

# snaggletooth

Issue 2  
Fall 2018





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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Our goal as a magazine is to document and celebrate the quality of the art produced at Bates. We believe that this issue is a testament to that goal. Through our new workshops and consistent staff meetings, we've begun to build a community of individuals interested in cultivating a supportive and collaborative attitude towards creative writing. Thank you so much to everyone who joined us for the workshops; thank you to our energetic and talented (if sometimes distracted) staff; thank you to Jess Anthony, our faculty advisor; and thank you to WRBC for their continued support.

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COVER  
*European Tour*  
Oil on treated paper  
Lily Kip  
2018

*Volcano*  
film photography  
Josh Klein  
2018



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## On Time

I watch the loaves of bread  
    rising in the oven –  
the tiny creatures feeding, swelling;  
    glutenous strands  
    crystallizing around their deaths  
to form a solid frame.

    It's almost 1am –  
it's daylight savings. The clock ticks  
    beside the oven  
as the bread crackles, peels  
    away from the pan,  
as my pulse thuds,  
as the carpenter ants  
    chew away at the timber framing –  
thousands of bodies  
    orbiting one malicious mind  
    intent on devouring  
    this home  
    from the inside out.

Time eats itself to death.  
Or shall I go outside and plant a pine tree?  
    Watch it grow tall,  
    fell it, then mill the wood  
    into a new beam?

Oh fuck I burned the bread.

I turn back the clock  
    but daylight savings won't salvage  
    the scorching.  
But that's okay –  
    the taste is a reminder  
    of mortality, isn't it?  
Dead poets  
    with their heads in the oven –  
Time counts itself to death.  
    And the old fat lobsters  
    molting in a rocky crevice –  
    what of them?  
Is their time a dying?  
Or a swelling?

*-Jessie Saffair*



Untitled  
digital photography  
Sophie Cohen  
2018

Altagracia

Water boils unwatched on the stove  
as flies descend upon the sugar bowl.  
The lights will not turn on

until tomorrow, if then. The night licks jowls  
that lather at their hinges. Scroll of tongue unrolls.  
Water boils unwatched on the stove

and in the seas, battering the tourists and their towels.  
A man shoots an angry horse. They both mourn the dead foal.  
The lights will not turn on

in the daytime. This morning, the Spanish tile smells foul,  
the once-white cement a shade closer to charcoal.  
Water boils unwatched on the stove.

Throw it out. Gone, the old-faced lady who sits on her porch and scowls.  
Gone, the loose-toothed woman and her swollen belly, blood cold and  
Creole.  
The lights will not turn on

again, nor should they. In the distance, a wife and mother howls  
for what she has lost, lone hands pruning in the washbowl.  
Water boils unwatched on the stove.  
The lights will not turn on.

*-Maria Gray*



*Stolen Clippers 3*  
film photography  
Josh Klein  
2018





*Gestural Man*  
charcoal on paper  
Alexandra Teplitz  
2016

Irrational Expression

Listen —

When the veterans' cemetery was deemed full to capacity  
and therefore closed to newer, less exquisite corpses,

I thought of my friend L and the mathematics of mourning.  
I recalled her asymptotic suicide, the hurt of nearly brushing zero.

I thought of the sharks in the rivers of her mother's womb,  
the Vista Bridge's underbelly and how it was roped off

with yellow tape as if to indicate a surgery. Listen, I know  
the accidents will happen. Little boys dry drown

every day, even when their pools are filled with holy water.  
Listen, I loved her like I love the rare good hair day

or orange sunset or whiteness of new shoes,  
which is to say, while they last. I am bankrupt,

lovingly. Everything good comes on a loan from God  
and you will be widowed before the wedding.

Scar tissue like a new, too-shiny apartment complex,  
healing reluctantly over the hurt. Inside my ribcage

is a wild mare. Please try to understand:  
I have seen all the wild there is to see,

and still, she stands.

*-Maria Gray*

## Grandfather Clocks on the Island

There were grandfather clocks drifting in the clouded  
ocean where time did not occur to me  
except when I would look upon  
the face of these invisible clocks bobbing up and down in the waves  
    we called the big waves 'oh nellies'  
and the clocks were as demanding and real as a splinter  
    get out of where you don't belong  
I swear they were there  
sometimes by themselves  
soft wood shining in the sunlight,  
but sometimes drawers and other bits of furniture accompanied them,  
a whole living room drifting away  
where, placed indoors, we'd find ourselves sitting on them  
staring at the same screen at the same time  
    what did we think about then,  
    probably just the same old thoughts about  
    Indiana Jones and how magnificent he was  
and then we would come out to the water.

I was fascinated with the waterlogged wood,  
watching its oscillations in silence,  
feeling the ocean become my bedroom.

