

LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

"Superstitions" has been on the Gardy Loo list of potential themes for the past few semesters and this year it finally seemed appropriate. The word is applicable to anything that removes reason and inspires awe of the unknown, imaginary, or mysterious. It was after we began working on incorporating this theme that we got permission from the Smallman family to include a poem from the JMU English student, Emily Smallman, who recently passed away. Although it was not intentional for Gardy Loo to choose a theme that contemplates the unknown, her passing has indeed instilled an awe of the unfamiliar in me. Death is something I will never understand or know how to deal with. Despite that, I think of Emily everyday and am so thankful for her impact on my life. I saw her as a role model and good friend and therefore find it fitting for Gardy Loo to feature this incredible girl.

I want to thank the Smallman family for letting us do a dedication page. I also want to thank the talented and beautiful Gardy Loo staff for their hard work, long hours, and constant patience with me.

Pojundery,
-Rosie Grant

At six years old, I watched my first horror movie. It was a classic, *Poltergeist*, and ever since then I've been constantly intrigued by the things that make most people scream. Naturally, I could not have been happier when Rosie suggested the 'superstitions' theme for this issue of Gardy Loo. I hopped at the chance to work with the staff to stretch the theme past the traditional black-cat-break-your-mother's-back. Some of us even traveled to a haunted house 45 minutes away for some on-site research..

Anyways, it's been another crazy semester pumping this issue out, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I can't believe I am writing one of these letters since joining the staff just last year, but I feel incredibly honored to be doing so. I'm so happy to work with these amazing people and be a part of sharing this beautiful art with you. Enjoy!

Peace, Love, and spilled salt,
-Ansley Luce

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coffee break Sasha Duran




inside the college library's starbucks
on a sunday afternoon,
the venture club is seated
around the large round table in the back corner,
with their eco-friendly water bottles
dusty backpacks, and muddy shoes,
sipping on tall frappuccinos
and discussing their upcoming hiking trip
to the mountains surrounding the campus,
not knowing
that a blizzard is on its way.



exhausted, frantic looking students are
rapidly tap-tapping away on their laptops
at their own little tables lining the wall.
sipping,
typing,
sipping some more of that venti americano
with a triple shot of espresso.



four skinny, blonde,
fake-sun-baked girls with shrill voices
are sitting in cozy patterned armchairs,
delighting in gossip from the previous night's parties,
and half-caf-no-whip-extra-caramel cinnamon dolce lattes,
skinny vanilla lattes with whip and a shot of caramel,
caramel macchiatos with extra whip and even more caramel,
and caramel apple spices.
it's a wonder
the chairs haven't broken yet
under the weight of all that caramel.





Little Boxes Maggis Morris

at various tables,
lovers gaze into the eyes of their better halves over tiny cups of espresso,
old friends catch up over tea,
and new friends get to know each other better over croissants,
while two strangers meet in line trying to decide
what exactly it is they desire
to spend
their four dollars on.





Faerie Queen Zachary Souliere



Reality Check Kathleen Thompson

I used to think you were real.

But no, the halo crowning your hair,

A mere shadow,

Just like those three words

You repeated to me all the time.

"Give me time."

Yes, the halo crowning your hair

Once existed in my mind, my dreams.

You were rich and golden,

A ticket to dream heaven.

But a walk into the empty street,

Gutters overflowing with sewer water,

Those three words sparking the air,

Spoke another truth to me.

Maybe that halo was a reflection-

My conscious, my golden wisdom,

Wrapped completely over you.



Bed Zachary Souliere



The Fox Lindsay Carlin

At first I think he is a dog,
and then I see the tail and spindly legs
and the color of his fur,
like a hot coal lit up from the inside.
He is a burnt statue illuminated in my
headlights,
A fox-shaped cut-out
thrown into relief against the thick
black trees behind.

Once, I was riding shotgun in George's
car
and an orange blur darted through his
high beams.
He crossed himself and told me
that foxes at night are bad luck.
"If you see one,
an accident can't be far behind."
He gripped the steering wheel
and the skin over his knuckles
was stretched thin the whole way
home.

The fox screams
and I think of Andrea Yates,
who drowned her children
one by one in their bathtub
until her sleeves
were dark and warm with water.
After she saved four sons and a
daughter
from the fires of hell,
she tucked them in for the last time.
I hear the unearthly noise again
and I wonder if the Yates children
screamed like that.

He bolts,
his shadow like a dark twin
running perpendicular to his sleek
body
and forming a right angle.
I stare at the space where he stood
and I wonder when my accident will
come.



This is an Ode Stephanie Maguire

This is an ode to things I love,
And all the many things I like.
Be they as big as Eastnor Castle,
or small as leaking dots of glue,
In my mind or in my hand,
Happening now or still to come;
I love them all.

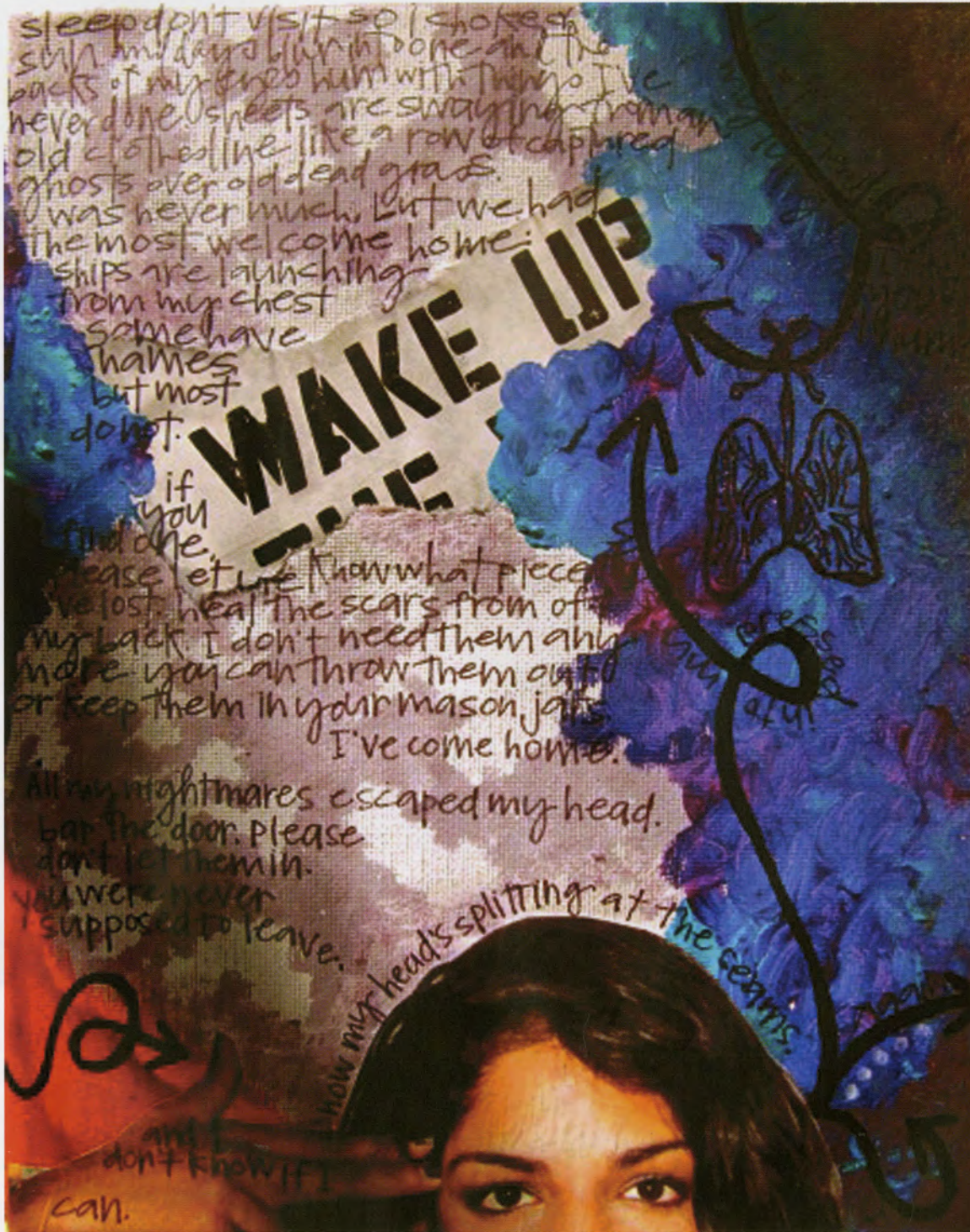
I love the bunch of hair that ripped
From my head when I went down the
Slide when I was five.
I love the grease that coats my hands
After I fix the chain on my bike.
I love the cheap coffee from 7-11,
That really doesn't taste so bad,
And the stomachache that comes
From drinking it too fast.

