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Exile Vol. LXVI

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Exile Vol. LXVI

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You of the finer sense,
Broken against false knowledge,
You can know at first hand,
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

Take thought.
I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.

Ezra Pound

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Letters from the Editors

If you're reading this edition of *Exile*, thank you. We are so proud and excited to showcase the incredible talent of everyone involved. For years, *Exile* has given students not only a chance to be published, but also an opportunity to connect with their peers outside of class; to be part of such a tradition is humbling. This year, dedicated poetry and prose editors selected twenty-three remarkable writers and artists to feature in our issue.

We hope something you read leaves you thinking a little differently or stays with you long after you've closed the magazine. Words are powerful tools that can create a world of change.

Over the past few months, we have been shadowing Rosa and Izzy during the editing process in preparation to take over next year. We are grateful for their guidance while teaching us all aspects of magazine production, and are eager for the next chapter of *Exile*.

- Lily Carroll and Mary Clare Edwards

Perhaps you were entranced by this year's stunning cover, maybe you opened to a random middle page and liked what you saw, or maybe you have no idea what *Exile* even is, and are standing there, pleasantly surprised that this is not, in fact, assigned reading material. No matter how or why you're reading this year's *Exile*, we're happy you've found us.

This is our second year as *Exile* Editors-in-Chief, and we could not be more satisfied with this year's issue and Denison's strong literary tradition represented within these pages. We are proud to produce a magazine where students across disciplines can publish their prose, poetry, and artwork, and where this work can be available not only online but as a physical book.

We hope you, like us, have taken something away from the pages in front of you. In reading the work of our peers, we've found ourselves humbled, moved, saddened, ecstatic, terrified, and surprised. Although we may attend the same college, we all experience life on the hill a little bit differently, and we hope that *Exile* can be a space for us to better understand and appreciate our Denison community. We are so grateful for our four years here, and for the opportunity to learn from and work with all of the dedicated faculty in the English Department. Without question, we have no hesitations about handing *Exile* over to Mary Clare and Lily, and look forward to seeing how *Exile* will continue to evolve to better represent Denison's community of writers and artists.

- Rosa Canales and Isabella Antonelli

I don't remember which Cape Cod beach I went to first. I imagine the ocean seemed overwhelming and enveloping back then, as if the greenish-blue water would swallow me whole. I do remember that it was the only time I felt free and unattached from a world I didn't want to understand. I would spiral with the wave to shore and, with it, be rushed back to sea. But I always emerged, my eyes salted and my hair full of seaweed.

Cape Cod, a 77-mile-long peninsula on the east side of Massachusetts, became my second home when I was five years old. My family still stays in the same house, located in Eastham.

The night we leave for Cape Cod, I'm always on edge. I pace the length of our house and check each clock on the way: the digital one that shines blue off the stainless steel stove, the manual one by my sister's middle school paintings, and my alarm clock that plays sounds of the rainforest each morning.

I bring the same books to the cape every year: coming of age stories about girls who are in love with boys who don't look at them twice. I love the familiarity of the crinkled pages and the sentences I've underlined. Some years they mean nothing to me, but sometimes, they mean everything.

Cape Cod's shape has stayed relatively the same since its formation after the ice age. It got its shriveled up arm from lobes containing basins in bedrock. My cape house sits right in the middle of The South Channel lobe, and it, too, has stayed relatively the same over the years, with its blue shutters and wood siding. Two years ago, the owners named the house "The Sanctuary" and hung a blue sign up above the kitchen window.

There used to be a plaque on the wall that said, "I searched the rainbows end and found not gold but you my friend." Every year, I would take a picture of it and laugh. To me, it never lost its hilarity. Because when I looked at it, I saw the house. Cheesy and cliché but familiar and something I didn't want to change. They took the plaque away years ago. But I still look for it, hoping they'll bring it back.

I can never sleep that first night. It's almost as if the house is not mine yet. As I lie on the bouncy twin mattress, thinking of my empty house back in New Hampshire, I think of my unmade bed with the grey flowered comforter, the sheets cold and bare. Then, I think of my current bedroom with the pictures on the wall above my head. In them are redheaded grandkids of the family we rent from. I'll think about my previous summers on the Cape, weeks where I'd do nothing but sit in the sun and read all day, and then, once that got too hot to bare, I'd run to the ocean's edge, letting my toes meet the liquid that felt too cold to be so smooth. But I never forced myself to rush in. I finally felt like I had time to get used to it.

Once I'm wrapped in the comfort of these memories, I'll close my eyes, and it will start to feel like home.

I always sleep the best on the last night. My exhaustion mixes with sunscreen, and this time, I don't think of how the people above me are strangers. Instead, I think about how we may not have anything in common but Cape Cod and "The Sanctuary" and the waves that sometimes crash too soon.

On our way out of town, we stop at the Salt Pond Visitor Center to see "Sands of Time" the documentary that they run every fifteen minutes. I choose to stay in the car and read while the rest of my family goes inside, down the corridor to the left, and enters a small theater.

