

2017

## Parnassus 2017

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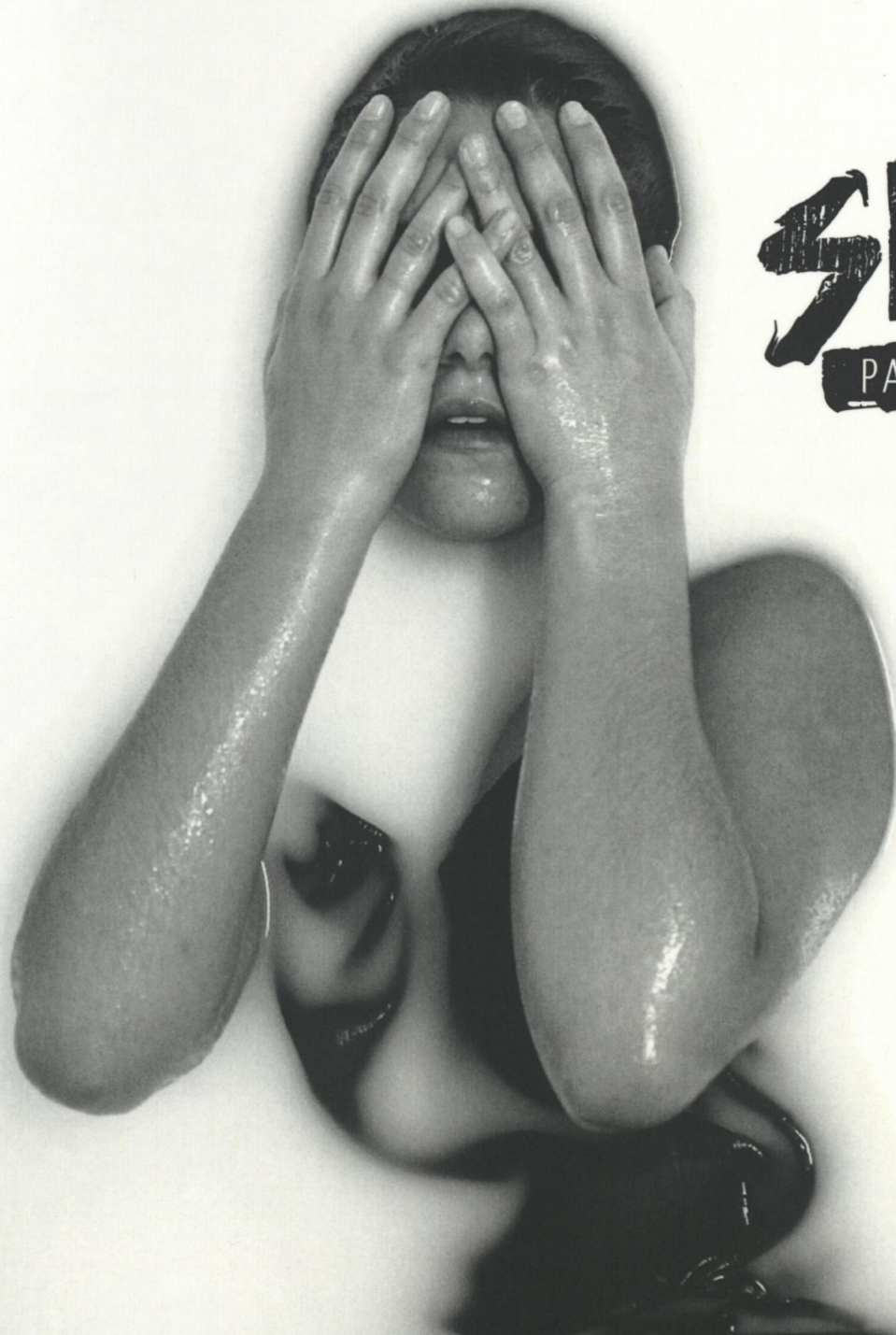
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# SKIN

PARNASSUS\_2017





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Parnassus seeks to document truth  
and beauty by publishing our  
community's diverse creative work.

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# Paranssus 2017 Staff

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Editor-in-Chief • Malaina Yoder

Staff • Mark Burnett  
Kelli Jean Collins  
Hillary Jo Foreman  
Camy Hanna  
Sarah Holmes  
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Molly McNamara  
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# Letter From the Editor

Malaina Yoder

---

The intensity of the word “skin” comes in its paradoxes. Clear and scarred, smooth and rough. All of humanity is covered by skin yet individual color is divisive. Skin provides a barrier between the body and the world but in its exposure is intensely vulnerable. Skin is self-healing but easily pierced. Going skin deep implies a shallowness if we’re working from the outside, in. But from the inside out, stepping out of our skin is a celebration of exposing that which is truest to our souls—the music that plays beneath our surface.

The submitted art revealed this music. Each unveiled piece speaking of the hesitant then celebratory dance between great pain and great joy. Thank you, fellow students, for the courage to be vulnerable. Parnassus 2017 wouldn’t be possible without this bravery.

It was my joy to work with a team of people committed to art and to story. They treasured the work of the artists who gave us glimpses of the inside of this campus. Thank you for meetings containing thought-provoking conversations and laughter.

One of my biggest privileges during my college experience has been the opportunity to interact with our advisor, Dr. Housholder. Thank you for your care for words and insight about art. You have continually been a comfort and an encouragement.

Finally, I want to thank you, reader, for engaging in our art. It’s intensely vulnerable to create anything, but it’s also vulnerable to enter into the space opened by an artist. As we do so together, I hope that the metaphor of skin becomes something that draws us into our humanity: a universal map of our shared story.

Malaina Yoder  
Editor-in-Chief



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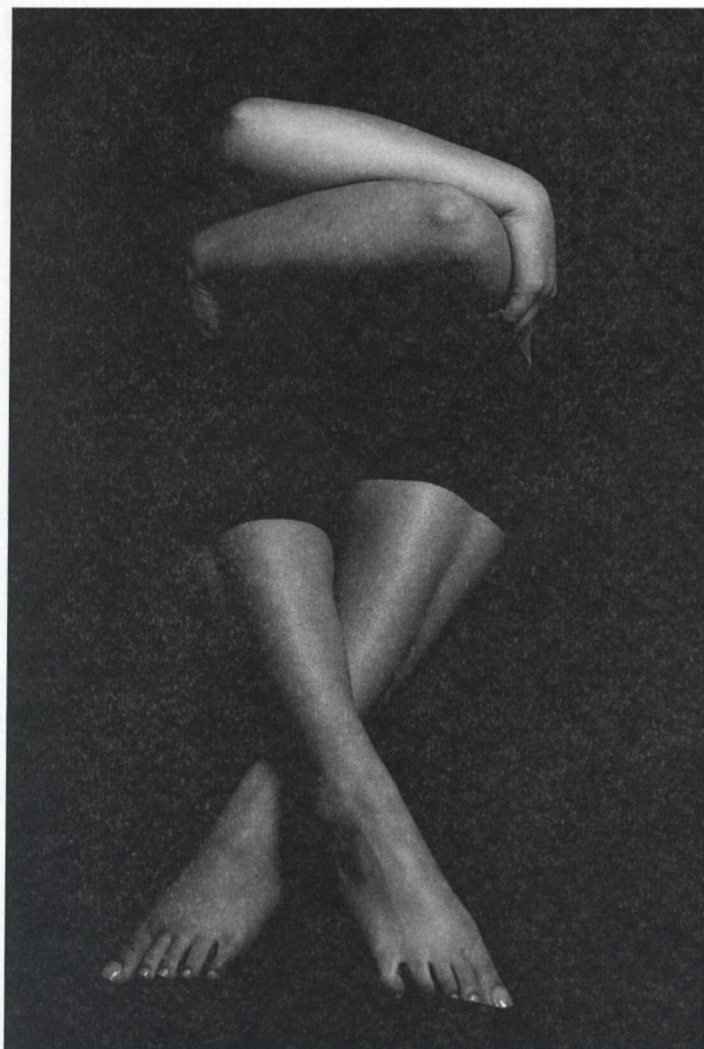
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Wary  
Katie Mercer

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## Demanding Elegance

Teagan Studebaker

---

# Misinterpreting the Body

Hillary Jo Foreman | 2nd Place Poetry

---

1.

You knit me.  
Two hands—  
small, scarred,  
two legs—  
shapely, opposable,  
and the important parts—  
    the curious,  
    the desired,  
    the feminine.

2.

I am thirteen: a girl,  
until the first crimson droplets  
stain the interior of my  
razor-burned thighs.

Isn't my identity in the blood?  
    "You're a woman now,"  
my mother tells me.  
    I have no idea how.

3.

I'm learning.  
After two years of high school, I know  
sex is a science  
of voice-activated motions.  
They say the words;  
    I undress, arch, ahh—



a chemical reaction, transaction;  
a body for

4.

A ring strangles my weak finger.  
My legs yawn open.

It's supposed to be different,  
but he still holds the breast,  
not the hand.

Am I a woman now?

5.

I learn from example.  
You gave your body for me;  
I give mine to the man in my bed



# The Upside Down

Leslie Clouse

---

# Intoxicated

Katie Vogel

---

Sidewalks are not what they seem  
when the dike fills to an ocean and flat  
feet become buoys:

Worms stretch an inch, or a mile,  
guess it depends who's measuring:  
brave invertebrates, organic ambition –

Under our eyes,  
a morsel of earthy nutrients.  
Maybe that's what we need. Maybe

exhaustion seeps from straight fed oxygen,  
sweating our salty dreams,  
when pushing through dirt

is a greater achievement of will.  
Floods collapse our cemented walls: the worm rises.  
*You* look like a dream.



# In the Land of Unfinished Poems

Matthew Storrer

---

In the Land of Unfinished Poems,  
under the judging, glaring sun,  
I climbed a dry and des'late hill  
and found a poem I'd once begun.

She sat beneath a bone-white tree  
with questions burning in her eyes;  
I could not give a good answer  
to why I left her there to die.

Here we sat awhile, side by side,  
in silence I ponder'd my choice,  
and all the time she spoke no words  
for I had given her no voice.

# Marks

Sarah Holmes | Prose: Fiction

---

The girl on the television is screaming and crying. She is blubbing and heaving and hiccupping in a tight baby-pink skirt suit, the firmly hairsprayed mass atop her head bobbing and swaying with her sobs. She waves a wadded Kleenex at the man beside her—red-faced and sweating heavily in his suit, tight as a sausage casing—and shouts, “He *knew*! The whole time, he *knew* and he never *told* me!”

The host presses his manicured eyebrows into a sympathetic slant, shaking his head in the perfect picture of outraged disbelief.

“How long has that been there?”

The host’s immaculately coiffed hair and color-coordinated pocket square fade as I register your outstretched hand, pointing to the side chair.

“What?”

“*That*. On the floor. That stain.”

We are eating dinner in the living room, on the couch, as usual, and your accusatory finger hovers above your plate of beef stroganoff and canned green beans. I squint at the carpet.

There is a light-brown stain next to the left front leg of the side chair. I squint harder, and it resolves itself vaguely into the shape of a rabbit.

“Mmmm...” I say.

“So?”

“Hmmm?” I am now thinking about rabbits.

“What’s it from?” you ask.

“I don’t know.”

Your eyebrows lift. “Well, I sure didn’t do it, so it must have been you, right?”

“Nope. I never even sit in that chair.”

“So we—what—have a ghost?” You stab at your gravy-soaked noodles.

“I guess so.”

“Let’s see if we can’t get it out, okay?”

I understand your use of “we” perfectly. I imagine you in your classroom, clapping your hands together briskly, smiling: “Now we’re going to take a nap, okay?”

“Yeah...” I say.

On the screen the perspiring man is talking quietly to the host’s shining wingtips. “No, of



course that wasn't my intention...I never wanted to hurt her, I never meant..."

The cupboard under the sink looks like some kind of troll's den—something green and foamy has spilled in the back and a third of the bottles are crusted into it. Yellowing dust rags sit crumpled in untidy piles, and a small community of spiders has taken up residence in the left corner.

I grab the stain remover and a lone rubber glove, tearing off a handful of paper towels on my way out of the kitchen.

I flick on the light and stare down the rabbit. I can't think what would have made a stain this color—it's too light to be coffee, unless it was drowned in creamer, but we both take it black and haven't had any guests in ages.

I kneel down and put on the glove. I'm trying to remember the last time anyone even sat in this chair. New Year's? I think Barry or Tom, maybe...but we weren't eating or drinking anything this color, and I know one of us would have noticed it since then—it's been months.

The rabbit lies soft and brown under my hands as I spray it with cleaner, rubbing white foam into its fur. I sit back on my heels and watch the bubbles seep into the stain, now fading to butterscotch. I soak up the moisture with the paper towels. But the rabbit, while lighter now, is still there, crouching, looking rather hurt and offended. I feel strangely guilty.

I stand up, staring at the stubborn rabbit. It stares back at me reproachfully.

"Sorry," I whisper.

I gather up the wadded paper towels and slide the side chair over the stain.

You arrive home just as I'm getting ready to leave.

"Why are you still here?" You've forgotten.

"I'm swapping shifts with Jenny this weekend, remember? She's going to Tucson for her nephew's wedding."

"Mmm..." Your keys land loudly in the tray, your bag hitting the floor with a hard thump.

I shrug into my jacket and sit to lace my boots. "By the way, I took care of that stain. All gone." If you are convinced it is gone, it will never occur to you that it might not be—that you might be incorrect.

“Oh, great. Thanks.” You shuffle toward the kitchen for your customary post-work apple-sliced-into-eight-perfectly-equal-slices and creamy-only-ever-creamy peanut butter. “Have a good shift.”

“Thanks. See you later.” I shut the door softly, gentle as a thief.

You won’t notice the chair has moved.

Tonight’s girl tucks her smooth dark hair behind her ear, legs crossed confidently in a dark-gray power suit.

“Of course, John. That was always our hope for the Foundation, and we feel that this year, with our new funding, we’ll finally be able to make it happen.”

There is no sweating man beside her, only a streamlined black briefcase.

