



shale

university of kentucky

undergraduate arts journal

spring 2015





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Shale Undergraduate Arts Journal
University of Kentucky
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letter from the editor

The rabbit is one of the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac, and it represents graciousness, compassion, and elegance. The Aztecs boasted over four hundred rabbit gods, and according to Japanese folklore, rabbits are said to live on the moon and make *mochi*. In Anishinaabe myths, the spirit Nanabozho, who often takes the form of a rabbit, helped to create the world and killed Paul Bunyan. In Arabic, *rabbit* is أرنب, French, *lapin*; German, *kaninchen*; Latin, *lepus*; and in Spanish, *conejo*.

If you browse the Student Center's posterred walls, you may come across *Shale* fliers, which include our abstract rabbit logo and often rabbits drawn by our art editors and designers. Was the rabbit taken up as *Shale's* "spirit animal" because of particular facts from above? Sadly, no—reality proves to be less enthralling than taking down Paul Bunyan, but no less important in terms of *Shale's* story. In Fall 2012, Marshall Blevins, the art editor at the time, created two covers for Sarah Hayden, then Editor in Chief, to pick between for that semester's edition. One was of an elephant, the other of a jackrabbit. Sarah preferred the second, and the rest is history.

My personal history with rabbits extends back into my childhood, and rabbits have continued to be good omens throughout my life. As a kid, my grandmother and I would try to spot wild rabbits hopping across our backyard. My high school's mascot was a cross-eyed, white rabbit. It was fitting, then, that *Shale* unofficially adopted the rabbit as its mascot during my first semester on staff. Just as a rabbit's foot brings its bearer good luck, I have been immeasurably lucky to have been involved with *Shale* for the past three years. I hope the rabbit proves to bring even more luck to *Shale* than it has to me.

My experience with the journal has taught me so much, and it has been an honor to work alongside the best staff members an editor could ask for. This is my last edition with *Shale*, and although it is bittersweet, I know the journal is in good hands—the hands of hardworking staff members whose passion shows, of talented authors and artists who submit each semester, and of faculty and staff who relentlessly support *Shale's* cause. As you read through this issue, remember that you, too, hold something special in your hands.

Thank you and please enjoy!

Katie Cross

Editor in Chief

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spring

Tiwaladeoluwa Adekunle / poetry

this time my hair remains like the thick
of a dark forest nothing can run through,
is never tugged straight, pressed flat, burned silky

this time there is no bleeding,
no tears when I find I have skin like a starless night, because I am light
enough, alive enough to see God's fingerprints everywhere

this time Yoruba blooms in my mouth
does not wilt, does not wither
does not recoil from exhaustion

this time my melanin holds my hands gently and we laugh
she touches my face, she says i know
i know i chose you

this time i do not run
this time flowers sprout from my spine

Nouveau Départ

Paul Morini / poetry in French

Le départ n'est plus qu'une idée.

Tout est prêt.

Mais moi.

L'avion décolle.

Tout en moi monte.

L'impatience est forte.

L'atterrissage se fait sentir.

Je sors et respire un autre air.

Je marche et je découvre.

Tout est différent.

Mon nouveau drapeau est bleu, le paysage est vert.

Je marche et j'observe.

Comprendre.

De l'archi et des rencontres.

Je suis bien.

Les absences sont vite oubliées, mes attentes comblées.

Je marche et j'en veux plus.

Autour de moi, j'entends « Nice to meet you ».

Le temps nous manque déjà.

Franchir les barrières.

Parler.

Réessayer.

Boire. Manger. Boire encore. Ne pas dormir.

S'oublier.

What is your name ?

Je veux savoir.

Je suis ici.

Ça commence.

Je suis prêt.

translation / Fresh Start

The departure is just an idea.

All is ready.

Not me.

The plane takes off.

Everything in me goes up.

Impatience is strong.

I am feeling the landing.

I go out and smell a new air.

I am walking and I discover.

All is different.

My new flag is blue, the landscape is green.

I am walking and I see.

Understand.

Some arch and meetings.

I'm fine.

The misses are forgotten, my expectations are filled.

I am walking and I want more.

Around me, I hear « Nice to meet you ».
Time is already missing.
Cross the gaps.
Speak.
Try.
Drink. Eat. Drink again. Do not sleep.
Forget myself.

What is your name ?
I want to know.

I am here.
It begins.
I am ready.

The Teat of Freedom (aka American babies)

Abby King / poetry

We suckle and bite,
Eyes nestled in the bosom,
Away from the light.

Say Lovey

Bridget Nicholas / prose

“That’s not a real map.”

I look up from the student grammar practice I’m grading. K-Lee’s small hands stroke the globe on the corner of my desk. I smile, set down my tablet, and meet the child’s curious eyes.

“It’s a globe, K-Lee. An antique. They used to make them to show how round the earth is.”

K-Lee’s eyes fix again on the globe. The sparkly bow perched on her head dangles in front of her forehead as though defeated. Brushing the hair from her face, K-Lee traces a finger along the invisible spine of South America. I glance at the fading orange United States, neatly bordered by a painted white expanse, alone amid my clumsy brushstrokes. When was it that I painted over the rest of the world?

“There’s something under here, Miss Mer. Why are there bumps in the sea?”

Mountains. The Andes. “It’s very old . . . the surface is probably cracking, and that’s what you feel. Why don’t you join your classmates in Scrolling Time?”

K-Lee studies me skeptically for a moment but returns to her desk, picks up her tablet, and flicks through the social media simulator.

I close my eyes. I am too old for this. Every year I swear it’ll be my last, but every year I return, a little grayer, caught in some inexorable orbit around this place. I could have left when they shut the libraries, or when they replaced the student art gallery with a new wall-size computer screen. I should have left thirty years ago when they made me an offer. But I stayed. Forty years, a teacher of American at the very best Public Co-education Learning Pool in the country, and I look in the mirror to see time whittling away my skin and my will.

I’m old enough to remember the Before. Officially, there is no Before.

The United States of America sprung fully formed from the hand of some Nonreligious Powerful Force, as it says in the history books. I remember the years of debt and doubt, where the voters cried for an end of taxes, of immigration, of waning economic power, and the arrival of the solution: isolation.

"Miss Mer."

A man in a dark suit stood in the doorway, his face as cold and colorless as the face on a dime. He stared in bemusement at the fleur-de-lys garland above his head. I taught French then.

"Oui? Please come in."

I sat down on the top of a desk and tucked my pen behind my ear. He remained standing.

"I work with the Board of Education. I'm sure you are aware that your position is obsolete."

"I don't understand."

"As you may have heard in the President's recent address, the federal government has decided that foreign influence is unnecessary to our growth as a nation. That includes language. French and its influence on the American language cannot be permitted."

I stared. "There isn't an American language."

"There is, Miss Mer. It is in fact the only language."

"Sir, our language isn't uniquely American. It's . . . it's cobbled together from bits of other languages. It's growing."

"We will be lenient in the beginning, but continued resistance to the order will result in a citation."

"Résistance. French. Citation. French."

"Miss Mer, we cannot achieve absolute isolation if we allow foreign language to taint our own culture. We cannot be politically separate if we are culturally and linguistically linked. The U.S. has become self-sufficient. Isn't that enough cause to protect our language?"

"Isolationnisme absolut, n'est-ce pas? Of course, it worked so well when we tried it before."

"We can offer you a position as an American teacher. Re-education begins next week."

If you cannot accept our offer, you will not be permitted to reside in the U.S.”

“Where would you send me? Haven’t you declared the rest of the world nonexistent?” I retorted.

The man ran the tip of one finger along the prime meridian of the globe on the cabinet beside him. “You need to fix your globe.”

And he left.

“All right, class, I have a special project for you today. Please sit, K@-tlyn, Tyylr.”

Expectant eyes turn toward me and the children’s fingers quiver over the surfaces of their tablets. The generation has finally arrived that genuinely believes me when I tell them that America is an island floating in an endless sea. Nonreligious Powerful Force bless America.

“The government has launched a new project: a special academy dedicated to preserving the purity of the American language. The President herself has challenged all American students to design the building to house this academy. You have complete freedom in designing the building, but you must capture the spirit of the language. You have twenty minutes before we begin our math lesson. See me if you have questions.”

After the children lower their heads to their devices, I return to my desk. I am too old for this. The administration has been saying this for years. I’m the only teacher who actually stands at the front of the class and talks to the students. All the rest just vlog in. Anything that gets between the children and their technology is nigh treacherous. Why subvert *l’age d’information*?

Stiffness seeps into my knees and an ache pools behind my eyes. I like to sit uncomfortably. It’s my penance for getting paid to lie to children.

I spin the globe absentmindedly so that America blurs into the great white expanse that surrounds it. A speck of pink startles me; a spot of color peeps out from the other side of the globe. *CHI*.

K-Lee must have scraped the paint away, an eight-year-old Marco Polo uncovering the Orient from the endless sea. My ancestors tried so hard to discover new countries; my contemporaries only cover them up.

Sliding a bottle of correction fluid from my drawer, I paint over the

scraped spot until China sinks back into white space.

“Miss Mer.”

I sigh and push the globe to the side. K-Lee clutches her tablet to her chest, chewing on her lip. Clinging to only a strand of hair now, her hair bow swings in front of her forehead like a pendulum.

“What is it, K-Lee?”

“I can’t find a word. I looked it up but it’s not there.”

My other students have all grown accustomed to the phenomenon of words disappearing from the dictionary overnight. Whenever a word is brought to a linguist’s attention for being too foreign, the government immediately erases all traces of it from the internet. Most of us pretend not to notice.

“Language changes, K-Lee. People change, and then some words fade out and some are born. Remember, we talked about this yesterday in class? The invention of texting in the early 2000s brought us many new words: *lol*, *bae*, *bff*. Language is beautiful because it’s alive.”

K-Lee looks down at her tablet as though it is hiding something from her. “But it was there yesterday.”

“Sometimes things change quickly. *C’est la vie*.”

The words slide from my tongue before I can stop them. Dammit. K-Lee stares at me.

“What did you say?”

“Oh, it’s just a phrase we used to say.” I am too old for this. “It means that the world is beautiful, and the world is ugly, and that that’s just the way life is. Did you have any other questions?”

“Iris, this isn’t over.”

My husband paced the room, fingers buried in his hair. He taught German, and had received the same ultimatum as I.

“What do you mean? What could we possibly do?”

My hands trembled, but I rummaged through the cupboards to disguise it.

“My grandparents live in Germany. If we act now, if we get out before they have a chance to shut the borders completely—”

"How are we supposed to escape to a country that doesn't exist?" I snapped. I leaned my cheek against the rough grain of the cabinet as I reached deeper inside, as though I could hide there. "They won't let us go."

My fingers closed around the paint bottle. "Tris." I looked up then, at the softness of his voice, and saw that he had cupped his face with one hand. "We can't stay here. How can we stay in a place where they won't let us teach what we love, where they're shoving patriotic garbage down our throats?"

I squeezed paint onto a paper plate and sat cross-legged in the middle of the linoleum-tiled floor, the globe cradled between my knees. Picking up my paintbrush, I daubed paint on the North Pole first.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm fixing it."

His breath hissed through his teeth.

"You're staying." The words fell dead from his mouth. I spread paint over Russia now, blanketing it in eternal winter. "Language is alive and they're killing it. Teaching American . . . it's a farce!"

I blotted out France next—no need to soften the blow. I was godlike, obliterating whole nations with a flick of my brush. Was this why they had decided this, to assume some sort of deity?

"Le monde, il change. Toujours il change. C'est la vie," I whispered. "Henry, this is a linguistic experiment. They're putting English in solitary confinement to see what happens. Don't you want to watch it thrive?"

"You'd be helping them if you stayed." My fingers rubbed my wedding ring, pressing the pad of my thumb into the sharp corners of the central stone. "Don't you understand? Don't give me this crap about language . . . They'll shut the borders and you'll never get out."

Four indentations from the diamond marked my thumb, like it had branded me. "Henry, did you love books when you were a child?"

"Tris."

"Did you ever spread your fingers over a page and lean into the smell of the ink and think that one day, these words will still be alive and you will be dead? God, it's beautiful."

I heard his breath and the squeak of his sneakers as he drew closer. I bent my head

over the globe.

"I'm leaving, Iris. I packed a bag—I've arranged to go tonight. Come with me."

I didn't answer.

Only his sneakers lamented. I listened to them squeak out of the kitchen and through the front door.

I think my tears fell in the Indian Ocean, but I painted over them.

My morning coffee is interrupted by a woman with a silver stylus threaded through her fingers like an old-fashioned cigarette. She is coin-faced too, like the man from my memory. Does the government mint their minions like their currency?

"Can I help you?"

I heave myself upright and rest three fingers on the edge of the desk for balance. The woman's eyes graze my entire body, lingering on the faded floral skirt that has been out of style for longer than her lifetime.

