

PHOENIX

A JOURNAL OF ART, POETRY AND FICTION

CLARK COLLEGE

❖2013❖

EDITORS' STATEMENT

So you've embarked on your journey with the *Phoenix*, and now the adventure begins. The editors and staff have spent eight months putting this publication together. During this time, we found inspiration in the following words by Aristotle: "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." This quote has been the root of our entire process: from the submission criteria, to the editing, to the award selection, and to the graphic design.

You might have noticed, the cover is a clash of the fantastical and the ordinary and was truly a collaborative effort. Take a closer look and you'll be able to find representations of the stories, poems, and artwork included within. These selections reflect the work of 118 Clark students from a variety of disciplines.

We hope you'll be excited about the changes in this year's edition, as we've introduced some new features into the publication. For the first time, we had the pleasure of including an interview. We believe this interview with acclaimed author Charles D'Ambrosio sets a great precedent for future issues of the *Phoenix*. We also presented awards for the poem and short story that best embody our submission criteria.

Put your textbooks and study guides aside for now, and take a break from the standard academia. Stretch out your mind's creative side as you pursue the artistic and literary treasures found within these pages.

Sincerely,
The Phoenix Editors

ABOUT THE PHOENIX

Phoenix is published annually by the Associated Students of Clark College (ASCC) in collaboration with the Art and English departments at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington. All contributors, editors, and volunteers are current Clark College students. Anyone enrolled in 100 level courses or above in the year of the publication is eligible to submit work for possible inclusion. The ASCC finances the publication solely for the benefit of Clark College students, and therefore, *Phoenix* is unavailable for resale.

Submissions are chosen through a blind process by selection committees composed of students nominated by their discipline-respective instructors in Art and English. Selections are chosen for inclusion based on criteria of quality, craftsmanship, originality. After the respective selection committees forward their selections to *Phoenix* staff, the editors then further refine selections to present breadth and balance within our allocated number of pages. Additional selections not published in the magazine due to space constraints, an archive of past *Phoenix* issues in PDF format, plus all information for submitting works, the current staff, and contact information are posted at www.clarkphoenix.com.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FICTION

NO REGRETS ✿ *Bridget Eleson*

APPLES FOR ORANGES ✿ *Jamie Spady*

ALABASTER ✿ *Lindsey Parker*

COLD ✿ *Elisha Feliciano*

LOST AND FOUND ✿ *Megan Finn*

THIEF ✿ *Kesha Fisher*

THE END OF SOMETHING ✿ *Chad M. Wilson*

POETRY

AUTUMN LEAF ✿ *Mark Hover*

CATHARINE -WHEEL LIVE ✿ *Michelle Gilbert*

GEMSTONES AND SERPENT BONES ✿ *Erica Vollmer*

ADYTUM ✿ *Meghanne Shipe*

A POSTCARD TO MY EX ✿ *Renee Soasey*

MY CHILD ✿ *Rosie Weathers-Govan*

UNREGRETFUL WEEKEND ✿ *Michael Hair*

WHAT LIES IN THE DARK ✿ *Lindsay Martinez*

FEATURES

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES D'AMBROSIO

ART CONTRIBUTORS' STATEMENTS

LITERATURE CONTRIBUTORS' STATEMENTS



Clockwork ✿ Graphite on paper
NATHAN JENKINS



City Art Rising ☼ Photo Collage
JEFF MERRITT



Full Metal Jacket ☼ Ceramics Mixed Media
ELIZABETH ALEXANDER



Looking Through the Cracks ☼ Photo Montage
SAVANA CATRON



Two Vessels ☼ Ceramic
SHIRLEY MORGAN



The Encumbered Turtle of the North ☼ Ceramic
JOSH ENGEL





Sundial Clock ☼ Digital Photo
YURIY KUPRIKOV



Broccoli Dream ☼ Ceramic
ENA SHIPMAN



Clay in Motion ☼ Ceramic
CARMAN PUTNAM



Stairs ✻ Digital Photo
BETH-ANN STEMPIEN

Concept by Jamie Wright and Illustration by E. Paul Pelouquin

Autumn Leaf

Mark Hover

I watched a mottled leaf drift down,
heralding the cold stark winter,
when colors fade to muted tones.

What a restless time.

I lost a good friend today.
A hushed windswept vista
affords a clear sight of past and present.
I face a journey with one less companion
who is no longer rooted in this vast tundra.

Today, I miss so deeply.
He is gone, and the dearth of him pales my life.
Gritty and abrasive, intensely caring, connecting—
tending his vibrant blooms in solitude.

I lost a good friend today.
The falling of a mottled autumn leaf reminds me
of the snips of time we will have no more,
of simple conversations that— now—will have no voice,
of fond recollections bound within me.

I lost a good friend today.
He is gone and I ache.

My face is damp with fall drizzle mixed with tears.
And I remember, when the winter solstice whispers farewell,
Spring will warm the path I trod.
And I remember, the autumn tree will once again
display its soothing shade.
And I remember,
I will forever count him as my good friend.





Waiting for the Storm ☼ Digital Photo
IRINA BURCHAK



Beth Ann ☼ Digital Photo
NICK HERBER



Industrial Box ☼ Ceramic
LAUREN DWYER



Jacob ☼ Digital Photo
ANNI BECKER

NO REGRETS

BRIDGET ELESON



Yellowed sweat rolls down the side of Rodney’s face. The rocking chair he’s been sitting in all morning groans as he leans back. He reaches for his gin sitting on the iron table next to the door and pats the shotgun lying across his lap. The whiney twang of heartbreak, accompanied by the crackle and grit of a Victrola phonograph, drift through the torn screen door. Rodney hums along with Patsy Cline’s “Leavin’ on Your Mind” and fiddles with the loose threads of his imported silk robe. Rose colored lilies and tiny green embroidered leaves travel the length of his broad shoulders. Through cat-eye sunglasses, he watches the chickens mingle and cluck in the dirt between rusted out cars. The pinkish foundation he applied earlier runs down into stubble. Rodney takes another sip and soaks in the uncommonly warm day.

Rapping heavily on the window behind him, he shouts, “Ma! Ma-ah? Ma!”

The sounds of bulky orthopedics announce his mother’s approach. The screen door opens out onto the peeling blue of the porch. A small withered face

crowned with gray hair rolled up in rags pokes out from the dark of the house. Agnes squints at her son.

“Well, what is it?” she demands.

Rodney shakes his empty glass in her direction.

“Get it yourself, dammit! It’s not even two in the afternoon yet, what the hell is wrong with you?” Agnes frowns and clucks her tongue in disgust.

“Come on, Ma, please?” Rodney begs, waving the glass in Agnes’ face and flashing a practiced pout in her direction. She yanks the empty vessel out of his hands.

“At this rate you’ll be passed out by three. You’re bleeding me dry, boy!” Agnes grumbles and disappears into the shadows of the house, wheezing all the way into the kitchen. Moments later, she reappears and pushes the screen open with her ample bottom.

Purring, Rodney thanks his mother. “You’re a peach, Ma.”

“Don’t you flatter me. Pour your own damn drinks.” Agnes slams a half empty bottle of gin and a smudged glass down onto the table. She pauses at the door to



catch her breath and glares at him. Agnes eyes his tattered robe and scuffed purple pumps. She shakes her head. Rodney pours a drink for himself and looks up at his mother. He returns her silence and notices the worn cotton of her house dress bulging in all the wrong places. Her slumped and squat body has slowly melted into her hideously heavy shoes over the years. She lets the screen slam behind her.

Rodney sips his gin and studies his mother's pansies. The potted plants lined up along the rail of the porch provide a stark contrast to the rust-brown backdrop of the front yard. Rodney leans the shotgun against the iron table and pries himself out of the rocking chair. His pumps clack across weathered wood as he practices walking as Edith. Rodney is far too fabulous for this sad little town. He sashays up and down the porch, pausing to pour another drink. Rodney sits back down and imagines a different life.

Hundreds of fans toss roses at Edith's feet after her nightly performances. *Bravo!* they shout, *Encore!* they plead. She wades through gentlemen admirers who flock to her dressing room. Her penthouse is filled with crystal chandeliers and lavish brocade. Edith ends each evening on her balcony gazing out over the rooftops and lights. Her breath hangs on city sounds.

Rodney sighs and finishes the last of his gin. "Have you been in my jewelry box again?" Agnes shouts from somewhere within the bowels of the house. Agnes appears in the doorway with hands stained in Bluing. She grunts in the direction of her son. Rodney is gazing at the '55 Chevy. The sedan is the

only car in the sea of metal littering the yard that works. Agnes takes it into town twice a week. Every so often, Rodney will take it for a spin. Agnes studies the Chevy's busted out back window. She frowns when her eyes fall on the crude word *faggot* scratched into the red paint of the passenger side.

"Rod! You hear me?" she raps at the wooden frame of the door. Rodney shakes his head and grabs his drink.

"What? Yes. I got into your jewelry box," Rodney answers, "Why? Did you have some sort of soiree to attend?" he snickers while dismissively waving his mother away.

"You hateful thing! At least do me a favor and put it away when you're done." The missing lower plate of Agnes' dentures encourages her lower lip to engulf

the upper counterpart. Rodney laughs and fingers the faux pearl clip-on studs clinging to his ears.

Rodney crosses his legs. The shotgun slides off his silk clad lap and lands with a heavy thud. The chickens screech as the gun discharges into the awning of the porch. Shards of wood and lead paint rain down on Rodney's head. He jumps up squealing, screeching, wildly gesticulating. Agnes clutches at her chest and nearly collapses. She looks up just in time to see her son trip over his heels. Rodney waves his arms in an attempt to catch himself. He loses his thrashing struggle with gravity and tumbles over the pansies into the dirt and chicken manure. Agnes shouts in alarm and shuffles over to the railing. Terra cotta pots, purple pansies, and Rodney lie silent in a silken heap in the dirt below.

She frowns when her eyes fall on the crude word faggot scratched into the red paint of the passenger side.



Illustration by Briana Stroh

"Good Lord, child! Are you all right down there?!" Agnes calls down at her son from the railing of the porch. Wood and paint chips crunch under her orthopedics as she backs away and trips over the shotgun. Her neck lands squarely on the edge of the iron table with a sickening crack. Agnes flops onto the dusty porch floor. She lies motionless. Dizzy, Rodney sits up and adjusts his now broken sunglasses.

He calls up from the dirt, "I'm fine Ma. I'm fine." Rolling onto his side, he pulls a purple pansy out of his hair. He pushes the broken pots away from his face and sits up again. He curses when he sees his busted heel lying in the dirt and excrement. The camellia bush that grows next to the porch steps blocks his view of Agnes. Rodney hears nothing but bees droning over spring blossoms.

"Ma?" Agnes doesn't answer him. Rodney gathers his wits and gets up off the ground. He tries again. "Ma? Ma-ah? You're scaring me."

His voice wavers as he stands, calling his mother. He tip-toes around the bush to the foot of the steps. Agnes' still body reclines across the porch.

"Mama!" Rodney screams. He trips up the stairs and shouts at his mother, "This isn't funny! Answer me!" He sobs and kneels on the edge of the top step. He smacks his mother's slack face. Rodney looks into Agnes' empty staring eyes and pleads with her to stop kidding him. He clutches her shoulders and attempts to shake her awake. Her broken neck pitches her head in an odd and unnatural direction. Bobby pins and rags are ejected from her gray hair. Rodney abandons his effort to wake her and puts his pearl dressed ear to her chest. Tears burst forth.

"Oh, Mama!" he clutches at his mother and sobs into her cotton house dress. He can smell traces of

her lavender perfume. Rodney again looks into Agnes' lined face. Her eyes seem to blankly study the jagged hole above her. His mother's lower jaw hangs open in a grotesque yawn. Rodney closes Agnes' eyes and rests his cheek against hers. He wails in horror and pain. He kisses Agnes' cheek and lowers his head. Milk colored paint chips and splinters stick to his tear soaked face as he sobs into his mother's limp shoulder. Rodney sits up and pulls his knees into his heaving chest. Rodney hugs his legs close and gently rocks back and forth.

"What do I do? Oh, God! What the hell do I do?" Alcohol clouded confusion leaves him to rock next to Agnes' lifeless body for what seems like days.

* * *

Rodney snaps awake, his body stiff from a night spent on the hard surface of the porch. Agnes lies still and rigid. The fabric of her dress is damp from dew. The clear sky of morning offers up a beaming sun. Its light sears Rodney's swollen face. His head is throbbing. He rubs the sleep and sadness from his eyes. New tears come when he looks over at his mother. Rodney sits up and wonders where to go from here. The relentless ticking of the mantel clock is still audible through the torn screen door. It reminds him of time rapidly passing him by. He studies a black wig lying on the cool planks next to the rocking chair. Rodney stands up, his knees threatening to buckle. Slow and measured steps lead him around his mother's body in the wig's direction. Splinters of awning work their way into the flesh of his bare feet. Rodney doesn't feel anything as he gingerly bends over to retrieve the wig.



Fluffing jet curls, Rodney seats himself in the rocking chair. He puts his wig on. He stares at Agnes' form draped over the shotgun. His eyes glaze over. He thinks about the questioning he will have to endure. He shivers when he thinks about the bigoted sheriff. Rodney convinces himself that he will be held responsible for this. Fresh tears come at the thought of being locked in a cell forever. The camellia bush reminds him that it's still there when it rustles in the slight breeze. Chickens fight over snails and cluck at each other in disagreement. Bees drone much louder today. The clock insists that he get a move on. Rodney heeds its ticking and stands up. He steps around his mother and enters the house.

Inside the parlor, Rodney lets his vision adjust to the dim light. He swishes and sways through the narrow hall to his room.

His rose colored walls cast the illusory look of health across Rodney's pallid face. Across from the brass bed his small closet hangs open. A

garish orange and green palm-tree-print-wiggle dress is slung over the top of the closet door. Lucite handles of a faux leather purse hang on the inside crystal knob. Rodney stands just inside his room and gazes at the empty wig stand sitting on his vanity. Strings of plastic pearls and glass crystal twinkle up at him from a mirrored jewelry tray. He pads across the floor and opens the drawer beneath them. Rodney pulls out a beige-colored girdle. He lets the tattered silk robe slide off his shoulders onto the floor.

Rodney sits at the vanity and observes himself. The girdle keeps his paunch in check. His fine tuned bra stuffing skills fill the top half of the wiggle dress perfectly. He reaches for his makeup.

Once the transformation is complete, he claps his hands. Black patent leather heels click across the floor to the foot of the bed. Rodney struggles to close the overflowing suitcase and finally latches it shut by sitting on it. Grabbing the case and Lucite handles of his purse, he heads for the hallway. Rodney scans his rose colored room one last time before closing the door. Heels clack loudly toward the kitchen.

Reaching for the coffee can positioned on top of the icebox, Rodney extends a silk stocking clad leg behind him for balance. He leans against the stove and opens the lid. He pulls out Agnes' savings. She never did

trust banks. Rodney opens his purse and drops the roll inside and makes his way into the front parlor. With the front door still open, Agnes' body is visible through the screen.

There's something that needs to happen right now, but he's not sure what it is exactly. A rotary phone sits on a side table next to the sofa. Rodney dials "0".

"Operator, how may I direct your call?" answers a young female voice.

"Uh, yes. There's been an accident. My mother is dead." Rodney stutters.

There's hesitation on the other end. "Pardon me, sir? Your mother is dead?"

"Ma'am." He corrects her.

"Who am I speaking with?" Her confusion tells Rodney to aim an octave higher. He clears his throat.

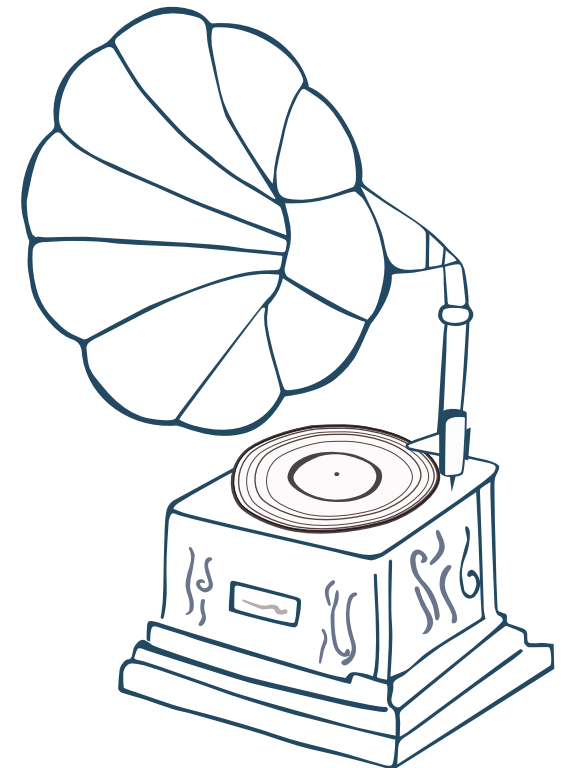
"Edith. You're speaking with Edith. Listen; just send someone out here, would you? 192, Pringle Road." He drops the receiver and walks across the parlor floor toward the record player.

Rodney sifts through the stack of vinyl and celluloid. At last, he finds what he's looking for and puts it on. The needle catches and he turns the volume knob up as far as it will go. Crackled bursts of orchestral music fill the room. Rodney passes the phone and puts the receiver back in its cradle. He picks up his suitcase just as a thick French accent belts "No, No regrets, no, I will have no regrets. . ." Rodney kicks the screen door open. He puts his suitcases down next to the steps and approaches the Camilla bush. Strings and horns waft behind him. "All the things that went wrong..." the vocals croon at his back as he picks a handful of cream colored blossoms. Rodney places the flowers in Agnes' cold hand. He leans forward and kisses her forehead.

Tearing up, he asks his mother to forgive him.

"For at last I have learned to be strong," Rodney croaks along and stands up. He gathers his things and slowly trudges across the yard to the sedan. Riding gloves trace hateful scratches in the faded paint. He hurriedly circles the Chevy to the driver's side. The interior is sweltering. Rodney rolls down the windows and retrieves the keys from the glove box. The rear view mirror reflects an empty rocking chair, the creamy blooms of camellia and Agnes. Choking down a lump of hurt, Rodney adjusts the looking glass.

Edith starts the engine. She looks into the rear view mirror and inspects the streams of black running down her face. In a cracked and teetering voice, she sings along, "No, no regrets, no I will have no regrets. For the grief doesn't last. It is gone." Edith guns it and gravel flies as she speeds away from the house. The orchestra is drowned out and the vocals fade away. Edith continues to sing, "I've forgotten the past." She looks into the mirror one last time as the sun-bleached red sedan turns onto the pavement. Edith pushes her black patent toe to the floor. The driveway is obscured by clouds of dust, gravel and brambles.





Our Dying Game ✿ Digital Photo
RYAN KELIPIO



No Place Like Home ✿ Digital Photo
IRINA BURCHAK



Overgrown ✿ Digital Photo
RAY COX



CATHARINE-WHEEL LIVE

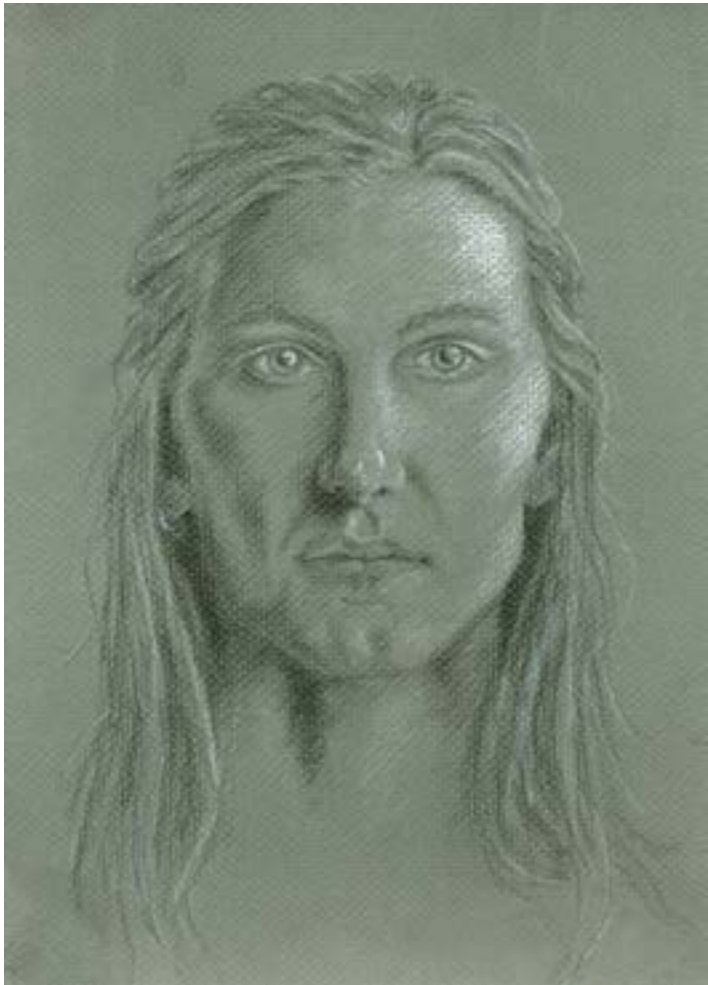
Michelle Gilbert

Wheels within wheels
of
Wheels within pinwheels
of
Pinwheels within even greater wheels.
A never-ending loop
In world's fun, miserable sport
Where the sky is green and
The green is sickly and
Where the grass is blue and
The blue is spiteful, and
Where bigotry stems from valid
Ripostes.
Honor gestures made by I
For I
Honoring I before all
For I.
A never-ending loop
In world's fun, trickster sport
Where the sand is water and
The water is stringy and
Where the water is sand and
The sand is lawless, and
Where sustenance achieves from
Neither.