I swam with my guests not knowing their shapes  
    not even knowing they were there  
but feeling them circling below my feet that didn't reach the ground  
    back then, I'd go far out till my mother waving on the shore  
    was smaller than my sand-caked fingernail  
    my back would be stinging  
    because I was always a rotten liar about sunscreen,  
    the sand on the board rubbing the burnt skin raw  
going home in the evening meant  
the good kind of tired  
and a shower to wash off the sand from the day,  
    over time the fear of water  
    creeping  
but I never thought about the time of day.

And new,  
And now,  
When I stand on the beach I let my feet sink into the sand  
    I am fixed by the minute hand breaking over my head  
    and each stroke makes me more permanent  
until the tops of my burned feet are buried  
    but the clocks are far away perhaps they drifted beyond the horizon.

*-Anna Mangum*



*Abdullah II Superman*  
film photography  
Josh Klein  
2018





*Kickball at Hassan II Mosque, Casablanca*  
film photography  
Josh Klein  
2018

## War at Home Tonight

In the morning it is a specter hanging above the bed. Hovering above the room, letting out a low humming sound, spinning in restless circles.

Carin tosses aside the sheets and walks barefoot into the living room without looking at it. I watch it from my side of the bed, blankets bunched up around me. I have not slept. I do not think my wife has either. In the morning in October, the floorboards creak with the cold. My toes are bitter white, turning blue in the air. Her bones are aching too, I know. I can hear it. It's in the way she sometimes reaches her arm back over her right shoulder almost to her ribcage and pulls, trying to shift some pain. Now, in the kitchen, she's taking down the coffee pot with too much noise. I can hear it in that too.

The specter is watching me. It's filling up the ceiling, expanding like an oil spill across the rafters.

In the morning this season the maple tree in the yard is bristling yellow, dropping leaves. It's through the bedroom window now as I put on a robe, put on loafers. The specter follows me into the living room, through the hall to where Carin is standing at the sink with the coffee pot, broken—long thin fissures splinter through what remains of the glass. Hot coffee and blood simmer with the shards on the floor.

"I dropped it."

I nod.

Carin steps around the glass and toward the living room. Bloody footprints trail behind her on the floorboards; the specter watches her, then turns to me and shrugs its thin shoulders. These days it's growing opaque. Sometimes I see an eye, swirling in the grey.

I look away from the mess at the sink and through the window. The tree is making its steady way from yellow to orange. The color asserts itself against the pines lining the property, mocks the burnt out barn and its soggy char. We used to have a dog, Milo, who lied under the tree in the summer when it was too hot to roll in the sun. The tire tracks coming from the driveway have filled with dew overnight. At the edge of the yard there's a stone wall, older than us. The ground swell from last winter sent the upper boulders tumbling to the earth in every direction. I used to go out and gather up all the loose stones in the spring when the earth thawed and the mud was thick with dead leaves. One by one I would place them back into the empty spaces, rebuilding something that didn't want to be rebuilt, something that wanted to return to the ground. I am not sure why the wall is there -- we have no neighbors for several miles.

I make my way around the other side of the kitchen table and peer through the door into the dining room, where Carin sits at the table with a roll of ace bandage. There's blood dripping from her second smallest toe and from a deep cut in the callus of her heel. The shards she's pulled out of her skin lie in a puddle on the table. With one hand she holds her left foot in her lap, facing the sole toward her body. In her other hand she

wraps the bandage, slow and deliberate, around her ankle and heel. Years ago on a trip in the Whites, halfway down Mount Jefferson, Carin held my right leg with her two hands and tied a bandana around my upper thigh to stop the bleeding in my knee long enough to remove some gravel embedded in the wound. For a vacant moment, I consider if the blood on the table with the glass will stain the paint.

“You have nothing to say?” She doesn’t look up. Around her small pale toes she is winding the bandage, in and out and in again.

I am silent.

Carin sits back, and despite the state of her foot and the blood dripping down her legs, she looks a little glittery behind the eyes, like she is either about to make me cry or burst into tears herself.

“We can’t keep doing this, you know.” She looks at me.

“What do you mean?”

“Ignoring it.”

“Which ‘it’ are you referring to?”

“The fight. We never talk about these things.”

“Okay, then let’s talk.”

“I don’t know if I’m ready to talk.”

“Fine.” I detach myself from the doorframe and walk back into the kitchen. The specter doesn’t follow this time. Through the doorway I see it sail over and land on the chair opposite Carin, who looks at me, and then down, back at her bloody feet. It gathers his smoky body into itself and leans the apparition of a face onto the heels of its palms, pressing into two bent arms cradling its translucent chin. Expectant.

It’s sickening, so I turn away.

