Our final fold of 2019 is a celebration of the great creators whose work has been a part of the Mastheads this year. They include: Historical figures of the Gilded Age Berkshires: James Van Der Zee, Edith Wharton, Henry James, Mark Twain, W.E.B. DuBois. Commissioned visual artist: Felt banners by Megan Craig. Writers in Residence: Toni Judnitch, Rachael Uwada Clifford, S. Erin Batiste, Sum Mix, James Davis, and Fireside poets: The Third Grade Class at Morningside Community School.

Thank you for participating in the Mastheads!

Tessa Kelly, Sarah Trudgeon, Jeffrey Lawrence, Chris Parkinson
If you're alone in the dark, there are things you can do. You can count to one hundred. You can look at the plastic planets glowing green on the walls and grown on the floors because they fell down, the tape wouldn't stick to them. You can press your fingers into your eyelids until you see white spots all over your vision. You can wait and wait and wait because you are alone. You are alone, and you can't sleep, and it's okay not to sleep sometimes, Jake says this sometimes, it's okay to stay up all night, and then you can sleep all day, and you are alone, and it all works out. It does.

Sometimes, when you and Vera wait, you ask each other questions. What happens to bugs when it rains? What does it feel like to be a crow flying in a thunderstorm? Is it scary? Is it fun? What does it look like inside an anthill and if you pour water on it, what happens? What does it feel like to be all alone? Do your rooms fill up? What does lake foam taste like? Is it salty? What happens when the sun goes out and it's dark all the time? What happens when? How do they know it's going to rise anyway? And in the dark the questions feel bigger, they feel giant, and so you have to stop thinking about them.

You can count. You can count again. By twos. By threes. You can look out the window and try to see something. You can wait, and the sun comes up eventually; it does, and it's you and you are waiting on the bed with the crinkly plastic sheets when the boys come, and they say, breakfast. They say, mom, mom, mom, and she is, on the floor, her arms spread out like a bird. But you don't have a mother. Your mother is under dirt somewhere, and it's easier not to know. It's easier, you know this now; and it's easy to let the led you lead you into the small kitchen, where the water from the hose hammers buds into the toaster, and there is nothing to put in it, the tub of butter is growing green, and the hamburger buns have circles of blue, but you don't have to say anything, you can stand there and smell them burn. And when the smaller boy hands you a piece, and it's bllock, and he asks you, why don't you talk, you can shrug. You can eat what you've given.

You have a shirt that's not your shirt, and you don't know where your clothes are. You ask the boys, and they shrug. They say, maybe in the wash, maybe thrown out. Yeah, maybe they're in the trash, they say, and they step on a little button on the can in the kitchen, and you can look in there, but there's only eggshells and pieces of plastic. You can keep looking. There is a big pile of laundry in the other room on the floor, and somewhere in that pile is your clothes, and in your clothes the piece of paper sits crumpled with the phone number on it, and now it's lost. Now the paper is gone. You lost it.
SAM MAX
Natural History is a play that follows four teenage boys who were involuntarily grouped together to complete a school project in the woods. Excerpt:

Silas speaks to the audience.

Silas
So you’re on this road trip in 2001, right?

It’s you and your sister and your mom and your dad. All four of you are driving through the Midwest to your aunt’s house in Kalamazoo. You’ve been sitting on your asses for like five straight hours. The end credits for the first Spy Kids is playing on the in-dash DVD player. And what really starts to horrify you is that someone’s penned the video on the name “Adam Cummings.” It’s not the name that’s scary, it’s the fact that the screen’s been stuck like that for a full century. The name “Adam Cummings” looks like it’s supposed to be in motion, but someone paused it right at the moment his name is supposed to sweep across the screen, finally transitioning to a different godforsaken name.

Over the past two hours of the film everyone has become permanently damaged. Your family is主義. And no one cares to actually shut the movie fully off. No one even wanted to watch the movie in the first place. But have you. You finished it. You swallowed it whole, like a programmed fucking automaton, while your mom passed at her BlackBerry.

“This is not what winners do,” is a thought you have. “This is not what being a winner feels like.” Something has seared your body, and you’ve wasted your life, but you can’t do anything because you’re stuck in a car that smells like a congealed carton of milk, and it’s hurrying through spaces, and if you get out, if you just pull your body out of the door and onto the highway like a dumb fog, the consequences will be much worse.

The Michigan-bound hell-machine glides on. And everyone is breathing through their mouths. You’re not hungry but you could consider being hungry.

But your sister? Well, she passed out halfway through the movie, and now she’s waking up and she’s licking her tooth. She just decided she’s ready to murder someone with a pair of rusty fingernail clippers for some food.

And what’s worse? There aren’t regular restaurants for miles, and your sister is threatening to rip out every single one of her head hairs if she doesn’t soon eat. Your whole family quickly realizes that you’re all going to have to bend to a tiny person’s forceful whims. The only way out is to feed your parasite.

The birds on the telephone wires peter out. They give way to an enormous yellow sign. And that.

That’s when you realize you’re going to have to eat at the Golden Corral.

