

Aquarian

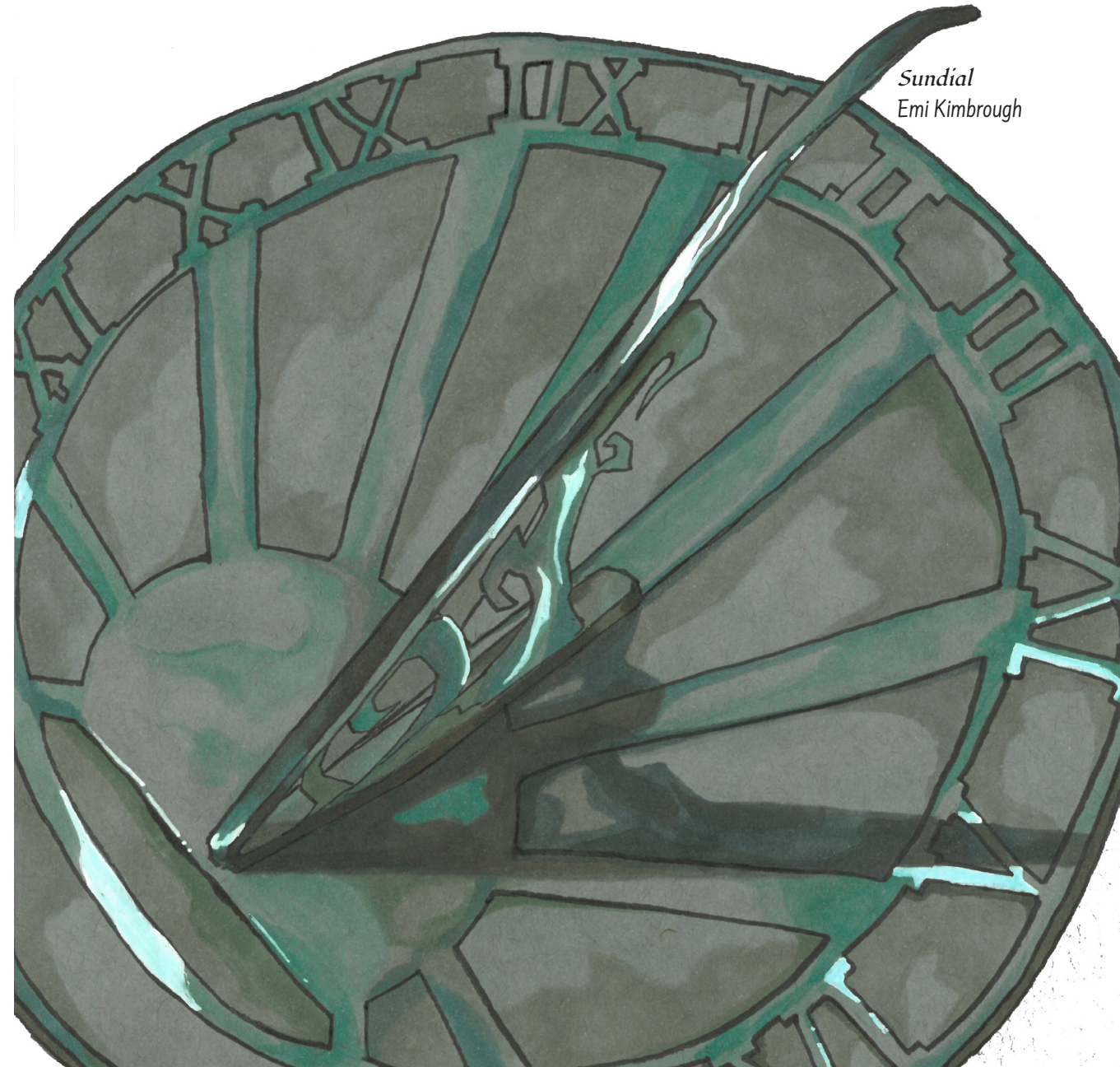
Literature and Visual Arts Review



Aquarian

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Sundial
Emi Kimbrough



Notes from the Editors

It's a special year for the Aquarian. This publication, this haven, this student showcase, has successfully broadcasted JU student's expressions of art for fifty years. Five decades of brilliant artistry, five decades of hard work, five decades of making a statement - art, in all of its forms, is worth celebrating. Gabby and I are proud to present you the magazine that for two years now, has shown us what it takes to not only be creators of art, but advocates for it and its patrons. In an effort to commemorate and honor the legacy of the artists who have contributed to The Aquarian over the past fifty years, this year's publication features current students of Jacksonville University, as well as its alumni and professors who have made this magazine, over the years, possible.

D'Ayn Sayre
Editor-in-Chief

As I roam through this book, I am reminded of when D'Ayn and I started editing for The Aquarian in 2018, and even though it was the 49th volume we had to focus on, we were already thinking of what we were going to do for this one, the 50th. This book is not only a representation of five decades of artistic expression created within the gates of our campus, but it is a book where each page is full of emotions and experiences. We hope you pause at each page and really process how each piece made you feel, whether it be literature or visual. We hope that as the confusion or intrigue from each piece sets in you share this book, these emotions and experiences, with the person next to you, because for the past fifty years we have wanted to create an artistic conversation and we will continue to do this for years to come.

Gabrielle Morgan
Assistant Editor

Darkest Times
Savy Dobbs

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Into The Unknown
Bianca Rodriguez

A sunset over a body of water with a city skyline and a palm tree silhouette. The sky is a mix of deep blue, orange, and red. The water reflects the colors of the sky. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of trees and a large palm tree on the left. In the background, a city skyline is visible with some buildings lit up. There are also some industrial structures like cranes on the right side of the skyline.

I Want a Love

Gabby Morgan

i want a love
that makes you wonder
how they got inside
because of how raw
and real and vulnerable
they make you feel

i want a love
that makes me
wanna get high
as i
look up to the sky
and feel closer to you

i want a love
that's freedom and
wholeness
grounded and flourishing
in the barren soil
that makes you realize the
garden needs water

i want a love
that makes you loathe
goodbyes because
you know
goodnights are never
really good nights

Night Fall
Diera Smith

Yellow Coward

Kristin McIntyre

I uncapped my liquid eyeliner and ran it across my eyelid. It's interesting; getting ready for someone who isn't your boyfriend. I gave my lashes a few coats of mascara then lost myself in the reflection looking back in the cosmetic mirror. "I won't judge you, honey," my roommate said before she went out for the night, "I just think you're stronger than this."

Sometimes people are just people. We get lonely and worn out from FaceTime but no face to kiss. Humans are imperfect creatures. I wish I was as strong as my roommate thought I was. I wish there weren't 5, 535 miles between him and I, but there are. It's okay to want someone to hold me through the night when I was used to it every time.

I stood up from my vanity and started to work on my hair. My boyfriend prefers it curled, so I drug the flat iron down my strands of hair until they all laid straight. Then I pulled on the leggings my roommate suggested I wear if I do go through with it, because they show off my ass. I opened my t-shirt drawer and tried not to look at the few shirts I've confiscated from my boyfriend over the past year. Instead, I selected a neutral one that I would throw out after the night. I've always believed in regret, yet I never felt it after that night. The apathy could be because it didn't matter. That night wasn't about the other boy or me; it was just two aimless people who wanted things they couldn't have, so they settled on the one thing they knew that'd always have: each other. My ties from childhood on have connected us in a way my boyfriend and I can never have, because you cannot go back. Yes, I was lonely, so I called the boy. But what's more is the fact that he came.

As I sat on my couch waiting for the knock, I started to second-guess my decision. But there was no stopping the inevitable now; he was already on his way. The only thing to do was calm myself down. I ran to the pantry and dug for the edibles that we bought last summer in Denver. Ripping open the package, I eagerly swallowed one wafer after another. "Shit," I realized in my head, "These are going to take at least an hour to kick in." Alcohol would suffice until then. I yanked open the fridge only to find a few White Claws left over from a party. But whatever it takes, so I chugged the first. After all, there ain't no laws when you're drinking Claws, right? I was halfway through the second can when he knocked on the door. There's no going back now.

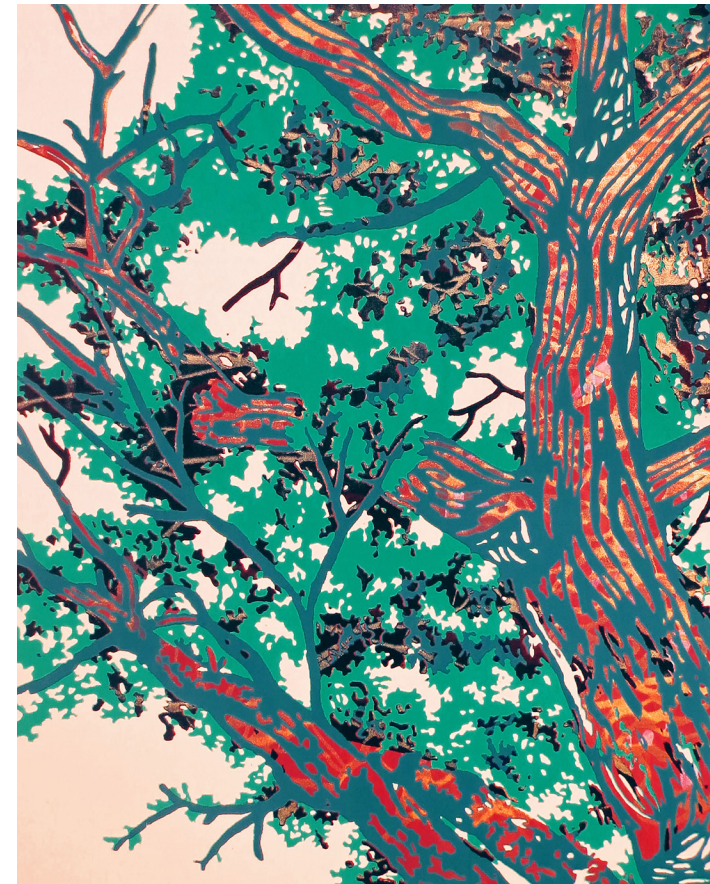
That night, I faced a boy on the couch and told him that I hurt. I brought

his hand to my chest, to show him where it hurt most. He complied, and yet still I ache. Later, I laid my head on his bare chest and told him, "we're just people, and we needed each other tonight; don't overthink it."

The cigarette hanging out of my mouth drops ashes as I squeeze more hair dye onto my head. Rock music echoes from the bedroom, pairing with my tortured emotions. I tuck the cigarette between my index and middle finger to take a swig of whiskey from the bottle. The bathroom counter is cluttered with a box of hair bleach, a hair dye brush, instructions on mixing the dye, an ash tray, and a bottle of Jack Daniels.

Sometimes a body is just a body. Sometimes a kiss doesn't mean forever. Sometimes we make mistakes and they don't sting like we expected them to. Sometimes we don't want to know why they don't. Sometimes the distance is too much. Sometimes we are weak. But every time, we're human.

With each stroke of the brush, I remember a stroke of his hand. As my hair lightens, my mind grows darker. My natural bronze turns dehydrated-piss yellow while I smoke the rest of the pack. When I look in the mirror, there is someone new looking back at me. Maybe she will do better.



Look Up Spring
Antonio Colon



Hazy Nights

D'Ayn Sayre

I like having a good time -
But he's got me pinned to the bed
With his stale beer breath
Swallowing my senses -

How the fuck did I get here?

I remember taking a double
At the end of the bar hoping
Safar would be more entertaining but
Everything gets blurry after that -

How did I end up here, with him?

I was dancing with my best friend and then
Black -
I'm in a car with him and
His friends and then
Grey -
We're pushed out of the car,
"Let me walk you back and put you in bed."
And then Clear -
"You're gonna take care of her,
Right? I'm going home with him instead."

She left me.
She left me in his hands
So she could be
in someone else's.
And then
Black -

Artist

Wesley Urbanczyk

Elusive definitions require the
Invocation of Negation.
Her plinth not found among
Our marble Muses.

Not forged in fire,
No blade of isolating destiny,
For the individual feeds from
The wrinkled hands of lives loved.
Not a tool of heroic introspection,
No conduit for enlightened Truth,
For Truth breathes on every neck
Who sees beauty.
Not haunted by duty,
No demon dribbles over strained
shoulders,
Blotting ink, swimming with
The vocabulary of ancients.
No star-strung strings of divine
inspiration
Guide trembling fingers while
Orchestrating a masterpiece.

The Title condemns by default.
We seem to think it must be earned
By epic trials and sacrifice of
Sound mind for a slim chance at
Brilliance.
By slicing open to
Bleed one's name on a contract with
Mephistopheles.

Would Faustus start anew,
If he knew he did not have to die
To be a genius?

Suffering.
The artist did not create.
But Experience.
The human makes.

Perspective
Barb Garran





*Trust in the Future in your
Loneliness*

Alexaandria Pulliam

regardless of care
we who love/d short
we who desire/d
let ourselves be led
by a thing of distance
of vastness

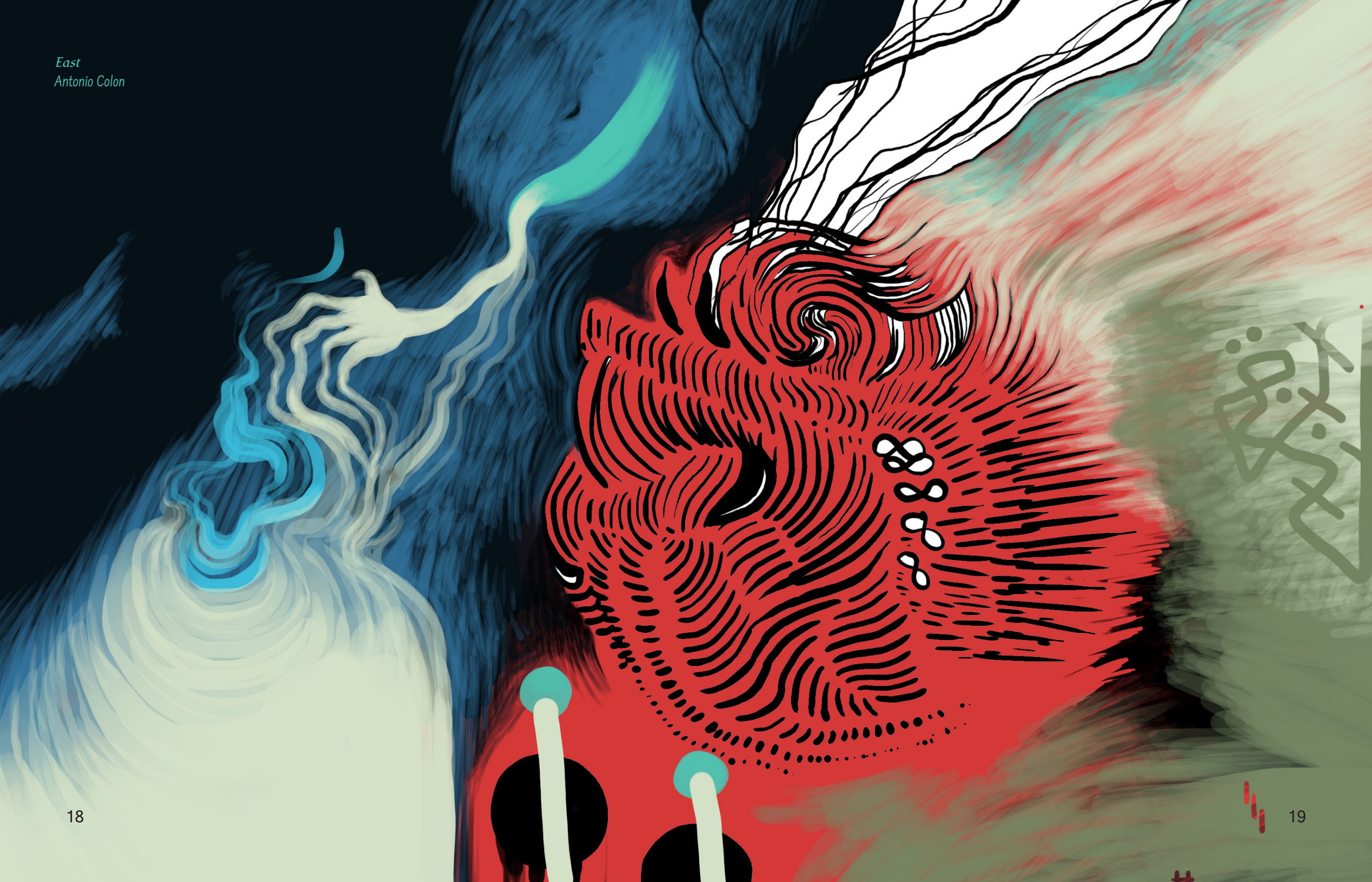
of there of then of those
this fullness of a door

no longer a beyond
here knocks decided silence
never mind the inspiration
watch it ripple in the river