The night before we read our books side by side on the couch. Carin is reading an Alice Munroe collection. I have been working my way through *Ulysses*, something I should have read a long time ago, in college, in grad school. As a young academic. My students reference Faulker and quote David Foster Wallace, names attached to texts that I cannot assign any validity to. I read them of course, just as my students have, but verse is my mother tongue and narrative doesn’t interest me the same way. It’s so hard to take them seriously when all they care about are convoluted, poorly-veiled autobiographies with no taste, no music in them. But when they look at me, little beady eyes blinking from little creaking seats, waiting to peck my brains out, I feel the weight of everything they think they know more than me like the metaphorical anvil on my shoulders. In seminar they are ruthless. They postulate theory, they send me spinning trying to figure out if they are making fun of me or not.

I do not like *Ulysses*.

If my students knew this they would laugh. Instead I put on my somber professor face, look over the rims of my glasses at their blemished faces, and lash out. “Has anyone read in meter before? Explain to me how you arrive in a third year seminar and you are unable to tell me what sort of meter is used in *North of Boston*?” 100 level courses are better—the

general poetry surveys. I like my sciences students. They ask innocent questions and still put too much emphasis on metaphor. They don't think they know how to write their own poetry yet; they haven't learned to think that they are smarter than me.

If Carin knew I did not like *Ulysses* she would tell me to stop reading it. She would fix me with her wet brown eyes and ask me why I torture myself so, why I care what my students think. Carin likes her Alice Munroe collection. At meals she brings up the newest story she has finished. When she is through with the whole volume she wants me to read it.

Last night we sat on the couch until Carin fell asleep with the book open on her chest. Curled into the couch, breathing shallow and drooling onto a throw pillow.

The specter was keeping its distance, hovering in the far corner of the living room, entertaining itself by twisting around the lamp and watching the pale kerosene light shine through. As Carin snored, I watched it twirl into itself. I absently wanted a cigarette. I quit eighteen years ago, when we thought Carin might be pregnant. Not because she was pregnant, necessarily, but because she had wanted me to for so long and in a fit of the instability that comes with potential fatherhood, I conceded. When we found out she wasn't, I still wouldn't smoke. Instead we just stopped talking.

In the kitchen there's still glass and coffee on the floor and in the sink. Taking a sponge, I drop down to both of my knees and begin to wipe it into a puddle. It has dripped through the floorboards and the glass shards have caught in the grain of the old wood, warped by years of spilling and stepping.

In 1996 we bought the house from the estate of an old couple who had just died. They had not kept it well. Once they had raised goats and sheep in the barn out back. When we moved in, it was filled with hay and dried animal droppings. For the first few years, I spent weekends sweeping floors, patching siding and cleaning gutters. Carin painted and repaired indoors on days she wasn't working. The Middlebury Family Health Center is constantly filled with patients ranging from toe-stubbing injuries to women in labor. Few want to go to the emergency room. Carin is a pediatrician. She likes children. I never wanted to be a father.

As I think this, she walks into the kitchen, limping a little, trying not to put pressure on her left foot. There is a plum colored stain spreading through the bandage around her toes. If Carin deems this stain pressing and the injury critical, she will bring out her medical kit and sew the wound herself. I have seen her do this.

"Why are you doing that?"

"Because it's dangerous." I do not look up. I am trying to remove a larger piece of glass from between two particularly warped floorboards. The pointed edge is sticking straight up and I'm sure it's what Carin cut her foot on.

"Let me do it. I made the mess."

With a sharp cracking of bones and without bothering to check

if there is glass before she lands, Carin drops to her knees. I flinch. As she re-ties her robe with bloody hands, the specter drifts in behind her and hovers just above the ground a few feet away, peering at our activity. Carin's head is close to touching mine as we each search the coffee puddle for pieces of glass. When my palm is full of tiny shards, I sit back on my heels. Carin does as well, looks at me, sighs, and then leans forward and kisses me on the forehead. I close my eyes.

"Carin," I whisper. "What are we going to do about the barn?"

"Good riddance, honestly."

The specter watches this small mercy, nodding.

A long time ago we used to talk about its presence more. A horror, a hurt, and then finally, gratefully, a joke.

In the lamplight the night before I could see the smoke swirling around within the faint shape it takes, of a man or a woman, of something from a long time ago. I watched it as it lifted itself and drifted toward Carin, muttering in her sleep on the couch. For the moment I was frozen in a dream, watching it hover and then begin to gather itself around her, twisting in the half light of the living room. It could've been dancing, twirling its strange body around and around her.

I'm not sure where the specter came from. I began to notice it when we weren't getting along, slinking down the hall, poking its head around corners. I didn't know if Carin saw it at first, until she started talking to it when she thought I couldn't hear. Last night as I watched it wind itself around my wife, as it began to hum some low-pitched song, some old fear boiled up inside me, somewhere in my chest. I felt myself stand, watched the specter stop, and place two arms on Carin's shoulders, an act of protection.