"Drop and Drag Ink" artwork by Nadia Martinez



Conflict and Choice ☼ Mixed Media on Bristol
TROY SCOTT



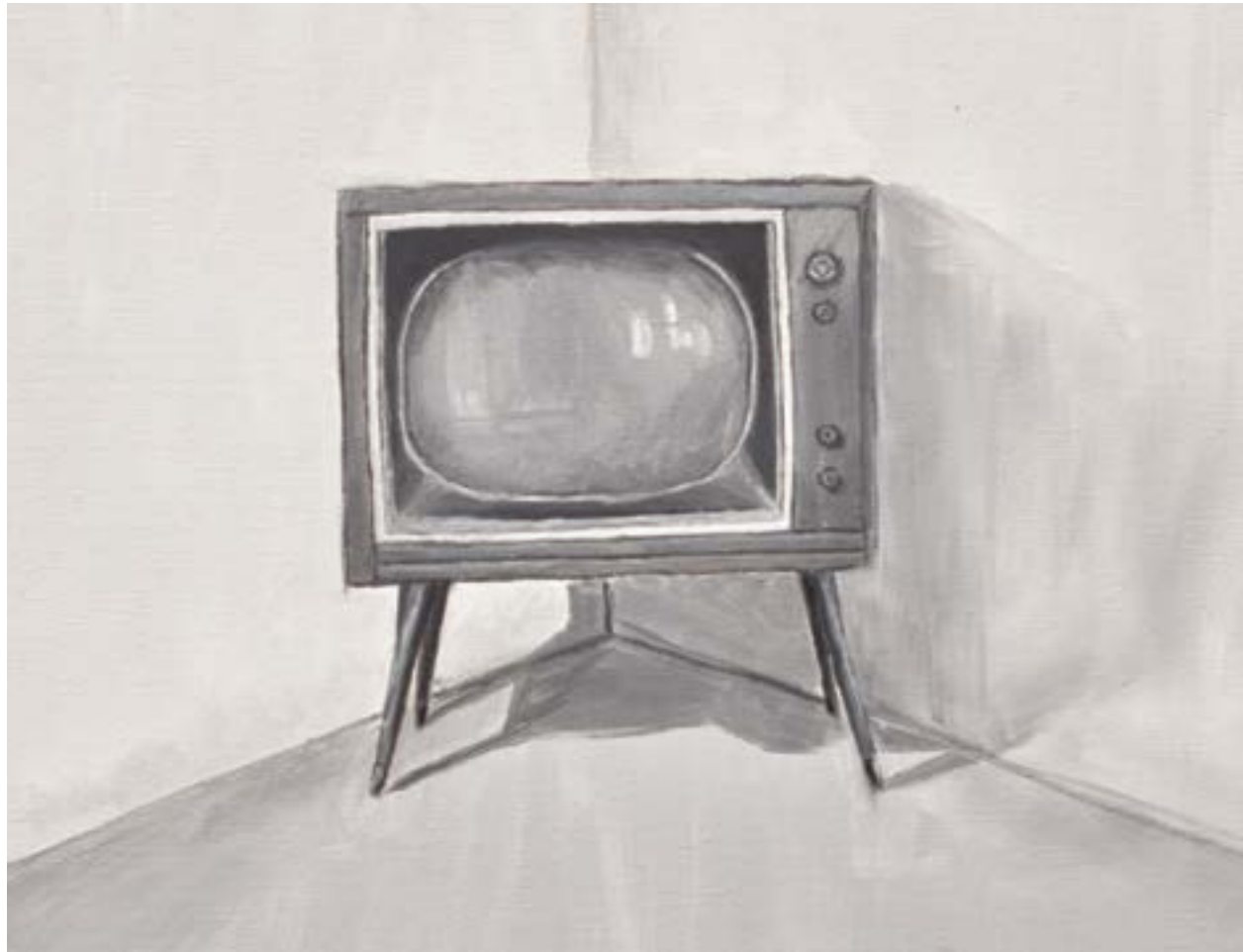
Self-Portrait ✿ Prismacolor on Paper
ANNA STAUFFER



Ev'oil'lution ✿ Styrofoam and Wire
MARJIE RADER

Krystal's Heart ✿ Silver Gelatin Print
NICK HERBER





Rerun ☼ Oil on Canvas
KALLISTA LEVESQUE



Wasted ☼ Pastels on Paper
DEREK ST MARY-TRYON



Clothesline ☼ Digital Photo
TARA OMNES



Zanahoria y Ojo ☼ Ceramic
JENNIFER JANE RODRIQUEZ



Psyche Trinitas ☼ Oil on Canvas
LILY YE



Prisim Set for Four ☼ Ceramic
RACHEL BOYNTON



The Red Cat ☼ Acrylic on Canvas
IGOR SHEVCHENKO



Camera and Flashlight ☼ Digital Photo
SAMANTHA MARTIN



Pepper ✿ Ceramic
NATALIE SKLYAROVA



Psychedelic Candle Vases ✿ Ceramic
NICOLE DUHAMEL AMUNDSON



Dragon Fish ✿ Batik on Cotton
JESSE COON



Woman Walking ✿ Chalk on Paper
ALEX BEAVIN



The Eye of Deception ✿ Graphite on Paper
MADELINE KUSCH



Self-Portrait ✿ Mixed Media on Paper
SAMANTHA MARTIN

Apples for Oranges

Jamie Spady

Pasha had never seen oranges look so beautiful. He splayed his palm over his belly button and twisted his fingers into the stained cotton of his kurta. As Pasha pressed his cracked lips together, he dragged his nails from one dip of his hip to the other. It hurt, but that skin hurt was nothing compared to the hurt that gnawed a pit into his stomach.

He tilted his chin up as he peered around elbows and waists, trying to keep the fruit stall in his sights as the people of the marketplace moved around him. No one gave him more notice than a stray glance or a nudge to get out of their way. Among the big and many buildings in Kovina, boys with dirty faces didn't get paid much attention. Street boys, boys born to mothers who wanted daughters or boys who no longer had anyone to call mama, were as common to the city as bugs to water.

Pasha lifted his hand and rubbed his thin, unsure fingers into his dark hair. He weaved through the activities of the bustling market. Scents filled his nose. The spice and grease of cooked food combined

with the manure of horses made for an awful stench in the heat of the climbing sun. Pasha had spent all hours of the morning begging for a stranger's kindness but had received nothing for it. It would do him no good to beg when the heat of the day had settled over Kovina and tested everyone's patience. People were not generous when they sweated.

To beg in the afternoon would give him nothing, and to beg at dusk or night would only invite the attention of older street boys who thieved anyone. If Pasha didn't eat soon he wouldn't eat at all. He couldn't wait for a new morning to fill his belly.

It had been days since Pasha had last eaten and even longer since he'd last bitten into an orange. They were his people's pride and staple, but Pasha barely remembered their taste. He knew the color, the smell, and the weight of the fruit in his palm, but it was difficult for him to recall the tang of its juice.

He pressed the tip of his tongue to the back of his teeth and swallowed what little spit had gathered in his mouth as he drew closer to the stall. The soreness

of his parched throat didn't match the ache in his belly. He thought of water, cool and smooth, but the orange seemed the greater prize. Pasha knew that were he to snatch anything that day it would have been best to take bread, maize, or nuts, but he couldn't resist the comfort that the orange promised.

With his green eyes pinned on the back of the fruit merchant, Pasha eased towards the stall and reached for one of the oranges. His fingers shook as he imagined the bumpy texture of the skin, but before he could curl his fingers around the fruit and yank it from its careful arrangement, the sound of iron stayed his hand. A pause overcame the area. Tongues and feet stilled.

A group of soldiers, with a red symbol imprinted on their breastplate, made the crowds in their path disperse. An itch flared along Pasha's ribs when his eyes locked onto that symbol. Everyone within Kovina had learned the Cornelian's cross. It was made of four red points, three of which flared out like a flower, while the bottom spiked sharp as a dagger. The Cornelians engraved their symbol on their jewelry and painted it on the windows and doors of buildings they had claimed as their own. They also stitched their cross onto their flags, a bicolor of red and gold that replaced Kovina's native blue and yellow.

Pasha was too little to remember a time when the Cornelian's cross, the Cornelian's flag, and the Cornelian's men didn't smother the streets and fields. Only the dead and the dying remembered the time when Kovina hadn't been part of the empire. Pasha only knew Kovina's true flag because he listened to the stories of old women and men with their eyes clouded from all the seasons they had seen. They insisted that Kovina had once called Cornelius "friend" instead of "leader."

Pasha returned his hand to his side. His fingers twitched with want for the orange but the risk of being caught by the Cornelians outweighed his hunger. To be caught a thief by his own people would earn him only a bruise and a scolding. But to be caught a thief by Cornelians? Pasha didn't know what the Cornelians did with thieves, only that they went away to be punished and never returned to the streets after.

He turned from the approaching group of soldiers and ran. Pasha didn't know what the Cornelians came to the market for, whether it was only for a patrol or for an arrest, but he didn't want to stay and see which unfolded. The longer he called Kovina's streets home and home the more he understood her most important lesson – only the brave and the foolish sought to have their curiosities satisfied.

* * *

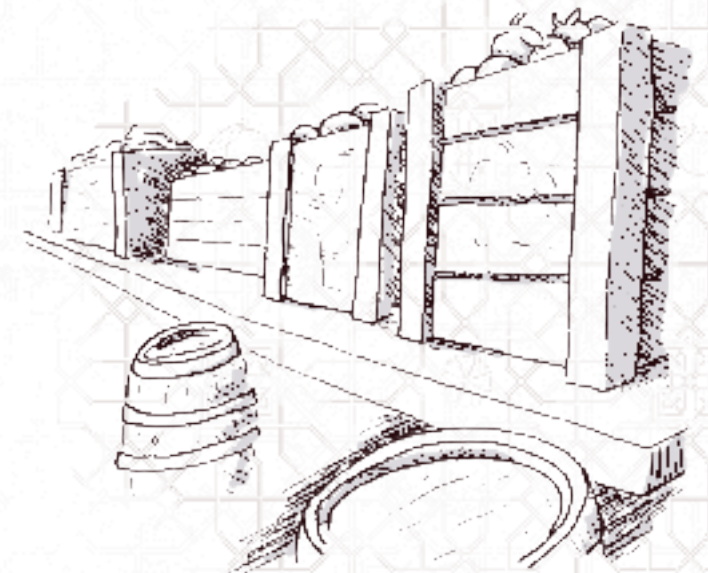


Illustration by Luke Acevedo

The alleys were quieter and cooler than the streets, darkened by drying laundry that crisscrossed from one window to its neighbor. Pasha walked slow and tilted his head skyward as he looked to the clothing that flew above him. There was no red to be found within this part of Kovina. It was one of the oldest neighborhoods.

Pasha dug his fingers into the fabric of his shirt and sought the beat of his heart. The rapid thrum in his veins was gone and the sweat on his brow had dried. He tried not to think of the soldiers, the marketplace, or the heavy hole that ate at his stomach. A breeze stirred and a blanket fluttered sideways to break the shade of the alleyway. Pasha stopped walking. The patches of clothes above him reminded him of a different time and a different home.

If Pasha squinted his eyes and thought hard enough he could almost trick himself into thinking the shirts were leaves and the height of the buildings were the boughs of old fruit trees. And if he took a deep enough breath he could make himself believe he smelled the citrus of the grove. Fresh and ripe. He opened his eyes. The shadow of the blanket fell upon his face

and blocked out the sun. The buildings were buildings and the laundry only laundry again. But the smell of oranges remained. No trick of memory or imagination. Pasha's stomach tightened and he followed the scent. With each step the smell grew stronger, until he turned a corner and discovered its source.

Wooden crates of oranges filled the alleyway and a tall boy stood towards the entrance guarding them. The smell of citrus stung Pasha's nose. As he walked closer to the mouth of the alleyway, he saw the boy wasn't much of a boy. At first look Pasha had thought him four or five springs older, but seeing the cut of his jaw made Pasha think differently. He had to have seen at least nineteen springs. His eyes widened when he saw the orange scarf tied around the boy's neck.

"A crime, isn't it?" Pasha asked the orange boy. His voice spurred attention. The orange boy tilted his ear and eyes in Pasha's direction. "To be a whore?" "It is." He smiled the dull smile that all orange boys gave. There wasn't any teeth to it. The movement was all an upward twitch at both corners of the mouth. "But there is no crime in selling oranges, yeah?"

Pasha had thought orange boys were stupid doing such a dangerous job, at least dangerous when one did their work with Cornelians, but in that moment he understood how awfully clever they went about it. The Cornelians forbade the sell and purchase of skin, so the whores didn't sell skin. They sold oranges. But their oranges were not sold in the marketplace. Their oranges were bought in darkened alleyways, open windows, and the thresholds of inviting doorways.

"My name is Matteo." He undraped himself from the wall and took a step towards Pasha. Without thinking, Pasha started taking backward steps and didn't stop until Matteo held up his hands to show

them empty. Pasha wasn't so quick to give up his own name. He stared up and noticed they shared eyes of a similar shade of green. Pasha glanced from Matteo's eyes to the barrels of oranges that surrounded them.

He thought he could snatch an orange or two and get away with it. Matteo didn't look like he would give chase or take offense. Pasha had watched street boys steal coin and fruit from orange boys. The orange boys did not usually fight back. Why would they? They didn't own what they sold or keep all the coin they earned. The fruit, the scarves they wore, the alleys they waited in, and the houses they used all belonged to a woman. She would care if Pasha stole anything from Matteo.

Pasha knew there was risk in stealing from Matteo just as there had been risk in stealing in front of Cornelians. He wasn't ready to chance it yet. He flexed his fingers, forced his palm and the pads of his thumb against his thigh.

"You're hungry." Matteo didn't even make it a question. That single word, hungry, was enough to draw Pasha's gaze away from the oranges and back to Matteo's face.

"No," he said. But the word didn't mean anything coming from Pasha's mouth. Not when hunger painted every inch of him. The strained expression he wore, the sharp jut of bone in his wrists and elbows, and the foggiess of his eyes. Pasha's mouth could lie but the rest of him couldn't.

"Go on and steal an orange if you want," Matteo said. His lips curled into an honest smile. It had just a hint of white. "But if you'd come with me you can fill your belly fully for a whole day."

"Why?" Pasha asked. His voice carried his wariness and concern. "Where are you going?"

"You ask many questions," Matteo called over his shoulder. "She won't like that."

"Who is she?" The promise of food without the risks that came with stealing had him following the orange boy. And the possibility of getting more food than just a little orange had him hurrying.

* * *

Matteo said the woman's name was Donna. Pasha knew that wasn't her real name because no mother would name her daughter that. The Cornelians named their statues Holy Lord and Lady in their songs, and even the Cornelian's Lady could be called a Donna. It was only a Lulish word that meant woman. But in some parts of Kovina it was attached a special meaning. Women lived on every street, but only a handful were known as Donna by their neighbors. Donnas didn't follow the Cornelian impositions. They traded in the work that the people of Kovina had always

done, never covered their hair, and worshipped as the Lulu always had, recognizing only one mother and no father. The orange boys worked for Donnas.

Pasha didn't know why Matteo brought him to the Donna's home. He couldn't see himself asking her for food. She had no reason to give it to him. But Matteo promised him that if he simply met the Donna he would be fed a whole meal of real food. Maize, bread, nuts, meat, and oranges too. Pasha had agreed to it only after Matteo had sworn on his mother's honor three times that he wasn't lying.

He smiled the dull smile that all orange boys gave. There wasn't any teeth to it.



The Donna's home didn't look like much from the outside. It was made of the same sand colored stone and white tile that most of Kovina's buildings used. The windows were tightly latched with wooden shutters and the roof was a terrace hidden from the street's view by bright green and yellow coverings. It looked the same as all the other houses on the street. But the inside was very different.

Inside was all shine. The floors were lined with thick rugs stitched out of patterns so complicated that they made Pasha's head spin. There were painted vases and other objects that looked easily breakable sitting on the little tables that lined the hallway. Pasha didn't know what they were for. He imagined that they held water or food, but he was too short to peek down the necks of the vases to see if they were full or empty inside.

Matteo kept a hand on Pasha's shoulder to keep him from wandering. He told Pasha not to ask any questions as he led him into a room that was plusher than the hallway. There were more rugs, more vases, and lots of places to sit down in the room. But Matteo didn't let him sit. His hand stayed on Pasha.

The Donna sat behind a wooden desk that hosted numerous leather-bound books and piles of parchment spread before her. Both numbers

and letters were scratched in neat little columns. A lit smoking pipe was balanced on a glass tray that lingered towards the edge of the desk. Matteo didn't say anything as the Donna looked up at him. Pasha didn't say anything either. He kept his mouth closed and hoped the next time he parted his lips it would be to chew on something.

The Donna spared Pasha a single glance before she said he was too young. Her eyes were a rich brown, but the smoke that cloyed the room faded the color. Her teeth clicked against the pipe as she placed it to her lips. While she looked at Pasha she spoke only to Matteo. "So young. Too much a boy to be an orange boy."

Pasha had spent most of his life invisible. People only paid mind to street boys when they were made to pay attention to them. But the attention he got from the Donna made his throat dry up with something different from thirst.

He had heard rumors about some Donnas. From the whispers he expected her to be ugly, mean, and bloody. Pasha hadn't seen the Donna smile yet, but there didn't seem to be anything cruel to her. She just looked bored and pretty. Her limbs were long and she had skin dark as the earth after rain. Only the lines around her mouth and eyes bespoke her age. The Donna's hair was spun into a thick braid and pinned to the top of her head. He wondered if, just like his mama, the Donna hadn't cut a single strand of her hair since the birth of her first child. And she certainly wasn't bloody. There wasn't a single speck of red any-

where in her home. When Pasha looked at her he was reminded of his old house and home.

The Donna lowered the pipe from her mouth, letting out a breath of smoke as her eyes went to his arms. She let out a ts sound from the tip of her tongue. "And he's so skinny. Chores need someone who can hold more energy. What did you bring him here for?"

"Boys grow quickly when you feed them." There was a gentleness to Matteo's voice, as if he only meant to remind the Donna of something she already knew.

"Remember how quickly I grew when you fed me? It would be nice to have another set of hands around the house, no matter how small."

The Donna held up her hand to silence Matteo, but her eyes stayed on Pasha. She set the pipe back down on its tray and with her newly freed hand she pointed her tapered nails towards Pasha. "Who are you?"

"Pasha. My mama was Lulu."

"Was," the Donna repeated. "What was your mother's work?"

"Oranges." Pasha forced the word from his mouth. "But not like you."

His mama had been proud. She wouldn't have sold anything to Cornelians, not even their own sins.

The Donna lost her boredom. There was a twinkle in her eyes. "And who tends to your mother's oranges now?"

It wasn't a fair question for her to ask when all three of them knew the answer. Pasha looked to Matteo and saw sympathy reflected in his eyes. The weight of Matteo's hand was comforting rather than imposing, but Matteo didn't look back at him. Pasha noticed how the brown of Matteo's skin matched his own. Perhaps this small humiliation was meant to be the price Pasha would pay to eat.

"Cornelians," Pasha answered.

If he had been born to bleed, the orange grove might have been his, but he had been born a boy, and his mother had never called him anything but Lulu. Pasha inherited nothing. The Cornelians didn't like Lulu laws or traditions, but Cornelians obeyed them when it got them things they wanted. They had wanted his mother's orange grove.

"What a sorry little boy," the Donna said. "And why aren't you working the grove?"

Pasha shook his head, his fingers curling into little fists at his side. The thought of working for a

Cornelian was unbearable. "I won't work for thieves."

"You can't live off charity for much longer. One day you'll be too tall for it. Work for me. I have need for someone to help with the cleaning and cooking."


Matteo made a relieved sound in the same moment Pasha's face twisted with refusal. "No."