There was a time when I joined them. I don't even know why I stopped going. It could have been because I had seen it enough times that I had it memorized. It could have been that nothing could compare to the time my sister found a lost diamond engagement ring under one of the seats, and the owner cried and hugged my sister tight. Maybe I just didn't like the film very much. It could have been that I didn't need it in my life anymore, one more thing to make me feel like I didn't have control. But right before I stopped going entirely, I'd only pay attention to the ending, when the narrator would say that Cape Cod would continue to change until it isn't here at all.

I imagine it like a tsunami; the wave rising up, foaming at the top and falling down all at once, taking out the cement bathrooms, then the parking lot, and the overgrown trail that my family takes to get to the beach, and lastly, I imagine it reaching my house with the freshly painted sign hanging above the bay window.

Days

Imani Congdon

Hazy dawn is daylilies.
It's a smooth stalk, a white petal,
leaves like cursive l's, need like a newborn.
Hungry, thirsty. Roots like a sponge.
Want like a mouth; gaping, dry.

Dusk comes like phlox,
dark purple dusted with sun,
a thousand eyes and their million lashes.
Stalk taut, like an upwards-stretched arm,
tall as the lily, smooth as her cheeks.

Night is phlox bloomed in lily fields,
left over from last year's plot,
strong enough to survive the cold alone.



Rush
Annie Karasarides

I Saw Seven Shooting Stars
Ethan McAtee

We sit on a log next to our smoldering fire with a baby elephant between us, and we gaze at the stars. We can barely make out any constellations within the sea of glittering lights.

A shooting star streaks across the sky, and you laugh with wonder. It's the first you've ever seen, you tell me. The elephant's trunk wraps around my hand and pulls it toward yours. I wrench it away and point out another shooting star.

The Milky Way is a cloudy road across the heavens, and I follow it with my eyes until I meet the gaze of the elephant. Its trunk points at my pocket, within which is the letter you wrote me that I read over and over until I had its sweet words memorized. I scour the sky for anything to distract myself—there! Two more shooting stars!

I mumble something about how it's one of those famous meteor showers you always see a million articles about on Facebook, and you laugh and say how lucky we are to get to see it together in a place so full of stars.

The elephant nudges my shoulder and nods its head in your direction and I'm tempted to say something cheesy about how I think *you're* a star, but instead I stay silent and watch a fifth brilliant stream of light zip across the horizon. We can't stay here forever. We both have our actual lives to get back to—yours across an ocean and mine in a landlocked state full of corn.

At this point, the elephant has crawled into my lap. Its trunk encircles my head and it turns to face you. As our eyes meet, a summer's worth of unspoken words shoot out of the elephant's trunk and hang in the air between us. I try to gather them, deciding it will be easier to write them down instead of saying them out loud.

You point out yet another shooting star as I finish the note and take a deep breath.

The elephant nuzzles my chin happily as I turn to hand you the note. But as soon as our eyes meet, I lose my resolve. I can't do it.

Instead, I feed the note to the elephant. It writhes in agony. Its pained trumpeting gets weaker and weaker, its motions slower and slower, until it stops.

We sit on a log next to a pit of cooling ashes, a dead elephant between us. A seventh shooting star flits through the sky, existing for briefer than the blink of an eye.

Scallops (edited version)

Micah Frenkiel

Eerily soon
I'd be old enough to give someone money
to draw something on me and have it
never wash off in the pool— And so,
I thought about getting
a scrabble piece, the lines of one,
on my ankle
on an afternoon in August
after work at my first ever job,
where I perspired
doggedly and all over
Dior garment bags and
carried them like dead bodies
up Hudson Street
where the agents would only be
wearing wide-legged pants,
Postmate-ing arugula salads and
savoring the garnishes
until five,

which would happen to all of us in fifteen
minutes.

And when it did and if we weren't there for
it,
they'd all be too furious to ask about
where specifically
the Dior and I had been
that had prevented us
from being
where we were supposed to,
but if they *had* asked,
I would have been honest
in telling them
that we were busy being assaulted
during a power outage
on the C train
by someone's selfish and
untimely flatulence,
and I would have told them about how
even before the assault,
I had already been thinking,
foolishly,
that there was *no way*
I could have wanted to be there
any less.



“students are not statistics—know our names”
Slayter Student Union, Denison University, Granville, OH
13 December, 2019
Michael Ball

Powerful discourse at organized protests quiets the masses and pauses the passerby to hear what the speaker has to say. Black Student Union (BSU) member and University Residence Council (URC), Tamela Flowers shouted to the crowd, “I’m outraged and ashamed to be a URC member,” the Head Resident of Curtis Hall said. The Denison University senior demanded action now, “What will happen,” Flowers asked, “when I tell prospectives that you cannot be Black and proud at Denison?” (Harrington, 1988). The crowd’s cheers rose to meet Flowers above and over the top where she stood from the podium. Like a rising crescendo, she drew one minute of roaring cheers for her provoking question. So many bodies on the grass that the quad is no longer artificial green, but a pastiche mix of earth toned colors as the community gathers around the person shouting from the flagpole.