"Hey," I said. The specter maintained eye contact, bobbing up and down above my sleeping wife. "Fuck off."

I don't know if I expected it to say anything back, but it made me angry. Everything is lost when you're angry enough that you can feel it in your body, like your nerves are coiled so tight that they're bound to explode, to burst up and out of you and then it's all out of your control. Last night I felt this, watching the specter watch me watch it leaning over my wife and continued to hum, I picked up Ulysses in my right hand, cocked my arm back, and shouted as it flew across the room and sailed right through the specter.

"Get out!"

Carin woke with a start and the specter shook itself off and away from her. It flew through the living room and into the doorway to the kitchen.

"Leave!" I walked after it, fists at either side of my body.

"What—" Carin said, trying to gather what had just happened.

"Carin, let me deal with this. I want it gone."

"Did you throw your book? What—what are you—"

She followed me into the kitchen where the specter was hovering next to the breakfast table, growing taller and smaller with each movement, moving in and out of itself, the eyes growing opaque and blinking



rapidly. Looking around for a moment, I snatched the broom from where it leaned next to the refrigerator, holding it upside down in two hands, poised like a batter with the head towards the ceiling. "Out!" I shouted again. The specter only shrugged. I began to swat it towards the door, shouting "Out! Out! Leave! Get the fuck out!" as it backed itself towards the back door.

"He can't go through the walls." Carin was standing calmly behind me, arms crossed in her nightgown and robe.

"What?"

"You have to open the door."

"What?" She let out an exasperated sigh, walked over, and tugged open the door. A rush of cold air blew into the kitchen as the specter slipped out into the night, humming still. I followed, broom in hand. Outside in the night I started yelling in earnest and couldn't stop. My lungs couldn't carry all the sound I needed as I swiped at the specter and chased it around the yard, it watched me, incredulous the whole time. "Why won't you leave?" I shouted, as it settled in the old barn in the far corner of the yard and I stood in the grass, watching it hover by the lawnmower. Back in the doorway of the house, through the boughs of the maple tree, all swallowed up in the leaves and too far to hear the specter's humming song, I could see Carin standing, backlit, shaking her head. I could've turned, I could've called back. For a moment, the specter stopped bobbing, and went completely still as I turned back to it, away from Carin. All I could think was that I needed it gone, that I wanted it out of our house, out of our lives. To my right, an old lantern and a box of matches sat on the tool bench. Keeping one eye on the specter, I moved towards the bench, lit the lantern, and began looking for something, anything flammable.

As I splashed John Deere motor oil all across the old bales of hay, the couch we no longer used, and the boxes of filing from years and years of cohabitating, the specter watched me. As I walked back to the entrance, tossed the lantern back into the oil, and slid the door closed, I could see it watching me, stock still.

Carin was shouting then, running into the yard in her nightgown and robe, waving the landline and cursing me for turning off the outdoor water early this year, seeing the flames lick up the sides of her barn and knowing what I had done.

The firemen came with their flashing lights and their enormous hoses and their clunky boots and drove all the way into the yard, past the tree, up to the barn. They were worried it would reach the edge of the yard, move past the stone wall and catch the forest alight. Forest fires are not common on the east coast but that doesn't mean they do not happen.

Against the night, the fire was burning high and bright, orange and yellow and red; and as I sat on the back steps with my head in my hands, I saw the specter, floating high above the fire among the trees. I thought I heard it humming.

Carin stood clutching her robe, the landline in her right hand in a fist.

Today in the kitchen we have finished picking up the glass and I have retrieved the mop from the pantry, the broom charred and soaking in the barn now. Carin rises to her feet, holding her back with her left hand. With a knuckle she massages something.

“Remember when we kept chickens for a summer?” She says.

“They all died when it snowed.”

“Right. It’s a good thing that didn’t last.” She laughs, to herself mostly. It has always made me uncomfortable when she tries to cope through humor.

Back and forth across the tangled floorboards I move, soaking coffee into the cotton tendrils of the mop head. The specter has taken up residence in the sink now, attempting to fit itself into the basin, lolling its head about.

“Good thing.” I say.

“I told them you were sleepwalking. I’m not sure if negligence constitutes arson but I was nervous.”

I nod. The mop head is heavy with coffee, I begin to move towards the back door to wring it out over the steps. Out of the corner of my right eye I see the specter, settled now in the sink, looking at me.

“Did you think you could kill it?” Carin seems to be talking more to herself than to me. The funny glittery look in her eyes is back, but she’s staring blankly at the sink. Before I touch the door handle, I pause. Coffee leaks from the mop, dripping to the floor. I realize I haven’t taken care of the bloody footprints, being so focused on the spilled coffee. Carin is looking at me; I raise my head to meet her eyes. To her left the specter is staring at me too, I shift my gaze and I feel as if we lock eyes, though it has none.