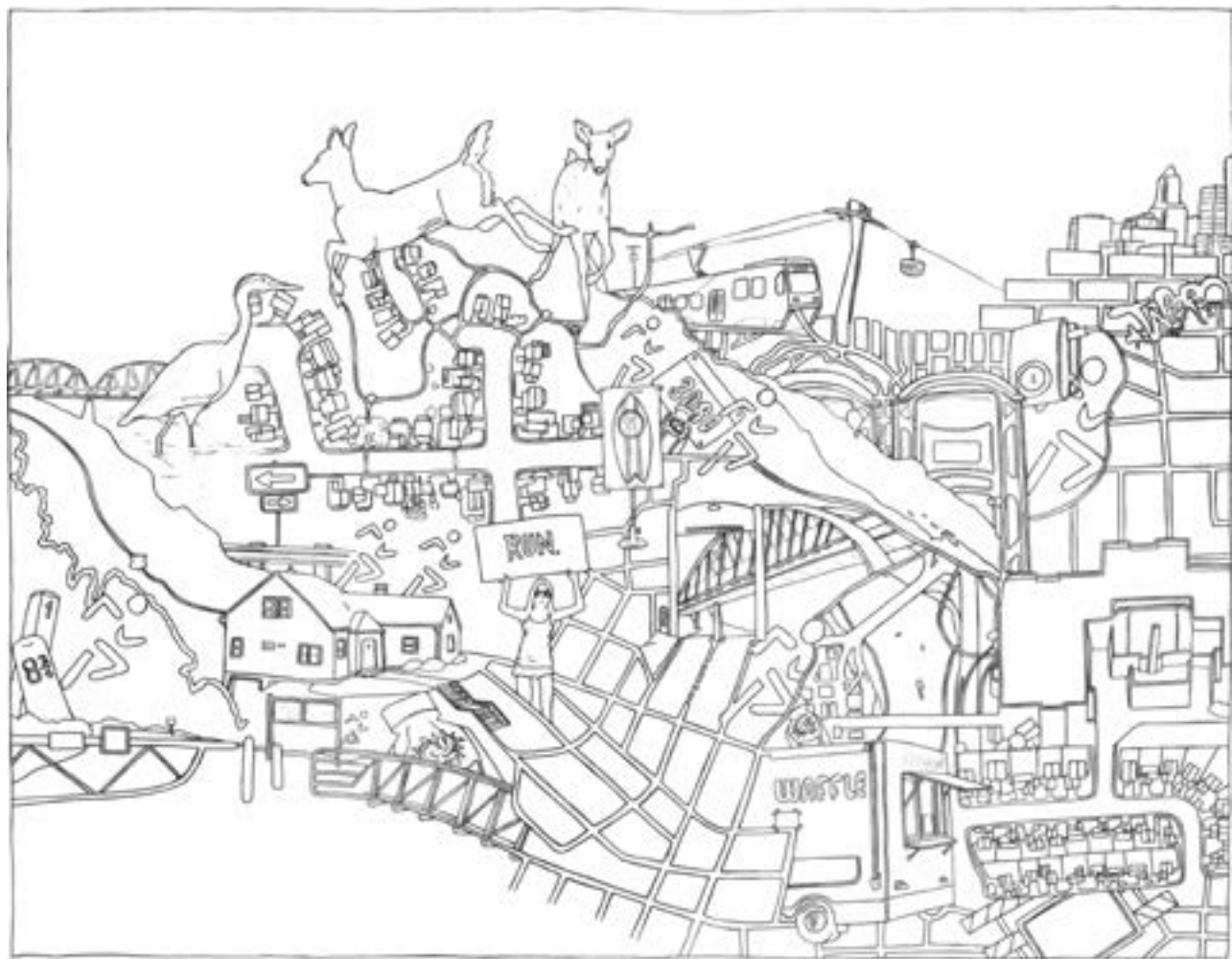
"And what will you do for work when you need it? Learn the tricks of a ruffian?" The Donna asked as she picked up a speckled quill and dipped it into an inkwell of dark blue. "Rely on luck's favor to give you a job at one of the workshops? The Cornelian's damned taxes would take most of that pay."

The Donna was quiet for a few moments before she interrupted the silence she had cast over the room. "Or you could betray your mother and call yourself Cornelian. Give up your tongue and become one of their priests, spend your life praising their false mother."

For so long Pasha's thoughts had been devoted to figuring out his next meal. He hadn't given serious thought to his larger future. Pasha knew how to steal, but he didn't know if he could be a real thief. And he had promised himself to never return to the orange grove. There was nothing there for him. He uncurled his fingers and let his hands relax at his side.

The Donna asked him again to work for her.

Pasha said yes. 



Run ✂ Ink on Bristol
LUKE ACEVEDO



Hero ✂ Ink on Bristol
ORLANDO JUAREZ-VITELA



Electrified Anger ☼ Silver Gelatin Print
DANIEL POWELL



Beauty and the Beast ☼ Silver Gelatin Prints
EVELYN ESPINOSA



Time Travel ✿ Oil on Wood Panel
LILY YE

Mr. Waits ✿ Digital Illustration
LUKE ACEVEDO



After Dark ✿ Digital Photo
JEREMY CRANE



Painted Dishes ✿ Ceramic
MARY SIMKO



Rhodo with Leaves ✿ Sterling Silver and Rhodochrosite
ENA SHIPMAN



Charm Bracelet ✿ Sterling Silver and Peridot
ROBIN HOMINIUK



Self-portrait ☼ Oil on Canvas
JASMINE ESCALANTE



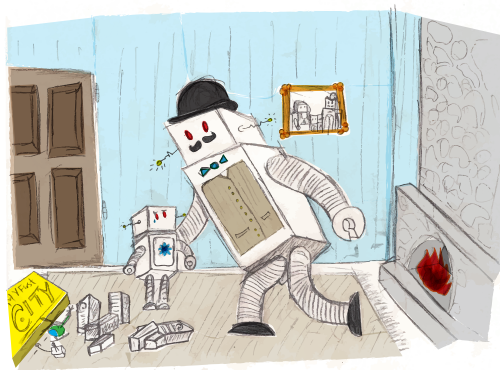
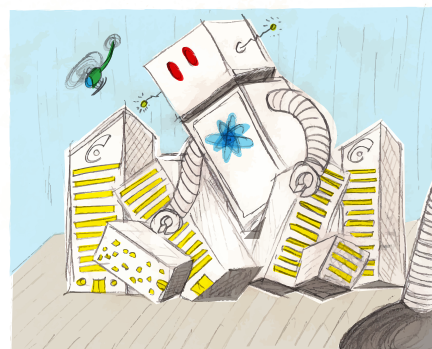
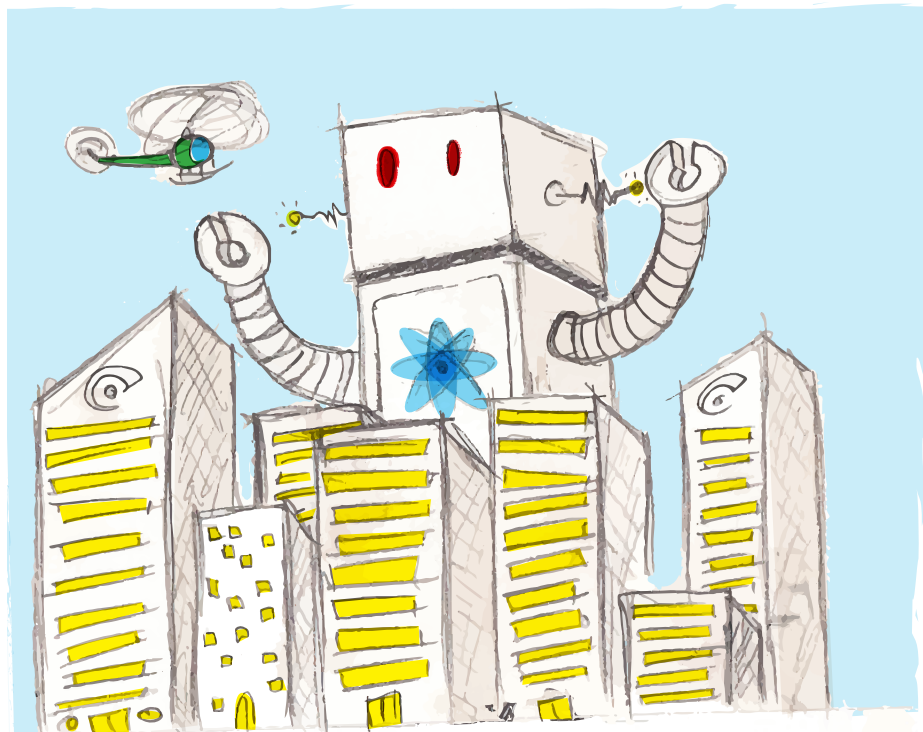
Ecstasy ☼ Acrylic on Board
AUSTIN FIELDS



Remembrance ☼ Digital Illustration
MEGAN LORENZ



Pink ☼ Oil on Canvas
REBECCA CRAIG



Robo ✿ Digital Illustration
BRADLEY YORK



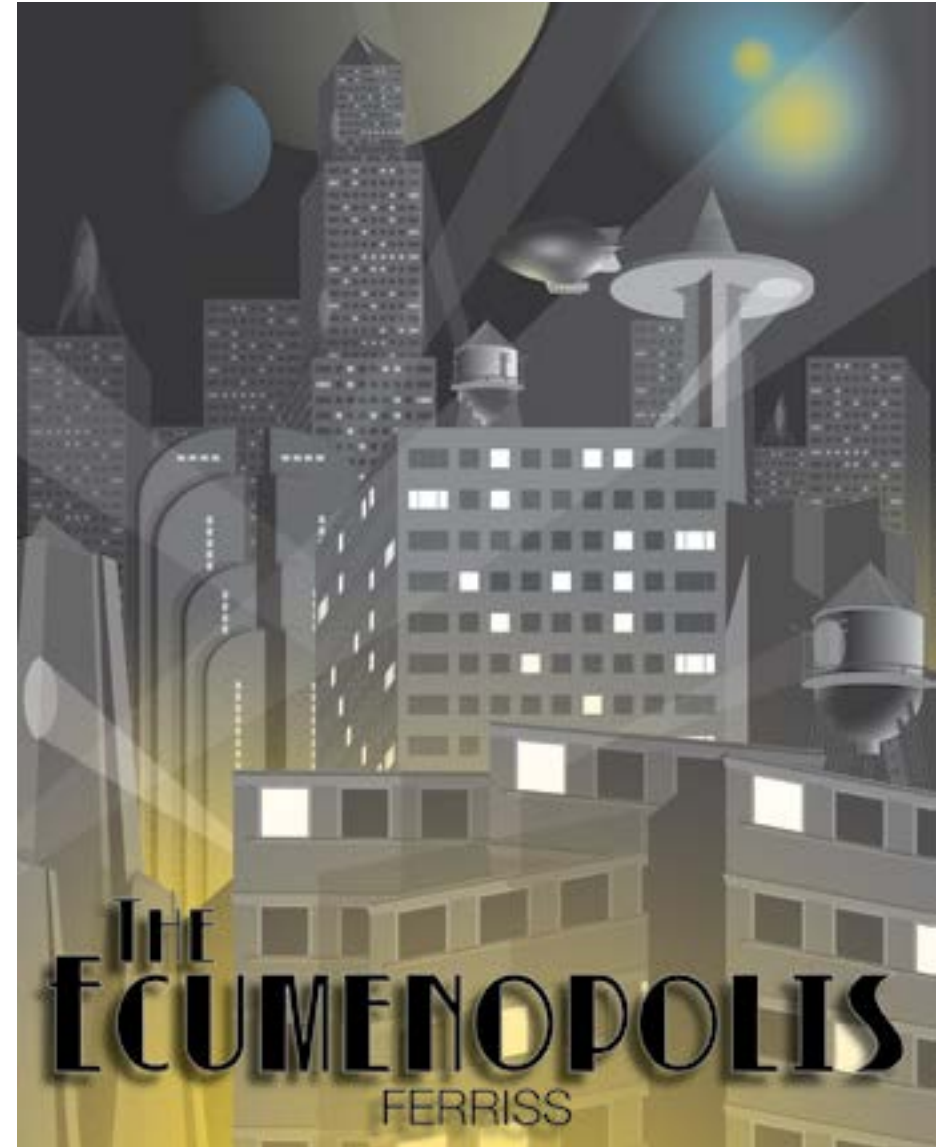
Million Shiny Boxes ✿ Watercolor and Ink on Paper
MACEY RICHERT



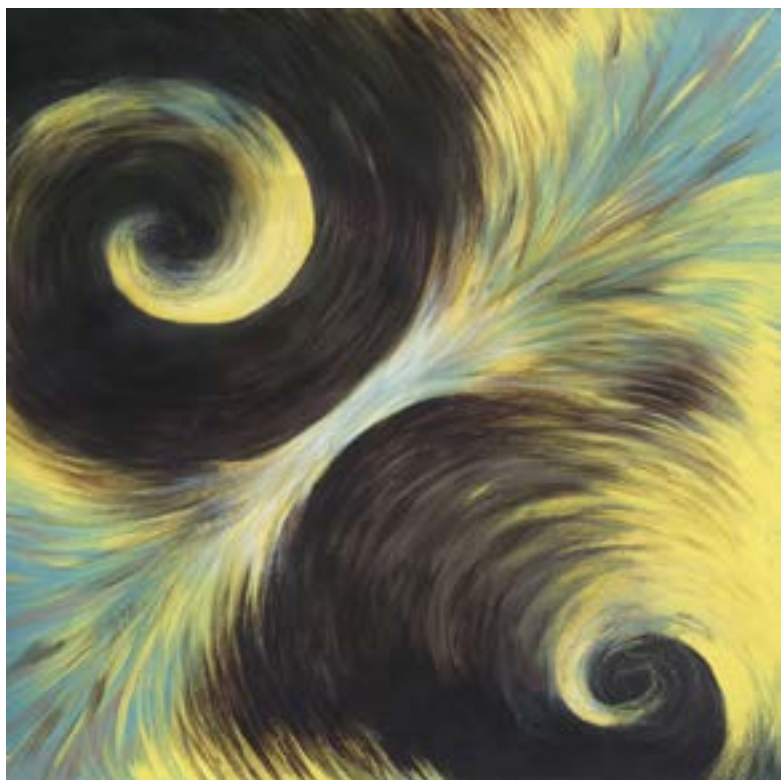
Asa Necklace ✿ Silver, Copper and Mixed Media
KATERINA MCCANN



A Study of a Girl in Pearls #4 ✿ Freshwater Pearls, Silver and Velvet
JACOB HALLENBECK



The Ferris Hub ✿ Digital Illustration
WILLIAM RUSHING



Eternal Time ☼ Acrylic on Bristol
LAUREN DWYER



From the Series *Water In Motion* ☼ Digital Photo
AZURE CALDER



Underwater Dance ☼ Photo
GEORGIA HENDERSON



Barnaby ☼ Ceramic
LYNNSEY BENSON

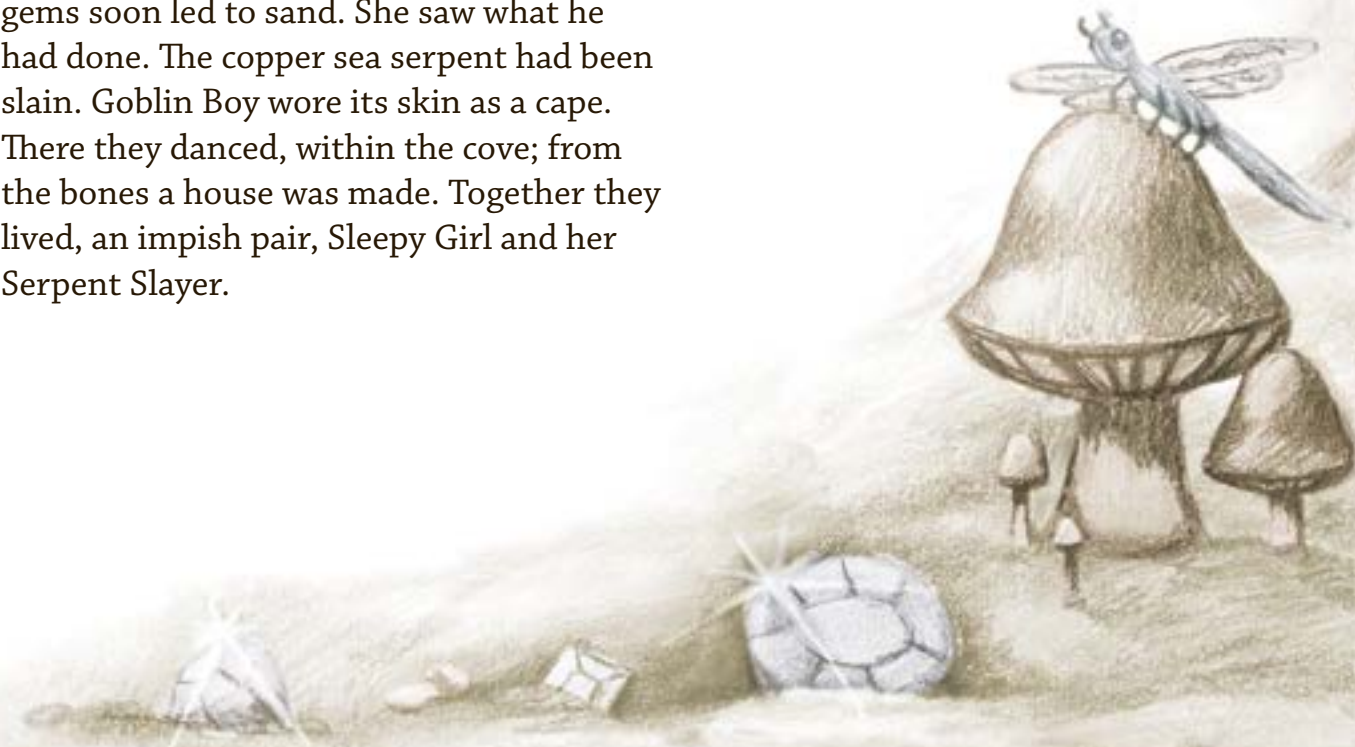


Illustration by Ashleigh Cummings

Gemstones and Serpent Bones

Erica Vollmer

Sleepy Girl catnapped with a blanket of moths in a purring forest-dragonflies whirring, songbirds and their lullabies, the moss breathing life. The boy who woke her, he was heading to shore. She hunted him, hiding from tree to tree. He had a goblin's smirk; she wanted to taste his mischief. From his pouch spilled a trail of diamonds, moonstones, and sapphires. The path of gems soon led to sand. She saw what he had done. The copper sea serpent had been slain. Goblin Boy wore its skin as a cape. There they danced, within the cove; from the bones a house was made. Together they lived, an impish pair, Sleepy Girl and her Serpent Slayer.





Slain Dragon, Aftermath ✿ Acrylic on Canvas
SCOTT PEDERSON



Pears and Plum ✿ Oil on Canvas
CATE CROSS



Green and Brown Serving Set ✿ Ceramic
NICOLE DUHAMEL AMUNDSON

Alabaster

Lindsey Parker

“Here, now,” Naphele grunted, stopping to a full halt in front of Pan with nothing but displeasure in her voice. “Look what you’ve done to the place.”

Naphele was a staggering six foot ten, so tall that even Pan had to crane his neck to look up at her, and he wasn’t a short guy. She was built like a siege engine and hit just as hard. She had the tell-tale mineral formations growing along her arms and neck. Well, she did have troll blood.

Pan lifted his head from resting on the palm of his hand and turned towards her. “I’m your commanding officer, Naphele. I’m allowed to sit here and be messy and miserable if I bloody well please.”

“Psht,” Naphele said, muttering something in a language he had never learned. She turned and galumphed towards the exit of Pan’s office. But at the tail end of her rant, he caught the hitch of her words that sounded something awfully like, “This would have never happened before.”

“Naphele,” he warned.

He glanced down at his desk looking for his missing pen. He saw nothing unusual until he spotted the drawer with the lock that was yet again open. Without looking away from the troll in front of him, he closed it shut.

Long ago, before he had been promoted, this office had been kept in pristine condition. Silken red curtains hung from the windows, bookshelves lined every square inch of wall, and papers were folded and properly sorted. Crystals of every different shape and size floated on the tables.

“Oh, cut your crap,” Naphele chastised, hand at rest on the doorknob. His attempts at intimidation had failed. “Stop wallowing around like a sick pup.”

“What did you just call me?” But she had already hammered the door shut. “Damn troll.”

He found himself hesitating, tapping his fingers on his desk. Then, he catapulted his second to last bottle of rich blood wine towards the door with all the strength his left arm could muster. He missed by a foot, but the bottle still shattered against the alabaster, raining a red flood down on all the books nearby. It felt oddly satisfying. Such a waste of an expensive wine, but still.

Pan sighed. He blew his lank hair out of his face. He pinched his brow and paced the length and breadth of his alabaster office. His hand found the rough line of skin along his throat where someone had once almost managed to separate his head from his shoulders. He had healed in a matter of hours, but it had been a very messy business. He’d also lost several fingers over the past few decades, but they had grown back. A little stiff, he would admit, a little lighter than the rest of his dark skin, but altogether whole.

When Pan next returned to his desk, the locked drawer was open again. It was the drawer on the left and second from the bottom. It was tiny compared to the others. Long and thin. It was supposed to be permanently locked. The key had been lost some time ago, probably his doing, tossed aside to be forgotten, hidden under papers that were months overdue. But as hard as

he tried, more often than not he would return to find the drawer open.

He would close it, try to reopen it, and find it locked once more.

The contents had stayed the same.

Old bits of sealing wax, letter openers, and a pair of richly crafted leather gloves, made for the dainty hands of his former commander. They had a thick layer of dust on them. Dust and the speckling of old blood.

Pan honestly couldn’t say why he’d kept them. They belonged to Ambrose, his former commander. He’d tried, once or twice, to get rid of them, but something always stopped him. A hard clenching in his gut and a tightening of his throat that persisted even years later.

That drawer put his mind ill at ease.

He could go months without thinking about it. Push it closed when it was open and push it out of his mind.

He didn’t need such worries. He had plenty enough to worry over on his own. Naphele could shove her scowls and her disapproval on her ugly face up her sanctimonious goddamn ass for all Pan cared.

If he wanted to destroy his hard-earned work, he could. He would.

If only his head would stop blistering, but his drink only seemed to make it worse.

He couldn’t focus. He swore he looked up through the window to find that hours had passed.

“You’re drinking again,” she said, in a soft voice. Her voice.

“And?” Pan answered automatically. He rubbed the sand from his eyes, wobbling between amused and perplexed. “That is nothing new.”

She was ridiculing him again. Wasn’t he getting a bit old for this?

“An incredible amount.” She paused, a catch in her throat. “Much more than you used to.”

