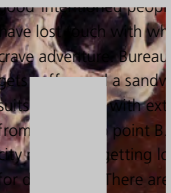
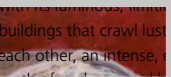


ec  
 h s. Like I an  
 searching for art when  
 arng, awestruck, at p  
 sociopathic, nave-c  
 would I have to be to lo  
 of a Syrian ref  
 of h

ne of  
 don't find a job by  
 w sa ends? In the lob  
 here is a giant screen  
 President  
 for the b  
 for mys  
 named.  
 ke a flat, com  
 nd of i



# ORACLE

## FINE ARTS REVIEW





**BETTA FISH**

Sarah Howard  
*Printmaking*

searching for art when everyone else  
staring, awestruck, at pain. What kind  
of a sociopathic, navel-gazing monst  
would I have to be to look at a pictur  
of a Syrian refugee cradling the body  
of his bleeding son in his arms and  
think about my own imminent return  
home to an air-conditioned house an  
a life of heartbreaking boredom if I  
don't find a job by the time my stude  
visa ends? In the lobby of the museur

**TRAGEDY BY THE  
SEA — SORT OF**

Naphisa Senanarong  
*Nonfiction*



**LIFE IN DEATH**

Joseph Bush  
*Painting*

# ORACLE

FINE ARTS REVIEW

University of South Alabama  
Volume XVI

**ORACLE STAFF****MICAELA WALLEY**

Editor-in-Chief

**LINH LE**

Art Director

**ABIGAIL O' NEAL**

Art Curator

**ANNA VAN DERWOOD**

Poetry Editor

**ISABELLA JETTEN**Assistant to the  
Poetry Editor**KRISHA AMIN**

Nonfiction Editor

**MATTHEW GLASER**

Fiction Editor

**AKSHAY ALURI**Assistant to the  
Fiction Editor**BOARD MEMBERS****POETRY**

Jennifer Barnes

Jordan Biddle

Laura Thompson

James Craig

**NONFICTION**

Traci Nelson

Amber Lynn Boothe

**FICTION**

Alexus Banks

Sierra Nash

Sarah Rocha

Cass McIntyre

**ART**

Kaitlan Wilson

Megan Hall

Kirsten Holland

Alex Vazquez

Sarah Howard

S. Elizabeth Hancock

Tanner Byrd

Anna Copeland

In contrast to last year's *Oracle*, we decided as a staff to go without a theme for *Oracle* 2018. It was an exciting endeavor for all of us to have no idea what we were getting ourselves into, asking our contributors to send us whatever they felt needed to be read or seen. To our surprise, a theme emerged through the works—broad, but connecting—which was the importance of art. We have included several works that explore what it means to need art in an instinctive way, and how it feels to see yourself within it. There are also works that describe what it means to not see yourself in art at all and the effects this can have on society. It is a topic that is impossible not to feel close to, especially if you work on a literary magazine. Representation is perhaps our most important duty as creatives, and I could not have been more pleased with how graciously so many of our contributors considered this topic of their own accord.

Of course, we also included work that did not abide by this theme at all but instead offered readers something to think about, move away from, and eventually come back to. That is what art really is, after all—not what is on the page, but what remains with you even when the book is left on the shelf. Our contributors had a lot to say and show us, and we were more than happy to watch and learn. Now, it is up to our readers to do the same. Take what you need from this book. My hope is that you find a sliver of yourself inside of it. If you don't, I ask that you submit to us in the spring and show us what we have been missing.

I hope you enjoy reading *Oracle* 2018 as much as I've enjoyed being a part in the making of it. Thank you for reading, writing, and creating.

Best,  
Micaela Walley  
Editor-in-Chief

**EDITOR'S NOTES**

This book would not have been possible without the brilliant Linh Le. Her vision was the starting point and the ending point. She knew what *Oracle* 2018 would look like before anyone else, and her talent for layout and design could not be more evident than it is in these pages.

Our editorial staff, led by Matthew Glaser, Anna Van Derwood, and Krisha Amin, worked tirelessly and without complaint on our included literature. Their passion and dedication to this project was endless. Additionally, our art curator, Abigail O'Neal, held the same dedication for our visual artwork. Their efforts combined became the heartbeat underneath these works, and we are grateful for their participation in the making of *Oracle* 2018.

We are always grateful to our faculty advisors, Diane Gibbs and Ellen Harrington, for their continuing guidance and support that carries through each staff.

As always, we continue to remember Bobby Holmes. His father, Dr. Larry Holmes, established the Bobby Holmes Scholarship, which is awarded each year to the editor-in-chief of *Oracle*.

#### OTHER THANKS:

USA Student Government Association (SGA)  
USA College of Arts and Sciences  
Professor Nathan Poole  
Dr. Charlotte Pence

## SPECIAL THANKS

## CONTENTS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 12 <b>PLUMMET</b><br>Jonathan Greenhouse                       | 115 <b>COMETS</b><br>Micaela Walley                                |
| 20 <b>EXAMPLES</b><br>Carol Smallwood                          | 116 <b>LOOKING BACKWARD</b><br>Jane Flint                          |
| 22 <b>INDELIBLE</b><br>Marilyn Ringer                          | 126 <b>*</b><br>Simon Perchik                                      |
| 30 <b>LIKE A CLYFFORD<br/>STILL PAINTING</b><br>William Doeski | 128 <b>THE WOMAN I LOVED<br/>IN THE COLD WAR</b><br>Jeffrey Alfier |
| 38 <b>LOST AT SEA</b><br>Sarah Rocha                           | 138 <b>IMPULSE</b><br>Scott Hutchison                              |
| 44 <b>GIZA</b><br>Mary Anne Hodges                             | 146 <b>SAYS MY SON</b><br>Craig Steele                             |
| 50 <b>ATTEMPT OF A<br/>MOVIE SCRIPT</b><br>Andrey Gritsman     |  |
| 59 <b>WAR OF ATTRITION</b><br>Corey Harvard                    |  |
| 70 <b>GRAIN</b><br>Robert Beveridge                            |  |
| 79 <b>NURSERY LETTERS</b><br>Katarina Boudreaux                |  |
| 80 <b>A GIFT CAN BE TRICKY</b><br>Kelly Jones                  |  |
| 105 <b>FIELD MUSIC</b><br>Seth Jani                            |  |

## POETRY

## FICTION

- 32 **THE ESCAPE TREE**  
Kellie Ryan
- 40 **ANOTHER MYTH**  
Phyllis Carol Agins
- 62 **OIL AND WINE**  
Blake Kilgore
- 98 **BLOOD IN A TEACUP**  
Tanner Byrd
- 118 **FIFTY YEARS AGO  
IN DETROIT**  
Olaf Kroneman
- 130 **ASSURANCES**  
Kathleen Glassburn
- 140 **DAISY**  
Arthur Ogburn

## NONFICTION

- 16 **HUNTING**  
Anna Van Derwood
- 24 **MY LIFELONG  
COMPANION**  
Blakely Barnes
- 46 **THE BODY'S SPIRIT**  
John Ballantine
- 54 **TRAGEDY BY THE  
SEA—SORT OF**  
Naphisa Senanarong
- 74 **MY MOTHER  
WOULDN'T HURT  
A FLY**  
Aryn Bordelon
- 106 **KOREAN  
HIBAKUSHA:  
OF SURVIVORS  
AND SAVIORS**  
Jean Verthein

## FINE ART

- 14 **STEARMAN AT  
BROOKLEY FIELD**  
Laura Scott Bell  
*Painting*
- 15 **ON 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET**  
Joshua Parker  
*Photography*
- 21 **AS THE WORLD  
PASSES BY**  
Thomas Myers  
*Photography*
- 23 **THE SNOWBALL BUSH**  
Pat Joynes  
*Photography*
- 28 **STRETCHED**  
Abigail O'Neal  
*Drawing*
- 29 **PLACE SETTING**  
Abigail O'Neal  
*Drawing*
- 31 **LUCID DREAMS**  
Adorable Monique  
*Illustration*
- 39 **FOGGY**  
Diana Dyer  
*Illustration*
- 43 **JAZZMAN**  
Thomas Myers  
*Painting*
- 45 **MEMOIR OF INNOCENCE**  
Anna Copeland  
*Glass*
- 49 **SACRIFICE**  
Ashley McIntyre  
*Glass*
- 52 **HANNAH**  
Allysia Newton  
*Painting*
- 53 **THE CAT OF  
BASKERVILLE**  
Tanner Byrd  
*Illustration*
- 57 **ENCHANTED**  
Adorable Monique  
*Painting*
- 58 **REFLECTION**  
Kelly Taylor  
*Glass*
- 60 **WHEN MY TRAIN  
PULLS IN**  
Allysia Newton  
*Printmaking*
- 61 **TO DEFINE IS TO LIMIT**  
Kirsten Holland  
*Photography*
- 71 **CARBS**  
Darcey McKinney  
*Mixed-Media*

## FINE ART CONTINUED

- 72 **HEARTH**  
Alma Vazquez  
*Illustration*
- 73 **SYMMETRY**  
Allie Toney  
*Photography*
- 78 **SELF PORTRAIT,  
IN THE MORNING**  
Kimberly Lovvorn  
*Photography*
- 81 **JUSTICE ISN'T BLIND**  
Kelly Taylor  
*Sculpture*
- 82 **BETTA FISH**  
Sarah Howard  
*Printmaking*
- 83 **LIFE IN DEATH**  
Joseph Bush  
*Painting*
- 84 **INTRICACIES**  
Allie Toney  
*Photography*
- 85 **SEARCHING FOR LIGHT**  
Amanda Youngblood  
*Printmaking*
- 86 **CAT**  
Darcey McKinney  
*Printmaking*
- 87 **INTROSPECTIVE  
DENOMINATOR**  
Laura Scott Bell  
*Painting*
- 88 **MR. MUERTE'S  
HOT SAUCE CO.**  
Emily Carlin  
*Illustration*
- 89 **DELIGHTFUL BLISS**  
Adorable Monique  
*Painting*
- 90 **VESSEL FOR PAN**  
Kaitlan Wilson  
*Ceramic*
- 91 **LAST BREATH**  
Billy Breedlove  
*Painting*
- 92 **THE DIVIDE**  
Megan Hall  
*Illustration*
- 93 **CUBED**  
Ashley McIntyre  
*Glass*
- 94 **LA BARDA**  
Ramon Deanda  
*Printmaking*
- 95 **BOOK1**  
Allysia Newton  
*Mixed-Media*
- 96 **JOMON POT**  
Abigail O'Neal  
*Ceramic*
- 97 **UNUSUAL AESTHETIC**  
Angel Poole  
*Photography*
- 104 **DISCARDED LIKE TRASH**  
Billy Breedlove  
*Sculpture*
- 113 **PEACOCK VASE**  
Erika Ritter  
*Glass*
- 114 **1933**  
Joshua Parker  
*Drawing*
- 117 **TUNNEL VISION**  
Pat Joynes  
*Photography*
- 125 **EL CHIVO**  
Ramon Deanda  
*Printmaking*
- 127 **BLACK GIRLS, PUREST  
FORM OF ART**  
Michael Moorer  
*Photography*
- 129 **MRS. ROCKABULLY**  
Allysia Newton  
*Painting*
- 139 **GATSBY**  
Joshua Parker  
*Drawing*
- 145 **PAINT ME LIKE ONE  
OF YOUR FRENCH PUGS**  
Kaitlan Wilson  
*Ceramic*
- 147 **TRIBUTE TO BETTIE**  
Kaitlan Wilson  
*Glass*

Don't be nervous. Just take a deep breath  
 & pretend like  
 you don't give a shit, even though

obviously you do,  
 even though you've prepared for years  
 & your entire future

depends on this. It's as if you're the cocoon  
 & if you don't  
 pop out right, you can say goodbye to

the fucking butterfly  
 you'd become. But take a deep breath.  
 Place your arms

& legs akimbo. Calmly repeat the mantra  
 Crisscross Applesauce  
 & imagine yourself floating on a cloud,

then imagine  
 plummeting through the flimsy cumulus  
 or cumulonimbus ether,

& try not to take out any birds. Feel  
 the tightening in  
 your intestines, the quickened heartbeat,

your thoughts racing  
 toward failure like a 14-car collision on  
 a NASCAR speedway.

But don't worry: You've prepared for this  
 your whole life,  
 & failure would quickly strip it of

any & all meaning.  
 C'mon: You can do this! There was never  
 any need to doubt.

A bunch of Mylar balloons printed with  
 "Congratulations!"  
 eerily bob in the barroom next door,

& you just have to  
 float effortlessly between skyscrapers  
 to the nearest exit.

Your only wish is to flawlessly accomplish  
 what's impossible,  
 what no one's ever expected you

to be able to pull off.





## STEARMAN AT BROOKLEY FIELD

LAURA SCOTT BELL

*Oil on Canvas*



## ON 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET

JOSHUA PARKER

*Digital Photography*

(Based on House, M.D. season 2, episode 7)

I'll tell you something I only just realized: you'll probably never have a mentally ill doctor. Look at these neurotypical-ass faces. Even the actors of doctors are attractive, well-rounded people with not the slightest hint of mania in their eyes. The closest you'll ever get to a neurodivergent doctor is my mother, and she is crazy, but she's not what I'd call a mentally ill person. My mother is one of those people whose mental illnesses go away when she's not stressed. Like, it's a state of mind, not a disability. I don't know where I get whatever is wrong with me from.

Anyway, how come none of these doctors look like me right now? You know: hair a little too greasy for comfort, under-eye bags setting world records for grotesqueness, and the shade of my lower lids so permanently dark that hey, it might just be hyperpigmentation; but I guess we'll find out when I'm seventy-three and get my first full night's sleep because the dementia finally outweighs the ADD, won't we? The only blatantly neurodivergent or disabled person in this entire fucking series's slew of medical professionals is House, and he compensates for that crime by being a wealthy, cisgender, heterosexual, white man.

And check out this heterosexual storyline! A straight white man tries to get a straight white woman to cheat on her straight white husband with him, because masculinity and the thrill of the chase and his ego and some other shit. It's not lost on me that their situation isn't romantic, but isn't it *doubly* romantic that he can still attempt to manipulate her into a greater affection for him even though what they're trying to do right now is murder an RoC (Rat of Color)? Isn't it so great that they kind of look like siblings—he looks so much older than her—and seem like they're about to consummate their illicit relationship over poisoned cheese balls and a cane?

Isn't it so NOT creepy at all how much heterosexuals are willing to ignore for the sake of their psychosexual—sorry, adorable—subplots? They're talking about her husband not liking her anymore because he's sad or something, so it's kind of like a half-playground relationship, half-socially awkward fuck attempt, and either way it just doesn't seem much like the way us queers go about getting laid, but shit—who am I to question the majority?

## THE PHONE RINGS, BECAUSE IT ALWAYS DOES, AND I GUESS THE TENSION IS SO THICK YOU COULD CUT IT WITH A PLASTIC SPORK.

It's Mr. Masculinity over there's job calling, and that's just, you know, so inconvenient, because he was about to try to kiss this middle-aged girl with a temporarily disabled husband—and thank god he'll recover, not be like, a broken man for life, right?

Enter the only person of color you'll see in the whole of this episode! Though sometimes they threw child-me a bone with Racially Ambiguous Doctor and White But Visibly Jewish Doctor. White doctor, white doctor,

white doctor, (white patient), hey-black doctor! Finally, you've salvaged the entire shebang so that no one can call it racist. There's some more sideways commentary from the white guy specifically to the black guy on cheating partners and usurping another male's dominion, in not so many words, which has no racist overtones, but most importantly, the black doctor says a few words. So that's a pretty big deal. Thanks white people! I'm just kind of wondering where the brown doctors are, since I was raised by one, but I'll take your word for it that they don't actually exist. If they did, they'd be really religious, I mean Christian, that's the only religion, or like, poor, and House would white-savior-slash-white-guilt-complex them all to a happy ending anyway, so maybe let's skip all that.

Spoiler alert: the white man will eventually elect NOT to kill the light-skinned black rat, but will instead decide to keep it as a pet—you know, take care of it. It's just so cute, the way it... uh... looks at him. *Meaningfully*. Obviously, it wants to be his roommate. He'll remove it from its home and put it in a cage about 1/1000th the size of where it used to live, but there's absolutely nothing to read into there. He just feels responsible for its well-being, since it's so much less capable of keeping itself alive than he is. You can see that all the other kids are kind of confused as to why Rat Lives Matter. But most importantly, Hugh Laurie gets to say "it's killin' time" and people just let that happen. Imagine a

brown doctor saying “it’s killin’ time” in a married woman’s house after just having tried to get in her panties by shit-talking her incapacitated husband and all the while helping her hunt and kill a rat. Impossible. Ludicrous. Do something even wilder and don’t automatically assume that the brown doctor is a man.

Next, we’re situated with Preachy White Girl With Traditionally Christian Values, and no, you may not call her by a nickname, thankyouverymuch. She’s very business, and very much disapproves of The Only Gay Character I Remember This Show Having And I’ve Seen Every Goddamn Episode Twice, who you can just call Stereotypical Queer. He’s sick, but for some reason she’s decided the best thing she can do for him is verbally box him about the ears in regards to his unhealthy, drug-shaped coping mechanisms for his, you guessed it, AIDS. Because he’s a self-identified P ‘n’ P (or party and play) boy, and since he got HIV it’s like, why even pretend you’re not trying to kill yourself, right? But you have to keep up that non-suicidal facade in front of people who wouldn’t get your existential dread humor and — wait, I’m not talking about the episode anymore. Okay, so, he’s pretending things are capital-F Fine because that’s what we, I mean he does, and she just kinda... believes him? It’s weird, because later she screams at her ailing, literally dying patient, and she’s essentially like, how dare you fake happiness with your drug-filled, disease-addled lifestyle and promote

it to me because I tried a single drug a single time and had really good sex but I did it on a weeknight and frankly I’m really hurt that you would betray me and lead me on like that!

## I JUST SAVED Y’ALL LIKE, SO MUCH ACTUAL DRAMA; IT’S RIDICULOUS.

Stereotypical Queer, because he is sick, coughs, eventually coughs up blood, and gets it in her eyes and mouth, because blood is just silly like that. Of course, because all gay people are toxic and dangerous (I believe in the scientific community, the term is venomous), there’s a risk he could get her sick, too, so I guess that’s an excuse to lose the professionalism and bedside manners she spent only like eight years developing and to develop an uncomfortably honest and intimate relationship with a patient she sees maybe five times in total the entirety of his stay there.

Black Doctor tries to be the voice of reason and make people care that our fair, feminine friend is in danger, but of course, our protagonist goes ahead and railroads those efforts in favor of not giving a shit about the emotions of other people, which makes him aloof, which is super sexy, or at least it was back in the early 2000s, a.k.a. apparently before empathy was cool.

The Australian Hottie, who I used to think was a genuinely well-developed character and not just a walking blond wig on top of a mannequin, inexplicably dressed in scrubs, hops on the Feelings Bandwagon, but it’s kind of obvious he just wants brownie points, so he can hit that, which is exhausting but not surprising.

She shows back up, because although I hate her and her Miss Priss bullshit, she’s right in thinking that to be taken seriously in a men’s field, honey, she has to act tough as shit and as masculine as possible — without destroying her chances at recouping her delicateness — in order to remain relevant in her own field. She’s tired and scared, and I should have been, too, even as a little kid. I should have opened my mouth and screamed the second the gay guy had a femme gender presentation and I never should have watched my favorite show again, because to the fictional characters on this show, my brown doctor mother and my mentally ill, queer, female-sexed self would never have been real.

**EXAMPLES**  
CAROL SMALLWOOD*Poetry*

of women's bound feet still exist in China—  
the painful binding by mothers so daughters  
present small feminine feet to marry well.

Western women believe themselves free  
of such things— but what about our enduring  
tale of Cinderella's small slipper?

When reading Nancy Drew my shoe size  
couldn't meet hers; now I can't match Claire's  
stiletto heels on tv's House of Cards.

**AS THE WORLD PASSES BY**

THOMAS MYERS

*Digital Photography*

**INDELIBLE**  
**MARILYN RINGER**  
*Poetry*

Shaped in the valley's black earth, stained by the Washita's red water, my life imbued by clover-scented fields, and the pump jacks rocking up the smell of oil.

A world filled with spaces between towns and cities. Broad sky, the loneliness of prairie, my vision expanded, an emptiness full of promise.

I saw shadows cast by people, by birds on the wing. A landscape free of rush and bustle. Self-sufficient, I need a far horizon to see clear.

Tasting the dust and lack of something I never knew I had, I pull on my boots and walk again the fields I could not wait to leave.



**THE SNOWBALL BUSH**

**PAT JOYNES**

*Digital Photography*

“Tell me what it feels like,” he spoke into the silence that had settled over us.

“What what feels like?”

“You know... it...”

“Oh...”

It. How could I describe *it*? I could say it is a thing that I carry around with me. I could say that I have had it with me for a while now, used to weigh heavily on me. I could barely hold it up above my shoulders, my head, my heart.

“Do you remember Atlas from Greek mythology?”

“Yeah.”

“It’s like that.”

“But it’s not that heavy anymore, is it?”

No, it isn’t. It had lightened a bit over the years... that, or I had adjusted to its weight. Sometimes, I couldn’t tell which.

“I’ve heard that people with anxiety are complete introverts. Well, at least I picture them that way.”

I laughed. “That’s not always true. When have you ever known me to stay in my room all the time?”

“You’re right. You’re one of the first ones on the dance floor... But that still doesn’t explain why you freeze up. I don’t understand it! In some situations, you’re perfectly fine, but in others you... you just... stop.”