a house comes down
on itself



*Look Up Summer
Antonio Colon*





From the Water

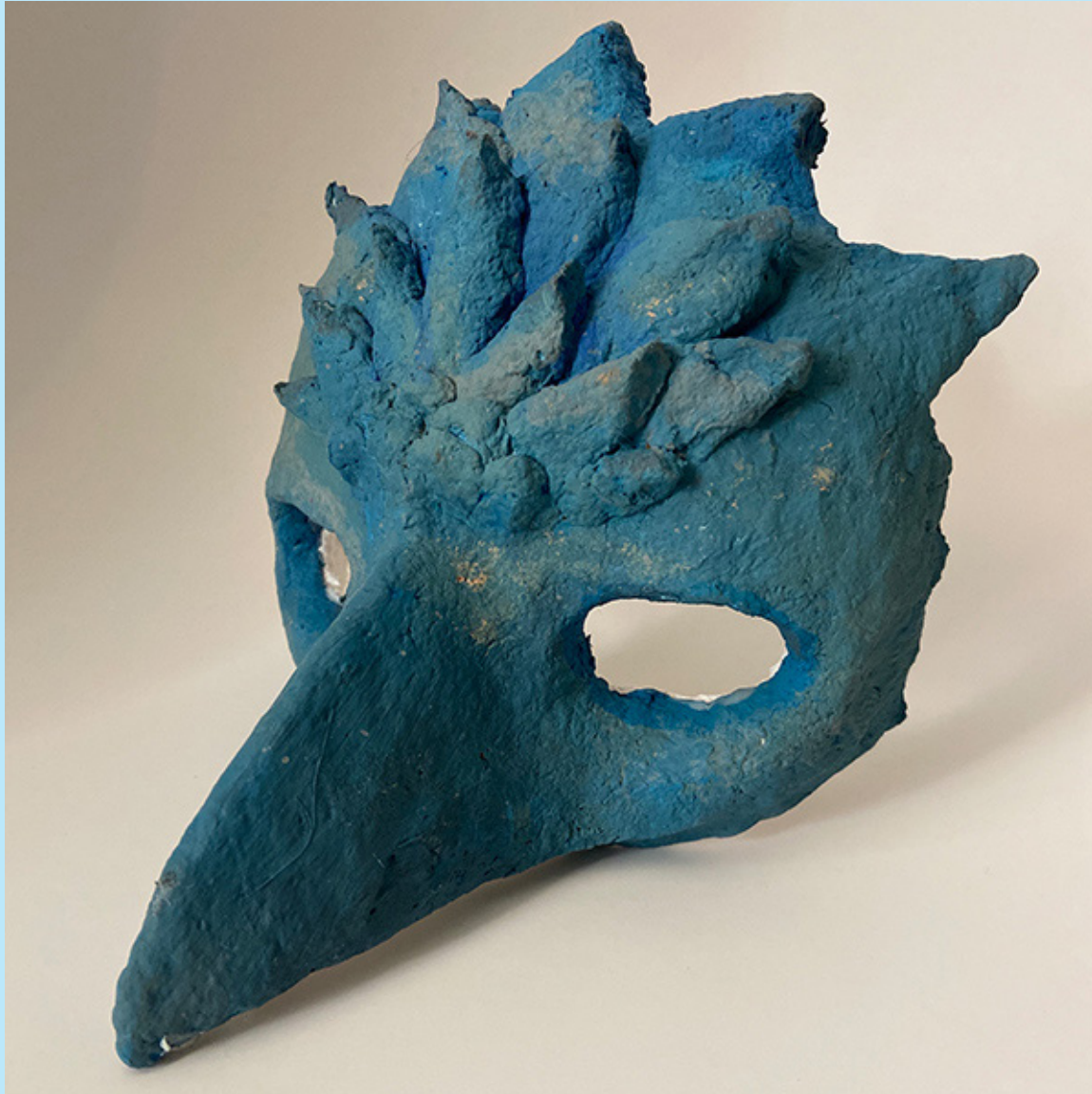
Hannah Cone

Pursue me like pharaoh.
Past the water, follow until you've captured me.
Run towards me, towards the sun.
I'm waiting.
Waiting.
Waiting . . .

Clouds thick like scripture hang over your head,
bleeding film over the seafoam whites of your eyes.
Open them! Wipe time from your face.
Can't you feel? I'm in a state of flux when your shadow overlaps
mine?
Don't you see how I unravel like the binding from a Bible when
you breathe?

But I'm still here.
I will still be here.
Forever waiting.
Waiting for you in the promise land.

Run, boy. Run.



Bubblegum

Hannah Cone

oh. no.
his earthy eyes, wide with inexperience, ask an inaudible
question.

the tasteless wad of cow fodder weighs five tons against
my tongue.
his towering body falls in agonizingly slow motion to
meet my height.

the bubblegum flips from one side of my cheek to the
other.
his tongue, wet like a dog's, runs over his flaky dry lips.

oh. no.

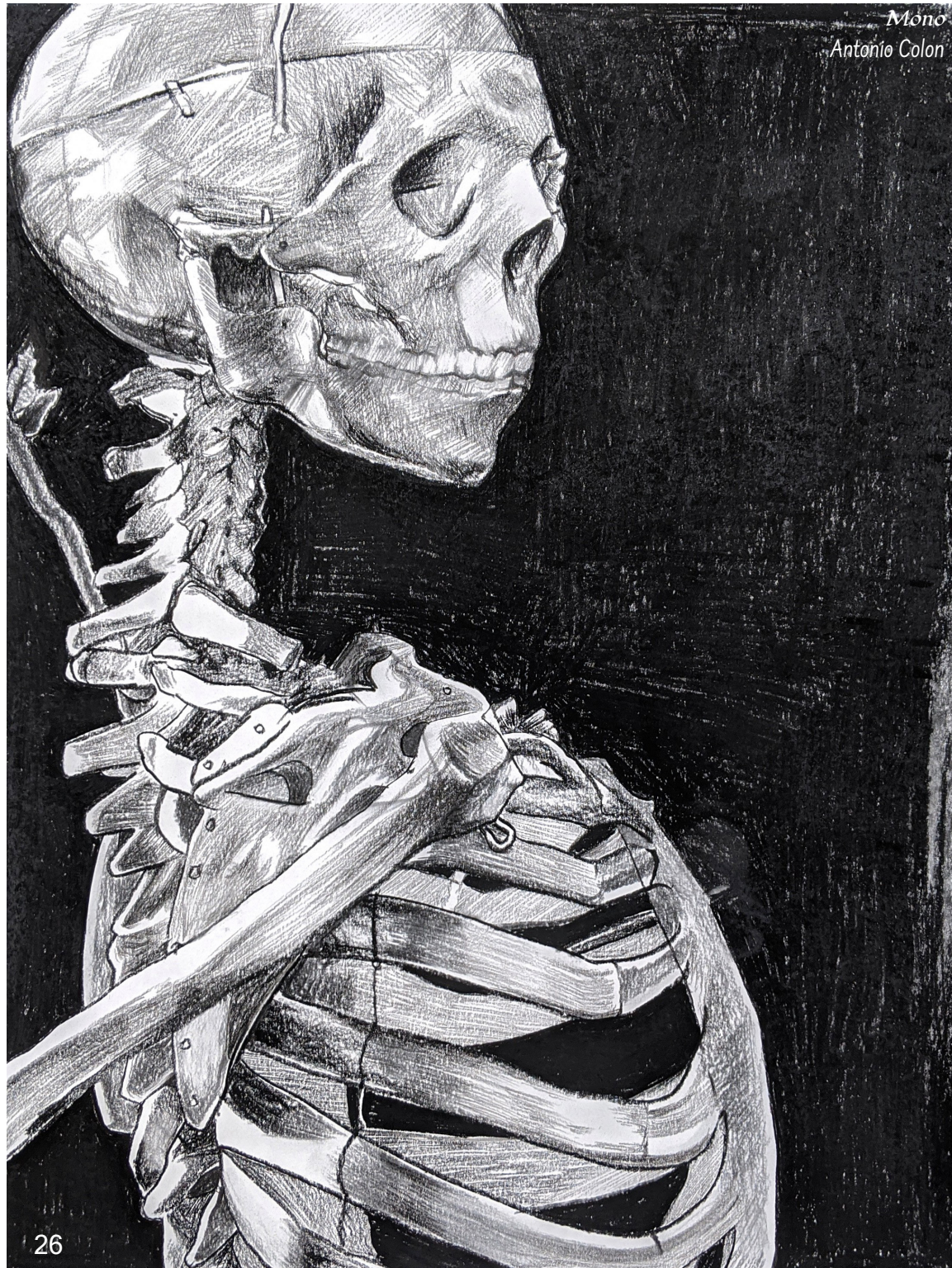
the wad of sticky pink moves to the back of my throat
and plays
a game of sickening ping pong with my tonsils.

i can smell his breath now.
the gum slides into a black abyss.

oh well.
i hope these next 7 years are worth it.



The Boston and Maine
Antonio Colon



Mono
Antonio Colon

These Consecrated Grounds Tremble *D'Ayn Sayre*

These consecrated grounds tremble
not with fear or fright
But with frolicking feet
Attached to young female bodies
Cheering, chanting, calling
To the high heavens, hand in hand
"Shabbat, Shalom, Shabbat Shabbat,
Shalom!"

I stood there dumbstruck,
My conservative neckline choking
My uncomfortable throat that
Stutters when a beautiful young girl
With a strong nose and angular
bones
Lends her long limb to me every time
The carousel of clambering feet
passes
Screaming, "Shabbat, Shalom,
Shabbat join in Shalom!!!"

You don't want this battered
Body, full of semen and sorcery
Tainting your celebration of the
Sabbath.
"Shabbat, Shalom,
Shabbat join in Shalom!!!"

You don't want this miscreant's mouth
Damning your God and any other
god who gets in her way.
"Shabbat, Shalom,
Shabbat join in Shalom!!!"

You don't want this mind who
Denies your mythical man in the sky.
"Shabbat, Shalom,
Shabbat join in Shalom!!!"

You don't want me
To taint your false sense of security
You slink behind when the world does
you wrong.
"Shabbat, Shalom,
Shabbat join in Shalom!!!"

All these admissions run up my throat,
the suffocating sweater keeping all
of them down, except, "I cannot...
I am not in a skirt."

The girl's warm eyes catch me as the
prayer ends,
The long skirt lying flaccid against
Her girlish figure, no longer a
lampshade
Lighting her love for the lord.

And the carousel picks up again,
Young girls screaming, laughing,
Beacons of light illuminating from
Their slight forms, singing,
"Shabbat, Shalom, Shabbat Shabbat
Shalom."
Long lean fingers grip my sweaty hand
Swearing me in to this sacred circle
Sharing, "That doesn't matter. Join in.
Shabbat, Shalom, Shabbat Shabbat
Shalom."

By the Time You Read This

D'Ayn Sayre

By the time you read this you'll probably be
dead to me

Maybe not in physicality

But most certainly in my reality

So I decided to leave you this note

Unsigned and undated

Although you'll know it's from me regardless

Because I am a one of a kind unforgettable

The one you thought was warm, wild, and
wondrous, "the one" for you.

It is true,

I am bewitching.

I'm a spring loaded cylinder

Needing that ragged jagged key

To push my pins into place and

Open me up for the world to see.

But you must understand darling,

I am a latchkey lover -

One whose lock is unlike any other

One who teases you to peek between the
sheer curtains

Of the terrace window to see me poised

On my red leather lounge in the laciest

Lingerie holding The Picture of Dorian Gray

In one hand and a Parliament in the other

Taunting you, probing you,

"Won't you come inside?"

Many keys of all sizes and varieties have
tried

And I will say my dear, your
hardware had most of the prongs
pried.

You opened my mind

Contemplating an author's
passage

To immortality.

You opened my legs

Singing your sweet

Ritual melody.

But the lock didn't budge when

Your blade turned the tumblers to
my chest

And perhaps that's for the best -

I would hate for you to have
opened it

And found nothing inside.





The Age of Aquarian

Theodore Simendinger

Sunrise Through the Forest Brush
Theresa Rykaczewski

The Aquarian was a toddler when I rolled into town in a rusted van worth less than the gas in its tank. Artis was gone, stylin' and profilin' and earning a big living swatting shots in the ABA, but the fumes of the A-Train's greatness emanated JU pride through the Spanish moss canopy of our shady, majestic oaks. Coach Tom Wasdin recruited a half-dozen high school All-Americans to campus to continue the winning tradition—the Super Six, we called them—and these guys could really hoop. The team's most memorable win was a jaw-dropping 120-78 blitzkrieg of previously undefeated and fifth-ranked Southwestern Louisiana. Their hotshot star Dwight “Bo” Lamar was a high-scoring gunner, 30 points a game, and a first team All-American alongside college basketball legends like UCLA's Bill Walton, N.C. State's David Thompson, and Providence ballhandling wizard Ernie DiGregorio. Barely six-feet tall, Lamar led the nation in scoring while shooting from distances similar to the Gate River Run. As ballyhooed as those guys were, that night Bo and his buddies were fleas on the dog. The Coliseum was packed, the atmosphere electric, and we destroyed them. Blew them out early, middle, and late. The Dolphins were a perfect 12-0 at home that year, averaged 85 points per game, and shot over 50 percent from the floor. Every time the team took the court the fans were treated to fast break showtime. The guys loved playing that way and we loved watching. These truly were the good old days. I arrived on campus from suburban Annapolis also a hoopster, my varsity high school legacy highlighted by two things: I broke my foot during a timeout; and I led the league in chest hair. Intramurals were my college calling, and I had a lot of fun playing sweaty defense against other ex-high school hotshots who couldn't shoot, pass, dribble, or jump.

Hoops were big back then but Artis wasn't the only legend whose footprints illuminated the campus. Fran Kinne was loved more than the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus combined. Everywhere Fran went the heralding trumpets of angels announced her procession. She was, and remains, the Pied Piper of happiness.

The long and short of Artis and Fran's legacies? Both deserve statues on campus. Titans of all good things, they have lived and led with dignity and kindness. I was neither a silver-spooner nor frat boy; and worked my way through the university as a full-time meat-cutter at a local Winn-Dixie. Academics I took seriously and tried. For four years I dragged out of bed for 8-o'clockers, rarely cut class, then left campus at noon to work. I passed freshman biology not because I knew where to spear a fetal pig in its pyloric valve or vena cava, but because

I knew how a pig was put together. I dissected mine like you would see it in a grocery store: teenie-weenie pork chops, tiny slabs of spareribs, and hams cut into butt and shank halves. I flunked calculus, a five-credit course, and landed on academic probation. My academic advisor informed me that the three advance math credits I received upon enrollment fulfilled my requirement; there was no need to take calculus. This was new news.

The only reason I took calculus—an 8-o'clocker five days a week—was because I thought I had to pass it in order to validate the math obligation. Wrong, frosh boy. As Forrest Gump would say, “Stupid is as stupid does.” I took my advisor's advice and retired from math. Having bombed biology and fled science after merchandising the fetal pig, I had erased the S and M from STEM core studies before I was old enough to chug a six-pack legally. Soldiering on, I graduated on time in eight semesters and shook hands at commencement with Secretary of the Treasury William Simon. I remember two things about



that moment: stifling heat and humidity; and walking across the makeshift stage thinking, Now what? I have no idea what to do. Legend has it I am not alone having mulled those thoughts. En route to that B. S. in General Biz, I had cut 13,000 t-bone steaks, a quarter of a million pork chops—plus the tiny ones to escape biology—and could dismember a whole frying chicken into nine pieces in 26 seconds. My hands received my

rolled-up diploma scarred by 24 evenly distributed stitches. My parents drove from Maryland to attend commencement and my mother, a post-World War II homemaker who traded college for babies, loved the campus. She hugged me proudly. “Mom,” I said, “remember when you said these would be the happiest four years of my life?” She smiled

and nodded. “You lied.” A relentless academic load coupled with a blue-collar job working 40-to-70 hours per week had leaked cynicism from the recently minted, suddenly ex-intramural baller alumnus. What I was, was tired. I looked forward to was only having

a full-time job. Sheepskin secured, decisions loomed. I had a wonderful girlfriend who deserved better than what I gave her; and I knew without question I was too immature to marry. So I did what many human roosters do: I moved out unannounced and boomeranged back home to Annapolis. The plan was to parlay a blue-collar trade into a famous sportswriter. The plan was to parlay a blue-collar trade into a famous sportswriter. To me this seemed logical. After all, I had majored in General Business. I talked my way into a sports reporter job that paid less than what I had earned with Winn-Dixie. But my writing career enabled me to captain the newspaper softball team. Bobby Shriver was a staff writer—Ace, we called him—and his sister Maria turned me down for a date when she visited from Georgetown. Bobby had never played ball but was a great gate attraction. Whenever I put him in left field, two dozen swooning young women would sit along the foul line oohing and ahing at every move he made. Being a Kennedy, and looking like one, had its advantages. Women fluttered around Ace like butterflies. You cannot eat a byline, and I soon tired of being broke.

I moved back to Jax to reconcile with my ex-girlfriend but she would have rather buried two dead cats than listen to me prattle on about having learned the error of my ways. I know this because she had me thrown out of Barnett Bank when I showed up dressed in a suit cradling an armful of beautiful red roses. I needed a real job and decided to do what my dad did, sell for a living. The placement office got me some interviews and I soon had two offers, Johnson & Johnson and Xerox. The J&J guy was great. He told me I would have to be willing to move in order to advance. Xerox never mentioned that. I wanted to keep working on my ex-girlfriend, a stupid strategy that would barbecue my soul. The way I saw it, making good money with a big company would distract her enough to forget my past slithering transgressions. I accepted the Xerox offer. Ten weeks later they moved me 100 miles south to Ocala. The unexpected relo caused me to draw up a new plan: stay in the corporate world long just long enough, perhaps a year, and then return to famous writing. One year turned into five, 10, and eventually 20. I had a large measure of success, learned a lot, and was significantly overpaid. I moved five times with Xerox, the last coming after I stepped over a murdered guy in front of a Miami diner and ate a lunchtime tuna melt the Friday before Christmas. Through the big window I watched the owner hose away bone chips and blood. It was a retribution mob hit, bullet holes and tire tracks. Miami was a tough town. I had a beautiful home on Biscayne Bay that I bought privately from a big-time Teamsters labor leader (Salvadore “Sammy Pro” Provenzano) whose brother Tony strong-armed union control away from Jimmy Hoffa and was prominently featured in Marin Scorcese’s film *The Irishman*. The two-story house had security bars on every window, a hidden floor safe, and real

Miami police officers determining gate-restricted access to our canal peninsula. In typical Miami fashion, I got robbed by boat.