Pan didn’t look up, didn’t react. But something in the tone of her voice caught his ear. There was something silhouetted in front of his desk. Something familiar, something moving.

He pushed back from his desk in fright, searching with his hands for any sort of blade or object he could use. She’d come to kill him. Finally.

“Commander,” he stopped. Swallowed that word. She wasn’t his commander anymore. Ambrose had been caught, and tried, and sentenced. Guilty on all counts.

“You,” Pan tried again, caught, frozen, blinded by something behind her that he could not see, “are dead. I saw it myself.” But when he turned to flee, there she was. Between him and the door. On the other side of the room.

She tugged open the collar of her coat, revealing a fist-sized hole in her chest where her heart should have been, the alabaster pillars behind her peeping through it. “Four javelins to the chest does that to you.”

Ambrose was wearing her old gloves. The gloves in his desk. Frayed edges but relatively well taken care of. She’d been wearing them when she’d been—when . . .

“I told you your greed would bring this to you,” she said. Pan’s eyes were searching rapidly around her face, looking for the details he knew should be there, her freckles and her pointed chin. He found them quickly enough, but it was impossible. He had played his role in her trial.

And her conviction.



Illustration by Marjorie Rader

Arms folded over his chest, he had once very long ago watched her glare at him from between cell bars, hands gripping at the steel hard enough for them to let out shrill screams.

Pan found himself being grabbed by the collar, yanked forward, and pulled close enough to her face to count the eyelashes clustered together and sticking to her cheek.

“What,” she lingered. “Oh, child. Did you really think you had killed me?” She raised her free hand to strike him. “That I wouldn’t come back to reclaim what was taken?”

“I didn’t kill you!” Pan said, driving his hands up, hoping that she would stay the hand that she could use to throw him against the nearest wall. “I didn’t kill you, I swear.”

“You were there when they passed the sentence.” He couldn’t see her lips move. His office had suddenly fallen dark. “You might as well have done it yourself.”

He struggled against the grip that lifted him off the ground. She had never gotten angry with him. Not ever. It wasn’t in her temper.

“After all I did,” Ambrose yelled. “You watched them kill me.” Pan could barely hear her over the thundering in his ears.

He caught just a sliver of light at the hard edges of her face. A malignant glint in her eyes that he had never seen before. The closer they were, the more of it he could see. She had a stretched grin on a too-stretched face. Sharpened teeth carved upwards in a horrid grin. But she was also too gray. Cracks and crumbling skin crawled over what little of her he could see. Like she was made of stone.

“You aren’t real,” Pan tried. A passing thought

occurred to him. That blasted drawer. And the gloves, too. “How long have you been tormenting me?”

Her clawed grip certainly felt real. But she wasn’t. She was just another one of his nightmares.

Ambrose seemed to beam, the dreadful cracks in that stone face breaking apart at the movement. “Look at you. Learning so quickly.”

“I tried to steal you, didn’t I? I didn’t learn so quick from that, did I?”

Ambrose looked at him oddly. The tilt of her head would have snapped the neck of a living person. “I never wanted you, Pan. It was you that wanted.”

He twisted his grip around, tried to get more air into his lungs. “That’s not true, is it?”

“You sell people, Pan,” his nightmare muttered. “For cheap wine and station and what you thought made me happy.”

Pan paused. That voice wasn’t hers. The sound of his own name caught rough on his ears. The face was all wrong. It was far too perfect, lacking scars and freckles and the lines of age that she must have worried over. The smile stretched too far on either side of her lips. Her teeth were sharpened and beastly. Grinning.

She had never grinned. Smiled, maybe. Just a little. “You never call me Pan,” he replied. “You never did. You always hated that pet-name.”

The only features in her face that hadn’t crumbled away were two bright holes in the dark glamor. Ambrose’s eyes moved, searching his face. But she wouldn’t be able to find what she searched for, even if she looked into his mind. He didn’t respond to anything anymore.

Something hit him in the gut, something squished,

Ambrose looked at him oddly. The tilt of her head would have snapped the neck of a living person.

and Pan felt himself falling sideways. The alabaster ceiling slid from his vision and his eyes went dark.

“Pan.”

He moved, jolted. Stiff. Cold. The heat from the afternoon broil was completely gone from the sand.

“You ass, get up.” Pan hissed. That crow-screech could be no one but Naphele. “Damn you, what did you even do to the place?”

“Hrm, what? What’s happened?” he blinked only to have the light launch straight through his head, right into the part of his brain that still remembered the drink from last night. “Oh, it’s too early.”

“Oh, now look what you’ve done,” Naphele said. Pan felt a hand on his chest, brushing aside something damp and crusty. “Cut yourself into bits, you did.”

This was the same woman who was tough as nails and preferred to hit him where it hurt. Now, there she was, examining his wounds. “M’fine,” Pan said, flinching.

Pan was hauled to his feet, Naphele only needing one spare hand to drag his entire body weight upright. He remembered the ruined remains of his papers, scattered about his office. Pan’s mind clung to it, that thought, but the rest of what had happened seemed to be empty. His memory wasn’t gone; it was voided.

It took him a few moments to realize that not only was that not the case, but his office was in goddamn pristine condition. “Naphele, did you clean?”

The curtains were hanging straight on shiny silver rods. His papers had been piled into three neat towers on his desk. There was a damn apple sitting on his desk.

He didn’t have time to peruse the room more because Naphele had pushed a compress at him to stop his wound. Naphele pushed him towards the door. “Get.”

He couldn’t find the will to protest. Naphele pushed

him out without any mercy, and after the first second of resistance, his office disappeared from his sight. That shiny red apple was still perched on top of his papers like it had won a game of king of the mountain.

Pan and Naphele were gone, but the curtains fluttered in what little breeze came through the balcony doors. Something like a gentle hush, a whisper that skittered across the floor. A murmur of something here, a bashful word there, and something crossed the room and came to a stop in front of Pan’s desk.

It could have been a trick of light, or maybe even one of the heat’s cruel games on a wandering traveler.

But suddenly there was something standing in the middle of the vacated room, as if Ambrose had been there the whole time. Gently, faintly, her skin a pale grey; flickering in and out like she wasn’t really there one moment, but solid again the next.

Ambrose appraised her handiwork and beamed. She picked up the apple with stony fingers and bit down on one side. One of the windows creaked open, pushed by an unnatural flurry.

The apple was back on the papers, missing a chunk.

Pan’s office was empty again. 

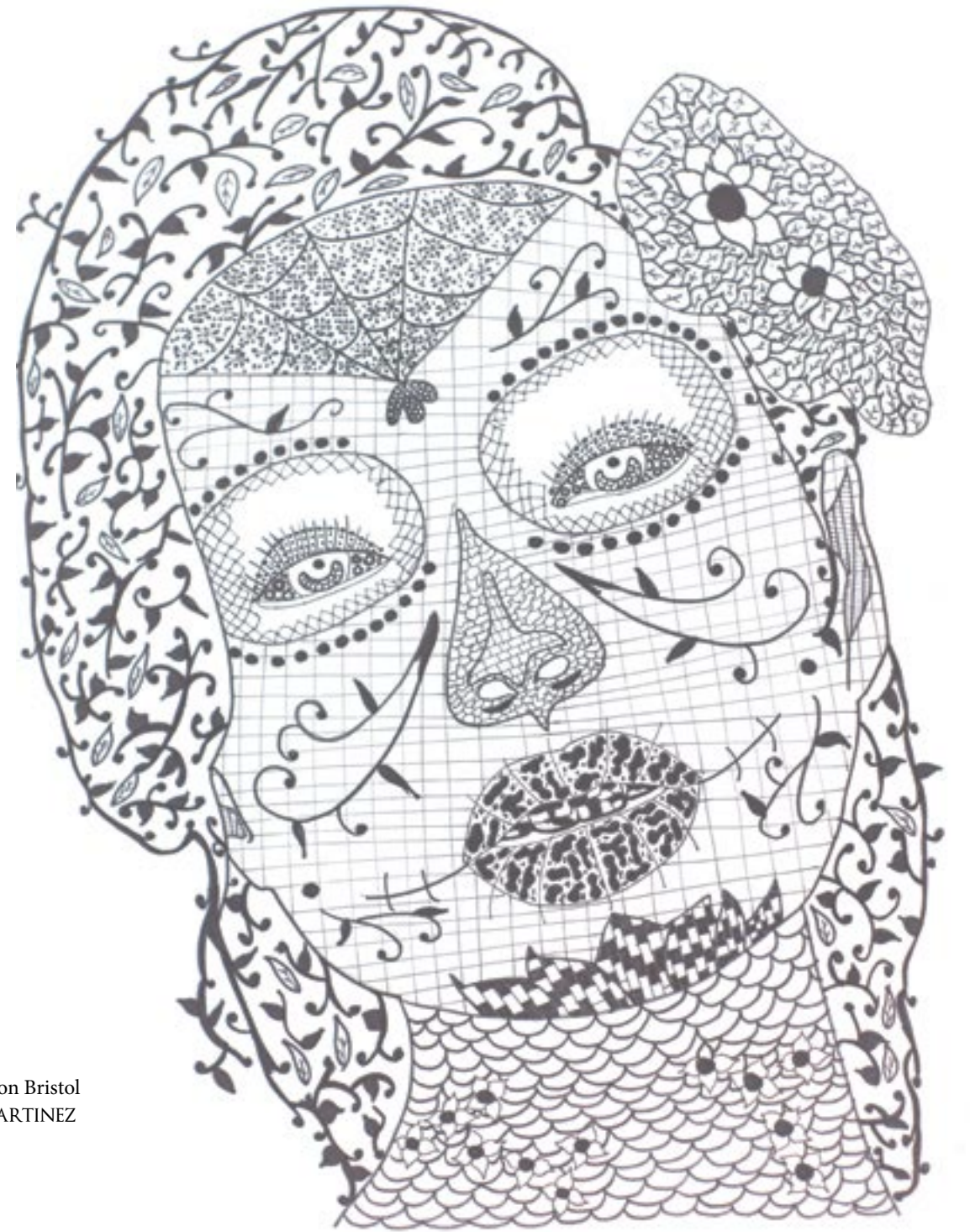




Dark Soul ✿ Digital Photo
CHRIS MASONER



Black Vine Dresser ✿ Steel
KATERINA MCCANN



Lola ✿ Ink on Bristol
NADIA MARTINEZ

Adytum

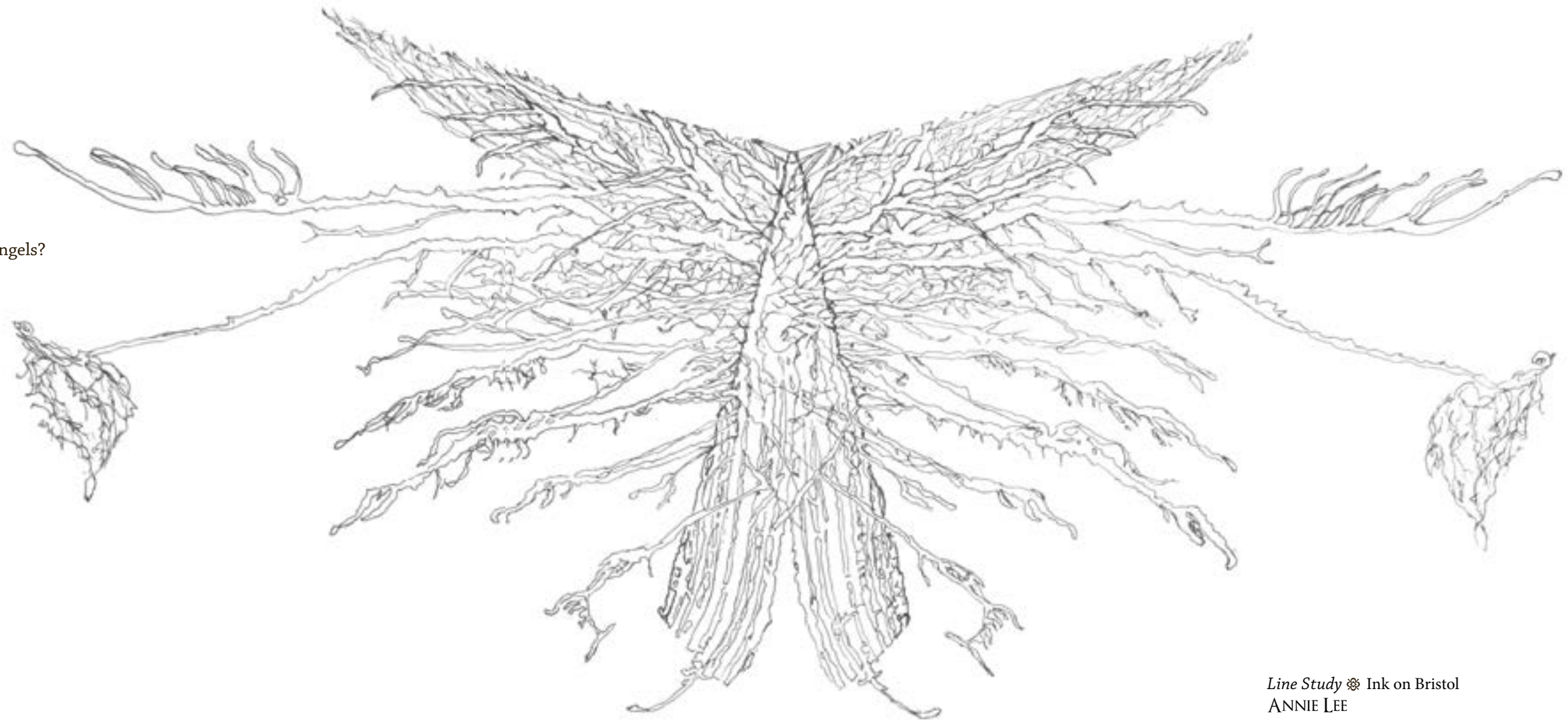
Meghanne Shipe

Taking off
Unbinding myself from the unchangeable pull
The sounds are soft
As the light that descends has no rule
Farewell.

Am I escaping?
How can this beauty exist if I am not on my deadly way to remain amongst angels?
Enthralled by the entrancement
Of the purest white the iris ever did feast upon
At first one would not believe such a white did exist
At first, rubbing the disbelief from their eyes with their fists
It is a world in and of its own, entirely
How unfair-
For it be only birds who relish this other earth day by day
I dream of living as a bird

The flatlands of this realm are pertinent to the Red Sea
By only the Worthy Traveler,
Could it simply be parted in one lithe motion to preserve its flawless beauty
That is, only if, it must be parted

Once more I have come across the largest of godly veils
However this grace, is sunbathing in its brothering veil of light
As elevation grows, the more relaxed this white barren burgeons
A place so magnificent, begetting only pure white and untouchable softness
On and on in endless sights
I dream of living as a bird



Line Study ☼ Ink on Bristol
ANNIE LEE



Heart of San Francisco ❖ Digital Photo
JONATHAN HARDY



Into the Fog ❖ Digital Photo
JONATHAN HARDY



Imperfection ❖ Digital Photo
IRINA BURCHAK



Young Brazilian ✿ Digital Photo
CHRIS PACANINS

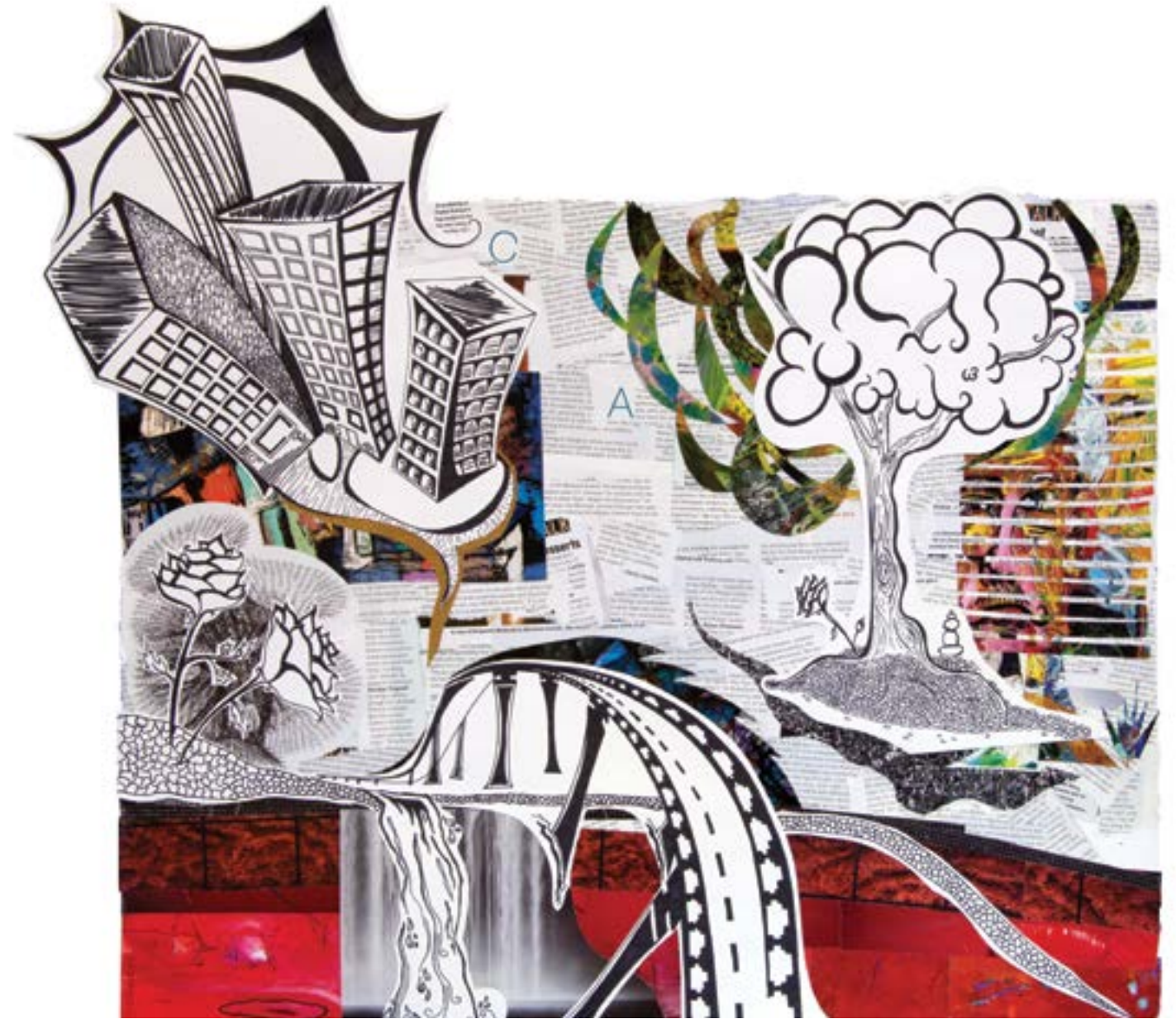


Monkey See ✿ Digital Photos
ALEXANDRA VELYCHKO





Re: assimilation ☼ Digital Illustration
PATRICK MICHAEL CASEY



Layers ☼ Mixed Media Collage
DANIELLE LICHTY



Wishes ✿ Japanese Papers and Glass Jars
RIZALETTE MONTEVERDE



Yes, No, Maybe ✿ Acrylic on Bristol
GAYLA SHANAHAN



Something Good Can Work ✿ Acrylic on bristol
OLIVIA FAULCONER



Business as Usual ☼ Oil on Canvas
NOREEN COATES

Concept by John Cummins and Illustration by Leif Clausen

a postcard to my Ex

Renee Soasey

I want black boots.
No high-heeled fuck-me boots.
No thigh-high whore boots for me.

Give me combat boots.
Sturdy, sure-footed, ready boots.

I'll stomp down the street
Howling my truth
Hurling my truth
like a grenade exploding your conceptions.

No man's meal.
No man's thing.

I'll part the sea of your judgment
with one word
Ransack your righteousness
Smash your fortress into a million dusty bits

And stride away, owning all my
womanly flesh.

Watch it quiver.
Watch it bounce
and jounce and joust your eyes out.





Para la Niña ☼ Ceramic
GABRIELA RAMOS



The Fall ☼ Mixed Media on Paper
LEIF CLAUSEN



Vivre ☼ Acrylic on Canvas
ASHLEIGH CUMMINGS



The Night Prowler ✿ Graphite on Paper
ALLISON TYLER



Dead of Winter ✿ Acrylic on Canvas
ELISE CRYDER

COLD...

Elisha Feliciano

As he made his way home, Marvin looked around at the strangers treading the snowy sidewalks. All of them were bundled up in warm wool coats and hats or overly cushioned snow clothes. He saw a couple he had seen earlier walking arm in arm; the girl's purple sweater pressed against her lover's blue windbreaker, the crinkles contorting around her frame. He saw others too that he recognized. There were two friends that never seemed to be separated from each other during school now walking side by side. One was explaining some newly learned concept with rapid verbal description and hand gestures; the other was nodding, but not comprehending.

He saw Keri Sanders walking toward him. She was the girl who lit up the room. Her natural charm and effortless smile, which always led into conversation, would disarm anyone. It always disarmed Marvin, just as it did now. Her long, dark hair swayed with her small frame, each step bringing her closer to where he was.

"Marvin Harding!" she squealed. "How are you?" Those words, carried by her voice, always reached right into his heart. It had been that way since freshman year when she had walked up to him asking that same question with her brown eyes peering into his. They were seniors now.