“Well it’s not as if I can control it! It doesn’t work like a light switch.”

It always frustrates me when people talk about anxiety as if I could just shut it off. They talk as if it’s a choice. I remember my mother—in the early stages when I was trying to figure out what was wrong with me—telling me that I was worrying myself sick and to just stop worrying. But you can’t. You can’t *just* stop worrying. Even if my thoughts were focused, and I wasn’t worried, I would still feel sick. I would still feel as if something was wrong with me. I feel powerless in the face of anxiety.

## ONE OF THE WORST MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY IS THAT WE ARE FEEBLE — WEAK.

Yes, anxiety stems from fear, but that does not mean we are fearful people. At its core, it is a fight or flight reaction meant to protect us. It is a more intense and physical reaction to stressors. Sometimes, I like to imagine this as a super-power for those of us affected—heightened senses. It makes me feel better to think about it this way.

Fun Fact: One in five American adults has an anxiety disorder. This means that on the first day of class, every semester, I look down my row and think, “No worries. I’ve got you covered, guys.”

I always hope I’m the only one in my row. As much of a relief it is to know you are not alone, I would still rather be the sufferer versus someone else.

“Okay, so you can’t control it,” he persisted, “but can you avoid what’s stressing you out?”

“That’s a good question. And no. I can’t avoid stressors. I mean, if I avoided writing essays at all do you think I’d ever graduate and get a job?”

And here is the dilemma with that: facing something that stresses you out is scary. It requires strength. Which is why, when you don’t feel like fighting or avoiding the stressor entirely, you feel like a failure. If you’re like me, you shut down. You feel like you have failed everyone you love and who looks forward to the “greatness you will achieve.” If you are anything like me, motivating yourself to move, to do one thing, or to even function, is a struggle. On some days, facing fears is good. Some... the worst days ever.

“Do you remember my meltdown two weeks ago?” I asked him.

“Yeah, that was rough. I couldn’t pull you out of it.”

“I know. I have to push through it myself. That’s when my anxiety is at its worst—when it hits me the hardest.”

“Aside from this side of you, I don’t think I would have ever known you have it. Do you feel it all the time?”

“No... not really...”

But even if I couldn't feel it, I knew it was there, waiting, biding its time. I can feel its shadow, I know it's there — lingering in anticipation when it can crawl over me and coat me in the grey. It used to follow right behind me, trailing my feet. Over time it had shrunk in size, so it does not appear to be a threat to most people around me. It's rare when someone knows it's there.

So no, it's not so big, but knowing it is there and can appear before me at any time is burden enough.

“B., what do you go through when it covers you? What do you see? What do you feel?”

How could I tell him? How could I accurately convey the overwhelming sense of failure? Of hopelessness? How do you explain what it feels like when your light leaves you, diminishes, fades, and all you see is dark even under the bright fluorescent lights of a classroom? How it feels like, on the inside, I am pounding on the inside of my glass prison, screaming at my outside self, to smile, to enjoy the people around me. I'm screaming! But on the outside... I'm numb.

I did give it an attempt to explain, poor one though it may have been.

This is what I told him:

“I know you don't notice it, but I still have it. It doesn't make an appearance

often but when it chooses to, it nearly collapses me. It takes over me so completely that all I wish to do is surrender myself so it can do what it will and then leave me to repair my broken self.

It begins with the initial shock. I can feel my muscles tense, tendons contracting, fighting for a unity in calm or chaos. My breath quickens, and I feel in my chest a pulse — a pain. I know what it is and it is this that I dread the most. It is sorrow, it is fear, it is failure, it is the desire to flee and find a place of sacred peace. I am afraid. I am afraid of everyone around me. I want to shrink and not be noticed.

The pulse then finds its way into my head, a space I have no control over, for it thinks too much on its own. The sorrow and fear find openings and cover and penetrate something that I have been told is entirely mine to control.

Then *they* come. They roll around my thoughts. No, nevermind, *They* are thoughts. Dreadful thoughts. They tell me terrible things, predicting my future like the Fates of Ancient Greece — worse than the prophetic oracles. They tell me I'll fail. That my world will fall apart because of one thing I can't do, one thing I struggle with. They tell me all those beautiful dreams — those windows of light I have built a cathedral of hope around — they will never be, and they shatter, then all goes dark...

I am now in a grey room with a solitary window. All is grey. On a table in a corner I see a birdcage with all of my dreams flitting inside. They are happy to see me, but they don't know what I am about to do. I pick up the cage, filled with the beautiful dreams, and take it with me to the window and sit down on the seat in front. I stick two fingers through the bars and caress the dreams soft feathers. I'm going to miss them.

## THEY'RE SO AFFECTIONATE, AND THEY LOOK AT ME WITH ADORING EYES THAT LONG FOR MY HAPPINESS.

Before my second thoughts settle in, I open the shutters. The cage is propped on the sill. I swing open the door. Gingerly, one by one, they hop out at my coaxing. They all take off slowly, then fly off into the world to fill the head of some other girl. One, however, lingers. It perches on my fingers and gives me a sad look. A tear slips down its face and I leak out more. I bring it close to my face for one last goodbye; then, let it go.”



## STRETCHED

ABIGAIL O'NEAL

*Charcoal Drawing on Bristol Board*



## PLACE SETTING

ABIGAIL O'NEAL

*Soft Pastels on Black Paper*



**LIKE A CLYFFORD STILL PAINTING**

WILLIAM DORESKI

*Poetry*

Tattered like a Clyfford Still painting, my birthday unfolds on a snowdrift and settles there. I could use a glass of wine the color of starlight, but the murmur of competing voices keeps me sober. Maybe later in front of the TV I'll cough up the stone in my throat. Maybe when I'm old and bankrupt I'll find a stick of driftwood the color of bone and adopt it. When a friendly museum offers to frame and hang my birthday in a gallery I'll blush with the honor and accept a handshake or two. Until then I'll try to keep a straight face while women repulsed by my wrinkles and sour expression insist I resemble Richard Gere. I don't know Richard Gere well enough to spot him on the street, and have never sat through any of his movies. But I'm sure his birthday also resembles a Clyfford Still painting, maybe one of the white on white ones from the early Fifties. Mine looks darker, more like the orange on black ones of the same era. Regardless, it's the irregular forms, like rags after a bomb blast, that define me. Maybe every artist feels this tearing and ripping on their birthday. Maybe not. Maybe just the convergence of color and form excites and incites them to excel.

**LUCID DREAMS**

ADORABLE MONIQUE

*Digital Illustration*

I  
Black and white and gray is all I see reflected back at me through the lenses of my mind. Black and white lifeless eyes staring back at me. Black and white skin, black and white balloons bobbing helplessly above their captors below the gray sky dotted with white, shapeless splotches. Black and white machines whirling monotonously round and round for their black and white passengers paying for their artificial fun with black and white slips of paper. Black and white tickets shooting out of noisy machines in endless streams, and black and white children shrieking in glorious delight of their entire colorless splendor. I hear people speaking in black and white, too. Their voices sound muffled and strange, but it does not take much to pick out their tenors of dark gray and dull black. These mental snapshots are all stored away in my photographic memory to later be conjured up and mechanically picked over. I don't know why I bother; I know all their grays and blacks and whites by heart. I don't have to re-envision them through tired and exasperated eyes.

I remember the weariness that I captured in a young mother's eyes yesterday afternoon during the busy lunch hour; she made sure to contain herself and her small excited children into their safe box of gray. Her eyes were gray, too. They registered only her children and their relentless tugging of her slender gray arms towards the direction of another gray, whirling machine. Her weariness leaked out of her lifeless eyes and evaporated into the black and white air, which mingled with the gray smoke shooting out of the vendors' stations.

I resonate with the downtrodden janitor I frequently capture in my mental snapshots. He shuffles along the worn, gray asphalt in his tattered black shoes as he drags along his broom and dustpan. The rough bristles of that tired old broom helplessly drag against the gray pavement day after day; the sound resounds like nails against a chalkboard in my mind. I resonate

with this janitor because I see myself in him. This brings about a sense of fear so strong that I must file away the mental image along with all the others so identical to it. This is my least favorite snapshot to ponder over, yet I find myself inevitably doing it every single day. These black and white and gray people are always here, and my mind is starting to become muddled by an endless fog, a perpetual array of dismal snapshots in a world turned colorless and gloomy.

Until I see you.

Somehow a flash of color makes its way into my unsuspecting lenses. The light is so foreign and startling that I must pause in my monotonous routine to marvel at you. Your startlingly green eyes are the first glimpse of color that I capture. They are laughing, laughing at just the mere idea of being alive today. I absorb the fiery red hue of your curly mass of hair. It springs out rebelliously in intricate curls that shape your freckled face. I take in the bright violet of your dress that swirls like a newly bloomed tulip around your knees, throwing swatches of color out into the gray air. Your sneakers skip playfully along the pavement, and I catch glimpses of words scrawled endlessly along their yellow canvas. With all of this stunning color lighting up the gray around me, I carefully press my finger down onto the photographic button in my mind. It captures you in all of your flashing greens, reds, purples, and yellows, yet I cannot simply file it among the others and look away. I

capture image after image of those laughing eyes and skipping feet, and I can't help but be convinced that you are the screaming color in a world of perpetual black and white. You are the streak of light cutting through the dimly gray corners of my mind. And I know that I cannot simply capture your image and file it away because you don't belong among the others. You are the most alive being I have seen in this graveyard of tired faces and mechanically whirling machines.

## THIS IS WHERE OUR STORY BEGINS.

II

Sunlight filters in through the brilliantly green treetops, reflecting a kaleidoscope of gold onto the dirt floor of the hiking trail. You zoom past me in a flash of color, the spokes of your pink bike spinning crazily around in circles as if they want to take off flying. I can imagine your gaining enough air to take flight up, up, up out of this treetop canopy to fly to some faraway land. The people there would write stories about you and all your colors. But for now I watch you battle against the wind and race with the speed of light as the sun projects different patterns against your face and hair.

"Come on!" You shout and throw a backwards glance at the black and white boy teetering haphazardly on his

creaky bike. I watch the scene unfold before my eyes, knowing full well how it ends. You effortlessly glide through a small creek and send spouts of water shooting up around your tires, and I have too much pride to ask you to slow down and wait for me. Truth is, I haven't ridden one of these things since I was a kid, and I can remember all too well the headfirst collision I took with the neighbor's rusty old pickup. We'll just say the truck fared better than I did.

I reluctantly teeter on behind you and splash into the creek, sending rivulets of the cold spray onto the backs of my legs. I think you take pity on me at this point, so you put on the brake of your baby pink cruiser and slow to a crawl, a rueful smile stretched across your freckled face.

"Sorry," I gasp, unsuccessfully hiding my attempt at not sounding like a wheezing sloth that just ran a marathon.

I realize then that you aren't listening. You're pointing to a tree situated right at the edge of the bank, its gnarled limbs reaching out towards us as if to welcome us into its creepy embrace. I simply stare at the inanimate monster in silence; at this point I'm fully accustomed to spontaneous trips down strange paths to nowhere. Again I wonder how you discover places like these in our little town. We both stand with our bikes balanced against our hips as we ponder the weeping willow, and I squint my eyes

to realize that there are shapes — rather, letters — carved into its aging bark. I know you are waiting for me to take the first steps toward this mysterious discovery, so I pop the kickstand out on my bike and shuffle through the deep grass to take a closer look.

You glide towards the tree as if you are made to fit between its reaching branches — a work of art for others to ponder over, but they will come to no clear conclusion as they pass by. You silently run your fingers over the engraved letters of the bark and pause for dramatic effect. I stare at you in wonder.

"What is this place?" I ask, and break the anticipating silence.

"It's the Escape Tree," you say simply and look up at me, your green eyes solemn.

I say nothing and, instead, wait for your explanation while I admire the way the kaleidoscope of sunlight throws patterns of gold onto your fiery red hair. You look like you're in your element here, surrounded by all this light and color. I would never question it if I saw you frolicking through this forested wonderland, yellow daisies tucked all throughout the curls of that fiery hair.

You snap me out of my trance and place my hand onto one of the carvings. "WF + AS" stares back at me, and the letters seem as if they have always

been here, like they belong. I feel the grooves beneath my fingers and again wait for you to elaborate.

"Legend says that two people can transport to a faraway land if they both place their hands here," you indicate to the carving.

I smile slightly and try to imagine where such a tree as this would take us. You place your hand on top of mine, so that we're both touching the tree.

"Now close your eyes as tightly as you can, and don't open them, whatever you do," you whisper, so I oblige.

Minutes seem to melt into each other and we stand there for years and years, your colorful hand on mine and the magical tree beneath. The wind whispers secrets into our ears and the leaves answer back in their own language as they rustle against the trees. The warmth of the sunlight settles down into my bones and turns my core a shade of golden yellow. In this moment I don't mind if nothing happens, if no tree takes us to any strange land where time doesn't exist and Mars hovers in the clouds as if it is the moon. I don't care if the cool spring breeze doesn't lift us up and carry us above the canopy of leafy green trees, away from alarm clocks and lawn mowers and the shrill rings of cell phones and black and white voices. I realize that wonderlands begin inside us and wind around endlessly through the portals of our minds, that from within, strange tales may begin

but they don't end. We project our colors outside of ourselves and cover the blacks and whites and grays with our own sunlight.

I only want to remain here in the trees with you, Colorful Girl. You contain myriads of adventures within you. Surrounded by this forest of daydreams, time and reality cease to exist. Everything that we left behind evaporates into the colorful air, and leaves us here with nothing but my hand and yours and the tree and the awareness of being alive. Each day we can breathe a new tale from within that takes us wherever the wind blows. But today I am not certain of anything; except that I am glad I exist.

### III

I blink a few times and wince. All I can see is a blinding white light invading my vision. Sounds slowly creep their way into my consciousness. A steady beeping resounds over and over from my right, and I ache to turn it off. Muffled voices slowly become clear, and I catch the words "stable" and "waking." I can't seem to comprehend what is happening exactly, but I know that this is not where I want to be. The whiteness surrounds me, engulfing me in its cold embrace. I begin shivering.

"Can you hear me?"

I squint and furrow my brow as the connection tries to break its way through the static.

“Walt, it’s Dr. Franklin. Take it easy. You might feel a little fuzzy from the anesthesia.”

I close my eyes, feeling groggy and confused. I just want to go back. I want to see you again, and I want the beeping to stop and to breathe real air. Most of all, I want the colors to come back. There’s so much white and so many muffled static sounds that feed my disoriented mind. I fall back into the blackness and wish to return to where I was before.

When I wake again, the voices and whiteness return and I’m being discharged from this place so that I can return home again. I don’t recognize any of these faces, and they seem to invade me with their worried gray eyes. I miss the assuredness of your voice and the way you turned my whole world colorful with just your presence. But now I’m back inside this place of gray, back to the endless photographs stored away inside my mind. I don’t wish to take any more. I’m too busy trying to find the only one that matters to me.

The days begin to blur together, and I realize that the grogginess in my head never really leaves. It remains as a fog that matches the grayness of everything around me, and it takes some convincing of the unfamiliar faces that I can make it back to my usual spot. This place is covered in black and white people, but it’s where I first saw you, so even the dreariness in the atmosphere brings me hope. I don’t

recognize the janitor wearily dragging his broom across the gray pavement, his unfamiliar eyes reflecting sadness for what life could’ve been. I take a mental snapshot of him and realize that I’ve lost all the others.

The unfamiliar faces begin to reflect concern as I wander through the crowds, the fogginess in my head growing to a dull ache. The only hint of you is found in the faint rustling of trees coming from somewhere in the distance. I wander towards that sound that brings about the memory of green, something that I have yet to see in this old place of gray. But my bones seem to protest my urge to move, and the cracks in my skin deepen with each step. Puzzled by the fact that my body seems to have aged overnight, I will my creaky joints forward, slowly propelling myself toward that colorful memory. The sound seems to grow louder the closer I travel toward it, and my vision grows black as I sink back into its dark embrace.

When I wake, I’m back in the white place again. This time the beeping is all I can hear, and I strain against the wires that create that sound and keep it filling my ears. The shadows of people moving back and forth in front of me are blurred figures at best, and the familiar disorientation once again fills my senses. I hate this new familiarity and how it robs me of color and warmth. The hours and days blur together again and I lose all sense of time, unable to remember the structure of days and why we move according

to those rules. This blurring of reality reminds me of the way you made me feel, except this time all I feel is numbness and confusion. I drift in and out of awareness of my surroundings until the white is replaced with black, and it’s all I can see for miles. The blackness stretches on endlessly and the beeping stops monotonously filling my head.

It’s only now that I can see your face blooming into my consciousness; the tendrils of fiery red hair, the violet dress you wore the day we met. The sunlight filters through the trees onto a bed of green.

## COLOR, BRILLIANT COLOR, AND THE ABSENCE OF BEING ALONE.

All these things materialize before me in a whirlwind of light and sound until it’s all I see and breathe. And then you. You, the screaming color in a world of black and white, the only sure thing in a mind fogged by the passage of time. A reassuring smile spreads across your freckled face as you take my hand, now devoid of wrinkles and lines and the pain that traveled through its veins for a century. And I realize with gleeful abandon that this is the place you were speaking of at the tree, the place we would escape to and dwell in together. As you lead me by the hand through the tall grass and I gaze up at all the

new colors in the sky, colors I’ve never before seen, I feel the weariness drain from my body. And I’m not sure of anything, except that I am glad I exist.

**LOST AT SEA****SARAH ROCHA***Poetry*

I  
 Lost at sea with a single tiny jar of Vaseline  
 Parched and scared of clowns and oysters  
 Pickling my own aspirations as the sun rises  
 Truth bomb and spiritual intoxication  
 I am him and her and I am my own  
 Caring for someone else was too much trauma  
 for my psyche to bear

II  
 Starling the rumbling of  
 water in a dusty blue browser  
 Like a stalled out  
 intuition, flack unoriginal  
 Lint and rubber bands and awkward crunchy markers  
 Now with replicable tips for only \$14.99  
 Decide to leave the night behind with crusted eyes  
 Without a single characteristic of sobriety  
 “The next morning rose with a promise of summer”  
 Tricking now playing  
 marquee banner lightning and vigor  
 Disruptive crustacean  
 living inside my stomach  
 a cold clean cut

**FOGGY****DIANA DYER***Digital Illustration (CGI)*

With her arms circling the man's belly, Myrina swayed as the Harley climbed the mountain toward the navy sky. They traveled the Grande Corniche, the highest of the winding roads that followed the Mediterranean along the Maritime Alps. What lure of freedom had pushed her to accept this ride from a stranger, when all of her American sensibilities called out warnings? The speed, the quick turns, the ascent toward the peaks — she knew she could easily fly from that flimsy machine into empty air. She was suddenly afraid, amazed that a few days in a foreign city, a warm embrace on a dance floor, and the offer of a cup of coffee had caused her to discard all caution. When they finally stopped, the medieval walled city Eze rested solidly below, forever perched on its cliff.

"Follow, please," the man beckoned.

Ahead was brush and then pines with a path leading inward. She heard music in the distance — a mix of tambourines, drums, and guitars.

"Where are we going?"

"No one will harm you," he insisted. Her heart calmed.

He took her hand, leading her to clearing where a bonfire flamed. Trailers marked boundaries, and musicians gathered together, tuning their guitars in mismatched sound. Despite the early morning hour, women served food while children chased each other, darting between the men who wore big hats and gold chains. Outside the fringe of fire, Myrina could see nuzzling couples pressed together.

"My people," he explained, "come to work here in France."

They welcomed Myrina in a language she couldn't place — something guttural and musical.

"You must be gypsies," she said, her imagination igniting, for surely she'd be kidnapped. Who would have enough money to rescue her? What if she disappeared forever, her bones melting into limestone layers to be unearthed centuries later? That spot beside her husband's grave would always be empty. She saw her weeping children, forever parentless.

He placed her beside the other women, who made her sit and eat, then drink from a cup where wine and spices mixed — a kind of nectar that ran across her veins with every heartbeat. She grew more confused with each sip that opened lost worlds until she saw Ulysses and Calypso, bull-jumping Minoans, and women praying before Greek temples. She was transported to that land filled by gods who designed men's lives — just as men created their godly legends. Just as she was held by the drink that this man kept pouring into her cup.

"Where do you come from?" she asked.

"Some of my people are Italian." He laughed. "Some are Greek. Now some are Spanish and French. We come from the sea, itself." He gestured to the ancient blue below them that the lightening dawn would again reveal. Then he took a flute from his pocket and played a solitary, melancholy tune that grew and amplified as if a hundred musicians had joined in.

"Dance, dance," the women around them cried. They clapped a kind of

rhythm — primitive, yet nuanced. The man rolled his trousers up above his knees. He stripped off his shirt and wound a red cloth around his arm through the black hair that traced the lines of his muscles. In the firelight, his black eyes gleamed, and he started an ancient jig. His bare legs were darker than his face, covered by thick, black, curling hair.

"Jump, jump." The women's voices sounded together.

One leap upward, then another, higher and higher, as if he had rewritten the rules of gravity. As if air and earth blended into one. His face changed too, she saw, longer and sharper in the firelight — some animal she should have known. The entire camp watched rapturously, drunk with the high dance that soared without effort.

"Come, Myrina." He used her name for the first time. A Greek name that she'd hated since childhood.

"Come to me," he said, holding out his hand.

She started to move, slowly at first. The music supported her even after he stepped out of the circle, and she was alone.

She danced without understanding, the earth light beneath her feet. No, she was lighter, barely touching the ground with each step until the east turned bright and she could measure

the distant sea and the mountains ahead. Until she could count treetops and greet the morning's split-tailed swallows that squealed beside her with the new day.