"Miss Mer, one of your students included a foreign phrase in her texting assignment."

"Did she?"

"When her mother questioned her about it, the child said that you had taught it to her. Take a look."

She turned her tablet towards me. *Say Lovey*, I read.

"I have no idea what that means. It seems like gibberish."

Marks of disapproval appear around her thin lips. "It is certainly not American."

"Might it be slang?"

"No." Her gaze latches onto my fingers on the desk. Am I frail in her eyes? "We are required to search through your things, as a matter of course."

"Naturally." I step back and spread my hands. "Go ahead."

I began building myself a coffin in my lower desk drawer long ago. It is lined with luxuriant plush: the feathers of dying words. *Naïve. Burrito. Athlete. Tycoon. Bikini.* Forty years of language violation slips, filled out dutifully and then placed in the drawer so that people could say *cigar, purple, bamboo, façade*, at least for one more day. I would not be their murderer. I

rescued them, nestled them into the soft down of their brethren.

When the woman opens the drawer and finds the jumble of slips, she is silent.

I reach for a pen. “K-Lee spelled it wrong.” I scrawl the words on the back of one citation. My hand does not shake. “*C’est la vie.*”

The internet connection is spotty today, so no one can be arranged to vlog in as my substitute. I am permitted to teach for the day. Then, I will get into the government car waiting for me and then. And then what? I am too old for this. I run my fingers over my globe and imagine the nonexistent countries where they will exile me, imagine myself becoming one with the nothing sea. *C’est approprié, n’est-ce pas, que Mer devienne la mer?*

I watch the children’s presentations without seeing them: elaborate cakes of buildings, garnished with windows, or sleek contemporary structures. 3-D printing has eliminated the age of papier-mâché and glitter glue for most.

K-Lee holds a shoebox. She has drawn swirls all over it in faint gold gel pen, cut out little flaps for windows.

“The American language is alive,” she tells the class. She points to a constellation of holes poked in the top. “My building is like its home, and it breathes through here.”

The class claps for her. “It’s lovely, K-Lee,” I tell her. “But you’ve got one thing wrong.”

I retrieve a roll of tape from my desk and tear off a strip, offering it to K-Lee on the tip of one finger.

“You don’t need the breath holes. Our language has been dead a long time.”

An Homage for Carolyn Kizer

Sue Mize /poetry

Carolyn Kizer we salute you—you reordered our stars
How important it is that we carry on, like an ocean coming wave after wave
We take our places proud of the sobriquet, cod-piece coveters
Remembering when God was a woman

We mourn and praise Hester Prynne whose epithet was a Scarlet Letter
We mourn without praise Kurtz's Intended
She never escaped her absurd capacity for fidelity and suffering
Suffering is fine in its place but we want more and we are taking more

Like Hatshepsut, we are audacious
Told a woman couldn't be a Pharaoh
She donned a Pharaoh's ceremonial beard
Declared herself divine and claimed the title

Like Cleopatra, we are outlandish
On the run for her life, she rolled herself in a carpet
Had it delivered to Julius Ceasar's feet
And rose asking for the crown of Egypt

Like Theodora, we are dauntless
A prostitute forbidden to marry even a common man
She danced with the bears at the circus and into Justinian's heart
At her death, blackness blanketed Byzantium

We revel in our sexuality and
Celebrate Pocahontas'
Turning cartwheels down main street

Stark-naked but for a beaded necklace

Because of you and the women on that first wave
We embrace our yin and yang energies
We delight in wearing camisoles, or cod pieces,
Or nothing but a beaded necklace

Latin Haiku

Jonathon Berry / poetry in Latin

Cretio dē virīs
facta similis montī:
tempora terent

translation / Latin Haiku

The legacy of man
made like a mountain:
time will erode

Danville Midnight Express Blues

David Cole / poetry

It is a dark morning out Danville way, the moon
rolls along but doesn't cast one damn ray of light
down where you lie awake for that train whistle.
Pops and cracks, your only company an old record—
Jimmie yodels, asks why his body would rattle and ache,
says to you and the world he's ready, come what may.

There's a drizzling rain out there tonight, month of May,
and that lonesome gray fog drifts up from ground to moon.
You stand and your joints ignore youth, shout with their ache.
One bulb casts your shadow over a window in dying light
as Jimmie fades out of the room at the end of that record.
You wait patiently for a train to pass by, to again whistle.

When it finally sounds, there's a hollow wail to the whistle,
lonely as the fog, without passengers in this dreadful May
weather, not one man, woman, child onboard or on record
despite the Americana feel of darkened steel under the moon.
The bulb fizzles out, pops and cracks dead, and gone's the light.
You crawl out the window, your bones not tonight's only ache.

This is a familiar feeling, not physical but a longing kind of ache.
It acts up whenever you see the boxcars roll by empty, a whistle
sounding out in the still of a boring, stationary night, the light
of a crossing flashing in the distance. To you, no matter what may
be said of young hobos in a young century, outdated as using moon

phases to plan ahead, it is a calling from god and Jimmie's record.

Train's wheels are fast, kicking up dew on each side, spinning like record left back there, half a mile from the tracks but a different world of ache and young people that feel like old people, like hobos and arthritics. Moon above is clearing through the fog, you are clearing through field to whistle call and the rain is finally letting up, easing your joints, in this month of May. Behind you, your home is swallowed up by rolling field and gone is its light.

The day is done and here you are, shedding lonesome under this new light finally reaching down from on high. Mind kicks up like dew, makes a record of exactly what this moment is like—when you forget consequence in May and grab ahold of that slowed down freight, jump in a moving car, lift ache from your insides. Legs hanging over the edge, no pain, and that whistle calls out again, telling the world this train has one friend under the moon.

The morning's first light rises from the east and you feel no ache for the first time on record. That warming train shouts its whistle through this night in May. And you say roll on to that Kentucky moon.

Smithfield, KY

Aaron Henson / poetry

The truck must've known our whereabouts,
a loud transmission turned to quiet hums.
Crunching gravel cracks beneath
rolling tires. Hauntingly halting,
making an inevitable end.
Drooped dead limbs welcome
the presence of life that hangs
over my head. The sun neither shines
nor hides, it's just there.
Falling behind knee-high grass
and a half-painted fence.

Straw covers my path, my feet
stepping on sprouts of green.
Freshly dug dirt clotted.
I walk up a small hill and stand.

such perfect marble

I kneel at your headstone and place a quarter.
I know you will want a Mountain Dew.

Surviving and Thriving

Sue Mize / poetry

I was raised on Shawnee Avenue in Lexington, Kentucky
We were poor and white but not trash
My family was church-going, hymn-singing
cash-paying, soup beans- and cornbread-eating people

I was proud of my heritage,
but aspired to more
I didn't want to be just a good girl lacking cash
The truth is, I wanted to be "trash"

I admired the pulp fiction girls in my neighborhood,
girls called Peachie, Creamy, and Louvina
They wore their collars turned up, smoked, cussed,
scratched out eyes and pulled hair with the best of them

I coveted the courage of these Shawnee Warriors
If I had their grit, maybe I could defer my death sentence
"She will not survive childhood," doctors had predicted
But what did they know about me—really

Les Deux Bêtes d'hiver, ou une plainte en deux morceaux

Bridget Nicholas / poetry in French

I. Le dragon à l'intérieur

Mesdames et Messieurs

Je peux sentir son haleine sur ma peau,
 Une vague drapée par quelque
 Sueur à l'ail.
 Est-ce que c'est si difficile pour quelqu'un de bannir
 Le dragon qui demeure derrière les murs ?
 Quelque bête a envahi votre édifice,
 Un rôdeur qui avale des volailles
 Des ouvrières
 Des étudiants de première année.
 En imprégnant tout l'air, la chaleur est sûrement
 La vapeur de son chaudron colossal.
 Je suggère que vous examiniez cette situation :
 Il y a une gargouille dans la gargote.

II. L'harceleur dehors

Lorsque je marche seule,
 Le silence me séduit avec ses
 Touches de soie sur mes oreilles,
 J'arrête
 Soudainement
 Comme un doigt suit chaque
 Bosse de mes vertèbres.

Le vent,

Mon soupirant non souhaité,

Pousse ses pouces doucement sur mes pommettes.

Ses ongles grattent mes yeux,

Ses mains glaciales les étreignent jusqu'à ce qu'ils deviennent

Bleus,

Ses lèvres effleurent presque mes oreilles,

Susurrent des sentiments si expansifs, presque fleurant.

« Laissez-moi tranquille ! »

Je souffle, mais il siffle

Jusqu'à ce que mes mots se perdent dans sa ténacité.

Ses doigts persistent sur mes cheveux

Avant de m'évanouir à travers la porte.

Mais encore la chaleur qui m'étreint ne peut pas

Arrêter de renifler ma peau,

Son nez couvert d'écailles

Émettant seulement une fine volute

De fumée.

Pourquoi est-ce que cet endroit est si carnivore ?

Espérant

Pour votre réponse rapide,

La victime de deux températures extrêmes

translation / **The Two Beasts of Winter, or a
complaint in two pieces**

I. The dragon inside

Madams and Sirs,

I can feel his breath on my

 Skin, a wave draped with some

 Garlicky sweat.

Is it so difficult for someone to banish

 The dragon that lives behind the walls?

Some beast invaded your building,

 A prowler who swallows poultry,

 Workers,

 Freshmen.

Permeating the air, the heat is surely

 The vapor of his colossal cauldron.

 I suggest that you examine this situation:

 There's a gargoyle in the restaurant.

II. The stalker outside

When I walk alone

 The silence seduces me with its

 Silken touches on my ears.

 I stop

 Suddenly

 Like a finger is following each

 Bump of my vertebrae.

The wind,

My unwanted suitor,

Presses his thumbs gently against my cheekbones.

His nails scrape my eyes,

His icy hands encircle mine until they

Turn blue,

Hi slips almost brushing my ears,

Whispering sentiments so effusive, almost flowering.

« Leave me alone! »

I breathe, but he whistles

Until my words are lost in his persistence.

His fingers linger on my hair

Before I slip through the door.

But even the warmth that embraces me can't

Stop sniffing my skin,

His scaly nose

Emitting only a wisp

Of smoke.

Why is this place so carnivorous?

Hoping

For your swift response,

The victim of two extreme temperatures.

becoming eve

Tiwaladeoluwa Adekunle / poetry

to be stained is to be woman,
you are told
so you become one on your knees,
watching blood glide down your legs in slow, lazy lines
your body like a secret or a poem or maybe
a fruit sliced open.

this wound has been quiet too long
now it sings
now it leaks
softly unto your skin.

your hands are stained with blood
you wash them, quickly
for your mother's sake.

Search and Tell: A One-Woman Show

Abby Schroering / prose

1

GIRL COMES ONSTAGE AND SITS CROSS-LEGGED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR.

Please don't make fun of me, I'm very scared.
I've never done a show-and-tell before.
This is a key. I found it in my house.
Every key in the entire world
fits perfect in one door and lets you in.
You put the key inside of the keyhole,
and then you turn it and the door tastes it.
if it likes the key, it opens for you—
if not, it spits it out and makes you leave.
I searched and searched for a very long time
trying to find which door it belonged to,
but I tried them all and none of them worked.
I sat down on the floor 'cause I was sad
and my dad sat next to me and he said
"why are you sad?" and I told him that I
needed something for show-and-tell today
but I can't find what door this key unlocks
which means I won't find something cool to show.
But then he said that I should show this key
because it looks cool and also sometimes
people can be more interested in
how you find what it is you're looking for

than what you end up finding in the end.
I said okay, 'cause this key does look cool
and I was on my way to put it in
my backpack when I saw this giant bug.
I mean I tell you it was big as this!
I screamed and smashed it with my daddy's shoe
'cause it was in my house! And I was scared.
I think that I was in my house before
the bug was ever even born because
you know that bugs only live like a day.
My dad said next time call him and he would
take it outside instead of killing it.
Then I felt bad because I killed the bug,
even though it scared me inside my house.
I feel like I should tell it I'm sorry
for murdering it when it could have lived;
so now, instead of showing you this key,
for show-and-tell, I'll show you all the bug!