Then my hubcaps got jacked at a 7-11 while I was inside getting coffee. Soon after came the murder. Everybody got stung one way or another. Miami is a taker’s town. I yearned for a better, easier quality of life and decided to go west. My final Xerox transfer was to Denver. My new territory included Hawaii, which is el primo on an expense account. My role was important—I negotiated the biggest deals Xerox cut with giant accounts—but everything changed in Honolulu. A co-worker shot up an early morning team meeting, killing seven of nine. He liked one guy and passed the gun over him, then missed the ninth when the fellow zig-zagged down the hall. I was high in the food chain and the police thought the gunman, who escaped in a company van, might try to take out the executive team. They rang my hotel room as I was preparing to head in and told me to “disperse.” Aimlessly wandering Waikiki’s antique district, police sirens suddenly screamed from all four directions. Miami had taught me that whoever they wanted was in the middle. The shooter was apprehended in his van, quietly waiting, smoking a cigarette and reading a magazine. Regardless what a person does for a living, once co-workers start shooting each other it is time to leave. Six weeks later, at the stroke of the Millennium, I walked away from corporate life, ending a 20-year run. Life, not school, sometimes dictates the need for situational reinvention. This was one of those times. I had no plan. Leaving was step one. Step two I would figure out in due time. Since I had taught advanced strategic selling at the Xerox International Training Center, I knew a lot about influencing behavior and decided to learn more. Life skills matter. I invested the next three years reading and researching all I could about head management. The goal was to help prevent other corporate workers from reaching a point of hopeless despair.

I wrote a book that resonated with a Denver-based global brand and taught a pilot class with multi-national representation. We had a great week, which validated two things I had believed to be true: These gaps existed and needed to be closed; and, since life skills are relevant to everyone, there was true value in my work and approach. I carved out a private consultancy, kept researching and writing, designed programs and crafted curriculum, and proved the truth in what my best friend told me when I contemplated exiting corporate life. “Do something you like,” he said. “If money matters, you’ll find a way to make it.” Xerox had sent me overseas three times—Hong Kong and twice to New Zealand—and I traveled well. Coupled with my life skills work, my sales background and new behavioral-centric approach opened a door in London. My work resonated. I secured a four-year retained deal that had me teaching, coaching, and developing talent all over

Western Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, South Asia, and the Far East. The more I taught, the more I learned. The more I learned, the better I got. The better I got, the more work came my way. I built the life I wanted to live and was living it. While the Hawaiian assassin remained locked inside a jail cell, I was crisscrossing the world honoring my fallen co-workers through work designed to help others. I have never forgotten them and never will. Outside of work before heading west I organized a guys weekend at Dodgertown in Vero Beach. I love baseball and missed playing. So I rented the place out and got four teams of mid-career fellows to show up for a long weekend of camaraderie and fun. What I intended to do one time turned into an annual event, soon with a charity focus. All these years later, the No Bats Baseball Club is still at it. This year we will pass the \$211 million charity mark, every nickel of which has been turned over to a wide variety of fabulous baseball and military charities. No Bats has supported a full spectrum of diverse initiatives helping Hall of Famers like Nolan Ryan, Cal Ripken Jr., the late Tony Gwynn, Randy Johnson, and Andre Dawson.

We have twice visited the tiny North Carolina town and farm of the late Hall-of-Famer Jim “Catfish” Hunter, who died from A.L.S. (Lou Gehrig’s Disease). We actively support the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund, helping fund education for children of the fallen; and have twice challenged the island of Bimini, Bahamas (population 1,200) and taken guys over to play. We put computers, networks, and printers in their schools, kids gaining access by reading books. Major and minor league parks across the country have let us use their fields, and this fall the Chicago White Sox are hosting us in support of their inner-city initiatives. Next year, our 30th season, Nolan Ryan will engage with us for the fifth time. Nolan is a great man, a prince of a fellow, a quiet, dignified Texas gentleman with old school values. As life has evolved, chapters have closed and other ones written. As my hair has taken an interesting journey turning from blonde to gray, I have come to realize that life reinventions work best when coupled with giving back. In the end, when the final tally is taken, our measure is not what we have accomplished as much as how our choices and efforts have impacted the lives of others. Working my way through JU was difficult; and soon after graduating I set up a scholarship fund to help others who would follow and need to do the same. I admire women and men with the gumption to climb high hills on their own. Accountable self-governance requires time management and discipline, both of which have value in an increasingly competitive world. Once we enter that space, grades do not matter. Performance matters, and performance is fueled by determination. I spent much of this past summer in Pakistan, teaching classes to a fascinating collection of talented executives eager to learn. Few Americans go there. I went because I was asked. Together we worked hard to pave the runway



to better lives and careers. I rank these seven small classes among the best I have had, and I have worked with thousands of people. I may or may not return this year to Islamabad but will be returning to London, sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

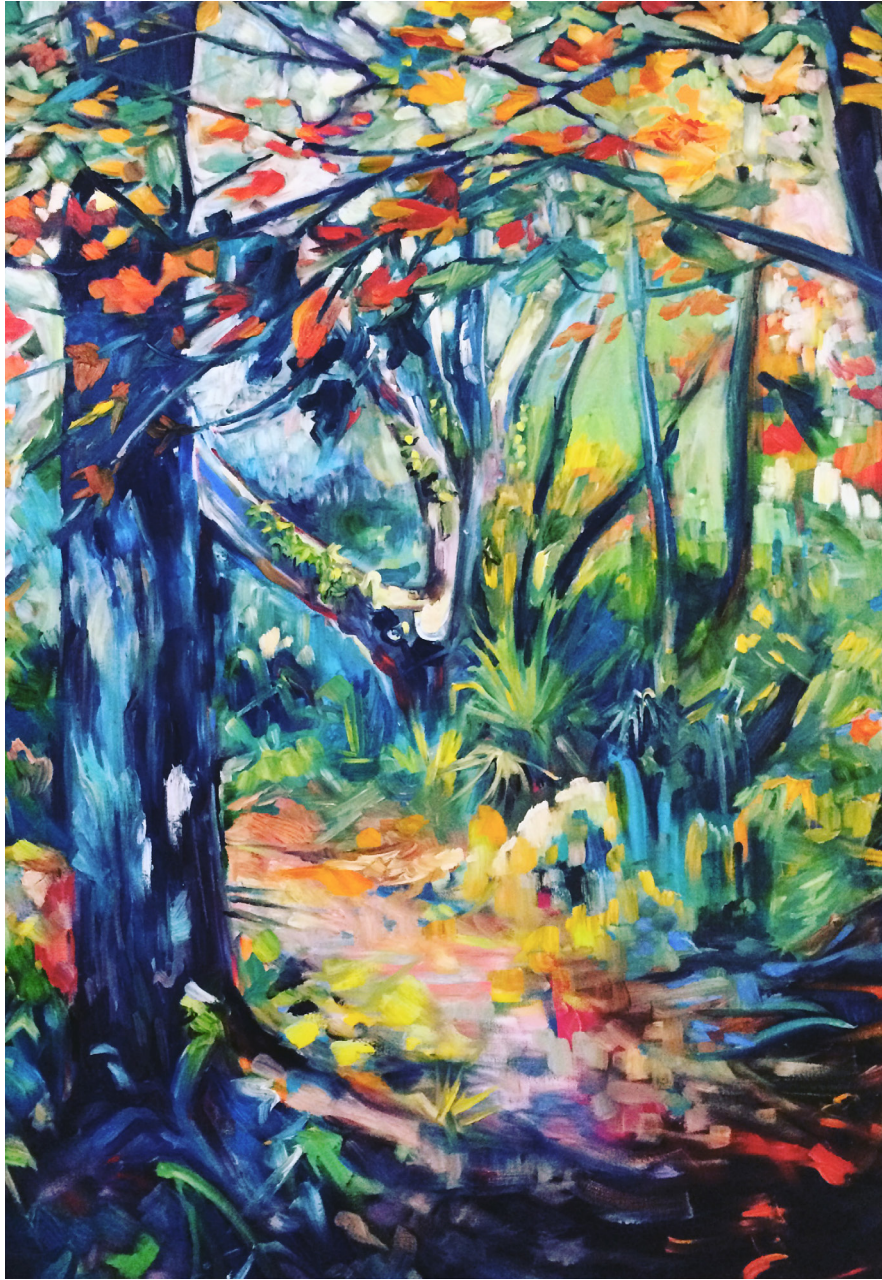
Every project is distinct, every class unique. The world has taught me that people everywhere are 93 percent the same and seven percent different. Our choice is simple: We can either build upon the 93 or argue about the seven. I am a builder. The foundation for approaching life and work through respect, brotherhood, and self-belief grew from the banks of the old St. Johns. If someone had told me that the answer to my graduation perplexity of “What next” would involve five continents, 44 countries, and friends all around the world while benefitting thousands more through my charity work, I would have thought that cutting big dead animals into small little pieces was remarkably valuable. I never dreamed that future decades would create successive versions of global me 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0, each upgrade opening opportunities and expanding possibilities. I do not fear reinvention, because I know that exiting one life to build the one you want to live is doable. I am proof. I have had a marvelous, extraordinary, spectacular life on levels more important than money. Money is good—you cannot help the poor by being one of them—but money only matters when you don’t have any. Fiscal responsibility keeps options open. The road less traveled is one, and it is a magnificent route to take. For the past 50 years, The Aquarian has chronicled parallel lives of a stadium full of creative talents whose passionate work in visual and literary arts has twinkled starlight across our shared universe. STEM subjects and binary professions are important, but it is the artists, musicians, actors, and wordsmiths whose bloodwork pumps life’s heartbeat with love, passion, imagination, and happiness. Stay tuned and keep turning pages. The next five decades, I am sure, will be even better.

Cascade of Glass
Alexandra Swift



Teal Cane and Murrini
Isabella Harmeson





Dutton Island Trail I
Isabella Harmeson



Blue Merletto
Isabella Harmeson

Silent Observations
Alexandra Swift



False Idols

Hannah Cone

Fingers entwined like dried veins, too thick to pry apart.
Airport hellos and goodbyes thick with salt taffy tears.
Buttery, caramel, sweet popcorn smiles that light our faces
against glowing light.
Barefoot journeys into beds of water clear enough to see our
souls' reflection.
Moonlight tantrums and sunrise make ups.

The thought of us is my false idol.

The way your hair curls in rings of thickly shaved chocolate.
Your eyes, deep and quiet like the caverns of my own soul.
The upward curve and glimmer of white when you smile.
The kindness that radiates like a furnace when you speak.

You are my false god.

Take My Hand
Margaret Saypoh





Commotion
Alexandra Swift

Qué hiciste este fin de semana?

Kristin McIntyre

Typing

“My father had a heart attack”

Into Google translate

“Cómo se dice ‘heart attack?’”

“Tuvo un ataque al corazón”

Well, mí padre tuvo un ataque al corazón.

¿Cómo se dice?

It's not fair

I'm barely 21 and

I am afraid to sleep

in case my dad stops breathing

Suddenly a break in the snoring

which once brought relief

now brings instant panic

¿Cómo se dice?

I want to scream

at Mom for leaving

at God if He makes Dad

leave me

¿Come se dice?

I'm not ready

I still reach for his enormous hand

When we walk into a grocery store

Even though I'm 21

I still giggle like a toddler

when he makes a preposterous face

even though I'm 21

I still plead for his advice

like the gospel it is

even though I'm 21

And even though he's 71

I'm only 21

And I'm not

ready

¿Cómo se dice?

Please

An Ode to My Kitchen Utensils

Hannah Cone

The sifter that stands all silver and tall
Lodged behind the chipped bowl, forgotten,
Blends together the essentials, all
Is the most important tool in the kitchen.

The wooden spoon that sits in front
Argues its importance with its sage look.
Its strong form, so colossal and blunt,
Does more than just hold open a tattered cookbook.

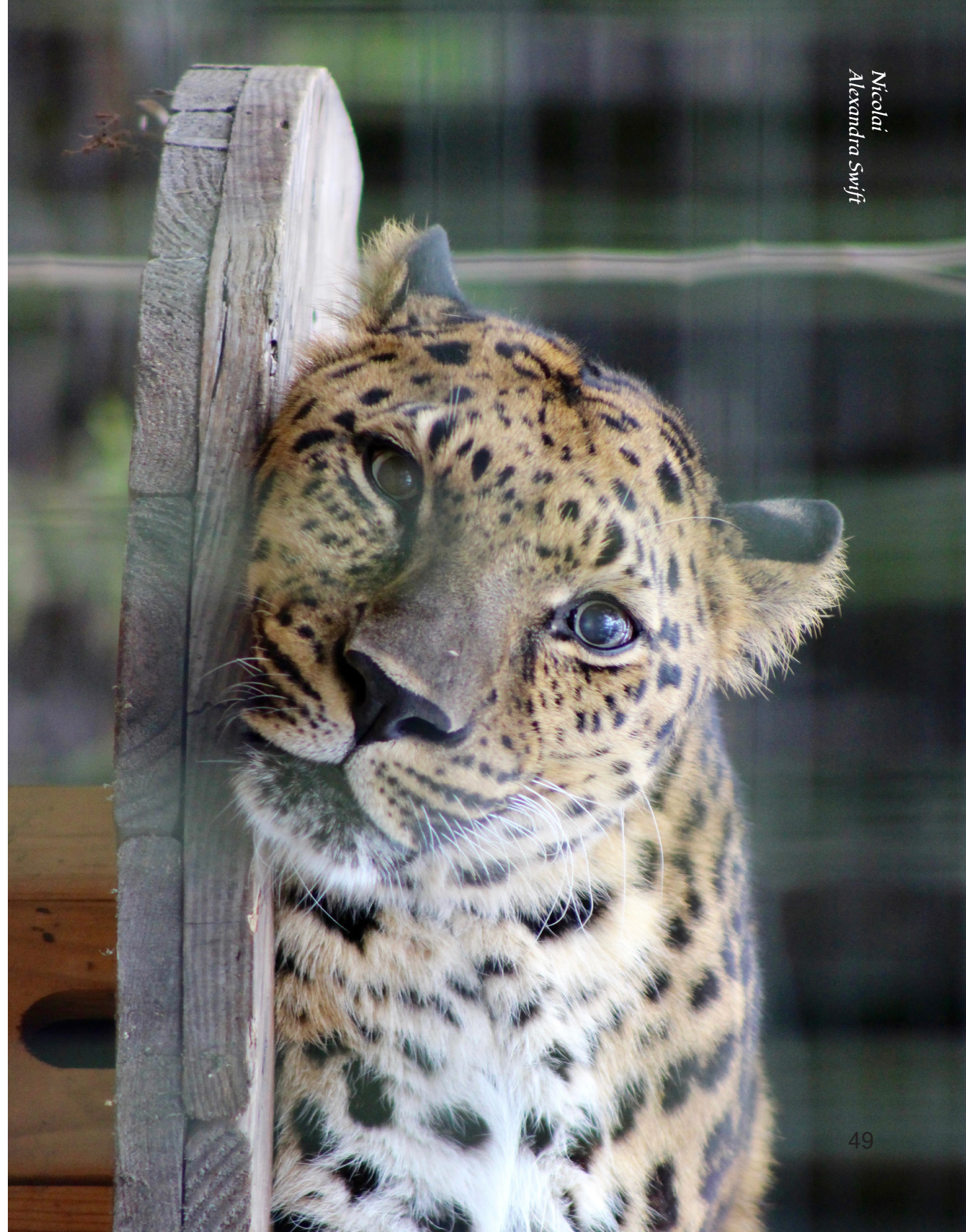
Yes, the tall silver sifter may unite
And indeed, the wooden spoon does stir.
But the best utensil, I'll tell you alright
Is the beater filled with remains of cookie batter.



Online Shopping

Kristin McIntyre

Open the app.
Apply search filters.
Choose age range,
And distance from you.
Never ship standard,
When you can ship Prime.
Scroll through the pictures.
Read the description.
Add to cart and go on the date.
Small talk over a meal.
Giggle after too much wine.
Stumble into his car.
Tumble into bed.
Sloppy kisses lead to,
Clothes on the floor.
Exaggerated moans lead to,
Sleeping on separate sides.
Once the passion wears off,
Just order a new shipment tomorrow.



The Five

Paul Risner

We lost C.P. Lee in the winter-
His Athenian Odyssey had led him around the world twice and to our little school
Only to die far from home, but for his colleagues and students.
When he orated, when he pro-nounced and dramatically presented
Paradise Lost, in all its glory
You believed that this was what Milton had in mind
When he wrote the damned thing.
C.P. Lee, we missed, as soon as he was gone.
Of the four remaining, Duchovnay, Hallam, McLeod and Tilford,
Tilford and Hallam have slipped the surly bonds,
Duchovnay left, to seek the future that only he knew.
Only McLeod abides.
These five, these thinkers
Formed the basis of my literary union
And one by one, they left me.
Tilford published a reading list of fifteen books,
And when we arrived at class
He said to set twelve on the left side of the desk,
And three on the right.
These three books would be our works for this class
And the other twelve you must read in your lifetime.
We were puzzled, and a little angry—
We had just spent more than fifty dollars
On books we did not need and might not read,
But he knew: he was making a bet with us.
If we would take the challenge and read those books in our lifetime
Our education in the word would never end.
And by the time we finished those books
We would understand those books.
Tilford knew.
Hallam stirred the Bard in us and made us believe
That Shakespeare was more contemporary than we
And language, much of it invented by him
Was ever our friend and trusty Falstaff.
We studied Shakespeare, read aloud Shakespeare,
Learned the music, food, and habits of Shakespeare's time.

The bloody moon
Ksenja Lazar



And learned to appreciate the beauty of language and the spoken word.
Hallam knew.
McLeod showed us films and persuaded us
That literature and art could be cinematic.
He loved foreign films and loved Wertmuller
Riefenstahl, De Sica, Demy, Hitchcock, Fellini and more...
And the fact that I can tell you their names
And why they are essential to all of us,
Is credit to McLeod, because
McLeod knew.
I write today for a living.
I write for amusement, and I write to explain, to persuade,
To tell stories, to command, and
I write to unburden myself of the thoughts
And feelings that have accumulated over time,
But I write well because I know the value of spare and concise passages.
I know the difference between writing to fill the page,
And writing to fill the mind.
I know because Duchovnay taught me how to write.
Duchovnay knew.
The five men of my literary world knew
That I would not realize who I was until I was their age,
And that the books I read when I was twenty
Would not be the last books I would read,
And the thoughts they gave me,
Would come back to a fuller life, and better understanding
As I approached their age.
They knew.
I won the bet with Tilford; I read all of those books, even though it took me 25
years.
I can quote Shakespeare when required, and I know why Hamlet hesitated.
I can intelligently discuss the difference between post-war Italian cinema
And the new wave of the French, and I have a transferred appreciation for
Catherine Deneuve
That may only be described as "learned," from McLeod.
I am a product of all of these men, all of this learning.
I hope that, looking at me 45 years ago,
They knew.