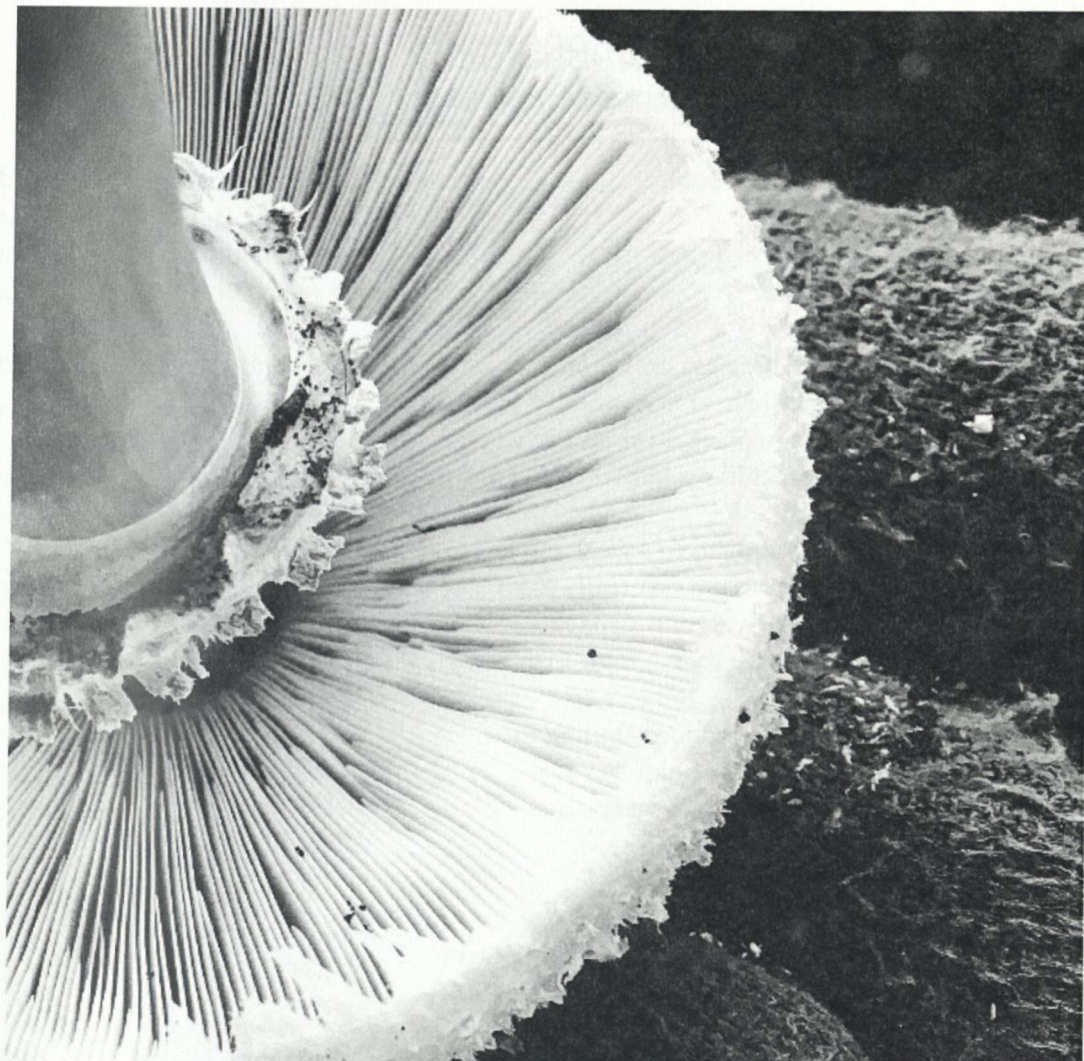
The host—John—leans toward her, hands clasped on his knee, crossed over the other in an—unconscious?—mirroring of the woman’s stance. Today he is wearing orange argyle socks.

I peer over at you. You are eating taco salad and refried beans, placid, engrossed in to-night’s spiel.

I glance at the side chair, imagining the unseen rabbit curled beneath it. What would you have done to it if you knew it was there? How great would your hostility be toward this harmless thing taking refuge in your home? I know you would never allow such insurrection as its continued existence, but I feel a strange happiness knowing that this small and innocent fault will stay with us, sleeping in dark and quiet and peace.

“Well, John, that’s a good question. I’d have to say that the idea really was with me my whole life. I *always* knew I wanted to do something like this, *always*...”





# Victim

Jaylin Gadel

---

# Homecoming

Katie Vogel

---

My legs are rattling, nervous and cold  
stripped smooth from a razor.  
Majority vote shoved me on a pedestal.  
A representative of what?

I'm wearing a valentine red strapless dress and  
little sparkling stars crest the hem at my knees  
and it's tight enough to stay in place, to show my waist.  
I'm just past puberty and I feel like a lady.

Saxophone elevator music struggles to squeak out and  
someone is reading things about me that really say  
absolutely nothing about me. Everyone claps.  
I thought a name was just a shell to live into.

I slip, my friend saves me. He practiced smiling too.  
The student body is watching me or him  
or distracted by someone crunching buttery  
popcorn from a brown paper bag.

Halftime: halfway crossed the sweaty floor.  
The announcer tells my parents to stand – to honor them.  
Dad is not there to claim me, to see my shaven legs shake  
or my dress glimmer or my smile turn plastic.

A single rose wrapped in cellophane replaces him.  
I must let go—walk to the x, shoulders back, stop—the  
short click, click of stilettos reverberates inside my bones.  
Arizona, Minnesota, Illinois?



## Homecoming | Katie Vogel

---

I hear three hundred people, smell them,  
bearing down on the cold-seated bleachers;  
maybe he was there in the crowd,  
but I saw a plane skid across New Mexico's runway.

So here I am representing God knows what.





# Light

Ellie Hershberger

---

# Grief: Part 1

Hillary Jo Foreman | Prose: Fiction

---

The used furniture store on the corner is a vast and crowded maze of tight, snaking aisles. Since few customers pay the store homage on a daily basis, the owners often leave it to buy lunch and run errands. They are absent, chewing, somewhere, on thin hamburgers when a man wanders in. He follows a trail of dust and wood chips through the stacks of furniture like Hansel and Gretel. The air is stale, but he breathes like a meditator.

Mannequin ladies lurk around corners, sporting old-fashioned hats and fur coats. Their arms stretch toward him, and he aches to be held by their long white fingers, but he will not touch them. Instead, he follows the slim path to a vertical fork pointing to attic or basement.<sup>1</sup>

He glances at the attic before jogging down the stairs. The basement is another furniture-lined labyrinth, no different from the main level until he looks up.

Armchairs and old school desks and a wicker couch hang from the naked rafters by crusty rope.

He turns. Several rows of ancient theater seats face the gallery of furniture for sale, as if an invisible audience listens to an invisible old lady tell stories from her childhood or invisible schoolmates recite their grammar lessons or...Kelsey.

He sees her stretched out on the white wicker couch with her purple-painted toes tapping on the arm rest. The man sinks into the first row of theater seats and listens to Kelsey laugh. He imagines he told her a joke, a pun she's heard five times yet still finds funny.

He points at his wife and never takes his eyes from her. He fails to see the four other men, seated sporadically behind him. They all salute with index fingers their own piercing visions of loved ones long deceased. All at once, the men say, "Do you see her?" or "Do you see him?" or "Do you see them?"

The harmonic collision of voices and words sounds like "Do you see harm?" but none of them understand. Instead, they return to the basement the next day and the next. They remain blind of one another—content to commune with ghosts.

---

<sup>1</sup>Since Kelsey disappeared ten years ago, he has had trouble convincing his legs up a set of stairs. Hallucinations of his wife are frequent enough on level ground, but strengthen as he approaches heaven. He does not allow himself to contemplate this fear of altitude.





# Gravity

Teagan Studebaker

---

# en Croix

Megan Herrema | Third Place Poetry

---

They once were pink, these shoes,  
blushing canvas made  
stiff with glue,  
now broken, raw, and worn,  
softened by sweat and stained  
by blood,  
the remnant of my sacrifice.

I dyed them the  
color of my skin.

Nude ribbons laced, I  
roll through my foot,  
and flex,  
and press,  
and pointe.  
My teacher's voice calls out the rhythm,  
sometimes corrections and wisdom too.  
Her cool hand lifts my elbow to the  
proper place, reminding me of when she  
pressed the cold glass bottle of pigment into the  
hollow of my palm.

---

My teacher danced in  
Harlem,  
left her Californian  
home for the district that would  
accept her as an artist



—not many jobs were offered  
to ballerinas with  
skin not  
ballet pink.

She too, dyed her shoes,  
and from beneath her tutu,  
her legs glowed dark and fierce,  
one long line from hip to toe.

One day, they told her that  
her shape was too womanly,  
too buxom.  
Would she sacrifice more  
than family and home,  
submit her body to the knife?  
She refused.  
They did not ask  
men  
to sacrifice their fullness,  
she said.

---

*And stay,*  
My teacher's voice calls me back.  
The combination ends.  
I balance  
flamingo-like,  
then wobble.

*Fight for your rights,*  
she says.

So I pull my core  
together, spine erect and stacked  
on top of hip,  
on top of toe,  
one long line into the floor.

*Lift your cheekbones to the light.*  
I raise my chin,  
tilt my face.

*Present your grace and let them look.*  
Arms outstretched, I offer greeting,  
elbows lifted, palms turned up.

When class ends,  
I curtsy,  
body bowing in respect  
for the wisdom I have learned.  
She curtsies back,  
my ballet rabbi,  
and dismisses class  
with her familiar benediction.

*Be at peace.*



## Modern Parisian

Ruth Orellana

---



# it's easier to leave

Katie Vogel

---

drive far and fast.  
moonroof half-crescent  
swallowing  
sunny air, splashing  
shadows from  
receding pines.  
i look on –  
gravity pulls left,  
right, spinning  
an elegy for  
yesterday.

west to route 2.  
take me anywhere  
there. i need  
the weight  
of an eighty pound  
pack to scramble  
till there's nothing  
left to climb and my  
hands bleed for more.  
i will throw my pick  
to the clouds and catch  
that crag, the one  
spilling with  
tomorrow's honey.  
hazel eyes left  
on the summit.  
sweet cedars, lodges,  
and cottonwoods



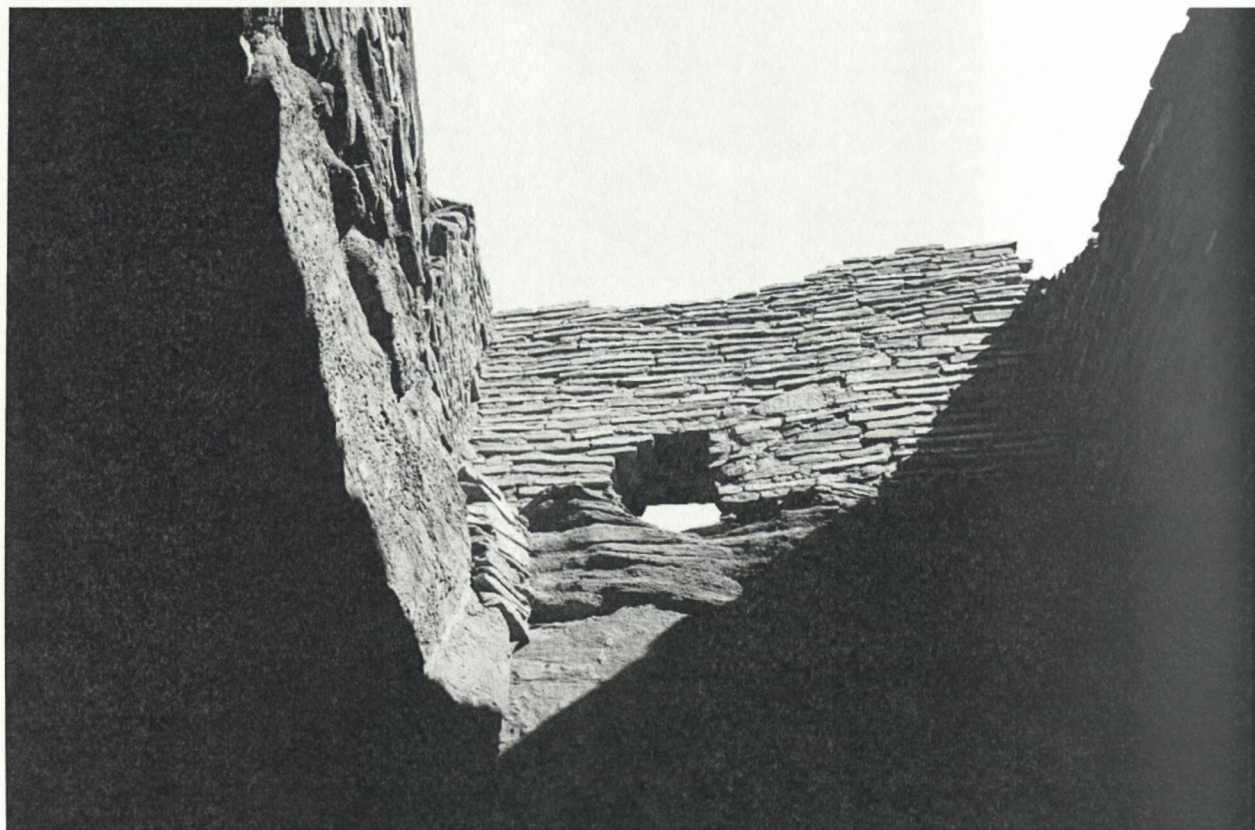
aren't tall enough.  
great valleys of  
my soul fill with  
weightless  
sky and shake  
from a distant  
avalanche.