**SHE TURNS AROUND TO REACH INTO HER
POCKET, SPINS, AND ENDS UP ON HER KNEES.**

2

Listen, Bobby, I got some rotten news.
My dad said I can't go with you today
to pick blueberries in your neighbor's woods.
I told him how important it is that
we nurture our relationship in these
early phases with activities like
having conversations in the outdoors
so that when we get to high school we won't
be stuck in an unhealthy way of life,
where all we do is sit on your old couch
and watch movies and eat Sour Patch Kids

while your parents keep tabs on us upstairs.
I told him nature'd do us both some good
and that we'd get blueberries out of it,
but he said he was afraid of the woods.
He said that there could be a dog or bear
that snuck up on us from behind without
being heard and mistook us for its prey.
I told him he didn't have to worry
because I'd be with you and you were strong,
but he said that you're not as strong as him,
which is true—I guess—and then he said
that just the two of us alone's not safe.
I think he thinks that we're gonna have sex.
I mean, we've never been alone before,
I guess it's possible we could have sex.
But Bobby, I'll be honest with you here
I really don't know what all it involves.
People seem to want it for themselves,
but hate it when it happens to their kid.
It doesn't matter though, I have a plan.
I'll just say that I'm going to your house
instead of to the woods to pick berries,
and then when I get there we can sneak out
and you can have some time outside with me.
Oh, also about sex, I remember
my mother told me to do it only
when I was sure that we were in true love.
I guess in case it isn't very good
at least you still have to like each other.
You know what Bob? I think I changed my mind.
Let's invite my dad to come along.
Then we can be outside and safe from bears,
and he can be certain we won't have sex.

SHE GETS UP, SKIPS TO A DESK, SITS DOWN.

3

Trespassing? Are you kidding me, you fuck?
No one can trespass anywhere on Earth.
The Earth is here for every one of us,
and either every one of us is free
or everyone here is a trespasser.
Okay, no, don't go into people's homes,
but that's not what I'm saying—don't you see?
I am not invading anything
by living in a mountain by myself:
I am on a quest for salvation!
No, no, not God—though I wish it were God.
I'm too educated to believe in
God, but smart enough to want one.
The people who believe win in the end, you know?
But I do know that there must be something,
be it Nature or Will—it's all the same.
The world is pushing us all in some way,
and every religion was just formed
to give us a way to blame something else
for not knowing what we are headed towards.
You never get the overwhelming sense
that everything is planned out already?
That you are just a little floating thing
meandering through actions that have all
been done before? It takes so much courage
just to be alive at all, yet here we
are, without having been given a choice.
Up in the mountain, you can see it all.
You can walk straight into a wall of fog,
or watch the sunrise level with your feet.
You hear the soil begging to be fed

and feel the coal mines screaming in the heat.
Around there, you can feel it in your lungs,
the rain comes in to wash the fear away.
It makes me feel Earth's vibrations deeper,
and understand why people need to pray.
I know I'm just another useless brat,
but right now, can you just let me believe
that I've uncovered something wonderful?
I am not hurting anyone up there,
no one even saw me for like a week.
I promise not to stay out there for long,
just enough to find what I'm looking for.
If you hadn't so clearly lost all hope,
I might recommend that you do the same.
Fine, don't expect me to tell you my name.

4

**SHE SUDDENLY BECOMES FRANTIC AND STARTS
RUNNING AROUND, SEARCHING.**

Shit—shit—shit—shit—shit—I can't find my keys.
Only so many places keys could be...
Really, there are a lot of places, huh?
They could be anywhere inside my house,
or maybe I locked them inside the car—
I have been know to do those things of late—
or anywhere from the car to the house,
buried in all the plants out in the yard.
A small bird or two could have been confused
and tried to take them home to feed her kids,
but dropped them somewhere else along the way
because keys are heavier than bird food.
Dear God. They could be anywhere. And now
I'll never find them, and I'll never make

it to my very important meeting
at which I am supposed to meet a bunch
of very important people who I
am sure would never do something so dumb
as lose their keys to slightly confused birds.
Or a malicious bird—you never know.
Perhaps the world is angry with me and
is trying to scare me by reminding
me that I am slowly losing my mind
and sooner or later I'm gonna die.
Of all the places that my keys could be...
It's terrifying to consider it.
With all the plants and people and buildings—
the world is massive, and it makes me think
it must be the work of giants, and where
did they go? They are all dead now, I'm sure.
They've played their part and now I'm playing mine,
strutting and fretting here, about the stage.
They told me when I was younger that life
is like a roll of toilet paper—it
goes faster the closer you are to the
end. I did not believe them then of course.
Oh—that reminds me, I need to pick up
some toilet paper when I'm at the store.
My husband was yelling earlier for—
That's where they are! My keys! In the bathroom!

SHE RUNS OFF.

5

SHE COMES BACK AND STANDS AT THE PODIUM.

Thank you all for coming here today.
My husband and I did not have what you

would call a perfect marriage, but I knew...
I knew always that we would see it through.
See each other until the bitter end.
I've tried to teach my children
to resist the temptation of marriage
until they understand what it entails.
This in the hope that they will never be
included in the ever growing rate
of perfect marriage ending in divorce.
I have only one way to explain to
you the life I shared with my husband.
When I was very young, I ran away
for a time into a mountain in the
eastern part of Kentucky. After some
time my father was able to track me
down and bring me home to him and mother,
who I now realize loved me more than
a child will ever be able to know.
He did not bring me home, though before I
made a small home for myself in the woods.
I chose a spot next to a deep lake
that sat very still, and featured two trees.
These trees were rooted on opposite sides
of the water, and served as a bridge for
a small community of animals
that needed things from both side of this
thing that to them must have seemed a sea.
To see these trees, you understand that they
must have been forced together by the hands
of God himself—why else would you grow in
to such an uncomfortable position?
And even though the forces of the sun
and gravity were so against their lines,

their branches grew into one another's
and dug so deeply in that I could tell
no storm the sky could bring could make them break.
I went back a few years after that time,
just to see if what I saw still moved me.
The trees still stood as strong as they had then,
though branches had grown weak, and bark grown thin.
I brought my husband with me there that day,
And every day I needed to be sure.
I returned to that spot again once more
when my husband got sick—I was alone.
It appeared to me, at least, that the tree
on the left side of the lake had been struck
with lightning in a storm not long ago.
There was a pile of ash at its base,
and veins were burned into its partners trunk,
where once his branches had been deeply worn.
The animals had grown and gone away,
and the right tree was standing there—alone.
Even though I always knew that we would
eventually have to come to some
sort of end as people together here—
and even though it is selfish to say:
whenever it came up to be our turn
I always hoped I'd be the one to burn.

Thank you.

END OF PLAY

How Not To Be a Poet

Stuart King / poetry

A Contradictory Response to Wendell Berry's "How To Be a Poet"

i

Make a human-shaped nest
in the clothes piled on your bed.
Lie down. Turn on some music—
something loud—to excite you.
You must depend upon Hollywood-
portrayed, fleeting romances,
tabloid journalism articles,
Jeopardy! re-runs, and a staunch
record of ineptitude—heaped
throughout your life like the dirty
laundry on your bed—thoughts
that are forced and weak,
impulsiveness, for impulsiveness
joins a moment of satisfaction
with a lifetime of regret. If anyone
can bear reading your poems,
beg them for false praise
and relentlessly continue to
shovel your stale verse onto their plates.

ii

Watch *Casablanca* to learn
how to smoke cigarettes

like Humphrey Bogart.
Take a shallow drag,
feel your lungs strain
to hold that polluted air,
and exhale quickly so that
the smoke doesn't get in your eyes.
Don't open the window. In fact,
don't even face the window.
Turn on the AC if it gets too hot.
Use power strips and extension cords
to conveniently deliver and reduce effort.
Electronic devices will need to be
within arms-reach, for easy access.

To others, speak quickly and loudly—
and don't listen, rather, wait
for the next opportunity to talk.
Write emails, not letters.
Never reply to anything.
Live like a one-way street, and flicker
like the row of lamps that line it.
Check your phone for the time, check
your watch as a gesture of impatience.
Make sure to own a digital watch,
they're easier to read and waterproof,
in case you drop it in the toilet.
Spend a lot of time
in the gift shops of natural wonders;
the people-watching is supreme.
Go to concerts so you can try and
meet the band, but only talk
to the lead singer or the guy who

writes the songs, just to ask him
for an autograph. Don't waste your time
going to Rome or Jerusalem, and
don't visit Gettysburg. You can always
find pictures of them on the Internet,
two feet away on your left. Don't go
to the library and don't go
to museums. Don't read
about heroes, villains, conquerors,
or the conquered. Don't read
books about people who did too much,
but if you can, find something to read
about someone who never really did anything.

iii

Silence is the motive of the suspicious.
Honest voices are loud and clear.
Always want more; want too much.
Thrive on excess. Take what you can
from noise and make it your own.
Drench your poetry in profound
unoriginality, with lines that look like
one feeble epiphany after the other.
Make a poem that creates noise,
and let that noise bury you
with shovelfuls of lyrical disgrace.

Wir Sind Alle Kunst.

Maddisson Hatton / prose in German

Als sie erwachte, fand sie sich eingeschlossen in einem Glaskasten - nur groß genug, um darin zu stehen. Der Glaskasten war auf der Seite einer Ausstellung mit zwanzig Zuschauern, die durch den Raum wanderten und in die anderen Glaskästen reinschauten. Sie legte ihre Hände gegen das Glass und drückte ihr Gesicht gegen ihre Hände ums sehen zu können, sodass sie am Glass stehend nicht weit von den Menschen ausserhalb der Box war. Sie versuchte in die Box neben ihre eigene Box zu sehen...

Er hing nackt von einem Seil, auf der Oberseite der Box angebracht; Tot. Auf einem Schild auf der Unterseite der Box könnte man lesen: "Tod durch den Strang."

"Was für ein schönes Kunststück.", sagte ein Zuschauer.

Sie sah in die anderen Glaskästen mit Menschen. Eine Box war voll mit fleischfressende Ratten die, ein andere Box war mit dickem Gas gefüllt, und eine andere Box hatte einen Kadaver, im Wasser schweben. Als die Panik einsetzte, fing sie an auf die Box zu hämmern, aber die Zuschauer beachteten sie nicht. Sie hörte nur schreien auf, als ein Tourist an ihre Box startete. Dann sagte der Tourist ein Wort... Nur das eine Wort.

"Hungertod."

translation / **We Are All Art.**

When she awoke, she found herself locked in a Glass box – just big enough to stand in. The Glass box was on the side of an art exhibit with twenty audience members looking into different Glass boxes all around the room. She put her hands against the glass and pressed her face against it, so that when standing she was not far from the people outside the box. She tried to peer into the box closest to her own...

He hung naked from a rope tethered to the top of the box, dead. On a sign below the box one could read: “Death by hanging.”

“What a beautiful piece of art,” said one audience member.

She looked into the other Glass boxes with people around her. One box was filled with flesh-eating rats, another one was filled with thick smoke and yet another one had a cadaver floating in water. When panic set in, she began hammering against the glass, but the audience did not pay her any attention. She stopped screaming only when a Tourist started staring at her Box. Then the tourist said one word... one word only.

“Starvation.”