Marvin looked at her and let the question hang. Her eyes squinted slightly and her mouth curved to the side in a perplexed manner. "What's wrong?" she asked.

Marvin shrugged, then had to remove his eyes from hers and looked down instead. Keri continued to

look at him. Then she understood. "You have to move on, Marv. It's time to let go." Her eyes continued to peer at him as his head remained down. Keri took a step closer, then gently wrapped her arms around his shoulders and pulled him in for a hug.

She told Marvin that she had to go, but would catch up with him later. He said goodbye and continued through the snowy streets.

There seemed to be a lot of people around, most from his school. He looked at each one to see how many he recognized. There were quite a few. As he continued to search the faces, there was something else he noticed. . . nobody saw him. They were all looking down or hurrying to where they needed to be. He saw a player from the team whose eyes were downcast. He saw a girl from biology. Eyes downcast. He saw a group of people he often sat next to, but they didn't glance his way. Turning, rotating, he searched every face, but nobody wanted to see. Across the street, in the middle of the road, behind him, their eyes were downcast. Everywhere! His head was spinning and a giant fist slammed against his mind. Memories of people chatting, smiling, laughing in a living room . . . of a draft interrupting . . . of snow angels.

* * *

Emma had been playing in the snow when it happened. Nobody knew she was out there; by the time anyone had realized it, events had already taken place and it was too late. His parents often hosted dinner parties in their home, inviting friends and sometimes

relatives. In an attempt to get Marvin involved, his friends were also invited. He didn't enjoy being there, but he was the Harding son and as his parents said, "It's a party, be social."

Marvin remembered feeling a draft and getting up from the dinner party, his customary spot near the food, to see where it came from. He found the backdoor open—not the one that led from the far corner of the living room, where people were laughing and carrying on, but the door that was to the left, down the hall, past the kitchen and through the cream colored dining room. He went out this sliding door, which was wide open, and discovered that Emma had snuck into the backyard. Tiny snow angels were scattered in patterns around the porch. Little footprints led from there and he followed them, calling out to his sister. "Emma!" he recalled shouting. "Emma!" There was no answer. A sudden fear swept over him.

Her tiny footprints led to the frozen swimming pool. Marvin ran until he reached the pool's edge. Then he saw what happened. Maybe she thought it looked solid and maybe she thought she would be like an ice skater or Jesus from the stories, but the ice did not hold. She fell into the pool and froze to death.

Marvin pulled her stiff, swollen corpse from the icy tomb, holding her in his arms. He rocked back and forth whispering her name. Then he screamed.

The rest was a blur of shouts to call 911, amber lights flashing, people stampeding through the house, and tears crashing down. Over thirteen months ago, a nightmare had found its way to 1809 Acre Boulevard.

* * *

Marvin ran, the threat of tears stinging his eyes, with one arm simultaneously reaching up to wipe away even the possibility of trickled hurt. The ground was layered with compact snow, so when he saw a section of clear, gray concrete it immediately caught his attention. There were fractures throughout the whole uncovered area. Excavation drills and other equipment lay nearby. Mid-run, a thought struck him—there is a crack in the earth and I want to sleep in it. He stopped. There is a crack in the earth and I want to sleep in it. Then, he was walking, arms at his sides and hands in his pockets. A tear slipped down his pale cheek. It fell through the crisp air splashing onto white pavement.

When Marvin returned home it had gotten dark. He walked throughout the house to see if his parents returned early. They hadn't. Marvin checked their room, but everything was just as they had left it. He went into his own room, removing some books that were strewn across his bed and desk, before leaving it again. Next, he went into Emma's bedroom. Stuffed animals still lined her pink comforter and multiple hand paintings covered the walls. A brush lay on a nightstand with a pink handheld mirror that had *Princess* written on the back of it. A pair of little red shoes lay at the foot of the bed. Marvin picked one of them up and held it in his hand for a moment, before putting it back down. After a few minutes, he left her bedroom and gently closed the door behind him.

Marvin walked downstairs. He lazily wandered through the living room, the hallway, the kitchen, the cream colored dining room and came to the sliding door. He opened it and stepped outside. Marvin closed his

Concept by Chris Masoner, Illustration by E. Paul Pelquin



eyes as the snow-filled wind whipped against him. Memories of that night flooded his mind yet again. When his eyes opened, he looked around at the snowy patio and realized how late it was. The sky was darkened and shadows lined the yard. He stepped back inside and turned on the patio light, before stepping out for a second time.

Marvin took a brief look around and then he lay in the snow, legs spread and arms arched outward on either side. He began to flap his arms as though he were trying to fly. Slowly, at first, then more fervently. Powder lifted into the air, but he did not. Marvin got up and looked down at his work. An angel had fallen and been stamped into the ground. That's what it looked like. The patio lights made it glow. Marvin stared at this fallen angel for some time before looking away. When he did, he saw the pool. It had been left uncovered. The water was icy and dark, wicked and beautiful.

He removed his coat, hat, gloves, shirt, boots, wool socks, pants, until only his undergarments remained. Marvin took a breath. Then, all at once, he was in the water.

* * *

The cold caused him to shiver; skin shrinking over rattling bones, pulse barely thudding, muscles rapidly tightening, loosening, and tightening again, the hair and skin of his arms being pulled up, forming

multiple tiny bumps. . . then it stopped. He cringed, not only at the physical sensation of chill itself, but at the sequence of events that were naturally to follow. The ice would kill him.

As hypothermia began to set in, he started thinking of her—the bubbly, petite five year old whose giggles were like the pure ringing of bright silver bells. He used to tell her that fairies danced to the music of her joy. That always made her giggle even more and he would lift her into his arms and dance in circles with great swirling flourishes and sweeping gestures. Her smile radiated and would burn in his heart for

days. She was always good about brushing her teeth, making sure to scrub each ivory pearl until she was sure the cavities wouldn't come. Each night she would find Marvin or their parents, smile real big with

all her teeth showing and say, "See?" Her teeth sparkled. Sparkled like the icy water that was killing him.

His hands were tingling, but only for a short time. They soon became numb. He looked down at his pale, almost bluish, appendages and knew, at that moment, that this was the end. His end. No one would see. He was shivering and his teeth were chattering together.

His thoughts then turned to that night at the dinner party, the house filled with people— some strangers, some family and friends. He couldn't remember what they were celebrating, maybe the upcoming season, but he wasn't sure. What he did remember was the draft, the cold, the sliding door, the snow... and Emma. He remembered Emma, who had become

a miniature ice sculpture, except she was real once. She was alive once. Not frozen and puffy and blue. Not dead.

Violent shivers overtook him. He began to fall asleep and didn't realize his eyes were closed until he opened them. Pain seared his retinas, icy daggers stabbing into them. Violent shivers continued to wrack his body. He couldn't see anything clearly, just foggy outlines and shadowy shapes as he floated in the water. His eyes closed again and he saw black.

* * *

In the far distance, he heard his name being called. It seemed so far, though, and so faint that he didn't think it was real at first. But then the sound got closer and louder. Much closer. His frosty eyelids peeled back with much pain and effort and fluttered multiple times like butterfly wings before he was able to see even semi-clearly.

She was standing at the edge of the pool shouting his name. "Marvin!" she shouted. "Marvin!"

Dizzily, slowly Marvin made his way to the edge of the frozen water. Then, he dragged himself out of the grave that stole his sister. He was numb and felt tiny stabbings all over his body. He lay there dripping in a puddle of frosty water. He couldn't stop shaking and hoarse whistles escaped from his throat as he tried to breathe. Somebody grabbed Marvin and helped him get to his feet.

The fog gradually cleared from his sight until the blurry figure came into focus. It was Keri Sanders who stood at the pool's edge, her brown irises brimming with tears. She looked at him, her mouth twitching

one last time before the tears flowed freely. She then wrapped her arms around his drenched body. He didn't understand at first and looked around absently, trembling and blue. She sniffled and a soft cry escaped her lips. Her arms were wrapped tightly around his torso and she didn't let go. He looked down at her. "I see you Marv. . . I see you. . ." she whispered and then began crying again.

Marvin's face contorted and the corner of his mouth twitched as grief and pain found expression. He was seen. His eyes scrunched closed until he felt the tension form around his eye sockets. His arms reached out and wrapped around Keri as he sobbed into her shoulder, the words coming in slow, tortured syllables, "I didn't. . . I didn't see her." His shoulders heaved and icy trickles of water streamed down his shivering face, falling in patterns on the snow. ❄️





The Shot ✿ Silver Gelatin Print
JOSHUA RAMIREZ

MY CHILD

Rosie Weathers-Govan

You are the descendent of kings and queens

Vision it.

Embrace it.

Dream.

From the kink of your hair, to your rich mahogany skin

All proof of your heritage that lies deep within

So dark child go forth and be proud

You are the descendants of kings and queens

Vision it.

Embrace it.

Dream.



Concept by Orlando Juarez-Vitela and Illustration by Luke Acenedo



Fiesta with a Jalapeno on the Side ✿ Ceramic
ADRIAN RIBEIRO



Mishima ✿ Ceramic
GENNETTA "JET" MOORE



Girl from the Past ✿ Acrylic on Canvas
JULIYA BOYCHENKO

LOST AND FOUND

Megan Finn

The door creaked open on neglected hinges when she finally felt clear-headed enough to enter the building. “Dad,” she started to say, but her throat was tight and she forced herself to clear it before continuing, “Dad, are you here?”

When there was no answer, April made her way slowly inside. She hadn’t been up here much, at least not before mom had died. It was a place of creaking floorboards, barely seen windows, and overly harsh lighting that she did not find at all comforting. Her mother was the one who had brought meals up when her father was so involved in his creative process that he couldn’t remember to eat regularly. Now it was left up to April. She was afraid she would end up alone if she didn’t. Contemplating that fate made her shake, and she pushed down the fear as she continued her search.

Logically, the shack couldn’t be bigger on the inside than it was on the outside, but all the junk crowded inside it somehow managed to make the building seem bigger than it was instead of smaller. There were mounds of stuff and half disassembled machines piled on tables or next to half finished sculptures her father had been building using the junk he collected. Her parents had called it “found art.” April had never been sure what to call it other than strange, but apparently other people did not share her opinion. Her father had sold a few pieces, and for a good bit of money too. It just hadn’t been enough for them to live off of.

Just when she was beginning to worry that her father wasn’t there and she had walked all the way outside for no reason, she found him. He was sprawled awkwardly

on the battered loveseat shoved into a back corner. His soft snore echoing through the still air was the only clue she had that he was there. She picked her way over to him, something that involved carefully avoiding the large junk-statue that was nearly right in front of the loveseat. Or at least she assumed it was a statue since there was a sort of structure to it.

She stopped by the loveseat and looked down at her father. Something unpleasant rolled in her gut, and she struggled against the impulse to just drop the lunchbox on his head. Here she had been worrying about him, and he was sleeping. Had he even thought about her at all today? Probably not. Everyone said she should try to understand where her father was coming from, that it was hard on him too, and he was just trying to provide for them. Easy for them to say. He worked, came home, and headed out here, to his shack.

For a few seconds she just stood there, trembling at the thought. The lunch box of leftovers slammed into the floor with far more force than was necessary. After all that effort of saving dinner for him, of bringing it all the way up here because she didn’t want to be alone in the house anymore. . . and here he was asleep. Would he even notice if she disappeared one day?

A part of her, buried deep inside, wondered if her father was doing this on purpose. Everyone said she looked like her mother. Same black hair, same eyes, and same face shape. If that was the reason her father was trying to pretend she wasn’t there anymore, she wasn’t sure what she’d do. It wasn’t like she could just stop looking like her mother after all!

Trembling, she turned around, and decided to leave him there. He wasn’t going to notice anyway. April stopped in her tracks, and felt her thoughts freeze when she looked at the statue in front of him.

She hadn’t noticed the shape of it at first, but now that she took a second look she could clearly see it was in the shape of a human figure. Her father had taken care to make sure it was a womanly figure, with delicate curves and arms gracefully extended in front of the body.

There was something oddly familiar about the pose and the way her father styled the twists of metal he used for the hair. Her heart stopped as she understood. It wasn’t that she hadn’t seen what it was before; it was that she hadn’t *wanted* to see what her father had been trying to do.

That was her mother’s shawl. She knew it anywhere. It had sat draped over the back of the bed in her parent’s bedroom for so many years, she couldn’t remember it not being there. Her father took it to drape it over pieces of junk! Her vision went red, and she felt herself shaking again. The “hairstyle”, if you could even call it that, was the one her mother had been wearing right before her death.

April felt, more than heard, an outraged sound escape her lips. Something swelled in her chest and tore a sob from her throat. Shaking hands grabbed the shawl off the dummy and hugged it close.

It smelled wrong, the comforting scent of her mother replaced by the cold metal of the iron. Something cracked inside her, the same pit that had opened when she lost her mother.

She hadn’t meant to push the statue. Touching any of her father’s art had been the last thing on her mind. She wasn’t even aware of what she had done until the

Something unpleasant rolled in her gut, and she struggled against the impulse to just drop the lunchbox on his head. Here she had been worrying about him, and he was sleeping.

echoing crash rang through the shack. The parts of her mind that had been jarred awake by that crash clenched the shawl tighter to her chest. She took a step backward as she tried to figure out what to do.

There was a sound from behind her on the loveseat, then a sudden heart wrenching cry as her father lurched passed her to drop to his knees next to the mess of parts on the ground. “What did you do?” he demanded. “How could you do this to me?” he gave her a glare before turning around and trying to right the remains of the statue.

April stared at him, realizing how fragile he looked. It didn’t stop the sudden surge of anger at him for caring so much. “What did I do?” she managed to get out. “What did I do? I’m the one who should be asking you that question! I came all the

way up here because I was worried about you, and I find that *thing*,” she spat the last word as she gestured at the shattered bits he was holding. “What the hell were you trying to do? Honor Mom by turning her into a pile of junk?”

“You know your mother loved my work! She would have loved something like this!”

She turned to leave, but his voice stopped her. “Wait,” his voice suddenly sounded tired. “I’m not, I’m not trying to remake your mother. Why would you even have that idea? I was just trying to figure out a way to sort everything out.”

“You think you’re the only one it’s hard on?” Tears blurred everything, making it hard to focus on him. “Mom is *gone* Dad, and I have to deal with that too. You coming up here everyday and locking yourself away hasn’t

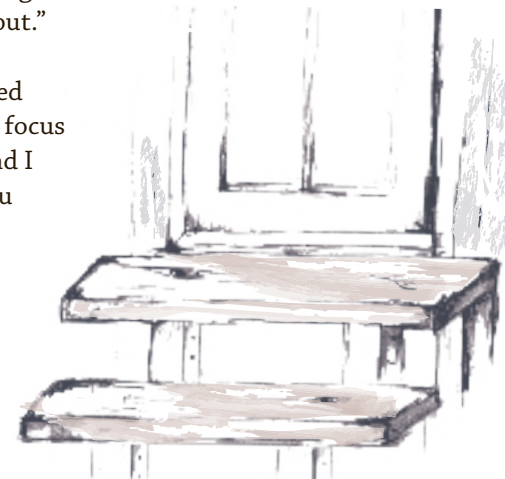


Illustration by Marina Kaminskaya

exactly made it any easier. You barely say ten words to me in a week! Do you even care if I'm here?"

"What? Of course I do! How could you think that?" Her father reached out for her, but April pulled away and kept glaring at him.

"Hiding up in a shed all day, remember?" she asked. "Disappearing the moment you come home. Barely coming into dinner at all. What else is that supposed to mean besides 'I'm avoiding you'?"

"I hadn't meant it to be like that," her father replied, "You're sixteen. I thought you would be okay for a while! If I had known you were having trouble I would have been right there."

"I just lost my mother. How did you think I was going to feel? What was more important than helping your own daughter? Finishing that *thing*?" She brandished the shawl as if it were her flag, and her father flinched away from it.

"That wasn't how it was supposed to be," he repeated as he stepped back, eyes looking around at all the pieces of the statue. He bent down and picked up something that glittered in his grasp. "I wasn't trying to make a replacement of your mother, or even something that was supposed to look like her. I wanted to make something out of her memories." The last was said heavily as he held out what had been glittering towards her.

It took April a moment to recognize what it was. It was a key chain, and the logo on it struck her as familiar. At the beginning of her mother's illness, before it had gotten to days where she could barely move, they had gone to a wild life park as a family.

"So that's what all this stuff is," April asked at last. "Memories?" Her father nodded. "Why didn't you tell me about it?"

"I wanted to finish it before I showed it to anyone," he said, wearily. "I had thought that I would bring you up here soon. It would be a way for both of us to remember her."

"For you to remember her you mean," she said. "Because if you made this all alone then that means every memory you put into it would be only yours."

"I hadn't wanted it to be like that. I guess that's what it turned into," her father sighed. "I'm not very good at this, am I?" He looked at her helplessly.

"No," she told him quietly. "I miss Mom a lot, but I don't want to miss her alone. Can't we help each other?"

He closed his eyes and took a breath before opening them again. "You sound older than you are," he said smiling a little before he looked down at the remains of the statue. "You know," he said slowly, "I can fix this, I think." He looked back up at her and hesitated for a moment. "I want you to help, fix it I mean. If you want to."

If she helped him with this, maybe, just maybe, they could let her mother go.

"Yeah," she said, "I would like that."



Serpentine Feline ☼ Ceramic
HAILEE ANDERSEN



Ugly Jug ☼ Ceramic
HEATHER HERROD



Blue Skies ☼ Ceramic
ELIZABETH ALEXANDER



Dragon Tree ☼ Digital Photo
JEREMY CRAM



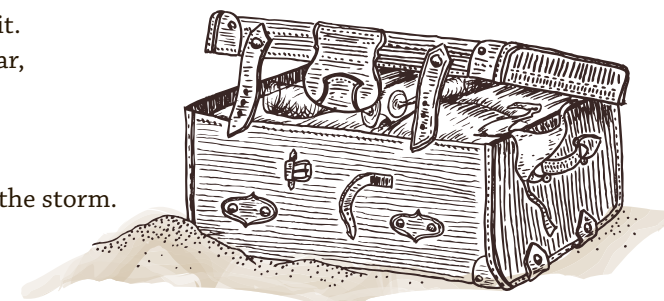
Watchman ☼ Oil on Canvas
MEKENNA HARVEY

Illustration by Kristen Butcher

UNREGRETFUL WEEKEND

Michael Hair

Anticipation stirred us both, the packs and cases full of everything we thought we needed crammed in the pencil lead Buick. Star Trek playing through the stereo; Delancey's voice sending our imaginations out to be a part of the story. A first stop at the rainbow sign of the crystal wizard to pick up a trinket and play with crystal bowls. The enchanting Ohm playing in the background. A quick hop next door to the herbal shop to clear my head. I hated being sick. The view from the ocean excited us both and we pushed on to the hotel. Beach at our door step, the salt air blew hard as charcoal clouds skittered over bringing sheets of cold rain. Laying stuff out on the second unused queen size bed. A decision to go crabbing. its amazing you still love me after frozen fish heads and being soaked to the bone, then having to throw the catch back. Or when the sea lion wrapped our net up. Climbing down along a slick peer pole over raging water to unhook it. Changing out of wet parkas and drenched clothes in the car, man you have a great body. Warming up in the restaurant drinking hot chocolate and eating peppery clam chowder. The night-making love and enjoying the waves from our room as they crashed. The nights sky clear from the storm. The moon making the waves glow in their rhythmic beat. Early morning shower. Suds and kisses. Lasagna and mousse boxes at the Whale's Tail, too scared to do it then. A walk to the Undersea Garden and fumbling the ring. One sweet word. Half dazed in Waxworks and Ripley's as we pondered our future. Tide pools of life, flourishing, taking home a found golf ball. A souvenir of a kind. Stop at Wally World because you blew out a shoe. Beating sun, steamy shore and salt cleared nostrils; we fly kites and walk on the beach. Being burnt in all the right spots.



A Mystery ✿ Digital Photo
DEBBY CORZINE



Snorri, A Moss Faerie ✿ Found Objects
ERICA VOLLMER



Swirl Necklace and Bracelet ✿ Bronze, Jasper and Wood
KATERINA MCCANN





Fall Opened Up ✿ Ceramic
RACHEL BOYNTON

The Road ✿ Acrylic Transfer on Wood
LAURIE KENNEDY



Peace in a Bowl ✿ Ceramic
CLAUDIA CARTER





Lake Merwin Sunset ✿ Watercolor on Paper
KATIE LOMBARDO



Castle ✿ Ceramic
LYNNSEY BENSON



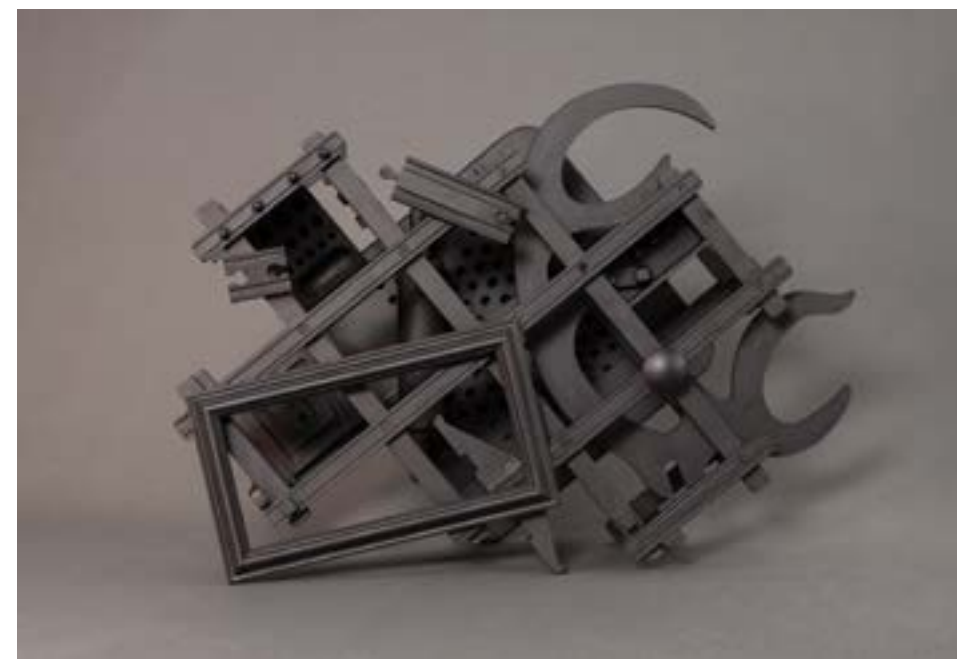
From Romania and 70's Brick Wall ✿ Ceramic
OREST ZAVEDYUK



Mt. St. Helens ✿ Mixed Media on Canvas
LAUREN DWYER



Soft Black Ash ✿ Ceramic
HAILEE ANDERSON



21 ✿ Found Objects and Acrylic
LAUREN DWYER



What Lies in the Dark

Lindsay Martinez

It is a day that's been consumed by the gloom I regret to know.
The moon laughs, thinking the sun exists through the year,
For nothing is certain in the moon's heavy sarcastic glow.

