance, it came as no surprise to me when an interdimensional tear brought fictional characters to our reality. At first, this was a welcome distraction from the never-ending boredom, but when Betty White tested positive for Covid-19, every single governing body, from local to international, swiftly and unanimously decided to shut down the world. As a global quarantine began, many people, myself included, volunteered to shelter the fictional characters, and by lottery, I welcomed Nick Bottom, Sir John Falstaff, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek into my home.

05/05/2020

Dear Diary,

As luck would have it, I could not have asked for better Quaranimates (I am going to coin this term once this is all over). It was inevitable we would learn little facts about each other and, to my delight, many of their talents and preferences enhanced our experience together.

Falstaff is an amazing cook and loves to experiment with different flavors. Unsurprisingly, he admits his refined palate has led to his rotund appearance. Nick Bottom is, by far, the most artistically inclined, and would treat us to various impressions and impromptu songs. Just earlier today, he played a prank on Falstaff by roaring like a lion (behind a closed door) so accurately and loudly that Falstaff declared, “pranks, like cowards, are like sack with a lime in it!” Once Aguecheek agreed that he doesn’t like lime in his sack either, they became fast friends. If it weren’t for Aguecheek’s running commentary on all that is happening around him, whether it is accurate or not, I would have missed many of the shenanigans they got up to while they stayed with me.

Speaking of sack, it has been 48 hours since my three guests arrived, and we have spent 46 of them drinking, telling stories, and just having a grand old time. The stories, like all storytelling, told us about the orator rather than just the story itself and we were glad for it. Falstaff disclosed details about the fierce Battle of Shrewsbury where he slayed the rebel Hotspur. Aguecheek told of the time he almost got into a deadly duel with

a woman! Bottom recounted the epic he named “Bottom’s Dream” that told of his adventure in the land of fairies as the King of the Asses. Though we all enjoy each other’s company, it seems the true guest of honor was always a bottle of spirits. If it weren’t for Sir Aguecheek’s limitless purse, they would have drunk me out of house and home!

In those two hours where everyone was somewhat sober, I felt it was time to let them know that, in our dimension, they are famous characters in different plays by one famous playwright, which they handled surprisingly well. Bottom immediately accepted his predicament as another situation where reality and imagination intertwine. Falstaff began “proving” how familiar he is with Shakespeare’s work by repeating some of the things he has said in the past 48 hours. Aguecheek, adorable Aguecheek, explained he knew Shakespeare personally: “Such a well-rounded fellow! I never knew he wrote plays!” I admit, their parlor stories grew from amusing to legendary as time progressed, and the alcohol flowed, but they soon became as restless as the rest of the globe.

05/06/2020

Dear Diary,

It was when I went out for another trip to the “essential” liquor store, I had a genius idea to cure their blues – what if we put on a Shakespeare play? I rushed home and told them of my plan and, of course, Bottom volunteered to play the lead. Before I could remind Bottom I haven’t told him which play we will put on, Aguecheek began to worry he wouldn’t remember his lines. Falstaff agreed, as long as the play doesn’t involve his playing a soldier or a robber, but he was most excited for any chance to dance on stage. After considering their positions and limitations, I announced we are doing a truncated version of Merchant of Venice. (To be fair, I also drank me out of house and home, but I sobered up enough to relieve Falstaff of cooking duty and made us tacos, since it was Tuesday.) Afterward supper, I went about adapting Merchant of Venice for four actors as they spent the rest of their night discussing their past exploits.

05/08/2020

Dear Diary,

Today was the casting call and first rehearsal! I rearranged the living room so that we can have a proper place to rehearse and produce the play. Once we had gathered, but before I revealed who would play what role, Bottom suggested the only fair assessment of skill would be through an audition to which, of course, Aguecheek readily agreed. When I explained that doesn’t make any sense since there are only four of us, Falstaff reminded me to prepare a little jig to go with his given monologue. With that, all three men went their separate ways to “prepare.”

After two hours of proper auditions led by Bottom, I read out my original lineup:

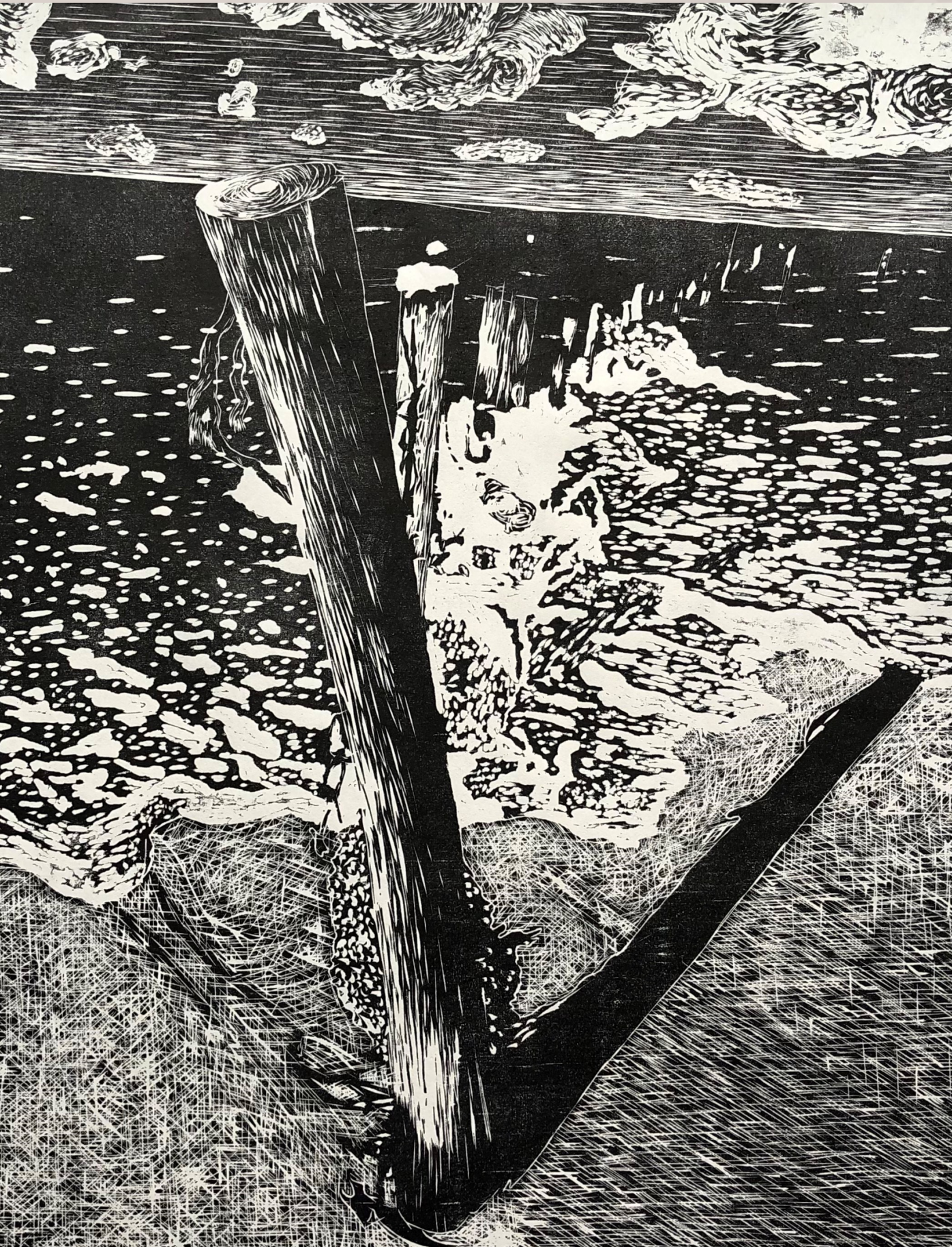
- Aguecheek as Antonio
- Bottom as Portia
- Falstaff as Bassanio
- Me as Shylock

They fell immediately into protest over their roles. Falstaff said he did not like Bassanio because the man incurred debts he could not pay and therefore he could not possibly play the character accurately. Bottom said he would not do justice to the role of Portia, since he has not shaved since he arrived, so he asks if he and Falstaff can switch roles. Aguecheek requested we change the name of the character from “Antonio” to “Andrew” so he could remember who he is set to play. I acquiesced to all the ridiculous demands because I love them and want to make them all as happy as their presence has made me. As Bottom surmised, “reason and love keep little company together”.