"Dance your life," the man called.

The music found her and she danced away from the pain of an early widowhood, sorrow for her children, the fear for the rest of a lonely life. For a moment, she looked beyond that blue-lined horizon. Eternity or heaven or the universe—wherever her lost husband was, she was certain he saw her, and he was applauding with those others laughing below. No longer hesitant and afraid, she danced away all her sadness until only pure joy was left, until she merged with the sound of that flute, and it nourished her very blood.

That night above Eze, Myrina floated in the clear, fragranced early morning air, suspended there by the sound of a fine reed flute.



## JAZZMAN

THOMAS MYERS

*Watercolor and India Ink*

**GIZA**  
**MARY ANNE HODGES**  
*Poetry*

Without the creamy sheet of silence,  
 without the bloom of cherries, foaming,  
 turning out, I follow  
 every gust.

The bolt shoots up,  
 crumbling the desert,  
 curving in, I darken  
 the new, silent sweetness.

Let me call to you,  
 let me climb,  
 the sand, the wicker,  
 shredding cultivars with tombs.



## MEMOIR OF INNOCENCE

**ANNA COPELAND**

*Blown and Sculpted Glass*



I left the body; in fact we never joined. The spirit flew out as some ghostly apparition, slipping through the window with my checkered bathrobe. I sat up astonished like Scrooge, wondering where I was—past, present, or future. I lay back down, eyes closed, mind flickering with the evening breeze as my spirit soared through the copper beech limbs touching the moon. As a spirit, I could swoop with abandon—up, down, so fast that the leaves fell as I swept by. Unseen, above my mother and father, I knew they were not really saying what they were thinking. As a spirit, I could see my mother's words form: "I am not sure I like this life of taking care of you, the house, two children, and my family." But then the phone rang, and Lucia Ballantine, nee Heffelfinger, had to fix some family drama: "Dad has gone off the wagon again."

Hmmm. Is life down there as good and comfortable as it looks, as they imagined? The man of the house, my father, is still trying to convince the workers with his asbestos-stained hands that the contract is not all that bad. I see that he cannot sit with his conscience—the angel of justice would not whisper such lies just to mediate a contract between workers and owners. But he did not tell his wife of some dozen years of his doubts.

These parents are caught cutting the grass, washing dishes, putting the children's clothes neatly in drawers, and making the meals that are ever so wholesome. The pipe, scarf, witty asides, and white bodies held them in the Madison Avenue jingles of the 1950s—why sheets were white, dishes a joy to clean...and why we should brush our teeth twice a day, morning and night.

As an invisible—not black or white; rich or poor; heathen or angel—I hovered above the dance, holding this family together. The girl in the pink chair, my sister, fled her seat for dark romance, not a knight in shining armor but someone more tortured—

Heathcliff or Mr. Rochester with mad wife in the garret—a catacombs of bad luck. Would my sister find love in her flight, words taking her to other lands, to faraway imaginary places? Maybe, maybe not. I knew the impulse to escape as I soared on the updrafts of morning rays.

As a spirit, I do not have to return to the boy's body or even visit his dream. No, I can wander the land and see the days unfold for the Ballantines at 82 Library Place, or I may fly to faraway lands—Moscow, Paris, even the bogs in Wales with songs and peat moss. As I soar by the poets in clouds, I nod to Blake, singing of tigers and the firmament with God's battlements. I see that Yeats and other Irish bards look too for love. Joyce and Beckett wander to most unlikely corners—no song or lovely ladies in those druid ruins.

I swoop, soar, and flee to more cloudless climes with stars, camels, and aromas of fine spices; they too search for love beyond the morning prayers and calls to Allah. Oh, he is not here, I say; how can you all be so foolish. Bowing to statues and empty spaces, hoping that faithful intonations will seduce the spirits to speak.

All of YOU are caught, walking long hallways, counting the change, and putting up brick houses that will not blow down—believing that this is the way to happiness, that this is the answer for those who haul the water each day from the well. You think that

work and all the school instructions you sat through is how and why you will be free. That is the trap of your everyday doings—the aches and the pains of duty that afflict you. Yes, those are Job's boils.

I feel the frustrated currents below and tell them, I won't join you in your charade.

## I WILL NOT COME BACK TO EARTH UNTIL YOU BREATHE, REST YOUR MIND, AND LET THE FLOWERS BLOOM WITH THE COLD RAINS.

I will not join your bodies until the mind stops spinning, the tasks are dropped, and the spirit let free. This is why I flew.

It turns out that this dialogue is part of a long journey—a lesson hard to teach the young boy, the family, the sister, and parents—Lucia and Jack. In fact, some must die before I touch the body lying prone on the floor, the mind letting go, and the muscles relaxed. I must see, first, a release from the captivity of living there. Eventually I hear the chants of monks as they sleep with angels, walking in quiet

meditation. It is only then that the soaring spirits will join hands with the lost boy.

Finally they, down there, hear what the prophets have preached through the ages—not the riddles but the true light of the star streaking across the sky. The rumblings of the earth moving, exclaiming, enough. It is only when the silence speaks, whispering in hushed tones as the harp with angel's hands playing the golden strings, that the body and spirit can join. In the cold absolute dead silence of the night when nothing is heard; this is when the hand of the living holds the spirit of man, woman, and child. It is then that I come back to the body of the man—no longer boy—and let him delight in the secret of the spring cardinal and the coyote cutting through the brush.

In those quiet moments earth, moon, and sun are one with the body and the soul. A brief epiphany of light, that is all.



## SACRIFICE

ASHLEY MCINTYRE

*Kiln Formed Glass*

*Liliya Gazizova, translation from Russian*

It's raining in my movie.  
Water streaming down the roof  
of an old house,  
dark from insomnia,  
into the big wooden barrel,  
teeming with tadpoles.

Silent old man  
(everyone forgot about him).  
And the sad girl  
(she will become ballerina after many years).  
They sit on the front porch.

She comes to him,  
because other kids won't play with her.  
They don't talk much,  
they drink tea with yellow marmalade  
and look at the lake.  
To herself, girl calls it "ocean."  
Everything in this world is still not sized for her.

From time to time gray cat crosses the road  
in front of the porch  
(she will never be run over by a car,  
she will die quietly in her sleep).

Nothing is happening in this movie.  
The old man smokes his cigarette,  
trying not to remember anything.  
Little girl sits next to him  
and whispers to her doll.

In my movie the blue color predominates.  
Girl's dress,  
worn knitted sweater of the man,  
teacups and barristers of the porch,  
even the rain —  
Everything is blue.

When after the rain  
sun comes out,  
twilight already settles down,  
and the old man brings her home.

They walk along the road,  
facing the sunset,  
two shadows — big and small —  
They fall behind, reluctant to come closer.

When he comes home,  
the old man sits in his chair,  
his mouth takes the shape of horizontal parenthesis.  
He is not crying, he's just trying not to remember.

And at the end of this never made movie  
there is simply a road and the titles...



**HANNAH**  
**ALLYSIA NEWTON**  
*Oil on Canvas*



**THE CAT OF BASKERVILLE**  
**TANNER BYRD**  
*Experimental Typography*

There are so many photographs in the exhibit. Olympic sprinters embracing midair, their long, gazelle limbs tangled in a mesh of lean muscles and pure ecstasy, tears of gratitude stilled on their open faces. Naked, napalm girl streaking through the desolate streets of South Vietnam, the first ever full-frontal picture to achieve such high acclaim. Man in clothes too big for him, shoulders stooped, crying as people in hazmat suits carry out the remains of his family to be cremated with the rest of the Ebola victims, angels of Death in white. The back of a young Central American teen, the only thing in sharp focus, on top of a fast-moving train — the background of his surroundings a dangerous, uncertain green blue. A baby being passed across barbed wire somewhere cold and miserable in Eastern Europe. All of these pictures and I still gravitate toward what could — amidst all these intense memorabilia of history — be perceived as an anomaly, an anticlimax. John Gaunt's Pulitzer award-winning photo for the *LA Times*, "Tragedy by the Sea," was taken on the shoreline facing his beachfront home in Hermosa Beach, California, and depicted, in hollow, grainy black-and-white, a young couple in the moments right after they'd lost their 19-month-old baby to the Pacific Ocean.

The photograph was taken on a Rolleiflex, a twin reflex camera with two objective lenses of the same focal length, a vintage thing of beauty. The two lone figures in the photo were captured sharply in the bottom right corner of the photo on the wide, empty shoreline, a rule-of-thirds composition that may have earned Gaunt his Pulitzer but not sharply enough that you can for certain determine the emotions on their faces. He, himself, had a three-year-old at home at the time the photo was taken. It was said that he only took four pictures of his grieving neighbors. One of the four would become iconic, an artifact of small-scale tragedy — if anything could ever be termed that — and Gaunt would receive his spot in the halls of fame. In this case in the pleasantly neutral, monochrome Pulitzer Photography hallway in the

million-dollar Newseum, the museum of news in D.C. And I would not be able to move from this photo.

Alex finds it borderline predictable that this is the photograph that captivates me. *I could've guessed this would be the one that gets you*, he says. *It's the storyteller in you*, he says when he sees the belligerent look on my face. *All these photos tell a story*, I argue. *Yes*, he says. *But this has an ocean and it's poetic*. He cups his hand around his chin in a mock gesture of deep thought. A group of four women stands off to the side, sadly examining a photo of a crowd huddled around a distraught girl in Kenya moments before her female circumcision ritual. Light refracted off a thick, silver cross slung over the back of one of the women. It was like there were two circles of spectators presiding over her mutilation. We are some of the last people wandering the halls of captured tragedies.

I hate that he is somewhat right. From the angle that it is taken, the way the woman's head is tilted up toward her lover, her brows furrowed, his eyes deflected from hers, looking out into the waves, arms bracing against her clutch, I think, *this is a picture of confrontation*. I wonder how they will go on from this photo, framed by monotonous waves crashing, merciless, upon shore.

The fact that *this* is my kind of photograph makes me solipsistic.

Like I am unable to comprehend and feel a sorrow much larger in scope than this.

## LIKE I AM STILL SEARCHING FOR ART WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS STARING, AWESTRUCK, AT PAIN.

What kind of a sociopathic, navel-gazing monster would I have to be to look at a picture of a Syrian refugee cradling the body of his bleeding son in his arms and think about my own imminent return home to an air-conditioned house and a life of heartbreaking boredom if I don't find a job by the time my student visa ends? In the lobby of the museum, there is a giant screen broadcasting the forty-fifth President's new proposed plans for the ban and the wall. I am afraid for myself. I leave the exhibit, ashamed.

D.C. is like a flat, concrete playground. Not the kind of bona fide adult playground that New York City is, with its luminous, limitless skyline, buildings that crawl lustfully on top of each other, an intense, erotic, exotic mesh of underground bars, secret old Art Deco elevators, and confusing postmodern art, grandiose in its utter meaninglessness. D.C. is like an

actual playground for kids: boring, standardized, mostly gray except for pops of uneventful color, controlled by good-intentioned people who seem to have lost touch with what it was like to crave adventure. Bureaucratic. Everyone gets coffee and a sandwich and wears suits and walks with extreme purpose from point A to point B. It is not a city meant for getting lost in. Not one for digression. There are no stars in your eyes here, just maps and history that feels not entirely yours. Founding fathers you have no connection to.

I take a picture on the roof of the museum of news with my back to Capitol Hill and think about how inopportune it is that this is the moment I choose to fall in love with New York City. I am always falling in love with things after I leave them or when on the verge of leaving them. For the longest time, I have been telling people about how overrated New York is, like kale chips and Soulcycle, and now, four hours away in another city, the city of museums and guided tours, I am overcome with longing. I want to be driving across the Brooklyn Bridge at night, feeling that cliché Concrete-City-of-Dreams rush take over my bones. I want to listen to Sinatra from the balcony of a nouveau-riche hotel on Park Ave and cry for no one else but myself. I want Alex to turn around and look at me, his body framed by the sun setting on the Hudson — which I know is a river, not an ocean, but it feels like one — and get down on one knee and ask me to marry him. To stay.

*Do you have this thing in Thailand where old couples would hold hands and walk into the sea together?* Alex asks me later that night in D.C. when we find ourselves talking about Gaunt's photograph yet again. Because that's a thing in Japan, he says, picking french fries from his plate. *I don't know*, I say. *Never heard of it.* We will drink too many margaritas that night to make the last ride of a Ferris wheel that would allow us a glimpse of the Potomac River at its finest.

I think about how this half-decent photograph of me with my eyes half-shut, hair whipped into my own face, with the backdrop of the capital of America, will one day, maybe a few months from now, become something that I love because I've lost too. Like this whole seven-year chunk of my life on this side of the world, this continent across the Pacific Ocean, so far away from where I've started and yet the only place I call home. Just an artifact of something separated by the merciless ocean, lost. A small-scale tragedy by the sea of my own.



## ENCHANTED

ADORABLE MONIQUE

*Acrylic on Canvas*



## REFLECTION

KELLY TAYLOR

*Kiln Formed and Enamels*

I'm afraid that if you look at a thing long enough,  
it loses all of its meaning.

—Andy Warhol

Today, I pulled up a chair for that curse you hung around my neck:  
“I don’t respect you.” I have spent the last year trying to bury it  
beneath barbells and Bacardi, boys and music, telling myself  
that I can heal by diversion. Nobody ever heals by diversion.  
Even on the best days, it reappears — on the steam-licked  
mirror, in the white noise of the air conditioner — *I don’t  
respect you* — pervasive, peripheral. Until now. Now,  
I have sat it down for tea. “You have my attention,”  
I say. “I don’t respect you,” it replies in your voice.  
On the way to the gym, I buckle it in. “I don’t  
respect you,” it whispers from the other  
seat. I take a breath and say nothing.  
At the dinner table, it complains  
about the way I look, says  
that I’m self-righteous.  
I put down the fork  
and knife to listen.  
The longer I stare,  
the more it  
seems to  
shrink.

**WAR OF ATTRITION**  
COREY HARVARD  
Poetry



# WHEN MY TRAIN PULLS IN

ALLYSIA NEWTON

*Lithography*



# TO DEFINE IS TO LIMIT

KIRSTEN HOLLAND

*Digital Photography*



Thomas was a late bloomer, but even when he filled in, he still had skinny legs. So each spring, while he dreamed of meeting all the hot girls at summer camp, he also felt the swelling crest of dread. Shorts season. As long as he could remember, he had been self-conscious about his bony legs. When he was very young, the kids called him ‘chicken legs.’ That was bearable. But in high school some of his friends started calling him ‘faggot legs.’ This name was meant as a joke, but it was a dangerous shift. Chicken just meant scrawny. Faggot meant un-manly, disgusting and weird. Lower than an animal. It was something to be hated, and Thomas had learned this lesson early.

There was this gay kid in Thomas’s middle school named Landon. Everyone talked about him behind his back and to his face, threatening him and mocking him. They were cruel, and Thomas felt the injustice. But Landon would do weird stuff, too. Back when Thomas was a kid everybody showered after gym class, and at Benjamin Franklin Middle School in Jude, West Texas, they had communal showers in the boys’ locker room. So once in a while, Landon would come barging into the showers, smiling wild-eyed, giggling at the other boys and staring hard until they fled, screaming and covered in suds. It was frightening and strange, but it was the one weapon Landon could wield against all the ‘real’ boys.

Thomas couldn’t remember a time when Landon wasn’t acting bizarre, and looking back, he concluded it was by design. Landon spoke in this strange voice that sounded like a mix between a robot and a baby. Thomas thought he might have been smart, but he noticed that teachers didn’t reach out to the kid to praise his strengths or accommodate any shortcomings. Landon was just sort of left alone, and it seemed like maybe he wanted it that way. Thomas wondered why the kid lived up to his label with such reckless gusto. Maybe it was easier to be a super-hyped weirdo — to be a side show rather

than a threat. And Landon joined the other silent outcasts sojourning atop the lonely mountain, far from the holy city, yet clinging to the sacred.

When Thomas scored a role in the high school musical as a freshman, he was happy to be paired in the dancing scenes with the hottest cheerleader in the school. Abigail was a senior and her boyfriend was off playing basketball for the Texas Tech Red Raiders. Thomas had no chance, but Abigail flirted with him, and this made him feel nice. But she wasn’t the only flirt.

In French class one day, Thomas was surprised when the male lead, Randy, passed him a note offering to give him a ride home each night after play practice. A dude hadn’t passed him a note since the fourth grade. Anyway, he quickly understood when he shared the good news with his mother, whose reaction was terse.

“You are not to ride anywhere with Randy Cowler, do you understand?”

A year later, the debate and drama team travelled for an overnight competition. Thomas was taken aback the following morning when he saw Randy exiting the hotel room of the drama teacher, Mr. Maurgin. It all cleared up a few months later when Randy Cowler got beat up the morning after Mr. Maurgin was fired by the school board for sexual assault. Thomas never saw the drama teacher again, but he never heard of

any charges. Randy was a senior, so maybe he wasn’t technically a minor. Either way, it was pretty frightening considering the fact that Randy had tagged him as a possible ‘friend.’

Years later, when Thomas went to Simeon Baptist College up in Oklahoma, the good Christian kids would go into the city to ‘witness’ in this nightlife district — an area of town with a couple of dance clubs for punks and one for gay dudes in a seedy hotel called the Cuthean. Thomas went to the hotel once, and after that he spent the rest of his time talking with the punks, even though this brought him into contact with drug-dealing, gun-wielding gang members. He felt safer there, among the jacked-up hoods who liked girls.

When he’d gone to the Cuthean, he’d learned immediately what it was like to be a girl. Guys were coming up to him from all over, just sidewinding, circling like vultures, looking up and down and all around, undressing and caressing him with their minds, penetrating him in so many grotesque and unnatural ways.

“Hey man, if you come up to my room with me and take off your clothes, you can tell me all about Jesus,” one said as he stared intensely at Thomas’s crotch.

Having occasioned many nightclubs through the years, Thomas should have recognized that the lurky, creepy pack of hunters he saw at

the Cuthean that night was no different than the marauders roving the straight clubs and looking to take down women.

Instead, he saw the harsh judgments of his youth being affirmed in young adulthood. Homosexual men were depraved and not to be trusted. They were sick and had chosen to pursue wicked designs of their animalistic tendencies. Only years later did he wonder if maybe all of the regular gay dudes had been chased underground by the raging bigotry that filled the world.

Thomas had a gay cousin. Leon was his mother's sister's son and the youngest of three children. His father had been away when he was young and died when Leon was still in high school. You know the rumor: he was without a father, so he became gay.

Anyhow, Leon was always acting weird at Thanksgiving and Christmas, sneaking off for a smoke, a line, or a pill. When Thomas was young, he didn't understand why Leon was so jittery and smiley all the time. Later, when Leon was diagnosed with HIV, it started to make sense, but Thomas still didn't see the whole picture. Drug addicts get AIDS too, right?

It was only when Thomas visited Leon's home that he understood. As he entered the apartment complex, he felt like there was something different in the air, but he couldn't quite place the feeling. There were

only dudes hanging around, no girls anywhere. Then Thomas met all of Leon's friends when he came to the bedside, and he felt the hungry looks. Ignoring his discomfort for the sake of his dying cousin, he smiled at Leon's lover, whose devotion put him at ease. James was as fervent as a saint and as loyal and tender as a mother. He never left Leon's side, and he wept like a child at the funeral. And Thomas had glimpsed something different for the first time.

After he graduated, he moved to the city and got a job, then moved into an apartment in a groovy little section of town where all the artists and wannabe philosophers hang out. Coffeeshouses, vegan cafés, gardening shops, yoga clubs, shoe stores (hipsters always have nice shoes), a token bookstore, and a vast multitude of clothing stores that sold handcrafted goods only the rich or self-absorbed could afford.

Thomas emptied his wallet and bought several pairs of artisan-made fancy pants with which he covered his skinny legs. After that, he met a girl named Jannah. Then he fell hard.

Jannah was tall, and her long, tanned legs grew into sleek curves at her hips, which were always exposed because she wore those sexy low-rise jeans. Curly brown hair fell over firm shoulders and arms. Her breasts were small, but round and womanly. She came from an athletic family. Her brother, Jordan, had played defensive

end in college until he tore up his knee. Thomas liked Jordan, but sometimes he could be intimidating. He was a real macho-man.

One day Thomas was out to lunch with Jannah and Jordan, who brought along one of his many girlfriends—a bronzed bombshell named Sheena. The four of them sat outside at one of those tables near the street where you could people watch and also be seen. Next door was an art shop called Sychar that sold the work of locals. Thomas recognized one of the shoppers as a young man from his apartment complex. He had noticed him coming to and fro, but they had never spoken. Soon his neighbor strolled toward their table and when Thomas made eye contact, the young man waved and approached, smiling.

"Hey, we live in the same building, right?" he asked.

Thomas stood and shook his hand, introducing his companions. The neighbor replied in a friendly manner.

"Good to meet you. My name is Sam. Maybe we can hang out sometime."

Sam left them to their lunch and strolled down the street, enjoying the sunshine. Jordan waited until he was out of earshot and then leaned in to the center of the table, talking low so only the girls and Thomas could hear. "Watch out, Thomas. That dude might want to do more than just hang. You can see he's a fag a mile away. I hope

he's the only one, or you might have to move outta this hipster village.

