

THE IDEATE REVIEW

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers –

Welcome to Issue 3 of *The Ideate Review*. We are ecstatic to present our selection of poetry, prose, and art that explore and transcend the self.

Self-introspection often leads to new realizations not only about the self but also about the world. As Kilroy J. Oldster, writes in his book, *Dead Toad Scrolls*, “Personal awareness leads to transformation in how a person lives . . . Revamped internal functions eventually alter how we view our external environment.” In this sense, we firmly believe that words hold the incredible power to bring about change, whether it be on a personal or global level.

We reviewed a remarkable volume of works this round; in total, we received over 100 submissions from across the globe, including Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, India, Greece, Brazil, the United States (Virginia, New Jersey, New York, California, Georgia, Washington D.C., etc.), and many more.

In the process of synthesizing this issue, we were mesmerized by the following pieces for their ability to convey daring and emotional messages through lyricism. We hope you feel the same way.

Jimin Lee
Founder & Editor-in-Chief
of *The Ideate Review*

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THE CREATURE IN THE SHAPE OF WATER

LAWDENMARC DECAMORA

Based on what I saw today on the reflection
of tall trees on the river, there's an Armageddon
of swirling things trying to drink the water,
their spreading tension the surface of paw-prints
and misty roars in emerald. I tried to identify them
in their uniform art of consciousness—namely:
bumboat cruises, dollar leaves, eat-all-you-can
buffets, The Miramar, the Lee rhetoric that matters,
the image. All of these worth surrounding
the only mirror held by the invisible hand of water.
This mirror in the heart of the river reflected
a figure of the literary life with strange curved horns
on its head. It was not at first easy to look at.
I saw it and admittedly got confused
with its misunderstood image. But every time
it moved things stopped swirling. A moment
of silence shone. And slowly, slowly
there was a sight painted with sublimity.
Right there, it's called Sungai Singapura.

Singapura: Singapore River's native name

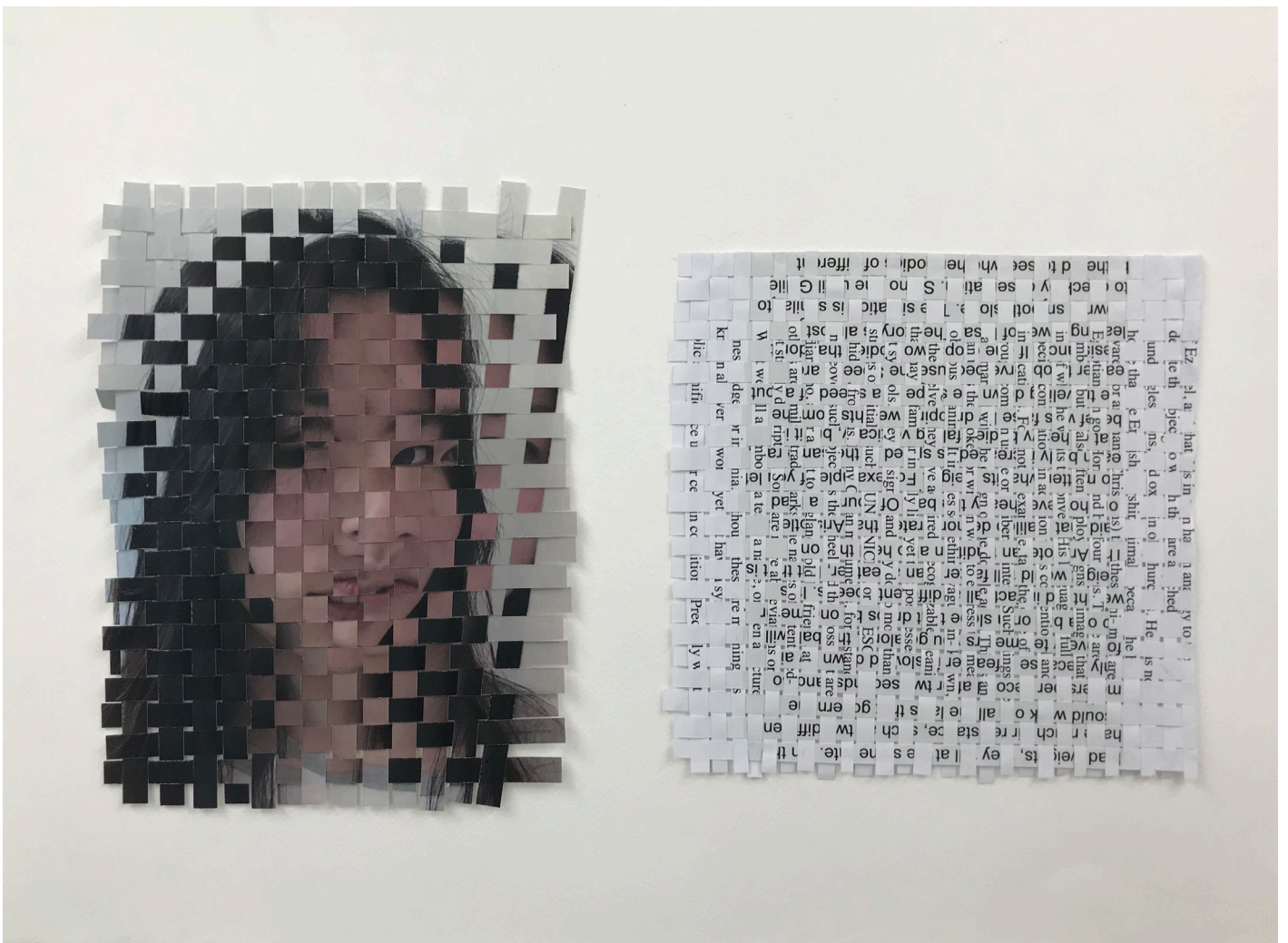
ON THE EXCLUSION OF ASSAMESE MUSLIMS FROM THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS (NRC)