A pause

There’s nothing as depressing as being strung along for something you don’t want.

[acak] for shutting up heaven[acak] for the word[acak] for the beauty of men[acak] for, believe it or not,[acak] for Flannery O’Connor[acak] for Nietzsche[acak] for the Bible, its many horrors and absurdities and ditties and arcana[acak] for the Tao Te Ching[acak] for being way cooler than church[acak] for existing and not existing[acak] for disinterring my live-buried childhood, brushing the soil off its body, pumping air in its lungs, and making it speak the terrible things it had been led to believe:

love never lasts
not even the other faggots want you
love never lasts
you have been left for dead
not even the other faggots want you

sore, crying until my tear ducts bubbled
and yoga mats and gay-church pews, crying until my throat was

insurance agency, on the Free Mall Ride, on therapists’ couches
puling, snot, silent tears in grocery aisles, on hold with the

for needing sobs and wails, screams into throw pillows, bawling and

for needing more than words
for leaving me at a loss for words

You were watching the movie.

Adam brings his head up.

Ta, God,
for shutting the fuck up
for teaching me to appreciate k.d. lang
for slowing my roll, as the kids say
for teaching me to appreciate k.d. lang

Ta, my depression,
for being way cooler than church
for existing and not existing
for disinterring my live-buried childhood, brushing the soil off its body,
Pumping air in its lungs, and making it speak the terrible things it had been led to believe:

love never lasts
not even the other faggots want you
love never lasts
you have been left for dead
not even the other faggots want you

sore, crying until my tear ducts bubbled
and yoga mats and gay-church pews, crying until my throat was

insurance agency, on the Free Mall Ride, on therapists’ couches
puling, snot, silent tears in grocery aisles, on hold with the

for needing sobs and wails, screams into throw pillows, bawling and

for needing more than words
for leaving me at a loss for words

You were watching the movie.

Adam brings his head up.

The Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary

See “complete.”


See “beginner.” See “finisher.” See “discrete” (not “discreted”).

See “complete.”

from Ta

“an expression of gratitude”

The Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary

Ta, my depression,
for the day, work
for teaching me to appreciate k.d. lang
for slowing my roll, as the kids say
for disinterring my live-buried childhood, brushing the soil off its body,
Pumping air in its lungs, and making it speak the terrible things it had been led to believe:

love never lasts
not even the other faggots want you
love never lasts
you have been left for dead
not even the other faggots want you

sore, crying until my tear ducts bubbled
for not being about anything
for raising your voice loud enough for me to acknowledge you
for shutting the fuck up

Ta, God,
for existing and not existing
for being non-binary that way: real and fake, a quantum
for being way cooler than church
for the banality of blasphemy for the Bhagavad Gita for the Tao Te Ching for the Bible, its many horrors and absurdities and ditties and arcana for Paradise Lost for Leibnitz for Nietzsche for Flannery O’Connor for, believe it or not, Game of Thrones for the beauty of men

the melodious of their stomachs and legs
their thick, husky eyebrows
their stupid pouts and exaggeratedrimples
their cubist chests and cocks and posterior

for the word outgrow for shutting down heaven
for shutting down hell

See “the first tone in the diatonic musical scale”
- to begin and carry through to completion

The Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary

See “ha.”
See “ms.”
See “am” and “be”
See “to” and “go.”

See “fag.”
See “lurk” and “lur.”
See “how” and “rum.”
See “why” and “you.”
See “out” and “now.”

See “echo.”
See “here” (here).
See “kiss” (talk).
See “home” (prof).
See “done” (genus).

See “major.”
See “sharp.”
See “panic.”
See “drones,” “yourn,” “alon.”

See “prayer” and “closset” and “church” and “family” and “fucked” and “filthy” and “farts.”

See “honesty.”
See “abandon.”
See “goodbye.”
See “forward.”
See “through.”
See “beginner.”
See “finisher.”
See “discrete” (not “discreted”).

See “complete.”

Bo

“a pal...”

The Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary

An oh short of honey, my friend-zone bo.
A why short of youth, my god bo.
An all American homey wim, my unmanic bo.
A bo short of homeless, my sheltered, privileged bo.
A gum short of crook, my bland. Yankos bo.
A lo short of queer, my ciqstener, heteros bo.

Au natural, my crunchy, granola bo.
Not Hollywood gold, nor slickieron bo.
A Cruaglut compromise, my $25 o bo.

A terror dance, my jangling Mister Bo.
Kind of a scheme, my so-so, bobs bo.
We see each other, though.
Good people—my dude, my bo.