This is an ode to the things that hurt
All the many things that hurt.
Like how I know he'll never change
And we'll never be what I envisioned we'd be,
Just another piece of art lost in the drafting stage.
It hurts to know she killed herself,
Convinced her friends weren't there,
And it hurts that her family looked at us
As though she had never known our secrets
And never laughed at our jokes.

This is an ode to the things I want to do,
The things that seem unthinkable, impossible, and
brave.
Like fly a kite I built myself
Without the help of any boys.
Or create a masterpiece that I paint with my feet,
Blind-folded and without restraint.
Or climb to the top of the Denali's sky-licking hills
And breathe in the harsh, shallow air;
Understated, tired, and free.



MIA Lauren Van Reesema



One Thousand Sixty-Three Spaces

Kate Anderson

Oh baby, we tried to get out of this town,
holding hands and taking that leap of faith
across the divide of life and death.
What is there for people like us,
here and now,
two girls clinging to each other
in a storm of hatred and uncertainty?

All our friends made it across the divide,
and I hope that they're together
because I'm here, alone once more,
holding you close, baby,
counting the spaces between your heartbeats.

oh Mercy please wake up

We all were such a mess, weren't we?
With razor blades and dirty sex
and bruises and scars we couldn't hide,
except for you and me, Mercy,
our scars were on the inside.

But I've been the only survivor once before,
and I've lost life inside of me,
and you were always the vibrant one,
so baby, I love you,
and I'm going to count the spaces
in between your heartbeats
until you wake up in this brave new world,
and we are forced to face another day
on the wrong side of the divide.

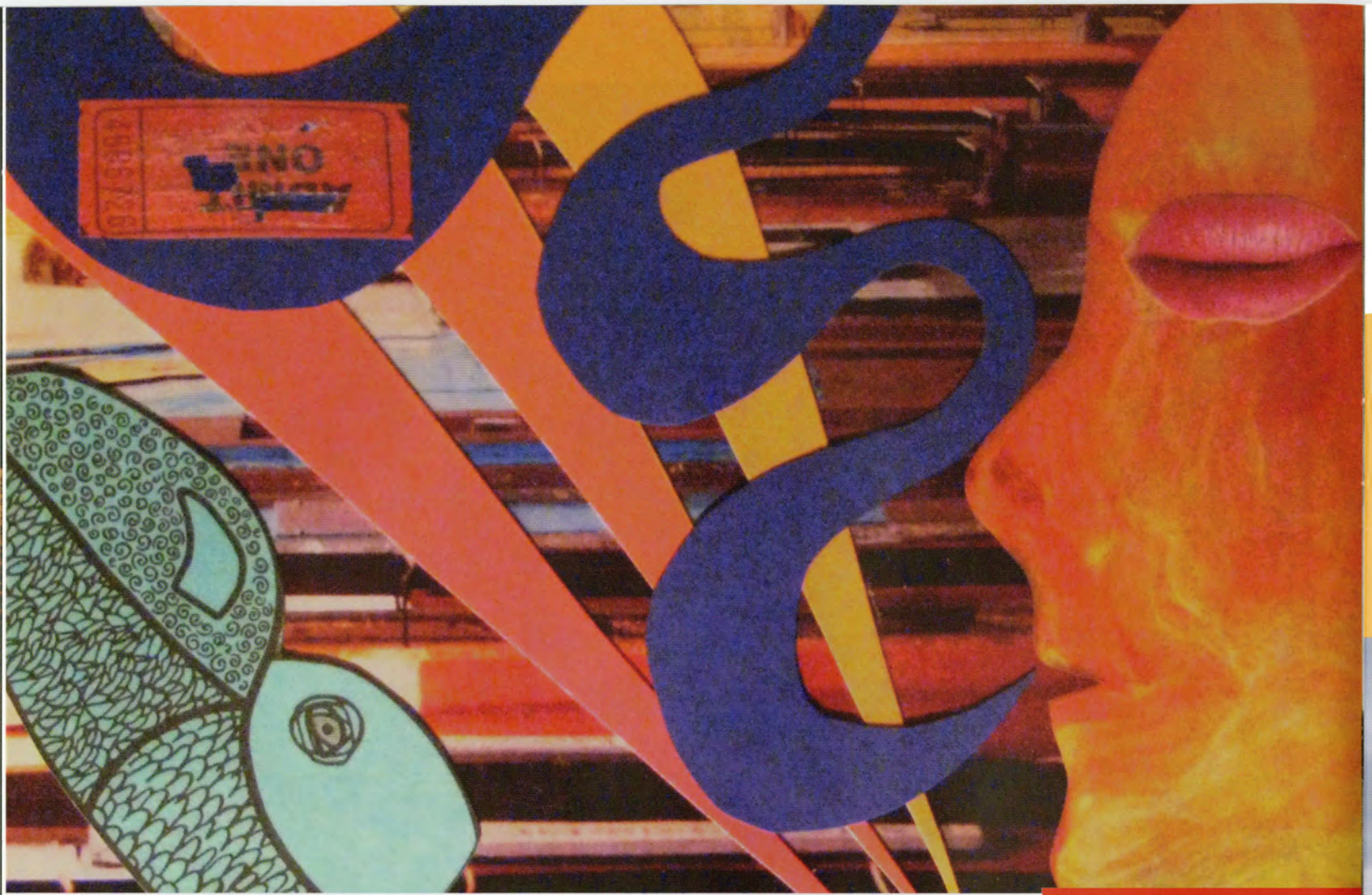
When I reach one thousand sixty three spaces,
I feel your hand twitch in mine,
oh baby, oh Mercy,
and for the first time in what feels like forever
I remember what hope feels like,
stirring in my chest.





Life Time Maggie Morris





Carnival Emily McNally

Acknowledgements Alan Linic

The author wishes to thank
Coleridge, Thoreau, Aristotle and other
dead people who make him look intelligent;
also Coca-Cola, Hanes, and the Bill of Rights.

The author will thank
Anger and headaches and smooth-moving pens and
every other source of a poem;
also sex and sex and sex and sex.

The author is required to thank
friend and family and the Academy and the opinions
of the masses, from whom he determines all of his human worth.