**THE WEST
COAST IS BURNING**

Camille San Gabriel



**SERENITY**

Hanna August

A WATER SIGN

Lindsay Everson

The creek was quiet one summer evening
making my reflection clear
the gentle ripples moved me
and my face began to wrinkle
the rocks slowed the waves
calming the water
showing me you
like the creek so often did
a journey I felt I could trust
failed in the hands of fate
you wanted big plans
I wanted the safe way out
now as I stand here
the fresh mud sinks
I reflect into you
and I am scared
I see you
and I dive in
there is no backing out
now.
my black hair shines
as water drips down
the curve of my back
I will not be you

SAINT

Amy Palumbo

I did not expect to fall for such a man on the day we were both created
you seemed to be god's finest creation
He pushed us together, smooshed us against each other, for some odd reason
Reasons that are still unbeknownst to me
Perhaps hoping our bodies would find each other somehow and some way
With gods and prophecies tattooed onto your skin your intestines shielded the sins that were
etched onto your tongue so as to not trick the unlucky recipient of your desire
We ran through the forest of lust and pleasure,
hoping to find a way of unity
of clarity
I could taste the regret and sins on the tips of our tongues before we begun
Like a venomous snake you coaxed me to try the Apple that lay hidden under the branches of
the forbidden tree
I had been told to not fall for this trickery as I would not be able to turn back time or be able to
take back my mistakes
But I wanted a taste of this treachery within myself, to taste the forbidden fruit that we,
that I,
had not yet discovered
It was not as sweet as I had hoped and your smile became treacherously deceiving
I had fallen for you and your prophecy-stained skin,
with such anguish and such desire
I could not fathom why I had fallen for
you for this trick
so quickly

Your eyes were a weakness as well as your hideous sweet nothings that melted the pain around
my arteries
I thought I had fallen for an angel with the prophet Saint Michael inked across his arm and
biblical figures and verses scrolled onto his body
but instead I had collapsed and tripped upon
a fallen angel
who did not need my help
in getting back up
and now I have come to realize
that you were the snake all along
and your only purpose
was to bite and inject poison
and disguise it as sweet nectar.
Your skin does not define you or your morals
so why must you paint yourself
to be a holy man
when you are just a mere
mortal
boy

THE BIRDS WILL SING
JUDGEMENT DAY

Kylie Swenson

I have no patience for a selfish man
who rolls his eyes at the parking lot gulls
Far they have travelled from their sunny sands
to perch atop flickering street lamps

They are the harbingers of judgment day
They scorn greed through keen, beady little eyes
Barbaric yawps announce the fall of man
The desecration of morality —

it is upon us!

Alone on pavement sits the cart you left
This neglect attests to a selfish hand.

I loathe the people waiting for the train
that *shoo!* the city pigeons like the plague
As if the iridescence of their wings
won't lift them closer to divinity

They were couriers!

Like false prophets you cast them aside.
You are the messengers now; needless war cries

When you seek the sweet cooing from these birds
know it's your hand who bloodied the dove.
The laurel leaves and olive branches died

to make room for parking lots and train stops.
Greed distorts divine melodies
As above? So below — you clipped their wings!

When you meet God, you'll stare into the eye
of parking lot sea gulls, chattering pigeons
Your hands will tremble, come the bloody dove

HOUSE SPARROW PERCHING

Lindsey MacMurdo



BISON AT YELLOWSTONE

Sunnie Souza

The wind calls to him.
It howls through the mountains
Frosted peaks that caress the sky.
It twists through the gangly pines
bellows along indigo rivers.

The wind calls to him.
It drifts by eagle's wings
gliding above the horizon.
It whispers through the valley
bending the petals of asters.

The wind calls to him.
Behind misty geysers
below his fierce horns
eyes like embers
ignite with the rising sun.

The wind calls to him.
Broad head to the ground
golden grasses ripple
beneath his hooved feet
Earth thundering,
from his cloven drumming

The wind calls to him.

STILLNESS IN THE AIR

Grace Leopold





THE LION

Mollie MacDonald

GAY

Shayla Hinds

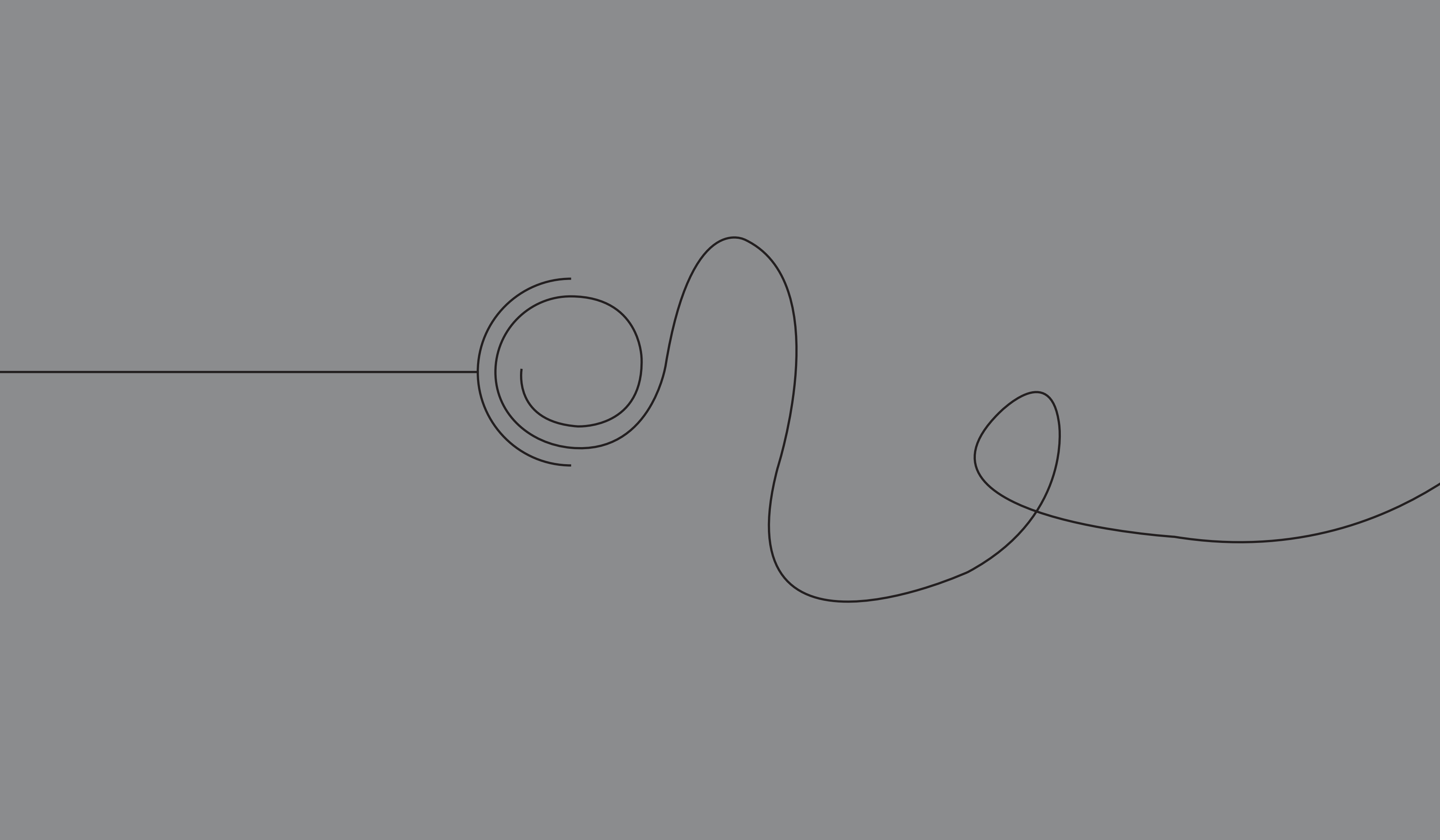
I am not the mimosas on the weekend kind of gay
Nor the glitter explosion of rainbow type of gay
decked out like a drag queen, frizz
swallowing the entirety of their wigs
and I swallow my anxiety down like a shot
their gaze full of intent