“I don’t know.” I say.

Carin turns her head and looks directly at the specter in the sink, the first time she has done so in years. It glances back and forth between us, pleased to have our attention. Across the kitchen I watch Carin watch the specter, lips twitching. Something in her face is struggling to land. I can see some thought forming in her head, disappearing, and then forming again.

“It’s been here for so long, I don’t know if you could get rid of it in one night. In one fire.” A pause. Carin closes her eyes and then opens them. “It will be okay—it has to. But I can’t believe you did that.” She’s speaking to me but she’s looking at the specter. It sways back and forth and bobs up and down in the sink, maintaining eye contact with my wife. It’s humming now.

“I don’t know what to say.” I look down at the mop in my hands. Carin turns and looks at me.

“Was there a time it wasn’t here? Wasn’t present?”

“I think so. A long, long time ago.”

“Funny.” She shakes her head. Again she looks to the specter.

“Such a long time ago.” I repeat. I lean the mop against the back door, careful not to let too much of the soaked coffee drip out onto the floor. A puddle of dirty brown water appears on the floorboards anyway.

With quiet steps I walk toward her, reach out my right hand, palm out flat, wet with coffee and dirt from our unwashed floor. For a moment we are a few feet apart, standing limp and old in our kitchen. Carin's foot is bleeding through the bandage. I am sure it is hurting her, but I know she will not let me help. "You're a doctor of books, not people," she will say.

Carin looks at my outstretched hand. She looks to the specter, a swirling mass of smoke, staring at us without eyes. Finally, she looks up at me.

*-Lily Kip*



*Midnight Hands*  
charcoal on paper  
Edén Rickolt  
2018

don't know you now

but i'm hoping you also can't erase  
that too-lovely-to-be-true evening,  
when we were most known to each other  
and yet deeply afraid, both of us,  
of not being what the other wanted.  
you almost left  
but i pulled you back onto me  
and held your face like it was  
some fragile wild newborn,  
could hardly kiss you  
for not wanting to disturb the water.  
and somewhere knew that these  
moments of doubt  
were the poetry we lived on.

you poor, gorgeous muse,  
i contemplated you like verse,  
fed like a parasite on the salt  
in your eyes  
and talked pain out of you  
so i could put a mirror  
in your face and tell you  
it was my art.

we were the fools who dreamt  
like we would wake up  
and still be able to fly.  
and we were marvelous at it.

*-Olivia Gomez*





Untitled  
digital photography  
Sophie Cohen  
2018



*Common Ground Fair*  
digital photography  
Becca Havian  
2018

biking mountain ave

the bike is doing everything  
and i'm a freeloading passenger,  
a recklessly sitting with my arms wide  
catching the morning against my chest  
passenger who is, yes,  
afraid  
of a rogue pebble under my wheel  
or, who knows,  
maybe something more divine –  
i the goddamn nonbeliever who  
spooks at the thought of providence.  
but in the morning i'm so willing  
to be unsure.

i close my eyes,  
the insides of them incubating  
october sunlight.  
the rest of my face tears its way down  
through the bitter air  
as if it were tilling frozen ground,  
and the whole brief event  
is a wonderful discomfort.

whether i skin my knees or not,  
i'm a fool  
for thinking myself winged,  
for adoring the wind so.  
or, i'm the only one left  
not afraid to love what's been loved  
by every chump with a bike and never enough.

*-Olivia Gomez*

nest

a robin made her home  
wedged between  
the weathered beams  
of my porch roof. her refuge  
sculpted from detritus  
left nearby; strips torn from  
plastic cups, orange ribbon,  
loose tangles of friendship  
bracelet string. thin  
sticks rescued from  
the obscuring  
quality of rain.

on some afternoons i could be still  
and watch the mother cobble  
together bits of her lovely world  
to live inside, to sit in.  
i enjoyed  
seeing the parts  
of her disjointed existence.

if i were to wake and sing  
to my home at sunrise i'd say  
thank you:  
for keeping me here,  
overwhelmingly safe.  
at first i couldn't say how.  
now, i suppose it's  
because you're made  
from hundreds of little things,  
built by patient, novice hands.  
they were not guided by a blueprint.  
not drawn with any  
conscious design, but  
spun, like yarn, from something  
soft and lost into  
a sturdy fabric.

*-Cyan Hunte*



*Horse Gulch*  
digital photography  
Elliot Wilson  
2018

Non sequitur, or the devolution of a haiku

I.

one black eyed susan  
in a bottle from England  
window sill sunshine

II.