Backwards Strife Mandi Graybill

Bruised and battered, I wrestle
Aimlessly against trying devotion. Believing
Countless lies that spill from your mouth like
Kaleidoscopic pictures. Your confidence is
Wavering. The fraud seeps out of your pores like a ghost.

A thinly veiled story of loyalty
Rings mercilessly through my mind.
Deceitful, dishonest, and untrustworthy. Yet,
Somehow, I'm the one begging for forgiveness.



Ghost Ship Zachary Souliere



Neural Spark Alan Linic

I know you don't use the subway,
but I just happened to picture you
sitting naked in those plastic orange seats,
legs crossed and a fresh newspaper in hand.

And I know you don't dance,
but putting you in that train of thought
would be stupid without playing a little R&B,
watching you grind on the metal poles like a mill wheel.

And it's no secret that you don't like sweets,
but how could I not coat your skin with
a layer of honey as lustrous and
yellow as Truth?



la vida Stephanie Holguin

Untitled Maggie Morris



Green Thumb Alan Linic

Now that my lilies are curled and
shrunken, I can't
stop staring at them.

the Sun has bleached them runny greens
and yellows, like water-spotted chalk drawings.

they teach me about wilting gracefully,
how to go from roaring orange
to speaking in crunchy whispers
with every breeze.

They're so good at dying I almost don't
want them to burst back through the
dirt next Spring.

But being raised by my thumb is being born with a pillow stuck
to your face,
so I'm not worried.



Bye-Bye Becky Alan Linic

On the elevator up to Collin's place on the twenty-eighth floor, I hit the button for twenty-three. "I need to stop off at Becky's," I said. "It won't take long."

He cocked his head to the left. I didn't find out until later that he assumed I was dropping by to get my rocks off. The elevator opened and I went down the hall to knock on Becky's door. I drummed my fingers on the frame for about fifteen seconds before she opened the door. I walked right into her apartment, down the glossy hardwood floor of the hallway. Then I turned around to face her.

"Hey," I said.

"Want to take a seat?" Becky asked.

"Nah," I said. "I'm not planning on staying long."

"Want to take your coat off, at least?" Becky asked.

I shrugged and removed it. I wouldn't need it at Collin's anyway, and he was right upstairs. A wave of adrenaline hit my chest and my skin felt tight—how I feel right before I get on a roller coaster.

"So what's up?"

"I don't want to do this any more," I said. I almost giggled through the adrenaline. It was going to be over. No more weepy nighttime chat sessions, no more creepy "we're forever" conversations with my friends behind my back, no more repeat explanations about how little I was planning on investing in our relationship.

"Don't want to do what?" She stood in the hallway, leaning against the wall. On the other side of the wall a chrome faucet dripped once every three seconds into a sink with at least three used wine glasses inside. One or two of the glasses probably had fingerprints and smears of paint on them. Becky fancied herself a painter. And a comedienne, and a singer-songwriter, and some kind of undefined activist. She also drank wine a lot.

I plopped down onto her flowered couch. If needed, it could transform into a futon. A nifty piece of furniture. I had helped assemble it when she moved in. The apartment was great; air conditioning, open space, and a wall made entirely of windows from floor to ceiling. Being able to come by and see north side Chicago covered in snow was almost worth coming over once in a while. But Collin's apartment was identical to Becky's, and I actually liked hanging out with him.

"This. Whatever it is that we're doing," I said. Becky and I had very differing ideas about what kind of relationship we were in. It was strange to me, since I had asserted to her on numerous occasions that we weren't in one.

Tears welled up in her bright blues, eyes bigger than quarters. She looked at a spot on the wall a few inches to the left of my head then at her feet, five feet and three inches below her.



Blue Door Zachary Souliere

"I figured this was going to happen," she said to the floor.

"Oh?" "Well, you've been kind of phasing out for a little while now," she said.

I felt a twinge of panic that this break might lose me a couple of friends. I didn't know it then, but everyone else I knew basically loathed Becky. The only reason they didn't mention anything to me was that according to her we were going to move in together sometime soon.

I had the option of either defending myself or making this go as quickly as possible. It didn't take me long to decide.

"Yeah," I said. "That's true."

"I mean," she said, locking eyes with me, "you didn't even really put any effort into anything."

I nodded slowly. Then I stood up.

"So," I said. "Is that it?" At that moment, nothing would have made me happier than for her to say "yes." Or at least to cry hard enough that I could slowly back out of the apartment and escape to Collin's for food and video games.

"I just don't understand," she said. Her eyebrows came down. Her pale lips thinned.

"Bummer." She stared at me. I clicked my tongue. "What don't you understand?"

"Just, why, I guess." She dropped onto the couch, where I had been seated a moment ago. I thought about bee-lining for the door. "This just seemed to come out of nowhere."

"I thought you said you weren't surprised."

"Well, I am," she said. She stuck out her jaw.

"I just think we want different things from each other," I said. "That's all."

"Like what?"

"Like how I want this to be over," I said. I was surprised with myself for saying it that way, but the kind of surprised like I had discovered I could do way more pull-ups than I thought.

"Is it that you're bored with me or something?"

I sighed. Resisted the urge to check the time on my phone.

"Not really," I said.

"I'm not going to see you with like, some other girl in the next few days?"

"I don't think so... I don't have one lined up or anything."

She just breathed for a moment. Ragged, stuttery breathing. Tight-chested breathing. Pre-cry breathing. I picked up my jacket and put my fingers on the buttons of her broken, cream-colored intercom.

Becky stood up suddenly. It actually scared me a little. Every movie in which some douchebag gets kicked in the balls for hurting a girl's feelings popped into my head at once. She walked by me to the bathroom, and I could hear her blowing her nose. I rolled my eyes. I felt every second that went by pass over the back of my neck. I felt my stomach rumble. I checked my phone. 1:12.

Her bare feet were noiseless on the cold wood floor of the hallway when she came back. I wouldn't have heard her at all if not for the weeping. Her face was pulled, the muscles underneath contracted to accommodate tears. I always found Becky's face to be her most interesting feature. It seemed like it had been weathered for years by terse and motherly expressions. It contrasted sharply with her short, curvy frame and annoying levels of optimism.

"So," I said. "I think I'm going to go." I winced.

"I think I should go," I corrected. That sounded better. Or something. I needed to get out of there.

She didn't say anything, just looked away. I pursed my lips. I started walking for the door. As our bodies lined up in the hallway, she put her hand on my chest to stop me. I glanced down at her hand, then followed her arm to her face.

"Wait," she said, still looking down and away.

I waited for about two seconds. Raised my eyebrows to complete my facial question mark.

"Yes?"

She took her hand off my chest.

"Right," I said. I headed out the door. Becky caught it behind me as it closed.

"Bye," she said.

"Later," I said.

I headed down the brown carpet to the elevators. I felt lighter than air. I felt giddy. I wanted a pizza in the worst way. I heard the door to 2301 shut behind me. Then I heard Becky slide down the door, sobbing. I swallowed a laugh, and it came out somewhere between a cough and a quick exhale. The elevator arrived with a ding, and I smiled all the way up to the twenty-eighth floor.



Eric in Arizona Rebecca Bunker

October 11, 2010

Columbia College Chicago Student Financial Services
600 S. Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL, 60605-1996

To Whom It May Concern,



I recently received a notification that I had an unpaid balance of \$960.00 in my student account. Enclosed is a check for the amount due. For confirmation purposes, my Oasis student ID is 223243, and my default emotion is saucy. Also, you'll be pleased to know that my money tree is in fantastic health, and if you need any more money from me it's no trouble at all for me to pick a couple of Benjamins and send them your way.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say that the Comedy Studies Program was probably the most important thing to ever happen to me in my entire life, and was worth every penny and more (even this particular summation of pennies that was not made aware to me until the notification I received; the notification that included threats to "further collection activity with a third-party collection agency"). In no way do the unexpected notice, charges, and implied threats taint the experiences I've had through Columbia College or the city of Chicago.