Shadow figures dance in the cold streets lined in a whispery row
as the trees instantly grow claws and beg you to come near.
Once a bright day, now consumed by the gloom I regret to know.

Say goodbye to your honesty, for the darkness overcomes the low
ambitions of the light with such intense irreverence, drawing a tear
where it seems nothing is certain in the moon's heavy sarcastic glow.

Abide by the rules of the night and its knights, or proudly show
that you'll stand and be freed from the black swords of fear.
It is a day that's been consumed by the gloom I regret to know.

Even my thoughts become mangled in the dim world below,
they are untouchable and replaced with anxiety that sears;
because nothing is certain in the moon's heavy sarcastic glow.

The beam of day wishes to run rampant, but is forced to go slow.
Angrily, it seeps into the corner and looks into the mirror
to see the day that's been consumed by the gloom I regret to know
and nothing is certain in the moon's heavy sarcastic glow.

Illustration by Tanner Casey



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

We are proud to present you with the 2013 Editor's Choice winner for fiction. *Thief* is an emotionally charged story that deals with a mature subject matter that Kesha Fisher handles in an empathetic and respectful manner. Upon each turn of the page, fearful anticipation clung to us. We were immediately attached to the protagonist, Lyn, and filled with compassion as we watched her survive her assault. Lyn is a believable character, and we connected with her physical and mental turmoil.



It is with delight that we present the 2013 Editor's Choice winner for poetry. Every word in *What Lies in the Dark* serves as a steady building block to create the melodic structure of this poem. "Nothing is certain in the moon's heavy sarcastic glow" serves as the structural foundation and heartbeat. This line wormed its way into our heads and sent tremors down our spines with each repetition until its final echo. Lindsay Martinez has evoked a vast spectrum of emotion in this poem: delight, curiosity, melancholy, mystery, and even a trace of fear.

THIEF

Kesha Fisher

Lyn had been sixteen for only two weeks, and he easily stacked a decade on her. The clouds shifted for a glimpse of the sun as she strolled by, and she remembered him describing her entrance as resembling a flower blossoming from nowhere. Beneath her brilliant red mane was an equally bold smile greeting everyone in her presence. Eyes from men and women quietly buzzing over their meals followed, as her confident steps stamped their way into the café to stand in line. She had no inkling of the power she held when she stepped into a room, and when he spotted her behind him, it was as if he had been waiting to pluck her from this childish obscurity.

She now knew that the way his teeth shone like the fullest moon was how he snared his victims. Not much else was required on his part once she caught a glimpse of his smile; and after that fate-sealing wink, he entered with a simple, “Hello.”

She nodded.

“Do you often carry the sun with you?” he asked, in a thick West African accent.

She nearly allowed her rose-tinted pout to curl into a smile before her brain calculated it as a weak line. Instead, she nodded disagreeably and delivered a disappointed frown.

“Okay, that wasn’t a great first line,” he said. “But when a woman as beautiful as you falls into my world, my nerves are rattled. Can you blame me?”

The porcelain white of her cheeks flushed, and her flawless hand hid an unexpected chuckle. Unversed

was she at being wooed or called a woman for that matter, so she took the compliment and returned a sweet, simple smile.

“You can thank me by at least telling me your name,” he added, still grinning.

She saw in his eyes a bit of hope toward carrying the moment into more than a chance meeting, and with a wink, she helped it along.

“Lyn. My name is Lyn, and thank you.”

“I’m John. What will you take? It’s on me,” he offered, pulling apart his wallet.

“A hot chocolate please, extra hot,” she said, mouthing the words in a slight whimper.

He requested one espresso and a petit four, “Plus one hot chocolate,” he added, “extra hot,” mocking her girlish disposition. She laughed.

That laugh seemed to approve of his humor, well after his looks already hooked her. With a firm handshake, the exchange grew solidified, and the rest was left up to her. They took their drinks to an open table outside, he suggested, and she followed. He preferred to eat in open spaces, for the privilege, he said, speaking through their walk as if they were long lost friends.

Outside, he pulled out her chair. “Sit,” he pressed. “Unless you have somewhere else to be.”

“No. My parents needed their privacy, so I’m supposed to go have a long lunch.”

After taking his seat as well, he sent her eyes with a straight finger toward the Eiffel Tower.

“What?” she asked, searching the sky with her roving eyes.

He replied, “The sun’s face hanging behind the tower like that? I’m going to paint it.”

With widened eyes, she declared, “You’re a painter.”

“No. *Un Artiste? Oui*. Not only painting. I tell stories on canvas, and I dabble in writing too.” He pointed again in the same direction. “What do you see there?”

“The tower?”

He dropped his head in disappointment within his palms and said, “No. Me? I see a tall, slender woman, and the sun lingers behind her like a dutiful lover.

The sun, her lover, rarely shows his face, but today, he comes to kiss the back of her neck ever so gently.”

Slow to catch the interpretation, she smiled and said, “Oh, I see what you’re sayin’.”

Lyn’s American accent did little to hide her youthful witlessness. She hoped he would not ask her age after that and quickly offered instead that she was eighteen.

“Just a number,” whispered John, leaning into her cheeky effervescence.

She cooed with oohs and ahhs as he described his life as a Liberian immigrant making his way through life in France. Taking measured sips of her hot chocolate seemed the more mature way, and when she spoke, she saw him taunted by her East Coast lisp.

“I’ve never been to Africa,” she said.

“Oh, you should go. I say that every human being should experience Africa at least once. It simply changes your soul. Africa is immensely beautiful and equally tragic. The French I spoke in my home country is what helped my life here, and I am grateful for all of it. You are a New Yorker, no?”

“Yes, from Brooklyn.”

“I’ve been there, to the States once, just after I left the University. For a wedding. It cost me nearly eight years of my life.”

Lyn nodded, “I still have a few years to go in school,” she began, before her attention was lost to the hovering clouds above. A drop of rain here and there on her head melted her neatly placed curls. “Why I did anything to my hair today, I’ll never know,” she cried, and instinctively, he presented his fedora.

“Unless you want my jacket?” he offered.

“No, I like this hat,” she sang, setting it firmly above her defeated mass of curls.

“Should we go back inside?” John asked.

“No. Let’s go some place else,” she said, with a suggestive wink and a nod. One of her hands held his hat still, and the other sat atop his hand implicitly flirting.

What sat behind her scandalous eyes lured him to glare into them. How quickly she accepted the offer did not seem a surprise to him, yet he raised a brow and the side of his mouth. “I know just the place,” he proposed, extending his hand for hers.

“Okay,” fell off her lips as easily as it formed in her head.

Trapped inside John’s hold and hidden behind his embrace, she squeezed him tight. At the Gallerie Perigueux, just a block from the cafe, they stopped to view his work. The glass window separated them from a display of neatly placed canvases splattered with oil and ink. Lyn squeezed tighter as he pointed out his favorites.

A faction of cheerful women waved at John from inside the gallery, catching Lyn’s attention more than his.



“Let’s go,” Lyn said, securing John by the elbow. He turned to her with his own glowing grin, and she blinked rain from her eyes.

They galloped over puddles, and her dainty steps blended with his cumbersome ones while drumming up a chorus to their destination. Precisely nine flats were nestled within that building, and she tilted her head to capture its megalithic stature.

“This is what I love most about Paris,” she cried. “A romantic touch it seems, was used to build this place from the ground on up; don’t ya think?”

“I pegged you right then,” he said, fiddling with his keys in the rain soaked egress. “An American smitten by French romance, no?”

She sighed, exactly enamored while tracing the length of his torso to the tip of his chin with her eyes. Right there, he lifted her like the petite four he just dismantled and placed a kiss on the rouge of her cheeks.

“One for each lifetime I would have to return to find a match to your beauty,” he whispered, leaving his breath against her skin.

Yes, yes, yes, poured from the thousands of pores on her skin as if he touched each and every one. She was begging and heaving through the stillness of the moment, wishing to burst through her own skin.

“My flat is on the fifth floor,” John said, and again, she followed.

The door opened up to a shadowy room, and the walls inside were covered with pictures of near-nude women and African tapestry. Newspapers and magazines strewn about held as much clout as the queen-sized bed in the center of the room. Easels surrounded the space like watchmen with unfinished faces

overlooking the bed. Lingering in the chilly air was the perfume of cigarettes and incense disintegrated into ashes. An open tin can of snuff dominated the bedside table, and she imagined him snorting handfuls of it fresh from sleep. The rush of an impending encounter quickly fizzled when they fully stepped inside, and John slammed the door behind them. A cast iron latch sealed them in, and Lyn heard her heart begin a race within her body.

“You are not nervous are you?” he asked, watching her once daring arms cradle her center.

“No,” she said, hiding behind a brewing innocence.

Slipping out of the fantasy, she watched John take a seat on the bed. He pinched the snuff and lifted it to his nostrils, inhaling deeply.

“Sit down,” he pleaded, patting a spot next to him. She joined him.

After wiping the excess snuff off the tip of his nose, he placed a hand on her thigh. Her softness tight-

ened beneath his grip, so he took his hand up to the buttons of her sweater. It was the first to go.

He placed one arm around her lower back while tilting her top half with the other. His big hand against her shoulder turned her skin ghost-white, and she got a whiff of his flesh. That same hand swiped rain off her cheek just minutes earlier, but the stink was oddly dissimilar. It ran on rancid air that churned in her belly as it collided with the fear that arrived from the clank of the door.

Lying on top of her, he kissed her lips, but not as she had imagined. Her mouth was pried apart and his tongue darted for her throat. She moved her head to gain some balance, but he held her still, suckling her tongue like a famished calf.

“Wait. I can’t—” she said.

“Stop talking!”

“Wait!” she cried.

But waiting was not for him. He wouldn’t stop, couldn’t stop, even if he wanted to.

“Don’t or I’ll scream,” she begged, fearful that it would not help.

His hands smeared the gloss from her lips across her face, signaling movement into the next phase of their chance meeting. He silenced her mouth with the fill of a scarf, and she thrashed about. Her flailing arms and legs worked tirelessly when her mouth could not, and his weight seized her. Holding her legs in place, he bound her wrists to the bedpost and spread his charm delicately across her face. The breath that carried his whispers against her ear was foul and dingy like his room, and she started squirming at the thought of experiencing him. He gorged himself on the might of her fight, growing swiftly from it.

Having been warned of the pain that comes with being touched by a man, Lyn tearfully waited for it. His hand started a gentle massage on her navel, and she closed her eyes hoping for the end. His weight kept her still, and bite marks ran from her chest on down.

She begged, shaking her head no and wishing for a way out of the quietness in there, but his fingers were inside her, pushing and pulling for something her mother always said to keep to herself.

Lyn braced herself for his unwelcome delivery, and he pushed his way in, breaking her trust in men forever. Her tightness fell away with every push until she was wholly defeated.

There she laid, melting in a pool of her own guilt, as John breathed a satisfied sigh. The drawer next to the bed slipped open, and he reached inside. He removed two things. One was a towel and the other was the jagged blade of a knife.

“What’s going to happen when I open your mouth?” he asked.


She shook her head again and again, as tears slipped from the corners of her eyes. After John removed the scarf, she gasped for air like a fresh fetus.

“Nothing. I just want to go home,” she whimpered

With a smirk, he replied, “That’s what I thought you’d say.”

After lifting the bond from her wrists, he dragged his silhouette near the window and looked straight ahead. The sun stepped back into view behind the tower but the sight had grown sour. Facing the window too, she saw the tower’s glow as painfully red.

He said, “I am not a monster, you know,” reverting to his formerly gentle self. “Tragedy thrives in many forms.”

Lyn gathered the shattered irony of that afternoon and replaced her clothes. And as if suddenly growing wings, she glided down five flights of stairs. 





From the series *Ink Stories* ☼ Silver Gelatin Prints
JESSICA SCHIFFER



In the Windows of Other People's Dreams ☼ Digital Photo
MELISSA MITCHELL



D'AMBROSIO: WRITING ON THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

INTERVIEW BY ELISHA FELICIANO
FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Feliciano: The editors of *Phoenix* have selected the following quote from Aristotle to really capture the essence of what we were looking for in literary submissions this year: “The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things but their inward significance.” What are your thoughts on that quote?

D'Ambrosio: Good question. You know, it's absolutely true—ultimately. But I think the route a writer takes to gain inner access to things is through their outward appearance. You need both, particularly in the writing of fiction. We apprehend the world through our senses, so a sense of the actual physical world is kind of the gateway or path to the inward significance of things. Both sides of that equation are true and necessary. It's hard to imagine Moby Dick if you don't believe that whale is real. That whale has to be something more than symbol. The search for Moby Dick's inner significance is elusive and it maddens Ishmael and it maddens Ahab and it has maddened critics for a century and a half, but before all that, it's a real whale.

Feliciano: Your writing really exemplifies the beauty of brokenness. For instance, in “Drummond & Son” you wrote, “The kid wasn't ready to say it yet, but half of him wanted the jalopy touch of his broken Olivetti back.” Do you intentionally write to convey that beauty of brokenness?

D'Ambrosio: There's a drive in everything you write to find some kind of beauty. To me, it can be a simple beauty. A form of harmony, a sense of how the whole relates to the parts and how the parts condition the whole. You want everything to fit and work, to have a place, a resonant and meaningful place in the world you're creating. Brokenness itself then presents something of an artistic and human challenge, right? Normally we think of the broken as something useless, without value or beauty, something to be discarded. But for me (and a lot of writers and artists) brokenness is somehow the

appeal, the lure. That's where life is really happening. I'm drawn to it for all kinds of reasons but on a very practical level when things are broken, when people are broken, then there's a problem to be solved, and as a writer that's what I'm looking for—problems. A writer has a nose for trouble like other people have a nose for fine wine or whatever. If people are completely intact and they're happy in their life, I wouldn't know what I would say about that. I'd probably feel uncomfortable. I'd start looking for the snake in the garden. Anyway, a sense of brokenness leads you, by instinct, to the margins of life, in an almost pastoral way. Like Jesus, I guess, who was always moving through the margins of society, dealing with the poor and the sick and the broken. In storytelling I think we move that way too, toward the broken, the poor and the sick. It's not a morbid curiosity, but a recognition—of what's poor and sick, what's broken in ourselves. A story begins when things break down, I think.

Feliciano: In many of your stories your readers are left with unanswered questions. For example, towards the end of “The Dead Fish Museum” you wrote, “A car drove by, and in the wake of its passing everything was briefly quiet. The gun was gone. He considered the probable suspects and decided that RB had taken it. A moment later he was convinced that Rigo had stolen it. Then he wondered if it was Desiree. When his cab came, he repacked his things and stood to go.” And in the conclusion of “Up North,” to go with that, you wrote, “She was standing by the outhouse, sunk to her knees in the broken drift, her

hands clasping her shoulders so that she seemed to be embracing herself. Wind separated the ragged wisp of smoke from the chimney into several twining strands. Her long blond hair held the moonlight. Her nightgown billowed out, fluttering behind her, and she appeared to be hovering, almost drifting, as through water.” How do you know when your story is finished?

D'Ambrosio: Well there are two questions there. One is dealing with unanswerable questions and then the challenge that presents of knowing when the work is finished. If the question could be answered, then one of the easiest ways to finish a story would be to provide that answer, the answer being the final piece of a fairly simple puzzle. But a story poses the right questions; it does not provide answers. It looks at vital questions in a character's life but if those questions are really vital, if they really matter in some profound way, then there's a very good chance that they won't be answered, not like wishes anyway. The character in a story may remain broken and incomplete, alone and without answers—not every broken life gets repaired—but the story itself can't be broken or incomplete. It must answer each and every one of its aesthetic problems. That's the art of the thing. The fullness of the art often sits in crazy tension with the emptiness of those unanswered questions, but that's the job. And that's how I know when a story is done—when it's addressed all the artistic problems.

Feliciano: That's an interesting interplay between the characters and the art.

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D'Ambrosio: Yeah, for instance, plot to me presents the image of a whole, the dream of a life restored; it's a completed thing while meanwhile within it there are these broken struggling lives, trying to find a way in that world. That's kind of like all of our lives. We all dream of being restored to that wholeness, we all believe in a tomorrow that will cure the problems of today.

Feliciano: The LA Times in a book review of your second collection, *The Dead Fish Museum*, wrote, "D'Ambrosio, who should be ranked up near Carver and Jones on the top tier of contemporary practitioners of the short story, manages to channel Carver's deftly elliptical manner and Jones' wounded machismo. Yet in this collection he marks out his own territory, using only the most steadfast and difficult of a writer's tools—craft and character—and his own marvelously skewed lens." Is Raymond Carver, who they mention here, one of your inspirations?

D'Ambrosio: It's always hard for a writer to trace out how another writer influences them. Here's a simple idea of influence, though. Growing up in the Northwest, in a different far more isolated era of the Northwest, I didn't really know that anybody from my hometown could write. I thought writers were another species, who lived in a far different habitat—Paris, I suppose, or New York City. I actually discovered Raymond Carver when I was living in Chicago. I picked up this slender little paperback, at a bookstore on Michigan Avenue, and I opened the book and immediately saw the word "Wenatchee." Wenatchee, Washington. I thought, "Wow. You mean

somebody could write that word and use it in fiction in a way that others would understand and it could be the word for a place that I knew?" So I bought the book. It turns out it was this great book of short stories, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. But I had no idea who Carver was at the time. I just knew that he wrote Wenatchee into a story. I know this must seem like a crude example of influence, but Carver was inspiring to me on that level. Then on the level of artistry, he was an amazing, amazing but soulful craftsman, so I could read and study him and learn how to write and

also develop values. Carver never did anything cheap. Always difficult—he was bold, very brave, willing to look at things that were common to all of us. That's something that's stayed with me. I never forget that no matter what extreme situation an individual character might find themselves in, they're still dealing with problems that are common to a lot of people. I think Carver captures that essential compassion beautifully.

Feliciano: Are there any other inspirations that you do have in your writing?

D'Ambrosio: Sure, but again, they're all over the map. I really like John Cheever. Philip Roth matters to me more than I can say. Graham Greene's prose haunts me. Some of those inspirations, particularly Roth and Greene, Saul Bellow, are writers whose books populated my parents' bookshelf. They didn't recommend them to me; they were just there. At a certain point the fact of their existence and the fact that my parents had a little bookshelf where they kept books drew my interest.

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"YOU'RE SHIT, YOU'RE NOTHING."
AND YOU HEAR IT! YOU!

I wasn't so much curious about those books as I was curious about my parents. Who are these weird people? I couldn't ask them that question directly so I started snooping around, starting with the books they read. I don't think I ever got any answers but Bellow, Roth, and Graham Greene remain among my favorite writers today because I had that very early exposure to them.

Feliciano: What did you last read?

D'Ambrosio: I read a book by a woman named Hannah Pylvainen called *We Sinners* that I was really taken with. It's about a family of fundamentalist Lutherans in the Midwest. It's a beautiful portrayal of a large family, but a tightly knit and isolated family as they begin to face the modern world. The world starts happening to them. One son is gay, another daughter gets pregnant out of wedlock. But it's a very loving portrait and an inside view of the rich complications and the beauty of this family and the troubles that they face. It's a beautiful story.

Feliciano: What is the greatest challenge you have found as a writer?

D'Ambrosio: The greatest challenge I think is learning how to face down fears and accept failure. The ratio of failure to success in writing is a little shocking. I always tell people: writers are always failing, but if you string enough of those failures together, that's called a career. The same is not true of heart surgeons; it's not true of jet pilots or bus drivers. Enough of those failures, like one or two, and you're kind of done; your career is over, you

know. Anyway, writers live with the failure and you have to befriend it. You have to see it in another way, as a crucial part of the process, a process of writing but also a part of the process of living life. You fail in order to know a thing more intimately. I think that would be central, a key challenge. A kind of guiding light for me. It's not a

state that you achieve; failure is a practice that you work on daily.

Feliciano: How do you deal with rejection and criticism of your work?