shale **art** section





Reflection

Kyeong Ran Jang / photography



Listless

Luke Hays / oil and latex paint

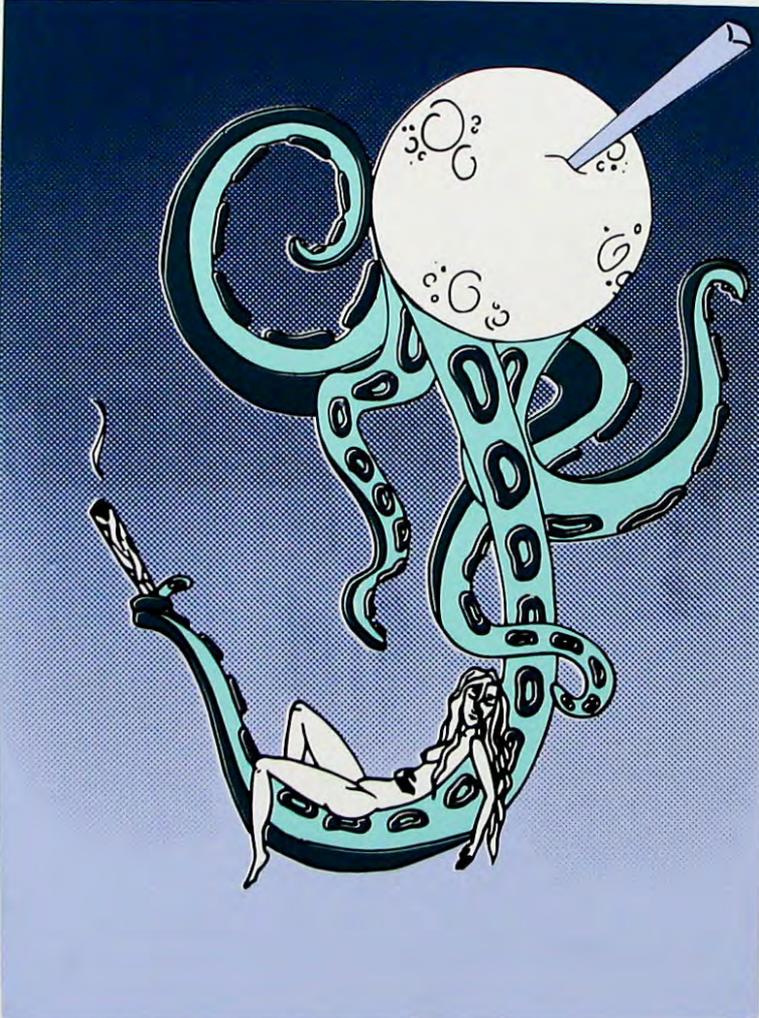
Girl Looking Down

Lacy Daniel / photography



mf insomniac

Grace Mayeur / silk screen print



1/2

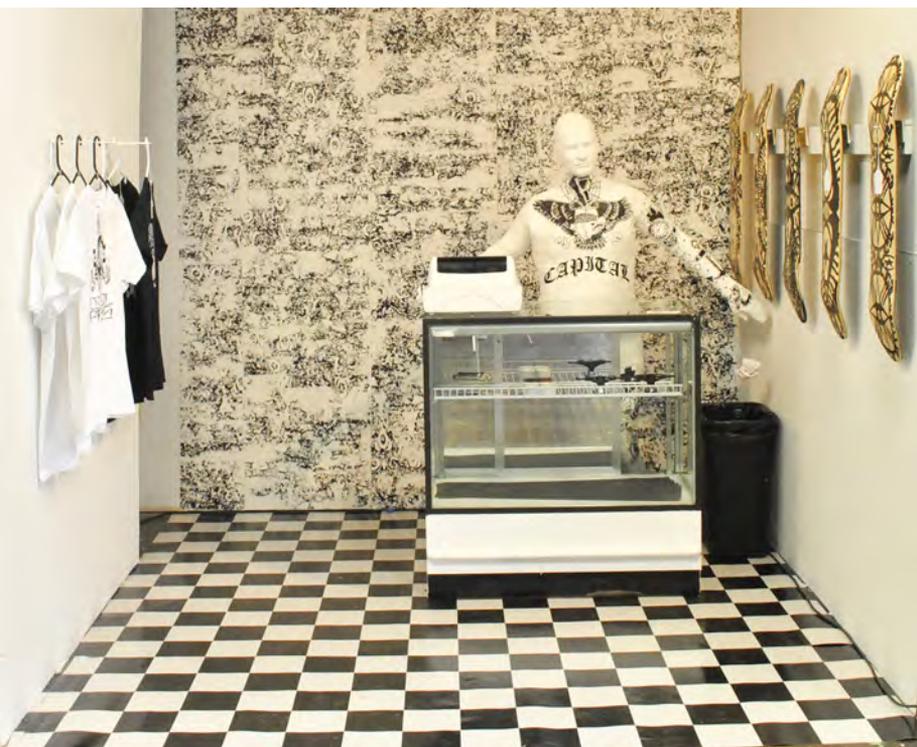
"mf insomniac"

9/01



Self-portrait

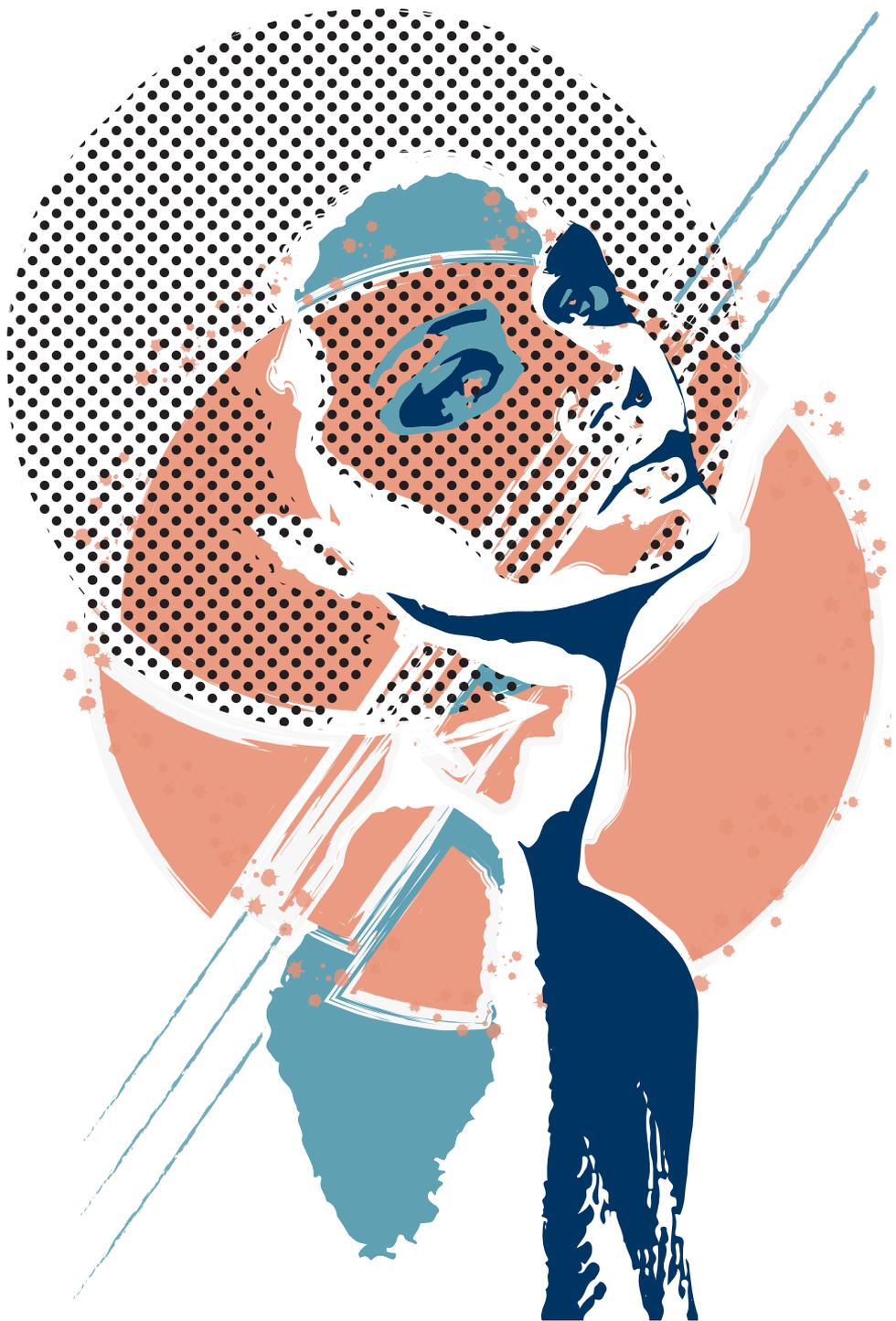
Grace Mayeur / cast iron, wood, acrylic paint