Coping
Aaron DeCicco

Over the last couple of weeks,
Kat requests to hear
“The Lord is My Joy”
at least once daily.
She sings in his octave for the first
verse
and chorus
and then

takes it up the octave
screeching gleefully

At
The
Top
Of
Her
Lungs
into the rafters.
“Violin!”
she declares
while Leonard’s solo rips through
the speakers
and then

he plays.
“POPPY! YASSSS POPPY!”
She yells so loudly behind me.
“I love you, grandpa!”
“THAT’S SO GOOD! YASSS!”

When the song ends,
she asks me if he can hear her,
and if he would like her singing.
She tells me she sings
so loudly
because
she
needs
him
to
hear her.

These moments make my logical mind
spin its tires futilely.
I don’t have an answer,
and I don’t like the go-to.
Never have.
But
sometimes I forget
I’m not the only one who lost
a piece of her self
last year,
not the only one
who died
just a little.

She yearns for
a connection to him,
So I search for
a way to give
a part of mine
to her.

For Zelda

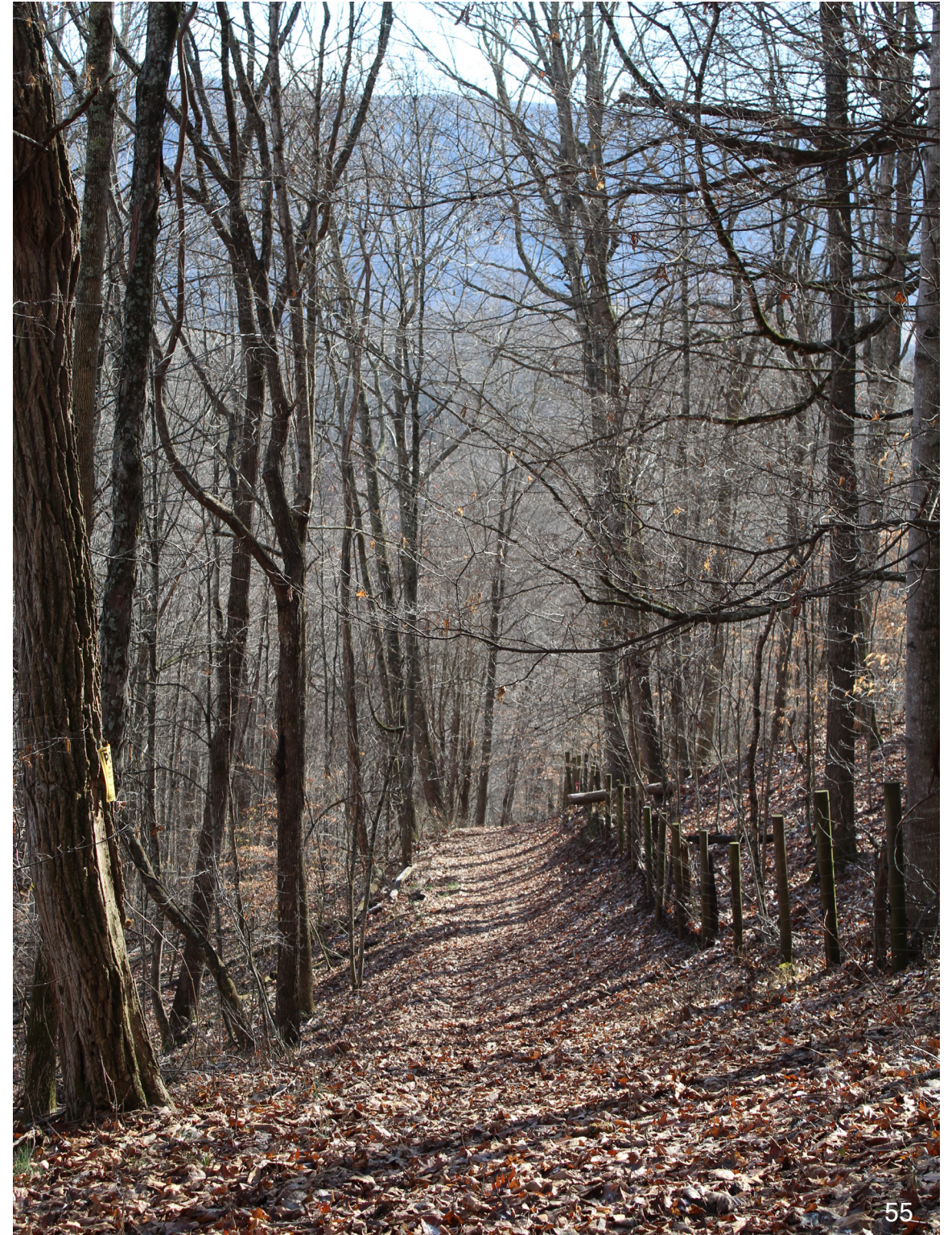
Robert Dew

The morning I stopped by
those old stone stairs
where you made
your final ascent
my mourning for the
loss of your paintings
and the theft of your
carefully-crafted prose
began.

This morning as I sought
to encourage my students
my last talk of the day
was with your great great-niece
and I described to her
the feeling I had there
in the Paris of the South
at the place where your life
ended.

When I told her
that this was
her opportunity
to create the
Art and Poetry and
Anything else she desired
that they had tried
to silence in
your heart

This mourning I have held
in my heart for you,
your work and that
miscreant's horrible
mistreatment of you transfigured
into a dove holding a white rose
in its mouth and flew
like a perfect Phoenix into
her heart.



Cuban Coffee in Cracked Hands

D'Ayn Sayre

Driving through the countryside, the roads are narrow and the asphalt is clayed over from the runoff of the mountains on either side. The awkward yellow taxi driven by Dianelis, our first taxi driver's daughter, weaves through the switchbacks, the stray dogs, and the horses pulling carts with expertise. The jungle dances to the rhythm of the wind. Dense, low forestry with enormous palm trees poking through the thick of the land are swaying high, reaching for the sun. The further we drive into the forest, roofs of homes seem to sag deeper, horses are thinner, makeshift barns lean further. Despite the decay of the infrastructure, the farmers wave with large smiles that truly reach their eyes as we drive passed. Now deep into the countryside, Dianelis pulls off the side of the road, minding a broken-down SUV on the right, and a plow with a missing wheel to the left. We have finally made it to the farm.

Trekking up a "driveway", a man's shouting reaches my ears as he yells for his family to come and greet us as we arrive. No vehicle could ever actually travel up this driveway because it is a nearly 60-degree angle upwards, laid with loose stones the size of paperweights. Half way up the muddy incline two houses, a 30-year-old rusted tractor, two horses, a mule and more than 10 people come in to view.

First, I'm hugged by Perfecto, who I quickly discover is the one who shouted our arrival. Eight children grew up on this farm, and he is the sixth. This man is charismatic, and easily the star of the show. His energy is infectious, his arms waving, head rolling, straight white teeth smiling wide. Though Perfecto is surely entertaining all the way up to the top of the hill, his older brother grasped my arm as I nearly tripped over a loose stone. He's the one who truly caught my attention. Clad in government distributed garb, Juanito's tall and lanky form stands proudly in his forest green trousers, khaki button down that is a size too-large and originally intended to serve as an overcoat, a tan newspaper-boy cap, and to-the-knee rain boots. He leads us to his home, where we spend the day. His home is painted a light green with salmon colored shudders. The wooden structure atop a concrete pad was quaint, two bedrooms and a common room, separated into two spaces by a string of beads. One side of the common room is a seating area situated around a TV from the 1980s, and the other half is home to a magnificently hand-crafted dining table. The "kitchen" is out the back door, though they have no refrigerator and the stove is coal fire. The bathroom is also, outside. Juanito is the oldest brother of the family. He is the only sibling that lives



*Juanito
D'Ayn Sayre*

on his father's farm. It is now his. All eight children grew up here, but the rest of the siblings moved closer to the city to find work. The land grows coffee and sugarcane. Pigs, chickens, and hound dogs run about the yard.

Even though I can not directly communicate with Juanito, I feel we will get along. About 60 years old, though looking 40, this man is quiet, observant, and hard-working. Perfecto is the talker of the family, and Juanito is the worker. Juanito's deep, kind eyes and worn, cracked hands spoke for him. In him, I saw my grandfather.

I grew up two doors down from my grandad, and although I saw him nearly everyday and we were close, he is not the chatty type. We can sit together in the car, work cows in the field, toss a baseball back and forth for hours in complete, comfortable silence. My grandad prefers to let his actions do the talking. The cracks of Juanito's dry hands, with dirt embedded in the cuticles no matter how hard they are scrubbed, were just the same as the hands who picked me up off the ground after my first horse bucked me off. The hands that skimmed through my math textbook helping me find the answers to my homework. The ones who built homes and surveyed land for a living. Though Juanito and I do not speak, his eyes tell me he is of similar spirit.

After introducing us to the remaining family and friends, and the gray clouds cast low in the sky, Juanito walks us up the path from his house, to his father's. He begins to shovel the coffee beans drying out on the concrete pad in front of the house, which now sits empty after his father's passing. There are purposeful divots in the pad, that serve to encourage rain run off. Noticing a second shovel leaning against the porch, I walk up to Juanito with it in my hands and question, with hand gestures, if I can try. His dark brown eyes soften as his lips perk up into a tight smile. He turns his body to show me the correct hand placement of the shovel, and then slowly performs the correct movements of the tool so I can learn. We push and shovel thousands of coffee beans into the middle of the pad. We cover the heap with a great blue tarp to protect the dried-out beans from the rain. He gives me a curt nod for a job well done.

As Perfecto shows us how to remove the coffee bean from the hull standing on the porch, Juanito disappears. Minutes later he comes back through the thick of the forest, dragging stalks of sugar cane along with him. He hacks the stalks with a long machete hanging from his belt, and passes a hunk to each of us to chew on.

We return to Juanito's house as the rain comes in, and snack on sweet oranges, bananas, and the best pork I've had in ages. True organic, farm raised food. The kind of food I grew up on, but no longer come in contact with while

living in the city. I meet Juanito's son, his wife, and their daughter. I can see the deep, kind eyes were inherited as was his height and physique not only by his granddaughter. The energy as both the Americans and the Cubans laugh deeply and grasp their bellies with one hand, almost losing their glass of rum in the other, is contagious. We drink, we laugh, and some sing as we lounge about the house, telling the rain to take it's time in passing, as we were in no rush to leave. We all are enjoying the time with one another. I've never experienced such a deep feeling of comfort with a collection of strangers, especially strangers who do not speak my language. Perhaps it is because their lives are not so different from mine.

I grew up on 30-acre farm split between my parents and grandparents, where we raised cattle, horses, goats, chickens, llamas, rabbits, the list goes on. Farming is a way of life, and it is evident that regardless of your country, your government, your language, your education, it teaches you strength. It teaches you hard work. It teaches you kindness. This family, feels like my own. As an American traveling to Cuba, I was not expecting to connect with anyone, yet I have with Juanito and his family. After many group pictures and hugs good bye, leaving is not easy. I am upset that I am not able to speak their language. I am saddened that I can not tell them goodbye for myself. I am frustrated for not realizing there are kindred spirits regardless of your place in this world.

We drive back through the forest as the sun is setting, and I've never seen anything quite like it. I've seen plenty of beautiful ones, sitting on the riverbank of campus, watching the colors paint the flowing current. Over my pasture back home, sinking beneath the orange trees. Off the balcony of my dorm in Sorrento Italy, fading into the Tyrrhenian sea. But this sunset feels alive, even in death. I want to climb to the top of a ridge and watch the bold orange sun fade from the sky and sink below the palmed hills. It has been an unforgettable day.

Seeing Cuba as an English major is not about relating Jose Marti's Abdala to the struggles of the nation. Feeling Cuba as an English major is not about walking the grounds of Hemingway's home in Havana, pausing as the warm air rolls over me, wondering if he stood in those exact steps. In actuality, being an English major had everything to do with seeing and feeling what Cuba is through my eyes, through my fingers, through my thoughts, my emotions, and my perspective. For me, writing isn't about comparing and analyzing the thoughts of the greats before me. Writing is about breathing life into the crevices that are not yet explored. Writing is about telling a story the way I see it through my life and my experiences, past and present.



Along for the Ride
D'Ayn Sayre

Coming Home *Kristin McIntyre*

The anticipation of the rush of his Lexus descending our driveway has been rising since I noticed the clock turn five. Pausing my late afternoon Scooby Doo episode, I walk out of my room and position myself at the end of the hallway, where all of our bedrooms meet. The hallway connects to heart of our home, the kitchen. The kitchen is the only way in or out of our family home, so my position is ideal here. I crouch, bending my eight-year-old legs underneath me in such a way that I can surge forward when the time comes. Mama's computer keys tap, tap, tap away in her home office, as a reminder of her indifference to the impending excitement. The sound of his car cruising down the sloping driveway gives way to the mechanic grunts of our automatic garage. His heavy thuds climbing the back stairs reverberate through the closed door. The backdoor lets out a long creak as it opens, then slams shut in one beat. I hear the cracks of his aging ankles as he takes four wide steps forward, chanting, and "Fee- Fi- Fo- Fum". Daddy turns the corner just as I spring forward to launch into his embrace. "Gotcha!" he boasts as I giggle and squeal. His suit is wrinkled from the day at his law office, but it still smells as it did when he left this morning. I tuck my face into his chest and breathe in the familiar scent of aftershave, hairspray, and leather as he holds me. We walk hand in hand to his home office, to continue the favorite part of my day.

My father always laughs when I cry. When I tell people this fact, they assume he is an asshole, and to be honest, he does have his moments. My dad is fifty years my senior. He has lived more lifetimes in those years than I can keep track of. So, when a sobbing teeny-bopper, such as myself, comes to him lamenting over school stress and boyfriends, of course he laughs. He reassures me that none of these trials will matter in a year and takes for ice cream, as I totter behind his long strides, desperately trying to convey to him the seemingly real severity my problems hold.

My dad is my best friend. His arrival home after a long workday felt like a peer coming over for a playdate. We would joke and tease and laugh like comedic equals. When I was upset, my dad reassured me by not taking me seriously. My mother always took my impulsive whims as my best and greatest life plan. My dad, having raised two children before marrying my mother and producing me, knows too well the indecisiveness of the youth. When one heartbreak overwhelms me, my dad recognizes another will be on its way; such is life. Therefore, he taught me to never let one situation get me down. He would just simply laugh, shake his head, and reach for my hand as we walk to the car for a Costco trip or Dairy Queen run.

Bachelors of Science versus Bachelors of Arts

Kristin McIntyre

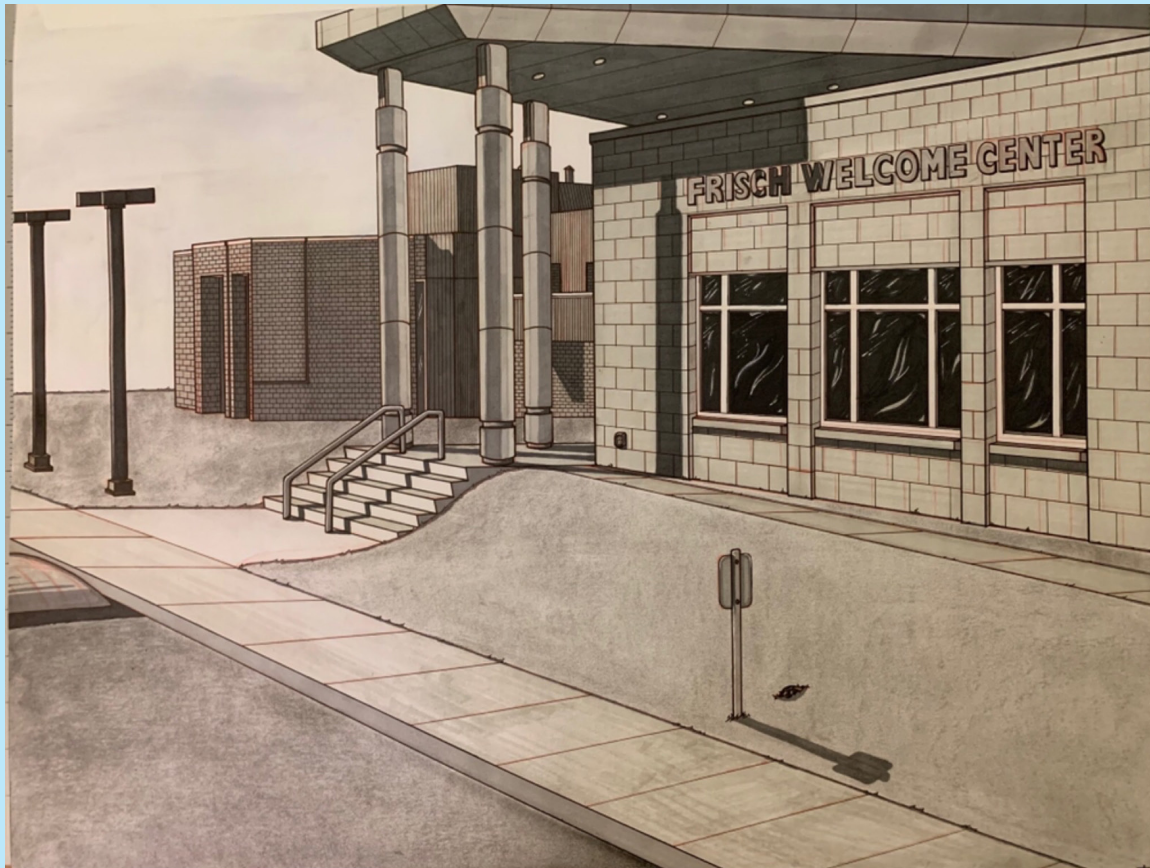
He reads the news
While I read old poetry
Serious and critical
Beautiful and pointless
How strangely perfect
Our mornings together seem to be
When two moments later
The news lays abandoned next to the book
And our clothes
Their blanket