I would like to think that the flagpole remembers. Like an elephant, I hope it holds decades of public memory of outrage, protest, and rejected harassment inside the aluminum tin of the base. The feeling of the hot sun that beats down on the crowd and the flag forever set in the layers of the metal. I hope that even though at the same time the next day the flagpole is alone, it still remembers when it came together to stand against hatred and injustice in the community. Braving the wind each morning, the flag greets the sun over the fleet of trees at the top of the hill. The waving flag mimics the fog that rolls in on the crisp October morning. It bows to those who have passed at half-mast.

The nipping wind chases commuters to hurry across campus. There are no traditions surrounding the flag on a college campus. It becomes something to pass by, to momentarily gaze, a pit stop for friends to meet. When enlisted in a mission, the flagpole is powerful. Activists with passion in their hearts have repeatedly chosen the flagpole to be their star destination when staging their protests.

The eerie silence of the forum as the audience waits for the next orator to stand behind the podium; hundreds of bodies all keep still to preserve the sanctity of the moment. There are important words being said. The thoughts that have been hidden behind doors, some never said

out loud, are being voiced. Dr. Desmond Hamlet, adviser to the BSU and English professor, proclaimed, “This incident shows a pathetic lack of awareness on the part of our community. We all must realize that racism is a form of violence.”

The importance can be seen in how many community members stand and stay. There are layers to the crowd. The furthest are the curious, those who did not know that this was going to happen. The community can recognize that this is something out of the homogeneity of campus life. The devoted stand closer to the elocutionist stepping forward to hear every word that spills from their heart. The center are the people with the most passion, the organizers, the victimized, the ones who have been yearning to speak out into the world about their issues. A line forms behind the podium, real or imagined, as the discourse picks up.

When the climax approaches, the public speaker holds the silence and it beats through the audience in waves. Visceral, tangible emotion flies in the air carried on by whispers, gasps, and unsettled fidgeting; shifting feet as the perpetrators realize their role in the pain.

The next day it will be only the flag that still stands as a reminder of the emotion of the day before.

For the first year, she and her big brother sat side by side every day as the yellow school bus wound through the roadside leaf piles and the mansions of the west side. When the older kids asked him questions they knew he couldn't answer, she cried on the front lawn wearing her tiny red rain boots and oversized purple backpack into the arms of her mother's soft fleece. Then summer came and went and Kindergarten turned into first grade. One Friday afternoon, she decided to get off at her classmate's house for a playdate leaving the spot next to him empty. She turned back and caught a glimpse of his blue eyes as they watched her leave him all alone. Without her there, he could not remind the driver it was his stop, so the bus glided right past their shingled house. Her brother rode silently all the way back to the sea of yellow, his round face pressed up against the glass, distantly watching his world go by. She came home and found out that their mother had been on the phone in a panic asking the school what they had done with her baby. So they assigned an adult wearing a lanyard and a nametag to sit with him. Then a month later, a white van labeled "carrying school children," came to pick him up each morning while she ran up the steps to sit with her new friends instead.

Tambourine Boy
Claire E. Tierney

He is the sweetest soul you will ever know. He runs freely through the tired greenery of late August. He also sits incredibly still, peacefully watching the wind sweep through the tree branches. He sits cross-legged on the floor, flipping delicately through the worn pages of our old storybooks. He is forever consumed by the thoughts trapped in his head, a wheel of film, flashing millions of words left unsaid. He is drawn to all types of music like a moth to the light. When we bring him to the experts they always shake their heads and tell us they really just don't know. While looking out over the chilled morning I think, his mind is like a white glove lost in the snow. It will always be somewhere out in the meadow long gone from our sight and maybe one day, when the winter subsides, the sun will come out and we will spot that glove through aging eyes; but for now, we push on. When we explain to people that it is lost they always say they are sorry, it's the worst word in the world. Sorry for what? He's still our tambourine boy.



Flower Vases
Alexandra Terlesky

Pears

Maeve Quinn

with small bruises the size of fingertips
under their skin, spread beneath the vendor's tent.
Passerby press to feel the stick of dried syrup.
If I count each speckle, connect them, I
imagine the trail would wind across taut flesh
like the maps of ancient Rome, roving walls
punctuated by fortresses and temples.

Only part of the Colosseum wall is still standing. What
makes sense now, as I stare at the crumbled stone,
is the way you used your hands: intent, and angry.
I fall asleep with my hotel door locked, murmuring
soles in the hall. I dream of floating at the bottom
of the Trevi fountain, raking coins through my toes
and fingers, their slimy coats loosening, freeing.

IAN C. BRADSHAW'S

CARLOS II

ACT ONE

Dramatis Personæ CARLOS II, *King of Spain*

PERO, *a blackamoor; King's prick* QUEEN *to Carlos II*

COURTIERS

SCENE: Throne-room at the Royal Alcázar of Madrid

COURTIERS. (*Sings.*)

First-born of Mary dead was from crib cribbed, And hob did fair babe for th' androgyne truck!
Grew King unsexed, and took Orleans as bride; Swear barbers France's daughter virgin died.