SAKINA ABIDI

maybe,
they will say in my obituary:
last week we buried an oxymoron,
an indian muslim,
survived by no others.
maybe,
all the people who read the same book as me
will be removed from registries,
and the rest –
buried too soon before their time,
and whoever's left –
will flee to the neighbouring muslim nations,
or outwards,
and maybe
the last adab will be heard
in the heart of aligarh, uttar pradesh
and maybe
when i say my goodbye
it will be the last time an urdu speaker says khuda hafiz
and the last of the indian muslims
will finally return home.

DARWIN'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION AND ME

CHLOE KANG



WISHED; REWIND

WORLANYO MENSAH

My baby brother is seventeen years old.

He knows a bit of something and a whole lot of nothing. His glassy eyes reflect like the lenses of studded sunglasses. The blue bib draped over his ebony skin is beaded like a gold chain. He slips his fingers between his lips to salivate the nail tips, yet he is only greeted with shouts of praise. And he glares at me, and only me, with widened pupils and dares me to do better, in which I succumb to defeat as my rightful fate commands. He is a tyrant of the heart. If only he could stand.

The boy calls me the day after with his whines and his cries. He knows what he's doing, and he knows what I can. My able legs bring me to him, where he sits in his throne lined with plush protection. "Rock me to sleep," his smile whispers. I know I can't say no. I do what he asks; I am his puppet, and he is my master.

I stare up at him while looking down to his height, wishing I am in his place. His mind is full of innocence, yet it seems he knows the world: deception, manipulation, want. He is a tyrant of the mind. If only I couldn't stand.

But when he grows a bit older, autumn comes. He watches the leaves fall to their deaths by the gust of wind that shortens their last moments of beauty. "He loves the fall," our mother tells our guests. I hate the fall. The stove gives off the annual odor of burning sugar. I can hear that it's thick and boiling. This time, he doesn't know what is coming. I wish I couldn't remember. "You'll hate the fall too," I tell him. "You'll wish you couldn't chew."

My mother brings the tray of arrayed candy apples. The glistening of the syrup and the redness of the fruit make my teeth shiver. She hands me one, my aunt one, and my uncle. One and one and one. "It's good," she says. It's "good" every year.

He doesn't get one, still joyful and dumb. I watch his pudgy fingers as he presses the skin on my mother's arm like the keys on a piano. I envy him; he can become his own Mozart without knowing what a symphony is. I want to throw my candy apple at his face and make him taste what he's so lucky to not digest. Maybe if I poop and pee and yank my teeth out, I won't have to eat it either. I consider trying.

But then I watch him, gleeful and greedy, reaching over to the candy apple in my hand. He has changed. He sees its glittery exterior, its gooey skin that beckons the world to feed on its plump make. He is deceived himself. I don't give it to him. I wonder why I don't let him stand.