I am not the underarm hair activist type of gay
I write love songs on my hands
blue and cracked by the end of the day
I wish I could use my words
turn my uselessness into
meaning

I am not the celebratory type of gay
avoiding pride parades
their happy faces, happy smiles
rainbow striped faces

I am gay
hidden and scared
stuck in darkness
bound by disapproval
trying to be anything but
this type of gay



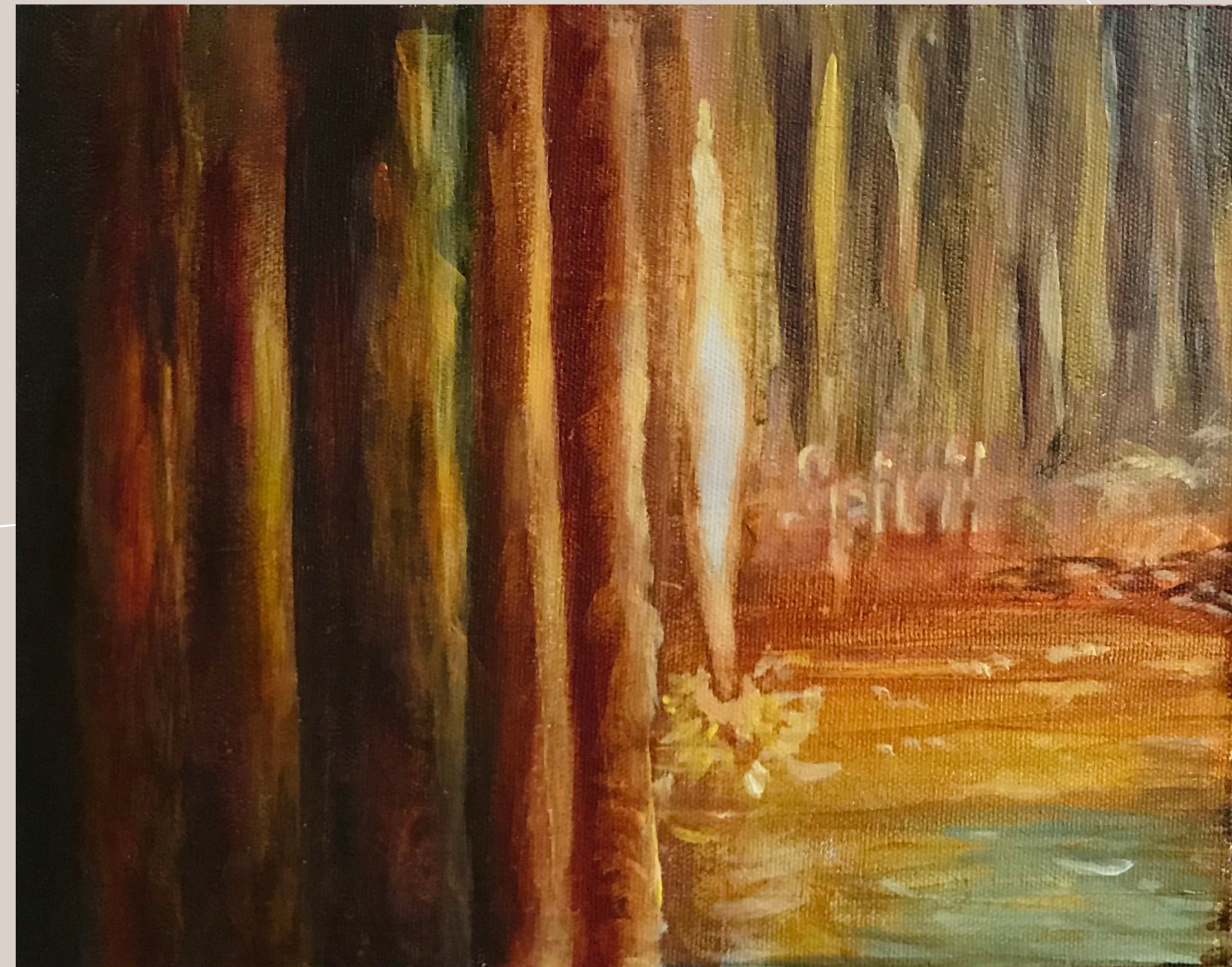
TO MY MOON TATTOO

Shayla Hinds

Skin on skin, the graze of my fingertips
against your soft
inked up body with sharp angles
cutting like glass
A shard of remembrance, of when you were
here
You stare at me
up close, too close
always around, always
silent
You wear what I wear
A tiny stalker
shouldn't make me feel so safe
But when I gaze at your shape
you, a dark shadow in the dusk
I smile and remember
when you were still here

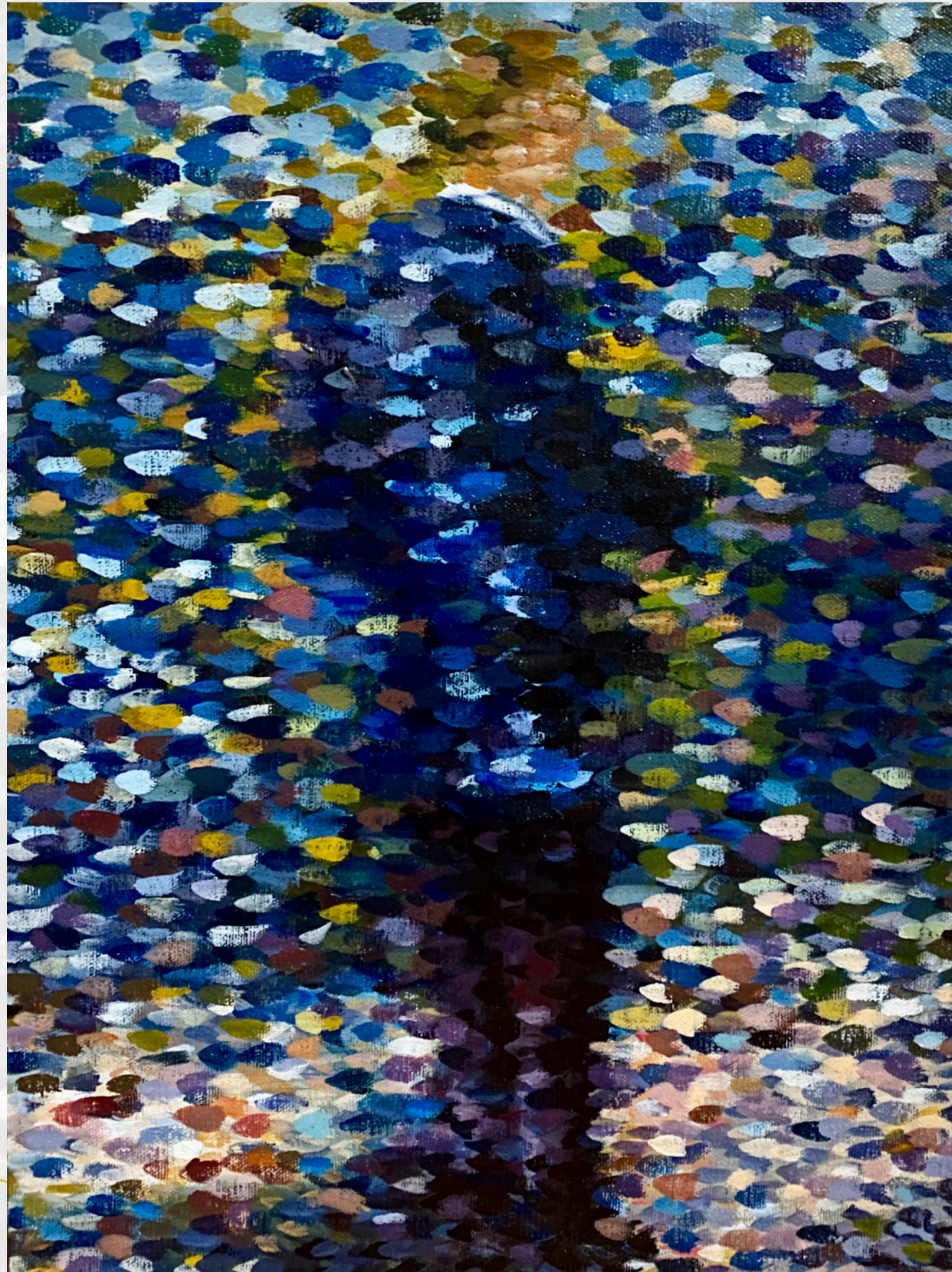
SPIRIT

Nicole Seeley



ABSTRACT MAN

Bao Huynh

**ICARUS**

Shayla Hinds

I can't whistle because I have no air
I am a deflated balloon of a body
floating away to the horizon
with nothing to keep me to the ground
My stretched plastic skin follows the birds in the sky

I soar and soar and soar
past those birds, past the milky clouds, past the
scorching sun
then I plummet

I am only an empty bag

the string that kept me tethered ripped into pieces
With no control I continue to fall
back to gracing the tops of city roofs

I wish the static would come back
electron sparks like a citrus twinge on the taste buds
letting me cling to safety

But I was never the balloon

Its liberation calls to me but my feet

are concrete

I am full of useless air
a body bag
reaching towards the skyline



CLEMENTINE

Emily Hayes

CALL TO MIND

Kaitlyn Hampton

He asked me my name,
I collapse onto the hearth,
its smooth, hard, cold surface swaddles me.
I try to push myself up, I try to stand,
but tears burn like acid down my cheeks,
darkness is surrounding me,
I can't breathe.
He doesn't remember me?