Long hath Carlos' prick at new Queen's cunt jibbed, And throws wide she her gates, and
varlets fuck! Does as she likes, and may he her ne'er chide;

So, no reason hath Carlos t' himself pride.

Think thou not him we hath affectless ribbed:

Inflame we our hearts with love to King Cuck!

(*They laugh. Enter KING CARLOS.*)

FIRST COURTIER.

Hark! hark, men. Sport of a King nearer comes.

KING CARLOS.

Lords, what merry lay dost you so well sing

That we Morpheus' calls refuse, and t' our Throne hales us back again, and stay constrains?

SECOND COURTIER.

At royal seat for our disport we doth

Weekly meet, and troll ancient Basque lyrics.

(COURTIERS chortle.)

KING CARLOS.

For King vulgar poesy? Tell us true, Lords,

How for Court all you would as lief perform.

(Aside.)

Song didst heart strike, and we remember when King fain to own himself Queen's
husband was.

Mayhap they may sing of Ma'am Orleans dead; For late meetings are to mem'ry recalled,

And bethought us of her charm and graces, But we their stay could not betem, so from Mind
wast demurely cast out, and mis'ry O'ertook us, and heart didst violent flutter, And grieved as 'tis
well-affected toward her. Hapless Spain thy King is too much woman!

(Lies on the ground. Sotto voce. COURTIERS surround him.)

Why our crowners fem'nal humours discharge; Why doth softness our heart incline, O Lord?

O Lord! why for Lot's penance must son curst Live, and this wretched state endure? What blights
Thou dost excite against Carlos Bewitched!

(Pause. Stands.)

Thou seemest doubly incensed, but wherein Hath Carlos offended Thee? Pray, speak plain!

FIRST COURTIER.

King, what doth trouble thee?

KING CARLOS.

My lords hear'st here nothing. Send for Queen, and Hence, your rooms; let morrow misdeeds
cancel.

FIRST COURTIER.

Grant time to please thee.

(Exeunt Courtiers.)

KING CARLOS. *(Simulates masturbation.)* Come Pero, dear'st cock!

(Enter PERO betwixt King Carlos' legs.)

PERO.

In faith, more seeming Queen than King implore

Me come, but Queen her creatures calls; yea, she With her hests doth make them vastly happy.

KING CARLOS.

Prick, thou must be cautelous, or lose crown.

PERO.

Well thou know'st it, 'twould better grace thee, too. Time goes we grow short, so say what
thou wouldst.

KING CARLOS.

With steady purpose speak we to thee who

Did to our retainers give poor credit,

That e'er are we out of fettle. One doth

For thy der'lict condition say, green Mantles Carlos' brow! or blagues much like Unto boys
in their fatuity. Thou

Makes rumour that sparks like a beau, and in Hearts indefect disorder thou begets.

Verily, God hast many malisons

Dispensed, and our front He did make misshaped. Disorders disturb the peace, and rend us

In sunder, but if we thy liquor spilt, Quiet's the worry, and be there never

A claimer to front our charge to rule Spain.

PERO.

Marry, even not sanguine complexion

Could aggravate thy foul aspect! Be to Thee plain that I thy report blast, wherefore

Dost thou still lay upon me curses and

Imprecations dire? Thou art a parlous

Man, 'struth! Spurn the Earth and curse and ban, and Forswears thee thy doubled tongue and
King's balm.

I vow, class me as recreant prick, and

Thou makes God sore beat: injured with thy sin.

For Him thou wilt fear Anjou; King of France

Cockers him high fantasy, and villain

Bourbon shall thee rough confound — and right course Divert — if for gall no child genders thou.

KING CARLOS.

Sorry state where King under his prick bends!

(Enter Queen in bed-clothes, with tangled hair.)

QUEEN. *(Excited.)*

Why dost thou clepe me loathèd Queen hither,

When I... *(Pants.)*

Was at bedside, and much engaged in prayer?

PERO.

Be pleased to stay th' evening and fuck, Ma'am?

QUEEN. *(Laughs.)*

My strange inequality of temper

Begs thy excuse, King. Would'st thou have me to

Shrine, and lash? Will go: by Heavens I swear't.

(Taking leave.)

KING CARLOS.

What meanness takes that complete o'ertops this

Great business! If thou beest our hand-maid,

Then thou art in duty bound to fair Spain.

(Remove KING CARLOS to the throne. PERO lies on the ground.)

QUEEN. *(Aside.)* Know you,

Low boys not King Queen's body honest used.

(Sits in KING CARLOS' lap. She moves slightly. PERO stands; then, with a sigh, sits.)

KING CARLOS.

Imagine thee Orleans, but prick's as rope!

(Throws off the QUEEN. He shrinks.)

O Spain! how thy meads wilt for Anjou rot!



Loud Mouth (Cover Art)
Annie Karasarides

it's a jungle out there
Scarlett Constand

the cuts on my arms are like zebra stripes,
jagged edges stand out against the pearlescence surrounding.
my body is the ultimate prey, my mind the ravenous lion.

tears like raindrops flow down my cheeks
as i struggle to breathe, struggle to calm.
the sterile white sink before me is stained with blood,
circling the drain like a predator stalks its prey,

and my own lion-mind is to blame.