Amidst my thoughts, my mom hands him to me. "Take him outside."

I look through the window and the leaves continue to fall. I'll let him mock me this one time.

In my arms, he visits the outside world. A golden leaf falls on his chest and he examines the intricate wrinkles. It will be replaced in the spring. I know this, but I do not tell him.

I sit on the grass and put him on my lap. He is a boulder now, but was a feather just a year ago. My struggle to hold him up gives him a chuckle. I dig my face into his voluminous curls, the dark mane revealing the identity of his blackness. His body is shivering. I put on his hood and he rolls off of my lap. One foot up, next foot follows. He tries to stand and he tries to walk. He falls down. I'm glad. "Not yet," I whisper to him. "Not ever." Where does this sympathy come from? I cannot put my finger on it. Maybe I pity him, for he doesn't know how lucky he is that his only reputation is his name. I feel the need to run inside and throw out all the milk and cheese and yogurt. Calcium helps the bones grow.

I look at his face and see a baby who is too eager to become an adult. When he is seventeen by not only mind, but physique, he will stand. I don't want him to. Legs won't give him freedom. It will give him no choice but to hide. Hoods will make him a gangster, running will make him a criminal. His hair will make him dirty and his success will be a mistake. He knows how the world works, but he doesn't know how it cheats.

Maybe he was never a tyrant. Maybe he was a cold, scared king wearing his dominance in robes to shield his ignorance. I mourn for his facade. Just like the sugary coating of the candy apples, it melted in the heat of the fire.

He touches my leg with the utmost delicacy, as to him it is a rare diamond needing to be cared for. He doesn't know I look at his as well. To be new to this world again would be a blessing created from a curse. I hope God will let him know that.

I taste the candy apple between my teeth. They, those unholy candy apples, remind me of life. It looks appetizing from afar. He will dream of it, long for it, wish that his teeth were hard enough to bite through it. He will wake up every day, hoping to smell that melted sugar burning in the kitchen and taste the warm sweetness on the root of his mouth. But when it's time to bite, it will be too much of everything. He will be one of the unlucky who lack a sweet tooth. Too much sweet, too much red, too much fruit, too much sugar. He'll wish he never had it, but time is cruel. It won't allow him to take a step back. If only he could know his struggle is fated.

I try to tell him this. "Don't grow up," I plead. "Candy apples will break your teeth." But he looks at me, his head tilted and eyes begging me to speak in his language, the goos and the gaahs, because he has no damn idea what I'm saying. There's no point trying. I watch his future roll by like a film trapped in my eyes.

My baby brother will be seventeen years old, and he'll wish he couldn't stand.

WE WANT THE WANT THAT WANTS TO BE WANTED

CLARA BURGHELEA

The untended touch
of a long-lost mother
to be invited.

The fat bitten plum
in the son's palm
to be marveled at.

The tall grass
hiding familiar footsteps
to be remembered.

The empty rooms
of your eyes
to be filled.

The searing heart
hammering at the ceiling
to be heard.