Open for Business

Jacob Lee / plaster casting, relief painting, screen printing

Mad Fuckable





Wire Monster

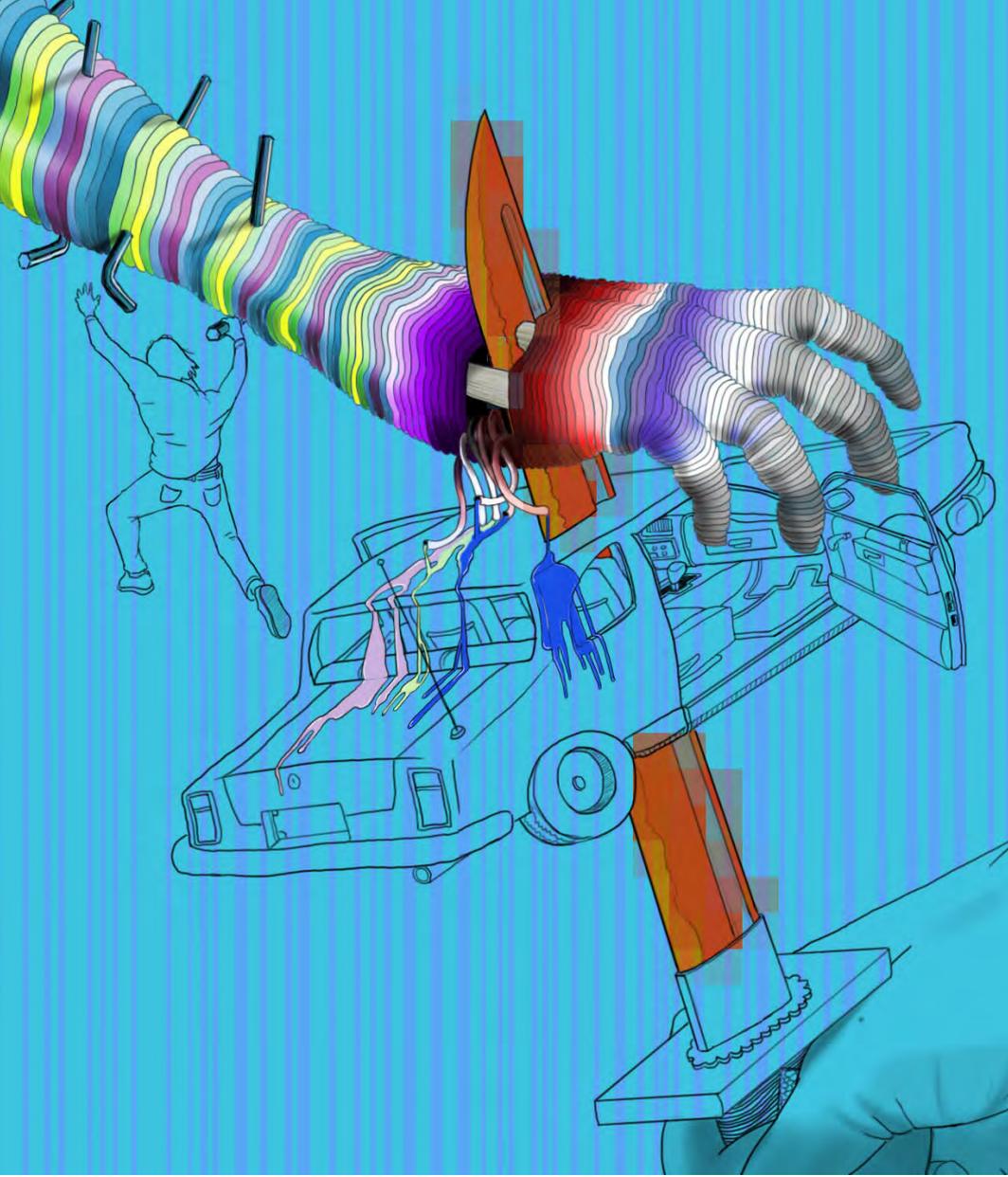
49

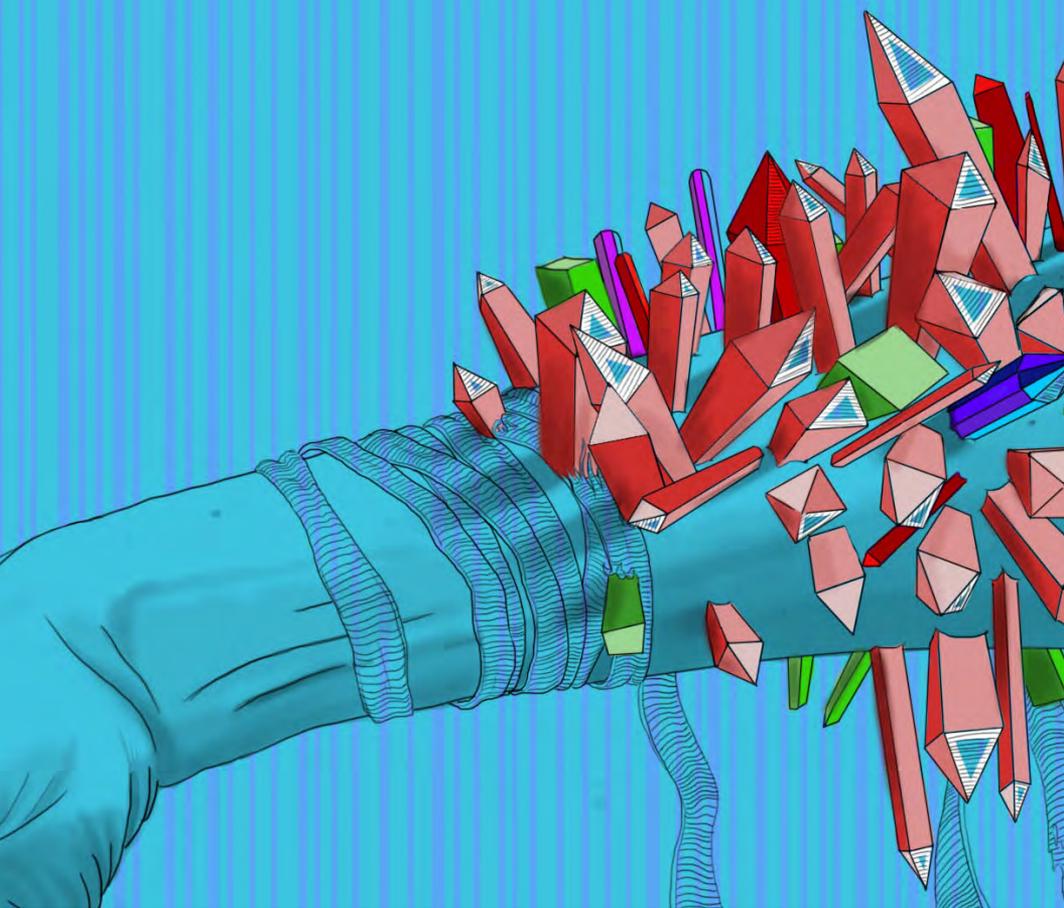
Shelby Carpenter / *wire*

NY, Phonecall

Jenny Winstead / *photography*







Wonderful Symptom

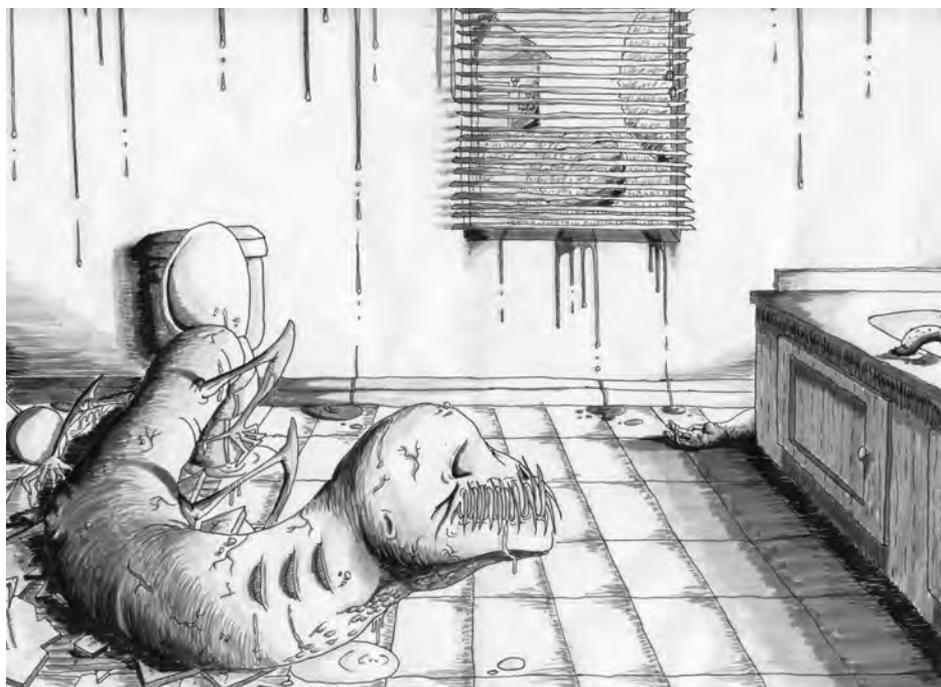
Dallas Conn / digital

52

hidden incision

Matt Ireland / digital





Something Appearing in an Unexpected Place

Jacob Wachal / pen and ink

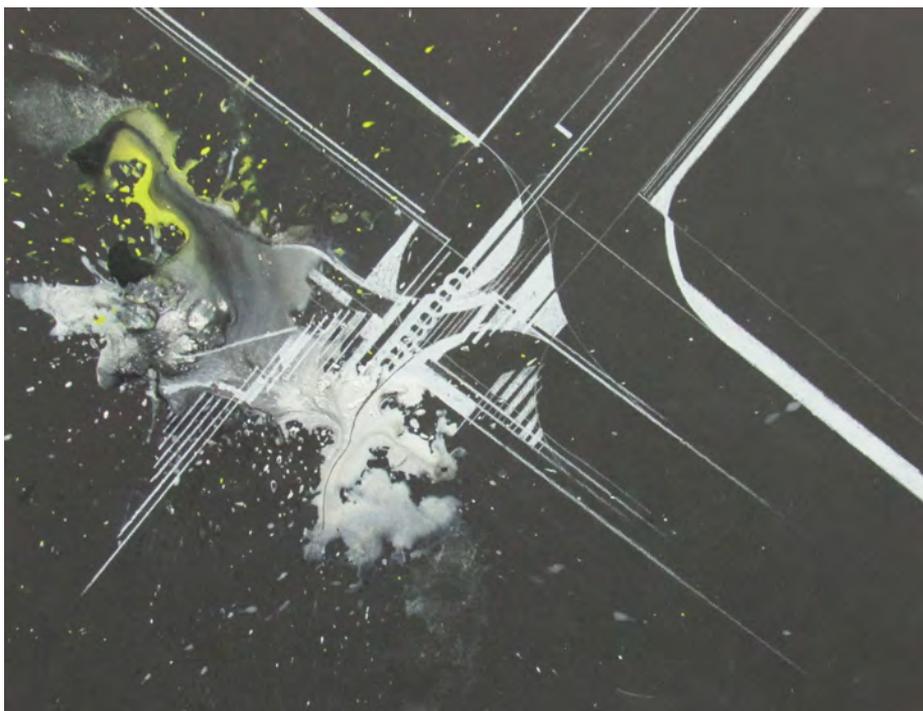


Divorce

Dallas Conn / digital

System Integration

Connor Verteramo / acrylic ink, white charcoal, black mat board



Unsweetened Green Tea

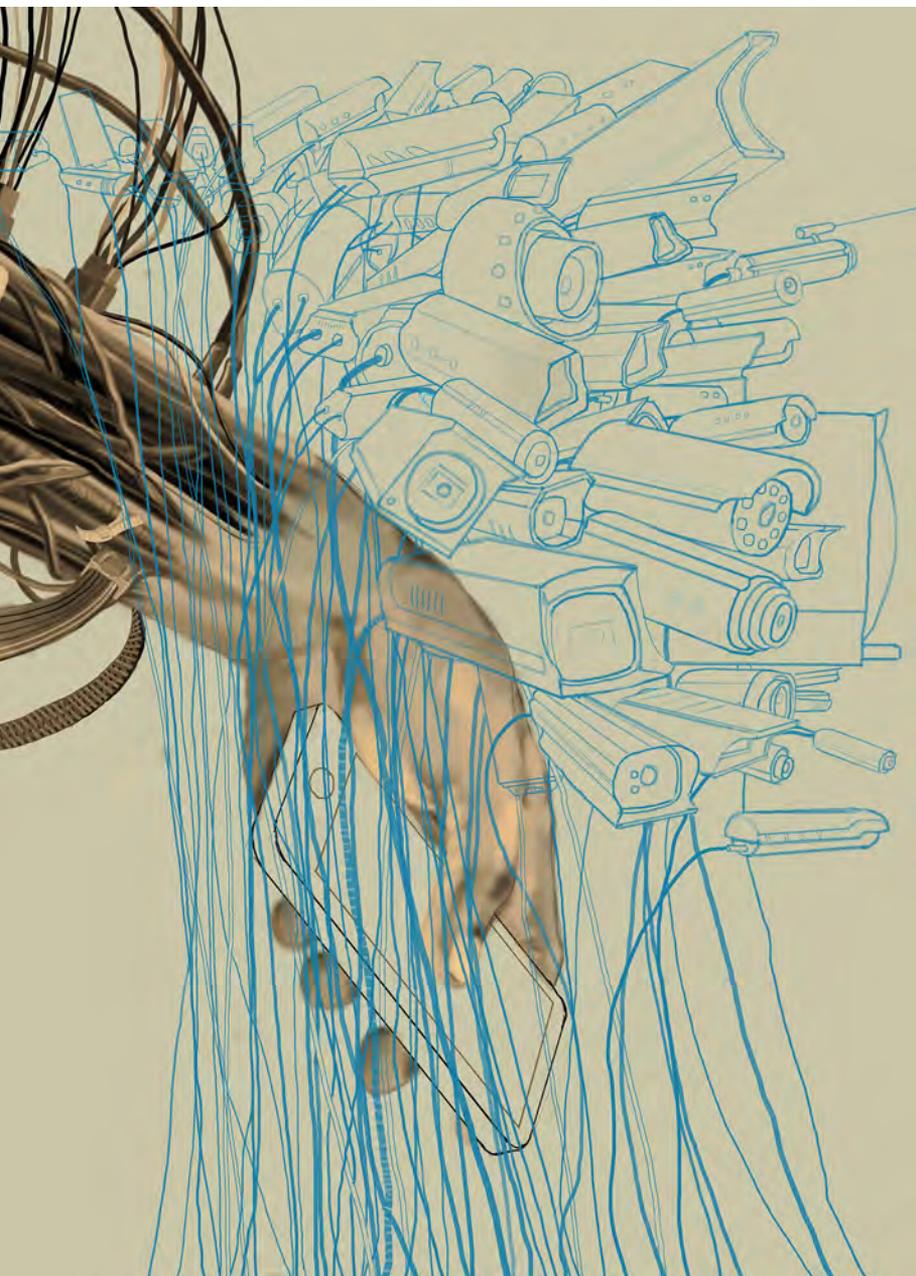
Luke Hays / latex and oil paint





Look

Dallas Conn / digital





Self-portrait No. 4

Nick Thelen / acrylic on mansonite



Pattern Exploration

Shamaria Rankin / quilt dyed and painted on fabric (silk and cotton), fused board clamp and shibori

Lo que quieren los saboteadores

Alexander Parmley / poetry in Spanish

Lo que quieren los saboteadores
En su batalla en marcha con la luz:
La independencia completa de la soltura de ideas,
Como teme al sol el avestruz.

El día que tienen éxito
En el revelo total y forzado,
Será el día en que se visualiza
La alegría en el supermercado.

translation / **That which the saboteurs desire**

That which the saboteurs desire
In their ongoing battle with the light:
The complete independence from the freedom of ideas,
Just as the ostrich fears the sun.

The day when they succeed
In the total and forced takeover,
Will be the day in which one finds
Happiness in the supermarket.

Serving Delight

Aryana Misaghi / prose

“Are you ready?”

Two pairs of eager brown eyes look up, pondering the biggest decision of their week. Moments pass. Tension builds. Choices have to be made. We make eye contact. I know what needs to be done.

In another instant, the twin boys relish their half-chocolate, half-strawberry scoops of ice cream, swinging their legs off the bench positioned just outside the windows of Ellen’s Homemade Ice Cream. It is within the easygoing environment they, and other customers like them, create that I feel most at home.

The sounds of bluegrass music and friendly banter brighten the already vibrantly-painted walls. Children dance around parents, sporting their best puppy-dog eyes to get that extra sprinkling of gummy bears atop mounds of ice cream. Mobs of Mountaineer fans crowd the counter after a big win, looking for yet another way to celebrate the success of their alma mater. Timid teenage couples on first dates inch toward the cash register, reading far too much into the question “Together or separate?”

There is no such thing as a “typical” Ellen’s customer: the lawyers in offices neighboring the store are met by the local drunks in downtown Charleston, both craving an afternoon cup of coffee; those looking for a pick-me-up on a rough day are met by an equal number of those looking to celebrate their latest accomplishment. No matter what their intention, they all expect a pleasant experience from the moment they walk past the flyer-plastered facade and into the store. I love few things more than meeting these expectations.

Customers used to the sullen teen merely going through the motions of a job obtained purely for the monetary gains are often surprised to find me, an eager ice cream slinger with a passion for frozen dairy desserts and intimate connections with strangers. The twin boys I serve every week after

they ace their spelling tests, the businessman I pour a glass of milk for every evening, the retired doctor whose feeble wife I walk a bowl of soup to in the afternoons—they make my paycheck feel like nothing but a fringe benefit of going to work.

I thrive among my fellow West Virginians, open and ready to let me make their days a little merrier. Together, we speak the language of endearments, filled with plenty of “honey’s” and “thank ya kindly’s.” Conversation comes naturally. “How are you?” is not merely a formality. With coworkers prepared to assist me in any way they can, whether scooping a quart of mocha almond or providing comic relief after a particularly long shift, a sense of community within this microcosm appears, and my heart glows.

At Ellen’s, I get to be the gregarious optimist I truly am without reservation. I get to network with locals, have meaningful and distinctive conversations with visitors, and foster lifelong relationships with other employees. Personal questions, perhaps asked hesitantly elsewhere, are encouraged and candidly answered. I get to learn people’s stories and associate with them anonymously, yet sincerely.

I am more than an ice cream server. I am open ears and kind eyes, aching to know the intricate details of strangers’ lives. I am the reassuring words comfort food simply cannot offer. I am the ecstatic congratulations a brownie sundae fails to verbalize. The smile I don habitually is not only welcome, but expected, from behind the counter. The smiles I get to invoke with a simple “Y’all enjoy now” mean the world to me.