Close your eyes and may [the stars surround you.]  
be[,] you can see the music [they talk about in rain and planes and love]  
you hear[/here] in the smoke [of a candle, blown out moments ago  
you can still smell lavender]

III.

I'm grey and blue and yellow in summer  
But I'll change when autumn comes  
You're this deep orange  
and that purple blue  
of an almost dark sky at 10:00 on a  
June night  
Just as the stars are coming out.

-Ellie Friends





*Old People*  
digital photography  
Elliot Wilson  
2018

## What It Would Be Like

I am made of pilgrimages  
like your cellular composition  
boasts coarse, ashen granules.  
Where is my holy land? Easy. It's upwards,  
where the atmosphere thins and the miracles begin.  
God begins to exist wherever our vision gives out,  
and I've never believed in anything more.  
Every fallen tree makes a sound.  
Tilt your head until your spine crumbles  
beneath your cerebrum,  
and you'll understand why  
a compass is a hindrance  
pointing north.  
The only way out is through.  
The only way through is private property.  
The physics of time and space are not fences  
to be jumped or scaled.  
And so I sit  
swallowed gracelessly by brambles.

I don't need to fasten the goggles  
before diving into this graying cenote.  
There are no sharks in this sinkhole,  
only gaping pores begging to be filled.  
I can fill them with a predator.  
I can fill them with whatever I imagine  
into truth.  
I don't need the oxygen tank  
while in orbit. I don't need the bayonet  
in order to deflate.  
I don't need the contact lenses;  
the ladder; the bilingual interpreter.  
I will not be tortured by the company  
of anyone whose job it is to know everything I don't.  
Sometimes, it's better to leave the light off.

Nothing I write unties the noose, but  
I could conquer the world.  
All the old legends were written about me.  
I am Joan of Arc, half-hanged Mary:  
living through my execution,

forging and forgiving the fire beneath my feet.  
I am everything that cannot be overcome,  
but mostly, I am prune-skinned and dehydrated

and nocturnal and Rumpelstiltskin,  
ugly and feverish,  
spinning straw into gold.

*-Maria Gray*



*Celeste & Olivia*  
film photography  
Maria Gray  
2017





*Blub Blub*  
digital photography  
Anna Landgren  
2018

“king”

i legally would not have been allowed to exist  
if my parents had chosen to raise their family in china  
i fantasize a body  
worthy enough to turn  
criminal

explain this to the white kids  
who ask me if i can see with eyes this small  
who tell me my mother has always been more tiger than woman  
as if they, too, know that i chewed my way out of the womb

but if i squint enough when the sun sets in shanghai  
the chinese honor flickers, unclaimed,  
burning blank  
mirages of red & white  
drowning  
amongst the cicadas

i forget about  
carrying my father's name  
- 王 -  
meaning king,  
meaning maybe secretly i want the white kids to fuck up the pronuncia-  
tion  
meaning plastic royalty  
reigning over unwanted bodies &  
widowed tongues  
the fraying threads of dissected characters &  
recycled archetypes  
searing in grey air

i forget my name  
- 书瑶 -  
means my parents' first date in america was  
highlighting the incomprehensible curves  
of english chemistry textbooks,  
means the jagged shards of jade  
that my mother carved  
her fossilized dreams into

together we bind  
frantic poetry around wilted feet  
as if dreams don't speak chinese or english  
as if second chances are still waiting  
for us on the horizon



after all  
no one asked for this diluted template of a body -  
too american to be a respectable fetish  
too chinese to turn off the screeching cicadas

& so i dream of cells  
holy enough for feverish chinese prayers.

somewhere,  
a jade stone is crouching  
underneath my twitching regality

*-Christina Wang*

Perennial

Recently my misery rolled  
over to sleep.

I know what you call death,  
I know it is mysterious.

Yet I reach for my dinner glass, and  
in vivid pain  
watch the fragments of my self  
float around me as I drown.

Imagine seeing  
the end of your life  
so clearly through a storm.

Drops of rain form, collide  
in streaks like lightning  
on the windowsill.

Imagine thinking that,  
like you came,  
you would also disappear. That

you had the ability to will any  
tiny wish into being,  
and let it die before  
it had been born.

If you have not had to put  
your misery  
to bed, I assure you; it goes fitfully—

but you will wake and come  
to your own

as you rub the night from  
your eyes, and speak,  
and sing.

*-Cyan Hunte*



*A Little Afternoon Chit Chat*  
digital photography  
Anna Landgren  
2018

## Wingbeats

It had been a slow afternoon, the day fading as the light sunk into the mesa. When his stomach grumbled for the third time, he sighed, put down his book, and went to go make dinner. With his family gone the house was his for a few weeks, and in the first couple days he'd experienced amusing flutters of independence and self-reliance. He made pasta and salad, complimented his own culinary skill, and sat down on the deck to eat.