## I MEAN, CAN'T THERE BE A STYLISH NEIGHBORHOOD WITHOUT IT BEING OVERRUN BY FREAKS?"

Jordan chuckled softly and winked. Jannah and Sheena smiled nervously. There was mockery in Jordan's tone, but also anger. Thomas just stared after Sam, thinking that it was a shame the dude had to be gay. He had come across real genuine, a true nice guy. *Oh well*, he thought. *I guess he's on the dark side.*

Over the next weeks and months, Thomas crossed paths with Sam a time or two, and there was always the cursory greeting, but nothing more. One time they waited in line together at Jacob's Well—the corner coffeeshouse—and Thomas could feel the tension between them. He figured Sam probably understood he wasn't cool with homosexuality. Sam was curt, said a few words, and then turned around and spoke with the barista the rest of the time. He waved to Thomas when he left, but barely raised his eyes. Each of

these encounters left Thomas with a mingled sense of uneasiness and guilt that ruffled him. Sam was the one retreating, but Thomas still felt bad, like he was the one to blame.

Thomas attended the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church on Sundays, listening attentively and taking notes while Pastor Mike Lawson preached on the wages of sin. Pastor Lawson was one of these hardcore old school Baptists — no dancing, gambling, cussing, drinking, or premarital sex. Thomas thought it seemed almost like sex, in general, was deemed improper. But the Pastor did have several children, so maybe not.

Pastor Lawson would always begin his sermons with a question.

“What must we do to inherit eternal life?”

Then he’d preach, saying how the people needed to love God with all of their heart and soul and mind and strength, and for Pastor Lawson, that meant following all of the rules. The sins of Christians mock God in the public square. The Church must live shining lives that draw others to the saving knowledge of the Lord.

He’d add, in a low, eloquent flourish, that God also commanded Christians to love their neighbors, and he talked a lot about tough love. Then he’d speak harsh words for the people who didn’t sit in his pews: abortion doctors

and liberal politicians, collectors of welfare checks, gangbangers and drug-dealers, porn stars and liquor salesmen.

And homosexuals.

Thomas always put his tithe in the offering plate when it passed. He led Bible studies in his home, volunteered to chaperone trips for the youth groups to summer camp, and joined one of the church leaders, Deacon Levi Slade, on short missionary voyages out of the country, to visit the poor and suffering in faraway lands. Thomas sometimes wondered why the focus always seemed to be elsewhere. He guessed that helping the poor in his own city might be difficult, there might be the need to handshake and partner with liberal politicians, who seemed to be the ones concerned with slums in his town. And Pastor Lawson was quick to cite the scriptures that suggest the danger of being stained by the simple touch of the wicked.

Pastor Lawson was happy to have Thomas in his congregation and heartily shook his hand when he greeted him on Sundays, smiling broadly. That made Thomas feel real nice, like he was a part of something meaningful, something special.

So, when Pastor Lawson asked him to join other members of the congregation as part of a rally at the Courthouse, he was willing. When the Pastor told him they were protesting gay marriage, Thomas

felt uncomfortable, thought about Sam, remembered the devotion of Leon’s lover, James. Nevertheless, he smiled and nodded and followed his pastor’s lead.

When Jannah heard about the rally, she asked if she could come, and Thomas agreed. Jordan and a new girl, Heather (another suspiciously perfect ten with too much time in the tanning booth) also joined them. Thomas picked them up at Jordan’s house, which was down the street from the big New Jerusalem Church, with its mighty columns and high golden steeple.

They had to park pretty far away from the rally point. There were just too many people. They were supposed to meet up with Pastor Lawson and the other members of the congregation over near the old Jericho Street Train Station. Thomas parked the car and they started the trek to the parking lot that stood out front of the quiet, antique ruin.

Along the way they saw other groups of protesters, not just the straight ones, but the gays, too. There was some shouting and the angry waving of signs. Thomas groaned inside, but still put one foot in front of the other, and wondered at the hysteria that was building, inside and out.

Many of the protesters were in the street, bringing traffic to a standstill. Motorists were frustrated, angered at the delay, and some began to honk.

Others rolled down windows, cursing both the goodies and the gays and some began to threaten, revving while their horns blared. Then the commotion behind Thomas and his group suddenly erupted. He turned to look and saw a black hard-top Jeep Renegade with tinted windows just as it squealed its tires and jumped the curb, racing straight toward them. He screamed out a warning and everyone nearby began to panic, trying to get out of the way. But there were just too many people in the streets, and some tripped and fell. He could hear the Renegade hesitate like a beast about to pounce; the Jeep was out of gear, the engine heaving, the driver waiting for a clear space before he popped the clutch. But the driver made a mistake, his irritation trumping reason, and slipped into gear while the crowd still swayed frantically before him, and the Renegade lurched into bodies, tossing several who’d leapt in time straight into the air. Then Thomas heard a shriek of terror cut short by a thudding crunch as the Renegade bounced awkwardly and then made it to a side street, running now, not from impatience, but from manslaughter.

Jordan was running like the old defensive end, chasing the killer, cursing at the top of his lungs. Heather sat against the curb weeping, rocking back and forth. Thomas just stared at the mangled form of his love, and his soul began to fall, rapidly, into an abyss. He turned to Heather, but she nodded hurriedly and stood

up, walked around the corner and vanished. Thomas fell down upon the broken form of his Jannah and wept. Blood and gore covered him, and no one intervened. Some of the marchers paused to gawk, but none lent a hand. It was as if he'd fallen among thieves, been stripped of his raiment, left for dead.

Thomas looked skyward, silently calling out to God, and soon it seemed his prayer was answered. He saw one of the leaders from Mt. Pleasant, Deacon Levi Slade, hastily walking toward him, eyes blazing and face drawn. But the Deacon just walked across the street, pretended not to hear when he called, and disappeared into the mass of protestors swarming toward the Courthouse.

Others were injured as well, and someone made a call.

**AN AMBULANCE  
WAS ANGLING ITS  
WAY DOWN THE  
LANE, BEEPING AND  
BLARING, WAITING  
ON THE CROWDS TO  
DISPERSE SO THEY  
MIGHT MOVE TO  
SAVE A LIFE.**

Thomas saw the lights, but could not hear the sounds anymore. He knew they could not help her, she was gone. But he was coming apart, could feel panic surging through his soul, and he cried out to God, aloud. Some of the onlookers saw the depth of his sorrow and called out to the crowd.

"Is any among you a minister? This man needs aid. Someone must help him. You sir, aren't you one of the organizers, one of the preachers who brought us all here?"

Thomas could barely hear them, could barely think. But he heard the reply, the voice that had become familiar and comforting to him on so many Sunday mornings.

"No, sir, I must go, I have to be on the Courthouse steps in five minutes, I am already running late. Someone else will have to tend to the needs of this poor fellow."

Thomas looked up, saw the retreating form of Pastor Lawson, marching off to do battle for Jesus, fighting to shine the light of the gospel, the good news, chastising sinners so that they would learn to drink from the Spring of life, never to thirst again. But there was nothing to draw with and the well was deep.

Then Thomas heard another voice, its tone a balm — oil and wine — and he felt a gentle touch that was able to penetrate the wall of his shock. Slowly turning his head, he looked into the

eyes of one of the gay protesters, one of the enemies, one of those faggots who was less than, selfish, and despised.

Sam lifted Thomas to his feet and took him to the hospital. He rode by his side when they transferred him to a wellness facility so that his healing could begin. He left his number and two silver coins with the psychologists, and asked them to call for any reason. Sam visited Thomas each day during the week that followed. He drove him to the funeral, and hugged him when he cried. Then he took him home and put him to bed, drawing the covers up to his chin like a mother.

The next morning, Sam brought coffee and donuts and the two neighbors sat on Thomas's front porch and ate. Then the orange glow of morning light swelled, chasing grey shadows and the night chill. Beams of warmth caressed the communal garden that lay at the center of the complex, turning the ripe, skyward reaching harvest a pure, radiant white. After they finished eating, several minutes of solitude followed. Sam waited, attentive. Thomas looked across the table.

"Thank you."

"You would have done the same."

Thomas looked afar, and the contented tune of a waking songbird harmonized with the awakening in his soul. It was a song of spirit and of truth. Then he looked back at Sam, eyes wet with

gratitude, his voice trembling. "But why would you help me, how could you show such mercy, you know how I —?"

Sam smiled and interrupted.

"I know, Thomas. But I am your neighbor."

**GRAIN**  
**ROBERT BEVERIDGE**  
*Poetry*

touch  
down my spine  
cold

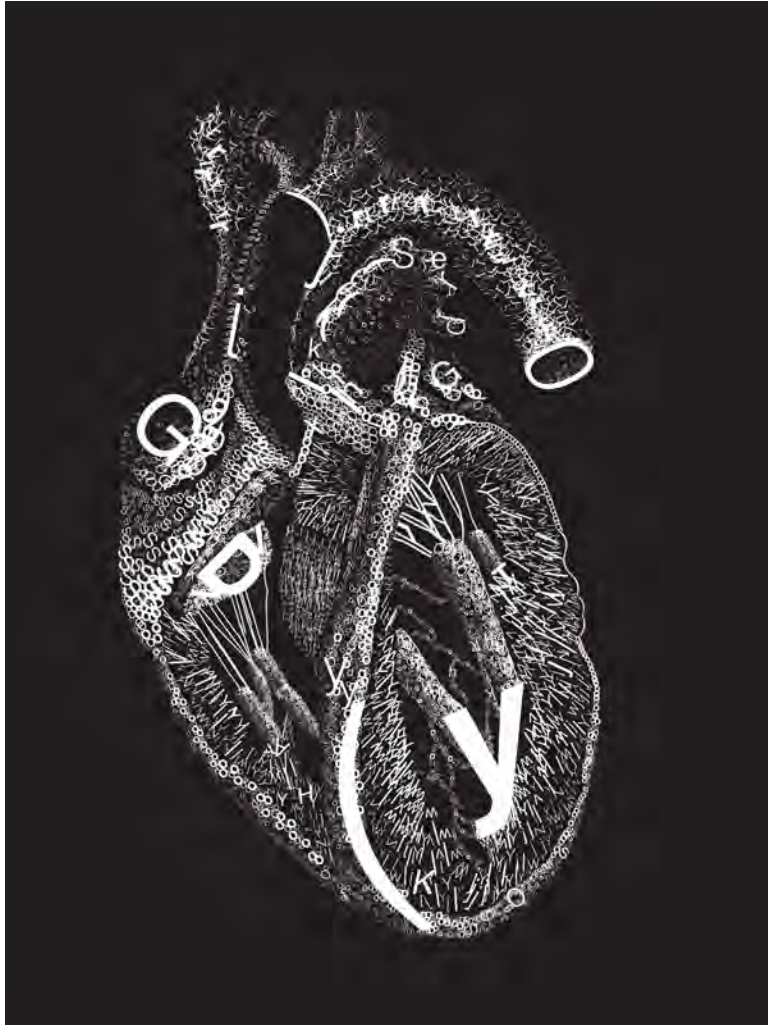
sounds suspiciously  
like socialism you said  
when I told you why  
I feel for you how I do

it sucks the moisture  
from the throat  
with a shot

chills the spine  
a kiss  
on the hollow  
of the throat



**CARBS**  
**DARCEY MCKINNEY**  
*Mixed-Media*



## HEARTH

ALMA VAZQUEZ

*Experimental Typography*



## SYMMETRY

ALLIE TONEY

*Digital Photography*

Any August afternoon in the Florida panhandle is painful and sweltering, but that summer was particularly hot. The type of hot that makes you feel like your skin is wearing you. The type of hot that brings an acute awareness of the blood coursing through your body. That particular August afternoon was extra terrible because school had just recently started back up. Unsurprisingly, the third grade was not enjoyable. We had homework every day. We would get marked for misbehaving. We were allowed only two bathroom breaks each day. Lunch was later, and it was shorter. Every day I was eager to get home.

As I waited in the carline, I used my eyes like a chameleon — one eye looking for my mother's dirty golden van while the other scanned the kindergarten section of the pickup line for my brother's red Power Rangers shirt or cerulean blue Lego backpack. The sun glinted off the hood as the van turned the corner around the block. "Aryn... Aryn!" Mrs. Powell screeched for my attention. I turned to focus on the least liked teacher in the whole school. The outline of her grey wig was perspiring in the heat, and her green polyester sweater embroidered with images of happy children with leashed puppies seemed to exude a hypocritical aura of friendliness and welcome. *I see my mom's car, lady. I'm just waiting for my brother.* "One second, Mrs. Powell! I've just gotta find Nate." As I yelled this, I realized a blue Lego backpack had run past me and was jumping into the old Toyota van. *Typical.*

It should be no surprise that the Pensacola Sam's Club at the intersection of 9th avenue and College Boulevard is still here. If I had to guess, it's going to outlast humanity. After all, it's a Sam's Club...in Pensacola; it is practically the mecca of culture and entertainment. Unfortunately, it has also been a motif throughout my childhood. I went to Booker T. Washington High School across the street from this ugly grey warehouse and even spent my summers at the Barnes and Noble next door to this Sam's

Club. Even today, when my parents are feeling generous, I fill my gas tank on their membership card. I hate that place, and I have ever since I can remember. Every time I went inside, I smelled the cold, dank, stagnant air that accompanies warehouses. Everything was grey; the cold uneven floors, the sharp industrial scaffolding, the dusty high ceiling, the unstable plastic tables on which merchandise was piled.

And we went there way too often. It seemed like every day the Bradley family needed something from Sam's Club. Coffee. Toilet paper. Birthday cake. Lasagna.

But on that particular hot August afternoon, we needed Icees because Nate was losing his teeth, and his gums were sore. My mother, ever in the 90's fashion, was wearing her straight black hair in a white scrunchie at the top of her head. Her oversized Ralph Lauren sweatshirt had the type of stains on it that only mothers with small children have. She wore her sunglasses like a headband while her regular glasses rested on her flat, wide nose. She always wore both sets of glasses. Still does today.

Nate and I took a seat in the long plastic tables that passed for a café and waited for mom to bring us our Icee's. He crossed his arms on the table and put his head down. He was moving the table by swinging his legs underneath and accidentally kicked me.

"Stop," I whined. He didn't, until a more authoritative voice approached us. "Nate, quit that. Sit up. Your spine will permanently curve if you stay slumped like that all the time," my mom corrected him as she marched up to the table, Coke Icees in hand. She placed them on the table, and my brother and I jumped on them like two ravenous lions on an oversized elephant.

*Slurp slurp. Slurp. Crunch crunch.*

Rearranging ice sounds.

*Slurp. Bzzz. Slurp. Bzzz bzzz.*

I waved my hand across my face to get the flies out of the way.

*Slurp. Bzzz.*

A fly landed on a bead of condensation that had crept down the side of my Icee. A fly — a member of the order Diptera, a name that comes from Greek words meaning "two wings." Hmm. Seeing our frustration towards the invader, our mom whispered, "Watch this."

I was already watching, but Nate picked his head up. The fly was busy cleaning itself in the water. Perhaps maybe it was drinking it. I wasn't sure. It had to be as hot as we were.

Seeing that she had our attention, our mom snuck her hand behind the fly, moving slowly, but with confidence. Then, she pinched the little black buzz

machine, and before we realized what was happening, she lifted it up in front of us to show us her catch.

The kicking under the table stopped.

*BZZZ! BZZZ! BZZZ!*

“Wow! Mom, that is so cool!” I exclaimed. Nate had stood up and taken a step back from the table, a big smile on his face, his eyes nervous, peering over the Icee that seemed permanently fixed in his mouth.

“You want him to stop buzzing? Watch this.” She promised.

She pressed the fly to the table and focused in on him. Without saying a word, she brought her face closer to him and picked off the right wing.

*BZZZ! BZZZ! BZZZ! BZZZ!*  
*BZZZ! BZZZ!*

My mouth dropped.

## SHE PULLED OFF THE OTHER WING.

My Icee fell to the floor and my hand shot up to my face. My heart fell through my feet, and I felt my face get hot. Guilt crept into my stomach like a giant, searing hand that was grabbing for anything and everything. It crawled up my throat and behind my eyes and into the most remote places of my skull.

Realizing what was happening to me, my mother grabbed a napkin, scooped up the fly, smashed him between her hands, and tossed the wadded paper in the trash.

“Ready to go?”

She told us more than asked.

She took each of us by a hand and led us out of the store.

The average housefly lives for 28 days. 28. A month. The first half of a title of a strange movie. The average human menstrual cycle. The number of dominoes in a standard set. But also, an entire lifetime. 28 days the average housefly lives. Did that fly get to live his 28 days? Will I get to live mine?

I still think about that fly several times a year. It’s why I take the time to scoop up the spider in my room and throw him outside instead of grabbing a shoe. It’s why I ignore the smell of penny beers on my students when they stumble into class on Fridays. It’s also probably why I’ve been a vegetarian for almost 10 years.

That stifling afternoon, on a grey plastic picnic bench in Sam’s, I learned the power I had over the things around me. That guilt that crept like a hot hand up my face and neck? It wasn’t really guilt of what was happening right then. It wasn’t really for just that fly— not totally. I felt guilty about what had already happened through my childhood that had collected and

compounded. Things I had caused but had not yet been conscious of.

That guilt wasn’t guilt at all—it was simply the first time I had felt responsible, and the weight of it remains with me to this day.





## SELF PORTRAIT, IN THE MORNING

KIMBERLY LOVVORN

*Digital Photography*

we come into  
this world

wanting more  
than we need,

craving more  
of everything

more milk  
more attention  
more love

pick me up  
I am crying

and learn  
disappointment  
the hard way

when crying  
does not get  
us picked up,

and need  
does not equal  
deliverance

**NURSERY LETTERS**  
**KATARINA BOUDREAU**  
*Poetry*

**A GIFT CAN BE TRICKY****KELLY JONES***Poetry*

My father calls and I don't answer. He calls again and again. I turn my phone off and in the morning there are voicemails marked urgent, but all they say is *call me back, I want to ask you something*. This is a reality my relatives do not accept, a harassment they think harmless. Love is not where it should be. I don't feel any for my father, but pity pulls out of me a sense of duty and a lonely man is a sad thing to behold. When the world cracks around me two things may occur:

I will look for help  
or I won't.

My father believes that he is fine. He still gets mad if I don't call him *daddy* and he buys my cousin's wife fancy jewelry at Christmas. I can't accept anything from others without wondering what it will cost me.

**JUSTICE ISN'T BLIND****KELLY TAYLOR***Mixed-Media Sculpture (Clay, Paper, Metal)*



**BETTA FISH**  
SARAH HOWARD  
*Screenprint*



**LIFE IN DEATH**  
JOSEPH BUSH  
*Acrylic on Canvas*



## INTRICACIES

ALLIE TONEY

*Digital Photography*



## SEARCHING FOR LIGHT

AMANDA YOUNGBLOOD

*Reductive Woodcut on Mulberry Paper*



## CAT

DARCEY MCKINNEY

*Mixed-Media*



## INTROSPECTIVE DENOMINATOR

LAURA SCOTT BELL

*Mixed-Media Painting on Canvas*



**MR. MUERTE'S HOT SAUCE CO.**  
EMILY CARLIN  
*Digital Illustration*



**DELIGHTFUL BLISS**  
ADORABLE MONIQUE  
*Acrylic on Canvas*



**VESSEL FOR PAN**  
KAITLAN WILSON  
*Ceramic*



**LAST BREATH**  
BILLY BREEDLOVE  
*Watercolor*



**THE DIVIDE**  
MEGAN HALL  
*Digital Illustration*



**CUBED**  
ASHLEY MCINTYRE  
*Kiln Formed Glass*





**LA BARDA**  
RAMON DEANDA  
*Woodcut*



**BOOK1**  
ALLYSIA NEWTON  
*Mixed-Media*



**JOMON POT**  
ABIGAIL O'NEAL  
*Anagama Kiln Ceramic*



**UNUSUAL AESTHETIC**  
ANGEL POOLE  
*Digital Photography*

Dismal, overcast skies typically brought Amanda Keystone comfort. She normally curled up on her window seat with a book and a steaming cup of tea. This grey day, however, held little cheer. A sinister aura drifted down from the blanket of clouds to rest squarely upon her chest. Nothing would please her more than to crawl back between her white linen sheets and down comforter. However, she had an appointment to keep.

A student in her class sent her a letter, a peculiarity, as she had never received any handwritten mail from her students in the past twenty years of her teaching. Then again, everything about this student emanated peculiarity. She recalled the first day of classes when Anastasia Vasily strode through the door of her studio painting class. Her long white hair piled itself atop her head in a tight bun, save for her bangs, which nearly reached her eyes. Amanda sucked in a breath as she made eye contact with the strange girl. Two dark pink orbs stared back at her from a paper white face. A Mona Lisa grin spread across the girl's primrose lips as she strode to a vacant easel.

The entire class watched as her flowing black skirts swished back and forth with her swaying hips. She held herself with such confidence and such grace that she did not seem real. Once seated, she turned her startling eyes back upon Amanda, crossed her legs and folded her hands in her lap, and awaited instruction. Amanda shook herself from the albino girl's spell and started class.

The girl did very well in the class— too well. Every painting she composed seemed too perfect, with hardly a flaw. Amanda would typically assign homework and give her students a week to work on their paintings, but Anastasia always brought in a near photographic piece by the next day.

Her level of perfection and the rate at which she produced paintings did not seem possible. For this

reason, and because of a twinge of jealousy, Amanda could not bring herself to give the girl an A. Rather, she gave Anastasia a C or lower due to her “not putting a proper amount of time into the assignment.” Anastasia never made any remark, but gave her a reproachful glance before taking her grade sheet and gliding out of the room.

The arrival of her letter unsettled Amanda, but she could not say why. Anastasia merely wished to arrange a meeting with her to discuss her grades within the class and how she might *improve* herself. She stated how her schedule would not permit her to make an appointment during Amanda's office hours or any other time during the week, so she invited her professor to tea over the weekend. Reluctantly, Amanda accepted.