D'Ambrosio: Better now than I used to. After enough of it you learn its twists and turns. I've had stuff rejected by one magazine only to be accepted at a far better magazine. I've had stuff rejected because it was just shitty, but later found new life, and won awards, after a lot of serious rewriting. Rejection is never easy and it kind of doesn't get any easier. You know I've had some good successes, and I've won awards and stuff like that, but in a way there's always that kid in the back of the classroom, shooting spit wads, fidgeting, shouting out "You're shit, you're nothing." And you hear it! You hear it! The whole

chorus could be saying "Yeah man you're great." But then there's that one kid. It just kills you, you know. So rejection is never easy to accept. The thing I've learned is that it's a moment to kind of reassess. Did they make a mistake or do I need to look at that story again? You might decide the magazine missed the boat, they didn't understand. Or, full of heartbreak, you might do that last, necessary draft, the one that makes all the difference.



Criticism is a little bit of a different thing. I'm very accepting of criticism. For a writer a very important thing is to find one, or two, or three good readers. By that, I mean people who you respect and trust and will tell you the truth, so that when they give you criticism, you will listen. I actually like good hard criticism. Those first readers, that editor, that's when writing becomes collegial. The only time it becomes collegial, except for cocktail parties, which I avoid. Writing, you sit in a room by yourself, but when you get that editorial input or criticism the process suddenly becomes conversational. You go back and forth and kick around ideas. Alone, working away, you can get so into a piece of work that you become kind of dumb about it. You like to think you're the expert on the story, having put in so much time, but you might just be lost, overlooking the obvious. A good reader or editor can help you see what's plain as day. What's right before your eyes.

Feliciano: You've won some major writing awards like the Lannan and the Whiting. How has this recognition changed your writing? Or has it?

D'Ambrosio: I don't think it actually materially changes it. The money provides time and time is always important. And then it's nice to be recognized, particularly as a writer, because so much of the work is deeply private.

Feliciano: You teach in the MFA program at PSU and have also taught at Iowa before; do you believe that an

MFA or degree is necessary from a top tier program to become a successful writer?

D'Ambrosio: Where did Kafka get his MFA? I think people labor under a certain kind of misconception about MFAs: "You go there and you get taught to write." But MFA is a nice adjunct to a process of discovery that's



already underway, not a replacement for that process, not a shortcut. It can help. It can enlarge and invigorate that conversation. It can offer support, money, community, widening a sense of your ambitions. What I got out of the MFA was not so much direct interaction with teachers, but with the other people in the program. That conversation mattered more to me, ultimately, than the conversation with the teachers. I got one, or two, or three really valuable bits of advice from the faculty, but I got way more juice from talking to the people around me. That's where I learned most of my stuff, in those conversations, and an MFA is a way of facilitating and making that conversation happen. America is a big, lonely country.

Its vastness alone is isolating, right? We have no center, no center of culture, so how do you get people to group and gather and talk about what they're passionate about? An MFA is one of those ways that you can make that ancient, necessary conversation happen.

Feliciano: Do you see a significant difference between programs like Iowa and PSU?

D'Ambrosio: Oh, there are definitely differences: differences in funding, size, aesthetics, reputation, geography, etc. Myself, I liked Iowa as a student and I love teaching at the Workshop now. When I was a student I felt pretty confident that in any group of fifty people, I could probably find two that I liked, and who liked me back. If I'd gone to a small program, I would have felt like I was riding an elevator with strangers for two years. I'm just that kind of person. I need a big group in order to carve out a proper privacy. Anyway, there are different nuances to MFA programs. There are lots of great programs around the country. Portland State's struggling to become one of them. We just started, so...

Feliciano: *The New Yorker* is the top market for fiction in the United States. Can you tell me what the process was for getting your first story published in *The New Yorker*?

D'Ambrosio: I'm a little embarrassed by that because I'd never published a story before and it happened strangely and easily and without much effort on my part—I mean, I wrote the story, but beyond that I didn't do much beyond running into good luck. I was at Iowa and I wanted feedback from somebody who knew the publishing world and had a lot of professional experience. Through social connections I knew someone, just barely, who was an agent. I just wanted to hear what she thought of this story I'd written. She had me drop the story off at her friend's art gallery on Hudson Street in New York, telling me I could pick it up there later. I believe she did this so she wouldn't have to interact with me face to face,

in case she thought the story was dreadful. So I dropped the story off. I was spending the summer in a cabin in the Catskill Mountains but I came to the city and dropped the story off at her friend's art gallery. The next thing I knew she'd submitted and sold the story to *The New Yorker*—and she's my agent today. So that's how that happened. Painlessly. The pain was to come later.

Feliciano: So since that first time getting published, has your process changed given the success that you now have?

D'Ambrosio: No, it pretty much stays the same. My comfort level with talking to editors has changed. I actually really enjoy that part of it. I've never had a bad interaction. I like editors. I like that conversation. So, in a sense, that end of the process has adjusted over time. The actual writing is, you know, you're always working in the dark and every day you have a blank page. You never know what's going on, in a certain way

and it doesn't change. It doesn't matter whether you have twenty books or you're writing your second story. You're plunged into uncertainty. It's not like having a law practice where eventually you build up a client base and everyday you walk in to the office, get behind your desk, and start cranking out billable hours. With writing you walk in, and it's like the first day on the job, again.


Feliciano: Many of your short stories from *The Point* and from *The Dead Fish Museum* collections have been previously published in the *New Yorker* and literary journals like *The Paris Review* and *Story*. How did these short stories transition into collections?

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D'Ambrosio: I guess when you have enough of them published. Probably the native home for a short story is not the book. The native habitat for a short story is a magazine or literary quarterly. You could be the best, most comprehensively read fan of short stories imaginable and not own a single book of short stories. You'd have to scour the journals and quarterlies and our dwindling supply of slicks. Anyway, I really believe in the magazine level, so for me, everything that's going to go into a collection has to have appeared in a magazine. That's just important to me. And then you kind of group and gather things that you think belong together. There are lots of ways to do it. My two collections are bound together by obsessions or interests. They're an accurate record of the kinds of things I was dwelling on during that time. There are more self-conscious ways of organizing collections: writing linked short stories, binding them together by setting, using the same or recurring characters, unifying the various pieces by theme. There are lots of ways to go, but mine are linked by obsession, I hope. Otherwise, it's all just a big accident.

Feliciano: Really the last thing that I'd like to be able to ask you is, as an aspiring writer myself, and there are multiple students throughout Clark College who are also aspiring to become writers, what advice would you give or what would you say that you had to do in order to get to where you are today?

D'Ambrosio: Above all, just write a lot. Write, write, write. This maybe relates to the MFA question too. In the process of arriving at what you are going to write—not just writing good sentences generally, but writing what you and you alone have to say—you have to make a lot of mistakes. You need to make them. You will make them. There's no choice. They're inevitable, everyone makes those mistakes. The same mistakes! The only way to get past them is to go ahead and make them.

It's almost like you can burn them out of your system by writing a lot, probably because, like it or not, with writing, you learn by failing. You write, and the writing will give you feedback, and along the way you'll discover things and find yourself saying "Oh that didn't work, why didn't that work?" Then you'll go back and rewrite and fail and rewrite and . . . well, write a lot. You want to get all those obvious rudimentary mistakes behind you. Then, you're ready to begin. Even though I'm a fan of MFAs, I would advise people not to go to an MFA to make these mistakes, that's a waste of time and money. You can make your mistakes for free, all by yourself. When you're ready, consider the MFA route. Apply to a lot of programs, because there are a lot of different flavors. Many of them have funding, so you can look at it as your first paying gig. I think that's an important attitude to have. I would even go so far as to say that if you apply to programs and you don't get funding, hold off for one more year. Just double down on your dedication, keep writing, and reapply. Get that funding, get that first paying gig, and get into that community of writers. And start stringing together those failures that will, over time, become your career. 



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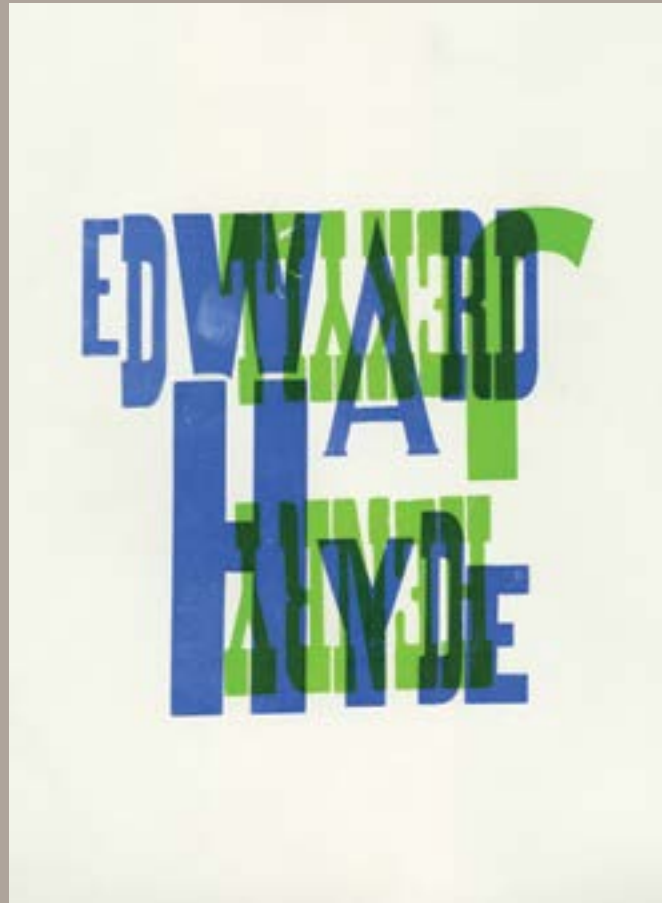
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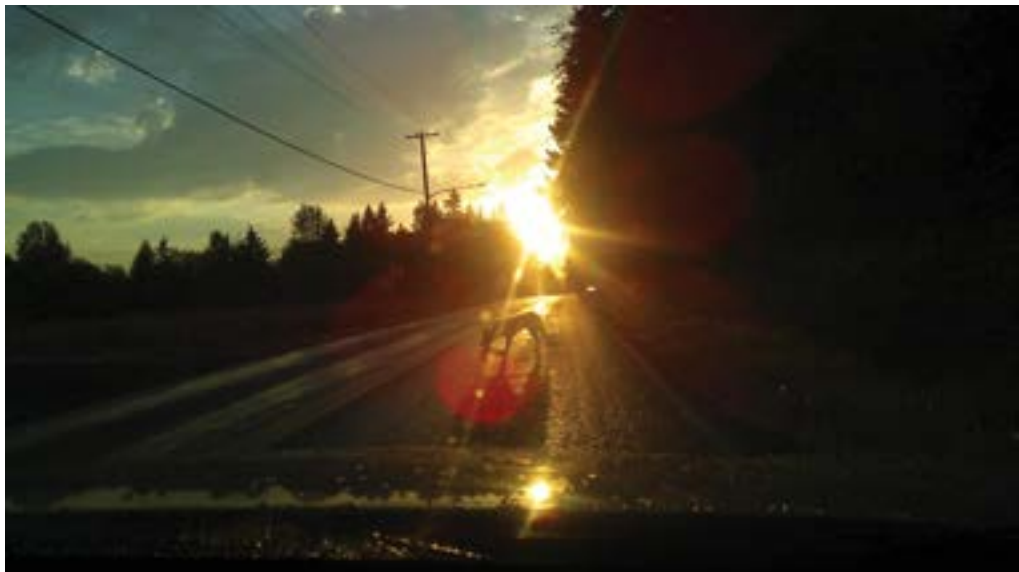
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The End of Something

Chad M. Wilson

“You remember that time we went to Mt. Nebo to go skiing?” Jay asked, his voice low and gruff. He had been dozing. “We got rained in at the lodge.” He sat crookedly in the passenger seat, at the corner between the rusted truck door and his seat. His knees were up, and his feet rested on the seat cushion.

Sami turned on the radio. It spat static and fragments of songs and words. She turned the dial this way and that. “Not really,” she responded quietly, sounding tired. It was almost in respect to the night, which was somber and demanded whispers. “Kinda.” She turned off the radio.

“Stuck there nearly a full twenty four hours,” Jay said. Not as if to remind her, but as if to tell an old story. “We never got the chance to ski.”

Jay thought of that winter. He and Sami had sat on a couch next to the fireplace. People filtered in and out of the lodge, sitting at nearby seats to warm themselves with the embers. They had played all the board

games the lodge provided, a stack of them had rested on the coffee table. They had shared a peppermint cocoa, and when they had finished Jay purchased another. Eventually Sami fell asleep on Jay, her hands wound around his arm.

Jay was surprised the details were still vivid in his mind. He supposed the memory had been important to him, and that was enough make it a permanent resident in his mind.

Jay twisted, facing away from Sami, his left foot now on the floor. He rested his head against the window and looked out into the midnight landscape. Wheat fields blurred by on either side of the two lane road. Ahead of them a few miles was the small and hindering town in which they were born.

Sami turned on the heater, glancing at the dark panel. “We’re on empty,” she said, interrupting his thoughts.

Jay leaned over slightly and looked at the gas gauge.



“Shit,” he said, sounding apathetic, and returned to his seated position. He reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a pack of Marlboros. From it, he produced a cigarette and a box of matches. He put the cigarette to his lips, and he struck a match against the dashboard.

“Don’t,” Sami said before he could burn the tip. “Please.”

Jay sighed quietly, trying not to sound irritated—because he wasn’t, not really. He did not care either way. He shook out the match and returned his pack to his shirt pocket. He took the unlit cigarette between his two fingers and tapped it metrichally against one knee.

They were quiet then, listening to the sounds of the truck, rumbling and staggering at the bumps in the road.

It sounded tired

and worn and as though it had been driven far longer than it was meant to. But it was comfortable and worn in, and there was no real reason to discard the old thing.

“Kayla is having a party Friday,” Sami said, her eyes watching the flecks of rock in the pavement pass under the dim headlights. “She invited us. Did you want to go?”

Jay looked forward, cranking his head sideways. “Not really,” he said. “Been tired lately. I’d rather stay in.”

“You’re tired?” Sami said. “I’m tired too.”

Jay looked at Sami briefly. “What d’you mean?”

Sami said nothing, and the truck lurched. In short, exhausted motions the truck came to a halt, dying as far to the side of the road as possible. Sami and Jay rolled their eyes and sighed.

“So what?” Sami asked. “We walk home?”

“We need the truck. There’s a gas station at the edge of town. I can walk there and come back with gas.”

“I’ll come too,” Sami said as she rolled out of the truck, whose doors squealed painfully. Jay got out and pulled a gas can out of the bed of the truck.

“You forgot the lights,” he reminded her. The headlights were staring out at the road. Sami opened the door and turned them off.

Together they began walking down the long road into town.

Jay put the cigarette he’d been holding into his mouth. “Mind if I smoke now?” He asked.

“No,” she murmured.

He took out the matches, stopping to scratch a match against the pavement underneath him. His face glowed within the cupped hand in front of his mouth, guarding the match against the slight wind as he lit the tip of his cigarette. He extinguished the match, waving his hand back and forth, and dropped it to the ground. He exhaled a cloud of smoke and watched it disappear into the midnight. He breathed smoke for some time as their unraveling shoes kicked and scuffed at the pavement, intentionally launching a stone into the dark fields on occasion.

He took out the cigarette to speak. “How long have we been together?”

Sami was quiet. “Um. Three years in August.” She kicked a rock into the wheat. “Why?”

They were quiet then, listening to the sounds of the truck, rumbling and staggering at the bumps in the road. It sounded tired and worn and as though it had been driven far longer than it was meant to.

He shook his head as if to say, Nothing, really. Just talking. He stuck the cigarette back into his mouth and the tip glowed orange and black. “Feels like a long time.”

“Yeah,” she said like she was paying more attention to the crickets than to the conversation.

As Jay and Sami neared the town, he read the sign of the nearest building, which was Andy’s—the gas station advertising tobacco, candy, and beer.

“I mean, not that it’s tiring. It just seems like it has been a long time.”

“It’s not? Not tiring?” she asked, looking at him languidly, then looking away again. “Well,” he sucked on his cigarette, burning the tip, considering the question. “No.” Smoke ran up his face as he said it. “I mean, we don’t argue.”

“Is that all you want?” Sami asked curiously, “to not argue?”

“What d’you mean?” They walked into the white lights, glowing from the overhead of Andy’s four gas pumps.

“Some people want more. Like. . . I don’t know.” What else do you want from a person?” Sami stopped at the glass door of Andy’s, and Jay stopped with her. She looked at him and he looked inside Andy’s.

“I don’t know, Sami,” he said, his eyes darting around inside the gas station. Sami sat down at a decrepit bench outside the doors. Jay took his cigarette from his lips, expelling smoke one more time, and threw it on the ground, rubbing it out with his shoe. “You want anything?” He indicated inside Andy’s.

Sami shook her head, rubbing the ends of her shoe into the concrete beneath her. As Jay opened the door to go in she said, “Water.”

“Kay,” he replied as he stepped inside. Walter was

there, mopping up the floor, wearing Andy’s red shirt-ed uniform.

“Hey, Jay,” he said kindly, seeming appreciative of company. “Late night?”

“Yeah,” Jay replied absently, grabbing a water from one of the fridge. “The truck ran out of gas.”

“Ooh, too bad.” Walter drawled and went behind the counter, balancing the mop against it and waited for Jay.

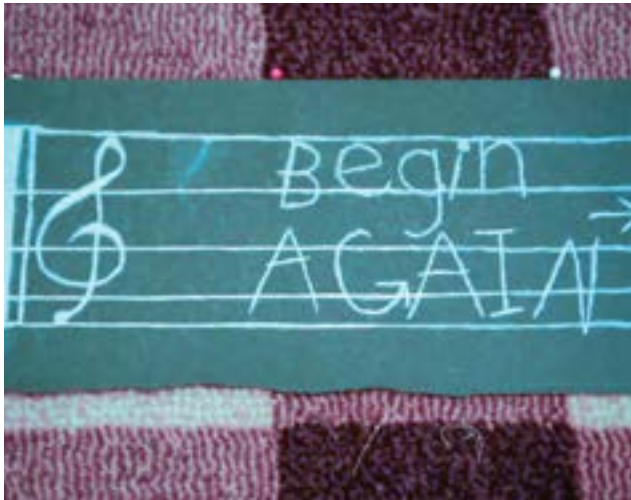
“Yeah. Could you give me eight dollars in ones?” Jay put the water on the counter.

“Okay.” Walter clicked the register. He took the water bottle and rang it through. “Is that Sami out there?” he asked, glancing out the windows. “She’s still lookin’ good. You got yourself a good girl there.”

“Yeah,” Jay said, rifling through his wallet. “Could you grab me a pack of Marlboros?”



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Terrors of a Misspent Youth ✂ Stop Motion Animation
NICOLE HANEY



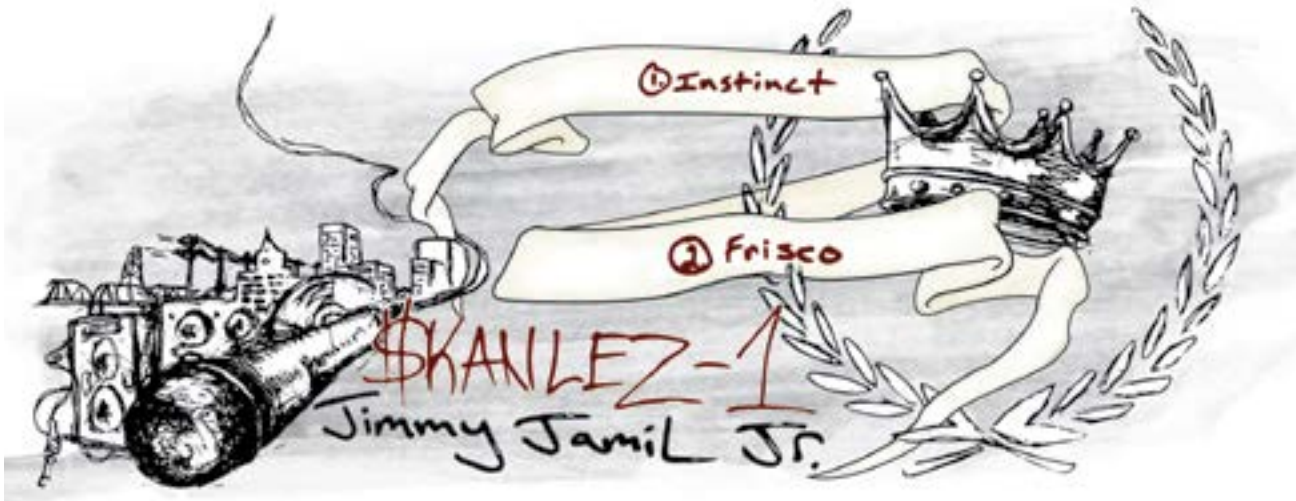
Runaway Doodle ✂ Stop Motion Video
LUKE ACEVEDO



Birth ✂ Stop Motion Animation
MATTHEW CARAVAGGIO



The Ending ✂ Video
CHRIS MASONER



Instinct and Frisco ✂ Original Songs
JIMMY JAMIL JR.



Paper Airplanes ✂ Stop Motion Animation
LEIULF CLAUSEN



Methane Clouds-Levi Watson ✂ Music Video
ORLANDO JUAREZ

ART CONTRIBUTOR STATEMENTS

LUKE ACEVEDO, *Run*, p. 42

This drawing is a map of the places I've been and experiences I've had while running.