With his feet propped on a chair, he watched the neighbor's cat sulk in the grass against the fence, seeming to prey on something or other while also seeming too bored to actually hunt. Every now and then, she would perch, anticipating, waiting for an appetizing rodent to present itself. Then the excitement of the moment and all the promise it held would pass and, pitying herself, she'd slump down. He was fascinated and watched this cycle of ferocity and indolence for several minutes. His preoccupation with the cat left his pasta to get cold, reducing the thrill of cooking on his own to a hasty consumption of lukewarm spaghetti. So he sat, cramped and unsatisfied, absentmindedly staring into the yard.

He picked up the book he'd grabbed from the bookcase on the way outside and began to read, frequently distracted by the wingbeats of birds above him. Do younger birds ever miss the telephone pole they aim to land on, having to instead circle about until successful? Never had he seen a bird miscalculate its flight. There was the cardinal which busied itself by attacking its reflection in the bathroom window, but that was more of an error in cognitive judgement than aeronautics. On the latter, the bird receives full marks.

Planes flew over his head every few minutes. The nearest airport was a couple hours' drive away; these were fire planes full of water headed north. A haze had descended over town last week. At first, the smoke descended in the mornings, settled by the cooler nighttime temperatures. But as the fire burned on, it began to persist past noon; and now, half of the sky had assumed a charcoal color that fused with the southwest pastel blue. The geography around him was mostly uninterrupted land filled with dry desert scrub. He often hiked up on top of the mesa, feeling a safe isolation for a few hours before descending back into town. The burn was still far enough away not to cause any real worry, but the news had been consumed by its continuous growth in recent days. He watched as two red and white planes crossed the sky, one headed south, the other north. One full, one empty.

He turned pages, absorbing some of his book, enough to qualify as reading. The birds continued to flutter, all congregating in the tree behind him. It was big and round. Plenty of nooks and crannies for the birds to practice navigating. Every now and then, the quiver of wings would

cross the yard, destined for a fence post or power line. He turned more pages, finished his glass of water. When it gets dark, he thought, I'll head inside, watch something maybe. It's too nice a night to waste daylight. He took a deep breath, marveled at the beauty of the willow, the solitude in which he found himself, the peacefulness of the night.

Soon, though, he began to get bored. He looked up from his book more and more often, waiting for the evening to end so he could return indoors with a full conscience. As it went, though, he realized this night was taking longer than others to unfold, and he began peering curiously at the sky. The gray of the smoke had begun to ease its way south, with tinges of pink sunset flaring throughout. He'd left his watch on the bathroom sink, but it seemed to him like the night should have come by now. The smoky sky was still well lit, however.

Another bird flew over his head, but this time it came within a couple inches of his scalp. His heart quickened. It landed on the neighbor's roof on its first try. He shook his head and resumed reading, but couldn't seem to relax into the chair. Soon another bird took off from its arborescent perch, and he flinched as the wings beat above him. The air, beaten quickly through the flight, sounded like a rug being shaken out. The next three birds took off at once, all flying within reaching distance. Alright, he thought, time to head inside. But before that thought materialized into action, he was again distracted by the happenings in the yard, the cat back at the fence, the trees waving lazily. He settled back into his chair, facing the southern sky, which he noticed were grayer to him since he'd last looked. A quick patter of wings and air behind him, and before he flinched the bird's head slammed into his own. He shrieked as he felt the beak pierce his scalp. His book fell to the ground and he looked about wildly, looking for the bird. It was gone. It was mostly surprise that had overcome him; he wasn't hurt, and the absence of pain made him doubt himself just enough to wonder if it had happened. The night before he'd shaken himself awake at the rush of falling from a great height, another trick of the restless mind, perhaps. Enough, he said to himself. But then he looked down, found the book back in his lap, and, as one does when holding a novel, began to read again. Above him, the sky grew hazier.

Minutes passed, or perhaps longer; he couldn't tell. Maybe it had been days. What was peculiar was that he never seemed to make any progress in his book, despite the pages turning every few moments. The temperature of the evening was just right, he was neither hot nor cold. He never grew uncomfortable in his chair, his legs perched on the table never lost feeling. The light lingered, not too bright so that he squinted, but plenty enough to see. He didn't feel any pressure from his bladder or his stomach. All that might have served to rouse him into action had long since gone. The house was empty, the sky continued to fade into vague colors,

the birds continued to flit about.

He continued to read, less distracted now, but the pounding of the wings continued sporadically over his head. Another flew into his head. He yelped again, clapped his hand to it, and wheeled about in search of the bird. He had a flicker of a memory, but it came and went without revealing itself. He paused to think harder, trying frantically to remember, but soon gave up. No sign of the bird, so he resumed his reading.