As a matter of fact, I would like to thank you, "whom it may concern," for giving me a grand total of 15 days to come up with the money to pay a bill I didn't know I owed (15 days assuming one-business-day mailing both ways, and also assuming that I check the mailbox of my non-permanent address every day as soon as the mail is delivered). I would like to formally put in a request for a receipt of the payment and this letter, as well as any other outstanding debts that you were planning on waiting until practically the day of to tell me about. As a student who is not enrolled in a full-time education program at Columbia College Chicago, I'm sure that this request will be placed on the backburner, since I am obviously not important enough to be promptly informed of my inherent failure to read the minds of Student Financial Services when it decides to up program costs without telling anybody. That is, without telling anybody until two weeks before said "anybody" will have third-party collection agencies knocking on their door.

Sincerely,

Alan



The Things We Used to See Jessica Ward

In the peaceful hours of the morning, in thick fog
and dew covered grass, she sits, Indian style, beneath the oak tree.

She twirls thick blades of grass through delicate fingertips,
bright eyes transfixed on the three birds before her.

She watches as they hop and chirp through the tall grass,
burying their beaks in the soft mud, in search of food.

A breeze ruffles their feathers and her stray hairs,
carrying with it the refreshing scent of a morning promise.

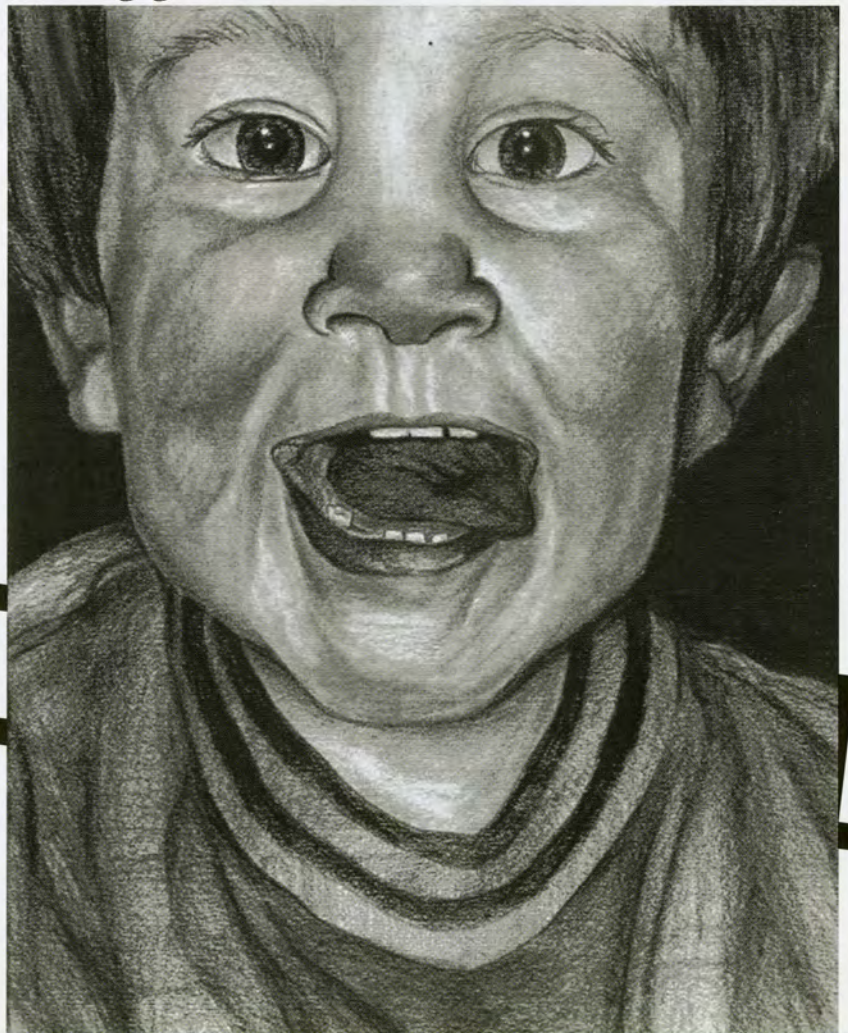
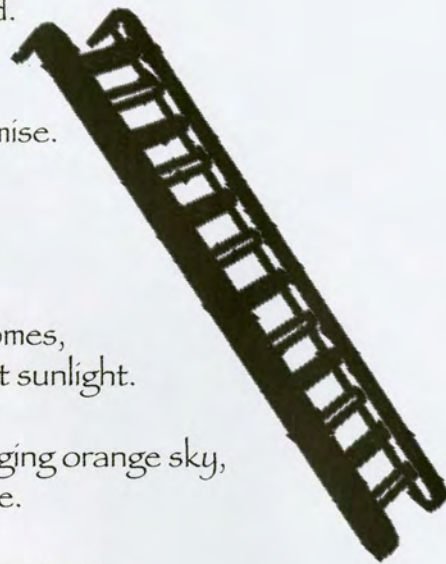
The sun creeps above the edge of the woods,
rays of light shining through leaf covered branches.

In the distance, families rest in the comfort of their homes,
protected from the soft chirping, the breeze, the faint sunlight.

In pink leggings and a ponytail, she looks to the changing orange sky,
she watches the birds, the birds glimpse her still figure.

Violet flower petals skirt the damp earth from the long, green
branches which sway to touch the ground.

The earth whispers
but only she hears.





Oh to be Young Kara Schab

I wish I could print the snapshots I have taken in my memory-
Like that time we took flows and became one with the river.
Where we sat crossed-legged and created laugh lines.

I have never felt more natural than when swaying with the lilies-
How thankful I was that they were not roses,
what scars from the thorns our tan and innocent skin would have.

Never have I felt such contentment then when sitting in this back seat-
When every gust of wind feels like a fresh kiss on my cheek.

Then I catch your eyes as they fill up from tears of laughter-
And as I close mine, and breathe in the mountain air,

I realize how I never want this to end.

Can we take another hit again?

Sun God Carlisle Sargent



Asparagus Maggie Kern

From my mother's hands, things sprout up and branch
out. She shakes hands with sunflowers at dawn,
and preens prickling rosebuds with fertilizer-fingers,
beneath the wide-brim of her summer hat.

Her fingers spread underground into a system of roots
that grip the land, and stand up with sturdy stemlegs.

She strolls in her garden every morning;
and with a quiet smile, she watches them grow.



An Almost-Meeting Kate Anderson

You see me walk down this California street,
wavy brunette hair catching the sunlight
and setting it ablaze in fiery color.

I am young and beautiful,
all long limbs and white teeth,
laughing with friends along the shore,
my hands weaving through the air
as I tell the tales of my life.

You remember this hair on another girl's head-
she was about my age when you met her,
nineteen years ago.

But her hair didn't catch sunrays;
instead, she pulsed in a club,
flashing lights giving you glimpses
of freckled skin and chocolate locks.

You bought her drinks, though she was
young,
and you took her home with you,
and now here I am in this California town,
and I don't even know who you are,
though we share the same deep eyes
and the same rich laughter
and the same lust for life that sometimes
leaves others behind.