## 5th Ave

Ruth Orellana

---



## wukoki ruins

Nysha Chen

---



# The Archaeologists

Sarah Holmes

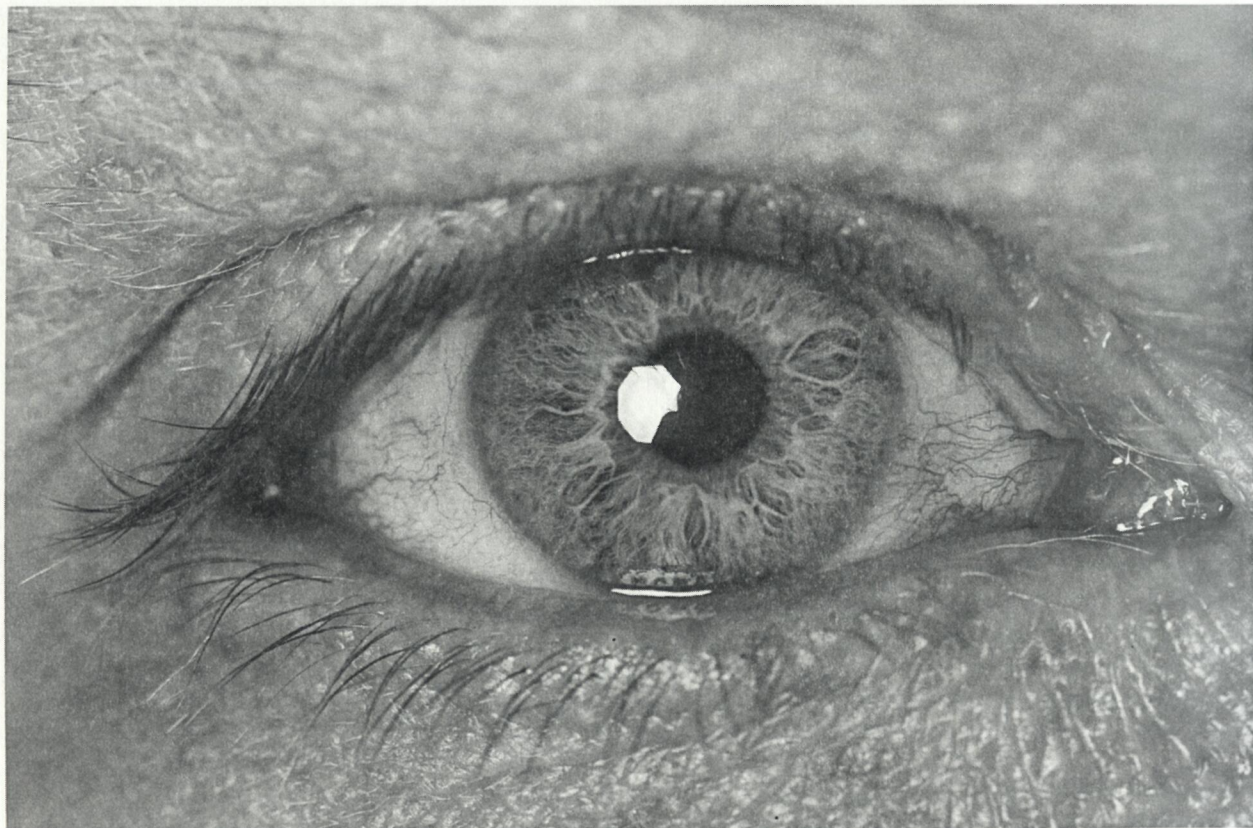
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The heart beats not quite in time,  
The spine not all straight,  
The gaps between the bones and  
The rusted joists of muscles  
All clicking and ticking,  
Gossiping about insufficiencies.

There are bits of lint, lost coins,  
Dry carcasses of forgotten pens  
Clustered in the corners of the brain;  
A low dull ache, constant as the  
Thick hum of a generator in the background,  
Filling all the middle spaces.  
It is heavy as a pulley weight, a foundation  
Stone, a falling cedar tree arriving  
Groundward to crush the breath from some  
Small delicate creature.

Maybe someday the team of  
Hushed archaeologists  
Will excavate the webbed lace  
Of those shattered bones,  
Brushing the ages' dust away gentle as caresses.  
With soft speech and thoughts  
Of dirt-gritted sandwiches later,  
They will kindly stab fine flags  
Into the earth's dead breast,  
And shuffle from the shrine of their crimes  
Laughing quietly at a private joke and  
Making weekend plans.

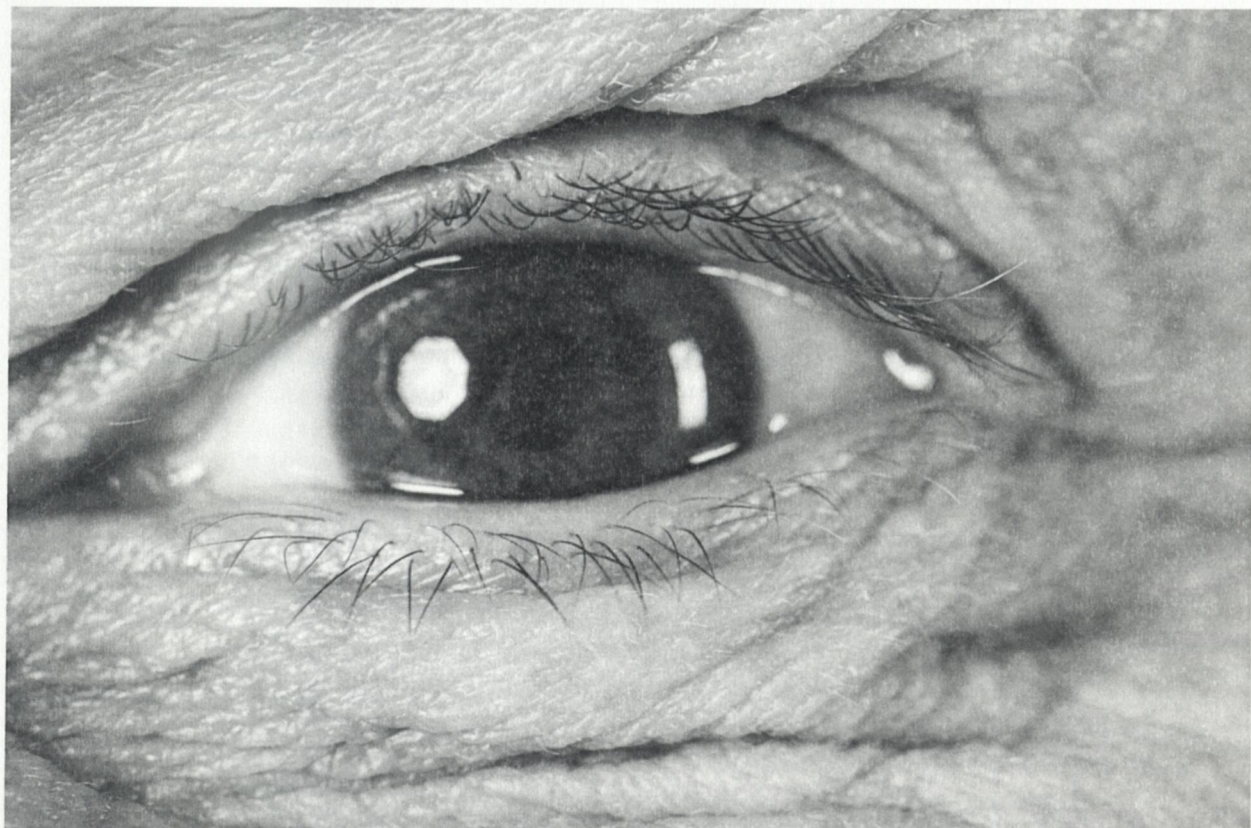




## Webbing

Katie Mercer

---



## Time Folds

Katie Mercer

---



# Unknowable Things

Sarah Holmes | Prose: Fiction

---

When she came downstairs in the morning he was eating fish. How like him, she thought. Fish for breakfast.

The kitchen was white and pale yellow and filled with clean, early-morning light. He almost matched the kitchen himself, his fine, pale hair sticking out like—in her mind’s eye—some anemic undersea growth. He wore a faded yellow t-shirt and sat at the little round table by the window, looking even more washed-out than usual in the strong light. He was eating baked fish and doing the crossword.

He looked up when she came in, but she went for the coffeemaker and he looked back down without saying anything. She felt like a giant, her every movement harsh and clattering in the thin silence. She could hear his fork scraping at the last of the fish and the rustle of the newspaper as he folded it up, crossword only half done.

Her skin prickled. He would never finish the crosswords. She had asked him once why he always started them then left them half-finished.

“I do it till it’s not fun anymore,” he’d said.

She had suggested that there were crossword dictionaries if he had trouble with some of the words, but he’d shaken his head.

“That’d kind of defeat the whole purpose, you know.”

She didn’t know. She believed in finishing what you started; either that or just leave it alone altogether, let someone else do it. Why start something in the first place if you knew you weren’t going to finish it?

She poured her coffee, standing for a few seconds and watching him read some blurb on the back page of the paper. There was nowhere else to sit in the kitchen so she went over and sat down in the other chair. He looked up at her again.

“Good morning.”

“Morning.”

She leaned down and fished the local news out from the pile of discarded pages by his chair.

“Want some breakfast?”

She looked up at him from under her eyebrows. “Fish is not breakfast.”

“What?” His laugh came out through his nose in a quick huff of air. “Sure it is, I mean, in



England they do it all the time. Very proper over there.”

She wasn’t looking at him.

“Come on, it doesn’t matter what time of day you eat something.”

She was pretending to read an article on the second page, but she was looking at the light on his fork and glass and on their hands. His were square with long fingers and prominent knuckles, all the intricate tendons visible under the skin.

His left hand moved; now he was fussing with his ear. He did that a lot, she thought. It had just started to irritate her when he pushed his chair back and gathered his dishes.

While he washed them she gave up pretending to read the paper and watched his shoulder blades moving beneath his shirt. For some reason he always seemed to carry around an extra kind of inverse gravity—his shirt hems and sleeves and his hands when they hung slack looked almost as if they were reaching for the floor. It gave the impression of a perpetual droopy tiredness, even though he usually stood very straight.

She herself had to make a constant, conscious effort to keep good posture, and generally looked stiff. Most of the time she seemed like she was walking on a tightrope.

He rinsed the last dish and rested it in the drying rack, his movements careful and deliberate. He wiped his hands on his shirt and headed up the stairs.

She hated him, she decided.

She could remember how she had admired him when they first met—the way he encountered things with such a comfortable straightforwardness; the ease with which he seemed to inhabit his own body. He wasn’t particularly reserved. But no matter how much time they spent together she felt he was still a foreign territory. She couldn’t work him out.

She knew herself, she thought. Type A. Driven, determined, detail-oriented. Given a situation, it was easy to predict what she would do, and she prided herself on being consistent. It meant she knew herself.

He wasn’t so predictable. But she couldn’t say he didn’t know who he was.

She just wished she could know, too.

---

You meet them and there’s an aura around their head like the holy Virgin Mary. Maybe they’re an uncle, an aunt, a friend of a friend, a cute barista. They are oh so intelligent, oh so

funny. They live with that inexpressible flair, that unattainable *je ne sais quoi* that looks all your insecurities straight in the eye. They walk with purpose and a long stride; they walk slowly and observe the world; they move with the rhythms of a satisfied mind. You admire them, of course.

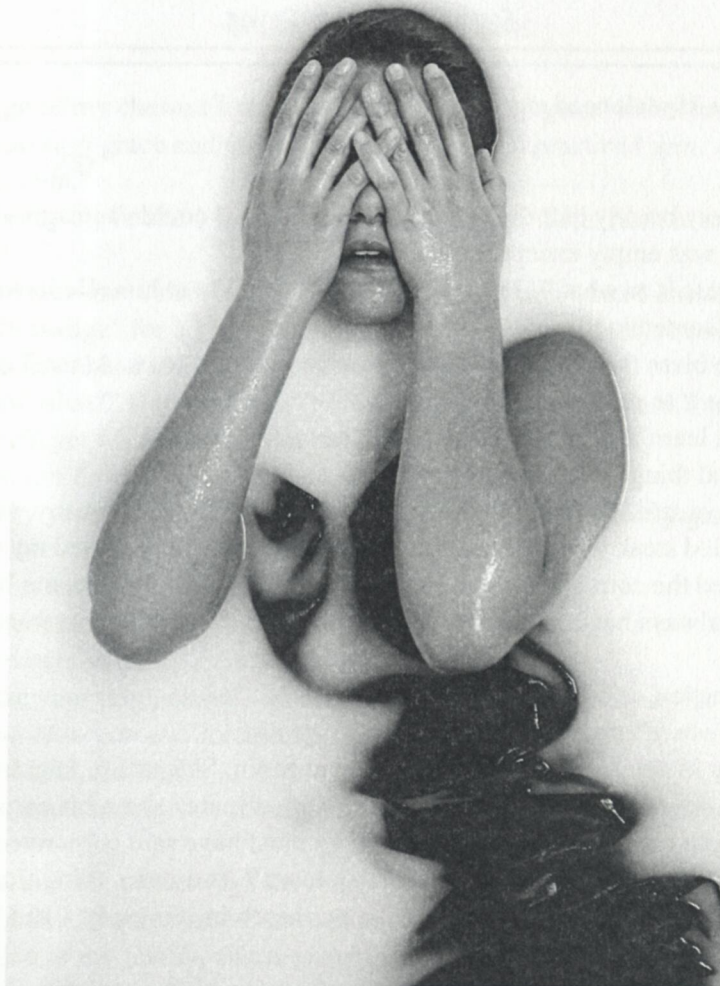
You want to know them, you want to love them, you want to be them, they are altogether a superior kind of individual.

You discover that this is a terrible idea and it wreaks havoc on your state of mind. You find that you do not know them, you cannot know them, they will not know you, nobody will know anybody and you do not know yourself.

This is how you know your fellow people: you are the solitary dweller of a planet and you send your dying metal probes to test the dirt of other worlds.

This is how you know yourself: you are a small child trying to see his own face by crossing his eyes.





## Milk Bath

Leslie Clouse

---



# Tuesday Dinner

Sarah Davis | Prose: Fiction

---

"Alright, enjoy. If y'all need anything else let me know."

I smiled at her.

"Thank you."

She walked away briskly like the significant people do. I couldn't imagine her being busy though—the diner was empty except for us.

"You gonna bless it or what," Dad asked. I looked blankly at him. He looked back not as blank, eyes full of something. I said okay.

"Christ, please bless this food. And thank you for giving it to us. Amen."

*God didn't give it to us though, Mandy did.*

"What did you learn at school today, Lil?" Mom asked weakly.

"Oh just normal things. We did some midterm review."

That was always safe. Review. It gave him an answer without too many words.

My chicken fried steak was drowning in white, speckled gravy. I used my spoon to push some off. It touched the corn pile, which bothered me, but I decided to come back to it.

"Why do you always have to do shit like that? Why can't you just eat what's put in front of you."

It wasn't a question, and I didn't answer.

*I wish Mandy would come back. I need something else.*

"Richard came in again today," he said, aimed at Mom. She sat up, feigning interest. "I tell you what, that kid never shuts up. He talked for twenty minutes about his corporate job in his corporate building in his big corporate city. Hell, he must have said corporate fifty times. I'll tell ya what's corporate, getting shit done. And he doesn't do a damn thing. Just comes in and talks our ears off until we can't stand it and take our lunch breaks early. I had lunch at 10:15 today just to get away from the guy."

He shoveled his chicken fried steak in quicker, proving his starvation to us. He continued to talk, mouth full.

"I should have got that promotion. You know David won't even look at me? He knows."

He rambled on. I wished for Mandy. Then like magic, she appeared behind us.

"Can I get you a refill, Hun?"