He stares at the fireplace,
he remembers those he has not forgotten.
His memories exposed through pictures on the mantle;
a black and white scene of him as a little boy,
smiling, as he shows off his new wooden red truck.
"Who's that little boy?" — he asks.
A tinted yellow stained picture of his mother in a pink dress,
his father in a matching pink suit, they gaze at him as he awaits
his bride to be at the altar, his younger brother standing
beside him with matching tuxes and matching smiles.
"What was his name?" — he points to his father.
A glossy picture of him with a full head of dark brown hair
holding a baby wrapped in a bright pink blanket with the same dark hair,
tears in his eyes as he gazes at his new bundle of joy.

I look up at him with tears in my eyes,
like I did when I fell off my bike,
I reach for him,
like I did when I wanted him to hold me.
Will he remember me?
He turns, looks down at me,
like a father looking down to his daughter.
He holds out his hands and pulls me to my feet.
As I tower over him,
he gazes at me with a twinkle in his eye,
"I love you lil dalin...
... never forget that."

MR-Brain
6.0x4.8x4.6cm

02/23/2011
12 year
Hayes, Emily A.

**MORE DANGER
THAN YOU
THOUGHT**

Shayla Hinds

Black people can't swim
but I am a siren lurking below the surface
salt-water reddened eyes set on my target
like a blood driven shark with no thoughts

kicking my feet like a gentle motor
I feel the fire bubbling below
with my arms outstretched towards my victims

I can practically taste their panic
through the emerging air bubbles
eyes screwed tight to avoid impact

I'm never able to catch up
since I'm actually a slow swimmer
but I imagine the shock on their faces
to see a little black mermaid
grabbing at their ankles

STORM

Nicole Seeley



MURMURING

Mei Fung Elizabeth Chan



BRIDGE
AWARD

MEI FUNG
ELIZABETH CHAN

SPEECHLESS

Mei Fung Elizabeth Chan



THE THINGS SHE NEVER KNEW

Kaitlyn Hampton

Before having a child out of wedlock was acceptable,
30 plus years before 16 and Pregnant was romanticized on MTV,
everyone worried about driver's licenses and high school proms.
But, you wore baggy shirts and maternity pants,
trying to hide your ever growing bump.
Of course they all found out,
kicked you off the white pedestal
your father put you on,
you were labeled as a bad influence, a poor example of
what a girl should be.
They tried to take away your education,
You wouldn't let them.
You. Alone.
Fought for yourself and for your baby.

Before domestic abuse hotlines
and battered women shelters,
You married at 17 because your parents couldn't stand to look at you,
You were told this is a man's world, you're just living in it.
He yelled at you, he hit you.
You were told to just take it,
You could do nothing about it.
Then, he threw you against a wall.
You hit your head so hard the last thing you remember is seeing stars.
You woke up with your daughter screaming, crying over your chest,
trying to wake you up.
You grabbed her and ran to your dad.
He turned his back on you.
Posted with shotguns on the front step,
You wouldn't let him hurt you again.
You filed for divorce.
You. Alone.
Fought for a better life for you and your daughter.

Before cell phones
Everyone used phone booths.
Your best friend Rosemary begged to stop at the first sight of one.
It was your first girls' night out without the baby,
but she NEEDED to check in with her boyfriend.
You both squeezed into the tiny booth,
backs to the door, trying to hold in the giggles.
You started to feel uneasy, not knowing if you were longing
for your daughter or...
The hair on the back of your neck stood at attention.
Before you could say anything a hand covered your mouth,
You could feel the smooth, sharp edge of a knife.
"Do not move, do not scream, or I will slit her throat"
Those words echoing in your ears.
He took the both of you, threatening to hurt
the other if you tried anything.
Your grip on Rosemary loosened
He was too far away to grab her,
She ran,
You were just glad one of you got away.
You prayed she would get to someone in time.
You. Alone.
Fought for your survival.

Before doxxing and privacy laws,
They published your story in the paper,
Plastered on the front page, your name and address.
Your mother brought your daughter to see you in the hospital,
but your father never came,
“You should have never been out in the first place.”
They told you it was your fault,
“Look at what you were wearing”
Bell bottom jeans, a Beatles shirt and a leather jacket.
“You should have been at home where you belonged”
The assailant was a
“well respected member of society”,
He had a
“momentary lapse of judgement”,
He was
“not a threat”
The gavel hit the sound block
It was only a matter of time
Before....
You inhaled a sharp breath,
As he stood in your kitchen
He smiled at your fear.
His smile grew and his eyes twinkled as he looked down
at your daughter peeking out behind your legs.
The light reflected off of something familiar.
He started to walk towards you, knife in hand.
Your whole body wanted to freeze,
but you needed to act fast,
your lives depended on you.
You. Alone.
Fought for your life.
Before Katherine Graham became the first

CEO of a Fortune 500 company,
women were taught to be seen and not heard,
only good for domestic duties and raising the children.
But you had a toddler to feed, and no man to help.
You aspired to be more.
Working three jobs you raised your little girl
and put yourself through Nursing school.
With glossy lips and perfectly curled hair,
you couldn't stop smiling,
as you took the stage.
Standing proud with your white scrub dress, ironed and neat, paired with a
matching nurse cap.
You waited for your name to be called.
You were the first woman in your family to
go to college.
You scanned the audience for your father,
he was supposed to be there to pin you.
He never came.
You held back tears of abandonment
You held your head high
You. Alone.
Fought for your future...

BREAKING UP IN FOUR PARTS

Kate Bazarsky

I.
We are not in love
We are simply each other's
bad
habits
We fill the broken parts
patch them up the best we
can
and find each other
in the cracks
when starlight creeps through at
night
when sunshine peeks in the
curtains
as we sip our coffee
and pretend we are in love.

II.
I do not want
to be alone
but I do not
want you

And I think that is the
best
thing I could have said.

I will be
okay
despite your presence.

III.
We broke the universe
Maybe we were the glue
holding the sun
in place
But it will not stop
raining now
The wind is blowing
my windows are creaking
and
there are no birds
singing

We broke the universe.

I am honored.

IV.
The universe was
screaming
at us
today

Thunder pouring
from the
clouds

Maybe—
it was
love
after all.

SHATTERED INTROSPECTION

Elysia Johnson

**REVENGE**

Michelle Kuras

She will always finish last
when you are blurred and gagged and bound
and made to be grizzly, hoarse and gruff

Speak their truth, show loud and tough
and soldier on, my free bird
with wings sewn shut in stitching red
and howl your truth with heavy eyes
with locked jaw tenderness inside

Your lungs are fire and she will provide
the medicine to keep you whole
Silk and honey weaved in intricate
patterns and layers around your form

In outstretched hands she carries her cards
and you can see them, cheat her charm
conquer her with glowing words
and promises knotted together, ruptured

Lock her up in your igloo heart
drain her to return to form:
a flightless bird with feathers lost
mute and captive, pricked with gashes
imprisoned forever, laid to waste.