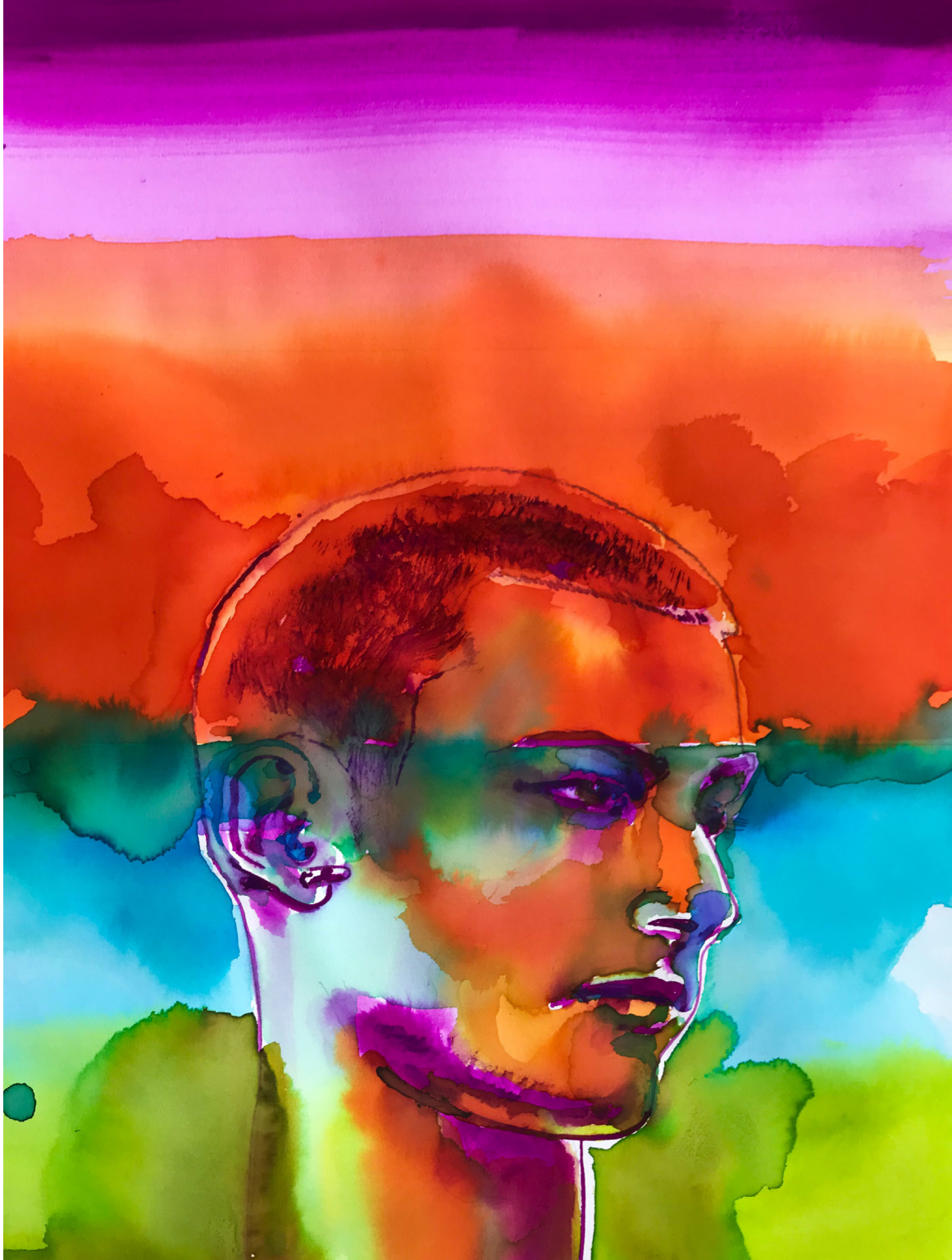
The mouth full of bees
stinging the air
to be open.

The pain of the dry ink
on the paper
to be undone.

The right of the flesh
to a voice of its own
to be granted.

MAN MOOD

RICHARD VYSE



THE EXILE OF BROTHERHOOD

DAVID ANTHONY SAM

Each day is bloody
with our flesh cleaved
on the sharp edge of world
So near shadows
your zealous eyes dim
with too much vision
My doubtful sight is darkened
by light that comes from
a ticking clock
Our flesh is corruption
kinned in a grave
opened to broad daylight
We are both dark animals
made of the same mud
pawing the sky like feral cats
We have two roads to walk
and cannot forgive each other for
the dust rising as we decay

SHADOWS OF ANCESTORS

DAVID ANTHONY SAM

My shadow prays for me
elongating dark memories
of five long hours
across landscapes
made of the names for silence.
No dictionary defines
my doubled alphabet
made from crescents of moon
and evening myths
as opaque as a dawn-deferring fog.
City streets stretch out
in echoes of my grieving.
Each day is secret to the next.
Fog corners me
and transpires my disguise.
Here rumbles of trucks
grind this reality
while all that I love
bleeds from every thunder
that detonates a street of memory.

THE COURT OF THE SUN KING

THOMAS O'DELL

As the bus pulled away from the bus stop, deep in the heart of Taipei, Nolan glanced up from his language book. The sun was setting directly in front.

The bus headed down a broad avenue, away from the Xin Yi district. This avenue, like many in Taipei, was framed by apartment buildings, six to eight stories each: tall enough to be threatening but too short to be glamorous. Straight down the west end of that canyon the sun was settling into a golden palace of city haze. Its amber glare spattered along the windowpanes that glowered at each other from opposite sides of the boulevard.