9/5/19

A Little Bit More Broken

Claire E. Tierney

She hated it. Everything was messy and confusing. It was back when they still had somewhere to go and something to be excited about. She didn't know then that it was only going to get worse. Despite everything, she refused to give up and spent an hour flattening her curly hair. The steam from the straightener made her room smell like birthday candles. She told me they all did it, applying endless layers of mascara and checking their outfits in the mirror over and over again. When she arrived and finally gathered the courage to enter, the only answer was no, no, no, and no. So she ran and hid alone in between the concrete walls and next to the dumpster with the vomit-covered mattress. There in the dark frozen air, she cried for hours. The kind of crying you remember from falling off your bike as a kid, where you laid pain-stricken on the pavement while your chest heaved in and out and your eyes burned. When she called me, I cried too.

Another Day in the Backyard While My Parents Fight
Cody Tieman

While late spring lingers,
I arrange earthworms
into a writhing braid.
I watch my art slip away.

I arrange earthworms
to travel my hand lines
I watch my art slip away
as they return to the soil.

To travel my hand lines
place trust in my palms
as they return to the soil,
I watch the train pass.

Place trust in my palms
my legs to my chest
I watch the train pass
and my home shake.

My legs to my chest
while late spring lingers
and my home shakes
into a writhing braid.



Garden
Annie Karasarides

My father hates it when birds build nests on top of the lights on our porch. They've been doing it for years, and year after year, my father has to evict the bird families and sweep out the bits of straw and sticks that have gotten everywhere.

This year, he told me, he bought a birdhouse and put it in the big sycamore tree in front of the house. "That'll solve the problem once and for all!" he boasted.

For months, the birdhouse sat, empty, among the branches.

And for months, my father found himself chasing birds away from the porch as they attempted to construct a home.

What is a birdhouse, really? A glorified box, that's what. We build a box, cut a hole in it, and stick a roof on top.

Why on earth would a bird want to live in a manmade box? Do you think, if some giant, well-meaning robin made a great big "humannest" and placed it on the corner, people would want to live in it? Of course not. Humans don't live in nests. Birds do. And humans live in houses. Birds don't.

You never turn on an episode of *House Hunters* to find Mr. and Mrs. Bird arguing because there isn't a birdhouse that has both the swimming pool and large kitchen Mrs. Bird wants *and* is a short commute from Mr. Bird's favorite crabapple tree.

Birds just want a nice, safe spot in a tree where they can build a cozy nest for their family to thrive in. There's plenty of fresh air, and it's easy for them to fly in and out of.

And yet we keep occupying the best nesting spots with dark, claustrophobic boxes where the only mode of egress is a tiny hole in the side (which, by the way, definitely violates fire codes). Just try flying out of that, birds.

If humankind were to be defined by a single thing, I would argue that it is our unending urge to gentrify everything they can get their hands on. Old factories are turned into lavish studio apartments, unused parking lots are transformed into verdant public parks, bankrupted family-owned businesses are reimagined as Starbucks shops.

Even nature isn't safe from this global-scale Manifest Destiny. Unbelievably beautiful mountain ranges have become littered with tourist towns, African savannahs are overrun by safari-goers and have practically become zoos, and, perhaps most egregious, the lovely tree-lined streets of my hometown have become infested with birdhouses.

And why even put up birdhouses? What do we get out of them? The birds don't love us like our pets do. They don't even get near us. Birdhouses just sit in our yards and allow us the pleasure of going, "Bird!" whenever we see one fly to or from the birdhouse. That's it. That's all they do.

I explained this all to my father after he told me about his birdhouse's failure. "Dad, it's not worth it, just let the birds be." I urged him. Better to sweep out the porch every once in a while than to contribute to mankind's gentrification of the planet.

But he shook his head. "It was just too small, that's all. I just need something bigger that they'll like more."

The birds were disinterested in his bigger birdhouse. That didn't stop dad, though. He just kept buying birdhouses. Now, to walk through our backyard is like driving through an old Midwest steel town--lots of structures with nobody in them.

Because birds don't live in houses. They never have, and they never will. Birds live in nests.

I forgot to live. My eyes were fixated on the night sky, a beautiful array of veiled blues. I sat on the hill alone, the lush grass curling up over my body. Fireworks thundered, stirring up my feelings. Each rocket exploded as if they were conversing, a dis-harmonic reminder of my loneliness. I clamped my chest with my right hand, squeezing to feel pain or anything. I smiled. I laughed. My left hand began violently tearing at the grass along my side. I turned to face a patch of empty grass, *a perfect spot to sit* and my chest constricted. I thought, *Ireshia, what's the point of living?* Gradually my vision blurred as I continued to stare at the fireworks. All I could hear were the tears dropping, exploding onto the grass, each tear a note in a thundering tune. My laughing became choked, which only encouraged me to laugh harder. The fireworks stopped, revealing my laugh to me. I stopped, muted, no longer smiling and thought *Ireshia is dead. Move on.*