FISH TEAR

Mei Fung Elizabeth Chan

**BEHIND EVERY
GREAT MAN IS HIS
BITCH OF A WIFE**

Michelle Kuras

I never learned how to be a woman
I was taught how to not be a man

I was taught sitting
and talking, mostly listening
how to cross my legs, plaster a smile on my face
and not be too loud or forthcoming

I was taught
if I was delicate and sweet I would be liked and
what is more important than being desired?

I learned to say please and thank you
when complimented
so when he chased me each day
(because he liked me)
I gave in
and let him and others after
push me into a corner

I learned I was the villain
in everyone's eyes
For letting it happen
I must've provoked it

I learned that playtime was not mine to be had
and I was better off staying in and reading instead
That I shouldn't try throwing a ball or catching
because my chromosomes made it nearly impossible
I'd fail

I wasn't taught to be angry
just sad
And when the years filled me with rage
and nasty thoughts
I shared them
And I was called names
And silenced

I began to see anger as violent
I was taught to hide it
and felt disgusted by the red in my cheeks
that I caught glimpses of in my reflection

I never saw the power within me
I didn't know I could reach for the stars
and that defeat didn't mark the end
Instead,
I learned to stand behind men who pushed
others into corners
because they didn't know how
to get into the spotlight themselves

As I've gotten older I've grown to embrace
the mean inside me, the ugly disgrace
the human emotions I had learned to push down
Several years of unlearning
and I've realized
that I was never actually taught how to be a woman

But I certainly learned how to not be a man.



FRIDA
Sara Gifford

**BRIDGE
AWARD**

SARA
GIFFORD

DRIVE
Madison Staples

**BRIDGE
AWARD**

MADISON
STAPLES

“You really shouldn’t be picking strangers up off the side of the road.”

“You really shouldn’t be on the side of the road waving down strangers to pick you up.”

“Well.”

He shifted his pack to rest it more comfortably on the floor beneath his feet. Heat radiated out from underneath the dashboard, and he stayed huddled for a moment, holding his hands close to soak up the warmth. The corner of an envelope poked out from the glove compartment, itching at his nose as he hunched in the passenger seat. He rubbed his hands against his jeans, wincing as the denim tore at his papier-mâché skin. A sudden rattling cough jolted him upright and he self-consciously readjusted, stuffing his hands beneath his legs.

“Even so,” he tried again, “a young lady such as yourself, especially at this time of night—”

“Are you going to kill me?”

“What?” he blanched, “No. No, of course not. Why would you think that?”

“It just really sounds like you’re thinking about killing me.”

Ashamed, he kept his eyes averted down, staring at the envelope corner now digging into his knee. “It’s not like that,” he mumbled, “I just needed to get into town.” Out of the corner of his eye, he saw her shrug. He pressed his knee hard against the sharp corner of the envelope, surprised that it didn’t fold.

“Would you have picked me up if you thought I was going to kill you?”

The creases and the curves of the road seemed to gradually flatten out, like a ribbon wrapped tight around a gift box. Silence replaced the rumbling and loose rattling of the car’s bumpy progress, and he looked out the win-

dow to see the trees thinning. Brief clearings in the forest revealed long driveways, occasionally lit up with warm yellow lights or the red glow of tired brake lights returning home for the night. Neighborhoods filled in around the car, replacing the dense wall of trees alongside which he had been walking a few minutes before.

The air rushing from the heating vents shushed his next five questions. As the stillness in the car softened, he gently allowed himself to fall back against the seat, the warn cushion welcoming his tired bones. He knit his hands together in his lap, wringing the creaks out of each of his fingers. He glanced sheepishly to his left and, finding her still staring stiffly at the road in front of them, he settled into his gaze and took his first good look at the woman driving the car.

She wasn't dressed for the weather, wearing only a threadbare grey shirt and loose light blue jeans that crumpled around her stringy frame. Her fingers were coiled around the steering wheel, so long and thin that they looked as if they were wrapped around twice. In the glow of streetlamps and headlights her fine blond hair looked almost white, a lacy curtain that framed her small pale face. Only her eyes looked heavy, sunken in and anchoring her whole body with their depth.

Confident in his comfort, he pulled gently on one of her loose threads. "Why did you stop for me?"

"You waved me down and asked for a ride."

"There were at least a dozen cars before you. None of them stopped."

"Well then I guess I did because none of them did."

He thought back to the cars that had passed by him that evening. The ones that had acknowledged him enough to swerve around him. Those

that hadn't, speeding by so close that the wind in their wake threatened to vacuum him out of his own body. "One guy passed me in a huge pickup," he mused, almost to himself. "I was going his way. I could have sat in the truck bed. He wouldn't even have had to look at me."

"He doesn't have to look at you now either."

"Yes. Well." He was flustered by her wry bluntness. "If it would have made no difference to him—"

"Wouldn't you rather it did?"

"What?" She didn't answer. "Did what?"

The car rolled to a stop, and the lazy red traffic light flushed her face as she turned to look at him for the first time. Her eyes yanked his gaze to meet hers, their leaden grey weight held up only by the spider webbing of her thin eyelashes. "Wouldn't you rather that it made a difference?"

"Does it?"

Green. She blinked hard, severing the taut pull of her stare. She turned back to face the road, easing the car further into town. "I guess we'll find out."

Feeling frayed, he turned away to look back out the window. Despite the hour, the town continued to meander on outside the window, couples clutching each other for support as they stumbled out of restaurants, a growth of men and smoke swelling out the door of a bar. A patchwork huddle leaned on the corner of a closed-up hair salon. That could have been him. It still was him, he realized. He reached for his bag.

"You might as well let me out here," he offered as the car hummed at another stoplight. "I can try to find something to eat and a place to put up for the night."

"I need gas." Seeming almost as startled as he was at her proclamation, she stared at the dragging needle of the gas gauge. "I mean, yeah, I guess I need a little, at least." She stomped too quickly as the light changed to green, throwing both of them back against their seats. After a panicked second, they came up on a gas station and time slowed again, ticking along with the directional. Creeping into the parking lot and up to a pump, she shakily shifted the car into park and thrust her hand into her pocket. Coming out with a crumpled bill, she reached for the door handle and pulled herself out of the car. "I'll be back," she tossed over her shoulder.

"Wait."

She leaned back in the car to face him, clutching the top of the open door for support.

"Are you going to kill me?" he asked, frightened of the sudden mania that had replaced her previous stiffness.

Her eyebrows tugged upwards. "Would you have gotten in the car if you thought I was going to kill you?" She slammed the door and ambled with surprising grace into the station, the bill crushed in her small fist.

He let out a long, low breath, trying to calm the anxious beating of his heart. She was no older than twenty-five and no heavier than a wet, woolen scarf; she posed no threat to him. Regardless, he reached for the top pocket of his bag, intent on slipping his rusted box cutter into his jacket pocket, when his hand scraped again along the sharp corner of the thick white envelope. Curiosity replaced concern and, checking to see that she was still waiting in line for the cashier, he pulled open the glove box, letting the envelope fall at his feet. He picked it up to examine it, surprised by its weight. Holding it against the light of the window, he could see that it was stuffed with lined notebook paper covered in

dark scrawl, but he could make out none of the words. The opening was sealed with glue and again with tape, the blank side decorated only by the careful outline of a single heart. Distracted, he didn't notice her return to the car, and he was torn from his investigation with the sound of the driver's side door cracking open.

Wordlessly, she ripped the envelope from his hands, inspecting it for damage before sliding it into her boot. She glared at him, flinging a bag of trail mix into his lap before flinging the door closed again. Shame kept his neck stiff and facing forward, feeling the holes her eyes bore into the back of his head as she stood at the pump. An eternity passed before he heard the grinding of the gas cap being screwed back into place. Thud. Creak. Slam. The click of the seatbelt. The protest of the engine. The slurred cursing of the man she almost hit as she sped out of the parking lot and back onto the road. Angry silence. Risking the metallic crinkle of the bag, he tore open the trail mix. His stomach begged loudly as the smell of salt hit his nose.

"Thank you," he said, tipping the open corner of the bag toward his mouth, "I am allergic to nuts, though."

She stomped on the breaks, choking him with his seatbelt as he was jerked violently forward and sending a spray of almonds and dried fruit at the windshield. Doubled over, he gasped for air as she stared at him wide-eyed with a mixture of shock and horror.