*Masada
D'Ayn Sayre*

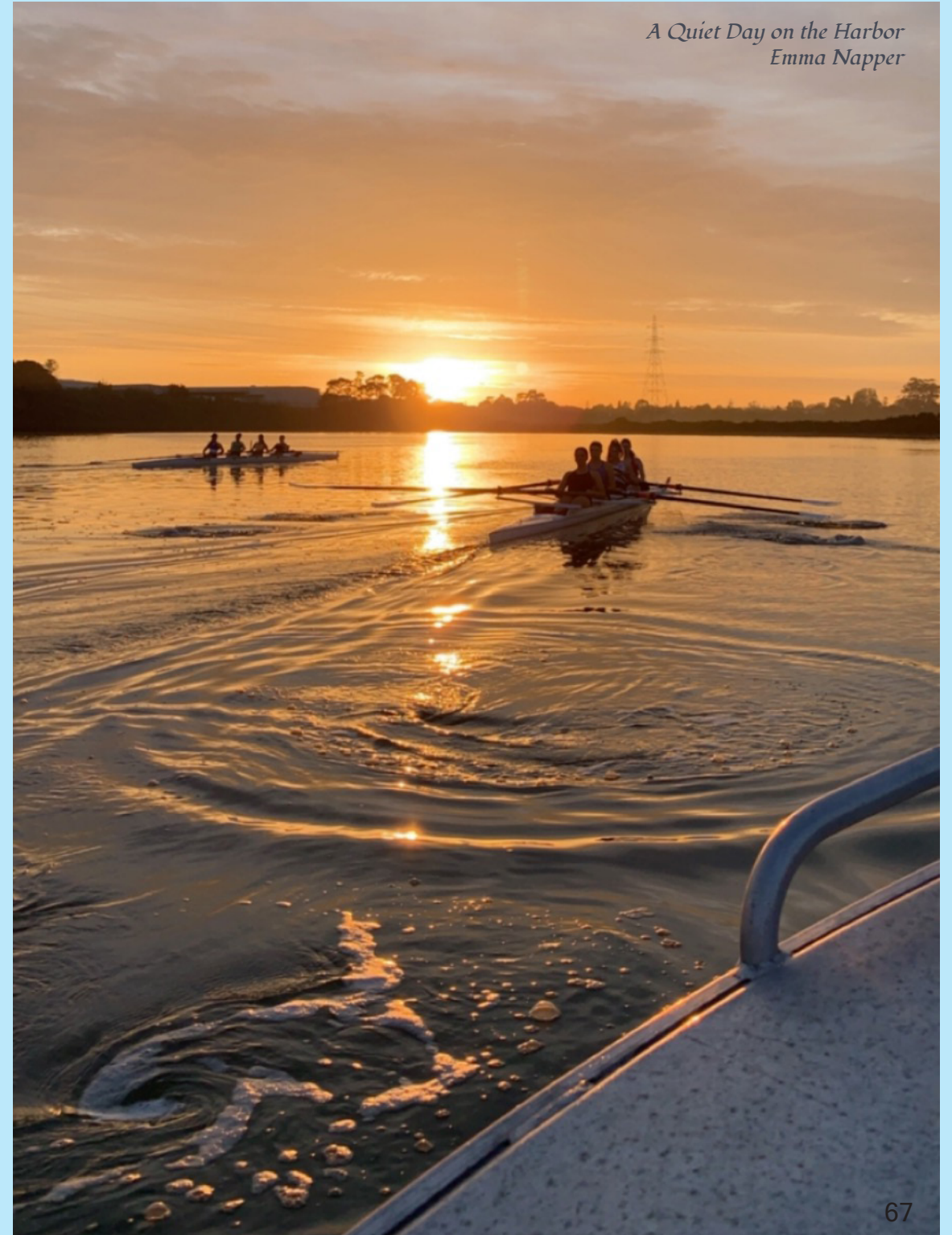


*Little Dragon Tea Cup Set
Isabella Harmeson*





Frisch
Ian Freese



A Quiet Day on the Harbor
Emma Napper

A Take on the State of the World and the End of All Things

Wesley Urbanczyk

the Poets got it right,
you know.
my conclusions
drawn from all
they knew,
Wrote.
with our Time.

Clipped
Short.

but now we're
the Penholders
scrawling
something of a
The End.
too late to see
smeared Future's
stains,
before I realize
we were
Warned.

Kept
Short.

we'd hoped to go
A'Roaring,
I know,
into a new
Deafening Decade.
but just past
Dawning Day,
A'blaze,
our screaming
World
succumbed to
Ice.

but
without a Bang,
we're just waiting.
waiting for
a Whimper.

*Still Skull
Ian Freese*



Buttercup Street
Katie Fritsche

Bare feet meet a misshapen combination
of gravel and asphalt as eyes
take in a slanted sign
declaring it, "Buttercup Street".

Buttercup Street sounds pleasant
not an overgrown forest of hybrid pea plant trees,
flooding into the street
whose cradle-like seeds roared with every blast of the wind.

Surely, not a community
of stray animals sequestered in stark
dwellings composed of palisades
that lead back to Buttercup Street.

A gray, ashen face
digs into the terra
imposing dominion
over the hinterland.

The sugary, donut colored fence
shuts the door
on the blatant determinism
of the peculiarly well-maintained garden.

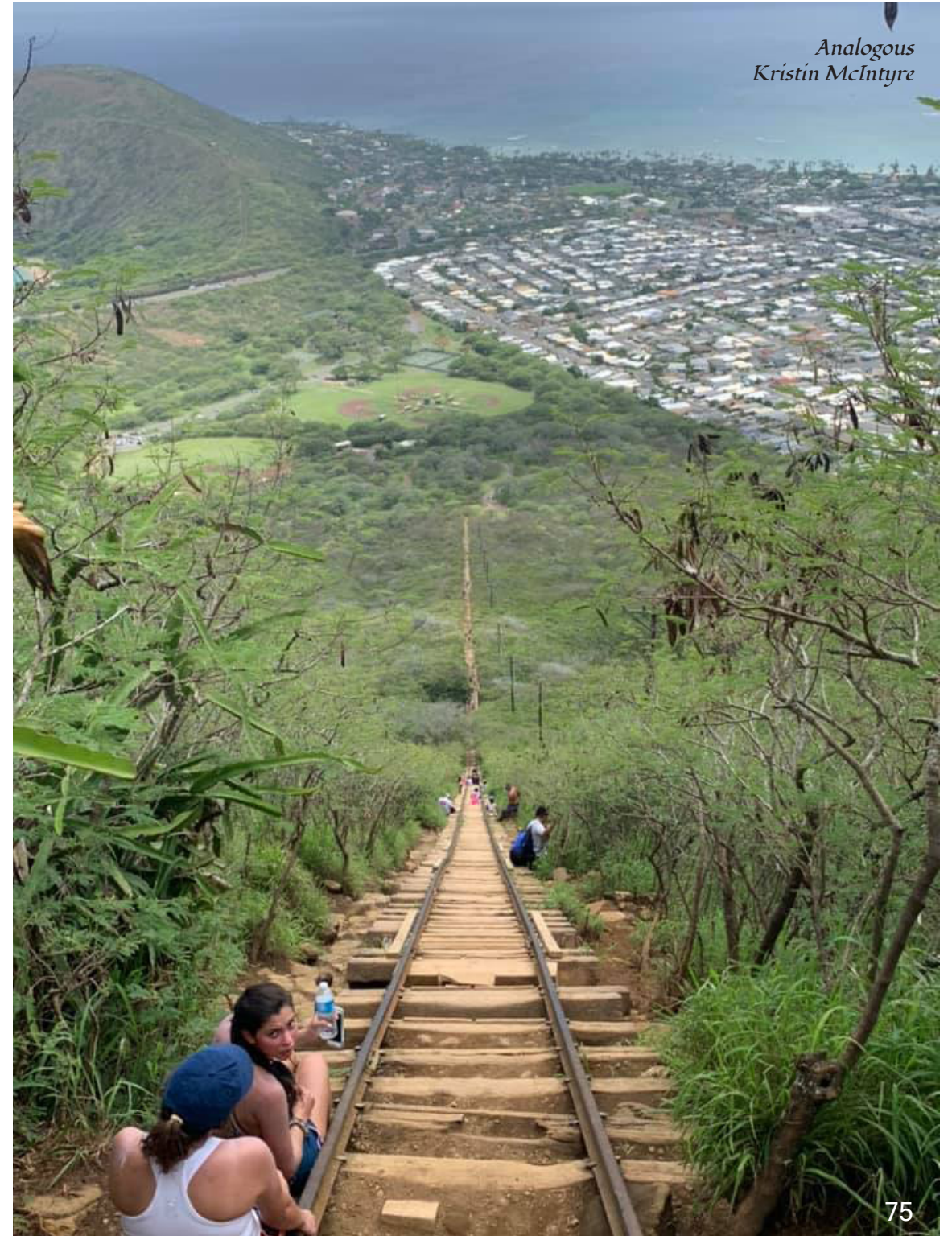
Blackened shoes
exit the depressions
of childhood innocence
into the overgrown.

Sunrise in Cuba
Elena Cobas



*Venezia From St. Mark's Campanile
Catlynne Keet*

*Welcome to Venezia
Catlynne Keet*



*Analogous
Kristin McIntyre*







For Keith and Karen

Paul Risner

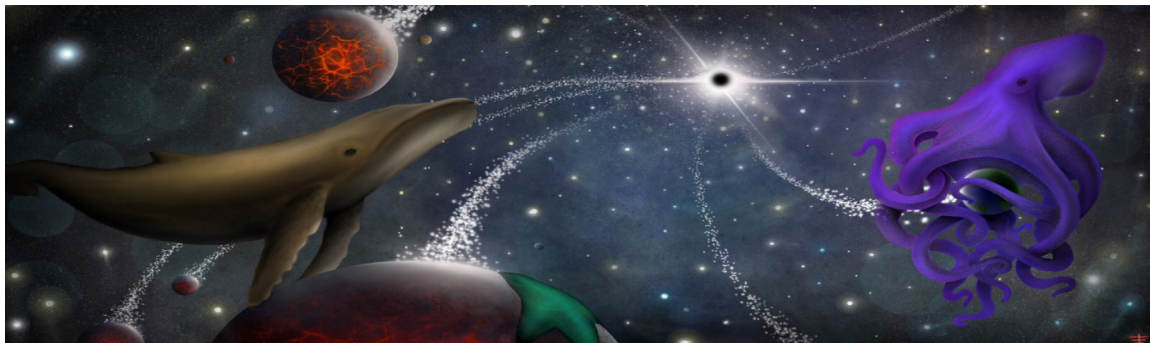
My friend is sad today—
His best friend, his wife, he fears, is leaving him
Not by choice, but in the way most mortals do.
He has faith, and he believes in grace
But his heart is still heavy—
He knows the answer to his question, “why?”
But he still whispers it in the dark.
And when he looks down at the face he knows, but knows not him,
He allows himself to feel all the emotions
His heart wants, but his head denies.
When comes the day, as days come
That she must go on without him,
He will hold her hand once more,
And with all the faith and love he has,
Whisper to her: “We will meet again, my love, my wife,
We will meet again.”

The Grain

Paul Risner

In the biggest hole in the ground in the world,
Next to the oldest rock I had ever seen or touched,
Beside a magnificent river that had carved two grand canyons,
Holding my wife's hand and staring at a billion stars,
I was as far-far away, and as far-far down as I have ever been.
I was suddenly...insignificant...and happy about it.
I felt as if I was a grain of sand, in a mighty river.
I understood the relevance and context for my life.
Later I described this experience to a park ranger, after the trip.
The ranger was a Hopi native, who listened intently to me
And watched me as I told of my realization.
When I told him I felt as if I were a grain of sand he said quietly,
"You are a grain of sand,
But every grain of sand alters the course of the river in which it
lies.
You are here to alter the course of the great river.
It is not up to you as to how it is altered, nor to understand it.
You must be the sand-grain, and let the river decide."
At last I understood.

Wrath and Beauty *Ian Freese*



Thats a Nice Name
Gabby Morgan

Arboretum Animals
Ian Freese



Blue Pitcher
Stephen Wiley



Breakfast Burritos with a Side of Morning Meditation

Hannah Cone

It's been five years or more since I have sat in this booth. Facing the entrance, I have a bird's eye view of all the going-ons in my small hometown's local diner. One of three restaurants in my town which consists of a bit over 3,000 people, this diner always had the most business and best seasoned fries in all the county. This place was a staple of my childhood, the hole in the wall we'd crawl into when mama was too tired to cook. This was the place where the whole family would gather on Sunday afternoons, fresh from church and smartly dressed, ready to devour butter fried dinner rolls and sauced soaked wings. It always stayed the same; in a comforting way, it never changed. It's as if this diner is impervious to time's clutch.

Even after years of wear and hundreds of bouncing butts, these booths are still the most comfortable. Its wornness matches the décor of the restaurant quite perfectly. Across the room, sticky tables stand with chairs that shouldn't rock but do because of uneven legs. Dinged and filthy license plates from all 50 states line the walls as well as crooked signed photographs of famous racecar drivers, old and young. Over 100 wood frames are filled with pictures of local veterans and newspaper clippings honoring the county's hometown heroes. Somewhere on the wall of décor hangs a picture of an old friend who is now just a face suspended, a ghost of a memory in my mind.

Nothing has changed.

The waitress who took my order chews stale bubblegum while she scrawls the next table's order on a coffee stained pad. With her studded pocketed, boot cut jeans, red tie-dye t-shirt, and her fake tan two shades too orange for her, no one would have ever known that she had been the county's Miss Pageant winner in 11th grade. No one would have ever known then or now that she has dreams of opening her own store, selling a clothesline that she designs herself.

The blonde waitress leaning over the counter with dark bags under her heavily eye-lined lids was homecoming queen ten years before Miss Pageant winner. Her plastic, gold-chipped trophy collects dust in her leaky attic. The blonde counts her tips and her shoulders slump forward in exhaustion. Single mom of two, she works multiple jobs just to pay rent. No one would have ever known that for years she had dreams of being a doctor in a place far away from here.

In the back, the cook—fifty pounds overweight—who wears a stained half apron and has a nicotine addiction fries food and toasts brioche buns. No one would have known that he was the star quarterback everyone had high hopes for. His high school peers and family members goaded over how much potential he had, placing burdens of high hopes and unrealistic aspirations for his life on his shoulders. So much potential, yet here he is now, working in the sweaty, filthy kitchen making minimum wage in the same town he was born and raised in. He's no longer the star quarterback of the early 80's, but instead the best wing maker this side of the county line. His dreams of becoming the next author of the great American novel have disintegrated like the skin on his left pinky knuckle from boiling grease.

Ten years here, and nothing has changed. Yet everything has. And here I am, nearing the end my third decade, trying to figure out life and become the opposite of failure as I sit in this booth in the pit of despair, the graveyard of hopes and high dreams within the town that reeks of screw-ups and deadbeats.



*Blossom by Blossom
Gabby Morgan*



Elegy for Pity Mike

Paul Risner

I was in Hendersonville, TN, recently, and
Thinking to stir a memory
Rode out Old Shackelford Road, seeking a place
I had not seen in 50 years.
When we moved to Tennessee, in my youth,
We lived for about 8 months in Hendersonville,
This was back when Johnny Cash lived there,
But no one else did.
A few months after we moved there, our Boston Bull Terrier "Pity Mike,"
A pet we had loved for longer than I had been alive, suddenly died.
My Mother was heart-broken, and asked me and my Dad,
The men of the house,
To find him a spot for him to rest in, for all eternity.
We wrapped him in his blanket and put in a few toys,
We carried him down to the bank of a stream, and
Buried him, with the few flowers I could gather, beneath a towering shade tree.
He is there, still, I expect.
I went to Hendersonville to find this spot again,
And to remember a long-gone pet,
And to hope he enjoyed his life with us, while he was here.
This is what pets do for you...they give you a past, and a reason to remember.
I found the spot.
The stream still runs and the trees are still tall and shady.
We picked a good spot.
He could not possibly know that, all these years later
I would be standing there, thinking of him,
But I am glad I got the chance to do so.
He was a good dog; he loved my Mother beyond compare, and he deserved to
be remembered.
For those of you with pets, you understand—
This is part of the bargain.