Throwing her scarf around her neck, Amanda snatched her keys and purse from the table and forced herself out the door. She locked it behind her, then trudged over to her silver Nissan Altima. Plopping herself in the driver's seat, she shoved the key into the ignition. The engine rumbled to life and she pulled out of the driveway.

“Take a right on Wayward Wind Lane,” the GPS instructed. She turned right. Amanda had left her home nearly forty-five minutes ago. The closer to the location she came, the more that dreadful feeling pressed on her chest. Twenty minutes after departing, all signs of civilization disappeared. Thick

woodland lined both sides of the road. The car jostled, running over another deep crack in the decrepit asphalt. Amanda groaned. Her car already needed re-aligning.

In the distance, a narrow cobbled street branched off of the main road. “Take a right onto Wisteria Avenue,” the GPS chimed. “Destination is on your left.” The car jerked about as it pattered along down the path. In another moment, Amanda noticed a picket fence with the gate left open. She turned, careful not to let either of her mirrors scrape the sides of the fence. Wisteria draped itself over the driveway. The further along she drove, Amanda noticed that nothing held the wisteria aloft. No sign or indication of an arbor at any point could be seen.

## EVERYTHING ASSOCIATED WITH THIS GIRL APPEARED BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND UNNATURAL.

When the tunnel ended, a sight even lovelier awaited on the other side. A modest Tudor cottage sat nestled amongst innumerable flowerbeds brimming with daffodils, violets, pansies, and every rose imaginable. Even more wisteria grew along the sides of the house. Amanda's mouth

fell open, and her blue eyes widened. Reality melted away, and a fairytale unfolded, though the dark aura still buzzed about her mousy head. She parked under a blooming witch hazel tree and stepped out. A breeze laced itself through the flowers and trees, causing sweet fragrances to dance about in the air. A tiny cluster of witch hazel blossoms landed on her shoulder. She flicked it off and made her way to the door.

Amanda stood before a great emerald green door. A brass gargoye knocker beamed out at her. She inhaled until her lungs ached, then exhaled before reaching for the knocker. As her fingers brushed against the cool metal, the door swung open to reveal Anastasia behind it. She appeared even more striking than she had in class.

Rather than being tied in a bun atop her head, her long white tresses rolled down her back and halted at her waist. She wore a simple long-sleeve black dress. Dark kohl lined her eyes, making them appear larger and brighter. A tube-like silver whistle dangled from a long chain around her neck.

"Professor Keystone," she grinned. "I'm so glad you found your way. Won't you come in?"

Amanda nodded and stepped across the threshold into a perfectly polished foyer. A vase bursting with luscious flowers, no doubt picked from the Eden outside, sat atop a lace covered

table. Paintings of faraway lands adorned the walls, while mahogany cherubs gazed down from the tops of columns. Everything radiated immaculacy and old charm.

"We'll be having tea in the parlor," Anastasia stated. "Just through there." She pointed to a door on the right, then floated into the next room. Amanda followed her. Elegance from a previous century permeated the room. Several vases overflowed with bright blossoms that cascaded over the sides of the lace-adorned tables. Candelabras cast a warm glow about the exquisitely furnished room. Numerous paintings like those in the foyer adorned the walls, except for the one over the mantle. A large portrait of the mistress of the house gazed down at the scene. She sat in a high backed chair, her body draped in a fiery scarlet brocade. Amanda stared at the painting, marveling at its regal beauty.

Anastasia drifted to her side. "I completed that about six months ago," she stated. "What do you think of it?" Amanda could say nothing. Bitter jealousy gnawed at her brain and burned her throat. Anastasia cleared her throat. She turned, the gnawing-burning sensation remained. Anastasia indicated to two Victorian sofas upholstered in evergreen satin, a low dark wood table stood between them. A sterling three-tier serving tray piled high with petit fours, finger sandwiches, and scones

awaited them. A porcelain china tea set sat perched next to the tray.

Amanda sat herself at one of the places. Anastasia placed herself across from her. She folded her thin hands in her lap. The professor squirmed under her steady pink gaze. After a moment, she broke the heavy silence.

"I know why you wanted me to come to... um... tea," Amanda started. "My grades are final. You got exactly what you deserved."

Anastasia tilted her head a bit to the right. A Mona Lisa grin bloomed on her lips. Her pink eyes burned into Amanda's.

"I'm sorry you feel that way," she replied. "I thought perhaps you would change your mind."

She perched closer to the edge of the sofa.

"You see," she continued, "I believe my work is more than satisfactory. I am very dedicated to the class and fulfill all of the requirements. The grades you have seen fit to give me, I believe, do not reflect the level of work I put into my paintings. Your comments as to why I have received such low marks seem a bit *vague*. Would you mind elaborating?"

Anastasia lounged back, draping her left arm over the armrest and the other over the back of the sofa.

The Mona Lisa smile remained on her porcelain face.

Amanda sighed, frustrated. The girl cornered her. She had no choice but to explain why she bestowed such marks upon her, however she could not reveal everything. To allow her, a student, to know that she, an award-winning painter, was jealous would deal her pride a fatal blow. She cleared her throat and spoke.

"I will elaborate. You received those grades, as I have said before, because you earned them. Painting requires time, time that you do not put in fully. That is the reason why you have earned such marks."

"Even though I perform above where I ought? I did not think time would be much of an issue. Perhaps jealousy creeps into the grading process? Every artist is different and should not be competing with one another, rather they should focus on bettering their own unique style. I can no more paint like you than you like me."

Amanda shook her head, rage building.

"No, no, no, no," she repeated, her voice growing stern. "That is not the case. Those are the grades that I have assigned you and those are the grades that shall stay. I, me, jealous of a student. How positively *ridiculous*." Anastasia merely nodded her head. Her Mona Lisa smile faded. She slid forward to the edge of the sofa.

"I'm terribly sorry you feel that way. Though I do not agree with you, I shall respect your decisions. And there is no hope of my grades being raised to what they truly deserve?"

"They stand. You deserve them."

"Very well. One more question. Several other students before me have also done quite well. Yet you gave them the same marks as me, and even dismissed a few from the class. Perhaps they didn't give their paintings enough *time*, either?"

"That is none of your concern," she stated coldly.

"Yes," the girl mumbled, "none of my concern."

She collected herself and the Mona Lisa grin spread back across her rose-petal lips.

"Well, now that the matter is settled, would you be so kind as to pour for us, Professor Keystone?"

Amanda grunted before picking up the teapot decorated with mountains, valleys, and ornate Chinese temples. She tipped the pot over her own cup, expecting hot amber tea to pour out. Instead a dark, thick liquid slid from the spout. At the sight of the blood, Amanda shrieked and dropped the pot. Before it could shatter upon the Persian rug, the teapot halted in mid-air, hovering inches from the floor.

She stumbled to her feet, eyes widening in terror. The pot levitated upward, across the table, and into the waiting hands of Anastasia. Amanda gawked at the girl, who gazed at her professor with a cool calmness. Amanda's chest heaved and became more and more ragged as Anastasia rose from her seat. She gave a short, curt laugh before speaking.

"Dear me," Anastasia said, "you seem rather... out of sorts. Please, allow me to continue."

She reached over the table and continued to pour blood into the teacup. The teacup overflowed. Blood cascaded into the saucer. She watched it spread across the lace covered table, then over the side onto the rug.

"What is this?" Amanda demanded. "Stop it!"

Anastasia paid her no heed. The blood continued to flow. It seemed impossible that so much blood could fit into one teapot. Impossible. A strange sensation crept over Amanda. She suddenly felt inexplicably cold. A piercing pain shot through her abdomen.

"Professor Keystone," Anastasia whispered, "I thought you would have seen reason. Your undermining has caused some of your students to give up on their dreams, their passion, their art, some have even given up their *lives*. Now, here is what *you* deserve."

Amanda's head swam as her vision blurred. She moaned and clutched her stomach as she crumpled over. Anastasia did not bother to look up. Blood seeped into the rug and began to form a deep crimson puddle on the hardwood floor. Amanda stumbled and tried to make her way to the front door. She had to get out. *Had* to.

She lumbered into the foyer, slamming her shoulder into the doorframe as she went. Her hand clutched feebly at the brass knob, but it fell away. Weakness ravaged her pale body. Knees buckling, she slumped to the floor. Her head bashed itself against the door with a sickening thunk.

The last drop of the blood dripped from the spout into the cup. Anastasia placed the pot next to the serving tray and erected herself. The silver whistle around her neck glittered in the soft light. She lifted it to her lips and blew, yet no sound escaped. Seconds passed, a great fluttering, shrieking noise filled the house. Anastasia clasped her hands together and kept her eyes upon the sea of blood. The fluttering and tiny shrieks increased.

A black swarm enveloped the room, descending upon every bloodied surface. Hundreds of miniscule bats sucked up the blood greedily. After several moments, they arose as one and flew back from whence they came. All traces of blood vanished, not a drop anywhere.

Upon their departure, three great black dogs materialized from the adjoining room. Their glistening red eyes gazed up at their mistress. Anastasia pointed to the foyer. They pranced away, their scaly, hairless hides disappearing around the corner. Soon the sounds of tearing flesh and snapping bone drifted in.

The mistress of the house picked up her teacup and saucer. She left her hounds to finish cleaning up the mess and flitted into the kitchen, where a freshly brewed pot of tea awaited her. After pouring herself a piping hot cup, she returned to the parlor and dropped three lumps of sugar into her tea. She took a teaspoon and stirred daintily.

The hounds returned to their mistress, licking their saggy jowls. In turn, she placed a kiss on each of their massive heads, then sent them away. She lounged across the sofa, lifting the cup to her lips. The scalding liquid washed down her throat, warmth filling her. The Mona Lisa smile broadened into a content grin. Anastasia Vasily did not plan on moving from the sofa until she had finished her tea. While sipping it, she reflected on the foolishness of the late Mrs. Keystone. Didn't she know never to break bread with an enemy? And under no circumstances is one to sit down to tea with them.



## DISCARDED LIKE TRASH

**BILLY BREEDLOVE**

*Ceramic*

The dead are playing their pianos  
In the circus ring of trees.

It's midnight, and the moth burns,  
Then starts out on new, dark wings.

It's best here to drink from the river  
Where the music leads.

Its water is a soft breathing emerald,  
A fire under glass.

It might be the home of all our molecules,  
The reason why something reaches out

When the rain arrives.  
Its gravity is secret and colossal,

Bends us into a chorus,  
Refracted singing breaking out

From every porous joint,  
Every wild fissure.

It causes even the small darkness  
Of our pupils to shine like winter stones.

**FIELD MUSIC**  
**SETH JANI**  
*Poetry*

Nuclear survivors, Hibakusha (Japanese A-bomb survivors), and some Koreans have propelled the dire call to nuclear abolition. Humanizing this painful subject of atomic and nuclear build-up, survivors have become heroes, indeed saviors, in the responsibility of memory.

Choi Il Chul went, at age twelve, to play with his friends. Unexpectedly returning from playing, he witnessed the bomb attack only 1.3 kilometers from its Hiroshima epicenter. Regular bombings of Hiroshima were a measure for him against this grotesque firestorm with no name. It was as if a thousand bombs were falling. This phenomenally new bomb blew off the second floor of his family home. Back from playing, he saw its firestorm engulf his house and the house next door.

His older sister's screaming from inside his home led him to manage pull his seven-year-old brother outside. There the foggy, gray air was overheated. Because of shock, Chul could not cry. But he noticed everything possible to see, remember, and report on later.

To free six trapped neighbors, his oldest brother sawed a pillar off from the next house, which his family part-owned.

### III

For the next twenty days, his mother also searched the city for his father, her husband. Her daughter, sister of Chul, raced with her baby up to the mountains for safety.

Comatose for twenty days and burned, his middle brother begged to leave the hospital to die at home. Remaining family members gathered around him.

Elsewhere, another sister and brother were consumed with chronic diarrhea and vomiting. At first Chul thought, *I survived so I'm okay.*

## THAT WAS THE BEGINNING. IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD, HUMAN FACES AND METAL OBJECTS MELTED.

His own body puffed up and retained the poke of any finger.

After Chul's year in the hospital, "My doctor gave up on me. At home my family cooled me with cucumber slices. I could eat only porridge and watermelon."

His brother hunted for medical textbooks for his mother to read about burns. But no data or texts were up to date on this unknown new extreme bomb.

His family, followers of Confucian ethics and once privileged within the old Choson Dynasty in Korea, was dominated by Japan in the pre-World War II period. His impoverished parents emigrated to Japan for work in 1927.

The family's survival of the 1945 atomic bombing derived from his mother, the basic support of the family. She also prayed with a bowl of water in front of an ancient tree and one shelved above his bed.

Sadly, both of his parents died, his father in three years and his mother in

five years, both at age fifty-seven. After seeing many friends and family members die after the Hiroshima bombing, Mr. Chul returned to Korea, where he was educated and later inducted into the Korean army. Both experiences strengthened him to live for the debt he owed to others for survival.

### III

Backtracking to the 1945 period, Mr. Choi noted that talking about World War II and referring to radiation sickness derived from Hiroshima were taboos.

### III

Meanwhile, Japanese women were emerging in this post-World War II from feudalism. In her published book, Nagoke Sugimori, a Tokyo University professor, and other scholars demonstrated women peace leaders' role in the post-war years.

Meanwhile, Hibakusha families emigrated—or felt shoved away from Japan—back to Korea or to North America. Due to her radiation sickness, Okazaki Masahiko helped develop the Association of Hibakusha of North America to advocate for better health care.

To magnify the horrific nuclear war armaments as death machines, local groups sought out local atomic bomb fallout and nuclear accident survivors to testify about their realities in order to motivate movement building. The groups invigorated the worldwide

movement against nuclear weapons and ultimately nuclear reactor use at a time when nation-states North Korea, Iran, India, Pakistan and the United States have insisted on a right to nuclear power.

The Japanese themselves began finalizing their own nuclear fuel cycle. This process enabled physicists to use nuclear elements, such as uranium, plutonium, and tritium, for nuclear weapons. North Korea has done so and recently exploded a weapon as well as lobbed missiles capable of hoisting a nuclear weapon as far as Guam and potentially farther toward the West. North Korea could expand its capability. So far, though, Iran agreed in documents with the United States and the West not to combine nuclear elements into a heavy-duty nuclear weapon.

### III

Back to humanizing this process that causes the eyes of many activists to glaze over with its complexity. Mr. Chul's experience helps to simplify.

The dates August 9 and 15, 1945, mark the onset, and many others reacting to the United States Army's bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Almost immediately, Japanese and Korean immigrant survivors began rising in Japan against the bomb use. Featured at indoor and open-air gatherings, their survival speeches have fired others to protest. Similarly in the 1950's United States, which

had set off the bombings of Japan, western Shoshone Indians and Mormon survivors from Nevada desert towns have done so near test sites. They became vocal against ongoing tests up to this minute. Accidents at Chernobyl in 1984 and elsewhere with piles of uranium, plutonium, and tritium in rivers were still destroying people, homes, and native cultures in North America. All began to gather against nuclear bomb use.

### III

Voices arise. On a bus from Hiroshima to Nagasaki, conference sites, we seemed to float above the Japanese greenery. Choi Il Chul talked for five-and-a-half hours to me, an anti-nuclear activist, about survival. Jang Jae Hyun, "Gal," then a student and son of a nuclear reactor contractor, translated Choi Il Chul's Korean into English. Often Mr. Choi speaks to large audiences. Long after the 1945 Hiroshima catastrophe, he presided over the Korean Atomic Bomb Casualty Association.

### III

Survivors of atomic bombs, nuclear testing, and accidents have testified to the dire need for a vigorous anti-nuclear movement to save lives. Nuclear fallout and seepage accumulate as waste and affect all in its ground range. Blowing winds and water currents do carry increased death or ongoing illness. This radiation experience has motivated its opponents.

As for Choi Il Chul, born in 1933, his face bubbles with hardened keloids that display his having coped with atomic bomb radiation sickness.

### III

To delve into recent history, ninety years earlier Korean joblessness in a fearful, oppressive atmosphere necessitated, as said above, his family moving to Japan. Legally, Koreans possessed citizenship rights if they spoke Japanese and paid taxes. They could attend Japanese schools, though all Koreans lacked the right to vote in Japan. Almost half a million Koreans lived in Japan, with seventy thousand in Hiroshima.

Japan dominated Korea in the 1940s. The Choi family head had originated from the "Yang Ban," the Confucian class from which his father maintained his stance as a gentleman. He wore the elegant Mandarin robes, styled in the Korean, Japanese, or sometimes modern tweedier American style. So the Japanese of comparable class bowed to him in Hiroshima.

While his father lived a life of leisure, signified by his occasional brocade robes, his mother supported the family. She wore Japanese or Korean women's wartime work clothes.

### III

Frequent firebombing of houses near a nearby road little startled Chul, age twelve. But on August 6, 1945, a routine day, his older brother was working on a shipping crew. One sister

had gone off to work in Hiroshima center. Four other family members remained at home. Another brother had taken off for the railroad station for Osaka but never reached it. Had he, he would have survived. His sister at this station closed her eyes against glass particles and did survive. "By instinct," Choi IL Chul noted, "people ran toward the mountains, if possible. Fire spread everywhere. People were screaming." Chul believed an earthquake was cracking the earth. He knew wooden houses were less vulnerable than concrete buildings to an earthquake. His family home was wooden. He hoped for the best.

Fiery lights blazed through his family house windows at 8:15 a.m., August 6, 1945. Circumstances in the city faced this massive unknown attack. Fire netted the whole city.

By nightfall still people did little more than scream. Fire scorched them.

The Choi home's second floor blew off. His sister's baby cried. They saw the sky. His sister, mother of the baby, despaired.

His seven-year-old brother was out of their home when their house was attacked. Nevertheless, Chul saw not just his home's attack, as he'd thought. All the neighborhood houses were attacked. Maybe one thousand were bombed!

Because of shock, he could not cry. Also he felt hot as, two minutes



later, fog and fire and darkness came together.

When he could see, people in and out of their houses burned and were entrapped in their circumstances.

### III

After the bombing his sister's husband, Chul's brother-in-law, was located fifty miles from home. Returned, he acted. He'd invested money in their neighboring house, owned by Chul's older brother. Hearing screamers inside, he grabbed his saw and cut off a pillar to let out six non-Choi people. He directed these tenants toward the mountains.

Although his brother-in-law had brought them out of danger, Chul never saw them again.

### III

By 1992, Chul's older married sister and his working sister had left Japan for Korea in 1945 and yet returned. Former local neighbors believed the Choi family had died.

Authorities still asked them to verify their presence in Japan when young. Accurate documents were required for A-bomb benefits for Korean survivors. Theirs were declared inadequate. Just after the A-bomb attack, his family members had experienced vomiting and diarrhea. Originally his mother continued her twenty-day search for her missing offspring. Chul's younger brother, at play five hundred meters from the A-bomb's epicenter,

fell into a coma, as indicated, for twenty days. Once awake, he begged to go home to die. Chul's older brother was wearing his navy suit at the attack time. His face and his suit jacket's front hooks were intact. At first his parents seemed okay. Chul's legs also experienced less burning than those of other survivors, he guessed. He'd received "many gauzes."

## OTHERS' BODIES LOOKED MORE MELTED THAN HIS DID.

To cool him, his family placed, as said, cucumber slices on his legs. His parents also noted his body swelling like a pillow that retained indents. He did not, though, he recalled, tie this phenomenon with the A-bomb attack on his home city of Hiroshima.

Because of his Red Cross hospital stay, the only remaining hospital, he could not be with his father, age fifty-seven, in his last moment of life. As Chul was recovering, his mother was struggling to save him. For two years, daily, his mother awakened at 2:30 a.m. to bathe him. She placed a large bowl of water on a shelf in his bedroom and another one beneath their ancient Chosen tree to ritualize his survival.

His doctor had given up on him after one year. She did not. Unable to

eat naturally, his mother and father both died at age fifty-seven. Chul lived on watermelon in June through September, the season of watermelon and porridge. He could neither eat nor think much.

"She prayed," Chul said, "every day for two years." His older brother, who could not find medical texts for A-bombing catastrophic injuries, obtained Chul's school books for him to study to qualify for military school. Much later, Mr. Choi Il Chul was hired as a policeman.

### III

More recently he has championed the "abolition" of nuclear weapons via the Korean Atomic Bomb Causality Association. Still, after such morbid experiences, for years, he says, "Korean Hibakushas did not talk openly about the A-bomb. Because, leading into World War II, Korea was a colony of Japan, Koreans tended to believe that the U.S. bomb aided ending this occupation. Even after five years of independence from Japan, Koreans accepted this US-as-savior viewpoint for favoring the dropping of the bomb."

Many died, Mr. Choi observed; many lived from "the debt from others to live for," care by families and friends. Many more have lived on from the treaty efforts of the youthful I CAN, Abolition, American Friends Service Committee, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (also a UN founder), as well as hundreds

of anti-nuclear professional groups of physicians, scientists, and engineers.

### III

By 1967, doctors and medical researchers knew of the linkages between chronically ill health and the A-bomb attacks. Often, though, detailed connections have been disputed and stir rancor among scientists regarding forms of scientific method. Dennis Nelson, Ph.D., a physiologist from the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, and a Mormon, accused some of using "junk science." Correlation (or cause-and-effect) disagreements among physicians and scientists over radiation in leukemia and other cancers erupted. So, the Korean Hibakushas, lacking needed medical treatment, sued. And some won.

### III

Nuclear survivors remind onlookers during the upcoming UN still-hoped-for July 2017 debate for the total treaty formation to ban nuclear bombs.

The world at this time watches potential North Korean weapon threats. They can aim missiles at Japan and the U.S., as far as Guam.