After a dozen more hacking breaths, his coughing fit turned into a muffled chuckle. He glanced playfully out of the corner of his eye, watching her fear become anger once again. She backhanded his shoulder and, though he barely registered the meek strength of her blow, he stifled his laughter and forced himself to sit upright, loudly clearing the last giggle out of his throat. Huffing, she jerked her head to face the road

again, but he saw the hard set of her jaw soften slightly.

“I’m sorry,” he cajoled, salvaging a few stray peanuts from the folds of his coat, “I was just joking around. I really do appreciate it.”

“Want some?” He picked a raisin off of his sleeve and held it out to her like a peace offering. She snorted, but after a beat of silence she plucked it from his hand and popped it into her mouth, wrinkling her nose in disdain. Laughing quietly, he settled back into his seat.

Outside was dark, save the dim glow of the cloud-shrouded moon. By its light he could see rows of sleeping houses flanking both sides of the road. Uniform black mailboxes stood sentry at the end of each driveway. He thought back to the letter now sticking out of her right shoe. Tentatively, he pulled at another thread. “So what’s the deal with the letter?”

She didn’t answer.

“Jilted lover?” he tried.

She scoffed. “Yeah, sure.”

“You or him?”

“Me. I don’t need to do this with you.”

“What did he do?”

She snorted again.

“She?”

She rolled her eyes.

“What?”

“Sometimes things just don’t work out. Life just doesn’t work out.” It was his turn to laugh. She shrugged. “Yeah. I guess you know.”

He thought about just how much he knew. About all the things that hadn’t worked out. He

surprised himself by saying, “I have nowhere to go. I don’t know where you’re headed, but if—”

“It’s just a little bit further,” she interrupted.

“Oh,” he sat back, “okay.”

He closed his eyes and tried to relax into the lull of the engine. After a moment out of time, he felt the car start to slow. Tugging himself back to consciousness, he opened his eyes, expecting to find himself in the driveway of one of the dark houses they had driven past. Instead, a thick expanse of trees seemed to surround them on all sides, clearing in front of them. Ahead, the road continued onto a narrow, metal bridge, stretching across a roaring, rocky river and on into the gaping, pitch-black maw of the unknown on the other side. Confused, he turned to look at her and saw a single tear sliding down her cheek. She turned the key in the ignition, silencing the engine. He stared as she reached down by her feet and pulled the envelope, still unwrinkled, out of her shoe. She sat up and held it out to him, using her other hand to stifle a wracking sob. Instinctively, he reached out to grab the letter and as he pinched it between his fingers, realization dawned, understanding finally bridging the gap between them.

“Is this it?” he whispered.

She nodded, shaking so hard that she let go of the letter. It felt even heavier in his hands now than it had before. Her hands flew to cover her face and she gasped out a muffled “I’m sorry,” before collapsing into herself like a marionette with all its strings cut. He opened his mouth but found no words to stop her from open the door and tumbling out onto the pavement. She staggered after her shadow, looming long and thin in the glare of the headlights. Finally shaking himself out of his panicked stupor, he shoved the letter inside his jacket pocket and flung the passenger side door open after her.

He stopped himself from grabbing her by the arm as he quickly caught up to her. In those few feet she had found a worrying sense of calm and was now striding purposefully toward the center of the bridge. “The keys are still in the ignition and I got enough gas that you should be able to get back to town,” she droned mechanically, “there’s a bag of money, all the cash I could take out of the ATM, in the backseat. I signed that with some personal information, my social security number and whatever,” she gestured to his coat pocket, “so they won’t think you did it.” With this, they reached the highest point on the curve of the bridge, halfway between the yellow glow of the headlights and the dark expanse on the other side. Facing downriver, she hung onto the icy iron railing, shivering against the wind in her t-shirt. She took a deep breath.

“Wait!” he shouted. She turned to look at him, the wind lashing her hair against her stony cheeks. Desperate to keep her anchored in place, he dove his hand into his pocket and grabbed the letter like a lifeline. “Where—who—what should I do with this?”

She shrugged. “I don’t even know why I wrote it,” she said, barely audible over the roar of the river. She turned back to face the river. “Do whatever you want with it.”

He let it go.

Immediately a gust of wind claimed it, carrying it high into the air. Her anguished cry was ripped out of her mouth and pulled along after the letter, jetting up and away, past the railing and out over the water. The two strangers stared after it, watching as it spiraled down with every breath of the sky until it hit the water. In a second it was gone, swept away by the current. Defeated, she let go of the railing and fell to her knees with a painful clang of bone on metal.

Without a word, he turned on his heel, leaving her in a crumpled heap as he walked back to the car. He slid into the driver’s seat and reignited the engine, taking no time to bask in the heat before easing slowly out onto the old bridge. He crept the car along the same path he had walked just a moment before, and stopped to idle next to the huddled mess. Before he could move to help her into the car, she pulled herself upright and stood. She rounded the car and cracked open the passenger side door. The flickering interior light illuminated her face, gaunt and grey except for the red rawness around her eyes.

With a tremendous effort she heaved herself into the passenger seat, pulling the door closed behind her. She stared expectantly at him.

“Put your seatbelt on.”

She choked out a strangled laugh but did as he said. Slowly, he released the brake and the car rolled towards the other side of the bridge. The headlights were swallowed in the darkness that stretched out before them.

“Where are we going?” she asked between sniffles.

“Just a little bit further.”

“Okay.”



CLIFF HANGER
Maggie Howland



YOU, THE FATHER

Clare Nee

You, the man in the picture.
The red face of laughter.

Beaming with light
and love.

You sit on the floor with your small child
and giggle.

As she discovers the powers of her two feet,
you discover the powers of your own fists.

a character,
an oppressor,

And I,
beaming with light and love.

Blurred stomach pains slipping from one memory to another.
A heightened sensitivity to sound.

Footsteps, continuous shuffling —
Tension rising like humidity into the air.

Silence.

The hunk of butter left undisturbed,
unblended, in a mouthful of mashed potatoes.

Fearing the slightest expression of dissatisfaction.
Waiting for the next unexpected outburst of rage.

Running and hiding became my only line of defense.
My favorite game of survival.

But you,
the father,

the man
in the picture.

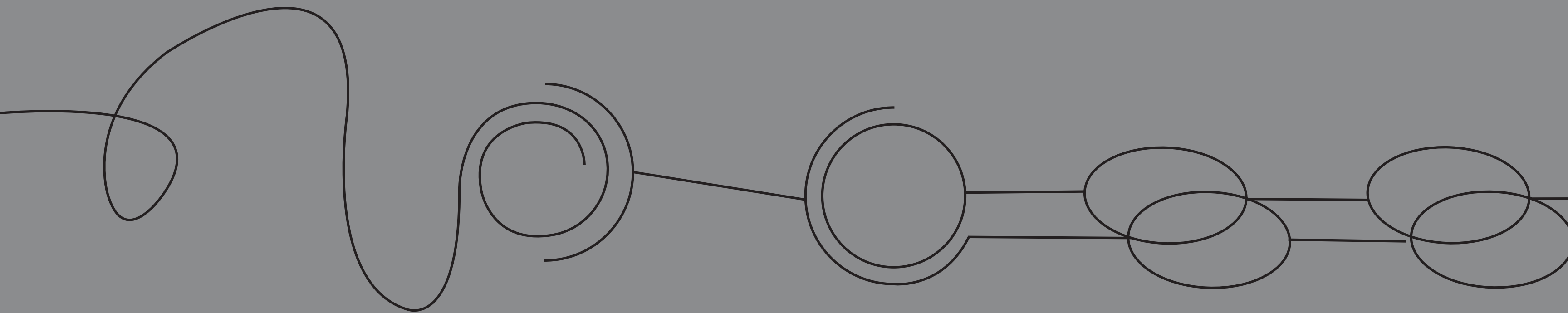
How different life
would have been

if you had discovered the powers of your own feet
& vanished sooner.

LIGHT IN THE DARK

Elysia Johnson







CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES



ALYSSA ASCI

is a senior with a double major in art and secondary education. She is working on getting her dream job of teaching art. She is inspired by nature and in her free time enjoys hiking, playing guitar, reading, and spending time with her family, friends and black cat, Sabbath.

HANNA AUGUST

is a sophomore majoring in secondary education and studio art. She has been creating art since she was finger painting in kindergarten, although she has only recently gotten into printmaking this fall semester.