Krazy Kat and I. Mouse

David Cole / poetry

Long before I was born,

a man wrote a comic strip about a Krazy Kat
and this mouse that threw bricks at her head,
which, in this time and place, was the ultimate
gesture of affection that the mouse could offer.
The Kat could never decide if it was he or she
and the world in which (s)he lived, Kokonino
County, could never decide if it was a surrealist
landscape or arid New Mexican countryside.
Nothing, in the world of Krazy Kat, was concrete.
Nothing, in the world of Krazy Kat, was reliable.
Except for that mouse throwing those bricks.

It is now twenty years after I was born,
and sixty years after the last Krazy strip.

I am a working class stiff with loans
and responsibilities and no time left
for looking at ancient comic strips.
I flit between being satisfied and hungry,
and the landscape around me has itself
changed from countryside to cityscape.
The change was much slower for me,
and there were no surreal landscapes
between my barns and these towers.
Everything, in my new world, is concrete.
Everything, in my new world, is scheduled.
A perilous pattern of alarm clocks and punch
clocks and meetings with ham hocks in ties.

And though no one chucks bricks at my head
I think that if I unbutton the collar a little bit
and work out the arm in preparation,
I might find the time to throw one of my own.

Mons Magne

Trevor Wiley / poetry in Latin

Mons magne. Pater,
qui cepisti cor meum.
Liberabis me.

translation / Oh, Great Mountain

Oh, great mountain. Father,
who captured my heart.
Liberate me.

Happy Birthday

Hannah Jeffries / prose

“Nathaniel Adrian Harper! If I have to tell you to stay out of that icing one more time I’ll—” I was interrupted by a peal of giggles. My son rounded the corner and escaped to the backyard.

I squeezed my eyes shut. “Natalie, please go play with your brother,” I said to my daughter. Natalie looked up from the barstool she was perched on, set her crayons down, and left the room.

Nathaniel and Natalie were twins, but I couldn’t fathom how they came from the same womb, let alone the same person.

I wiped my hands off on the dish towel threaded through the belt loop of my jeans. I looked around the kitchen and thought about what I had left to do. The cake was in the oven, the frosting was finished, but there were balloons and napkins and streamers strewn around the room. The tornado that was my son probably had something to do with that.

The August sun beat through the picture window and greeted the heat from the oven like an old friend. I pushed my sticky hair back from my face and walked over to the window. A new coat of paint had sealed it shut. I tried to push it open, but the paint wouldn’t give. I hit it with the heel of my hand. Nothing.

I swept my long black hair into a haphazard bun and turned back to the decorations. I gathered the balloons and the thin silver ribbon I had bought to anchor them. I pulled one of the old kitchen chairs around the island and settled in, making sure I had a good view of the backyard, and my children, before blowing up balloons.

No more than five minutes later the front door crashed open. I all but forgot the silver ribbon wrapped tight around my pointer finger. I wasn’t expecting guests for another two hours.

My eyes narrowed as my sister stepped into the room. “Elise?” was all I could manage to choke out.

“Hey, sis,” she responded. She hoisted herself up onto the island, as casually as if she had just done the same thing the day before.

“What—what’re you...doing here?”

“I couldn’t miss Mom’s 60th birthday party, could I?” Elise responded. “Andi, your finger’s turning blue.”

I looked down at my hand and quickly unwound the ribbon from my finger. I wiggled it.

It felt strange to hear someone call me Andi. I had shed my childhood nickname when I took my first real job as an accountant, fresh out of college and eager to please. Andrea sounded so much more professional. Hearing “Andi” caused a crawling nostalgia. I could almost smell the gardenias from my mom’s old garden.

“You didn’t answer my question,” I said. I tied the ribbon around the balloon I was working on, wrapped it one, two, three times around the pale yellow plastic.

“Yes I did,” Elise said. “I told you I didn’t want to miss Mom’s birthday.”

“Like that’s ever stopped you before,” I said. “That isn’t the answer, and you know it, Elise.”

Elise shrugged. She picked up one of the balloons and stretched out the plastic. She touched the end of it to her lips and puffed a little bit of air into it. Then she squeezed the end together and let the air screech out.

I stood up and snatched the balloon out of my sister’s hand. “Dammit, Elise, if you’re going to act like a five-year-old, you can go play with Nathaniel and Natalie.”

Elise shrugged again. She poised herself to hop off the countertop. I moved towards her and grabbed her wrist. “I wasn’t serious. I don’t want you anywhere near my kids.”

Elise yanked her wrist back. “Jesus, Andi, get your claws off of me!” She rubbed her wrist. “What the hell?”

“Answer me. Why are you in my house?”

“I thought I could help with the party,” Elise persisted. She was still rubbing her wrist.

“You’re so full of shit.” I got up from my chair and turned my back away

from my sister. I opened and closed some of the drawers and cabinets in my cramped kitchen.

I wasn't looking for anything other than to avoid confrontation with her.

I pushed my hair back again. I set out some plates and put them back. I grabbed a spoon from the silverware drawer. I picked up the bowl of frosting from where it sat by Elise and cradled it and moved to the window. My eyes caught Natalie's for a moment before she turned back to the sandbox.

Natalie packed some sand into a mold of a fish. She handed it to Nathaniel so he could dump it on top of the rest of the sand. Nathaniel's eyebrows furrowed when he saw he'd created a lump of sand and not a fish. Natalie stopped up the sand once again, packed it into the mold, and demonstrated to her brother how to gently turn it over and lift it to create a grainy white fish. He grabbed the nearest mold, a seashell, and filled each section at a time with sand. He pressed it down with his small thumb half a dozen times, flipped it over, and picked it up. He grinned from ear to ear, delighted with his creation.

Natalie was always so patient with her brother. I caught myself wishing I had shown half the restraint my daughter did when Elise and I were growing up.

I turned from the window. I half-hoped that Elise would be gone. My mouth twitched at the corner when I saw the skinny shell of my sister still perched on the island, kicking her heels against the wall.

"Will you quit doing that, please?" I asked.

Elise looked up at me. She bit the inside of her cheek and said, "Sorry." She kicked her heel against the wall one more time.

"You can stay half an hour after Mom gets here," I said. "But I want you gone after that. Got it?"

Elise hopped down from the counter. Her mouth widened into a toothy smile, and I noticed for the first time how old my little sister looked now.

"Sure, yeah, I'll be gone before sunset. Swear," Elise said. She took one of my hands and squeezed it. "Promise." And just as soon as she grabbed my hand, she dropped it. "Is there anything I can do? Since I didn't bring

anything?” Elise asked.

“You can help me string these balloons,” I said. “It’ll go faster with both of us doing it.” I settled back on to my chair and grabbed the nearest limp balloon. Elise followed my lead. She dragged a chair around the corner of the island.

Elise was clumsy with the balloons; she let air sneak out, rubbed the plastic too roughly with her calloused hands. The squeals of both were harsh against my ears. I took a sharp breath in through my teeth every time it happened.

“So how have you been, Andi? How’s work?” Elise asked as she struggled with her overblown balloon.

“I don’t work anymore,” I said.

Air sputtered out of Elise’s balloon and propelled it towards the ceiling. It drifted back to Elise’s lap after its brief taste of freedom. “You *what?*” Elise asked.

“I quit,” I said, my voice level and calm. “I felt bad about leaving the kids at home with a nanny all the time. And Jason started making enough money that I didn’t really need to anymore.”

Elise’s wide amber eyes stared straight into mine. “Are you kidding?”

“You don’t have kids,” I said. “You couldn’t understand.”

“You just never seemed like the type to diminish yourself to a fucking housewife,” Elise said. Her eyes didn’t move from my face, an unspoken challenge written in them.

“You’re the last person who should be giving *anyone* life advice,” I snapped.

“Alright, you’re right,” Elise conceded. She raised her hands in mock surrender.

As much as I’d wanted to avoid it, the feelings of discomfort and uneasiness I’d had on Elise’s arrival today crept back into my mind. As I watched her then, I realized that I couldn’t have her just waltzing in and out whenever she wanted.

Elise first disappeared from our lives when she was eighteen and ran away from home. It wasn’t until Jason and I had moved to Chicago together

after we graduated from Boston College that I saw her again. He had a job teaching theatre at DePaul and I interned for chump change at Goldman Sachs.

One evening, we'd been cleaning up for dinner when we heard a pounding at our door. It was loud and insistent. We didn't live in the best neighborhood, and before I went to the door, Jason went to our bedroom to get his baseball bat.

I had looked through the peephole to see someone that looked kind of like my sister, but paler and skinnier. As I opened the door, I covered my mouth with my hand. Elise's cheeks were sallow, her eyes framed by dark purple skin barely concealed by makeup. Her hair was limp and tangled; I could see the bones of her chest.

Jason and I let her stay with us for a few days. When we found her strung out with a piece of rope tied around her arm, we checked her into rehab.

"Andi? Andi?" Elise's voice pulled me back to the kitchen. I blinked and looked over at her. "Andi, your phone's going off."

I looked at the text from Jason. *Just got your mom from the airport. Be there in half an hour. Less if no traffic.* We lived in the suburbs now. No more sirens in the middle of the night, no more guard dogs to warn against intruders.

"Sorry," I said. "Got distracted."

"Can I ask you something?" Elise asked after a moment of silence.

"Sure."

"Is it—and please don't say no right away—would it be okay if I stayed with you for a few days?"

My mouth fell open. I searched for something to say, but words escaped me. I was right. I knew she had to have been there for reasons other than Mom's birthday.

"Please don't say no right away," Elise said. "It's just that I'm in between places right now, and I just need to crash. Just for a few days. Please."

I shook my head. "No, Elise."

"What? No?" Her eyebrows came together in anger. "Why the fuck not? You're just going to let me sleep on the goddamn street?!"

"Because the last time I let you stay here, my two-year-old son got his hands on the bag of coke that you left on my fucking *coffee table*." And it was

true. The last time Elise had been in my house, the scenario had been much the same. She'd shown up at the door preaching good intentions. I hadn't wanted to let her stay here, but Jason had talked me into it.

On the second morning of her last stay, I went to the kitchen to grab a banana for Natalie. When I came back, Nathaniel had his tiny hand in a Ziploc of Chicago's finest "snuff".

"I'm clean now!" she insisted. She grabbed my shoulder. "I'm clean now, Andi, I promise. You know how bad I feel about Nathaniel and that whole thing. I never meant to—I mean, I didn't think about it."

"Of course you didn't think about it! You never think about anything!" I shouted. "And you said you were clean the last time, and judging by the fact that you're homeless, I really doubt you're telling the truth now."

She wiped angrily at her face with the back of her hand. I think she was crying. "Please, Andi."

I slammed my phone on the counter. "I said no. Absolutely not." I backed away from her. "Actually, I want you out. Right now."

Her eyes widened. "But you told me I could stay for Mom's party?"

"I changed my mind," I said. "I don't think Mom even wants to see you. I'm tired of dealing with this." I pushed my hair from my face. "I'm tired of dealing with you. Get out. Now."

Just as I said that, the front door opened. I could hear my husband's voice as he chatted with my mother. Both their voices fell silent when they walked into the kitchen. Jason looked between me, Elise, and Mom.

Elise wiped her eyes again and flashed a faint smile at my mom. "Hi, Mom. I just stopped by to give you this present." She produced a jewelry box from her purse on the counter. She handed the box to Mom and slid the purse over her shoulder. "I can't stay, I've got to get home. Sorry." She kissed our mother on the cheek. "Maybe I can stop by before you fly back to Nashville."

Our mom looked so confused. "What? Why can't you stay for the party?"

Elise shrugged and pretended to laugh it off. "I've gotta get back to work, Momma. Sorry. Duty calls. I'll see ya soon."

The front door opened, closed, and the room was silent.

I could hear my children laughing outside.

He's in High Cotton Now

David Cole / poetry

For sixteen years, I've been breakin my back
just for a pair of new shoes and some clothes
for school. I've been down in this field, on knees
like Daddy when that tree broke off and broke
him. This boll opens up like a pack of razors,
cuts my hand to bits cause I don't have no gloves.

I'm down here and I catch that same sound
rattlin down the hill to my little patch of earth,
same times every day. Whistle of a load-bearin
freight train stealin off into the night. I look
and can't see it from where I'm stuck so low.

I remember seein Daddy in the only chair
he owned, cryin cause he hurt so bad. Still
went out and worked his hands to bleed
just because we needed him to. Never felt
right with that. Never. Never felt right.

These ain't my clothes and this ain't my place.
That train howls out again and it reaches
into me, twists me up the way it carries
on the wind and wails down here, where I be.
*"I didn't plant this shit,
and I ain't never gonna pull it up
no more."*

I threw my sack down, half full of bloody
bolls and clods of dirt. I threw it down
on that earth and never went back to pullin.
I knew that somewhere was better than here,
and I wasn't waitin around for that old train,
like Death, to come get me. Clothes or not,
I was low down and angry. But if I left it there...
I'd be in the high cotton for sure.