LUKE ACEVEDO, *Mr. Waits*, p. 47

I created this piece after a still from the film, *Coffee and Cigarettes*. I wanted to capture his mood and personality through line quality.

LUKE ACEVEDO, *Runaway Doodle*, p. 136

For this video, I was interested in combining video stop motion techniques with 2D animation.

ELIZABETH ALEXANDER, *Blue Skies*, p. 95

These bowls allowed me to experiment with color and texture.

ELIZABETH ALEXANDER, *Full Metal Jacket*, p. 5

To me *Steampunk* represents never thinking inside the box.

NICOLE DUHAMEL AMUNDSON, *Green & Brown Serving Set*, p. 61.

I made this set entirely for myself having fallen in love with the glaze combination from a previous project. Getting the jar and spoon to fit was challenging, but it turned out beautifully.

NICOLE DUHAMEL AMUNDSON, *Psychadelic Candle Vases*, p. 32

These vessels are very different from my other work and I find them striking. I was glad I had the chance to branch out.

HAILEE ANDERSEN, *Serpentine Feline*, p. 95

The inspiration for this piece was mixing animal and plant forms.

HAILEE ANDERSON, *Soft Black Ash*, p. 105

Volcanoes were the inspiration for the shape, texture and color.

ASHLEY BARNES, *Primitive Masks*, p. 123

These masks were inspired by ancient artists and, for me, are all about the process I employed of creating plaster molds, shaping them and applying successive layers of glaze.

ALEX BEAVIN, *Woman Walking*, p. 34

I was studying the walk cycle and how drastically it changes with light and shadow.

ANNI BECKER, *Jacob*, p. 14

This photo is about the bliss of solitude.

LYNNSEY BENSON, *Barnaby*, p. 58

This piece is about exploring texture. All textures were either carved or applied by hand. Carving the texture onto the body alone took over fifteen hours. The glaze adds yet another texture.

LYNNSEY BENSON, *Castle*, p. 103

The interesting thing about glazes are their unexpected nature. It turned out completely different than the test tiles.

JULIYA BOYCHENKO, *Girl from the Past*, p. 91

The process of creating this painting allowed me to place myself in the past and develop a feeling for the 16th century.

RACHEL BOYNTON, *Fall Opened Up*, p. 100

This piece was inspired by childhood memories of jack-o-lanterns and the colors of autumn.

RACHEL BOYNTON, *Prism Set for Four*, p. 30

I love the fluidity of the colors and the oily sheen of the glaze.

IRINA BURCHAK, *No Place Like Home*, p. 20

This girl was expressing her love for the United States of America during the Fourth of July celebrations.

IRINA BURCHAK, *Waiting for the Storm*, p. 12

Acting as my own model, I'm holding the umbrella the wrong way around because I was trying to come across as brave.

IRINA BURCHAK, *Imperfection*, p. 71

Sometimes we feel we're not perfect and try to hide ourselves, thus only exposing half of our character.

PAUL BUSH, *Ink Splatter*, p. 144

I was interested in the ink splatter's messiness yet also its clarity.

AZURE CALDER, *Water In Motion*, p. 56, and p. 126

This collection represents the split-seconds of beauty we miss in our day-to-day lives.

MATTHEW CARAVAGGIO, *Birth*, p. 137

My inspiration comes from the nature of life, death, rebirth and the supernatural as a whole.

SAVANA CATRON, *Looking Through the Cracks*, p. 6

This work reveals the beauty in the simplest look of an eye.

CLAUDIA CARTER, *Peace in a Bowl*, p. 101

This bowl brings peace and contentment.

PATRICK MICHAEL CASEY, *Re: assimilation*, p. 74

This is a portrayal of ethereal bondage that seeks to reclaim the transcended.

LEIULF CLAUSEN, *The Fall*, p. 80

This piece strives to portray a woman's feelings when she is falling in love.

LEIULF CLAUSEN, *Paper Airplanes*, p. 137

I deconstructed one of my drawings a snippet at a time until the canvas was blank.

NOREEN COATES, *Business as Usual*, p. 78

This piece represents my frustration with medicine for profit.

JESSE COON, *Dragon Fish*, p. 33

I wet the cloth before applying the dye to get a color gradient to create the scales of the koi.

DEBBY CORZINE, *A Mystery*, p. 98

Early on a foggy morning at Nehalem Bay, I took this photo. I saw mystery in it, hence the title.

RAY COX, *Junkyard*, p. 131

The contrast between the bright sky, the darkness of the cars and the fog in the background gives it a battlefield-like quality.

RAY COX, *Overgrown*, p. 21

I found this old Ford pickup that was slowly being overgrown by weeds and blackberry vines.

REBECCA CRAIG, *Pink*, p. 51

The pink of the painting is to contrast with the green of the eyes.

JEREMY CRAM, *Dragon Tree*, p. 96

I had passed this tree so many times and thought to photograph it almost every time, but on the day I finally did, it was lit so perfectly.

JEREMY CRANE, *After Dark* p. 47

My kids played in this fountain all summer and I wondered what it looked like evenings. Even after dark the world's alive and beautiful.

CATE CROSS, *Pears and Plums*, p. 61

At the end of the summer, my friend and I gathered fallen pears and plums from the neighbors.

CATE CROSS, *Telescope*, p. 124

As part of our Typography class we visited Gann Bros. Printing. I made this broadside from cast metal slugs and antique wood type.

ELISE CRYDER, *Dead of Winter*, p. 83

This work is important to me because of my connection with my father and my love for birch trees, crows and winter.

ELISE CRYDER, *Self-portrait*, p. 129

I wanted to step out of my comfort zone for this self-portrait since I had already done so many.

ASHLEIGH CUMMINGS, *Vivre*, p. 81

I really liked how, in the study of *Cubism*, the inanimate objects take on motion.

LAUREN DWYER, 21, p. 105

You never know what treasures you can find at the *Goodwill* that can be repurposed.

LAUREN DWYER, *Industrial Box*, p. 13

My overall goal with this piece was to make the ceramic surface appear industrial and old.

LAUREN DWYER, *Eternal Time*, p. 56

I wanted to show the soothing feelings I experienced from listening to Enya's music while painting. I find her music inspiring.

LAUREN DWYER, *Mt. St. Helens*, p. 104

I used a canvas covered with an article written shortly after the eruption of Mt. St. Helens.

JOSH ENGEL, *The Encumbered Turtle of the North*, p. 7

I think this piece is interesting and unique. I had a lot of fun making it.

JASMINE ESCALANTE, *Self-portrait*, p. 50

In a way, this piece does say something about me—the default concerned look on my face.

EVELYN ESPINOSA, *Beauty and the Beast*, p. 45

This work, three photos from a larger series, captures the beauty of the busy streets of downtown Portland.

OLIVIA FAULCONER, *Something Good Can Work*, p. 77

Each background color is symbolic of a different mood or phase, from red for passion to dark blue for contentment.

AUSTIN FIELDS, *Ecstasy*, p. 50

It was my happiness working its way out of my soul, through the brush and onto the canvas.

STEVE FURIO, *The Squid and the Whale*, p. 122

This drawing was my response to an assignment asking the class to each illustrate a mythology. I chose to portray the *Kraken* myth.

JACOB HALLENBECK, *A Study of a girl in Pearls #4*, p. 54

I aspire to make a timeless, one-of-a-kind piece of art that can be passed down through generations. This piece is hand-carved and strung and is inspired by my deep love for the Art Nouveau era.

NICOLE HANEY, *Terrors of a Misspent Youth*, p. 136

This was the first experience I've had with stop motion animation. It was enjoyable and surprisingly easy to create.

JONATHAN HARDY, *Heart of San Francisco*, p. 70

I appreciated the ability to photograph from a higher elevation.

JONATHAN HARDY, *Into the Fog*, p. 70

While photographing the bridge, some could be frustrated by the fog that obscures, but I felt it made the bridge feel mysterious.

MEKENNA HARVEY, *Watchman*, p. 96

This painting was inspired by the pair of hummingbirds I see everyday feeding outside my kitchen window.

GEORGIA HENDERSON, *Underwater Dance*, p. 57

My intent of the submerged dress was to try to capture the flow and movement of the water.

NICK HERBER, *Beth Ann*, p. 13

I just handed the drape to my model and started shooting.

NICK HERBER, *Krystal's Heart*, p. 25

This piece was created by combining two negatives: Krystal, and the sun through the tree.

HEATHER HERROD, *Ugly Jug*, p. 95

This piece surprised me; I hated it until I saw the finished project.

ROBIN HOMINIUK, *Charm Bracelet*, p. 54

This bracelet was crafted completely by hand and was an experience in all things *Zen*. Time, patience and attention to detail were de rigueur. I love the way it moves on my wrist when wearing it.

JIMMY JAMIL JR., *A Day in Washington*, p. 132

I captured these images in Battleground, Washington. In just this one spot, it started raining.

JIMMY JAMIL JR., *Instinct* and *Frisco*, p. 136

This was a positive way for me to filter out any negative energy that surrounded me while I was growing up. I'm speaking my mind and life through my music.

STEVE JARVIS, *Pyramids Askew*, p. 121

Constructed of granite, marble and steel, these pyramids settled onto themselves to have us wonder to which side they will fall.

NATHAN JENKINS, *Clockwork*, p. 3

I wanted to incorporate the genuine beauty and movement of clockwork in human form.

ORLANDO JUAREZ-VITELA, *Hero*, p. 43

This piece came at a time when I felt like giving up or that I was too small to make a difference.

ORLANDO JUAREZ, *Methane Couids-Levi Watson*, p. 137

I made this video using my best friend's song as the soundtrack. It holds many easy to follow, but touching subjects.

RYAN KELIPIO, *Our Dying Game*, p. 20

Baseball is losing popularity in our country and I feel like my childhood is dying along with it.

LAURIE KENNEDY, *The Road*, p. 101

I walk all over Clark County, and always enjoy capturing the memory of it through photography.

YURIY KUPRIKOV, *Sundial Clock*, p. 8

Time never stops, even in winter, and is why this piece came to be.

MADELINE KUSCH, *The Eye of Deception*, p. 34

This piece shows off my love for abstract art.

KALLISTA LEVESQUE, *Rerun*, p. 26

To me, this painting represents the way people idealize the past as being "a more simple time."

ANNIE LEE, *Line Study*, p. 69

We were asked to do a line study in one of my classes. Having labored many hours, this is the result.

DANIELLE LICHTY, *Layers*, p. 75

This piece represents the simple, versus complex, layers of life that create our whole.

KATIE LOMBARDO, *Lake Merwin Sunset*, p. 102

I went on a hike right before sunset and the sky was one of the most beautiful I have ever seen.

MEGAN LORENZ, *All Mixed Up*, p. 128

I didn't want to waste all the leftover paint I had from other works, so I reused them to create this abstract.

MEGAN LORENZ, *Remembrance*, p. 51

I did this piece as a remembrance of Michael Clark Duncan. He died just before this illustrative assignment was given to me.

SAMANTHA MARTIN, *Camera and Flashlight*, p. 31

I was inspired by a wildlife photographer from the 1800s who captured images at night with just a flashlight and his camera.

SAMANTHA MARTIN, *Self Portrait*, p. 35

This piece combines many of my favorite things all contained within the shape of my silhouette.

NADIA MARTINEZ, *Drop and Drag Ink*, p. 22

This was an experiment where the shapes and lines were created by dragging a cup that was dipped in ink along the paper.

NADIA MARTINEZ, *Lola*, p. 67

You can create a new style of art using patterns, textures and a unique point-of-view, and it can be an inspiration for others.

CHRIS MASONER, *Dark Soul*, p. 66

I tried to capture the idea that no matter how beautiful we are, we all have a dark side.

CHRIS MASONER, *The Ending*, p. 137

My inspiration was a photo by Gregory Crewdson and my goal was to recreate the image in my own way.

KATERINA MCCANN, *Black Vine Dresser*, p. 66

My goal with this piece was to push my limits and gain knowledge in metal fabrication.

KATERINA MCCANN, *Swirl Necklace and Bracelet*, p. 99

An experiment with lost wax casting was the impetus for this work.

KATERINA MCCANN, *Asa Necklace*, p. 54

My goal for this necklace design was creating personality and emotion from a blank object.

JEFF MERRITT, *City Art Rising*, p. 4

This piece focuses on the use of line and is made of nineteen different photographs of the same sculpture from different angles.

MELLISSA MITCHELL, *In the Windows of Other People's Dreams*, p. 113

Through this image of a window, a person can imagine anything and paint any story they wish.

RIZALETTE MONTEVERDE, *Wishes*, p. 76

A Japanese legend says, if you fold a thousand origami cranes, you will be granted a wish.

GENNETTA "JET" MOORE, *Mishima*, p. 90

My teacher, Lisa Conway, introduced me to *mishima*, a slip inlay technique from Japan. I love the effect it gives these pieces.

SHIRLEY MORGAN, *Two Vessels*, p. 6

I was inspired by pots I saw at an Asian art exhibit. They had a powerful presence I wanted to recreate.

TARA OMNES, *Clothesline*, p. 28

Taken while at a friend's house, this photo is a reminder of the day my children first had an opportunity to ride horses.

CHRIS PACANINS, *Young Brazilian*, p. 72

While on a mission to Jundiai, Brazil, I took photos of the kids making goofy faces. This particular boy gave the best expressions.

SCOTT PEDERSON, *Slain Dragon, Aftermath*, p. 60

This painting's goal is to provide a reenvisioned alternative to the brutal power fantasy of slaying a dragon.

EDGAR PAUL PELOQUIN, *Lady Bug Gall*, p. 143

I stumbled across a ladybug checking out this gall, which was left behind from the previous year on the host plant.

DANIEL POWELL, *Self Portrait*, p. 44

The idea for this photo came to me while watching a music video, which faded to black in one scene.

LAUREN PUCCI, *The Beauty In Chaos*, p. 128

This piece represents me. I love getting lost in my art, creating something from nothing.

CARMAN PUTNAM, *Clay in Motion*, p. 9

I really wanted to showcase the motion that clay goes through while on the wheel.

MARJIE RADER, *Ev'oil'lution*, p. 24

This piece brings attention to the problem of plastic pollution.

JOSHUA RAMIREZ, *The Shot*, p. 88

Inspired by Michael Jordan's famous 1989 buzzer-beating, game-winning shot in the NBA playoffs, my photo tries to capture what Henri Cartier-Bresson termed "the decisive moment."

GABRIELA RAMOS, *Para la Niña*, p. 80

Before creating this piece, I hadn't touched a paintbrush or sketchpad in years. My love for art has come back into my life and I can't wait to see what else I can do.

ADRIAN RIBEIRO, *Fiesta With a Jalapeno on the Side*, p. 90

Held up by only three legs and featuring a vivid red interior that stands out, I like that this piece creates a unique space and style.

SHAWN RICHARDSON, *Wasteland #1 and #2*, p. 130

I wanted to create a photographic documentation of deforestation in the Pacific Northwest.

MACEY RICHERT, *A Million Shiny Boxes*, p. 53

This piece was inspired by a video from Hank Green, who is known for his *VlogBrothers* channel on *YouTube*.

JENNIFER JANE RODRIQUEZ, *Zanahoria y Ojo*, p. 28

This was my first ceramics project and took me from the beginning of the quarter through the last two weeks to create.

WILLIAM RUSHING, *The Ferris Hub*, p. 55

This poster was inspired by the work of Hugh Ferriss.

WILLIAM RUSHING, *Hyde in Plain Sight*, p. 124

This work was inspired by the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde..

JESSICA SCHIFFER, *Ink Stories*, p. 112

I wanted to capture the emotional relationships between people and their tattoos.

JON SCHWARTZ, *Information Overload*, p. 125

This sculpture depicts a person's head exploding due to all the information they were exposed to while on the web.

TROY SCOTT, *Conflict and Choice*, p. 23

I'm fascinated and drawn to people's stories. Our experiences unite us.

GAYLA SHANAHAN, *Yes, No, Maybe*, p. 77

This piece is a critique of the rapid pace modern life.

ANNA SHAUFFER, *Self-Portrait*, p. 24

In this self-portrait, I worked to accurately capture the range of shading across my face.

IGOR SHEVCHENKO, *The Red Cat*, p. 30

There is a pretty cool little guy hidden inside this painting, that others may or may not see.

LITERARY CONTRIBUTOR STATEMENTS

ENA SHIPMAN, *Broccoli Dream*, p. 8

This was my first ceramics project and it helped me to fall in love with this medium.

ENA SHIPMAN, *Rhodo with Leaves*, p. 49

I am trying to capture the form of blackberry leaves in this piece.

NATALIE SKLYAROVA, *Pepper*, p. 32

My aunt has a floral business so I was inspired to create a vase for her to possibly use in her store. I just love exotic flowers.

MARY SIMKO, *Painted Dishes*, p. 48

These pieces remind me of my Gram's dishes from Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

BETH-ANN STEMPIEN, *Stairs*, p. 10

This work draws attention to our surroundings and focuses on the implications of a single moment.

DEREK ST MARY-TRYON, *Wasted*, p. 27

This piece is a reflection on a stage in my life where I went through rebellion and self-discovery to find out who I really was. Drawing this helped me reflect on my past. My youth was one big mess.

ALLISON TYLER, *The Night Prowler*, p. 82

This image is based on a photograph of a wolf I saw and I thought it was so beautiful that I decided to try to capture all the detail of the silver, velvety fur in just pencil and paper.

ALEXANDRA VELYCHKO, *Monkey See*, p. 73

This story reveals the lives of one family through the eyes of a stuffed monkey.

ERICA VOLLMER, *Snorri, A Moss Faerie*, p. 98

I feel guided by the ancient spirits that reside within the moss and trees of Washington state.

LILY YE, *Psyche Trinitas*, p. 29

These three figures represent this quote by Picasso: If Cubism is an art of transition, I am sure that the only thing that will come out of it is another form of Cubism.

LILY YE, *Time Travel*, p. 46

I represented time travel with a butterfly's metamorphosis.

BRADLEY YORK, *Match Day*, p. 127

This piece captures the passion and excitement in *The Timbers' Army*.

BRADLEY YORK, *Robo*, p. 52

This work is important to me because it reminds me of being young and playing with my toys.

OREST ZAVEDYUK, *From Romania and 70s Brick Wall*, p. 103

The *70s Brick Wall* was my first bowl project and I was curious to see how it would turn out, but I think it is my second best piece. *From Romania* is for my mom because only the best will do for her.

JAMIE SPADY, *Apples for Oranges*

Writing this story allowed me to explore a fictional land that wasn't a replica of medieval England and dabble with concepts that are often ignored in the fantasy genre.

MEGAN FINN, *Lost and Found*

This story was a chance for me to explore the meaning of the quote given for this year's Phoenix. What is art really? What does it mean for people? And does it always have the same meaning for everyone?

ELISHA FELICIANO, *Cold* . . .

There were a few concepts that I wanted to communicate with this story. After some contemplation, I realized that a great connecting point between human beings is tragedy.

LINDSEY PARKER, *Alabaster*

Writing has grown from a childhood habit to a lifelong passion and an excuse for me to avoid doing things I probably should be doing. Pan and his story are simply one of the many adventures that is busy making a racket in my head.

BRIDGET ELESON, *No Regrets*

When writing this story, I tried to put myself in the shoes of a hard-working mother who loved her son but wrestled with his identity. I hope that I've done Rodney and Agnes and Edith some justice.

CHAD WILSON, *The End of Something*

This story is important to me because it's not about the painful conclusion to a once passionate relationship. It's the moments just before it ends, when the love has died away, just before either lover have realized the loss.

KESHA FISHER, *Thief*

While spending an adolescent summer abroad, with every bit of attention from men towards me, there was my older sister with a ready word about the worst case scenario. This work developed from what happened when I allowed my sister's words to get into my head.

MICHELLE GILBERT, *Catharine-wheel Live*

Catharine-wheels are a firework named after a torture instrument. I wrote this poem with the world in mind--where matters seem needlessly complicated.

MICHAEL HAIR, *Unregretful Weekend*

I wrote this to capture the feeling of a vacation I took with my wife to celebrate her birthday in Newport, Oregon. We also ended up celebrating something else--our engagement.

MARK HOVER, *Autumn Leaf*

This was read at my friend's memorial service that I could not attend. I wrote it to wrestle my feelings and put words to them

LINDSAY MARTINEZ, *What Lies in the Dark*

Shadowy figures and trees with claws don't exist on a stroll during the day, only at night. I wanted to capture the simple difference in feeling between night and day.

MEGHANNE SHIPE, *Adytum*

I wrote the majority of this poem while on a plane. The sun was beginning to set as it took off and I immediately felt inspired. It was so beautiful I simply could not look away.

RENEE SOASEY, *A Postcard to My Ex*

This is the final exclamation point on one woman's struggle to find courage for a self-directed, independent life. It's personally important because this woman is me.

ERICA VOLLMER, *Gemstones and Serpent Bones*

This poem was inspired by the mystery of nature and fairy tales. I wanted to write my own fairy tale that expresses the soul-freeing magic you can find in a forest.

ROSIE WEATHERS-GOVAN, *My Child*

I was in the military and my unit was scheduled to deploy. I wanted to leave my 3-month old daughter with my feelings and my words on paper, just in case I didn't return.



Lady Bug Gall ☼ Digital Photo
EDGAR PAUL PELOQUIN



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Body text was set with Chapparral Pro. Section heads were set with Optimus Princeps.



Ink Splatter ☼ Ink on Bristol
PAUL BUSH