Maybe you could right the wrongs in my
world,
set my soul at ease - just approach me!
Just come up to me, tell me who I am -
because you know more of it than I -
and I will always, always forgive you.

How could I not? When I see your eyes,
I will know who you are,
and I will always, always forgive you.

But instead, you turn around,
facing away from the blinding sunlight
and the beautiful daughter you created,
and I am left with all the weight of the world.



Igloo Maddie Wigle

Is Real Ian Spiegel

"I feel safe here," she said
sipping her diet coke.
The one the waiter brought out
without any ice
and a warm glass.
"At home, I'd never go on a walk alone or to the movies.
"Here I'm free."

In the news the next day
we saw flotilla raids
and troops, my age and younger
beating invaders from Turkey.
The anchor cried outrage
but my grandmother, proud,
clutched her star of David,
which hung from around her neck,
and shared a chain with her wedding ring,
and boarded the bus, whispering
"not that, not that."

Strange Locations Zachary Souliere



On the Bank of Forgiven Creek Lydia Wilson

From the shore I watch
From the shore
On the verge of heels glued to charred-cold pebbles
The beast, belly-up, sinks, pulled and repulsed
By the waters that swallow,
Like a child without name or home.
Cords called memory bind mangy wrists,
The currents rock his dead-man's float
Fetal, damp, the blood
Staining his curls.

From the shore they jeer
From the shore
Hurling their stones and boulders at his bones.

Chestnuts gather around the shattered fangs
And the blasted tongue crushed from screaming out
A song without title or end.
Shards of emerald glass lodge into the hide,
Pressing puss and ooze from shallow wounds
Black, sticky, while flakes
Of tooth, powered milky blue, collect in the crevasses
Of gentle hands.

Barry Island Dora Duvisac

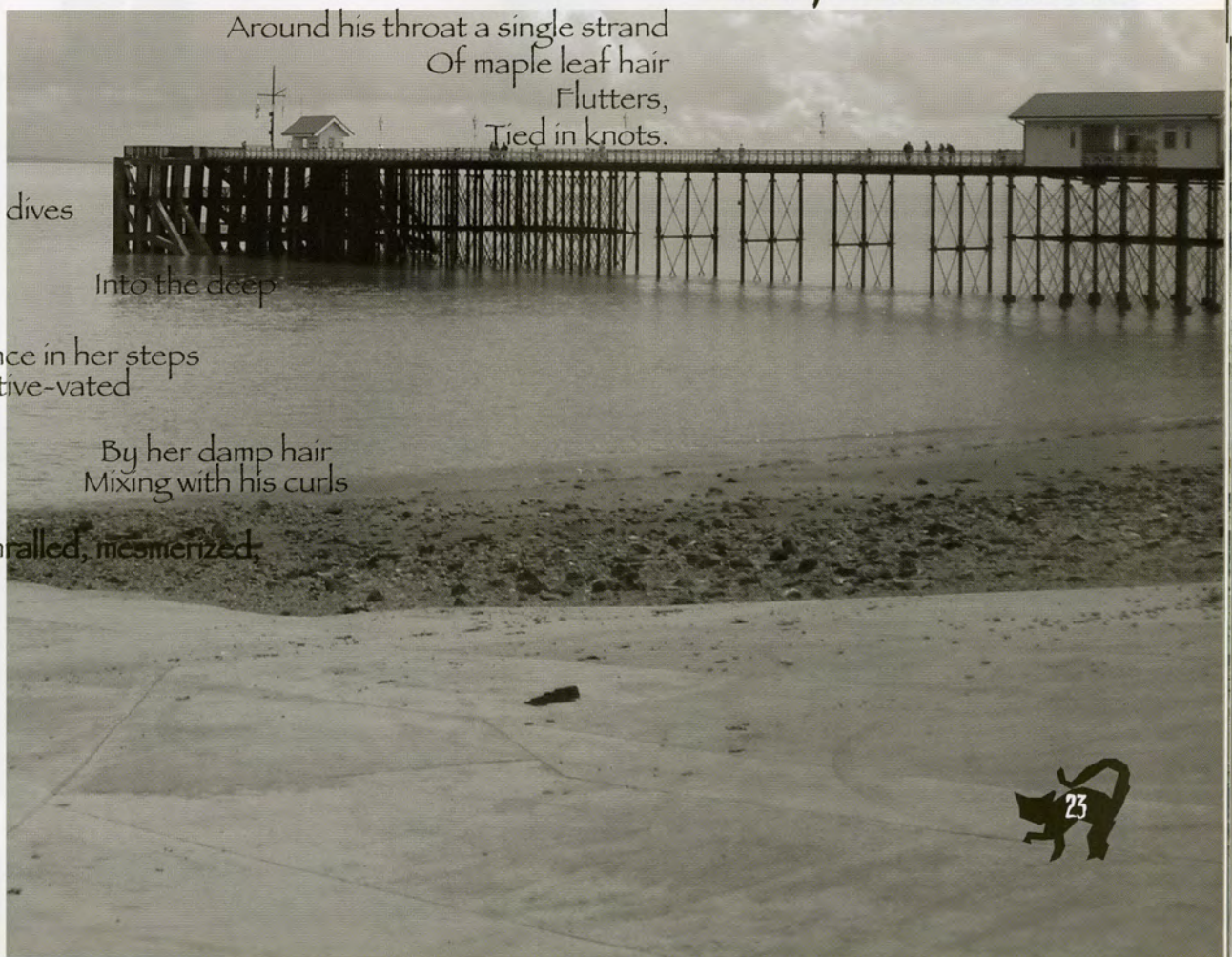
Into the deep she dives

Into the deep

Commanding silence in her steps
To hold us all captive-vated

By her damp hair
Mixing with his curls

As we watch, enthralled, mesmerized,
From the shore.



scribbled on the back of a flight itinerary Ian Spiegel

what do I fear?
right now, the little things
the pain in my leg, the effervescent
bladder that always needs alleviating,
the "occupied" sign illuminated
at the bathroom that they call
a lavatory.

I fear the backpack
underneath my feet and the
ten thousand dollar suitcase
filled to the brim
with rare cards, instead of clothes
and instead of books, binders.

I fear the red light district
and the five hour layover that
may cause it to seep into the
airport lounge
and the things that go unsaid in bathroom stalls.

I fear exchange rates and the
wad of cash in my pocket searing not a hole,
but a bullet wound.

I fear my empty pen and the chicken scratch
I won't be able to read tomorrow
my only outlet for the thoughts that
make my lips tremble and my limbs quake.

I fear the couples seated on either side of me,
the older man who adjusts his fat and the woman who
he rubs under the shirt, bare backed,

Logistics, they scare me not
like where I am going to shower
and
what's the German for "shave"
what's life threatening isn't
the turbulence or the safety issues
(who stays in hostels with \$10,000, stone cold cash?)
It's the memories, the words I
can't say, the repeating rocking,
the ebb and flow of "I miss you"
that is louder than any plane engine
and that keeps me focused on the pain in my leg
so that I can focus at all.

Champlain Maggie Morris





I'm Only Sleeping Emily McNally

The Way She Rolls Casey Pottle

Did it have to start now?
I am not ready to
let go.
The days continue to march on.
I can't think – I need more time.

Can the old stories be repeated again?
I forget the soothing of
their sanity.
It was just yesterday I came here.
I am lost – alone with myself.

Why am I unable to go back?
The wrinkles have taken over
my face.
Am I fooling myself again?
Life is short – youth is like the grass.