*I'd love a refill. I'd actually love something new altogether.*

My teeth let go of my chewed straw and I handed her my glass with a smile. She poured more water with an easy grace and gave it back to me with a practiced grin.

“There ya go, Hun.”

She breezed away again and I wondered what it was like there, back in that fun kitchen she always hurried to.

Mom stared at me—my straw—then back at me. Dad hated when I chewed my straw. He said it was “nearly savage” for a girl to mangle something so carelessly. I covered my straw with my hand and gave her a knowing glance.

“But you know what?” Dad rambled. “Screw it all. To hell with them. I’m not even mad anymore. David will get what’s coming to him, that’s for damn sure.”

I sucked my water down.

“Jesus, Lil, why you gotta eat your straw when you’ve got a perfectly good fried steak in front of you.”

He reached over and grabbed my steak, tossing it on his plate.

“There. Let me take it off your hands. Enjoy your damn straw.”

Mom looked down, vacant.

“You folks take your time, okay?” Mandy sang, placing the check on our table.

*She must know. How can she not know?*

“Thank you,” I said, smiling.

Dad used two hands to wipe his mouth with his napkin; then reached over for the check to assess the damage.

He always did this. He was always the one who suggested we go out for dinner. I used to try and say no, and that I could make dinner at home. But then we’d get in big fights—him saying I’m embarrassed of my family, and me saying no I’m not but we can save money this way, and him saying I don’t know a damn thing about money and to shut my mouth, we’re going. And then mom would lift herself off the couch, hold her head and ask for her medicine. Her migraines were as eternal as her passivity.

So then we’d go, and after dinner we’d get the check and he’d complain about the bill being too high and how we should be more grateful for the way he treats us.

“Damn, that’s a lot of money for a shitty diner,” he said predictably, looking over the



check.

He even said that when we were in New York City visiting my brother Damian. We went to this fancy seafood place called Estiatorio Milos on West 55th street, downtown. Damian was paying for everything because of a gift certificate he got from his company.

Dad was visibly impressed with the restaurant, but still reached for the check and still yelled about the place being a shitty diner. And we might have gotten kicked out if it wasn't for mom, whose migraine was apparently full blown at that point.

She asked dad to take her to the car to get her medicine, and when they came back—to our dimly lit, private table with linen everything and silver china—he had forgotten about what a shitty diner it was.

Damian is patient and got away. I'd like to think I'm as patient as him and one day I'll make it to a big city too, and work for a nice company that gives me gift certificates. He calls every once in a while and asks me how I am, but he doesn't ask it like strangers do. He talks in this kind, serious way that lets me know he cares about me. He also winks at me a lot across dinner tables and tense living rooms. He knows what it's like and I appreciate him. But I think a piece of me is still angry—that he cares, but not enough to stay.

"But I tell ya what. I'll treat you guys," Dad said, so generously.

He reached into his back pocket, finding his wallet.

"I sure do take good care of you, don't I?" he said, taking some cash out and sticking it with our check, inside the little black book.

I carefully lined the book up with the edge of the table, wishing for Mandy to see it.

*Look, we're paying like normal.*

"Well, don't I?" he yelled.

"Yes, honey," Mom tried. "Thank you for the dinner."

Dad muttered something.

There was a lull. He mulled over his benevolence, she held her head, and I scanned for Mandy. I was out of water, but I drank the ice. The cubes melted with time, so I took little sips every few minutes like a reward.

"Alrighty, I'll be right back with this," Mandy said, swooping in like an angel to take our little book.



“Actually it’s all set,” Dad said, not looking up.

“Oh, okay great! Thank you, you folks have a good night then,” Mandy smiled at me.

*Maybe she wasn’t listening. Maybe she really doesn’t think anything.*

At this last hope I said “Thank you, you too.”

She waltzed away with the black book, back to her haven kitchen.

“Let’s get the hell out of this place,” Dad said.

We slid out of the booth, and I wriggled into my old, purple coat. Dad put his hands on Mom’s shoulders and led her to the door like one of those dollies you use to move big boxes.

The door chimed as it opened, they went out, and I looked back again.

Mandy caught my eye, gave a little smile, and I felt it immediately.

*She knows.*

I smiled back at her and turned to go out, numb to the cold air and embarrassment. I tried not to be ashamed like Dad always says I am. I tried not to envy. I tried not to think about Mandy and I tried not to hate her.

We crammed into the front seat of our pickup truck. He turned on the radio and started singing and mom laughed and I was supposed to laugh then too, so I did.

The whole drive home he gnawed on a toothpick, one hand on the wheel.

And it seemed nearly savage to me, to mangle something so carelessly.



## Outstretched Adequacy

Teagan Studebaker

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# Where Is Your God

Elizabeth Vandegriff | First Place Prose: Fiction

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“Come on, Annie!”

Claire runs as fast as her 8-year-old legs will carry her, skipping to a halt every so often to check on the smaller girl behind her. Why can’t her younger sister just *keep up*?

“Wait for me!” Annie yells in frustration, her small feet pattering up the wooded path.

Claire rolls her eyes and takes off even faster, despite Annie’s protests. She reaches the rock in no time and she shouts, the woods echoing with her triumph. She squints through the bright Wyoming sun up to the top of the rock, towering almost to the tops of the trees. Annie appears around a corner, looking unhappy and out of breath.

“I said wait, Claire! Mom said to wait!”

“I did,” Claire responds primly. “I didn’t climb it yet. Come on, let’s go.” One bare foot steps onto the perfect crevice in the rock, and Claire grabs onto the rough stone above her. Once she has found her way onto the first ledge, Annie starts, stretching further to compensate for her size. Claire dances around on the ledge until her sister is up, then she keeps climbing. Her feet navigate the familiar dips in the rock and it only takes her a minute to get to the top. She swings over, jumps to her feet, and hollers into the treetops.

“Wooo! King of the mountain!”

“Claire, help me up!” Annie’s hand waves up from the side and Claire kneels down to pull her over the ledge.

Now Annie is smiling and laughing along with her sister, basking in the powerful feeling of being on top of the world.

Suddenly Claire stops, struck with an idea. “Let’s play hide-and-seek!”

Annie claps her hands. “I wanna hide!”

“Fine, you can hide first.” Claire sits down and covers her eyes. “One, two, three...”

Annie takes off running.

“...seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty! Ready or not, here I come!” Claire jumps up, heading for the nook that Annie chooses every time it’s her turn to hide. But when Claire peeks around the side, she finds the hiding spot empty.

“Annie, where are you?” Claire can’t hear her sister anywhere, and she turns in circles, thinking of where Annie might hide. A glint of golden hair catches her eye, and she glances over and sees her sister face down on the ledge below.



“Hey, how’d you get down there?” Claire swings over the ledge and climbs down next to her sister.

Annie doesn’t move.

Claire shakes her. “Annie, come on, get up! I found you!”

She rolls her motionless sister onto her back, and sees blood dripping from her forehead.

“Annie!”

#### 4 Years Later

Claire rolls over in her bed, her tear-soaked face contorted with grief. She grips her blankets in her fist, but it doesn’t suppress the urge to scream. Four years. She thought maybe four years would make it feel better but it doesn’t. She tears the blankets off and jumps out of bed, making her way blindly downstairs. She is sobbing before she even makes it outside. Running up the path, she hears her parents calling after her but she doesn’t care. She can see the rock looming closer as she runs. The rock she hasn’t climbed since that day exactly four years ago. The rock she hates more than anything in the world. The rock that stole a life and showed no remorse.

She stops a few feet away from the rock and screams at it. The forest trembles, and the moon hides from her rage behind a silvery cloud. The cold stone towers over her, unrelenting.

“Give me back my sister!” she shrieks.

As she collapses on the ground, strong arms wrap around her, pulling her close and murmuring soft words. Exhausted, her sobs turn to gasps, and she lets herself be carried away from the source of her pain.

#### Another 4 Years Later

Rain pounds on the window, begging for attention from anyone who will listen. Claire has her headphones on. She hates the sound of rain. Her parents always told her it’s because God is crying and that’s bullshit, she told them. Besides, she hasn’t cried yet, today on the eight-year anniversary, and she doesn’t want any encouragement. She just wants it to go away.

Her music can't hide the flashes of lightning that streak past the window, or the thunder that shakes the house. The power flickers. Eventually it gets too distracting, and she sighs and takes off the headphones. She feels her stomach rumbling and decides to head to the basement to get a snack.

"Mom? Dad?" she calls out as she emerges from her room. No response. Why aren't they home from work?

She starts down the stairs and SPLASH! realizes that they are submerged in water; water that's creeping visibly upwards. She gasps and runs for the phone in the kitchen. Her eyes scan the call log: seven missed calls. She presses the messages button and her mother's panicked voice echoes over the machine.

Between the beats of her heart, she picks up what she's already figured out. It's a flash flood. Her parents are safe, but she's stuck at the house. Before the message even finishes she's dialing her mom's number. She hears a nearby crack and looks out the window. The street is completely flooded; bits and pieces of furniture and housing are flowing past her window, smacking the side of her house as they pass. And then the lights go out and the dial tone is silent, and Claire is alone. She sets the phone back on the receiver.

Glancing back toward the stairs, she can see the water lapping up over the last step. "I need somewhere high, somewhere safe where I can't float away," she says aloud to herself.

The idea comes from nowhere and hits her in the stomach. She wants to vomit, but she knows that would only make it worse. She grabs her dad's rain jacket from the closet and cautiously opens the door. The water rushes in, pushing her back, and for a minute she doubts her plan. But she knows that it's the safest place. Pushing her way through the rushing water, she makes her way uphill.

Keeping her head down to shield herself from the rain, she doesn't see the rock until she has already reached it. The water drips off the unmoving mass, standing unworried by the storm. Swallowing the fear and hatred she feels so deeply, she lets her feet guide her up the side of the enormous rock. As she reaches the first ledge, she sees her sister vividly in her mind's eye. She steels herself and makes her way up the second ledge.

On top of the rock, she stays on her knees, the wind whipping around her and the rain soaking her skin. And now, her tears mix with the rain on her face and she looks to the sky. She can



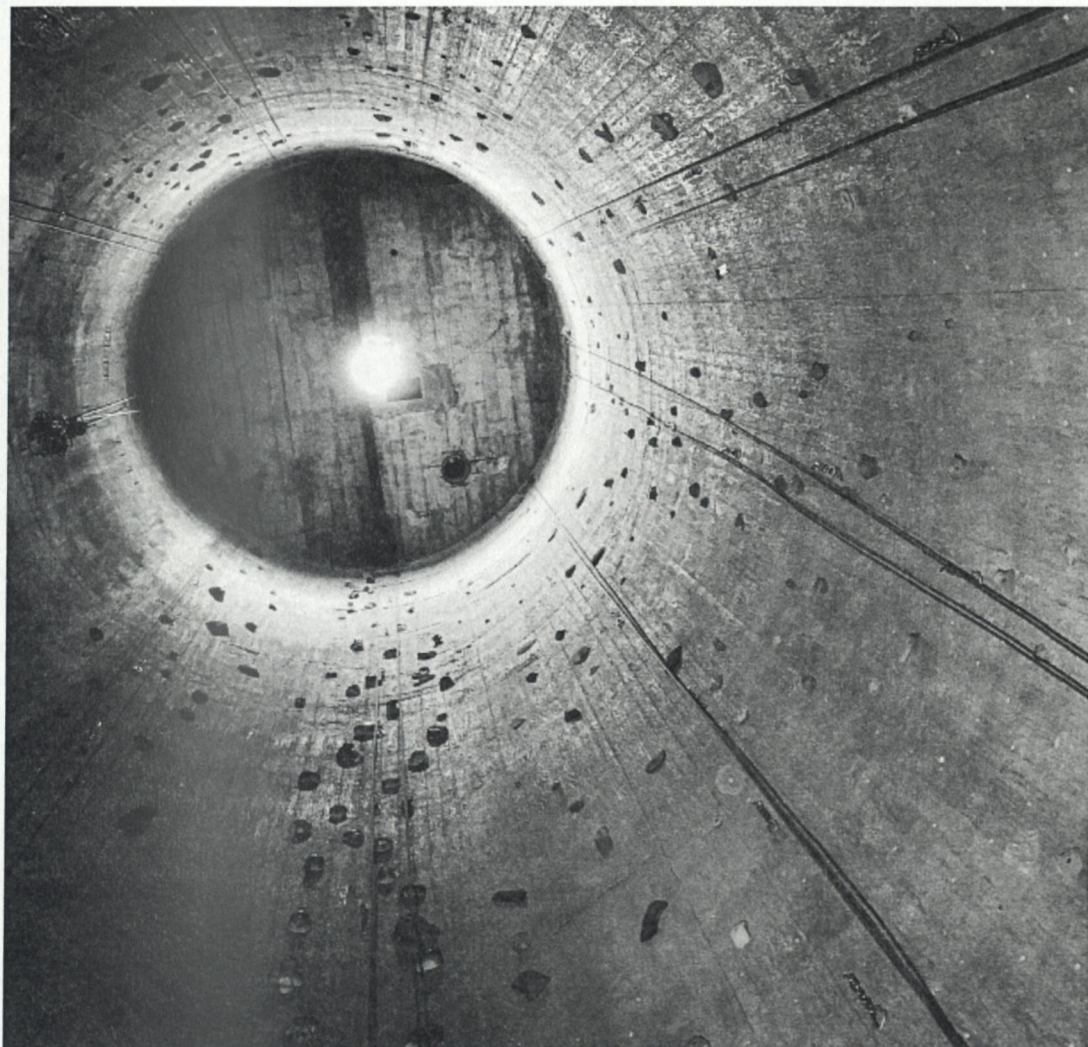
feel her grief pouring out of her like the flood below her, and she doesn't try to stop it. Eventually exhaustion takes over her, and she rests her head on the cool stone, curling herself in her raincoat.

She doesn't even hear the helicopter when it comes to bring her home.