I was outside of my house, standing at the front door. The chilling breeze brushed against my fur coat and I wiped off my damp face. I smiled, my teeth concealed, and walked in to feel a cover of warmth, smelling the intoxicating scent of sweet chili. Without warning, I was blindsided by a hug at my waist, Ireshia's long french braided hair striped by my side. Ireshia looked up at me, grinning, revealing her missing baby teeth. Chipped, her two front teeth were glossed in SpongeBob toothpaste. This is a surprise visit, we went through our usual greetings and ceremony--the typical mundane process, yet it never felt dull with her. "Uh uh, you're not getting off easy boy," Ireshia said, puckering her lips and placing a hand on her hip. She raised her eyebrows past their intended limit, implying she wouldn't take my typical response of "nothing's wrong." I grimaced jokingly, "Why are you bullying me, little girl? Fine, my day was rough. School just kicked my ass."

"Ooooooh, I'm telling your mommy!" she responded, mockingly plopping herself on my mahogany-colored couch. My arm wrapped around her shoulders, and we giggled comfortably. Ireshia grabbed her boombox from the nearby bookshelf. She stood announcing, "I'll go first!"

Unimpressed, I responded, "Haha okay, I'm excited to beat you." Ireshia glared as she

began to tap her left foot, matching the song's upbeat thumps. Her head began to bob and then there was a moment of silence. The beat dropped and she exploded! Her body twisted then spun, spindly arms flailing as she glided across the wooden floor. She nearly slipped; however, she caught her balance and continued, both precise and graceful. She practically floated, each step a methodical slice of her masterpiece. Ireshia then started to sneak toe taps in between her steps. I caught a glance from Ireshia, her eyes squinted and she beamed with joy. *I wish I had this much energy in school.* I sniffed the air, *that chili is heavenly.* Ireshia thrust her shoulders up then down in a circular motion. She looked like a human car, driving as I smiled with my teeth bare. The song came to a close, I clapped, "Bravo bravo haha, you killed that, girl." She bowed, declaring, "Now, show me whatcha got boy!" Ireshia collapsed onto the couch as she wheezed and looked dumbfounded. Sweat traced her eyebrows, dripping into her eyes. She wiped, nudging me with her elbow. I stood, stretching out my arms and yawning, "I'm tired, we can finish another time." Ireshia exclaimed, "NO, let's do it now!"

"I'm hungry dude, aren't you? That chili smells so good." I responded, anxiously making my way towards the kitchen.

"No, I wanna—" Ireshia was cut off by my mom's food call to the dinner table. We ate dinner, Ireshia pouting and glaring throughout. Eventually, the doorbell rang. Then, Ireshia's mother banged on the door to the point that its frame pulsed. I opened the door. Ireshia's mother, my aunt, stood anxiously thumping her leg and snapping her fingers. Her curly weave was barely attached to her scalp. I winced at the smell of her breath as she forced herself past me. She demanded Ireshia be brought to her and began interrogating me. My aunt probed about my academics as she clapped frantically and praised me for sticking to the, apparently, "correct path." I started to get annoyed at her; her constant sniffing irritated me. There was a pasty blob of spit and an unfamiliar substance in the corner of her mouth. Initially, I thought it was a part of a cold, but her eyes spoke the truth. They were bloodshot. I offered a tissue; however, that was wasted energy. It was as if she didn't even see it. She looked past me. Ireshia arrived, and I attempted to hug her, but my aunt took her hand and began to pull her through the door. Their backs faced me, hiding my aunt's crack crazed lips. Ireshia looked at me, "You better come to Chicago and see me!"

My aunt yanked Ireshia out the door.

I smiled, waving cheerfully, "I'll see you very soon! Winter break, love you!" The door closed and life seemed dull.

Winter break had arrived early, the winds outside were frost ridden as snow piled upward. The school bell finished its chime, and the class fell silent, waiting for their instruction. I leaned against the back of my chair, closing my eyes briefly. Dr. Thompson began his lecture; I noticed he had a piece of spinach wedged in his front teeth or maybe it was lettuce. He wore his usual fresh dress shirt and tacky pants combo. One of his pants pockets was untucked, revealing its wine-stained spots. The child next to me spoke. His voice felt distant, yet directed at me. I stared at the ceiling, it was oddly clean. Nothing hung from it, except for the spider nest supported by silk and mold. My phone rang, buzzing in my pocket as I panicked to silence my phone. "Excuse yourself, Cordero," Dr. Thompson said to me, annoyed. I left the choir room as the class giggled. Unfazed in appearance only, I entered the hallway. My phone read "Mommy." I clicked accept, "Hey, what's up, ma?"

"D-man...I'm picking you up," she quickly responded, distressed.

Irritated, I said, "What why? I can't afford to-- "

"Damn it! Listen to me for once! Ireshia...Ireshia" my mother's voice cracked. She continued, "She's dead, I'm so sorry, baby. Grandad just called me." I placed a palm over my mouth and heard incoherent words through the phone. My hand curled, pressing against my nose as I sniffled and puffed air intensely. I began to tremble, my grip on the phone waned--it nearly slipped out of my hand. I cut my mother off, "How'd she die?" Impatiently, I yelled, "TELL ME. What happened?"