August 9 and 15, 1945, marked the onset of many reacting to the United States Army bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Almost immediately, some Japanese survivors began protesting in Japan against the bomb use. Featured at indoor and open-air gatherings,

their survival speeches have fired others to protest. More recently, the Fukushima reactor explosion has added calls for protection from nuclear dangers.

In the 1950's, American Indian and Mormon survivors from Nevada towns had protested near test sites. They became vocal against ongoing tests. Accidents at Chernobyl in 1984 and elsewhere piled natives with uranium, plutonium, and tritium. Such substances have settled or flown into rivers, destroying people, homes, and native cultures.

Voices arise. Along with the bus trip from Hiroshima to Nagasaki, Choi Il Chul talked about Korean survival. Often he speaks to large audiences, such as the anniversaries of the two city bombings, sponsored by the Japan Council Against the A and H Bombs.

Ultimately, Chul the boy went outside to play at age twelve with his friends. Unexpectedly, as he returned home, he witnessed the bomb attack but did not experience "the most strong heat rays." He hid under heavy furniture.

Millions of Japanese Hibakusha ultimately died. Others, including seventy thousand Korean immigrants, died. Others, about ten thousand, survived in Korea and suffered. Eventually some rose up. Japanese survivors and worldwide activists from countries, such as Egypt, Kenya, South American, Europe, Canada, and U.S., sustained each other and linked

into a movement against nuclear bombs and other weapons. They have been gathering at the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing sites and their respective bombing dates for seventy years under the aegis of Gensuikyo, the Council Against the A and H Bombs.

Now, because of scores of peace NGOs and anti-nuclear organizations which met in Vienna last year, they collaborated in order to press the UN General Assembly to debate the formation of an international, comprehensive anti-nuclear treaty.

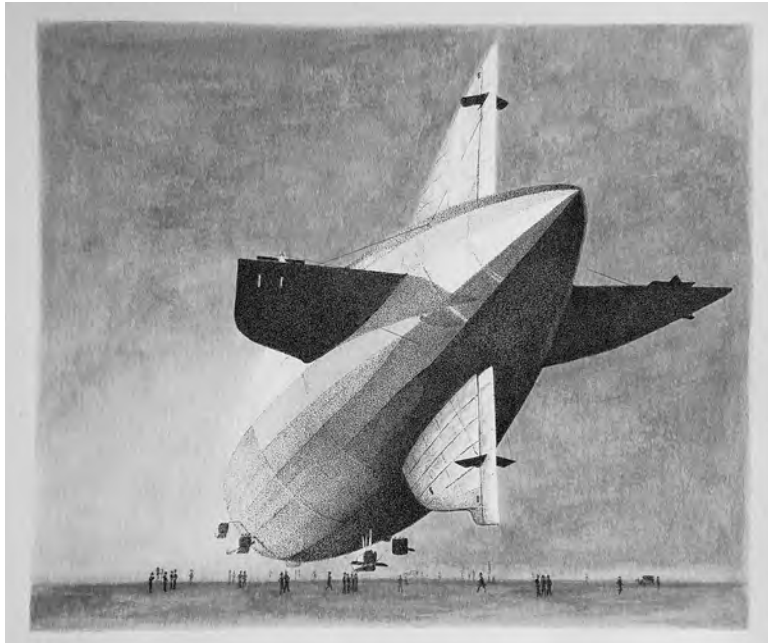
*"A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream we dream together is peace."*  
— Yoko Ono, May 2005, UN.



## PEACOCK VASE

ERIKA RITTER

*Kiln Formed Glass*



**1933**  
**JOSHUA PARKER**  
*Ink and Ink Wash*

**COMETS**  
MICAELA WALLEY  
*Poetry*

broken rocket  
 broken rocket  
     I am alone  
         in your bedroom  
             cold I am  
         anxious when you are  
     here no one in  
 your family has died  
     yet your fish died  
         but that doesn't count  
                                 it's hard  
 to tell what makes you tick  
                                 -le me when you think I am mad  
   or lonesome I am  
 annoyed  
         but in love with how  
         your grandpa's breath tastes  
 like pretzels  
         the day continues  
 this way  
 in your bedroom  
                                 alone  
         and what if they all go at once  
         while you're at work or  
 otherwise  
     will I have to hold you  
                                 -r head up in the movies  
   I am not that strong  
 or get you water  
 when the names are caught  
                                 and dried  
                                 and holding onto  
         in the back  
         of your throat  
 how much longer do I get  
                                 to feel alone before I am  
   the fish you land on  
         from outer space  
         unbeknownst to them  
 sing a similar song

**LOOKING BACKWARD****JANE FLINT***Poetry*

I found a cardboard camera  
 when I cleaned the other day.  
 I took it to the drug store  
 and this morning  
 I got a deck of newly-printed pictures.  
 Suddenly there is my son  
 six years old  
 and gangly as a baby kangaroo  
 and me, slim and young,  
 making faces for him:  
 "See how fun our lives will be?"  
 We're flying kites somewhere along the coast.  
 We've just arrived here as if some part of us  
 had stayed til now  
 in 1993.  
 In one photo, sunlight and ocean  
 fill the square of picture  
 except for the tiny dot of blue  
 that is my boy  
 and the diamond of white above him  
 that is his kite.  
 And in another I am so strong  
 and full of light  
 so sure about the future  
 I have to focus on my smile  
 and the overlap  
 in my front teeth  
 to ground myself.

**TUNNEL VISION****PAT JOYNES***Digital Photography*

July 22, 1967 was a simple night for Matt Drummond.

He lay in his bed listening to the baseball game. The soothing southern drawl of Ernie Harwell cool-breezed into the room, giving the play-by-play. It was Tigers versus Yankees, and to the faithful, it was the only thing that mattered. The Tigers won. The summer night became softer and sweeter, less hot and humid. He fell asleep. By morning, everything changed.

The telephone rang, waking him up.

"Hello?"

"Dr. Drummond, we need you at the hospital."

"My internship hasn't started. I'm really just a medical student. I could hurt the patients."

"The patients are dead as mackerels."

"Where?"

"Westside. The real doctors are at the hospital. Been there all night. New interns are to report to the morgue and help the coroner."

"Help him with what?"

"Autopsies. Turn on your TV. See what's happening."

Matt adjusted the aluminum foil on the Sylvania's rabbit-ear antenna. He smacked the television with an open hand and brought Walter Cronkite of *CBS News* into black-and-white focus. He did the same four years earlier when JFK was assassinated. You only saw Cronkite at night, unless something really bad happened. Here he was on the CBS morning show.

*CBS News* showed footage of a crowd, mostly black, in a smoking downtown. White cops, wearing white helmets, stood on the sidewalks and watched the anarchy. Some in the crowd were celebrating. Some looked frightened. Some were crying, and some walked down the street carrying a new television set with the price tag hanging. Cronkite said liquor stores were looted first, then everything else.

"The death toll is now thirty and expected to go much higher," Cronkite said. "President Johnson is sending the Eighty-Second Airborne Division." He looked into the camera with the same teary eyes he had in 1963, signing off with, "And that's the way it is."

It was unusually warm when he left his apartment. The atmosphere seemed dirty. He took the Lodge Freeway to Detroit and, because of the heat, kept the window rolled down. The wind blew in his face and smelled of burning rubber. At first he thought it was his car, but he soon realized the smell came from the city. His eyes burned. It was smoke and tear gas.

Matt was distracted. He noticed buildings that were reduced to piles of crumbled brick. Scaled, burned, skeletal wooden frames juttied out of the rubble. He saw white-and-black business owners painting *Soul Brother* on their establishments, hoping to be spared. "Soul brother" didn't seem to spare any "soul brothers," black or white. It was an equal opportunity uprising.

His attention returned to the road in time to confront large white stars painted on the fenders of olive-green army Jeeps. The Jeeps were in formation to block him. Machine guns were mounted on the rear.

He was going to crash. He held his breath. He pushed his foot down on the brake pedal hard, then harder, praying they would hold. He stopped threateningly close to the lead Jeep. The soldiers screamed at him and exploded off the back of the Jeep.

## "GET OUT OF THE FUCKING CAR."

"Bastard almost hit us."

"He tried to ram us."

"It's not my fault. Bad brakes."

Bayonets pointed at him. Matt was certain somebody was going to shoot or stab him. Matt had the absurd thought that he'd rather be shot than stabbed.

A soldier approached. "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

Matt was more surprised than frightened. He tried to remain calm.

"I'm Dr. Matt Drummond, a first-year intern." He handed over

his driver's license. "I'm going to the morgue to help. Don't shoot."

"I don't need your license. I need your papers that identify you as a critical worker. Get out of the car."

Matt slowly opened the door.

"Spread your arms, your legs, and put your hands on the car."

"But —"

The Guardsman shouted, pointing to the ground, "Now get down and put your hands behind your head."

"This is ridiculous." He had to get them to understand.

"I said get down. Let's see your papers."

"I don't have them."

He was shoved to the ground. Stones and other debris abraded his face. He saw a discarded hypodermic needle and glass. He noticed several dead rats. If they pushed him closer toward them, he would fight. They would be surprised what he could do.

"Call the City Hospital, please," he begged. "You guys have put forty people in the morgue. They need me to help." He hadn't meant it like it sounded.

"How would you like to be forty-one, asshole?"

The cop was smeared in the same black soot that covered the rats. He had cuts and scratches on a sleep-deprived, don't-fool-with-me face. The cop was at his limit and he had a gun. Another cop put on gloves and picked up a very large rat by the tail and waved it in Matt's face. Matt hit him.

The cop's knees buckled and he went down.

A police captain saw the punch. He walked over, his hand on his holstered sidearm.

"What's going on here?"

"Davis tried to throw a dead rat into this man's face and the kid hit him."

"Throw some water on Davis," the captain said, "Cops like him caused all this. Makes us all look bad."

Several cops and National Guardsmen opened their canteens. They talked with the captain as they poured water on the fallen officer.

"What's this man doing here?"

"This guy says he's an intern at the City Hospital. He's supposed to work in the morgue, but he doesn't have a critical worker's pass."

The captain shook his head. "Put the kid in my cruiser, and I'll drive him to the morgue. A white kid would rather get a kick in the nuts than come down here unless he has to."

"But he doesn't have a pass."

Drummond got in the back of the blue-and-white cruiser labeled Tactical Mobile Unit. The fake leather seats were cracked and covered with duct tape. It smelled of cigarettes and coffee and disinfectant and sour vomit. The scratched and worn protective barrier between the front and rear seats reminded Matt of a Checker taxicab. They drove to the morgue and parked in front. The captain pressed his horn down and called out on the patrol car's speaker, "Detroit Police."

A morgue attendant came out of the building, wearing a black rubber apron. Areas of the apron were darkened, like oil. The attendant was unshaven and looked as sleep-deprived as the cops. He was black. His arms were huge.

"Check and see if this kid's telling the truth," the captain said. "He's an intern. Says he's supposed to work down here."

The attendant looked at Matt. "What's your name, son? I'll check the list."

"Matt Drummond."

He left Matt and the police captain.

"This saddens me," the cop said. "We're on a hair trigger. One of ours was killed yesterday. Most are handling themselves pretty well. Ninety-nine percent of the cops do a great job."

"Why do the cops do it? Clobber people for nothing."

"Because the cops are afraid. When a cop makes a mistake, it's usually because of fear. They don't know what's out there. Doctors don't have to be afraid of what's out there. We protect them in the emergency rooms. What's their excuse? Treating people like a piece of meat. Doctors are not nice people."

"I am," Matt said. He surveyed the destruction. The burning buildings reminded him of the smoking battleships from film clips of the raid on Pearl Harbor. Detroit, like the Arizona, was listing on its side.

The attendant returned and said, "He checks out." He studied Matt's face. "Boy, you got some cuts and bruises. You got some glass in your face, but you're alive. I'll take you to those who weren't so lucky. Some were snipers, most were innocents killed by the National Guard spraying buildings with machine guns. We got a little girl in there."

Matt looked in the man's eyes and saw a blend of pain, outrage, and kindness. Matt wasn't sure if he saw tears. This man had seen so much. He must be hardened to the suffering and violence or he could not bear to work in this place. Matt was having second thoughts about his medical career. He wondered if he could change, become tough enough. He thought about what the cop said about doctors not being

nice people, treating people like a piece of meat.

“The police were ordered to stand down. Only the Guard was unleashed. Imagine if they’d shot white kids on a college campus. That would never happen.”

As he walked with the morgue attendant, Matt noticed the smell. It was getting stronger. It was a dry smell—part horse stable and part rancid, chemical fertilizer—and it was everywhere. It enveloped him like a swarm of insects—no-see-ums, from which there was no escape. It coated his skin.

The attendant noticed Matt’s gagging. “That’s the death smell. You can’t get rid of it, and you never get used to it.” He stopped and opened two large wooden doors.

“I’ve been here ten years,” he heard a morgue technician say. “I’ve never seen so many bodies.”

In the corner of the room, Matt saw several fish-belly-white body bags stacked up on each other like firewood. Matt thought “dead as mackerels” was a fitting description. The body bags were bloodstained, and some had red handprints on them. Other bodies were on stretchers. They were nude, washed, and ready for their autopsy. Most were black. The bodies didn’t look peaceful, like in a funeral home, but had pained expressions. Some had their eyes open looking

for, it seemed to Matt, what was to come next.

The coroner noticed Matt’s unease.

“You think they’re looking at you?” Matt shook his head. “No, of course not. They’re dead.”

Matt looked away. He couldn’t take much more. He stared at the ceiling or the floor. He could not look at the victims. He was afraid he would see the body of the little girl. He wanted to turn and run. This was not for him. He did not belong here.

He was shoved from behind and forced further into the room. He turned to look down at the face of a young woman.

“Move it,” she said. “Let’s get going. I want to help with the autopsies.” She extended her hand. “Jody O’Reilly, pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

The coroner said, “You won’t get near any bodies. You two have to wash and sterilize the surgical instruments and the gurneys after they’re done.”

The morgue assistant pointed at three stretchers. On each stretcher rested a body bag. Matt could see the bags were full and could make out the rough size and shape of the victims.

“Those are the three boys the police executed at the Algiers. Stay away from them. You don’t want to know anything about them. Don’t even clean

their stretchers after the autopsies. It could prove too dangerous for you. To you, they are unidentified.”

Jody walked toward the three bodies. She read their IDs. “Cooper, Temple, and Pollard,” she called out. “Executed by the police.”

## THE MORGUE ATTENDANT SHOOK HIS HEAD. “FORGET THEIR NAMES.”

“No way,” she said. “There’s a story here.”

“A tragedy,” Matt said.

“A crime,” Jody corrected.

They were escorted to a vacant room adjacent to the autopsy amphitheater. Shower hoses hung down from the ceiling. The two stood, waiting for their assignment, until a door opened and the attendant wheeled in a stretcher.

“Okay, clean the surface, then wheel the stretcher back. We don’t have enough stretchers. Those in the body bags have to remain stacked up.”

Matt looked at the stretcher. Blood and other secretions left a smear of what once was a human being--the outline of a large figure, tall with broad shoulders and long, thick legs.

This was the shadow of an athlete. Matt imagined he could have boxed him in the Golden Gloves. Maybe he had. Matt realized if he were black, it could have been him.

Matt imagined what the victim looked like in life. How did he die? Did he die looting or was he a hero trying to save someone’s life? Perhaps the life of that child the coroner spoke of. Did he have a family? If he did, did they know he was here? Were they looking for him, hoping he would come home?

Matt was given a metal scrub brush and an aluminum pail filled with a harsh chemical cleaner that burned his eyes. He and Jody grabbed a hose and rinsed the stretcher.

“Done,” Jody said. “Wheel this back in.”

Matt did what he was told and returned with another gurney, that of a woman. Her hips and the angle her arms made from her side indicated the stain was definitely a woman.

Matt imagined her life as well. Did she have children? Did she have a job? Who were her friends? Did she dance to the Motown music? Was she happy? How did she end up dead and why?

Jody looked at Matt. “Stop daydreaming and get back to work.”

The stretchers kept coming in. The two worked steadily. Matt was surprised he was getting used to the gruesome assembly line. He

stopped giving them biographies. They were stains that had to be removed, and the clean stretcher had to be returned.

The morgue attendant, crying, wheeled in another stretcher with a small shadow.

"It's the little girl?" Matt asked.

The attendant nodded. Matt went to the stretcher, picked up his coarse scrub brush, and went to work. First he scrubbed in slow, circular motions, then faster and faster. His eyes burned, tears pouring down his cheeks. It must be the cleaning solution, he thought. He kept scrubbing until the wooden handle broke. He grabbed the metal bristles with his bare hands. They bled, but he kept scrubbing. The tiny shadow remained. When it wouldn't come clean, he scrubbed harder. The metal bristles made a scratching sound. He scrubbed harder, smearing his own blood with the smear on the stretcher.

Jody shouted, "Stop, you're hurting yourself."

"I've got to clean this up. I can still see the shadow. It's the little girl."

"It's gone. The stretcher's clean. It's nothing but scratch marks."

"No, it's still there, I can see it."

Jody looked frightened.

"Matt, it's clean."

Jody screamed for help.

"I have to make it go away."

Jody took Matt's hand.

"It's alright, Matt. Let's go." Jody said.  
"It's clean."

Jody put her arm around Matt.

"The coroner can take it," Matt said.  
"I can't."



**EL CHIVO**  
RAMON DEANDA  
*Etching*



126

•  
\*

All those nights two suns running free  
—with a clear look at each other  
could see how bright her face becomes

when the window pane unfolds on fire  
spreads out that long-ago afternoon  
end over end though the shade

is reaching for the sill — a constellation  
and still her arms are frozen open  
as if this snapshot was trying to breathe twice

make you think you are covering her eyes  
are in the room alone, holding on to what's left  
letting it flicker, wait for something in the light

to move closer together, fit into her mouth  
so it can see you as the bed no longer made  
as the wall and empty picture frame.

\* **SIMON PERCHIK***Poetry*

## **BLACK GIRLS, PUREST FORM OF ART**

**MICHAEL MOORER**

*Digital Photography*

127

• **BLACK GIRLS, PUREST FORM OF ART**

**THE WOMAN I LOVED IN THE COLD WAR**

JEFFREY ALFIER

Poetry

I drift back to '75, December-dark Kolberg,  
shore leave from the freighter I was deckhand on.  
I wandered discos in search of drink, dance,

any woman rumored loose. Sewn into my peacoat  
lining was Parisian lip balm, smuggled for the off  
chance I would find that woman, and I did,

claiming she was a shy clerk from a worker's council.  
After the disco, all night the bottle of Soplica slipped  
the winter-cracked lips on her windburnt face,

frost starring her wool scarf in headlong gusts that never failed  
to whip in from seaward. She spoke little English  
and I no Polish. So we laughed at our displaced

tongues, a laughter that caught the ire of police who stopped  
to inspect my seaman's card each time we stepped  
into streetlamp halos or neon prisms late drunks

infest, swaying like spent refugees. In the lust-fever we shared  
at her flat on Albatrosa, bedsheets clung to us like damp  
earth. I told her of my hatred to leave, of my bourgeois

dread of the sea. She wished my ship was stranded there,  
icebound at her Baltic port, as we watched the trees  
outside her window grow heavy with ice,

the cathedral's shoulders lean away into darkness. Now,  
I think how half a world away, boats are unmoored  
from their Kolberg quays, how smooth they glide,

like eyes raised to a mirror, the sighing sounds of her waking city.  
I think how you kiss the stranger you dance with, turn to catch  
your breath, and come away with blood on your lip.

**MRS. ROCKABULLY**

ALLYSSIA NEWTON

*Oil on Canvas*

Several hours after the wedding, we took a late-night flight to St. George's, Bermuda and checked into our suite at Molly Porter's Pub & Inn. With the confusion of rushing from the reception and last-minute packing, Kate remembered her white silk goddess gown but forgot her birth control pills.

"I'll have my prescription sent to a local pharmacy," she said. "Don't worry, Philip, I'm not going to get pregnant for just a few days."

"Oh yeah?" In all her life it seemed like nothing had ever gone awry for Katherine Anne Best — now Conlin.

By contrast, I had gone to special classes for my stammer through elementary school and carried a nebulizer in my backpack until eleventh grade.

We were living in one of her father's condos, rent-free. As soon as possible, I wanted to buy our own house. A baby now would mess up that plan.

"What are we going to do? Abstain? It's our honeymoon for God's sake!" She rubbed up to me and cajoled me until I cast aside my concerns, feeling the steam rise between us under a fan that spun like a propeller, barely moving the room's humid air.

Afterwards, several minutes into a doze, I awakened to burning, swelling, and tingling. Kate complained of the same things. I said, only half jokingly, "Maybe we've become allergic to each other." *Will I start to gasp as well as itch?*

I'd never had sex with anyone else — even Peggy, my only other serious girlfriend, and the daughter of my mother's best friend back home in Chambers, Minnesota. Peggy and I fooled around plenty, but she had convinced me that being virgins was important as a pledge to God and the Catholic Church, as well as to our mothers. Still, we'd been

close enough, and neither of us ever broke out in hives the size of nickels.

Kate and I moved over to the French doors of our balcony, hoping for a breeze.

"Allergic?" She scrunched up her face before going on. "It's the heat."

Despite the early-morning hour, it was already eighty-five degrees.

"Come on, lots of other things to do besides fuck." She threw both arms around my waist for a quick hug and kissed me hard — her naked, me robed up.

Usually her talk and lack of inhibitions amused me, but feeling tender and grumpy, I mumbled, "What do you want to do?"