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I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?' My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'" (Psalm 42:9-10)

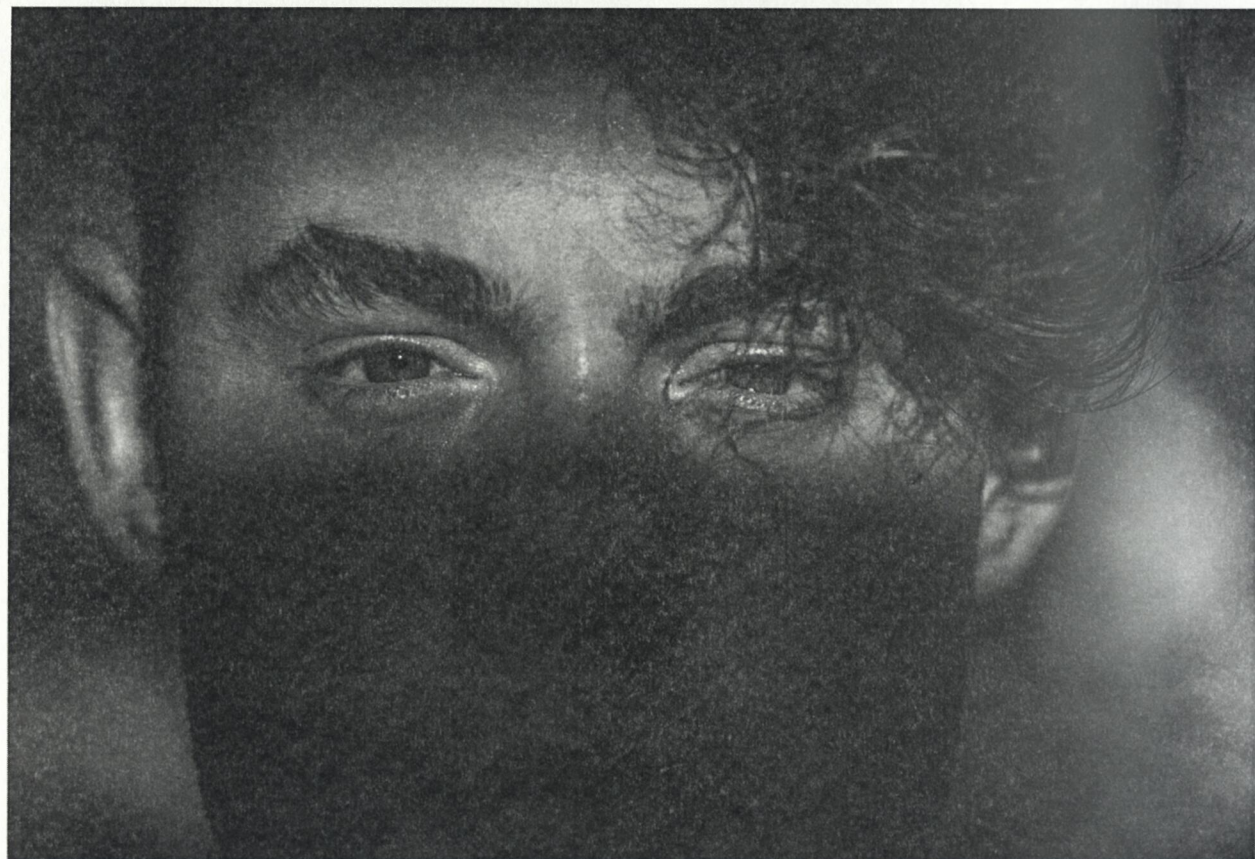




# Ascent to the Heavens

Jaylin Gadel | First Place Visual Art

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## Two Windows

Derek Bender

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# When it Strikes the Strong

Maddy Glinz | Prose

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He stepped into his shop an hour before sunrise. The dust still lined the shelves, and among it, ashes. One wall caved in itself, but he passed by it without a glance. It had been there for about a month now, and the broken shelves had just about rotted away. His pride and joy was a termite's feast.

Several people, when they heard he had elected to keep his shop open, had either stared in horror or gave off hope that at least one person still had the nerve to fight back. While many had retreated to the innermost corners of their houses, he sat, brushing away the newest addition of soot from his stool. For if there was not him, he reasoned, there was no one.

A long while ago, he used to play music from the radio, blaring it loudly for all to hear. If the spinning contraption, constantly swirling and remaking itself did not catch an eye, then the sound of drums and guitars, so juxtaposed to the calm store, turned so many heads, his first day with it he actually made profit.

But the radio, like all of his creations, splintered with the Fall. He called it that, as did everyone else, though he doubted the name would last—too common, he thought. But it wasn't every day a bomb fell from a cloud and destroyed half the city.

The families had learned to lay low after that.

He brushed aside a bit of debris on the wheel, placed his foot on the pedal, and began to pump. Hidden under the counter was the last bit of clay that he'd been waiting to use for Sanji's birthday. Now Sanji was captured, detained, most likely dead, and it was futile for the mound of gray matter to sit, growing hard.

So he rolled it between his hands, the normally familiar feeling of a new project barely at the precipice of his lips ached him down his body. Each smash and knead filled him with additional grief. Unaware of how much his son's death would wrack him, tears washed his soiled cheeks, revealing darker trails surrounded by layers of caked grime. Through the tsunami blocking his sight, he watched this piece of clay, far too hard, slowly transform with each added cupful of water into a smooth and crevice-lined possibility.

His aging hands slowly found their way in the curvature of the clay. He pressed down, and the clay shot up through the exit of his hands. He smiled at the very nature of his work and clumped the bits together again. Softer this time, he molded the clay smoothly, taking his time,



edging out the perfections. The slick gliding of the clay tingled his fingers with familiarity, and only positive thoughts raced their way through his sea of despair.

The furnace had been destroyed when the police were ordered to demolish any sort of weapon or what could be a weapon. Therefore, all he had left were his hands as tools, and his love as the furnace. He would soak in his creation for as long as possible before the heat took it back, selfishly.

He stared at the work from that day, trying his hardest to memorize every line and mistake and concave. He studied so hard, that when head blasted from his body, when his clay-clotted hands lost its fingers, and his shop and all it stood for was just as shattered as he was, the burning image in his mind was the vase.



# Strings

Sarah Holmes

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# Scene Two, Draft One

Abigail Kesler | Prose: Fiction

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The fruit hung from a branch just above her head, bouncing slightly with the wind. Light shone reflected off its golden-brown skin. It was, of all the perfect things she'd seen, the most satisfyingly right.

She checked behind her, reached up a finger. It was perfectly ripe, yielding and symmetrical. No bruises, no mold—that hadn't been invented yet. She wanted to hold it, nothing more.

So she did.

It was satisfying to hold, cupped in her hands. Her fingers closed over the fruit meditatively. It fit into her palm like it had been made to be there. She squeezed it, thinking.

*I could just smell it, nothing more. That would be fine.*

So she did.

She let her fingers dig ever so slightly into the skin, which ripped and caught under the rounded edges of her nails. Juice slid across her palm, sticky and warm. And the scent. It smelled like cinnamon and oranges and honey, all her favorite things. She brought the fruit up to her nose, inhaled. She wanted very much to taste it.

Not to eat it.

Just a small bite, nothing more.

She hesitated. He had told her not to, but...

"What do you think?" She asked her companion.

"Do it," it said.

So she did.

She never regretted anything more.

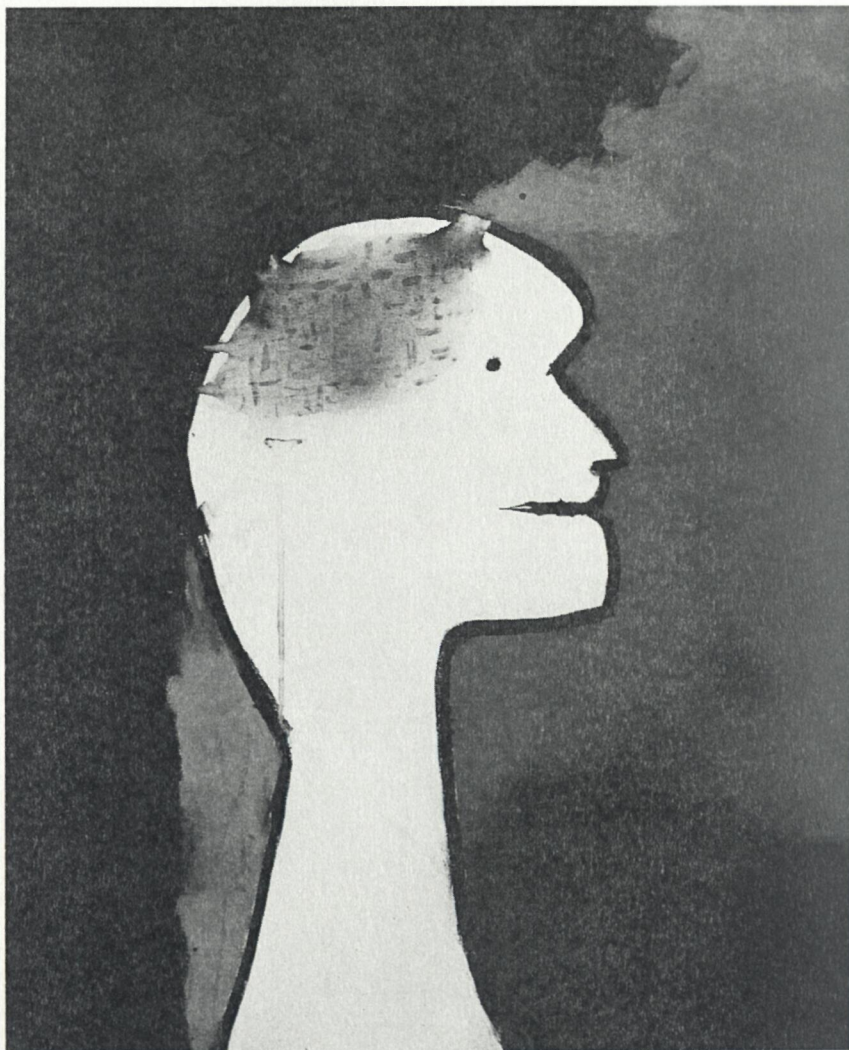




## Tree Climber

Lindsay Couvion

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# HUMAN 1

Andrew Davis

---



# Fragmented

Hillary Jo Foreman

---

If you look in my head,  
you'll find my brain's bones  
chip and clatter like yellow teeth  
that chatter and decay,  
hidden behind lips upturned.

*fix our eyes not on what is seen, but*

A pretty face allures the innocent  
to a hidden exhibition—  
cluttered, hollow.

*what is unseen*

Osteoporosis: noun  
(person, place, or thing)  
disease  
(abnormal condition of the body or mind)  
bones  
become  
brittle  
and  
splinter.

*outwardly we are wasting away*

Degeneration deceives,  
thieves a mind of wholeness.

Am I insane, or is  
my multiplicity of selves  
justified in uniqueness?

If you ask who I am,  
I can give you a name,  
or job description,

*what is seen is temporary*

but if I crack wide this  
fractured fiend,  
you'll find the rickety skeleton  
of an osseous identity—

noun  
disease

*what is unseen is eternal*



# Part One/Part Two

Maddy Glinz

---

## Part One

We sit on the park bench, and in the breeze  
a cool whip rings the bells in center square  
where lines of evergreens stand still with flare  
and children shriek with joy and naive ease.

A mother and her babe, taunts on her knees  
and I meet eyes with him, a broken pair.  
A wife, her stomach large, skates with no care  
and from these years, I sit, wishing to freeze.

But oh! But oh! What coarse love stays to me  
but here yet still my head rests on his sleeve.  
His words are kind but ice corrupts to see  
The purpose resting here was meant to grieve.  
The tender touch stings deeper for the flee  
The park bench makes a home, yet still, I leave.

## Part Two

The lamp was too bright,  
She insisted as she stared at her  
Baby, bleaching in the light and the  
Jaundice, kissing her skin sick and  
Yellow. Yellow, like the sunflowers  
Sitting at the table, smiling at the  
Ceiling, though intended for the mother.  
Mother, she laughed, with so little time  
Left, how could I be one?

One nurse had laughed along but dad  
And doctor stared silently at the ground, hoping, dreaming, praying  
For the end or the beginning, whichever  
Was nearer and best. Best improvement  
I've seen, said the nurse, though, mother,  
Bipolar in action and words, snapped back  
Before cooing at her girl. Girl had been  
The Great Prediction, and now the games  
And parties and comments seemed  
Futile and thin. Thin body, tiny arms, heart  
Beating rapidly, as though battling to keep  
Life flowing, flowing, flowing to every  
Finger pad and yellow toe and to her  
Crying mouth, yearning for escape or  
Cure from this desolate fate as just. Just a baby,  
Dad thought, forgetting his crying wife,  
The insistent doctors and just listened. Listened to the  
Sound of her cries to the pump of her machine, giving the life, the breath, the depth  
Of her young, small, short life.





## Backyard

Alison Broersma

---



# He Used Words

Mary Anleitner

---

Don't you find it odd

How every breath you exhale

Is sold to your neighbor

We manage our air to form

The syllables that pulls the oxygen

Right out of their bones—

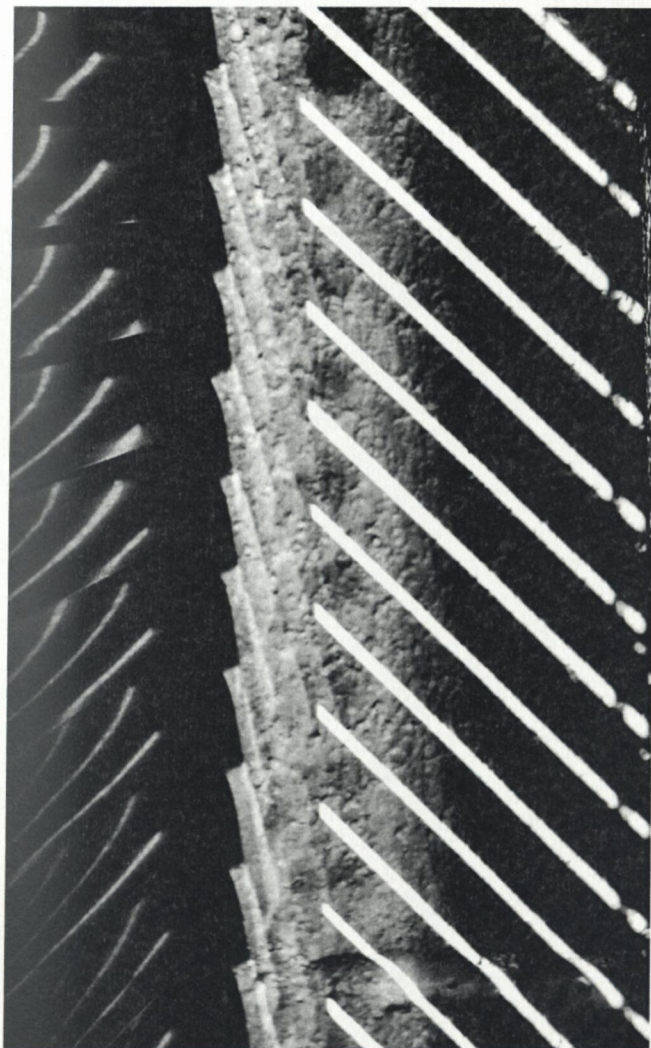
It cripples

We are in the business of deprivation

Kick them hard, kick them good— take,

Then give them the crutches and ask them,

“Did you fall?”