My mother took a breath, "Cordero, Ireshia never made it home. Your aunt fucking abandoned her. These past couple weeks Ireshia's been living on her own. She was in a car with a couple of kids who were playing with a gun...and it fired. The bullet killed her." A sharp pain struck my head as I clamped my chest, my shoulders feeling nauseatingly light. I hung up the phone and bolted to the bathroom. I slammed the stall door shut, locking it. I stared at the ceiling, and a tremor surged through my body. My shaking only made me angrier. I punched the door

once, twice, three times, paused, then a fourth. My hands were numb, blood trickled onto the floor. I sat down on the toilet and thought *I'm dreaming, this is just a nightmare. Wake up.* I slapped my face furiously multiple times, then stopped. My arms tightened, and my jaw locked open. I screamed, "Wake uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuup!" Tears streamed onto my lips, stinging with a taste of salt. No one came. The hallway was silent. My eyes were attracted to the mold on the ceiling, and I laughed. The mold seemed on the verge of descending onto my face. I smiled weakly, my gaze falling to the ground, *what am I doing.* I licked my knuckles, cleaning the crevices in between my fingers. Then I wiped my tears, smearing my face with blood. I listened. Silence kept me company.

Three months had passed since that day. I'd never seen so many members of my family in one place, especially in a church. Everyone sat in their seats providing their complete attention to what laid in front of them, Ireshia's casket. The crowd was overwhelmed with feelings of hatred and sadness. First came the women whose violent wails pierced our hearts. Second came the children whose cries broke our spirits. Last came the men who forsook their pride. This wave of emotions engulfed me in hate. Despair washed over me as my eyes poured like rain. I hummed, an attempt to ease my mind but to no avail. The murderer, a 12-year old boy, sat four aisles ahead of me. I clenched my jaw and attempted to avert my eyes. A long trail of small pieces of kleenex led to Ireshia's casket. At last, my Aunt walked up to the casket and started howling, begging for forgiveness. Forgiveness that couldn't be discovered in this room. The walls were ashen and dull which seemed out of place in the presence of Ireshia. I couldn't force myself to see the body nor to cry. My stomach rumbled, something I learned to ignore. I stared at the pieces of tissues, the trail now muddled, and I stood. The casket pulled me closer, slowly, gradually, until my heart stopped. I peered into the casket, Ireshia wasn't smiling. She's dead. A covered hole resided below her right eyebrow. I wanted to feel her gaze, her touch, but it wasn't in this room. I was tempted to press my thumb on her eye to reveal its hollowness, or maybe mine. I looked back at the crowd and tears burnt the inner corners of my eyelids. The 12-year old murderer looked at me. My body trembled as I contemplated pressing my thumb into his skull. Instead, I dropped a ball of tissues next to her

casket. I left a piece of my humanity at the casket. My smile was stolen. The soles of my shoes were glittered with tissue paper.

Another three months passed; the leaves were verdant, unripe. I sat on the doorsteps of my school's main entrance. The wind catered to my heart, carrying a single leaf into my hands. Hands that resembled those of a beggar. The leaf's touch was jagged on the edges and smooth elsewhere. My hands curled and crumpled the leaf until it dispersed into pieces. Gone into the wind like the countless students and teachers alike who passed me. The school was 8 to 4, and it was 4:03. I felt invisible; a voice kissed my ears but their words were deafened. On my shoulder, I felt something. I looked up, and it's Dr. Thompson holding out a hand. He asked me, "Would you follow me?" He gestured to take a walk around the school. I followed and we talked. We spoke about Ireshia's death and how I lost my appetite. I felt like a husk as he listened intently, never allowing my gaze to wander into the clouds, the trees or cracks in the pavement. My breathing slowed, and the sun's heat caressed my skin. The wind carried our steps forward, providing a cool wall of protection. When Dr. Thompson wrapped his sweaty arm around my shoulders, I felt at home. I told him about my day in the bathroom stall and Ireshia's funeral. Our walking pace slowed dramatically, and he told me about his life. His experience with loss. "Keep moving forward. If you fall, fall forward. That's all you can ask for," Dr. Thompson hugged me until I couldn't breathe, yet I felt alive. I heard his sniffing, "I'm here for you boy. You're precious." He then explained why he made me jump through hoops during classes. He believed in me. We continued walking, and I told him about Ireshia's dancing. My eyes lit up, my chest proud. Dr. Thompson grinned, laughing and chiming in about the ridiculousness of her dancing. I realized how much I missed talking, to him, to people. I had so much energy my hands were cycling between soft clapping and rubbing. We laughed, then there was a moment of silence. Dr. Thompson looked anxious as he pondered something. He scratched his chin then asked, "Would you join my show choir team? You'd really help us do something special." I was taken aback, and all I could manage was a thumbs up. I began laughing forcefully, an unnatural laugh marking change. Dr. Thompson just smiled in response. We'd arrived at the bike rack and said goodbye. I biked home alone but grounded. My

eyes wandered, searching for something. I looked at the trees, the clouds and the cracks in the pavement. No answers were found, yet my life had finally hit unpause.