Why do things have to go this way?
I will protest with cries of
stolen love.
What happened to my way of life?
I lost control – I needed more time.



Mother Anonymous

I saw her every morning on my way to work. She always wore the same thing; a red jumpsuit that looked like something out of an 80's exercise video. Perhaps she was like my mother and had a shelf full of Richard Simons Sweatn' to the Oldies videocassettes. I can't help but laugh every time I think of my fat mother shaking the whole house, struggling to keep up with Richard. "Why don't you get out from in front of the television and walk like all the other women?" my father would say, but he knew the reason: she was ashamed. The woman was so fat my brothers and I used to use her dresses as parachutes. Church was the only thing that got her out of the house, and you better believe every Sunday morning my father made all of us kids tell her how beautiful she looked.

I drove by this woman and thought of my mother. But this walking woman was older. She must have been in her early eighties. She had short white hair and she was small, like a middle school girl. She would mosey down the bike path with her hands clasped together in front of her, shuffling her feet and kicking gumballs and leaves in every direction. I watched her from my car window, ready to wave hello, but she never looked up.

Yesterday I came home from work and my wife told me about an elderly woman in the neighborhood who went out for her morning walk and never returned. "People are looking everywhere for her. There's a helicopter in the sky," she said. She saw it on the news.

It took a moment to hit me. It was Friday and I was exhausted and focused on the glass of scotch I was pouring. I took a sip of the alcohol and looked out the window. I saw two little boys riding their bicycles on the path. And then BOOM.

"You're kidding!" I shouted, nearly spitting my drink.

"What's wrong?" my wife asked.

"This woman, was she old?"

"Karen said that she heard from Denise that she was seventy-eight. She's the mother of that woman with the two little boys that talk all through Sunday Mass."

"Did she have white hair cut really short, like a man might wear it?"

"I don't know."

"Was she tiny?"

"Do you know her or something?"

I didn't answer. I put the drink on the kitchen table and ran into the living room. I turned on the television. The 5 o'clock news was on.

"Bill, do you know what happened to her?" she asked again. My wife said that people still





Bakery Maggie Morris

rape old women, even at that age. Can you believe that? I didn't. I looked it up on the Internet and it's true, Goddamnit. Anyway, I was watching the TV in a trance. She sat down beside me. A report came on. A woman by the name of Samantha Lee Broker was reported missing this morning. Her husband says she was on her morning walk. After two hours passed he started to worry and went looking for her. Four hours later he called the police. A photograph of a middle schooler sized woman with short, white hair and wearing a red jumpsuit appeared on the screen. She was smiling in the picture.

"You waited four hours you fucking idiot!" I blurted and strung at the TV. I jumped off the couch and grabbed the TV and threw it on the ground, shattering the screen into a million pieces. I fell to the ground and wept. My wife stared, shocked at my sudden outburst. "I know that woman," I said. "I drive by her every morning on my way to work." I hadn't cried since I was a junior in high school and saw Jenna Sandberg kissing another boy. I didn't cry when my father left his fat wife and his four fat kids and moved to Florida with a 26 year-old. I didn't cry at my mother's funeral. I didn't cry when my daughter was born and I didn't cry when my fucking dog was turned into a flapjack by a garbage truck. But, shit, I crying now.

A moment went by and my wife sat there, watching me with her mouth hanging open. I was leaning forward with my face buried in my hands wailing like a baby who's shat itself. Then she came over to me, pushing the broken glass aside with her foot and she sat down beside me. She put her arm around me and pulled me close. She pushed my head onto her lap and stroked my hair. "There there," she said, and held me tight



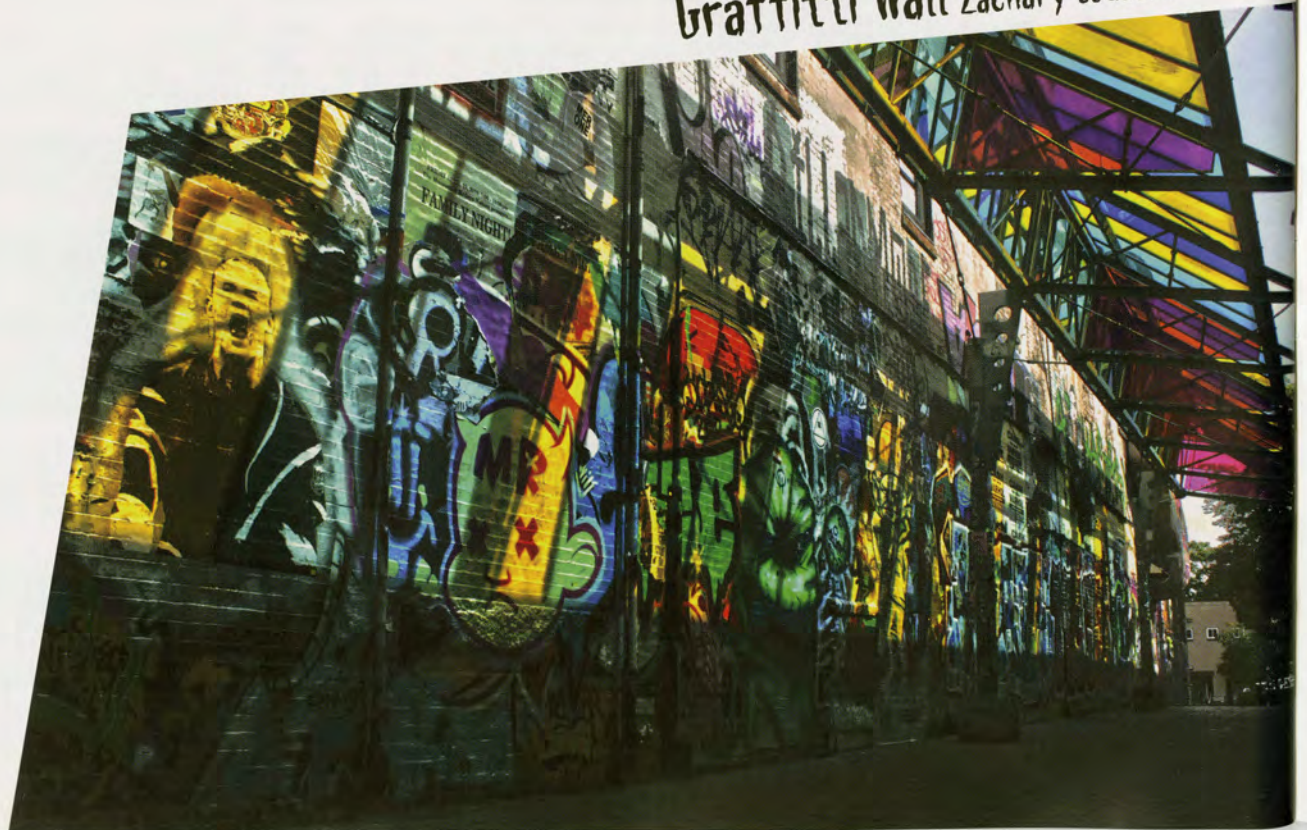
House Full of Outlaws

Matt Turner

The innocent boys of the summer no longer existed. The boys who had once heard the love of a mother's voice, had lived in a world without responsibility, had woken up in a soft bed of luxury, had now entered a hard house of freedom. They were men of the Box. The autonomy arrived controlled and rhythmic, then faster and fiercer as a carpenter's hammer attacks a nail the deeper it enters. Frail walls and cold floors became a home, a playground to the rebels of the residence. They explored their freedom by tearing down their structure. They attacked the walls with guns and knives, they shattered glass in the bowels of the home, they sent machinery into the air, to only watch it smash on the earth. Each day the men of the house shed a layer of innocence. Their raw and sensitive bodies absorbed the continuous sting the world has to offer. A metamorphosis had occurred in the white, brick cocoon. Entering as boys, they were stripped of their naïve past, beaten with life, wrestling with freedom. They exited fatigued, wounded, torn from the inside out, and more alive than ever before.