# Dusty Blinds

Katie Schantz

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## Veil

Kelli Jean Collins | Third Place Visual Art

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# An Honest Hymn

Hannah Hood

---

*Take my life*

(take one morning a week, maybe an evening if it's open; take a tenth, but nothing more)

*and let it be*

(nothing too costly, if you please)

*consecrated, Lord*

(maximize my minimum—I'll give you my lunch of loaves as long as you stay out of my kitchen)

*to Thee*

(the cross I wear around my neck, beneath my shirt, says more than my words ever could)

*Take my*

(half-baked, concave)

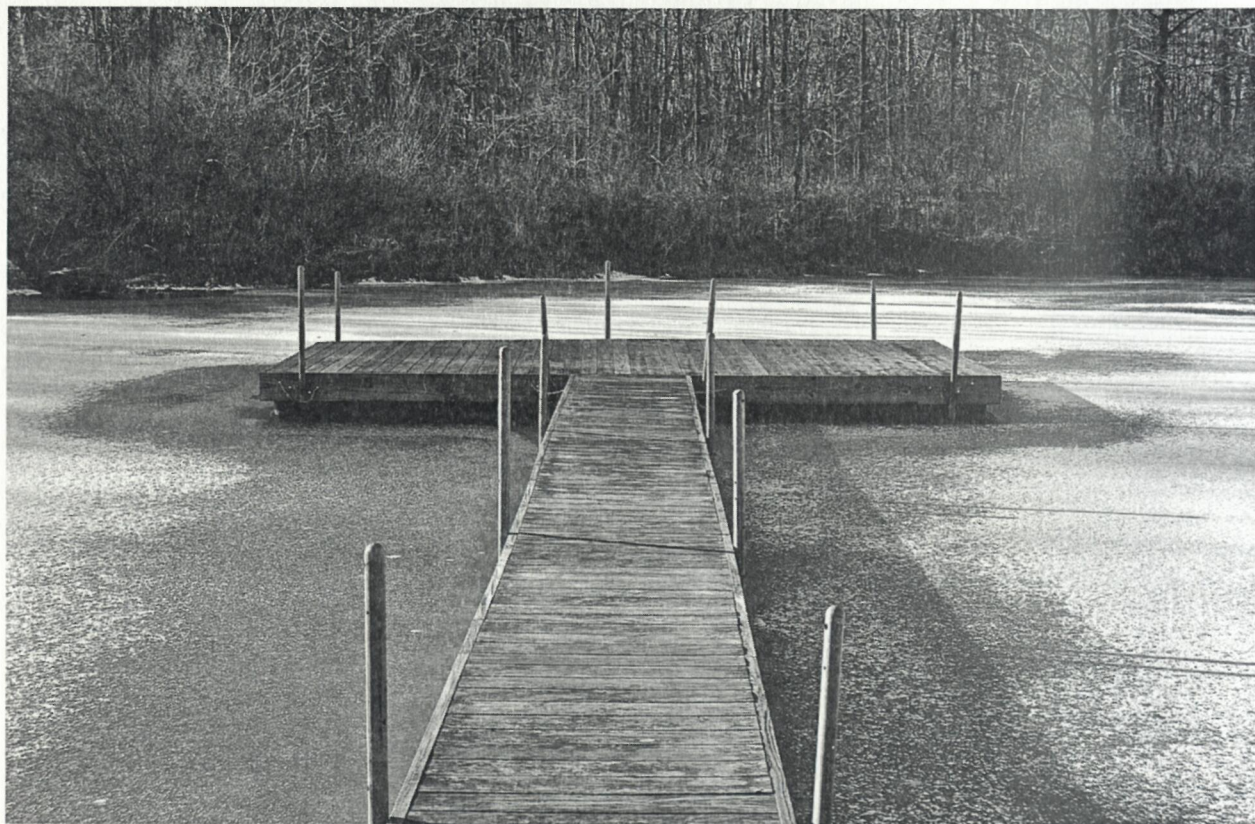
*life*

*and let it*

(let me)

*be.*





## Almost Frozen

Katie Schantz

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# Shedding

Sarah Holmes | First Place Poetry

---

step, light, under  
the brown filigree  
of leaves,  
bones, fine lace  
and brittle,  
they will be your  
stained-glass chapel

when they break  
away and shatter,  
ground-up colors  
under the feet of  
hordes, unaware,  
you too shall emerge  
into roofless space  
and claim your  
place of worship  
in every small thing,  
your rose windows  
in every frayed  
cicada wing  
half-gone and clinging  
and in the mirror-eye  
of every bird  
mangled by a cat,  
the sky's offerings

when your hymns  
are composed and sung  
you will know there is



music without ears, as  
in the half-real room  
you find before sleep,  
every note  
perfect and false



## Flooded Crypt

Sarah Holmes

---





# Peripatetics

Alison Broersma | Second Place Visual Art

---

# Laugh

Sarah Holmes

---

shakes out the mountains  
hollows valleys, gives dawn-bright  
birth to the great garden, a  
dancing mythic jagged creation  
in the swarm-tangled ribbons of my  
brain burning blue and red

mighty in the joy of your voice  
your voice riding happy in to  
terror triumphant, reeling  
the child-space new-born  
between us, the reprise singing  
love  
love  
*love*

topples my towers  
rejoices in warm destruction  
collapsing my lungs,  
roaring to seed they are  
spent parachutes in my chest  
burning into space too much not-empty,  
heart all strange and unfamiliar  
while this loud new thing comes tumbling  
through all the cracks in me





## Skin Attached

Rebecca A. Schriener

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# Ekphrasis on Tomek Sętowski's POSŁANIEC

Luke A. Wildman | Second Place Prose: Creative Non-Fiction

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It is dusk. The sliver moon sits in its violet-blue sky, which fades to pink in the west. There are wisps of cloud. Beneath the moon, mounding up towards it against the rocks, lies the woman. She shivers, her chin resting on her folded arms, her body flowing out behind her. Those were such days when she felt beautiful: every curve of her streets running like a river's course; every dome of her temples and palaces painted to gleaming in the morning's glow. She swelled from an infant village to a young town to a mature city in the dusk, enviable and alluring, the caravans parading through her gates while blimps and airships formed halos over her spires.

Youth is easily romanced. Most especially by itself.

As centuries passed, her sheens of paint dulled. Caravans still came, lumbering with men of desert voices, but always finding less of value to take away with them. The arc of her great bridge, once her pride, rusted into a rank, rattling spine of ridged rafters and wretched, wrinkled ruins.

And so she lies, still beautiful in her exotic way, still with the desert wind warm as it puffs dust through her alleys. But she is fading, and knows it. Despite her self-indulged smile. Despite her musical revels from every mansion.

There is one thing she wishes. For generations—actually since even before she was in her virgin village-hood—she has had a companion. Miles once stretched between her and the mountain, but as she's grown she has mounded against his sheltering rock, risen on his west face, and now she sits level with him. He has children of his own, families who never wished to live nostril against nostril and house against house in the city, but who rather built their villas on some shelf of his rock, overlooking her stretched body on one side and the ripples of the desert on the other.

If the mountain has ever felt annoyed by the city's expansion, he hasn't said it. In fact, they've never spoken.

He is rock, but not changeless. As she has swelled, the winds and the humans have warped and shriveled his surface, chiseling away pieces of him, leaving a cracked strength. But it is not those forces that shape his form in her eyes. Rather, as she ages and grows disenchanted with herself, she sees upon him something never previously glimpsed: the shape of his summit. A horseman, always reared and clad for Roman war, gazing back into her crime-riddled boroughs.



Now—after all these years—they converse in their own fashion.

Her bells ring over his surfaces. Tangy scents of her spices and supper fires waft up his slopes, carrying with them the smells of over-clogged gutters, excrement from caravans in the streets, and of humans who live and die in peculiar fashion. And from him there are also words: grumbles of families who are now uncomfortable at their closeness to the edge of the city. And the dry desert wind, blowing dust up and over from him to her. And smells of mineral deposits which pool in his cracks, and of twisted eucalyptus trees growing frail in his shallow dirt. He may be dependable, but he does not make allowances easily. He shows little hospitality, in this land where that is of first virtue.

Do the men and women who live there find themselves in those places, drawn to glimpses of cracked inner hardness or soiled and aging pride? No. Their pride is very much intact, and their walls seldom shape themselves into noble Roman warriors.

But in the spirit of the dust which blows through city streets, and of cracks which lace a mountain's core, they learn a lesson of soulmates: find the brokenness that other brokenness can help to strengthen. They can grow into the rest.



Study of John  
Erica Bell

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# Trapped in Rhyme

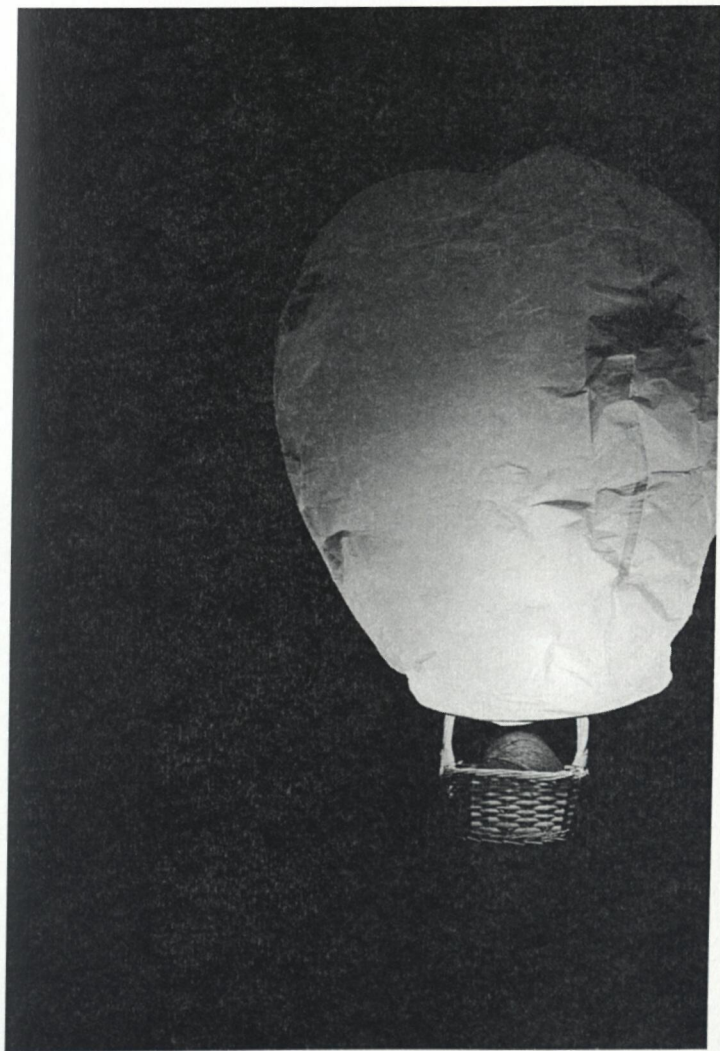
Matthew Storrer

---

My soul, it seems, is trapped in rhyme;  
I cannot seem to shake  
the Hellish beat of inward time  
my poems always take.

How cruel it is, this metronome!  
All times upon my brain;  
though through this poem I do bemoan,  
to fight would be in vain.

See, I long to break chains of form  
and set my verses free,  
but yet when I try to adjourn  
it never feels like me.



# Flight of the Coconuts

Kelli Jean Collins

---



# NO. 4

Sarah Holmes

---

I am too close to you, too  
New in the presence of your body so  
Towering in its  
Holy unthinking communion

In dancing shoes  
The universe waits at your elbow  
Eager for all your perfect  
One-and-three dimensions  
To slip meaning  
Out of nothing



Cierra  
Leslie Clouse

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## mountains between us

Nysha Chen

---

# An Elegy to Summer Love

Katie Vogel | Third Place Prose: Fiction

---

"I don't know what to say...if I had known, I wouldn't have...I'm sorry, I'll leave these with you." I held out a stack of letters. I felt silly now. When I walked up to the white door in my favorite sundress, I was sweating a little from my nerves and hoping there weren't splotchy dots forming through the cotton fabric. I had rehearsed what I would say at least ten times before I knocked.

"Uh, please, won't you come in? I just started some hot water on the stove." A woman who looked in her mid-sixties opened the door wider and brushed a tear away. "I would love to know how you knew my son."

---

*Dearest Stranger,*

*I'm glad you're at the beach today. If it's sunrise, goodmorning! If noon, goodday! If sunset, good evenin' ma'am! You'll never regret hauling out to Barrett's Cove, that's what I always say. I wanted to meet a stranger who likes the sandy shore as much as I do – so hey! That's you.*

*Now, don't take it lightly that you're the one who happened upon this here letter and I won't take you lightly. I suppose we have a deal! You must have a bit of curiosity – I like that, otherwise you wouldn't have uncorked this darn bottle (trust me, I sealed it real tight and stubborn).*

*A moment of your day is all I ask. (My eyes are pinched tight and I'm on my knees begging you). "Yes!" Perfect, I'm glad you obliged. Well then, what I wanted to say is I know this place pretty well, the way I know old Daughty (that's my dog) doesn't like the seagulls nesting on the sand less than five feet from her. As I was saying, I know this place pretty well, and I bet there are places here you've never seen. I dare you to challenge me.*

*If you accept my challenge you'll find another bottle in the dune grass by Southbend, just past the rotting bench nobody sits on.*

*Until then,*

*One Stranger to Another*

The handwriting was readable but the rough strokes slanted in odd directions. It was rushed, but free, probably not a woman's. I had to accept the challenge; I needed to know



who had the patience to write a letter at the beach instead of taking a swim. I had always spent my summers at Barrett's Cove and thought I had seen all there was to see. There was no way someone knew more nooks and crannies in the dunes than me. I've lived here for twenty-one years!

I nestled the glass bottle back into the sand between two rocks where I found it. I folded the letter into quarters and stuffed it into my pocket. Whoever this is must be a local. I rarely saw anyone by this jetty. Sometimes fishermen tried their luck, but I couldn't believe someone else sat here. The black boulders were slippery and covered in moss. I didn't mind, because I loved to watch the ocean jump, spraying in surprising directions after hitting the jagged edges.