Kate crawled back atop our canopied bed, not bothering to put on the white silk nightgown. Angry welts had sprung out where her tan ended. She picked up a tourist magazine and nonchalantly leafed through it. "There's an aquarium...and hey, we could go swim with dolphins." An animal lover, these activities would catch her attention.

Back at the condo in Minneapolis, one of the mailboys from Malcolm Best's electrical engineering company cared for her Humane Society rescues — three yappy, mixed-breed terriers and a couple of scruffy cats. Since her father owned this building, as

well as dozens of others, Kate didn't need to comply with the one-small-pet-per-unit rule. Because she worked at the shelter, it was anyone's guess how many more strays would join our newly-formed family.

"Don't you want some clothes?"

"No. I can't stand anything on me right now. I'll take a cold shower after yours." She fanned herself with the magazine.

### III

We walked to Water Street, Kate rushing along in front of me by several feet. There we caught a pink bus, scaled down for the island.

She wore a loose yellow dress and no underwear — "To get as much healing air on these buggers as possible," she'd told me.

In the 10:30 sparkling sunshine, we disembarked at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo in Flatts Village. Kate's dress stuck to her body rather than blowing up.

One turtle the size of a manhole cover topped another equally large specimen in the corner of an outside pool by the ticket window. The bottom turtle's brownish-green head (etched with geometric shapes like mosaic tiles) pressed between the turquoise wall and a white plastic filtration tube. The upper turtle, similarly marked, had a leg flopped over the bottom turtle's back. Its nose nuzzled along the lower

one's neck while they rocked back and forth.

"Check them out," Kate said.

Other visitors stopped to observe and snicker.

Little children said, "What're they doing?"

"Let's give them some privacy." I grabbed Kate's hand.

"Why? They're the ones who chose this spot." She gave me a sidelong glance from under lids that partially covered gingersnap-brown eyes. For the next few minutes, we watched the copulating reptiles until their movements stopped and Kate said, "Time for a smoke."

"Can we go in?"

"Sure, silly... lighten up." She gave me a playful nudge.

While she didn't seem that bothered by her rash, my discomfort had worsened ever since leaving our suite to explore this pastel-hued island. Even the green turtles--an endangered species that the BAMZ made every effort to keep from extinction, with the obvious cooperation of this pair—seemed to have taunting looks on their satisfied faces.

*Preserve and Conserve* had been the motto at a Democratic fundraiser where Kate and I had met—she as

an attendee from the environmental nonprofit where she worked, me as a journalist covering the event for the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Proudly, I'd told her about my father's newspaper that supported Al Gore, then basked in her enthusiasm.

An enormous water-filled, glass silo-like structure attracted her attention as we entered the first room of the BAMZ. Hundreds of silver fish with rosy underbellies swam in synchronization, their combined bodies flickering like a disco ball. She watched them as I studied her through the glass. These glittering specimens did nothing to distract from the ballerina-like way Kate stood. Others deferentially stepped aside, careful not to disturb her reverie.

## ONLY I KNEW WHERE THAT MIND HAD BEEN MOMENTS BEFORE.

Meandering down the hallway next to walls lined with at least thirty recessed tanks, I came upon one marked "Octopus." Several seconds passed as I searched out the camouflaged creature, and eventually found her—for some reason certain of the gender. She was curled up like a volleyball under a piece of driftwood. None of her body parts, with the exception of a bulging opaque eye, moved. It

intermittently opened, as if on a timer, stared at me for a short time, then shut again.

My mother had studied me like this during Kate's first visit to Chambers, a Minnesota town of 2,500 near the border with North Dakota. In the kitchen of an apartment where I grew up—over *The Chambers Press*, the weekly newspaper owned and operated by my father, Lloyd Conlin—my mother, Margaret, had stood as stiff as a pole, with her hands prayerfully folded over the front of a flower-printed every day dress.

As she contemplated us, Kate and I went in and out loading the Subaru for return to The Cities. I kept expecting Mom to grab me with her usual big hug, one that lasted too long. Instead, her gray eyes watched, blinked and looked away, and looked again, as if waiting for the moment when I'd be transformed beyond recognition.

I could understand her warily eyeballing Kate. I'd been scrutinizing her family, too. But why me? This brought on speculation about how Mom would cover our visit in her contribution to the newspaper—a "Local Goings-On" column. And what would she tell Peggy, her namesake, about my new love interest? She'd told me that after the break-up, other than teaching her kindergarten class, Peggy stayed in her apartment for at least a month.

In a museum section of the BAMZ that Kate rushed through, heading for the zoo, I discovered a display dedicated to the Gombey, one of Bermuda's oldest traditions. Groups consisted of brightly costumed, all-male performers accompanied by musicians with steel drums. Inspired by West African slaves, this type of dancing had been around since the 17th century.

As I read a placard, considering what it would be like to move with such abandon, Kate strode back through the door. "Come on out here. You've got to see this."

Reluctantly leaving the Gombey exhibit, I shuffled into the courtyard, just in time to see a peacock lower his tail.

"You missed it." Kate plopped down on a wooden bench, patting a place for me to join her. We waited until the magnificent fellow turned our way and raised his spectacular fan once more. He circled so all in the area could witness his beauty.

A man said, "She's a show-off."

Kate said, loud enough for the man's benefit, "It's a male."

Male or not, I couldn't help but think of Eva, Kate's mother. At our simple, civil wedding, that bothered my mother to no end since it wasn't a Mass. I had watched Eva float through the group of fifty family

friends, all Republicans, at their French Chateau-style house on Lake of the Isles. Wearing an iridescent blue-and-green gown, she mingled with a crystal champagne glass in an upraised left hand, spreading attention from person to person.

At the same time, Malcolm had smoked cigars with his cronies by the bar, and Kate's older brother Douglas, alongside his wife, Kippy, chatted with sailing chums by the long, linen-covered buffet table. In the flickering candlelight I could see my parents, the only two familiar faces, sitting in a corner next to a potted palm. They nibbled thumb-sized prawns, carefully stacking tails on the side of their plates as if planning to request doggie bags to take them home.

In Hamilton, after a quick lunch of Bermuda's famous seafood chowder seasoned with Outerbridge's Sherry Peppers Sauce, Kate and I climbed on another pink bus headed for the Royal Naval Dockyard to swim with the dolphins.

Paging through her tourist magazine, I noted, "Of the nine thousand shipped-in English convicts who built this place, two thousand died from yellow fever."

"That's awfully grim." She frowned, then returned to chuckling at the antics of several kids in safari hats.

Once at the pool, we walked up to a closet-sized dressing room with a broken door lock.

Right away I said, "You change first. I'll stand guard in case somebody tries to come in." Peggy would have wanted me to do this.

"Let's hurry and change together. We need to get out there."

Over the seven-foot-high walls, with clear-blue sky showing above, voices carried from nearby cubicles while I bumped into Kate and struggled into my usually comfortable baggy trunks. The fabric against my sweaty limbs chafed my hives.

I overheard a small voice say, "Will the dolphins bite?"

"No, Petey," a woman said. "These are friendly animals who like to play with people."

I was concerned about the same thing because somewhere I'd picked up that while swimming with sea creatures, one might nose up to a guy's crotch, even wriggle between his legs like a dog sniffing "hello."

"You're a big brave boy," a man told Petey.

Four people, in addition to Kate and myself, formed our group – the other couple and Petey, who looked about five, and an older guy, probably fifty, with a big round belly that hung over his purple Speedo. It made him appear, from some angles, to be buck naked.

We all donned black life vests that Deanna, the trainer, told us to "cinch

tight so they don't float up around your chins."

I did exactly that, wanting my hands free to ward off any curious creatures. The old guy could barely get his vest closed, causing me to hope that, seeing his drooping, pink paunch, they would head for him.

Next, we pulled on rubber-bottomed Aqua Socks so there'd be no skidding. Not finding any in size 12, I settled for 11 and pinched toes. Goggles that I tugged onto the top of my head pressed tortuously against my ears. At least these pains distracted from the persistent feel of crawling ants in my pants.

Ancient-looking stones, like those used in the fort surrounding this pool, comprised the walls. A musty smell hung over the area, but everything had been scrubbed clean. Once we were submerged, Deanna lifted a silver pipe whistle. Several toots and "Baxter," a six-year-old male dolphin, swam toward our group in a gallumping roll like a horse on a carousel.

"Everyone paddle in a row and when Baxter comes by give him a gentle pet behind his head," Deanna said. "Dolphins don't like to have their heads touched."

Would a misplaced hand make him bite or go scavenging?

From Petey's tightly drawn lips, I figured he still felt scared, yet,

being brave, didn't say anything to his parents. I put on a beamer for Kate.

She gave Baxter several soft pets, and said, "He's a sweetie."

I reached out and gingerly slid a palm across his side. Shiny, gray skin felt like a full-to-the-max inner tube.

"Baxter likes you people," Deanna said.

She instructed us to shift our goggles into place and peer underwater. When we came up, the rest of the mammals, five in all, surfaced and did a lined-up dive, flapping their wide tails and splashing everyone in the face. Each person took a turn "dancing" with Baxter, holding his front flippers, bouncing up and down as he gave a gaping grin. A male employee shot photos from the pool's side.

"The honeymooners get another turn with each other," Deanna said.

Kate led Baxter and me in a ring-around-a-rosy routine, and said, "We can use this picture for our Christmas card."

I summoned up another smile.

"What's wrong with him?" Petey asked. "He's different than those guys." Baxter's snout looked swollen and donut-shaped, like puffy lips.

"When he arrived here, Baxter became low man on the totem pole," Deanna

said. "You know, dating the girls. Another boy dolphin smacked him with his tail and broke his jaw. It had to be wired shut. This is how he looked when it healed." Over Petey's head she mouthed the word "sexy."

I licked my own salty lips.

"He's all right now?" Petey's forehead crumpled in concern.

"More than all right. He's our top dolphin. That's the way it happens sometimes. He started out at the bottom but that didn't mean he had to stay there."

"I'm glad." Petey gave Baxter another tentative pet behind his head.

*Me, too.* I gave a silent cheer for the underdog.

On our way back to St. George's we took a pink bus, only this time in rush hour traffic, standing pressed against other sweaty passengers.

I couldn't help but think, *What am I doing here?*

An unfazed Kate kept talking to different people, or bending to look out a window and point at a boat, a bridge, a pretty building for me to see.

While traipsing toward the inn, percussive rhythms got her skip-stepping to the beat. We followed the sounds to a street festival, where booths full of locally-made crafts

surrounded a town square. Male dancers in rainbow-toned costumes with feathers and masks that made them look like giant exotic birds performed. These Gombey, leaping and high-kicking, invited onlookers to join in. Kate swayed her hips faster and faster, then hauled me out to the middle of the revelers. Before I knew it, she said, "C'mon, you can do it," and coaxed me into a feeble shake and stomp with the crowd.

Starving after our long day roaming the island, we had an early dinner of yellowfin tuna at the inn's pub.

Between mouthfuls, Kate said, "What a great time," and "What a fun place," and, "Aren't you glad Dad's company did the underground wiring here so he could arrange this?"

## I NODDED IN FALSE AGREEMENT OVER EACH STATEMENT.

"Let's go to the pink sand beach tomorrow," she said.

"Do you know why the sand's pink?"

"Not a clue."

"Little animals live under the coral reef. Their red skeletons get mixed up with bigger crushed white shells."

"Interesting... we can rent mopeds."

*Great! That's going to feel real good!* But, I realized, "My itching's gone."

"Mine, too. The saltwater in the dolphin pool must have soothed us." With a gleam in those snappy eyes, she added, "Let's test it again tonight."

### III

Once in our suite, I took my customary quick shower and waited for Kate. After soaking for a long time in the tub, she drifted out, surrounded by a cloud of honeysuckle-scented lotion. I expected to see her in white silk. Instead, she wore a faded red T-shirt that said: "Hometown Boy—Chambers Centennial—1995."

"What happened to your goddess gown?"

She wrinkled her lightly-freckled nose. "Really not me. Mother bought it, saying, perfect for the honeymoon.' Perfect for *her* idea of a honeymoon." Kate ran her hands down the front of my T-shirt.

I could make out her breasts underneath.

"This suits me much better." She hopped onto the bed beside me.

A while later we were lying under the spinning fan, her fingers fiddling with my chest hair.

"You feel okay?" I asked.

"Couldn't be better."

"No... the itching?"

"All gone."

"I'm fine for the moment." I held her hand still. "Do you think we could be allergic to each other?"

"Impossible!"

I thought about Baxter and his current expertise. I nuzzled into Kate's sweet-smelling neck. I rubbed up to her leg. I momentarily forgot about everything else.

**IMPULSE**  
SCOTT HUTCHISON  
*Poetry*

Happy, in every touchdown moon dance romance way  
and still—even when you fuzzle down in luxurious heated  
passenger seat, your divine and driving wife  
graciously deferring to your favorite station  
oh you're drift-y and butt-shakin' it  
in fine color-coordinated leather when you suddenly  
blink into beckoning thoughts, on the bypass,  
of opening the car door and  
laying it out to kiss the wind.

The world is kind to you. You live in the work and reward  
and routine anger of the day, you self-actualize, the trash  
is picked up every Thursday, the dog  
squirms between your legs upon home arrival  
barkingly delighted and marking you as hers.

You realize this door is madness  
but the lines in the middle of the road  
double yellow into you with insistence you sit  
on your unsure hands that shake for the handle  
afraid to glance out at the waving grasses  
bent and fragilely happy with each passing blur.



**GATSBY**

JOSHUA PARKER

*Mixed-Media Drawing (Ink, Digital)*

“Daniel.”

The hiss in his ear only made him grunt and roll over, away from the noise that had disturbed him.

“Daniel. *Daniel.*” The hissing became louder and more insistent. He slapped away the hand shaking his shoulder. “Get up.”

He pulled the comforter over his head.

The *whoosh* of displaced air happened too fast for him to react, and the pillow slammed into the side of his head. The impact startled him and he jerked upright, locking a steely glare on the figure barely outlined in the moonlight filtering through the window.

“Hit me again and I’ll lock you out of the room. You can go sleep on the couch,” he threatened. Though his tone was menacing, they both knew the couch wasn’t all that uncomfortable.

Daniel glanced at the clock and scowled at the green numbers. “Andrew. It is three in the fucking morning. I have work in four hours. Why the hell did you wake me up?”

Andrew’s silhouette loomed over the side of the bed in the darkness, still holding the pillow. “There’s a little girl in the kitchen.”

Though he’d expected something stupid, he hadn’t expected something insane. “We don’t have children, Drew.”

“You think I don’t know that?” Andrew snapped, just as ornery and groggy as Daniel. “I’m telling you, there is a child in our house. I heard a noise and thought it was Daisy, but I saw her instead.”

“Why didn’t Daisy bark or something? God knows she loves to bark at everything else.”

“I don’t know. I can’t even find her. Get up, and come help me deal with this.”

Daniel groaned miserably, but hauled himself out of the bed. After groping in the dark for his dresser and pulling out a pair of shorts to slide on, he yawned into his fist and followed Andrew out into the hallway.

There was a faint, pale yellow glow emanating from the refrigerator. The door was open, but he couldn’t see anyone standing there from where he stood at the edge of the living room, with the kitchen island between him and the refrigerator. He stood at the mouth of the hallway and listened. If he strained, he could hear soft rustling coming from the kitchen.

Half-formed memories of horror movies entered his fuzzy thoughts and he picked up an iron poker from beside the fireplace. Hopefully all it would take would be one good hit. He took a step forward, stopped only by Andrew’s hand latching onto his wrist.

“What the hell, Daniel? I said it’s a child, not a monster. What are you gonna do, bash her brains in?”

Deciding not to admit to his unreasonable fear of evil, demonic children, he put the rod back on the stand and walked into the kitchen, his footsteps muffled by his socks.

As he rounded the corner of the counter, he stopped abruptly. A little girl, who couldn’t be any older than seven, sat in front of the fridge with her back to him. She was surrounded by what looked like the remains of pudding cups, leftover from his nephew’s last visit, and munching on something that he couldn’t see.

He approached the girl—whom he quickly realized was naked, making the situation that much more bizarre and uncomfortable—and carefully knelt down a foot or so behind her. The moment his joints creaked and his knee thumped on the floor, the girl tilted her head back to look at him with pudding smeared across her face.

Her dark eyes were eerie and he shifted uncomfortably. “Um, hi there. Are... are you lost?” he asked hesitantly.

In a voice surprisingly loud for something so small, she chirped, “Hi, Danny!”

The nickname caught him off guard, and he looked at her in bewildered confusion. “Uhhh...”

He heard steps and her gaze moved to behind him. A smile spread across her messy face. “Drew!”

Daniel impulsively scrambled back when she shot up to her feet and dashed past him to throw her arms around Andrew’s waist. He and Daniel shared a wide-eyed, confused look.



Daniel shrugged and Andrew carefully pried skinny arms from around his waist.

The little girl let go and beamed up at him. "Hi!"

"Hi," Andrew replied. "Who are your parents? Where are they?" His voice was soft and kind. He was so sappy when it came to kids.

Daniel, on the other hand, not so much.

Which was why his chest seized up when she cheerfully answered, "You are!"

Andrew laughed awkwardly and gently guided her to the living room, giving Daniel the space to clean up the mess she'd made.

After dumping the trash and closing the fridge door, he walked into the oddly quiet living room. A lamp was on, lighting up the concern on Andrew's face. Daniel joined him in front of the couch, where the girl was wrapped up in a fleece throw blanket. He stared down at her, and she stared back up at him through drowsy, half-lidded eyes.

Andrew left Daniel's side but soon returned with a damp paper towel and knelt down in front of her, cleaning the pudding from her cheeks. She squirmed with an unhappy whine, but calmed when he stepped back.

"She keeps saying we're her parents," he murmured. "And she says her name's Daisy."

Daniel scrubbed his face with his hands at the absurdity of it all. A random child appeared in his house with the same name as his dog. "Am I dreaming?"

"I wish I was," Andrew sighed. "What are we going to do?"

"I dunno. Is there a number you can call for strange children?"

Andrew snorted. "Besides the cops? I don't think so. And it's too late—early?—for any office to be open. Let's just leave her here for the night."

Daniel winced. "I don't feel comfortable with that. What if something happens to her while we're sleeping? It'll look like we did it." He reached up and brushed an eyelash from Andrew's cheek. He smirked. "You're too pretty for prison."

His joke earned him a disapproving scowl. "Then what do you suggest we do? It's not like we have a lot of options, especially at this time of night."

"Look, let's just put some clothes on her and go to the police station. We can't be responsible for her, and maybe they'll have a record of a missing kid somewhere."

"No, we're not taking her to the police, and I'm not going to argue with you about it. If we need to take her somewhere, fine, but it's not going to be to the police."

"Ugh, fine. *You'll* take her somewhere in the morning. *I'm* going back to bed so I can get some sleep before work. If you find Daisy, make sure she doesn't bark at the mail—"

His voice faded out as he glanced over to the girl on the couch, or where the girl had been. In her place was a chocolate brown puppy, a mutt that Andrew had fallen in love with at the shelter. She was sleeping—the only time that she was ever quiet.

"What the fuck?" He couldn't tear his gaze away from the puppy half-covered in the blanket.

## "DREW. WHAT THE HELL DID YOU ADOPT?"

"I... think our puppy is a werewolf."

Daniel laughed once, loud and hysterical, and ignored Andrew shushing him. "This is insane. There's—there's no way any of this is real." But the sight of sight of Daisy where the little girl had been was very convincing. His mouth was dry. "If... if this is real, what are we gonna do?"

Someone's gonna find out." His own statement made his stomach twist into a tight knot.

"Daniel."

"I don't want some freaky government agency coming into our house and asking about the fucking *werewolf* that we adopted on accident. I can deal with the police but the moment some *Men in Black* shit goes down, I'm out."

"Daniel."

"What if they think we're werewolves too? I really don't want to be kidnapped and dissected. I can't even stand getting my blood drawn at the doctor, I don't want some weird scientist poking around at my insides like some sort of—"

"Daniel!"

It was the sudden grip on his wrists that brought Daniel back to the present and his ramblings to a close. His chest still felt tight but the familiar green stare was gradually calming his frantic heart.

"Listen to me," Andrew said softly. "No government agent is going to kidnap you and experiment on you. But right now we have a kid/puppy that loves us, and presumably has nowhere else to go. I know you don't really like kids, but you're better with them than you think. I know we haven't really talked about it since that time I was drunk,

but Daisy needs someone to take care of her, at least for the time being, and she has nobody else. We could do it. And she was already living here anyway. It won't be so bad."

Andrew's hopeful smile made something melt inside of Daniel, and he sighed in defeat. "All right, we'll keep her. I'll pick up some clothes for her on my way home tomorrow and we'll go shopping later this week."

The kiss was quick and fleeting, but it made him smile anyway. "I bet you're really glad we didn't name her Sausage."

"Go to bed, Daniel."



## PAINT ME LIKE ONE OF YOUR FRENCH PUGS

KAITLAN WILSON

*Ceramic*

**SAYS MY SON**  
 CRAIG STEELE  
*Poetry*

“Art is everywhere and everything is worth drawing,” says my son, while sketching the triptych splash of a raindrop as it

p  
 l  
 u  
 m  
 m  
 e  
 t  
 s        u p  
       s        p  
 i r        l  
 n e        u  
 t s        n  
 o y        g  
       e        e  
 a g        s  
 p e, b k,  
 u d d l        a c

creates ripples,  
 becomes the puddle.