KATE BAZARSKY

is a twenty-one-year-old poet, musician, and PAL. As a senior English major with a big interest in the non-profit world, she plans to go into grant writing. In her free time, she enjoys copious amounts of caffeine and making memories with friends.

MEI FUNG ELIZABETH CHAN

was born in Kowloon, Hong Kong in 1988. Her family is from Fujian. She received her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 2017, and her BA from Bridgewater State University in 2014. She completed her drawing and printmaking residencies in Venice, France, and South Africa.

ETHAN CHILD

is a senior, double majoring in English and Secondary Education. He is pursuing a career in teaching high school English. Ethan is a proud member of both the Commonwealth Honors Program and Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. He recently completed his honors thesis, focusing on the role of audience studies in understanding Shakespeare's play-texts. This poem is Ethan's first foray in creative writing, inspired by his belief that literature can be an effective tool for promoting social justice.

LINDSAY EVERSON

is a junior majoring in English with a writing and writing studies concentration.

SARA GIFFORD

is a freshman majoring in studio art and secondary education. She likes to paint as it brings her inner peace. Her favorite subject to explore is nature and its relationship to people. In the future, she hopes to become a high school art teacher

ERIKA FAY GREENWOOD

is a senior Theatre Arts major and transfer from Community College of Rhode Island.

KAITLYN “KATIE” HAMPTON

is an English major, aspiring writer, and avid reader finishing up her senior year at BSU. She started writing poetry for a workshop and fell in love. 2020 has been a roller coaster of a year, allowing her to self-reflect and forcing her to appreciate every moment. Poetry has become an outlet, a way to get through the ever-changing world we live in.

EMILY A. HAYES

is twenty-two-year old majoring in Social Work and minoring in Art and Psychology. She plans to become an art therapist and work with adolescent and young adult cancer patients and survivors. This is a special population to her as she is a brain cancer survivor herself. She finds art to be an escape and an enjoyable, relaxing activity. The process of creating “Clementine” was particularly therapeutic for her as it is an MRI image of her first brain tumor. Other than creating art, she enjoys spending time with her brothers of Phi Pi Delta.

SHAYLA HINDS

is a senior in the communication disorders major here at BSU. She's been writing almost all her life and is happy to continue sharing her work to all.

MAGGIE PHILLIP HOWLAND

is a fifth-year senior at Bridgewater State University, who indulges in both digital and film photography. More importantly, she is a: Capricorn sun, Cancer rising, and Sagittarius moon. Shortly, she will be getting her BA in English with two minor concentrations in anthropology and sociology. She would like to dedicate these beautiful images to all of her professors who have helped her to arrive at her current academic state.

BAO HUYNH

is a senior majoring in Studio Art with dual concentrations, Painting and Graphic Design. He likes to express the emotion of realistic human figure and portrait through his painting. When he works with abstract painting, he also shows the perspective of human figure into the abstractive movement.

BRIDGET IMMAR

is a poet whose work, “Clenching” and “Windy Day,” appears on pages 34 and 57.

ELYSIA JOHNSON

is a junior majoring in Fine Arts with a Painting Concentration and Psychology. She enjoys working in all mediums from ceramics to oil painting and loves experimenting with new techniques and mediums. Since art has always been a stress reliever and source of happiness in her life, she typically likes to paint things that inspire her and bring her joy. You can find more of her work at <https://e12johnson.wixsite.com/mysite>.

MICHELLE KURAS

is a senior studying sociology, with a love of literature, writing, and music. She is inspired by social justice and is particularly interested in inequality. She doesn’t know exactly what her future holds, but she hopes to do something she is passionate about that will help those around her and be a source of joy. This is her first time sharing her poetry in a published format and she hopes that you find something in it that speaks to you.

JOSEPH LAFOREST

is a local photographer who does portraits, travel photos, landscapes, and events.

MICHAELA LEFEBVRE

is a poet whose poem “Surrounded By Yourself” appears on page 20. It is a commentary on the struggle of someone with social anxiety in a depressive state, and how mental illness is a sickness can appear at the times it’s least convenient.

GRACE LEOPOLD

is a multi-media artist whose work, Stillness in the Air, appears on page 71. It is the fifth painting in a series of work titled “Colors of Nature.”

ASHLEY LIMA

is a 2020 BSU graduate. BA in English with a concentration in Writing and Writing Studies. Photographer and poet.

MOLLIE ANN MACDONALD

is a resident of Brockton, Massachusetts. She is a senior this year at Bridgewater State University, majoring in Graphic Design. Ever since she was little, she’s had a desire to create, and her passion hasn’t slowed down yet. Mollie is looking forward to the future and is eager to start her new journey as a college graduate. She would like to say that she is happy and excited in being accepted into The Bridge Journal.

LINDSEY MACMURDO

is a recent Graduate from BSU who majored in photography and art education with a minor in art history. She is a photographer who works mostly with digital media. Her photographic style consists of narratives. She is fascinated with the past and with telling a story behind a person, place, or thing. Recently, she has grown a passion for oil painting as well, and uses her photographs to create beautiful paintings of nature scenes, people, and more. She plans on going back to school to get a Master of Fine Arts degree and continue learning more about what she is most passionate about.

AMANDA MEROLA

is an oil paint and charcoal artist who works in realism, specifically portraiture. She has been working in oil paint for two years and working in charcoal for three years. Amanda is a twenty-one-year-old junior at Bridgewater State University majoring in studio art with a minor in management. She has always had an interest in art growing up and continued creating throughout high school and into college.

DORIS NAU

was asked to include a short biographical statement to be used if her work was accepted for publication. Upon request, all she had to say was, “Ok, done.”

CLARE M. NEE

is a first year English M.A Graduate Student at Bridgewater State University. She is a recent graduate from Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y, where she majored in English, and minored in psychology. Her work has been published in several journals including Siena College's First Year Seminal Journal, Gleanings, in Fall of 2017, The Digital Literature Review Spring of 2020, Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History for Fall 2020, and Albany Poets Fall 2020. She was also selected to present her research capstone "The Sensationalism of Trauma in American Film and Literature" in Spring 2020 at the National Conference of Undergraduate Literature.

AMY PALUMBO

is a junior psychology major at Bridgewater State. In her free time, she thoroughly enjoys writing poetry, which has allowed her to creatively express herself and her emotions, and helped her through a lot of dark times. She hopes you enjoy her work!

LISA PERAKSLIS

is a returning forty-nine-year-old student, trying to complete her degree before her 50th birthday. When she first came back to school, she was introduced to oil paint and fell in love with the medium. She often uses her own photos as inspiration for her paintings.

SHALEY RONAN

writes poetry to express human emotion that is sometimes easier left unsaid. She wants to bring light to these emotions, accept them, and appreciate them.

CAMILLE SAN GABRIEL

(They/Them/Their) is a senior Secondary Education Major and a Studio Arts major. They are from Lynn, Massachusetts where they developed a passion for art making, art education, and activism. Their artwork often centers on religious themes and/or social, economic, and political struggles. San Gabriel sees visual art as a form of communication and uses their art to communicate feelings and ideas that can't often be put into words. Professors that had a high impact on their art are Debra Marek, James Stanley, and Leigh Craven. They graduate this May and say that they will miss BSU's Art Department with all their heart. Follow them on Instagram @art_by_san_gabriel

NICOLE SEELEY

is a senior at Bridgewater State University. She thrives on being successful in all areas of her majors and minor. Nicole is working hard to become an engaging and supportive art teacher while also developing a deeper connection to painting.

SUNNIE SOUZA

is an English major with a concentration in writing at BSU. She enjoys writing poetry about nature, mental health struggles, and her own life experiences. She is also a musician, which influences her writing as she enjoys playing with the rhythm and musicality in her writing.

KYLIE SWENSON

is an English major with a double minor in communication and African American studies. She uses creative expression as a medium to grapple with existentialism, reflect on childhood trauma, and explore the relationship of language to the sublime. As an avid bird watcher, her inspiration is often found from time spent in nature.