Triumpus Animi

Kayla Hicks / poetry in Latin

Vī cataclysmī
Animus sum vulneratus
Uter valebit?

translation / **Triumph of the Spirit**

By the force of the cataclysm (natural disaster)
I, the spirit, have been wounded
Which will prevail?

[vuh-jahy-nuh]

Anna Hall / poetry

I: The Naming of the Thing

I like “flower.”

Natural, pretty, life-giving —
it makes me think of Toni Morrison,
though maybe “kudzu” is more accurate.
Resilient, vaguely exotic,
and people are always trying to murder it

Becca says no

Becca says too delicate

Becca says more powerful

Becca likes “hurricane.”

Too destructive.

Ashley says let me think.

I help:

a conveniently shaped crevice in a cliff face?

The soft core of a pomegranate?

“Pulpy heart,” like in *Kindred*?

Ashley likes “velvet glove.”

Very sexual.

Ashley likes “fancy bit.”

Sounds like an old lady naming her cat

In the interest of gender equality,

I’ll include a male opinion:

Joey likes “pussy.”

II: Finding the Thing

In my relative youth,
I learn in art class that there is some debate
whether Georgia O'Keeffe's flower paintings
are meant to resemble vaginas.

Ashamedly (Becca says Catholic guilt),
I creep to the computer
and look up the paintings in question.

They are beautiful.
I hope they look like vaginas,
but I can't tell.

Et si le cimetière Père Lachaise n'était en fait qu'une boîte de chocolat

Bridget Nicholas / poetry in French

Quand les cieux ont essayé d'ouvrir une
Boîte de chocolats célestes, la main de
Quelqu'un, couverte de nuages, était glissante.

La boîte est donc
Tombée
Par terre

Et les chocolats se sont
Dispersés
Sur terre.

La boue a sucé les bonbons
Jusqu'à ce que pourris, ils devinrent gris.

Les décorations devenaient lisses,
Caressées par les doigts du vent.

« Pourquoi est-ce que vous les avez touchées avec vos mains graisseuses ? » cria le soleil.
« Vous avez étalé les noms des saveurs ! »

Maître temps, quand il traînait sa robe
Sur la boue, faisant du lèche-vitrines pour les âmes,
S'est arrêté souvent pour

Lécher les vitraux hors de ses charpentes.

Maintenant seuls les éclats restent,
Comme ficelles de sa salive.

La pluie pleurait sur le désordre

—Elle a lavé la terre la semaine passée, n'est-ce pas ?—

Et elle a saturé les débris avec des larmes noires

D'amertume.

translation / And if Père Lachaise cemetery were really a box of chocolates

When the heavens tried to open a
Box of celestial chocolates, the hand of
Someone was slippery with clouds.

Then the box

Fell

To earth

And the chocolates

Scattered

On the ground.

The mud sucked the candies

Until they rotted to gray.

The embellishments became smooth,

Caressed by the wind's fingers.

« Why did you touch them with your greasy hands? » the sun cried.

« You smeared the names of the flavors! »

Master Time, when he dragged his robe

In the mud, window-shopping for souls,

Stopped often to

Lick the stained glass from its frame.

Now only shards remain,

Like strings of his saliva.

The rain cried over the mess

—Hadn't she washed the earth the week before?—

And she saturated the debris with black tears

Of bitterness.

tiwa¹

Tiwaladeoluwa Adekunle / poetry

she says this version is a solution

see we americans lose our attention span after the first two syllables

my laughter

is my heart clutching my throat

wondering when my name 'Tiwaladeoluwa² became a problem

¹ ours (Yoruba)

² ours is the crown of God

Walk With Me

Jacqueline Trowbridge / prose

One foot in front of the other.

Up the brick path to the front door, crisp edges of the masonry clouded by overgrowth of moss. Past the cobblestones in the front garden now crowded by opportunistic dandelions and tall grass. Onto the porch where carefully tended lawn furniture lies abandoned beneath cracked, yellowing covers.

One foot in front of the other.

I ring the doorbell just as I have a thousand times before: running home with a wet towel and swim goggles after morning practice, wearing my Christmas Eve dress to celebrate with my cousins, arms stuffed with Girl Scout cookie boxes for my best customer. There is no bounce in my step; just a grimace where a grin once was. Am I even that little girl anymore?

One foot in front of the other.

A stocky Slovakian woman answers the door, a face that has become so familiar these past few months, nods at my presence. She beckons me inside. Since when have near strangers become such a comfort?

One foot in front of the other.

The living room is preserved indefinitely, untouched by the passage of time and transpiration of events, the carpet lined with grooves from the vacuum wheels. My nostrils burn with the perverse, formaldehyde-esque notion in which the past seems to taunt me. The hallway is lined with frames of captured moments in time, obscured by a fine layer of dust that seems to further separate them from where I stand, reaching for hands that can't reach back. Did they even happen?

One foot in front of the other.

The warm glow of the kitchen envelopes me, yet violently argues against the countertops littered with jaundiced prescription bottles and other assorted medical equipment. Disposable. Sterile. Uniform. I can hardly re-

member a time when the counter was overflowing with a Thanksgiving bounty, surrounded by little hands and big hands alike, scooping up food and shoveling it ravenously onto paper plates. Now food has become obsolete. He stopped eating three days ago.

One foot in front of the other.

I pass the kitchen table, buried under mountains of legal documents, bills, and letters from the insurance company, and I can hardly think about eating homemade oatmeal with him. The way he cut my grilled cheese sandwiches into four corners. How he always had dessert for us from his secret treat drawer. But he hasn't been able to sit up on his own for weeks.

One foot in front of the –

Stopping at the threshold to the family room, I pause. It isn't that great-grandma's auburn armchair has been replaced with a slick, uniform black wheelchair. I'm not fazed by the absence of the velvety plaid couch and loveseat. I've even become accustomed to the bleakness of the hospital bed that took the place of the handmade coffee table, and its various IV bags with their tentacles draped everywhere. It's that the tentacles are no longer tethered. It's that his breaths are increasingly shallow and rasping, like being smothered under a desiccant, dust-filled rag. It's that his figure in the bed is so small, his bones threatening to pierce through his pale drapery of skin.

Breathe in, breathe out.

One foot in front of the other.

I clamber up into the hospital bed with him, dragging my broken heart behind me like a wounded animal. I pull him in close and try to cuddle his dried up figure like a Band-Aid on a bullet hole.

"Grandpa. It's me," I whisper in his ear, voice wavering with emotion I can hardly contain. It is a violent tempest of pain that threatens to erupt with the slightest nudge. "I'm here."

With one arm around his shoulders, I place the other hand on his clasped fingers, feeling the rough calluses like gravel beneath my fingertips. The memories begin to surge into the clutter of my mind, love washing away the debris the cancer left in its wake. I see him brandishing the sandpaper as he helps me make my sixth grade medieval studies project. I see his

hands on the steering wheel as we drive to pick up a thin-crust pepperoni pizza from our favorite Italian restaurant. I feel him reaching out to tousle my hair as he greets me with a childlike grin. But he doesn't greet me now... he doesn't even react.

I put my forehead to his and I look into his empty brown eyes only to remember the way they wrinkled up when he smiled. How they gazed in proud approval during my recitals. How they lit up when we stopped by to visit him. Their dullness is now unrecognizable. Empty. Void of life that once enriched my own.

I know he's not in there anymore, that the cancer took him away a long time ago, but I'm not ready. I wrap my arms around his fragile frame and tell him that its okay to go. We will be okay. I will be okay. In the depths of my soul, as I try to hold him together, I know that it is he who has gathered my shattered fragments. The splinters will bleed for a while, and sting when I least expect, but the scars will be faint.

One foot in front of the other, I walk away for the last time.

Imagining No Constraints

Sue Mize / poetry

In a dispassionate email you say you'd like to have lunch with me
I respond in a detached voice, "I'd like that too"

We're keeping our distance—we must—we're married to other people
But under my facade I fantasize about:

Running to greet you under the disapproving nose of President Patterson
shamelessly throwing my arms around your neck kissing you right on the lips

Sitting at a candlelit table in Merrick Inn, gazing into your onyx eyes and
eating chocolate lava cake

Holding hands at the Kentucky Theater
Watching Casablanca as Bergman and Bogart end their relationship
accepting that we too are predestined for a painful parting

Recognizing our mortality in the Lexington Cemetery
and embracing under the cherry blossom trees
doing our part to bury mores that manacle marriage to a hearse

But we will only do these things in my imagination
In reality we'll say "how are you" instead of "I love you" and,
over lunch at the Grey Goose, tell each other what we did during winter break

And maybe that's enough

The Wanderer

Shannan Slone / poetry

*Speak, memory—
of the cunning hero,
the wanderer, blown off course time and again*

Speak, memory
of my wanderer.

Speak of the worlds I found in you,
the salt I tasted on your lips,
the heat I felt
rise off your sunburnt skin.

Speak of the way my fingers tugged your hair—
Searching—

Speak of the stars we saw
on the day you left,
the same ones I now look to
with the eternal wonder of a child.

Tell the tale, once more, in our time

The tale that begins with a girl
who stood atop a mountain,
saw the infinite expanse of blue,
and—breathless, invincible—
fell in love for the first time.

Colonialism

Colleen Kochensparger / poetry

he touches me lightly, like I might float away,
or burst like a soap bubble,
the kind we would blow as kids, and dance barefoot beneath in shimmering joy
but light touches never mean anything
and one cannot keep butterfly kisses,
pin them to cardboard,
collect the whole set

only nails digging in to my back, leaving tiger stripes
bruises left by teeth
mean anything
anymore

if you mark your territory in this way, with teeth and claws
you can leave as often as you want
this land is still your land

A Curious Dream

Anna Yi / prose

The forest is quiet, but there is a tangible air of excitement. Sunbeams pierce through the canopy of leaves to scatter their light on the forest floor as foliage rustles with the passing breeze. Suddenly, a twinkle of light catches the corner of the eye. Then another. And another. In the distance, a wispy figure is spotted before disappearing. Faint laughter rings throughout the forest – or is it just the wind as it brushes past the abundant greenery?

Traveling deeper in the forest, the twinkle of lights and wispy figures become more frequent. Eventually, ethereal figures are recognized: almost transparent beings with hair adorned with wildflowers and wreaths, small-winged figures with pixie grins, and beastly creatures with amiable and curious expressions – and all are gathering towards a certain place.

Drawing near, whispers and murmurs can be heard, and then the realization dawns.

There is a festival held amongst the Fae.

Fae of all shapes and sizes flutter about. Their movements are graceful, smooth, undisturbed, and natural – effortless. It's almost as if they are flowing with the wind as they twirl around and dance about.

The warm sunlight grows dim as the sun begins to set, and the forest is alight with hues of orange, pink, and gold. Shadows start to creep around the forest floor as a clearing is reached – a glade – filled with mythical creatures of every kind, and they are all smiles as they flutter and flutter around the open space. Noises and hums fill the air as creatures greet and converse with one another, but it doesn't sound like white noise. It sounds almost musical – resounding with tinkling laughers, chiming voices, and deep murmurs.

As the sky becomes darker with the approaching night, shadows approach and cover every creature, hiding them in the swirling darkness. The shadows darken their facial features, and only the flicker of their eyes as

they catch the remaining light and the flash of their teeth as they grin can be seen.

Then there is a glow of light.

Everyone pauses as they turn toward the source, only to see the rising moon as it makes its ascent. The moonlight bathes the glade with its charming light like a chandelier, its rays chasing away most of the shadows and making them retreat back into the cover of the forest. Everyone stares transfixed at the beauty of the full moon, and everything is quiet.

There is a sudden clamor from a corner of the glade, and everyone turns towards the noise.

Creatures slowly sink to the ground in tandem as a lone figure makes her appearance. She is elegantly dressed in a lovely, flowing gown that complements her willowy figure and her luminous skin. Her hair is styled ornately and adorned with flowers at their peak: fully bloomed, rich in scent, and bright in color. Her eyes are refulgent against the waning darkness, piercing in gaze, yet filled with warmth and wisdom that seem beyond her years.

She is none other than Titania – Queen of the Fae.

As she passes, all the creatures lower their heads in respect. She walks regally with a grace that is unmatched by any model or ballerina, and with an air about her that demands respect and regard. Every step is deliberate and slow, befitting her status as Queen.

When she reaches the center of the glade, she turns to look out at the gathered Fae around her. She effortlessly commands attention before speaking in a tongue unrecognizable to human ears, motioning with her hands outreached in a cordial and welcoming manner. Then, with the raising of her arms, music swells up from all corners of the glade; beautiful tunes from unfamiliar instruments and recognizable melodies from classical woodwinds and strings fill the glade. Lanterns are hastily hung on the trees around the clearing, providing more light and throwing a warm glow upon the gathered Fae.