**TRIBUTE TO BETTIE**  
 KAITLAN WILSON  
*Blown Glass*

**ABIGAIL O'NEAL**

Abigail O'Neal is in her fourth year of college at the University of South Alabama. She is pursuing a Bachelor's of Fine Arts with a concentration in Graphic Design. In her free time and over the summers, she works on drawing techniques and experimenting with different artistic styles. Her ideal afternoon involves working on freelance projects at home with a cup of coffee, or finding the time to draw outdoors.

**STRETCHED** p. 28

**PLACE SETTING** p. 29

**JOMON POT** p. 96

**ADORABLE MONIQUE**

Adorable Monique is an award-winning artist who was brought up abroad, studied Fine Arts and had the good fortune to be mentored by a renowned artist, which has enriched her artistic vision. She has received numerous awards and the opportunity to exhibit in various venues. Growing up surrounded by different cultures has broadened her overall view of life. She is continuously pursuing success in personal, professional, and artistic endeavors as well as in the artistic experience itself.

**LUCID DREAMS** p. 31

**ENCHANTED** p. 57

**DELIGHTFUL BLISS** p. 89

**ALLIE TONEY**

Alexandra Toney is an alumna of the University of South Alabama, currently working as a graphic designer. She enjoys traveling, photography, and sushi... so much sushi.

**SYMMETRY** p. 73

**INTRICACIES** p. 84

**ALMA VAZQUEZ**

Alma Vazquez is currently a junior at the University of South Alabama's Graphic Design program with a secondary concentration in photography. After graduation she hopes to go to graduate school and eventually acquire lots of experience and become a professor. Alma likes to learn about all mediums of art in hopes to one day utilize all those skills for a fulfilling job as a graphic designer and professor.

**HEARTH** p. 72

**AMANDA YOUNGBLOOD**

Amanda is set to graduate with a Masters in Art Education, December 2017. She already possess a BFA in Painting. Going back to school to get her Masters has been the best decision she's made so far. As a person who is passionate about the arts, particularly in schools, she looks forward to shaping the minds of future artists.

Amanda's favorite medium is oil paint; however, she's developed a love for ceramics. She also dabbles in printmaking, mainly woodcut.

**SEARCHING FOR LIGHT** p. 85

**ANDREY GRITSMAN**

A native of Moscow, Andrey Gritsman emigrated to the United States in 1981. He is a physician who is also a poet and essayist. He has published five volumes of poetry in Russian. He received the 2009 Pushcart Prize Honorable Mention XXIII. His poems, essays, and short stories in English have appeared or are forthcoming in over 60 literary journals, including *Forge*, *Confrontation*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *Hawaii Review*. He received an MFA in poetry from Vermont College.

**ATTEMPT OF A MOVIE SCRIPT** p. 50

**ANNA COPELAND**

Anna Copeland is currently a sophomore at the University of South Alabama. She chose this school for its excellent glass blowing program and location within the state of Alabama. She was first introduced to this medium in high school through working with glass artist Cal Breed at his studio in Fort Paynes, Alabama. She has an enormous passion for the medium of glass and for the arts in general. She is the 2017 – 18 recipient of the Glass Art Endowed Scholarship award. Her piece "Memoir of Innocence" is inspired by a particular dogwood tree that grew in the yard of her childhood home. It represents a time of innocence by reinterpreting a specific memory from the past.

**MEMOIR OF INNOCENCE** p. 45

**ANNA VAN DERWOOD**

Anna Van Derwood is a proudly queer and mixed-race Mobile native double-majoring in Creative Writing and Spanish at the University of South Alabama, with a minor in Gender Studies. They are a writer specializing in poetry and personal essays- with a focus on the lived experience of having marginalized identities- and have the distinct honor of being the poetry editor for this edition of the *Oracle*.

**HUNTING** p. 16

**ARYN SOJUNG BORDELON**

Aryn Sojung Bordelon was born and raised in Pensacola, Florida. She attended Florida State University and received a double bachelor's degree in English Literature and Biological Anthropology. She pursued her Masters in English at the University of South Alabama and is currently an English teacher in Pensacola.

**MY MOTHER WOULDN'T**

**HURT A FLY** p. 74

**ARTHUR OGBURN**

Arthur Ogburn is a junior studying English at the University of South Alabama. He likes cats, video games, and writing both fantasy and romance.

**DAISY** p. 140

**ASHLEY MCINTYRE**

Ashley McIntyre is a student at Spring Hill College who is taking classes at the University of South Alabama just for the love of art. Ceramics is where she feels the most comfortable, but ever since she took a glass class at South, she feels like she might have found a second place to call home. She plans to finish her studies in May and will hopefully teach art to elementary schools kids soon after. For now, she is focusing on turning Bible history lessons/stories into art pieces.

**SACRIFICE** p. 49

**CUBED** p. 93

**BLAKE KILGORE**

Blake Kilgore lives in Burlington, New Jersey, with his wife and four sons. People there treat him with kindness, and he is at ease living among the old and tall forests of the Garden State. His lingering accent, however, verifies that his heart is still Texan and Okie. Blake's writing has appeared in *Lunch Ticket*, *The Stonecoast Review*, *Midway Journal*, *Thrice Fiction* and other fine journals.

**OIL AND WINE** p. 62

**BLAKELY BARNES**

Blakely Barnes is a senior at the University of South Alabama majoring in English with minors in French and Applied Linguistics. She aspires to teach ESL overseas. Growing up, she dabbled in writing—jotting down the fragments of stories that entered her cranium on any scrap of paper she could get her hands on. When not writing the occasional page of her novel, she does work in short story fiction and creative nonfiction.

**MY LIFELONG COMPANION** p. 24

**CAROL SMALLWOOD**

Carol Smallwood's 2017 books include: *In Hubble's Shadow* (Shanti Arts); *Prisms, Particles, and Refractions* (Finishing Line Press, nominated for the Society of Midland Authors Award in Poetry); *Interweavings: Creative Nonfiction* (Shanti Arts); and two edited librarianship anthologies.

**EXAMPLES** p. 20

**COREY HARVARD**

Corey Harvard is an University of South Alabama alumnus and the Coordinator of Free2Be Mobile, a support group for queer high schoolers. His latest work can be found in *Random Sample Review*. He is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee and a previous editor-in-chief of *Oracle Fine Arts Review*.

**WAR OF ATTRITION** p. 59

**CRAIG W. STEELE**

Craig W. Steele is a professor of biology and health services at Edinboro University in northwestern Pennsylvania. In his continuing quest to become a widely-read unknown poet, his poems recently appear or are forthcoming in *The Lyric*, *Stoneboat Literary Journal*, *Mused: the BellaOnline Literary Review*, *Word Fountain*, and *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*. He continues to write poetry as "The Writer's Poet" for *Extra Innings* online.

**SAYS MY SON** p. 146

**DIANA DYER**

Diana Dyer is an Animation Major at the University of South Alabama. While her concentration is animation she also enjoys other art mediums, such as glass and watercolor. She is inspired by nature and explores color and form in her artwork.

**FOGGY** p. 39

**EMILY CARLIN**

Emily Carlin is a recent graduate of the University of South Alabama's graphic design program. She loves using color and has recently started incorporating type into her illustrations as a way to combine her love of graphic design and illustration.

**MR. MUERTE'S HOT SAUCE CO.**  
p. 88

**ERIKA RITTER**

Erika Ritter is a jack-of-all-trades in the art world. As a busy mother of two little girls, she makes as much time as possible to create whenever, wherever, and however she can. She is pursuing a Bachelor's of Arts in Studio Art with a minor in Composite Science. Although she has been trying every form of media she can get her hands on, her current medium is glass. Erika is in her fourth semester of kiln-fired glass, and she absolutely loves it. One day she would like to have her own home studio, so she can do more with her talent.

**PEACOCK VASE** p. 113

**JANE ANN FLINT**

Jane Ann Flint received a B.A. from Antioch College and an M.A. from Pacific Oaks College. In addition to writing poetry, her career to date has included creating animated films, independently and for PDI/DreamWorks, working with children and teens in hospitals and mental health facilities, and writing and editing for journals, blogs, and websites in the software and healthcare industries.

**LOOKING BACKWARD** p. 116

**JEAN VERTHEIN**

Originally from an upper Mississippi tributary town, Jean Verthein traveled through Italy, Iran, Japan, and Mexico before settling in New York City. She earned a Master's of Fine Arts degree from Sarah Lawrence College and received two writing grants from the Ragdale Foundation. Her work has been published by *The Saint Ann's Review*, *Downtown Brooklyn*, *Gival Press*, *Green Mountains Review*, and other presses. She served as a liaison for seven years to the UN from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US (WILPF), one of the UN founders.

**KOREAN HIBAKUSHA: OF SURVIVORS AND SAVIORS** p. 106

**JEFFREY ALFIER**

Jeffrey Alfier's latest works are *Anthem for Pacific Avenue: California Poems*, *Bleak Music*—a photo and poetry collaboration with Larry D. Thomas, *Southbound Express to Bay Head: New Jersey Poems* and *The Red Stag at Carrbridge: Scotland Poems*. He is founder and co-editor of Blue Horse Press and *San Pedro River Review*.

**THE WOMAN I LOVED IN THE COLD WAR** p. 128

**JOHN BALLANTINE**

A professor at Brandeis International Business School, John Ballantine took his Bachelor's degree in English at Harvard, with an M.A. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in Economics from NYU Stern. He has published economic commentary in *Salon* and the *Boston Globe*. His literary work has appeared in *Crack the Spine*, *Existere*, *Forge*, and *SNReview*, among others. He writes to understand the world we walk in and touch our complicated lives.

**THE BODY'S SPIRIT** p. 46

**JONATHAN GREENHAUSE**

Winner of the 2017 *Prism Review* Poetry Contest and finalist in the 2017 *Pinch* Literary Award in Poetry, Jonathan Greenhouse's poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *The Antigone Review*, *December*, *The Fiddlehead*, *LitMag*, and *Subtropics*, among others. His second chapbook, "Secret Traits of Everyday Things," was a finalist in last year's Annual Chapbook Contest from Encircle Publications and will be published in November.

**PLUMMET** p. 12

**JOSEPH BUSH**

Joseph Bush grew up in Saraland, Alabama and is a freshman at the University of South Alabama. He is interested in majoring in art as well as International Studies. He likes to practice art in his spare time currently and looks forward to possibly making a career out of it.

**LIFE IN DEATH** p. 83

**JOSHUA PARKER**

Joshua Parker, a Pensacola native, is an aspiring Graphic Design major. He is desperately working on a mid-life career change with hopes that he will, at last, find his niche in life. When not working, attending class or frantically finishing a project, he enjoys experiencing the small moments of life with his family.

**ON 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET** p. 15

**1933** p. 114

**GATSBY** p. 139

**KAITLAN WILSON**

Kaitlan Wilson was born in the coast of Mississippi and goes to school at the University of South Alabama. She is a senior pursuing her BA in Studio Art with a Biology minor. She started off with Biology but took one glassblowing glass and changed her major, discovering the power and comfort that art has brought to her.

**PAINT ME LIKE ONE**

**OF YOUR FRENCH PUGS** p. 145

**TRIBUTE TO BETTIE** p. 147

**KATARINA BOUDREAU**

Katarina Boudreaux is a New Orleans writer, musician, composer, tango dancer, and teacher. Her novel *Still Tides* was a semi-finalist in the 2016 Faulkner-Wisdom competition. Her first novel *Platform: Dwellers* is forthcoming from *Owl Hollow Press*.

**NURSERY LETTERS** p. 79

**KATHLEEN GLASSBURN**

Kathleen Glassburn earned an MFA in Creative Writing from Antioch University, Los Angeles. Currently, she resides in Edmonds, Washington with her husband, three dogs, two cats, and a 50-year-old turtle. When not writing or reading, she likes to play the piano and horseback ride. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in *Amarillo Bay*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Cactus Heart Press*, *Cadillac Cicatrix*, and several other journals. Her story "Picnics" was a finalist in Glimmer Train's Best Start contest. She is the Managing Editor of *The Writer's Workshop Review*.

**ASSURANCES** p. 130

**KELLIE RYAN**

Kellie Ryan is currently a senior at the University of South Alabama. She is an English major with a minor in Spanish. When she's not journaling or writing fiction, she can be found riding horses or petting dogs.

**THE ESCAPE TREE** p. 32

**KELLY JONES**

Kelly Jones is a librarian-in-training that currently calls Greensboro, NC their home. They earned their MFA in Poetry from the University of New Orleans' Creative Writing Workshop.

**A GIFT CAN BE TRICKY** p. 80

**KELLY R. TAYLOR**

Kelly R. Taylor studies glass and sculpture at the University of South Alabama. In her youth, she spent four years abroad. As a result, much of her glasswork is influenced by those childhood memories. Stunning European art and lovely storybooks littered her childhood. Now she draws inspiration for her glass from treasured illustrations and Renaissance art. On the other hand, her sculptures are altogether different. She uses clay and plaster to reflect on a personal message and give voice to more political or social conditions.

**REFLECTION** p. 58

**JUSTICE ISN'T BLIND** p. 81

**KIM LOVVORN**

Kim Lovvorn is a Gulf Coast photographer and designer pursuing an MFA in Creative Technologies and Practice at the University of South Alabama. Her current photography work focuses on the evolution of family with a special interest in motherhood and children.

**SELF PORTRAIT, IN THE MORNING**

p. 78

**KIRSTEN HOLLAND**

Kirsten Holland is from Hurley, Mississippi. She is a junior in the graphic design program here at the University of South Alabama. Even though design is her passion, she enjoys taking photos and drawing in her free time.

**TO LIMIT IS TO DEFINE** p. 61

**MARILYN RINGER**

Born in Oklahoma, Marilyn Ringer now resides in northern California. She received a BA in Social Sciences and an MA in Experimental Psychology, both from Southern Methodist University. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Natural Bridge*, *Nimrod*, *Reed Magazine*, and *Qwerty*, among others. Her chapbook, "Island Aubade," was published by *Finishing Line Press* in 2012.

**INDELIBLE** p. 22

**MARY ANNE HODGES**

Mary Anne Hodges is a second-year graduate student in Creative Writing at the University of South Alabama, holding a B.S. (with honors in English) from the United States Naval Academy and an M.B.A. from the University of West Florida. After a 20-year naval career, during which she led missions aboard P-3C maritime patrol aircraft, she has realigned her sights to craft fiction for the young adult audience. She endeavors to teach freshman composition and open a BBQ restaurant in Baldwin County, Alabama.

**GIZA** p. 44

**MEGAN HALL**

Megan Hall was born and raised in South Alabama. She is currently a Junior in the Graphic Design program at the University of South Alabama and is working toward a BFA. She has interest in drawing, designing, and photography

**THE DIVIDE** p. 92

**MICAELA WALLEY**

Micaela Walley is the current Editor-in-Chief of *Oracle Fine Arts Review*. After two years of editing the magazine, and four total years of being on the *Oracle* staff, she finally decided to include a poem of her own. She will graduate with a double B.A. in Communication and Creative Writing from the University of South Alabama in May, 2018 and intends to continue her education with an MFA in poetry.

**COMETS** p. 115

**MICHAEL MOORER JR.**

Michael Moorer Jr. is a Computer Science and Mathematics major at Berea College, located in Berea, KY with a passion for non-commercial digital photography, world exploration, and race relations. He is originally from the Magic City of Birmingham, Alabama which he proudly calls his home. Michael often enjoys meditating, hiking, and exploring topics surrounding marginalized social groups in understanding how social norms within media have prevented these various groups from being displayed in an attractive light.

**BLACK GIRLS, PUREST FORM OF ART** p. 127

**NAPHISA SENANARONG**

Naphisa Senanarong grew up in Bangkok, Thailand but is residing in Boston. She received her B.A. in English with a concentration in Creative Writing at Boston College. She won the McCarthy award for best collection of creative writing at Boston College, and also received the Devers Fellowship: a grant awarded to the student who shows the most promise for a career in writing.

**TRAGEDY BY THE SEA—SORT OF** p. 54

**OLAF KRONEMAN**

Olaf Kroneman graduated from the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine with an MD. He interned at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, then attended the University of Virginia to complete a residency in internal medicine. His interactions with patients and other healthcare professionals prompted him to write. His story "Fight Night" won the Winning Writers Sports Fiction and Essay Contest, and "The Recidivist" won the Writer's Digest short story contest. His essay "Detroit Golden Gloves" was selected as Editor's Choice by *inscape*, honoring the top nonfiction piece of the issue in which it was printed.

**FIFTY YEARS AGO IN DETROIT** p. 118

**PATRICIA JOYNES**

Thirty years ago Patricia fulfilled a lifelong dream to live in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and with the introduction of a digital camera, she began an unrestricted exploration of her true love — nature photography. She captures nature's glory in a moment that also conveys her deep, heartfelt emotional connection to the site. Patricia has had multiple photos in three Blowing Rock, NC calendars, including the 2016 cover. She furnished cover shots for two books and the inaugural edition of *Evening Paper*, a medical journal. In 2015, her photo was selected for *National Geographic's* online "Inside Access" story. Her photos have appeared in three editions of the *County Lines Literary Journal* (2015 – 2017) and in three editions of the *Blue Ridge Parkway* calendars (2016 – 2018).

**THE SNOWBALL BUSH** p. 23

**TUNNEL VISION** p. 117



**PHYLLIS CAROL AGINS**

Phyllis Carol Agins has long found inspiration in Philadelphia, PA. Two novels, a children's book, and an architectural study of synagogues and churches were all published during her years there. Recently, more than forty short stories have appeared in literary magazines, including *Argestes*, *Art Times*, *Lilith Magazine*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, and *Women Arts Quarterly Journal*. Lately, she divides her time between Philly and Nice, France, adding the Mediterranean rhythms to her sources of inspiration.

**ANOTHER MYTH** p. 40

**ROBERT BEVERIDGE**

Robert Beveridge makes noise and writes poetry just outside Cleveland, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *Survision*, *Loud Zoo*, and *Ghostlight*, among others.

**GRAIN** p. 70

**SARAH HOWARD**

Sarah Howard is a senior enrolled in the University of South Alabama's Printmaking program. Her main source of inspiration comes from Medieval style art, Viking art and artists like Walter Anderson.

**BETTA FISH** p. 82

**SARAH ROCHA**

Sarah Rocha is a poet and writer from Brampton, Ontario, Canada. She currently lives in Mobile and is an undergraduate senior at the University of South Alabama, pursuing a degree in English. She hopes to move overseas to teach English, and travelling is her chief passion. In her free time, Sarah enjoys video games, sustainability, discussions on human sexuality, great stationary, and unconventional books.

**LOST AT SEA** p. 38

**SCOTT HUTCHISON**

Scott Hutchison's previous work has appeared in *The Chattahoochee Review*, *The Georgia Review*, and *The Southern Review*. His new work is forthcoming in *The Atlanta Review*, *Aethlon*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, and *Tar River Review*.

**IMPULSE** p. 138

**SETH JANI**

Seth Jani currently resides in Seattle, WA and is the founder of *Seven Circle Press*. His own work has been published widely in such places as *The Chiron Review*, *El Portal*, *The Hamilton Stone Review*, and *Hawai'i Pacific Review*.

**FIELD MUSIC** p. 105

**SIMON PERCHIK**

Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *Forge*, *Poetry*, *Osiris*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *The Osiris Poems* published by *box of chalk*, 2017.

\* p. 126

**TANNER BYRD**

Tanner Byrd is a visual and performing artist, currently studying Graphic Design at the University of South Alabama. He is working on the first part of a four-part series of novels and a stand-alone with several others to follow. In the future he intends on studying animation, and enjoys voice and acting. Due to his grandmother hailing from Switzerland, he has studied both French and German, but prefers the latter. He also hand-letters.

**THE CAT OF BASKERVILLE** p. 53

**BLOOD IN A TEACUP** p. 98

**THOMAS MYERS**

Thomas Myers is a native of Mobile, Alabama and is the founder of a local healthcare consultancy and informatics publishing company. His black and white photography focuses on abstract qualities of natural and cultural themes, often with an emphasis on the Southern condition.

**AS THE WORLD PASSES BY** p. 21

**JAZZMAN** p. 43

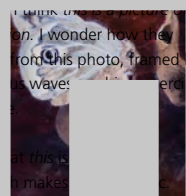
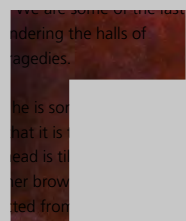
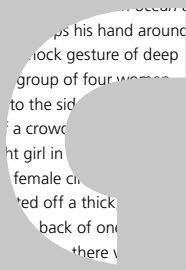
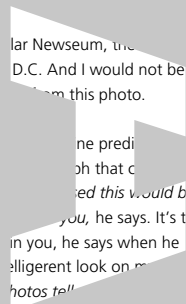
**WILLIAM DORESKI**

William Doreski lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in a small house in the woods. He taught at Keene State College for many years, but has now retired to feed the deer and wild turkeys. He has published three critical studies, including Robert Lowell's *Shifting Colors*. His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in many journals and several small-press books. His forthcoming book of poetry is *The Last Concert* (*Salmon Press*).

**LIKE A CLYFFORD STILL PAINTING**

p. 30





**SGA** STUDENT  
GOVERNMENT  
ORGANIZATION



lar Newseum, the  
D.C. And I would not be  
from this photo.

ne predi  
ph that c  
ed *this would b*  
you, he says. It's t  
in you, he says when he  
elligent look on m  
photos tell

occurs  
ps his hand around  
lock gesture of deep  
group of four women  
to the side  
a crowd  
ht girl in  
female ci  
ted off a thick  
back of one  
there v

we are some of the best  
ndering the halls of  
agedies.

he is sor  
hat it is  
ead is ti  
er brow  
ted from

I think  
on. I wonder how they  
from this photo, framed  
a wave:

at this is  
n makes