Good Morning, Santorini
Hannah Santos



HEREAFTER THE GUNFIGHT NEAR THE OK CORRAL

Narrative from Wyatt Earp about Friends, Lost Ones, and Lost Time

Brendan McClellan

Outlaws bandits and apache, I lay claim to your Tombstone
Arizona was slowly becoming the future for the West
Can't stop me from entering or enterprising
Wives hate the constant movements of home
Who honestly could blame `em, we are a never settled people
I wish our success came as easy as traveling did
Brothers in arms follow regardless behind me toe to heel
We come for the quick silver like every other

But run into what we left in cowtown Dodge
You never can out run the past, it finds you always
Virgil tells me established order must be changed here
I wish he would take time more for business
Who am I though to criticize for I carry the law on my shoulders
Oriental will be our first game in faro then billiards
First Johnny Tyler is the son of bitch we need kicked out
Bad for industry that man's nose and lack of cocksmanhip is
He was a coward I took by the ear and threw out
Made James the bartender and a watchful eye
Take back the city one stone at a time
Curly Bill Cowboys have taken enough from the kind folk already
I would not ask `em to wait any longer
Money is slim and hard to earn even under Wells Fargo
Old friends will be the key to avoiding graves here and establishing law
Thank peach Doc came in town after Prescott
Gambling must have run dry with full bags at his side
Still has Big Nose Kate with him in town collecting his winnings
I wonder if my confidant has come because of I or another, best not assume
Virgil says we need to deal with the Cowboys
Stealing cattle changing brands is an offense of federal legality
God you hope a time can be had to relax, but not soon enough
I said many a time we would see those groups more
Never have I been wrong about such things or individuals
But I did not see that October night coming, who did
God had already disappeared from Tombstone without warning
Fred White, a great friend and lawman, died by the hands of Curly
Damn drunkard stupor with associates firing about at chimneys and Moon
Some say murder befell my friend others say misfire, I say let the courts decide
Helped him survive a lynching I did so damn sure he better make it to court
Politics surrounded such scandals in Tombstone
Judge Neugass for lack of scent was a decent man on the decision
He discharged without trial based on testimonies including my own
Sinful men rise when good men choose to sit back and pray
There was not much praying after the Cowboys started collecting around town
Reminds me of Behan, the man that stole and cheated Cochise County from me
I hate that little corrupt and spineless Democrat consorting with Cowboys
Although he formed relationships that peaked my interests
If it had not been for the Sheriff I would never have met my angel
Josephine Marcus came into town on a stagecoach for him

Even when I stayed with Mattie I longed far more for her
When we escaped from the harsh reality of that time it seemed like heaven
Anything was better than a laudanum addict or political fights over justice
I had no way of escaping for long in any direction however
Robberies were turning into more than trifling occasional events
Stagecoaches started leaving bodies behind on account of this increase in violence
Cowboys killed for bullion bricks, it got so bad Wells Fargo put up a reward
Heavy dose of purse for such a task was set
Gathering up a posse and my brothers we rode for the robbers of the Benson stage
Even though it was a failed attempt, two were dead both the driver and a passenger
I suspected a group of individuals from the Clanton gang involved
Suspicious confirmed when Behan and Breakenridge arrived with displeasing faces
We all rode together before picking up a track worth following
Found on the trail a Luther King who held reins in the attempted robbery
Admittedly under questioning he gave us three names
Bill Leonard, Harry Head, Jim Crane entered the top of our list to find
As much as I opposed it in my gut I left King in the hands of Behan
The hunt for the runaways beckoned us all, couldn't bother sitting
We were gonna need help in finding these sons of bitches with no trail
Returning with the posse back to Tombstone we found a couple timid parties
Ike Clanton and Frank McLaury agreed to assist for reward
Only Ike was far better at listening talking and accepting my offer
Language of the Cowboys always included a bit of profit
I told the two of `em we wanted the individuals captured
Then reaffirmed my sentiments with a telegram reminder of the deal dead or alive
Around that time also I learned King had escaped his jailor, never to be seen again
Smell of Behan coated that like leaves on trees
He held off telling me because it was none my concern, bastard
Plans of capture delayed also when word said they met back with Cowboys
Apparently heading south with Johnny Ringo and a couple others
Everyone called those acts they committed the massacre of Skeleton Canyon
Held my interests to a minimum since they were outside my purview
Arrests would have been commendable but I figured the Mexicans could house `em
Cowboys were still stealing cattle around then, which would take `em for naught
Eventually people get tired of thieves and change their handling
Guadalupe Canyon provided a seemingly dead-on opportunity for `em
Tactical ambush occurred killing several of the wannabe cattlemen
We learned of these befallen events from Joe Hill
Crane being the first of the trio to meet his place in Hell
Leonard and Head would not be far behind on their appointment

However their deaths in New Mexico were managed by a couple shopkeepers
No reward would be received or paid out for such ill-fated ends
The bargain I made with Ike undoubtedly now meant trouble with a C
Added in a paranoid man that was unaided by Marshal Williams' drunk tongue
No doubt trouble would soon be coming for me
From April Virgil carried out his duties as City Marshal
An Ordinance had been set in motion for the largest city of the county
Tombstone like many other places across the West gained this Ordinance
"To provide against from carrying deadly firearms"
Whether it needed to happen or not is another question
However life was not caustic to a degree requiring such a law
I decided against argument for then I would have to take it up with `em and Behan
Politics formed our land, either go with it or be crushed by the outcome
We tried to have no feeling on the law either way
But like the newspapers at this time people preferred to help their friends
We profiled more for criminal types rather than regular residents
Feelings were mixed on such an approach
Months of quiet go by before another stagecoach robbery commenced
In the early weeks of September one outside Bisbee got hit
A massive haul was acquired along with jewelry and mail
Passengers of the stage told us of four men
Downside each robber wore masks sheltering the countenances
Driver, Levy McDaniels, recognized the voices of two
Luck had been fortuitous to learn of these men's identities
First Pete Spence a known chronic law violator and failed Texas Ranger
Second Frank Stilwell the Deputy Sheriff to Behan
Who also spoke the word sugar to the passengers a common phrase of his
Things were to get tricky in a very short period
Morgan, Fred Dodge, Marshal Williams and myself took after the trail early
When William Breakenridge and Dale Neagle arrived we discovered a number of prints
Rain from the night prior when the robbery occurred helped
Odd prints indeed looked like one had a busted heel
Followed `em for a time before becoming four horsemen
Continued into tracks up the hills away from the chaparral
Directional trail headed straight back to Bisbee
With posse at my side we broke at the center of town
Some with the way of the saloon while I went for the boot shop
Beaver the shoemaker told me Stilwell had come looking to repair his boots
Mentioned also Spence stood at his side
Funny thing is the boots remained with Beaver, which meant one thing

Stage robbers were in town waiting
 With money to burn and time to waste the saloon undoubtedly would be next
 Rushing over I found Stilwell talking with Breakenridge
 Morgan at my side shoved Breakenridge while I removed a willing Stilwell
 Noticed Curly Bill and Pony Deal nearby him, but without cause for arrest
 Spence had escaped around back headed out fast
 I left Stilwell in the capable hands of Dodge and Williams back for Tombstone
 Whence Morgan and I caught up to the runner
 When all returned to Tombstone we gathered `em ready for Tucson
 Behan tried a play but my warrants stopped jurisdiction
 Justice Wells Spicer gave `em bail with an assurance they would make preliminaries
 Each man paid his bail in full without strife
 State charges dropped due to insufficient evidence and alibis
 Therefore no trial would be carried out
 Sinful men escape justice when good men bend down and quiver in fear
 Thirteenth of October the two would be arrested again
 Virgil devised the idea of filing federal charges against `em
 Brothers in arms we backed him fully with the charge
 Since they were placed at the stage robbery then they interfered with a mail carrier
 Federal charges could be brought to bear on the suspects with that known
 I finally got back in the game when Virgil deputized me for Tombstone
 Officially I was the law once again
 Word got out that Stilwell and Spence were arrested for another stage robbery
 Newspapers and false reports was nothing new
 Political machines here to pick winners and losers
 Cowboys received word of this news and accused us of harassment
 A stage robbery had occurred near Contention City five days prior, but not our men
 Virgil and I remained in Tucson for the federal hearings
 Morgan remained in Tombstone when veiled threats came for us
 Tensions rose at the Oriental with drunkard Cowboys
 Many of `em lead by Ike Clanton were out to get `em an Earp
 When we arrived back in Tombstone tensions weren't better
 McLaurys and Clantons were now loud and open
 Frank and Ike being the driving force behind the outrage amongst `em
 Blood would remain heated with anger
 This month felt like it would change in a hurry, and it did
 October twenty-fifth Doc had engaged himself into an all night faro game
 Doc Holliday was the best gambler I knew
 I was no slouch by any means, but I was not him
 His game lived of skill in both tongue and hand



That disease that suffered his lungs did not slow his gifts
 However it did ruin his dentistry practice many years back I learned
 Chronic coughing has kept him moving
 Big Nose Kate, the Hungarian devil, looked after him as best as she could
 Though times they did cross each others throats even coming to blows
 Lovers quarrel at its best and its worst with `em
 They did love it when he won, and he won a lot
 Others at the table grew tired of his luck
 I watched on with enjoyment and fatigue
 A stranger, Virgil, Behan, Tom McLaury, and Ike waited for Doc to make his move
 Josephine sang in the back, by then she had kicked Behan out
 Man was caught with his pecker in another woman
 Relationships were a dime a dozen in Tombstone
 Come for the silver stay for the brothels
 I shall make her full again with love since she finds herself lacking
 Drinks had made the rounds making for patience to be inadequate in the game
 Once Doc flushed out his winning cards Ike burst
 Frustrated with Doc's winning game he called him out
 Accused him of cheating in order to have such a streak
 Doc insulted Ike's intelligence for believing an idiotic idea
 Nobody matched his caustic wit
 Saying also there is no need to cheat with how bad Ike plays
 Ike stood up in anger from Doc's remarks

Conversation turned away from the game
Virgil stood and motioned for Ike to leave, before he himself left
Morgan did the same with Doc
Ike turned back to Doc and accused him and us of being thieves Saying he knew we
to be the ones responsible for the failed Benson stage robbery
The one that occurred in March of that year
I don't dare to wonder where he came up with such an accusation
Being drunk did not help his imagination either
He even claimed Doc is the one who killed Bud Philpot, driver of the Benson stage
Doc did not take the remarks sitting down of course
Calling Ike a liar and was about ready to throw down
Ike usually a coward and paranoid, was given deceptive strength in his drunkenness
Profane insults of absurd degree were hurled on levels of both bad and berating
Doc delivered most of the tongue thrashing
Ike carried out what he could in the loudest voice possible
We separated the two once they composed `emselves straight
All night faro game had publicly ended
Gambling away money never could live as long as blood boiled
I escorted Doc and Kate home across the way
He was just barely able to walk let alone breathe
Skin looked like white death and air sounded corrosive
Had the Doctor in town check on him before I left for a rest of my own with Mattie
She seemed no better than Doc, for different reasons
I slept well that turn
Morning came and everything appeared to have alleviated from the prior night
Drunkards disappeared for the daylight
Horses were hitched and slushing through troughs
People walked about without a worry or concern for violence
Not that violence ran rapid but that it was just a nice sight to behold the peace
Tombstone stood calm almost as if God had come back
I still had my doubts about God
As I made my approach through town in the afternoon I noticed Virgil
Standing outside the jail he greeted me
Troublesome anger filled his entire face
He said Ike made more veiled threats only this time with a Winchester and a six-piece
So he had him sleeping it off in a cell, confiscated the weapons too
Ordinance followed to the letter
He would not be given `em back any time soon
I stepped inside to get a view at Ike

He lay out on the cot fully conscious, fury exuded from his face
Few minutes later McLaurys and Clantons burst in and demanded Ike be released
Virgil said he was only holding him until he sobered up
He added that he was forced to pistol-whip him to get him to comply
If he did I damn well knew that son of a bitch asked for it
As the McLaurys and Clantons left with Ike I followed `em out
Tom McLaury turned for me and showed me his pistol in an attempt to intimidate
Cursing me out I grabbed that six-piece and whipped the bastard's head
Ground never felt a harder ass fall than then
The group sat on their horses and kept a stern eye on me and Virgil
Ike positioned steady on one and said you are gonna bleed
Fight was itching to come for us eventually
Cowboys should never be given a loose rope to travel, only tight enough to hang on
As they rode off in town they stopped at a gun shop
I followed behind `em thinking nothing of it
They were loading up their firearms and ammo
Frank McLaury had stopped his horse damn close to the doorway
So to ease the burden on the citizens I took the horse and moved her
The street looked like the best place to put her
McLaurys and Clantons rushed outside
Speaking we gonna get us an Earp and anyone with `em
I felt nothing from their threats even as they stood fully armed in my presence
But nobody threatens my friends and family
They departed town only for a moment
Individuals on the sidewalk started running toward the Grand Hotel
I worked my way back to the jail to meet up with Virgil and Morgan who just arrived
Behan showed his damn face once more too
Come to tell me he did not approve of my prior behavior
He wanted me to keep calm not cause chaos
I said if men made threats against him would he take it up the ass willingly
Assumption at that time would have been yes
Political theater will make you do stupid stuff Johnny boy
Virgil notified Behan that the Cowboys had looked armed and needed disarming
Behan's duty as Sheriff required him to enforce the law
But he turned away and headed back up town near the OK Corral
The Cowboys returned only this time with more men
Morgan counted six Cowboys in town
Ike Clanton, Billy Clanton, Tom McLaury, Frank McLaury, Billy Claiborne, and Wes Fuller
About that time I noticed Doc walking towards us aided by a cane
Miraculous recovery if I ever knew it, cued by a cough or two

Doc seemed better but still stained in sweat
 I looked at him dead on as he approached
 He said what are we gonna do about these men I've heard make threats against us
 I immediately told him it was nothing he needed worry about
 My brothers stared at me in surprise
 Doc held and said that is a hell of a thing for you to say to me
 Reality went against me so I apologized
 Saving me back in Dodge meant I owned him my life
 He was gonna join because he wanted to help, who was I to stop him
 Friends to the bitter end if necessary
 Virgil told me with Morgan and Doc close we should disarm and arrest the Cowboys
 He gripped his shotgun tight with determination
 I reminded him it barely fit the level of a misdemeanor
 Virgil did not care he did not want to be intimidated in his work
 His belief was since they just loaded up on ammo it meant they were armed
 Which if were true they would be in violation of Ordinance Nine
 The rule had rarely been implemented since coming in
 Due in part to both Sheriff Behan and Virgil being the mediators of the law
 Minimal fines handed out from time to time
 But we were not playing with the McLaurys and Clantons
 Bastards did not deserve the benefit of the doubt
 They were armed and we were coming
 Before any step took I advised Virgil to give the shotgun he carried to Doc
 Doc a far better shot than the three of us
 Would make Cowboys far more nervous if they saw him toting the shotgun
 I told Doc to bring it under his long overcoat
 In exchange Doc gifted Virgil his walking-stick
 Exchanging great violence for hopeful peace
 Seeing everyone settled I flipped my hand with a lets go
 The walk down Fremont Street commenced
 Sinful men pay with others lives while good men pay with their own
 As far as we were concerned death was waiting for us
 Armed only with our wits and six-pieces we trudged to the OK Corral
 Doc being the only duel armed with six-piece and shotgun
 I myself carried the gift I received from Mayor John Clum in my hand
 A Smith & Wesson Model Three American, such a good friend in politics
 Around halfway down Fremont Behan walked with us
 Chin of his looked freshly shaved
 He had the air of concern on his face along with aftershave as he strolled backwards

Behan's mouth made an utterance when the OK Corral reached eye view
 There was no need for this from us he claimed
 We kept walking without hesitation
 Behan spoke again saying I have disarmed `em
 Virgil wanting no bloodshed covered his revolver and led more with the cane in hand
 Although we did not believe Behan's words
 I placed my Smith & Wesson back into the holster
 The approach to the Cowboys had entered the final stretch
 Faces of `em were becoming clear
 Past OK Corral the six were stationed in a vacant space between Fly and Harwood
 Heart pumped fast but my mind stayed calm
 As we closed the final leg I heard Morgan tell Doc to let `em have it
 Doc in response said all right
 `I hoped Morgan was wrong and that we would not be forced to fight
 But he knew if we had trouble the best person to signal was Doc
 The Cowboys caught our eyes as we turned the corner for the vacant lot
 In swift action Virgil yelled throw up ya' hands, we've come to disarm ya'
 Nobody moved
 Virgil lead the line while I, Morgan, and Doc stood next to him ready
 A moment later two Cowboys fled without question
 Billy Claiborne and Wes Fuller, two cowards no one wants to remember



Florida Sky
Barb Garran

They ran for their hitched horses at the OK Corral
Four Cowboys now lingered in view
The call for disarmament had not changed
I spotted only three armed with a visible firearm
Ike being the only unarmed, strange since he had the loudest mouth of `em all
Cowards would rather have others die than risk their own necks
Billy Clanton, Frank and Tom McLaury stood maybe six feet from us
A distance impossible not to get hit at if bullets flew
We very well might all die if such a thing ensued
Three armed Cowboys showed anxiety in their eyes as we stood apart
Two of `em placing a hand on their holster
Billy and Frank had eager fingers
Two had their horse right next to `em each with a rifle in their scabbards
We braced in defense our hands on our guns
Virgil yelled back at `em hold on, I don't want that
The next decision for both parties came on thin ice
Once cracked there was no going back for anyone
We were all gonna be in for a cold night in Hell
Ike just stood at the end and watched in fear
Tense eyes on everyone spun rapid, a flinch in the wrist was all it would take
Nobody wanted to fight
Nobody wanted to disarm either
I kept an eye on Billy Clanton
But focused my attention on Frank, a known better shot
Something about Billy drew my eye back
He was a stupid kid, no doubt he thought himself capable of surviving
Then it happened
Billy drew then I drew
Bullets were damn close in time
He fired at me and missed his shot
Frank and Tom drew their pistols
Morgan and Virgil drew their pistols
I fired at Frank and landed a shot in his stomach
His horse took off once the shots rang out
He managed to grab hold it as it ran over into Fremont Street, towards Doc
However he could not reach the rifle it carried so he stuck with the pistol
Tom had his horse blocking him
He fired his pistol around it in an attempt to shoot at Doc
Virgil fired and missed the horse but hit the wall behind it

He scared the horse enough to make it move
Doc jumped around the horse and fired the shotgun
He landed his shot on Tom then threw the empty weapon
Doc switched to his nickel-plated revolver
Bullets flew in every which way
I held steady and drew again
Before I fired I saw the unarmed Ike
Ike in utter panic ran up to me and clung to my coat and arm
I told him the fight had commenced, get to fightin' or get away
Ike ran away in fear through the OK Corral and disappeared entirely from the fight
Morgan fired and hit Billy in his right hand
As Morgan shifted his stance he tripped
Billy switched hands and fired hitting Morgan in a shoulder and exiting out the other
Virgil fired at Billy hitting him in the gut
He then received a bullet to his calf which he assumed came from Billy
Frank had also fired in Virgil's direction
I fired a shot at Billy hitting him
Frank was the last standing
He got in a standoff with Doc Frank believed himself the better saying I have you lunker
Doc being his usual self used his caustic wit and said you're a daisy if you have
Frank fired first and hit Doc in his holster barely grazing him
Doc thought himself shot as he fell to the ground
He said in response that son of bitch has shot me and I intend to kill him
Morgan aimed his pistol the same time as Doc
Both men fired but Doc nailed Frank first in the head, Morgan missed
As he rested on the earth Doc said of Frank he was no daisy
With that final shot the gunfight ceased
Leaving three dead and dying, two injured, and bullets everywhere
I stood as I started without a scratch
If not for a hole in the lower end of my coat you might not have thought me there
Citizens of Tombstone began to collect around the area some helping the wounded
Virgil used the cane Doc gave him to walk
Morgan remained crouched with his hand clasped against his bloody shoulder
Mayor John Clum stood amazed and shocked at the sights
Some of the aids moved Billy Clanton to a doctor
Billy would die less than an hour later
In his brother Ike's arms no less
They would all be taken to the Coroner to be examined
Wounds and causes of death would be certified

Standstill
Hannah Santos



Once my brothers, Doc and I headed back home Behan emerged
He stood in front of us with his hands raised telling us hold, I'll have to arrest you
I stared Behan down and paused as I observed his startled eyes
I said I won't be arrested today Behan, I am here and am not going away
Continuing I said you deceived me, you said you disarmed `em, I went to disarm `em
Behan spoke no more and left
No doubt he would be back at some point for us
God I loathed that man with a passion
After the doctor came Morgan got his arm put in a sling and Virgil his calf wrapped
Morgan had the more serious injury while Virgil had the more painful
The cane Virgil received from Doc became a necessary tool
Night finally fell and everything was calm
The longest day of our lives had ended
The Epitaph and Daily Nugget reported on us with both kindness and distrust
One believed us just in our actions
One believed us to be murderers
Politics decided which one you agreed with





MOTHER

Caitlin Morales

mother.
my first home.

mother.
my first friend.

mother.
the one who seemingly can get the job done.
and i'm the one who's oblivious to every tear she
sheds at night.
the nights she spends sleepless.
the Christmases and birthdays, she spends giftless.

mother.
the unsung goddess warrior.
the unappreciated mentor.

mother.
hug her and let her know you love her.
time is running out.