MADISON STAPLES

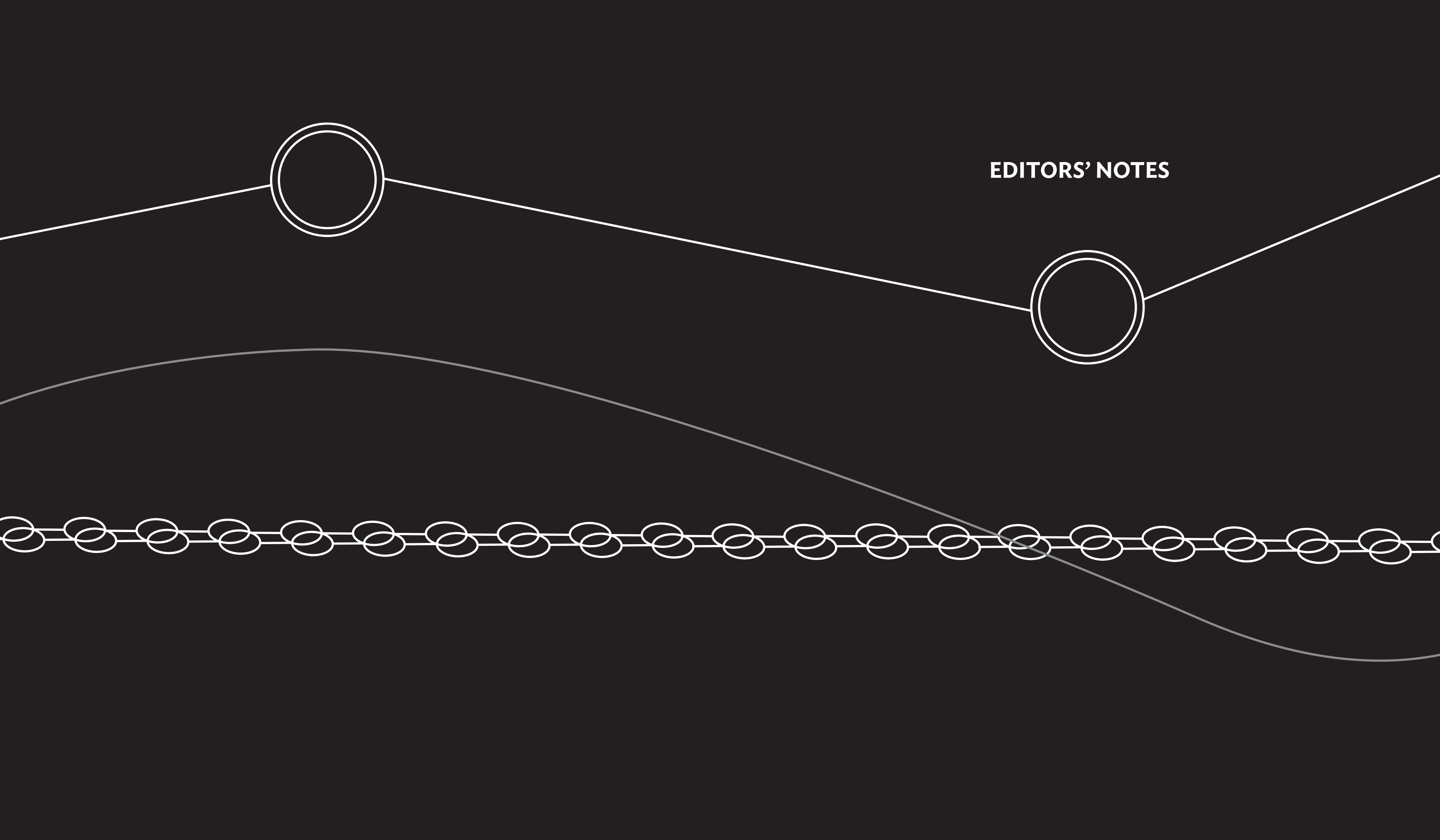
is a senior at Bridgewater State University. She is graduating this spring with a BA in English, Writing and Writing Studies Concentration, as well as a double minor in anthropology and U.S. ethnic & indigenous studies. When she is not writing, Madison spends her time knitting and watching reruns of her favorite shows, usually with her cat Rosie sitting by her side. While she currently works at the local coffee shop in her hometown, she hopes to use her degree and her love of the written word to become a librarian sometime in the near future.

LYDIA THERIAULT

is a senior with a double major in secondary education and English, and a double minor in studio arts and TESOL. She is very much looking forward to advancing her career and education and starting graduate studies in the fall!

SHELLEY WHALEN

is a Bridgewater State alumna of the class of 2020. She is currently working with Professor John Mulrooney to publish her first book of poetry.



EDITORS' NOTES

ELINOR AULT

is a Graduating Senior at Bridgewater State University. Elinor is an English major with a concentration in literature. Elinor has achieved the Dean's List each semester throughout her four years of collegiate studies. Elinor is very excited to be a part of The Bridge Journal's 2020-2021 school year editorial team!

KATHERINE AULT

is a senior English literature major and sociology minor at Bridgewater State University. She will be graduating in May of 2021. Katherine spent her first two years of collegiate study at Wagner College in Staten Island, NY where she was an intern at the university's Holocaust Center. Through this internship, she created her first short film along with her sister Elinor, beginning her love for filmmaking. Since, they have worked together on one other short film that was recognized and selected for the Prague International Monthly Film Festival. Katherine also spent a semester in Orlando, Florida as a part of the Disney College Program in 2018 before ultimately transferring to BSU in 2019. Katherine is grateful for the opportunity to be an editor of this year's Bridge journal.

RACQUEL DE BARROS

is a junior majoring in Graphic Design at Bridgewater State University. This is her first time being a part of The Bridge. After college she hopes to start a career in the visual identity side of graphic design: dealing with logos, typography, color palettes, etc.

GLEN BEAULIEU

is an English major with a concentration in writing studies at Bridgewater State University. He loves fiction writing, tending to lean more towards realism and surrealism, and he hopes to one day to turn that passion into a career in creative writing. He learned of The Bridge through Professor Evan Dardano and was ecstatic at the chance to be a part of such a fantastic display of passion and talent.

ADAM BLOWERS

is an English major, and the resident bear enthusiast, specializing in poetry alongside an interest in graphic design. He plans to write poetry books consisting of his confessional poetry, as well as novels and collections of paranormal fiction. Previously being published in The Bridge and working on this volume has also inspired an interest in going into publishing. Unfortunately, his name does not rhyme with flowers – that would make marketing his poetry too easy!

FLETCHER DONOHOE

is a sophomore at BSU studying criminal justice. He enjoys editing and critiquing work, with a background in journalistic editing and a newfound love of working with more artistic works in The Bridge. In his spare time, he enjoys writing prose and metalworking.

MICHELLE LANDRY

is a junior majoring in Graphic Design and is from Rehoboth, MA. In her free time, she enjoys keeping involved with her various leadership positions on campus and enjoys hanging out with her friends and family. She is passionate about creating art and proudly owns an impressive book collection at home. She looks forward to her senior year and what she will accomplish in the future.

LAUREN PRAY

is a senior at BSU majoring in marketing. She transferred to BSU in the Fall of 2019 after getting her Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts at Bristol Community College. When she found out about The Bridge from a friend who was published, she knew she wanted to be a part of the journal somehow. Although she is not an English major, she has always had a passion for creative writing and creating art in all forms. In her free time you will often find her painting, sewing, playing video games or trying to learn how to play guitar.

KATIE SHEEHAN

is a Junior at BSU studying graphic design. Born and raised on the South Shore of MA, she has always had a passion for nature, the ocean, and the arts. Her favorite medium is pen and ink drawing but she also enjoys using a full color pallet with watercolors as well as colored pencils. Katie enjoys all the arts from poetry and literature to music and theater. She looks forward to continuing to work with the graphics department and is thankful for the opportunity

JESSICA SWEENEY

is a sophomore majoring in Secondary Education and English. She plans on becoming a middle school English teacher where she will spend her career trying to get adolescents to enjoy literature- wish her luck. In her spare time she enjoys reading absurdist literature, watching documentaries, and spending time with her temperamental cat Georgia.

MAYA WYATT

is a junior English major at BSU. She greatly enjoys discussing literature and poetry and working on The Bridge has only solidified her desire to become an editor in the future. After graduation, she also hopes to travel to Japan to work as an English teacher. Maya spends her spare time watching anime, going for nature walks, and adding copious amounts of garlic to her food.



SPECIAL THANKS To:

ARNAA ALCON

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