“That’s amazing,” Nolan said, out loud. He repeated the phrase in Mandarin: it was in his memorization stock of the past few weeks. But the translation, instead of bringing him closer, seemed to cut him off from the experience in front of him. He felt like someone caught wearing jeans at a coronation. The Sun King glowered down from his throne at the balding, disheveled man on the bus, as if to say: “You have trespassed on something your mealy phrasing cannot describe. I choose to create this. No amount of study will attain for you the price of relating it. In minutes even its memory will have vanished.”

It did not come at the end of a pleasant day. After-shocks of Mr. Matsumo’s sudden death still rippled through the company. Larry had dropped by Nolan’s desk around four: “Wish me luck. I’ve been re-assigned to Xingdao.”

“What about my employment visa?”

“They won’t say yes and they won’t say no. Don’t build your hopes up, though. Whoever will invest will not be keen on foreigners. That’s just the way things are these days.”

The bus had negotiated the byzantine rules of swarming to reach the right curb and now grumbled patiently at the red light. Nolan glanced up through the front windowpanes, visible between random pillars of dark-coated people. The sun had not yet completed its majestic descent, yet its glory had already begun to settle into grey haze. To his right and left, tufts of people conversed fluently along the wide sidewalks. They huddled over their handphones. They strode purposefully in and out of stores that lined the road. The sun’s rays limned their faces and yet they didn’t even glance up.

You have all rejected me. Nolan’s thoughts erupted in an unexpectedly virulent spasm of petulant anger. I have tried for five years now. I’ve studied the culture. I’ve married into it and sired a child in it, and yet it dismisses me as easy as if I had just arrived.

He had a sudden vision of the people on the sidewalks, on the busses, taxicabs and scooters, standing shoulder to shoulder across the broad avenue, their arms interlinked, their hands raised in adoration of the Sun King. Nolan could have been among them; he could have been enveloped in the warmth of their bodies and the gentle chatter of their language, and could have understood every word of it.

Yet they did not, and, by not doing, separated themselves from him.

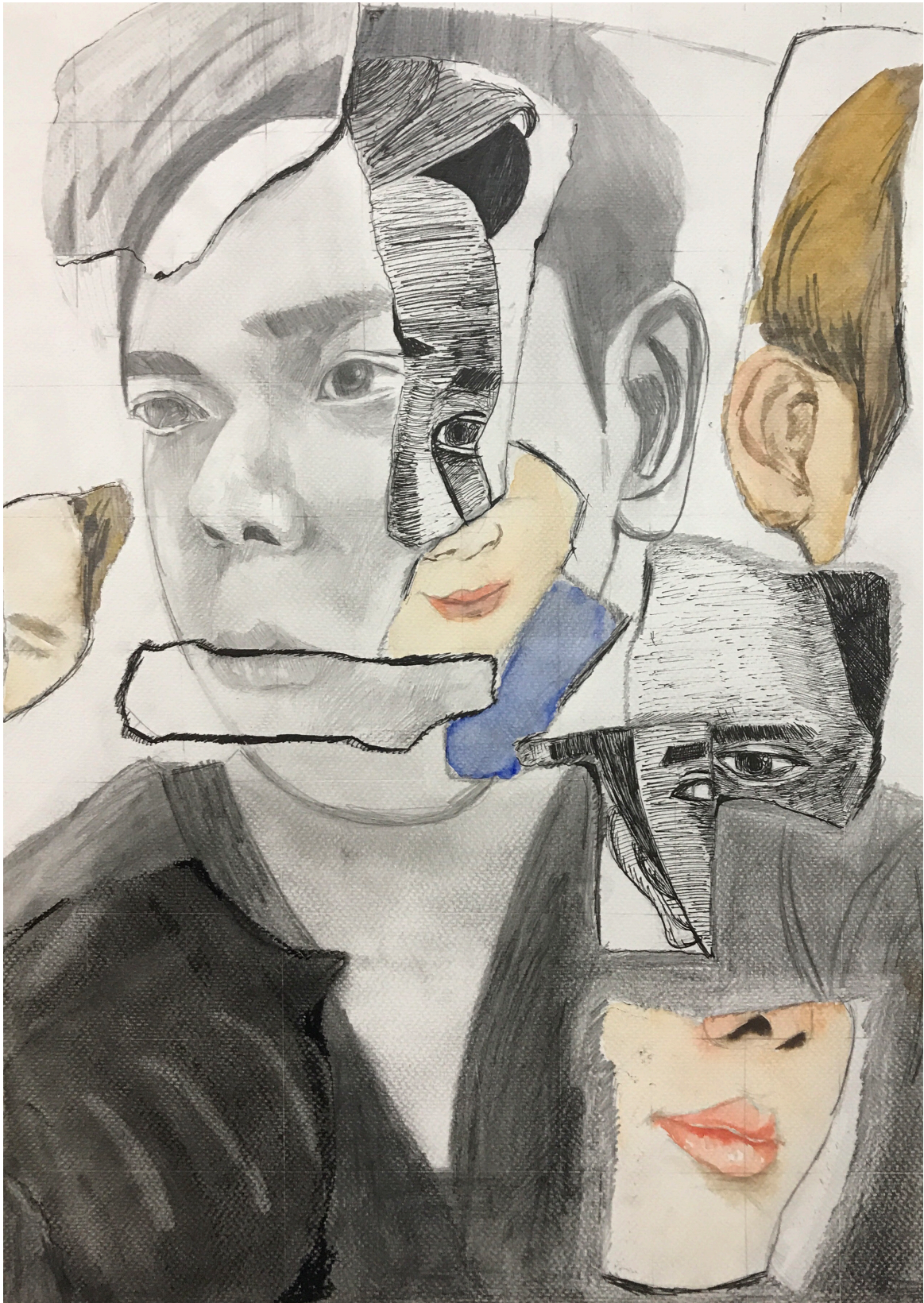
As if to announce its opinion on the subject, the bus stopped waiting for the light and turned right, up a shadowy street. Now the canyon walls obscured instead of channeled the rays of the Sun King. Shadows enfolded the pedestrians in warm haze. Hand phones rang. People skittered across the street between traffic.