Green Man
Emi Kimbrough

drunk

Gabby Morgan

sometimes you get drunk and forget what day it is
or that you're sad
or obsess over the fact that you have ruined
every
good
thing
in your life

sometimes you get drunk and talk to God
you tell him
i'm angry
i'm depressed
i'm alone
or you think of all the lies you have in you

sometimes you get drunk and say mean things
because you don't want him around you

sometimes you get drunk and blackout
and you honestly can't say what you do
as you never remember
but
maybe that's for the best

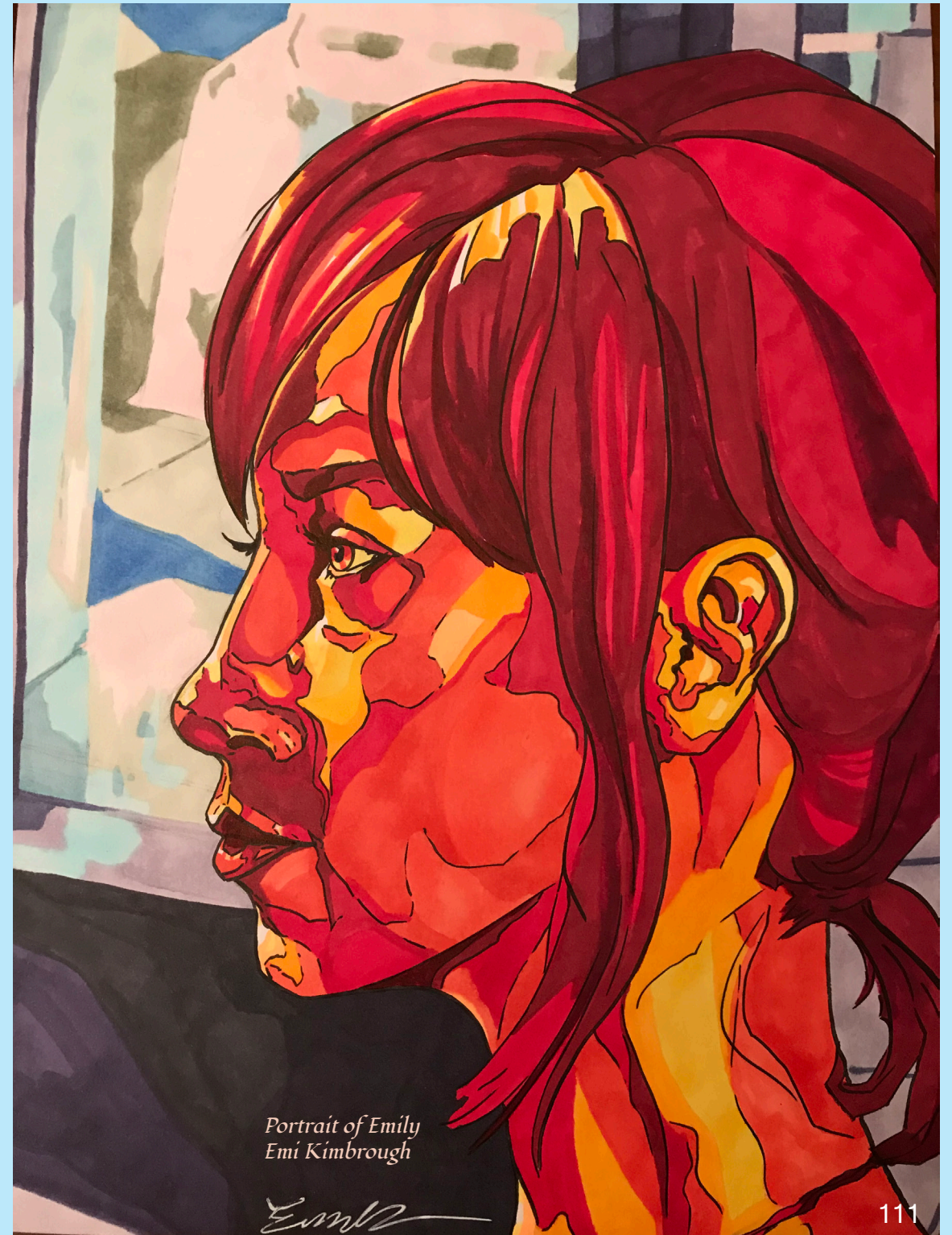
sometimes you get drunk and puke
and you like to think that's your way
of getting rid of
every
goddamn
bad
thing
you've done

sometimes you get drunk

My Little Girl

Paul Risner

My little girl is gone far away.
She took her makeup and some clothes
And six pairs of shoes and
A few trinkets to remind her
That she has a home
Even though she is not here.
I sat in her room, alone
And looked at her pictures.
I put away her books and
Made her bed, and
Put her necklace on her dresser,
Just to remind myself that
I have a little girl
Gone far away, and this is her home,
Even though she is not here.





Look Up!
Ksenja Llazar

A MAN HAD DREAMS

Brendan McClellan

Who doesn't?
Wouldn't you?
We each have a yearning for it.
They start out small like a dead balloon.
Someone comes along and spits air in it.
Filled with this air of hope, we fly.
We move on, on high.
More hope leads to belief.
Belief we can stay at that height.
We like to have belief, belief keeps us calm.
Like in the mind of a child belief becomes truth.
However truth bursts from reality.
Things changed for each of us.
Nothing remained simple. Nothing.
Reality with too much air is bad ownership.
We cannot have it be bad.
Bad is the opposite of good.
Good is what we desire, desire for most.
Desire is built with hunger.
We hunger to live and walk with giants.
Giants are the keepers of history.
Do you want to walk with giants?
Have your name in history?
Isn't that what we all wanted?
A Dream.
A Dream to be remembered.



Aji Dulce
Emi Kimbrough

Dear
Shelby Mickler

Today, forget. You sleep above me.
I can see your arm bent across your
pillow.

I reach over and touch it. It is cold, but
No. My dream. Warm, and your pinky
bends. You mutter in an infant's warble
for me to stop.

You cannot hear, but you never miss
what someone says. You always train
your eyes on my lips and I miss that. But
not today. Today, you are here
And you watch my lips as I speak,
Creating meaning from the shapes of my
mouth.

Your hands form words that I'm sup-
posed to understand. I don't always,
but I remember the one you taught me
Years ago while we sat on the patio
In the warm spring evening drinking
sweet lemonade and Kissing with the
taste of it on our tongues.
"I love you." You sign it often.
Still do.

I brought you your favorite flowers today.
I hope you like them. I'll try to keep them
alive in the Cold brutal winter of
Your absence
Love

Today, remember. Your body
crunches under me. Vision raging
red and black and white and
Why are you looking like that?
Blank angry numb
Was that me?
No.
He did this
And I killed him long ago
Impaled him on the sharp jut
Of your broken gravestone so now
he hangs

Above you, blood draining into your
soil and soaking Into your skin so
that maybe just maybe
You will grow new life from the
Canyons in my arms and
Come back to me
Love

Sunrise at Sunrise
Caitlin Geer





BENDICIÓN

Caitlin Moales

just in time before dawn, the birds sing their song of morning,
the sun shines its golden amber and warm reds.
the carnations bloom their bright pink,
with the morning dew on the petals from the night before.

i walk out into the dinning room to see your white leather chair empty
once more,
with a dent in the seat,
and that half empty glass of rum and coke you never finished on the
dinner table.
i can't let anyone else sit there.

i pick up the phone to dial your number,
but i still get your deep raspy voice on the answering machine.
it pains me to hear your voice.
but it's a melody i'll never hear again.

and just in time before night, in the black sky,
with its tints of dark blues and purples,
i see the big and little dipper side by side.
just north of that, i see a star that twinkles brighter than the rest.

and it's that moment i realize,
as the birds sing their song of mourning,
that you haven't left.
you just inhabited a fiery new form.

Over and over the vibrating chord

Maddie Rae

Over and over the vibrating chord, Wit, my love's mother tongue
rushes out in a torrent, Impulse guiding some spirit of Delight and Ease;
as the hunter masks their musk, hoping to entrap the deere among
comfortable circumstance, so he settled my rapt hart with a tease.

The wooded fox curls and mutters envy when he sees
the brush and beam my love's visage tell;
for even those, the forest creatures, hear the eternall reprise
of incomparable Virtue reach and swell.

So, this Love that I know very well, not sit idly by, but quell
mine and my love's time-enduring paine
and shed, bury, reskin, the older shell;
my delights of Wit having new thrill to reign.

To know the Selfe, first; to know one's fulfilled debt
improves dear Love's embrace; its life is sweeter yet.



The body thinks of itself

Maddie Rae

The body thinks of itself, Claw the skin and organs off
This clump of existence. Under my fingers sinks an impression
and I just want to pull as hard as I can,
Scrape until the outer layers peel away
Like a long and winding tube of soft dough,
Giving way to the smushy under layer of
the body's undeniable, continuing form.
Should the body, walking and commiserating with the other bodies
That skulk through the world, they too un-enthusing un-delighting over their
Casings, not think of itself?
Should the mental skyscraper push aside the remembrance of
love's first meeting, from the very beginning, the opening light
Which determined how the body would prevail? Reach back and
Touch that impression again, with new consideration for the body's unhelped essence.

*Rest in Peace
Savy Dobbs*



Un-sonnet

Maddie Rae

My heart I once thought, once knew, I knew, came
Crumbling, stumbling home one night, long night.
I(t) was de-termined, de-formed, de-born from the capitulation,
Defibrillation pumping out a shiver from the afterlife.
Each bone, Each rib, Each, Each, Each
--crack in the paradigm--
My candy-colored glasses, spli(n)t
(AndfinallyIcansee) the roiling, rolling loins
camp out, can't out-run, out-last, out-shine my own, my crown, selfish heart.
No more, No thankyou!
No more, I am through and through the
Waker of my
Piss-take of love.
Mistaken for one Mr. Keeper, and then one day, long day, you wake up,
T(w)o(ooooooo) brittle, little, pitiful wrung lungs
Sung(ing) our mel(ancholic)ody as I can see my portrait in a mirror,
No More, No thankyou!



Sky Air Show
Ksenja Ilazar

This Whole Paper is Bad Writing, Even the Title, But It's Artistic and Making a Point So It's Okay

Shelby Mickler

I like to play god. Now there's a sentence you don't hear every day. But we all have our little vices and guilty pleasures, don't we? Maybe yours is assassinating politicians in video games, or driving really fast when you're not supposed to. My guilty pleasure, however, comes from the power rush I get while writing. Yes, you read that correctly: writing—in any way, shape, or form. Was that last part a cliché?

Yikes, I was told to avoid those. You may be wondering how in the world I relate writing to "playing god." Well, after almost ten years of storytelling, I have come to the conclusion that the only reason I write is because the control I have over plots, settings, and characters is some of the only power I feel I have in the entirety of my life. There is definitely some comfort in writing stories when you're completely unsure of where your life is supposed to go. I've always been wary about the future; it seems so vast and vague and looming, like the threat of rain. The emptiness of the upcoming always felt daunting to me, so instead of dealing with it like a normal person would, I prefer to decide (usually while in the shower) how this hero will violently perish, or how I will destroy this couple's peaceful marriage. When I don't have power over my own life, I know at least that I have power over theirs. I am their god. I write lives.

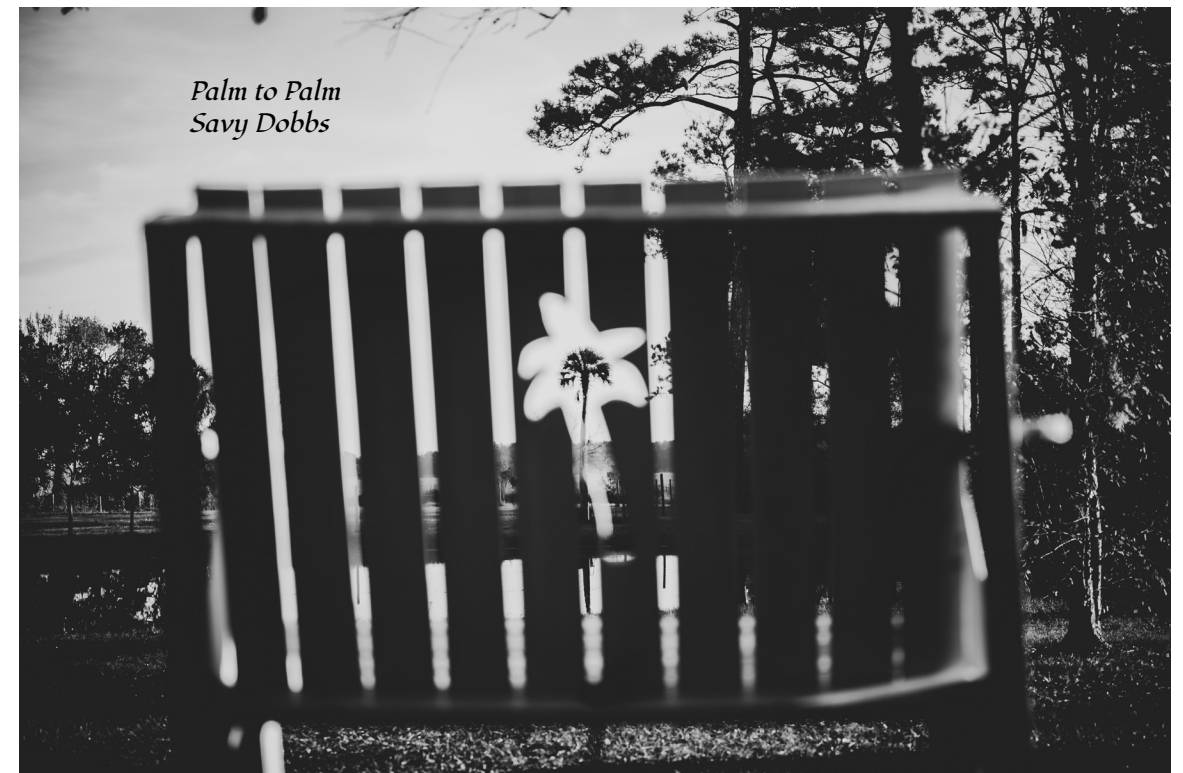
At this point you're probably ready to put this paper down because I've already broken the metaphorical fourth wall between author and reader several times

("That's bad writing!" all the critics scream!).

You may also be feeling confused or even concerned. Do I really attempt to mimic God in creating life on paper? Perhaps not. I think that I merely attempt to find some form of likeness between me and Him. In the same way that I create life in fiction, God creates life in reality. Writing allows me to breach the gap between god and mortal. In my mind, God is my Author, and I am a character in His great story.

Okay, I'm positive that was a cliché. But God's story for me doesn't seem as complex as the plots I write. My life has maintained a constant feeling of incompleteness; I'm always staring at the next empty page, waiting for my narrative to come to an abrupt stop because the reader is too bored out of their mind to continue. As a "character" in my own life, so to speak, I feel like I have barely developed from the shallow, bratty cheerleader that always shows up in the first chapter of your least favorite young adult novel. What chapter of the book of my life am I even living in right now?

It feels like it's almost concluded, or at least nearing or within the climax. But then I think about how young I am, and how much time I have left, and I realize that I am only in the opening pages. There is still so much to come. Will the remaining chapters of my life be more exciting than the beginning? But that's bad writing, I tell myself. Beginnings are supposed to be thrilling



Portraits by the Fire
Shahrazad Dadgar



If I am allowed, at my beaten, burning core

Maddie Rae

If I am allowed, at my beaten, burning core,
To inhabit all aspects of my way—
In Speech; In Character; In Intellect; In Spirit; In Affection—may
They live without interruption, resolved to their unguarded failures and gains evermore.
Let my duet with the seasons draw a sure,
Appealing love to my sonnet's display;
Be my closest partner, seasons; I'll wend where you say.
We start from the sprout of my crown, with fervor,
Jumping from the head with an unlocked tongue,
Then easing into the lifted curls, now springing without
Effort, a natural wave goodbye to that which once stung.
That maturation of the lady's breaths, in and out,
In and out: she watches a man's young
Heart, and presents to it the delicate hand, freed from doubt.