Do

“the first tone in the diatonic musical scale”
- to begin and carry through to completion

The Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary

Upon entering the garden, you see a group of people gathered around a large stone. They appear to be engaged in some sort of activity. You approach them, and they momentarily look up at you with surprised expressions. You can see that they are all artists or performers, dressed in colorful costumes. One of them, a woman with long, flowing hair, greets you warmly and invites you to join in their performance. She hands you a pair of shiny, silver-colored objects that appear to be some kind of musical instruments. You are hesitant at first, not knowing what to expect, but the woman encourages you to try it out. She adjusts the instruments and guides your hands, showing you how to play them. As you begin to play, you notice that the sounds produced are unlike anything you’ve ever heard before—clear, crisp, haunting. The audience around you begins to humming along, and the rhythm becomes more complex and rhythmical. You feel yourself being swept up in the moment, lost in the music and the movement of the performance. The woman next to you, sensing your delight, joins in with you, her voice blending perfectly with your own. The crowd around you is now fully engaged, clapping and cheering as you continue to play together. You feel a sense of community and unity, a shared experience of joy and beauty. The performance ends with a round of applause, and you find yourself in a state of elation, feeling grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of such a memorable event.
I Love Orange
Orange Orange Orange I love oranges. I love orange. I love the citrus ginger orange on a tiger. I love the sweet orange on a peach pie.
I love the orange on my favorite butterfly leaf. I love the orange ginger on Ma. Goura’s cute little mice. I love the orange on the mermaid’s fur. I love the orange on a sweet moon. I love the tint orange on my doll’s fluffy fur. I love the orange on my favorite bow.

The Mountains
A mountain is a dinosaur in the ground that’s covered in grass. The mountain is cheddar cheese. The mountain is a Fortress victory royal. The mountains are the Rubicon sound. The mountain is a car that drive at night. The mountains are Godzilla. The mountains are from moon bears that can live in summer. The mountains are being a death skin. The mountains are stars that are hanging their tails. The mountains are we on a crazy hair day. The mountains are sad when it rains.

I am like a blue shining sky and I am like a shining moon. I look like my sister

HASSLE CORTES MENDOZA
Repeat Lies
I am a sunny heart and I am in a golden dream.
The universe is purple. The stars are white and the earth is lava.
My garden is blank paper my house is a book of princes and I am the king of the universe.

I wish every day it was my birthday. I wish every day it was my birthday. I wish I could do whatever I want. I wish every day it was my birthday.

DOMINIC UNDERHILL SANTIAGO
The Mountains
A mountain is a dinosaur in the ground that’s covered in grass. The mountain is cheddar cheese. The mountain is a Fortress victory royal. The mountains are the Rubicon sound. The mountain is a car that drive at night. The mountains are Godzilla. The mountains are from moon bears that can live in summer. The mountains are being a death skin. The mountains are stars that are hanging their tails. The mountains are we on a crazy hair day. The mountains are sad when it rains.

I am like a blue shining sky and I am like a shining moon. I look like my sister

LENNY MANON
I am a sunny heart and I am in a golden dream.
The universe is purple. The stars are white and the earth is lava.
My garden is blank paper my house is a book of princes and I am the king of the universe.

Is the day warm? Is the day warm? Is the day warm? Is the day warm? I am a sunny heart and I am in a golden dream. The universe is purple. The stars are white and the earth is lava. My garden is blank paper my house is a book of princes and I am the king of the universe.

3RD GRADE COLLABORATION
Poetry
Poetry is a candy bomb
Poetry is a floating baby star
Poetry is my bird singing in the water
Poetry is a word that means a lot of things
Poetry is stars which are cupcake
Poetry is a monkey jumping over the school
Poetry is a birthday
Poetry is my home
Poetry is a fish in a pool of lava
Poetry is a collapsing building
Poetry is a cyber crystal
Poetry is comedy
Poetry is anything
Poetry is a tree
Poetry is a pencil in the ocean
Poetry is ice cream with a rainbow on top
Poetry is music to my ears
Poetry is the brightness that's in space
Poetry is a blooming flower
Poetry is like the ground is back forth and forth
Poetry is like 1,000 people cheering
Poetry is a castle
Poetry is my favorite song

LESNIEC MATTHIES
I Love Orange
Orange Orange Orange I love oranges. I love orange. I love the citrus ginger orange on a tiger. I love the sweet orange on a peach pie.
I love the orange on my favorite butterfly leaf. I love the orange ginger on Ma. Goura’s cute little mice. I love the orange on the mermaid’s fur. I love the orange on a sweet moon. I love the tint orange on my doll’s fluffy fur. I love the orange on my favorite bow.

The Mountains
A mountain is a dinosaur in the ground that’s covered in grass. The mountain is cheddar cheese. The mountain is a Fortress victory royal. The mountains are the Rubicon sound. The mountain is a car that drive at night. The mountains are Godzilla. The mountains are from moon bears that can live in summer. The mountains are being a death skin. The mountains are stars that are hanging their tails. The mountains are we on a crazy hair day. The mountains are sad when it rains.

I am like a blue shining sky and I am like a shining moon. I look like my sister

HASSLE CORTES MENDOZA
Repeat Lies
I am a sunny heart and I am in a golden dream.
The universe is purple. The stars are white and the earth is lava.
My garden is blank paper my house is a book of princes and I am the king of the universe.

Is the day warm? Is the day warm? Is the day warm? Is the day warm? I am a sunny heart and I am in a golden dream. The universe is purple. The stars are white and the earth is lava. My garden is blank paper my house is a book of princes and I am the king of the universe.