Nolan returned to the book on his lap. Complex Chinese ideograms stared back at him. He did recognize some of them--營運策略: operation plan; 稽核: audit register. He was not completely dumb. The shadows enfolded him once more in hospitality. He wondered what SungWei had cooked for dinner. His anger, bereft of its source, faded.

He had not yet told SungWei they might have to leave. He did not know the words.

LOST

ALEX JAEBIN LEE



PUSHING UP DAISIES

VIVIAN PARKIN DEROSA

when someone dies, do not send
the mourning flowers.
give them something that's already dead,
or better yet, something that was never alive
a scribbled card that clings to euphemisms
like a smoker does their cigarette

do you know what it's like, to watch
yet another wither away?
no matter how softly I press my fingers
to their smooth seeded centers
like I would a sick lover's forehead,
I can't stop the petals from falling.

I can't remember whether I'm
me or you am I
the one underground,
and you in the kitchen, singing any
winehouse with your clouded lungs
while doing the dishes?
the flowers too were once underground,
before they were severed like a diagnosis.

let's be roses together. I'll be the thorn
and you can be the wilted stem,
and we'll sit complacent among
all the other dying blossoms
in a state of decay.

OBVIOUS SIGNS AND SCIENCE

LUIS CUAUHTÉMOC BERRIOZÁBAL

I bet you like
the clouds
about now,
especially
the gray ones,
pregnant, like
if they are
about to cry.
The last few
days were
unbearably
warm. You could
not stand in
any place
without melting
like ice.
You are a firm
believer in
climate change
and no ditsy
twittering
button-down type
and his ilk will
change your mind.

There are obvious
signs everywhere
and science to
back up what you
know and what
you feel. It is greed
that debunks
the true facts.
As the rain falls
you feel relieved
it does not come
with a hurricane.
If only it rained
every day on all golf
courses, someone
may believe too.

RUMTEK MONASTERY

ADITYA SHANKAR

Is a bird that sang all
day, yet eager for more
at the edge of sky, worn
with steep walkways.
If the search is for a bird,
terminus must be a peak,
the hoot you missed must
be the blessing,
showered upon the tiring
alpinist as molting.
Be all ears: the chant
wheels echo the gushing
of water in a tree trunk,
the feet grips the soil,
embraces those beneath,
the eyes benevolent, gift
themselves like fruits,
the arms let go of the
clutch, spreads for a nest.
Buddha says, the one
who finds the bird
grows deep and tall,
as a tree.

Note: Rumtek Monastery is a Buddhist Gompa situated in the Indian state of Sikkim.

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THE IDEATE REVIEW

Literary magazine dedicated to providing a voice
for writers and artists from across the globe

ISSUE 3

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