The City of Brotherly Love
Ksenja Llazar



The Great Empire
Ksenja Llazar



Colorful Minds
Ksenja Llazar



Philly Time
Ksenja Llazar



The City of Yellow Cabs
Ksenja Llazar



*Standing Tall
Ksenja Llazar*



*Portrait of Dr. Scott Kimbrough
Emi Kimbrough*

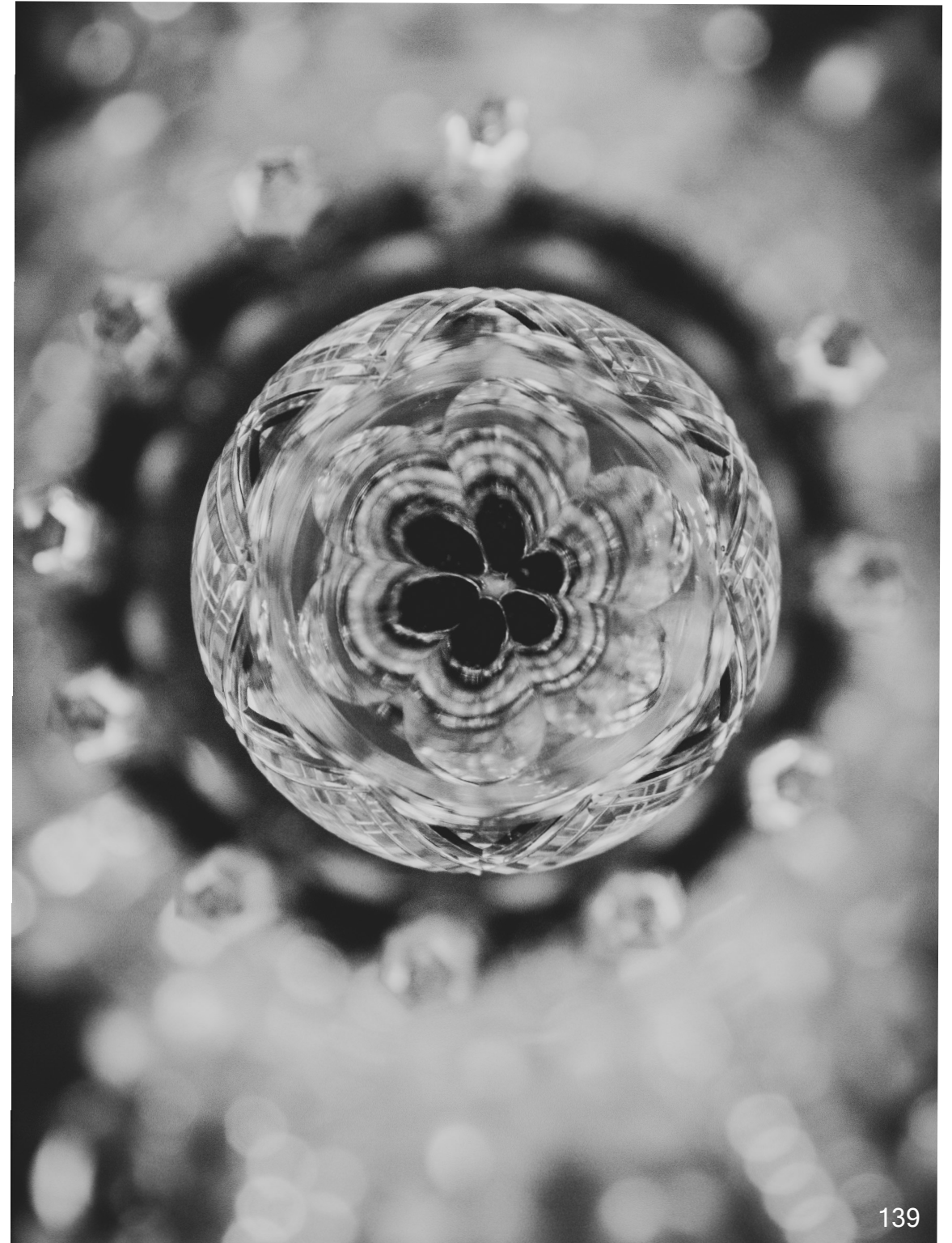


Pick Up

Barb Garran

My body is ringing
Maybe it's a wake-up call
I need to get over you:
Weep what is lost and move on
Maybe it's my soul:
Coming in tune with the world,
Telling me there is something more
Something more with you?
I desperately attempt to ignore it
But
No matter how hard I try,
You are gone.
I just sit here on the ground, picking up the pieces
Of me
Ignoring the phone which has become my body
It keeps ringing, ringing, ringing
Will I ever pick up and hear the truth?

*Circles
Savy Dobbs*



Infested

Barb Garran

No matter how much I bleed,
I can never get you out of me.
I am disgusted and comforted.
You have become a part of me,
I want you out now
But you won't go
No matter how much I try,
No matter how deep I cut,
You have latched on
I am your host.
You are just another parasite.

The sky is my Father and my Father the sky

Maddie Rae

The sky is my Father and my Father the sky;
Who was here before me, and with sanguine mysteries of light,
Who will be here after me, with the deep safety those soft wrinkles imply,
Transforming the empty plane with each new rewrite.
Arch across the treelines, the children's treelines, who meditate
A pointed path glittering, in their endless way, to
The Watching-Eye, slow-blinking; He transitions their bright wait
Into that warm, secret blackness to renew.
You cannot capture and keep the ceiling in a jar,
Nor understand how full a Father's love
Through a solitary likeness, but through this likeness you are,
In delightful confusion, encompassed in the great of that sky above.
The sky is my Father and my Father the sky;
Mostly, partly, clearly, each striking angle to satisfy.

Infinite
Kristin McIntyre



Healing
Kimberly Meszaros

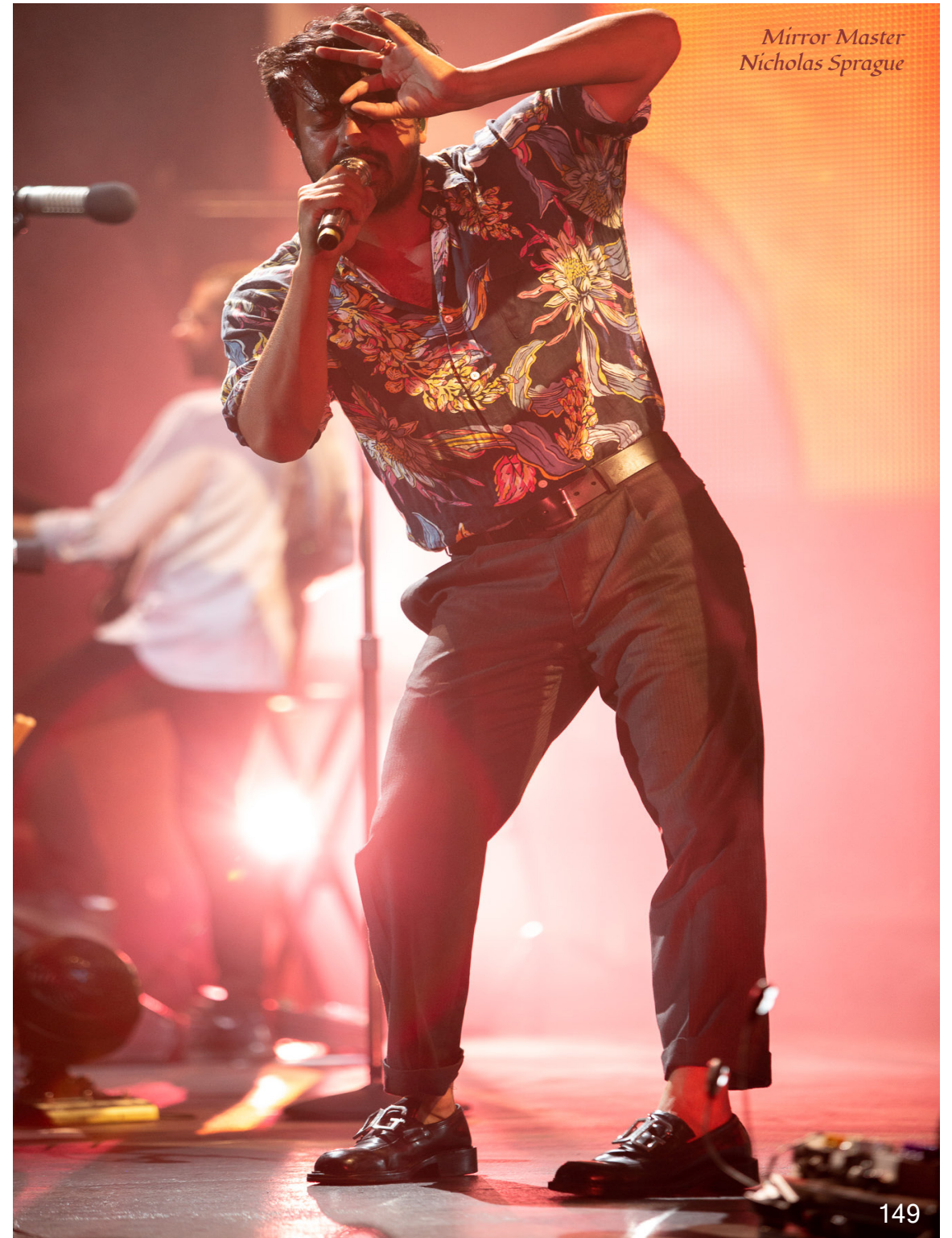


Silence
Kimberly Meszaros





*Blue Jay
Nicholas Sprague*



*Mirror Master
Nicholas Sprague*



*The P.O.D. on Film
Nicholas Sprague*



*Sea Turtle
Colton Hodges*



A DAY AT THE RACES

Brendan McClellan

Reader I found a new love and her name is Connie and No I am not doped up on dopamine, I am not allowed to share her twin sister Angie, though they both adored me like Henry VIII.

I know what you are thinking Reader, but understand this - it was worth it - to be treated like a King with Heaven all around.

The femme fingers ran across my nose with graceful lust, the blood in my body boiled - - my heart never pumped harder.

Reader, you no doubt would be a Péquignot with such a thing, you are damn sure lying if you think you better.

Until you gather in Monaco and feel the rush of asphalt than you might never grasp what Bandini, Fagioli, and I knew. I forgive you Reader for not being a Daredevil.

Reader move your ass now, we must hurry, taxi arrives soon - the snow is starting to pour down.

That need to rush with a big-machined heart to the finish of Belmont will keep you warm inside but not as calm as Big Red.

Some will be coy, some will burst with joy, some will simply spurt, but they will never be like me for I own the King's Habit.

Many would love to possess a royal nose such as mine that fares far better than Brother John's ever did dear Reader.

I never regret my affairs! I truly love my Big C!

I know her better than anyone else Reader - from her teeth to her Hooters - save the Big Cs.

In fact, as I write this I can hear her coming - my nose lusts for her scent - I am her Rocky Mountain - a snowy climb.

I have heard many cry for her, but Mona Lisa is mine and mine alone and nothing will ever change that.

Even if my sweet stuff displeases you Reader I do not care and whenever she gets here I will show you.

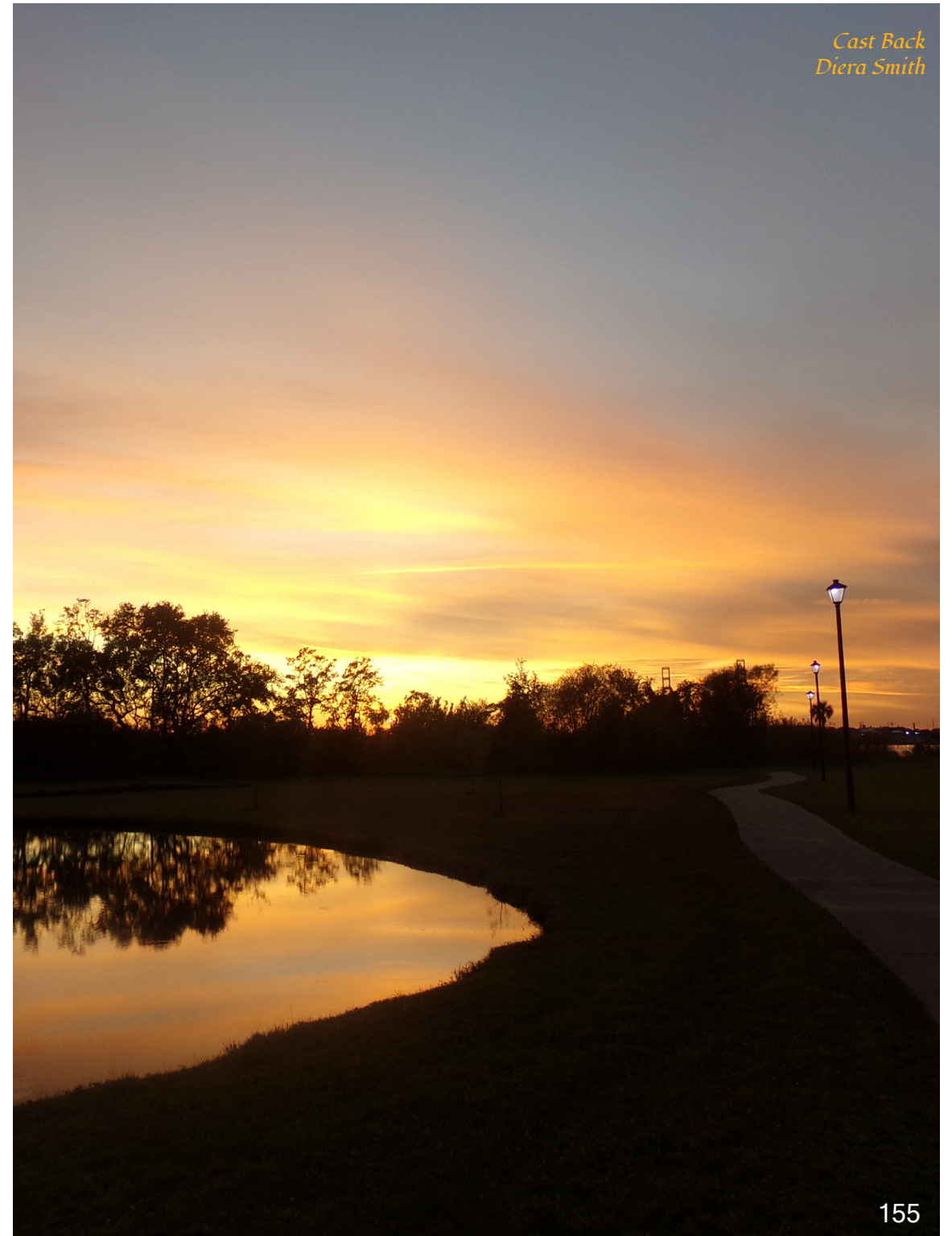
So please, if you do not mind Reader - - close your eyes.



*Florida at 4 pm
Ksenja Llazar*



*Flower Petal
Caitlin Sieger*



*Cast Back
Diera Smith*







Encalno Reticillo
Jay-Paul Thibault



Cotton Candy Skies
Grace Mann



*La Joventud at el Malecon
Anna Tripp*



*La Habana Vieja
Anna Tripp*



*El Clasico
Anna Tripp*



*La Pelota in Old Havana
Anna Tripp*

To Jared
Hannah Cone

Dear Jared,

No amount of pronunciation or
mispronunciation erases your
pudgy
face from my mind when I hear that
name.

Jair-id.

How is that nose of yours
—the one the color of dirt
from rooting in my flower garden
like a pig—
still working after thirty years of
over-achieving?

Jer-ed.

How are your eyes
—brimming with heat that
even satan shuns from at the gates
of hell—
after all these years of straining to
see a bright future that doesn't
exist?

Jeh-rid.

How goes the never ending quest
—with that mouth, that cavern
that rejects the cure for halitosis—
to con your wife into kissing you
after finding out the cause to those cold
sores?

Jah-reid.

Are you still a bowl of lucky
charms without the marshmallows?
Do you still peel back the skin
from your nail bed between your
teeth down to bone?
Do you still leave used dental
floss around the bathroom like
abandoned baton ribbons?

Do you still love her?

Do you still love me?



My Muse
Huong Pham

20 7 '19

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Shahrzad Dadgar

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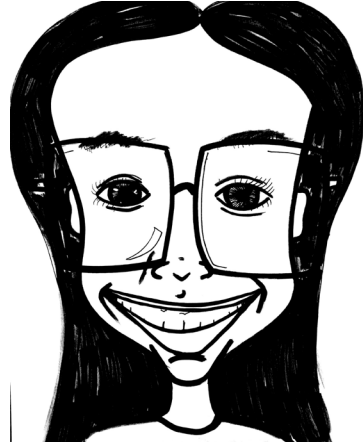
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Mission Statement

Since 1970, The Aquarian has supported artists and authors to express themselves and share their creativity by producing a platform which encourages artistic expression through publication. We welcome poetry, prose, two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and photography from the students of Jacksonville University. We continue to nurture and celebrate our university's creative community fifty years later, and will continue to do so for years to come.

Editorial Policy

The Aquarian is a student-run publication published annually at Jacksonville University, which includes literary and art submissions by current students. To celebrate our 50th year, we opened submissions for the very first time to alumni and faculty of Jacksonville University. We welcome poetry, prose, two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and photography to be submitted during our Fall semester each year. We advertise by posting flyers, social media posts, word-of-mouth, and classroom visits during our submission period in the Fall semester before publication in the following Spring. Students may submit up to ten different pieces through our Submittable account attached to our website, www.ju.edu/aquarian. All submitted work must be original. If their work is accepted, students will receive an acceptance notice by email during the Spring semester before publication. All submitted works endure a voting process through Submittable by our entire team. The Aquarian is a student-run publication, and there are opportunities to join our team at the beginning of each Fall semester. We advertise open spots by word-of-mouth, class visits, and our Spring semester club fair on campus. Our entire staff is involved in the voting process as well as the creation of each publication by participating in weekly meetings.

Colophon

The Aquarian works to encourage artistic expression at Jacksonville University by producing a platform through which students can express themselves. We achieved this goal by designing this publication, volume 50, which you hold in your hands. Together, our staff selected the theme of legacy for this volume as a representation of the past 50 years of artistic expression at Jacksonville University.

To celebrate our 50th year, we opened submissions to not only current students, but alumni and faculty. We received 258 total submissions in our Fall 2019 semester, and this publication holds our most highly voted for submissions which contains thirty eight poems, twenty three 2D, ten 3D, seven prose, and seventy three photography pieces.

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