There is a distinct air of cheering before everyone resumes what they had been doing.

Smiles and laughter are found on every face, eyes bright with mirth.

Some choose to dance and take their partners towards the center of the glade, which has become a makeshift dance floor. Titania is seated on a throne decorated with flowers and ivy near the edge of the glade, overlooking the rest of the Fae. There is a small quirk of her cupid-bow lips, indicating a hint of a smile.

Amongst the swaying figures and enchanting music, there is a sense of disconcertion. It is strange and unpleasant. The figures are dancing gracefully, but there is something off. It is too restrained, too controlled. It doesn't match the upbeat music that overflows and drowns out other sounds – sounds of laughter, of conversations, of whispers, of murmurs.

The dancers are like marionettes dancing to a completely different tune only heard by the puppeteer.

The music echoes and rings after its end, even as another song relentlessly starts up. The dancers continue their monotonous, yet still graceful, dance without missing a beat.

Looking around, the spectators have ceased their conversations to watch the dancers. Their eyes do not hold interest, but are rather blank and empty; the previous life and laughter is gone as the disconcertion becomes more tangible. The music is in frenzy, still swelling happily with its highs and lows, but the dancers' movements are still ordered and refined.

Everything suddenly comes to a stop.

The music, the dancers, the spectators – everything becomes frozen in place. The dancers are paused mid-step and the instrument players' deft hands are still placed as if readying for the next part of the song. It's as if time suddenly paused.

Titania slowly rises, but against the sudden stillness of the glade, her movements appear swift. She weaves around the suspended Fae, cleanly avoiding some while missing others by a mere hair's width. Her next words are surprisingly comprehensible as they pass her lips that are still quirked in that same smile, but upon closer inspection seems more mocking, more arrogant, and filled with contempt. It is a sneer.

"You were not invited."

Her wispy voice is discordant against her harsh words. At her voice,

everyone suddenly turns; blank stares, apathetic faces, and silent as ever.

And as if by an invisible cue, everything disappears. One moment they are there, and the next, it is nothing but an empty glade and shadows. There is a sudden chill in the air and the silence is deafening. The moonlight that had been so tranquil and bright has become eerie.

Backtracking through the now imposing forest, there is no sign of life anywhere. Even the wind has ceased. Everything is black and gray, and shadows stretch and swirl on the ground.

A misstep causes a tumble into the darkness.

And for a moment, there might have been echoes of faint laughter in the air.

Thursday, September 6: 8:27 AM

Wendell Maupin / poetry

he shivers but
he is not cold
tightens his coat nonetheless
another stride towards the house
a dark red car is parked outside

the 2nd and 12th stairs creak
he doesn't care enough
to avoid them

the symphony of blasphemed sheets
and kissing and laughter
and moaning that he approaches
drowns out everything

the bedroom door left open
he peers into the room
rays of the morning sun fight
through the curtains
he still struggles to see
anything but shadows

he wonders
wonders why
wonders when
wonders how
wonders if they'll even notice
the glasses he forgot on the nightstand

La Danza

Cia Scott / poetry in Spanish

salta(libertad)ndo a bailar.

(pensamientos frente a la realidad)

por el suelo , pintando en la tierra
grabando esta jaula con mundo(voz)[e]s desconocidas

dolor,miedo,obsesionante(amor)radiante,estallando
en todo mi ser.

ocultando (estoy en) silueta
(con)

mi alma respirando

a querer...

deténgase.

(te)

viendo, sintiendo,

entendiendo

(me)

Te voy a enseñar.

Seam(d)os

(libres). Baila.

translation / **The Dance**

leap(freedom)ing to dance.

(thoughts vs. reality)

across the floor , painting the earth,
engraving this cage with wor(l)ds unknown.

pain,fear,haunting(love)radiating,bursting
throughout my being.

hiding, (I'm in) silhouette

(with)

my soul breathing

to want...

stop.

(you)

seeing, feeling,

understanding

(me)

Let me show you.

Let us

(be free). Dance.

Upon Seeing a Photograph of Child Miners

Ryan D. Mosley / poetry

Their sullen stares peek
from behind black masks,
desperate eyes caked in coal dust
slowly clasping unseen hands
over barely grown nostrils.
Squeezing, shoulder to shoulder,
arms straight for a photograph,
and not one
can muster a smile.

The sight of child miners
reminds me
black stains in Papaw's lungs
recalls the
black stains in my veins too
makes me
only too glad to have drank coal
instead of digging it up.

I search for my great-grandfather,
picking resemblances in each face
to my childhood photographs.
I imagine every baseball bat
traded for a shovel
and the toothy well-lit smiles
for eyes slowly closing
under the weight of my own breath.

Caelum Astrōrum

Austin Hinkel / poetry in Latin

Caelum astrōrum
Facimur ex simili -
Semper fuimus

translation / **Sky of Stars**

Sky of stars
We are made of the same (thing) -
We have always been

ما أعلمه!

Abdul Majeed Al Hashmi / poetry in Arabic

بي من الألم ما يستحقُّ الكتابة...
 وبي من الجراح ما يتغنى بالصمت...
 لستُ أعلم كم من العمر سيمضي وأنا أنتظرك...
 وكم من الأحلام سأصنعُ بدمي وأنا أفتقدك...
 وكم من الأفراح سأخزنها لك في ذاكرتي لعلها تُسعدني...
 ها هو الحب يبتعدُ منّا...
 لا أذكر كم من الأفراح سبقتهُ...
 ولا أعلم كم من الأتراح ستليه...

ما أعلمه!
 الحب إذا كان صادقاً...
 يستطيع الأعمى أن يراه...
 ويسهلُ على الأطرش أن يسمعه...
 ويستطيع الأخرس أن يتغنى به...
 ويسهلُ على الأعرج أن يركض على خطاه.

ما أعلمه!
 بفقدان الحب...
 بعض الأشخاص تبقى ذاكرتهم في قلوبنا
 ولكن ليس لهم مكان في حياتنا

ما أعلمه!
 اني وحيدٌ وحزينٌ بدون رؤية ابتسامتك...
 فهل تفتقدني كما افتقدك؟

translation / **What I know!**

I have pain that deserves to be written
And, I have got some wounds that sing with silence
I don't know how long I have to wait for you
And how many dreams I'll have to fabricate with my blood while miss-
ing you
And how many joys I'll keep in my memory that might make me happy
Here is love running from us
I don't remember how many joys that came before it
And I don't know how many more sorrows that will come after it

What I know!
If love is true...
A blind man could see it
And the deaf could hear it
And the mute could sing it
And the lame could run to it

What I know!
When Love is lost
Some people stay in our heart
But, have no place in our life.

What I know!
I am alone and sad without seeing your smile
Do you miss me as much as I miss you?

Nineteen

Samantha La Mar / poetry

I laugh at the white-wisp couch
upon the entrance of a public bathroom.

My electricity went off this morning
but *thank God* I can take a shit
somewhere that I can also nap.

We are here and others have been
and we all will be
somewhere else in due time someone else

with lights that don't go out and, oh yeah,
did I tell you I made that chicken noodle soup
my mom sent in case of emergency?

I laugh.

I got ready in the dark.
So my hair looks like wet—I forgot my umbrella—
spaghetti noodles piled on top of a plate
I'll call my head.

What Fell in the Country on a Starry Night

Luke Fegenbush / poetry

Dad and I trekked together
to the tangled backwood sprawl,
trading night-bleaching fluorescents
for starshine and the moon's liquid glow.

Our jean hems thickening with burs,
we tramped through the wildbriar's thorny
pierce, where last year's deadleaves
feed the loamy underfoot crunch,
over hills where the grass grows wild,
paintbrush tops, past the ghostly gnarled
trunks and twisted roots.

And suddenly, a field:
windy waving sweep, wide whispering sea;
every atom of it azured and darkened and sacred.
The crickets chorus with solemn nightbirds
to the sky, dark blue and spangled infinitely.
I follow my father's finger to a fading streak
of stardust in the glowing chasm. His silence,
a prayer as old as night.

Holler List

Nellie Greer / poetry

I sensed it sink and squirm
prying prematurely to get loose.
In kindergarten I cried
refusing to sharpen my pencils
afraid of their disappearance
like my grandmother's flesh
beneath sheets clinging to flakes of skin
I wished to salvage—proof of existence.

I apprehended it position head down
pushing out my first poem,
a sneaking suspicion
of drowning in the quaint pond with lilies
and ice half way crossed.
Pencil smudge rest upon a coffee table
framed—despite the prophecy of being too dark
for a young girl.

I have heartily consumed
crumbs of cascading mountain tops,
forget-me-nots, haunting hums of church hymns,
two red seeds sprouting one stalk,
blue jeans littered with asphalt,
drunken fathers, screeching mothers,
the stand-up piano with ivory-striped keys,
the cassette caught on Tammy Wynette,
severed locks from a first hair cut
pressed between bible pages,

scales my grandmother shed,
ash of the cigarette that suffocated her,
A whistling woman and a crowing hen.

I have lived a life of labor
thrusting them stillborn onto the page.

contributors

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Thank you all for a splendid experience — you have made the work more than worth it. It has been my pleasure. “And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.”

Kelsie Potter

co-editor in chief / junior

english & integrated strategic communication, theatre minor

My interests include comic books, poetry, television shows, and Romantic poets.

Sarah Wagner

layout & design manager / junior

architecture & english

Interested in building spaces, literary and physical.

Mariana Carvalho

assistant layout designer / junior

architecture, art studio minor

My passion and dedication for architecture stems from the idea that architecture can affect people, their quality of life, their emotions, and their ability to see the world differently.

Mary Kate Elliott

poetry manager / senior

english

i woke up like this [flawless] i woke up like this
mad cause i'm so fresh fresher than you
fresher than you [flawless]

William Montgomery

poetry editor / senior

economics

I like good beer, The Beatles, and minimalist poetry. My shoes are usually dirty.

Jonathan Sarfin

poetry editor / junior

english

APENETRATINGANALYSISBalugaEgalitarianismSnifflesProcrastinationRazzleberryFermentationSpanishSpanishSPANISHyellow-belliedobsolescenceentrapmentHORRIDINSUFFLATIONconglobationOssuary !!!Ossuary !!!Futility!!ANENCHANTMENTpenguin-monstercadavermaladaptiveconsummationbloatedseragliodisasterdisaster!ANUNCOMFORTABLYPENETRATINGANALYSIS

Ashley Dunomes

poetry editor / junior

english (imaginative writing) & arts administration

I love all things created by Shonda Rhimes. I tend to write stories that involve unnecessary character deaths. I periodically get into debates with people over social justice issues. Also, I sing embarrassingly loud in the shower.

Nathan R. Petrie

poetry editor & social media manager / sophomore

english (imaginative writing)

I tell stories, read comics, and find geocaches. 116.

Jon Fish

prose manager / sophomore

political science & history

On a scale of 1 to 10, one being “meninists” and ten being my cat, being on staff at *Shale* is a solid 8.

Elizabeth Angell

prose editor / junior

equine science, english minor

I’m a bit of a writer and a bit of collector. I love reading and writing fantasy, queer romance, and mythological pieces. Good cups of tea and homemade pastries steal my heart and soul. “Make good art.” - Neil Gaiman

Kimber Gray

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[sunflower emoji]

Erica Stapleton

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english & international studies, folklore & mythology minor

This is my first year with *Shale Literary Journal*. I love to read, write, and travel. And I LOVE movies. I drink a lot of tea. Oh, and *Game of Thrones*. I adore it.

Karly Walker

prose editor / freshman

english

My likes include reading, writing, swimming, watching UK basketball, sleeping, procrastinating, and going out with friends! I love working for *Shale* and getting to read all the wonderful prose pieces everybody sends in!

Ashley Worley

art manager / junior

art education & art studio

I make stuff. I’m emotionally attached to all of my paintbrushes. I spend entirely too much time looking at baby animal pictures online. Breakfast is my favorite time of the day.

Amy Hoagland

art editor / junior

art studio, psychology minor

Strong coffee, good music, art, dogs, dark chocolate, Sour Patch Kids, the outdoors, and traveling give my life purpose.

Shannon Newberry

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architecture

Shannon is a connoisseur of aged root beer and fine Zebra Cakes. She is often found prancing about in the woods with unicorns.

Cassie Payne

art editor / sophomore

art studio, english minor

Slytherin. Enjoys sushi, poetry, trees, video games, watercolor, and dogs. Sometimes she time travels.

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Interested in anything artsy. Hobbies: writing, playing clarinet, drawing, makeup, reading about abnormal psychology.

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Currently struggling between staying a Kentucky Girl and becoming a Swiss Miss at the University of Geneva. Even in Switzerland, still loving baking, laughing, being outside, and editing for *Shale*!

Yvonne Johnson

german editor / sophomore

english & computer science

Some of my interests include studying languages, writing, doing triathlons, watching anime, and exploring social psychology.

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