---

"Did you know, he used to spend hours sitting on the beach?" Mrs. Waldon sighed. I knew she was at Barrett's Cove, watching her son.

"I can imagine. I never knew I had missed so many hidden treasures at the beach. I guess I always go to the same spots."

"He certainly knew them all. He's probably walked over every grain of sand in Barrett's Cove and Daughy shakes every inch of it onto our carpet—sorry if it's a bit grainy, I just vacuumed this morning but I can never seem to get it all out. Sand doesn't clean so easy."

"Oh, I didn't notice." I did, but I wanted to be polite.

"Well, anyway, he always took Daughy."

I glanced behind me and the Bernese raised a brown brow at hearing her name. She immediately returned her head to outstretched legs. The cup of chai in my hands was cooling and I blew into the steam, wondering if the ocean was really this hot but the winds never let it boil.

"Another cup?"

"No thank you." I had only taken a few sips.

Mrs. Waldon made her way to the stool next to me with a blue BoatHouse mug, tea swashing around like unsettled waves. Her hands were shaking.

"I'm sorry, really. I—"

"I'm glad you're here dear, no need to apologize. Now, tell me more about these letters. I never knew he was a romantic."

"I wouldn't call them *romantic*, playful at best."

---

*Dearest Acquaintance (cause we're not strangers now),*

*I see you found my second letter. I bet you're wondering how many letters there are! Forget about that and look behind you. See that dune? It doesn't look like much, but if you climb it you'll see what I mean. A personal favorite. Well, go on, don't just stand there. Read on when you reach the top.*

*Gorgeous isn't it? There's some driftwood to the right. Walk over there and you'll find the platinum view.*

A bench made of driftwood stacked like Lincoln Logs awaited me. I wondered when he had made this or if some other stranger had pieced it together. The bench sagged with a distinct impression, the work of several years. How had I never come up here?

*I think the waves look like a blue desert and the grass like people fainting in the heat. What do you see?*

I tucked my wild hair behind my left ear and looked over the blue expanse. I saw possibilities. No one puts a fence around the ocean, no one says the ocean has to be this or that. It is the ocean, whatever that may mean. Maybe I thought I was like the ocean.

*Hope you enjoyed the view! I sure did.*

*Find your next adventure by the canal, preferably at sunset.*

*Until then,*

*An Acquaintance*

---



“How many letters were there?” she asked, her grey eyes searched for answers as hints of wrinkles gathered around her smile.

“I think there were fifteen or twenty, maybe more. I haven’t counted them, but I’ve definitely reread them all.” I didn’t intend to include that last part.

“How do you know where to find them?”

“He tells me at the end of each letter. He gave me his address in the last one I read.” I looked down into my mug. Some spices stuck to the sides and pooled in the bottom. It left a bitter aftertaste in my mouth, clinging to my tongue like the spices to the mug. “I thought he would be here. And...”

Mrs. Waldon’s smile collapsed, and I regretted what I said.

“Did you ever see him? His friend Tommy tells me there was a girl he watched at the beach. Oh, that sounds creepy, I mean, not watch in that way. He said he liked to watch her live, like she was always smiling or something. I’m not sure, but he told me he wished he could have asked her on a walk.” She studied my face as if she was trying to match me to a picture.

---

*Dearest Friend (no need for explanations this time),*

*Welcome to my swingset! Have a seat, any seat! Ok, you should probably pick the one second from the right. (I hope to God there is not a child swinging in that seat! I will personally come ask the child to move if there is—but there probably isn’t because most children leave with their parents by dinner time.) Now that that’s settled, take off your shoes. It’s a crime to wear shoes on the sand. How else is all that sand going to get stuck in between your toes?*

I slid off my sandals and let my feet drag across the sand. Back and forth, gravity pulled my body back. It tickled. I felt like a kid again. My brother and I used to see how high we could swing, pretending we were shooting stars.

*Alright, alright, don’t forget to look up!*

## An Elegy to Summer Love | Katie Vogel

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I propelled forward, my right hand clenched on cold metal links. The sun was dipping into the sea, melting into a buttery reflection.

*I feel like I'm flying into the sun, just about to drink fire, when my body reminds me I weigh 173 pounds on earth. I don't know how much you weigh, but you probably float backwards instead of jerking.*

“haHa!” I covered my mouth hoping no one had heard me, forgetting that my hand was connecting me to the swing. As the swing rocked forward, I fell back! If he hadn't made me laugh I wouldn't have fallen off that slippery rubber seat. I can't believe I was embarrassed. He wasn't even there, but I'm sure some stranger got a good laugh out of it.

I wondered what it would be like to swing on the moon. Would that falling feeling, stomach rising, disappear or would it be constant? He would probably say, “Let's find out!”

*Anyways, drink it up! You'll only see this sunset once in your life.*

The beach is always dotted with couples during sunset, but I scanned to see if anyone was alone. Maybe whoever wrote these letters was here. I tried to imagine the type of guy who would send letters in a bottle—creative, observant, carefree, risky maybe, and tanned from always being at the beach. And he had to be young enough to keep up with all these adventures.

*I hope you like windsurfing. Stop by the shack on your next visit.*

I flipped the page over, waiting for more words, but there were only four.

*Until then,  
Your Friend*

---



"Do you want to see his room?" I don't think she knew what else to do.

"Sure." I wasn't really sure I did. I felt like I knew him, but he didn't tell me to come here, in his room. Outside of the beach, I didn't know what to do.

His room was clean and simple. A wide striped grey, blue, and white comforter sat untouched over the bed. A nightstand, a dresser, and a chair filled the lonely room. The only personal item left was a black notebook with frayed corners atop the nightstand. Next to it, a family picture of a much younger Mrs. Waldon with Mr. Waldon and their son stood framed in gold.

I walked over to the picture. "May I?"

---

*Dearest Love (there's no way around it),*

*By now you must be thinking, ok, I've seen every stinkin thing there is to see here! No. You're wrong. Get that scoop of mint chocolate chip on a homemade waffle cone from the General Store and walk south, past Southbend and past that rotting bench you looked at the first day we met.*

The sun melted more than I could lick up, but the sweet spearmint was refreshing. I imagined him challenging the sun to see who could eat more of his ice cream. The shoreline disappeared around a curve and I followed it.

*One surprise just isn't enough! Keep going around the bend. There's another turn once you reach Old Man Strotter's cottage, just keep going. Nobody wants to come around here, because they're scared of him, but he's actually pretty cool, just has a sour face. We're good friends.*

I had never thought to venture further than Mr. Strotter's. One of my friends had told me he saw Mr. Strotter sitting on a beach chair with a shotgun, shooting seagulls. Not that I believed him, but everyone had a story about Old Man Strotter. Last summer I went on a walk and stopped just before his house, but I didn't see him.

## An Elegy to Summer Love | Katie Vogel

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*Ok, so go around the second bend and stop.*

*Take it in.*

*Then run as fast as you can and watch the seagulls lift off—a picture never taken.*

I ran. I laughed. I splashed. A rosy lighthouse stood on a block of cement two feet in from the tide. The paint was red long ago, but it blushed, then cracked under the sun's stare. The seagulls gathered here in this tucked away haven, away from noisy children with shovels and bored dogs. When I ran, all I saw was white and pink whirring together. All I felt was salty mist and golden sun. All I knew was this.

*You're the first person I've had the pleasure of sharing this with. I don't need to describe it, because you've lived it and I've lived it. We know. Now, don't get cocky—I'm sure someone else will find Little Red (that's what I've named her). But no one else was here with you, but me. That's what I'll smile about today. I never saw Little Red when she was sparkling like a fire truck, but I know who she is and I like her just the same a little pink.*

I stopped reading and closed my eyes. The warm wind tossed my hair and teased my shirt. I didn't know till then that I wished he was there. I would've pushed him into the waves. Then I would have hid behind the lighthouse!

*I would've made you a picnic, but Gilly's Garage makes some mighty fine burgers. I would stop there for lunch.*

*For the biggest adventure yet:*

*3256 North Ridge*

*Knox, ME 49421*

*Until then,*

*Maverick*

---

His boyish face was dotted with a few freckles and shaggy brown hair ruffled all over



the place. I could almost hear him laughing with his wide mouth and squinty eyes. His parents were bent over him on either side, squeezing him tight. It was perfect.

"He was six years old." Mrs. Waldon reached out a hand to ask for the photograph.

"He's so happy." I passed the frame.

"I know." A tear slipped from her eye and trailed down her cheek till it stopped for a moment on her chin before falling onto her floral shirt.

I reached out and held her free hand. More tears came. We stood there together in the silence. She squeezed my hand and let go.

"We were just so proud of him. He never complained, you know. Just said, "Don't worry about me, mom, everyday is an adventure. Besides, you need more help than I do." Oh, I really was a mess. Well, I still am." She smiled as she thought of her son.

"That definitely sounds like him. I know I never met him, but I feel like I did."

"Do you want to see his last picture?" She left me in the room and I stared at the small boy. I didn't know what he looked like after this, when he was ten, eighteen, twenty, now. I didn't think I was ready. My sudden tears told me I wasn't.

"Here it is." She paused before handing it to me. "He was twenty-two. This this was seven months ago." She couldn't keep from crying.

His green eyes were hazed over and his eyelids struggled to open. His freckles had long faded into pale dots and his wild hair was gone. A nasal cannula flowed out from his nose like seaweed. His hospital gown was a dull teal with an undistinguishable pattern.

A watery fog blocked his picture. I closed my eyes and imagined Little Red, the seagulls, and me and him – moist wind pushing into my skin, seagulls skittering along the tide, and Maverick, pulling me towards the lighthouse, collapsing against its base, laughing and no breath left.

I think I would have loved Maverick Waldon.

---

*Dearest love (I love you more than I can say, which is a lot since I'm dead),*

*Now you know. I didn't want to tell you, because then you wouldn't have met me. And gosh I wanted to meet you! I spent most days of my last year at the beach, and I noticed you. You always enjoyed yourself, whether you came by yourself to read on a beach towel*

## An Elegy to Summer Love | Katie Vogel

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*or with some friends for some good 'ole sand volleyball. (I promise I wasn't stalking you. Besides, imagine a guy in a wheelchair trying to stalk—not so stealthy.)*

*Maybe you saw me, maybe you didn't. I was there. One time Daughtry ran past you and you stopped to run your hand through her fur. I sat in my chair and watched, thinking about all these adventures I could have with you, so every time I saw you I wrote a letter. I told my pal, Tommy, and he promised that when summer rolled around again (and it always does) he would set up the letters in each place—only if you keep reading them of course. I know I won't see Barrett's Cove again, but I guess I went on every adventure I could.*

*Finding the first one was up to you, no clues. But I'm sure Tommy put it by that rock you're always sitting on. You took the challenge, an excellent choice, and now you know one less stranger. Just knowing you'll be reading this is plenty enough for me. I wanted you to know me—the red engine Little Red, not the flaky flamingo red. You are a part of all my favorite places, which is half of me, which is now half of you—think about it. I have to confess that I love you for this. You're basically the woman of my dreams (and I'll be dreaming for a long time). I would ask you to marry me, but you're obviously already taken by the beach. See you at Barrett's Cove! I'll always be there.*

*Until then,  
Maverick .*





## The Next Generation of Adventurers

Shelby Sims

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# The Way I Remember It

Sarah Davis | Prose: Creative Non-Fiction

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When I was little my parents were millionaires. My dad was the pastor of a church of 50, and my mom was a thriving secretary at a tiny Christian school. We had a mansion in the back woods of Oklahoma and a garden that grew every fine vegetable in the land. We had a millionaire neighbor too who had loud dogs trapped in his fence. They watched over his kingdom because he was never home, but that was okay with my brother and me because we liked our own kingdom just fine. We had a trampoline without a net, and a bunch of popsicles mom would make out of grape juice, so we never wanted to go over to Jerry's because what more could we need? And besides, his dogs were mean and ugly and would bark at us—even if we were very much in our own yard. Mom always said those dogs assumed the worst in everyone, and we should stay away from them because that kind of attitude can rub off on people.

Sometimes my brother and I would play in the pools that surrounded our mansion. We would put on our bathing suits and trip around the sprinkler until we'd watered our land so much that the ground was covered in little meres. Mom would make us move the sprinkler around every so often, but that was fine with us. The more pools and moats around our castle, the better.

My brother would put his face as close as he could to the little sprinkler spouts and see how long he could go with the water pelting his face. I'd always jump over the sprinkler and try not to get wet, but hope that I would. And everything was good and right and safe because we were millionaires, who had a trampoline without a net to jump on, a bunch of swimming pools to cool off in, homemade popsicles to suck on, and evil dogs that didn't rub off on us.

Then we grew up a little and moved away and lived in a little house that we rented. It was a mansion too, but smaller. And we ate a lot of peanut butter sandwiches and soup from cans and Dad was on his laptop a lot during that time.

And then we moved again to another mansion, but it didn't seem as whimsical as our first one. We had more neighbors, but they didn't seem as much like millionaires as Jerry did. They had really tall fences and small babies and the parents would sometimes yell at night. But we were still millionaires and we had everything.



On Friday nights we would get pizza from the Pizza Hut down the street and bring it home. And the four members of our royal family would eat the pizza not at the kitchen table, but in the living room, and it was the ultimate luxury. We also watched a lot of Discovery channel during this time, to get Dad's mind off of what was on the laptop. So in this mansion we learned a lot about tropical birds and the top ten safari animals. And I was certain then that I'd grow up to be a millionaire too because I was learning so much and becoming very educated.

Then we moved to another mansion and Dad wasn't on the laptop as much. And I started Kindergarten, which was like a palace full of children. We learned a lot there even though I already knew some of it from Discovery channel. One time I asked my teacher to show me my name in cursive and she did and I practiced it a lot. I was only five and most kids didn't learn cursive until they were eight, so I felt secretive and very proud of that.

Our new millionaire neighbors had two little boys that were about our age. My brother and I would play with them and one time we were drawing with chalk in our driveways. I wrote my name in cursive and the older neighbor boy Vaughn said, "Woah, how do you already know cursive?" I just laughed and said, "I just know it" and it was a highlight of my time with them.

Mom stopped making those childish grape juice popsicles here, and we switched to a more sophisticated kind—the tall ones that come in the clear, skinny plastic. It seemed like we had an unlimited supply of those things, and that's how I knew we were millionaires.

Then we got a little older and moved again and I started to wonder if we were actually millionaires because the girls I went to elementary school with had these rolling backpacks that I wanted more than anything. But mom said we couldn't afford one and I didn't understand, because that's still when I thought everything was unlimited... like the tall, skinny popsicles.