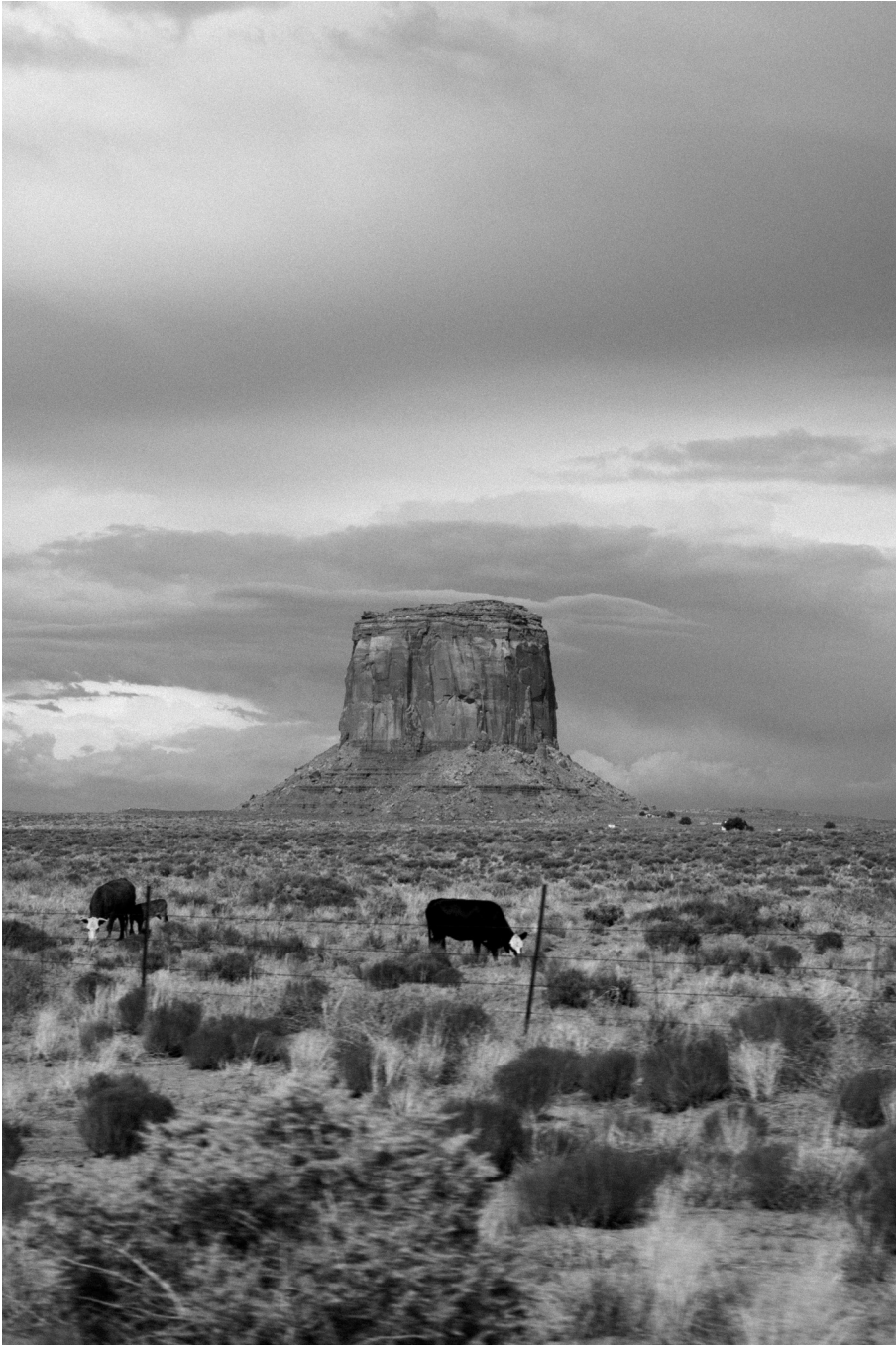
The day carried on. He never finished his book, but small, repeated collisions into his skull began to leave an impression on his brain. He stopped looking up at the sky entirely, which was still gray, and instead stared at his book with razor focus. He stopped turning the pages. The birds continued to fly, however, flitting off branches and eaves. He remained comfortable and content in his chair as the birds gradually whittled him down. For a time he shouted in pain after each attack; then he'd gasp, then flinch, then nothing. He stared at the pages of his book, his brow furrowed.

*-Elliot Wilson*





*cracked cornices*  
film photography  
Zoe Gallate  
2018



BACK COVER  
*European Tour*  
oil on treated paper  
Lily Kip  
2018

Lone Mesa  
digital photography  
Elliot Wilson  
2017