Made in Magrathea Evan Norris

Graffiti Wall Zachary Souliere



Setting Fire To The Past Kaleigh Somers

I didn't know the fire was going to escalate that fast. Or that the school Police Officer would take note, calling in reinforcements. You know, like legal guardians and that shit. I told Jenny that I knew what I was doing. Well I didn't say that, but my confident behavior suggested as much, throwing my hair back out of my face and motioning for her to give me the lighter.

"Piece of cake," I said, wiggling my fingers until she handed it over.

"Whatever you say." She clung to my side, an arm around my waist, and for the first time in months I had to consciously focus on swallowing, breathing, maintaining my composure.

I lit the top of a stack of papers, watching as the whole trashcan caught fire in one fell swoop. The smoke rose up in the air and we both jumped backwards, away from the hot air that burned our cheeks.

Her hands were still on my waist, as if that alone might shield her from the contained blast we'd created outside the school in the parking lot on a Friday afternoon, just moments into the start of summer vacation.

I knew I needed to set the record straight early, letting her know what I wanted from her, from the whole world. I wanted to be heard. And this time, I wanted her to know I hated going to class, writing papers, all of it. Never again would I let the monotony of high school assignments and nasally-voiced teachers get to me. Never again would I have to worry about upholding my reputation as calm, cool, collected, and in charge.

The scene should have set the tone for the summer ahead of me: lots of loud, packed parties, endless moments of unquestioned rebellion, and not a single thought about responsibility.

But when the blue Caravan pulled up in front of the school, the woman driving got out and stormed over to me, her high heels clacking on the sidewalk and leading everyone to look in her direction, I knew the summer would take a much different toll. In the space of just a few seconds, I watched my freedom narrow.

"Markus James," my mother called to me. I tried not to look around as a few people made noises, the same kind they make when you get sent to the principle. "On what planet was this a good idea?"

I didn't answer her, but I did notice the way Jenny stepped away from me just a smidge, as if maybe she would be my mom's next target.

"You are ruining your future," she continued, full force. "Just ruining it." She kicked at the loose gravel on the pavement for emphasis. "Get over to that car. Now." She pointed and I knew better than to disobey.



In the Stars Kelsey Brown

I don't know
if I've ever been one
to really believe
in superstitions or signs.
I've kept my left hand ring finger
naked
ever since I found out
it was bad luck
to do otherwise.
But the first two guys *I knew*
I'd marry, I now happen to have no doubt
are the world's two most eligible
bastards.

My high school sweetheart
made a 14 hour road trip to see me...
after I broke up with him.

My redshirt freshman, #15
catapulted my rain boots
down my quiet street
when I said we should just be friends.

But you...
the night you asked me out,
a star—
one as bright as my smile
the first time I held your hand—
shot through the sky,
piercing the midnight black.

... No, seriously.

I don't know
if I've ever been one
to really believe
in superstitions or signs.

But a shooting star...
that's got to mean something.



Edge Evan Norris



Cry My Darling Caryn Adams

Cry my darling, cry and sleep well.
Your pillow can take it, rebel.
Shed thoughts of him in tears you weep.
Let no one tell which you should keep.
Live to bid this dream its farewell.

For fear of flout stay in your shell.
Keep to this, your own nook of hell.
Careful, let no one hear your deep
Cry my darling.

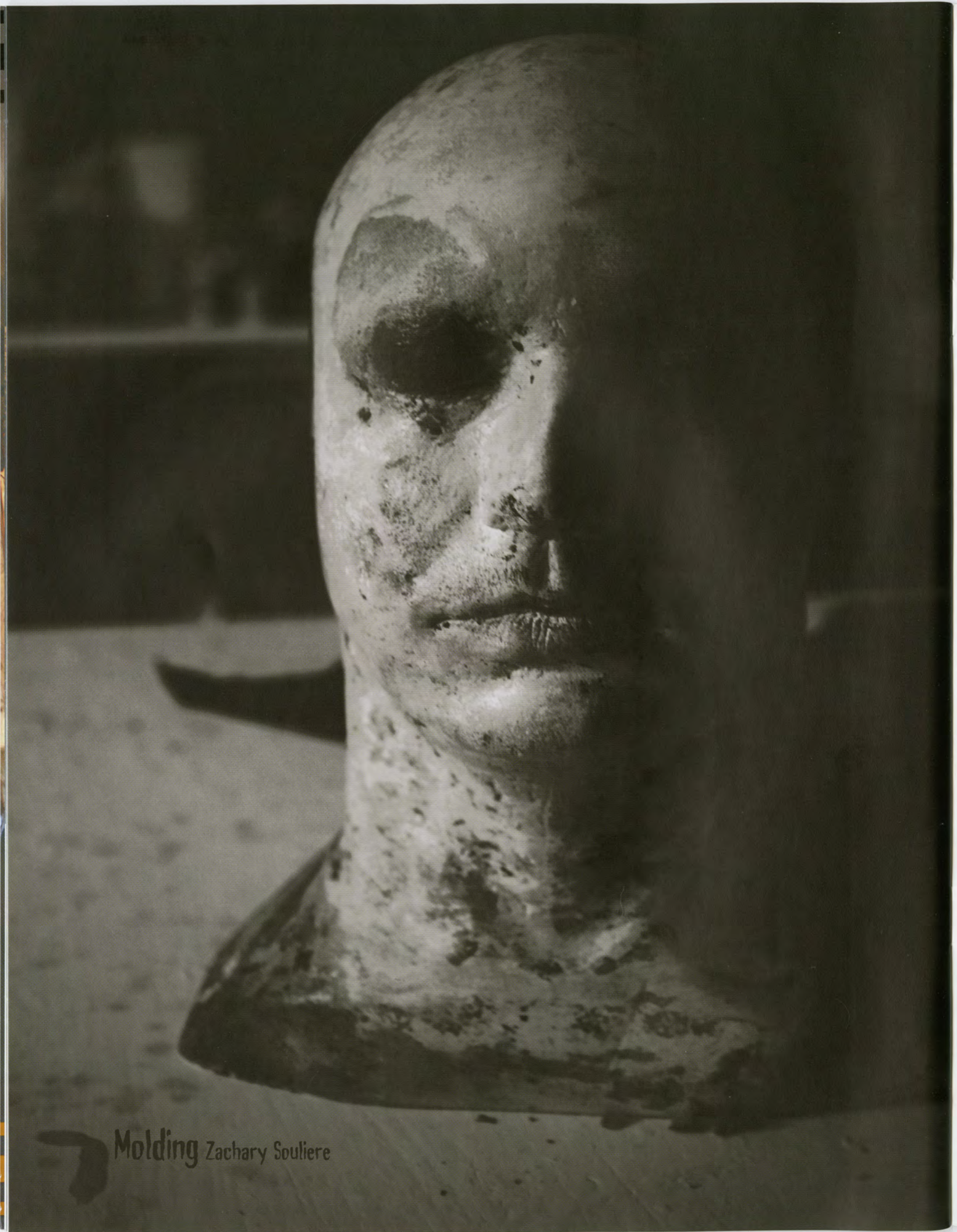
Now he lives within his choice cell.
Don't run to him like maid to bell.
Hold tight your heart for 'tisn't cheap.
Don't settle, set your standards steep.
Take your advice my sweet, young belle:
Cry my darling.