But then we moved again and I learned that we probably weren't millionaires. Because I was at public school then, where everyone seems like a billionaire and it takes a lot of money and also time to keep up. And I tried, but I didn't really fit in with the billionaires because I wore a lot of solid color polo shirts from Kohl's and had only one pair of sneakers I liked.

One day my mom came home from the mall with three shirts for me from Aeropostale and I thought for a second we were millionaires again because that store was the height of middle school fashion. But one girl named Kelly made fun of me for wearing an Aeropostale shirt on picture day. I guess she told all her billionaire friends the day before that she knew I was going to wear one of those three shirts. So I must have worn them too much, because I still didn't fit in with the billionaires.

Then we moved again and I went to high school and I knew I didn't have everything. It was funny to me, though, because it seemed that the kids who had everything had all of the same things. The girls looked the same, bought the same things, even acted the same. I remember thinking that if I had as much as they did, I'd buy different things no one else had. I'm not sure now if I would, but I admire the memory of that thought.

There were a lot of kids like me who didn't have everything, and a lot more kids that had even less. I saw it in the ways some of them ate their lunches and the ways they bought their clothes. But just like I didn't want the billionaires to think about my clothes, I didn't want to focus on the clothes of others either. So I stopped looking at what kids brought to lunch and tried to just look at their eyes. That helped a lot. Pretty few people are millionaires, and even fewer are billionaires, so it doesn't do a ton of good to even think about it.

I miss being a millionaire sometimes. It was a kinder, easier way to live and to see things. Now, even though lots of things have changed, nothing really has. We're getting older and still moving around and some dogs are still mean and ugly. But we have to look them in the eyes. Even them. And at least now we know not to let them rub off on us—whether we are millionaires, billionaires, or whatever else there is to be.





this is me

Alison Broersma

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# Coke Tastes Better Through A Straw

Hannah Hood

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*For Belize*

I prefer to sip on life.

I drink it all in  
little by little—

The musical Spanish next to  
the warm Creole,  
its broken words crashing  
over my head like the  
waves.

The now familiar smell of  
chicken and rice that  
has become synonymous with  
laughter.

The gentle breeze that  
seems to cleanse me as it  
goes.

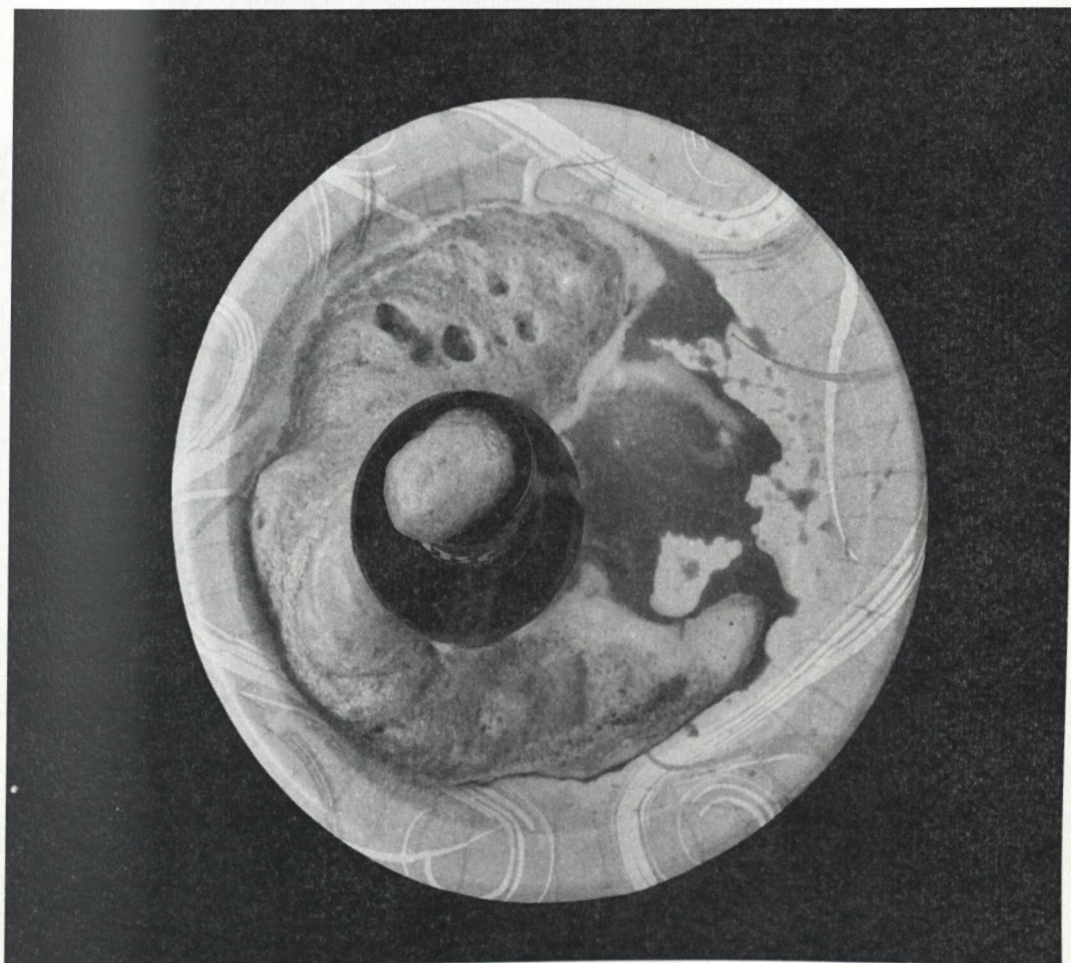
I draw it in slowly—  
up and up—  
until the sweetness of it all  
explodes in my mouth.



## Coke Tastes Better Through a Straw | Hannah Hood

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And I know that  
I am  
here—  
wanting to sip again.



## Tiger Moon

G. Connor Salter

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# Framework

Sarah Holmes

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Miami  
Andrew Davis

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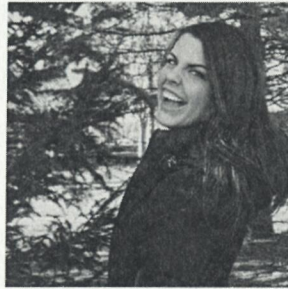


# The Artists

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## Biographies and Index of Works

Mary Anleitner  
62



Mary Anleitner ('18) is a English major from the Metro-Detroit area. She is probably the one talking way too loudly in the DC or obnoxiously quoting Michael Scott. Her writing attempts to reflect her gratefulness for a Savior who has turn her mourning into dancing.

Erica Bell  
75



Erica Bell ('20) is a freshman from Dayton, Ohio. She has been creating art since she was a toddler and is now pursuing a career in Art Education. Art making an act of worship for Erica, and she looks forward to teaching students how to fall in love with art making.

Derek Bender  
50

Derek Bender ('18) is a senior Graphic Design major from Sunman, Indiana. He has lived on First West Wengatz all four years of college, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

# Alison Broersma

61, 70, 94



Alison Broersma ('18) is a Junior Exercise Science major with a Psychology and Photography minor expecting to graduate May 2018. She grew up overseas in Moscow, Russia, and traveling was a part of life. Photography has always been her expression of what she sees.

# Nysha Chen

32, 80



Nysha Chen ('18) is a junior computer science major from Phoenix, Arizona who sleeps too much in her free time and loves documentaries about food.

# Leslie Clouse

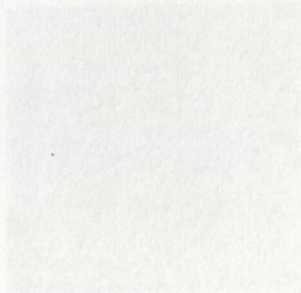
13, 39 (Cover), 79



Leslie Clouse ('18) is a Junior Graphic Design student with a minor in Photography. She has enjoyed photography since a young age and recently has established a series of her own: Women and Water. Leslie hopes to continue experimenting with this series as she pursues a future in design.

# Kelli Jean Collins

64, 77



Kelli Jean Collins ('16) graduated from Taylor Univeristy in January of 2016.



## Lindsay Couvion

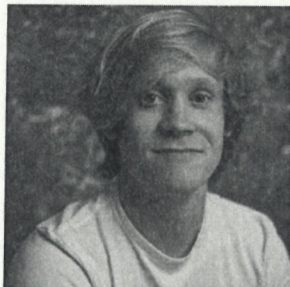
55



Lindsay Couvion ('19) is a sophomore music education major from O'Fallon, Missouri. She is active in Taylor Chorale, Sounds, and the student directed shows. She has a passion for singing and getting others excited about music. Along with music, Lindsay's hobbies include photography and poetry.

## Andrew Paul Davis

56, 99



Andrew Paul Davis ('17) is a senior from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He is a Film major minoring in English, Theatre, & Philosophy.

## Sarah Davis

40, 91



Sarah Davis ('18) is a junior journalism and creative writing student. She is thankful for her parents who never told her writing camp was nerdy. And she is thankful for Dr. Housholder and other friends who consistently ask, "Can I read it?"

## Hillary Jo Foreman

11, 23, 57



Hillary Jo Foreman ('18) is a junior English/Creative Writing major at Taylor University. Her time is best spent writing, reading, wandering in the forest, and drinking copious amounts of coffee. She hopes, in her writing, to tell the truth about the beauty and ugliness around her.

## Jaylin Gadel

19, 49



Jaylin Gadel ('18) is a junior Public Health major hailing from Champaign, IL. She attempts daily to develop a well-rounded lifestyle. With a knack for creative problem-solving, a heart for the oppressed, and interests ranging from biology to music, she likes to believe she is on the right track.

## Maddy Glinz

51, 59



Maddy Glinz ('20) is a freshman Biology major. She's been writing fiction since she was in elementary school, and she desires to be a published author in her lifetime. Her piece "Part One/Part Two" was given an Honorable Mention by West Central Michigan Scholastic Art & Writing Competition in 2016.

## Megan Herrema

25



Megan Herrema will graduate from Taylor University with a degree in English/Systems in May of 2019. She grew up the oldest of seven (wonderful) siblings in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and loves all things artsy and outdoorsy, from reading and drawing to ballet and hiking.

## Ellie Hershberger

22



Ellie Hershberger ('18) is a junior studying journalism, graphic design and photography at Taylor University. She has a passion for telling stories through words and images and has been Editor in Chief of Taylor's yearbook for two years. She grew up in Grandview, MO with her parents and three siblings.



## Sarah Holmes

16, 33, 36, 53, 67, 69, 71, 78, 98



Sarah Holmes ('16) is an English major with a creative writing concentration. She hopes someday to travel the world, fly an ultralight, and invent a teleportation device. In the meantime, she can be found playing piano, fighting the patriarchy, or staving off existential crisis through the power of humor.

## Hannah Hood

65, 95



Hannah Hood ('17) is a senior at Taylor University who is currently studying English Education. She is a lover of words and stories, particularly when they are accompanied by large cups of coffee.

## Abigail Kesler

54



Abigail Kesler ('19) is a sophomore English major.

## Katie Mercer

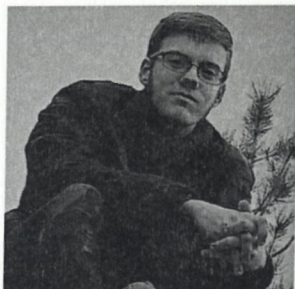
9, 34, 35



Katie Mercer ('19) is a Graphic Art major with her concentration in Photography. Receiving her first camera at the age of five, Katie knew photography was going to be a life-long passion. In the past she has enjoyed working with a local magazine, Dream Factory, and the Kansas City Royals.

## G. Connor Salter

97



G. Connor Salter ('19) is a Professional Writing major with a Philosophy minor. As a missionary kid, he's not entirely sure where he's from, but he currently resides in Colorado Springs. He has written articles, short stories, and is currently a weekly contributor to The Odyssey.

## Ruth Orellana

28, 31



Ruth Orellana ('19) is a Psychology major. She loves traveling, summer, and combinatorial creativity.

## Katie Schantz

63, 66



Katie Schantz ('17) is a senior at Taylor. Her family lives in Fort Wayne, IN. She's studying Public Health and Spanish and hopes to use both these fields to work with diverse populations either in the US or abroad.

## Rebecca A. Schriener

72



Rebecca A. Schriener ('16) is a December 2016 professional writing and public relations graduate of Taylor University. As a student, she fell in love - with her work. During her time freelancing for the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, she snapped "Skin Attached" to remember her time with her favorite animal.



## Shelby Sims

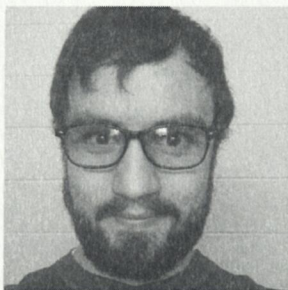
90



Shelby Sims ('17) is an English Literature major with a Public Relations minor. Her love of books started very early on with her dad reading Dr. Seuss and The Chronicles of Narnia to her. She has a love/hate relationship with the outdoors, but it's usually worth it to wander around the countryside.

## Matthew Storrer

15, 76



Matthew Storrer ('17) is a senior English Education major living on BroHo. He loves coffee and conversation so much that he'd probably literally grab coffee with you right now. Seriously. Go ask him. Also, he used to think poetry was stupid, but now he writes it. Go figure, right?

## Teagan Joy Studebaker

10, 24, 44



Teagan Joy Studebaker ('18) is a junior communications major with a minor in photography. You can probably find her knitting and spending time with her cat. Teagan's love for photography is about as old as her "grandmother like" spirit and she hopes to continue her photography career for years to come.

## Elizabeth Vandegriff

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Elizabeth Vandegriff ('18) is a junior physics major and creative writing minor from Silver Spring, Maryland. She loves reading and writing fiction, especially science fiction. Besides writing, she enjoys being outdoors, petting dogs, and playing classical guitar.

## Katie Vogel

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Katie Vogel ('17) is an English major with a Creative Writing concentration and a TESOL minor. She is left handed, a National Park enthusiast, and an aunt. There was a time when she believed she could fly with an umbrella like Mary Poppins. Now she is graduating at the closing of J-term, 2017.

## Luke A. Wildman

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Raised in Nigeria, Luke A. Wildman ('17) is a senior professional writing major. His creative work has appeared in Parnassus and Havok magazine. His unpublished fantasy manuscript received an Editor's Choice Award in 2015. In 2016, he received first prize in a student writing competition. Peruse his blog, [lukelawwildman.blogspot.com](http://lukelawwildman.blogspot.com).