By Any Other Name Kate Anderson

Decay Zachary Souliere





Molding Zachary Souliere

Feral Katherine Porzel

My dolls head is twisted
Stamped on by your sneakers
Its face lacks its former luster.
Careful, don't look too close.
It could just take your tongue.

I am not what I may seem.

I leave those behind who do not see
And every time, I regret;
Regret the choice I changed
The other you chose.
Regret what you stole.

This is not my fault.

You forget you already took it
Three years past--
I'm a soulless-eyed creature now
Empty behind these eyes
You won't find what you're looking for
here.

Your embrace just
Sucks me dry.

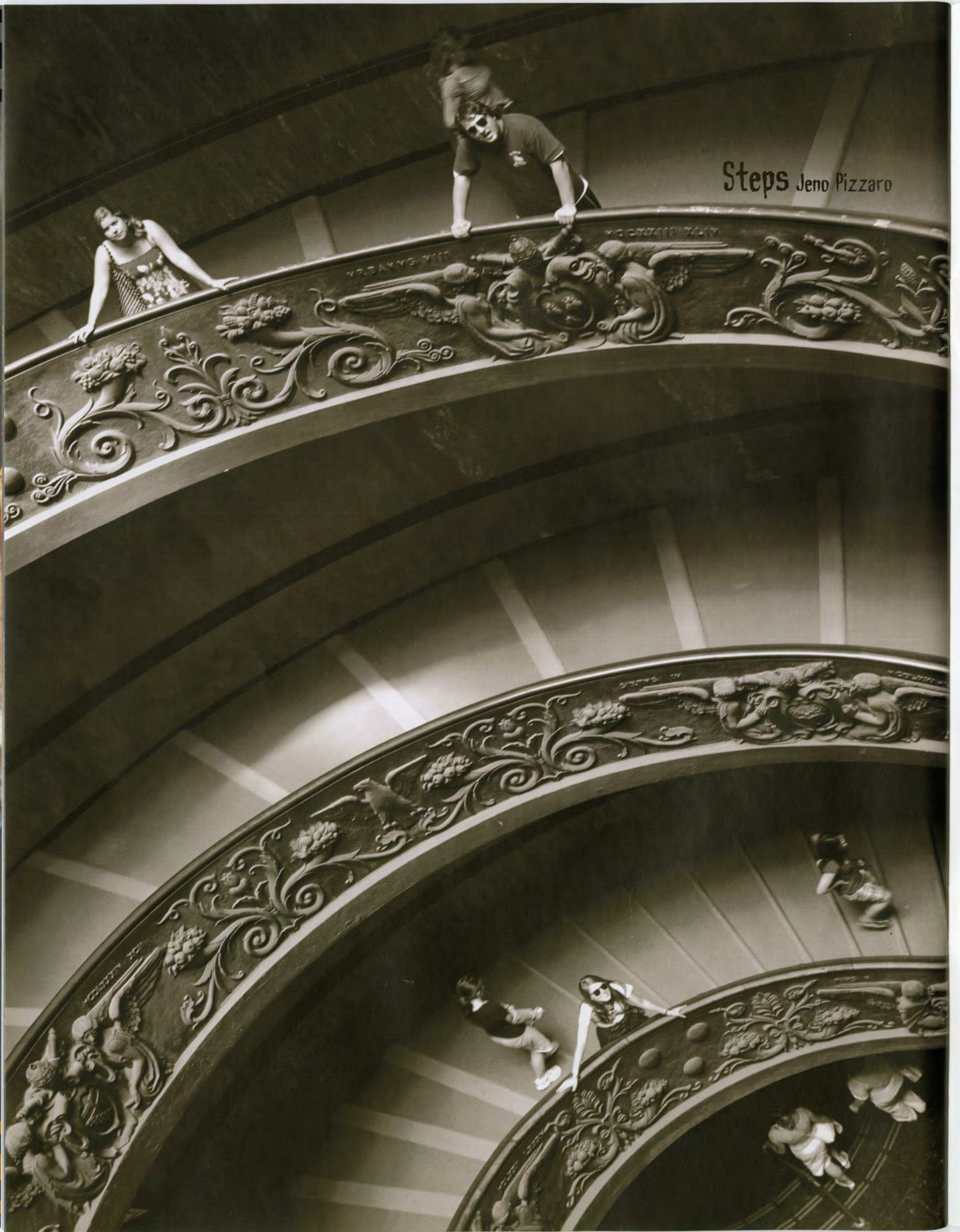
Across the way I hear voices whisper
They watch me cover the holes in my skin.
They know. You don't care.
Let them stare
Please, look at me in all my glory
Watch the holes, the scars, the teeth
marks
Vanish!
Watch the plastic smiles of the first act.
I'm a one-girl play, meant to astonish
But please—you beg,
I swear, it's for the children.
It's useless trying to persuade you
Useless to think against it,

To try.

I lick the salt from my wounds
And smile;
You can't expect it.
Won't conceive it.
I am not the doll.
Soon you'll be bloodless
And I'll be smiling.



Steps Jenő Pizzaro



The Ceremony Jessica Weaver

The old woman bows her head.
Wisps of thick black hair fall onto her face,
tracing the lines of age etched in her skin.
The milky white lilies arranged in
perfect rows behind her bow as well,
paying their respects to the fallen before
them.

The old woman clasps her wrinkled hands,
her fingers interwoven like spindly spiders'
legs.
She begins to say the prayer.

A young mother, her tiny infant
bound tightly to her back
watches.

Her eyes well up with tears, but
not one drop falls.
Her child coos and fusses,
tugging at his mother's hair.

Grandfather traces an invisible
cross on his chest, then kneels.
The dry, brown grass rustles,
crushed under his knobby knees.
He closes his eyes and slowly murmurs
his own prayer.

A little girl, hair tied in two long braids
running down her back like parallel rivers,
leans against her mother, who
wraps her arm around her daughter's thin
frame,
pulling her close.

The old woman finishes the prayer.
Looks around at the mourners and sees
Tears, fear, confessions,
Memories, forgiveness, redemption,
Regret.

"Ashes to ashes."

Her voice, now hoarse and weathered by years
reciting the ancient ceremony, manages to yet
again
speak the final words.

"Dust to dust."



This issue of Gardy Loo is dedicated to:

Emily Smallman

BELOVED FRIEND, IF ONLY LIFE WAS AS STEADFAST AS THE STARS.
YOU ALWAYS WERE AND ALWAYS ARE IN OUR HEARTS.

I'm riding a boulevard
littered with cars driven
by faceless strangers
who blare horns and
offer curses of rage
and impatience.
Yet I'm in bliss:
watching the trees
shrink behind me
while my calloused hands
sleep at the wheel--
Nail-bitten fingers
lazily woven around it.
The salty ocean air
kisses my face
as I exhaust
attempted duets
with the car radio
for those faceless strangers
to audience when
I slow to stop for
the glowing red lights.

"Pollutant"

-Emily Smallman

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Send submissions to JMUGardyLoo@gmail.com. With your submission include your name, phone number or email, and a list of the works submitted with clearly labeled titles.



W on
make your soul
damned
Weeds grow on your
grave
your grave your
soul is damned
Weeds grow
on your grave
your soul is damned



eds grow on
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soul is damned

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