After a year of countless hours working on my craft, I joined a family, *4th Avenue Jazz Ensemble*. The bruises that stretched from my thighs to my ankles, the sacrifices to my schoolwork, the vulnerability, the failures, tears, blood, doubt, and pain were all worth it. Now, I was at my first performance. My pain and struggle were veiled by a smile. A natural smile that had the support of all my fellow performers on stage. We stood anxiously as we all held hands behind an unveiled curtain, waiting in anticipation. My shoulders bore an excessive weight, buckling my knees and sowing the seeds of doubt, as I remembered the unmatched spirit of Ireshia's dancing. My chest felt warm as I remembered her laugh, her eyes, and how her beautiful braided hair twirled. The curtains ascended, revealing the stage. In harmony, we walked to our designated spots. I arrived at the front row faced with uncertainty and fear. My shaking stopped, I breathed. There was a moment of silence. I thought, *Ireshia do you see me?* I stared into the crowd, a deep abyss. The countless eyes receded into the darkness; however, dim lights shined over us. The band began playing, and our bodies moved, synchronized with the song's rigid three counts. I pounded my chest, followed by my arms reaching out, beckoning the beat. My arms pulled into my armpits and I froze. My ears deafened out the world, and everything seemed to have slowed down. My eyes wandered, I saw all the faces in the crowd. There was a pair of kids, a boy, and a girl. The girl had an arm around the boy, leaning her head against his. In the pocket of her flannel, a ball of tissues peered out and I smiled, exposing my teeth. I looked below the stage and saw Dr. Thompson. He held a thumbs up, smiling, his eyes locked with mine. Sweat traced my eyebrows, dripping into my eyes, but it didn't matter. The music fell silent and this unnerving silence broke the rigidity of my dancing. The beat dropped and my body exploded. A graceful explosion that embodied passion and love. The tremor of hate surged out. My body twirled and dashed across the stage as joy poured from every outlet in my body. My body continued to give what was owed and the burdens that submerged me in sheets of ice melted. I thought *Ireshia lives*.

The living room smelled of fresh chili. Its sweetness made me cringe as I leaned back against the stiff couch. I plopped my feet onto the table, exposing my overgrown toenails that were filled with dirt. On my heels, the skin was hard, it peeled like slices of cheese and blisters were littered between my toes. I pulled an ashen rag from my pocket and began scrubbing. I dipped it into the bucket of warm water at my feet. My feet throbbed and bled as I scraped away the dead skin. I expected to feel pain but it didn't greet me. Then my mind traveled to thoughts about Ireshia. I thought, *I bet her feet hurt*. Before she died, Ireshia must've traveled the streets alone, listening to dogs on chains barking and strangers yelling. Each street looked identical and the wind slapped her face as she walked with no destination in mind but home. *Where is home?* Periodically, she thought, *Mama or D-man gotta be near*. Each car that passed gave her false hope. I'm sure she slipped on ice once or twice and waited for someone to lift her. No one did. Or maybe she came across a garbage can and decided to eat a moldy piece of bread that had peanut butter on the crust. Her smile had to fade at some point. In reality, I know that she would get desperate enough to hang out with a couple of strangers, some kids who grew up too fast. They sat in a car, protected and safe until a 12-year old boy revealed a pistol. The kids laughed and joked about gang violence, imitating the thugs on their streets. There sat Ireshia in the back, silently crying, but no one listened. The pistol was fired and the bullet entered her skull only 25 miles away from me. My imagination died. I finished cleaning my feet, a puddle of blood and water flowed across the table. The blood almost reached the edge, trickling onto the carpet. I didn't care if it did. I placed my feet in a bucket of warm water. I looked at the wall. Its paint was a faded purple except for one spot concealed. There was a picture of Ireshia mounted on the wall, covering the hollow spot where I'd once punched the wall and broken through the drywall. I removed the picture, placing it on the ground. Then I dumped my bloodied bucket of water into the hole. I mounted the picture back up. The picture stared. In the picture, Ireshia smiled, a smile that was undeniable. I squinted my eyes, smiling at the photo and thought, *her smile moved mountains*.



“you think the world is yours to explore? get the hell off my property”

Granville South, OH – 11 May, 2019

Michael Ball

Ground
Imani Congdon

I grab vaguely upward from the floor.
I feel for the prepped French Press,
full of unused grounds.
God, I love Cuban coffee.

The morning is still gunpowdery black,
so my mother is alarmed to find me there
chewing the dry roast noisily,
legs splayed and flush to the kitchen floor.

Balsa cabinets paneled with ash
do not curve for a weary spine.

She asks what I am doing.
I look up at her and smile a tar smile.
I like my coffee like I like my women, ma,
I joke. *Bitter and gritty.*



“hindsight is 20/20”

Conesville Power Plant, Conesville, OH

18 February, 2019

Michael Ball

In Ohio, people must be seventeen to give blood, or sixteen with parent consent. The Oak Harbor High School blood drive was on the twenty-second of March, two days after my sixteenth birthday. I signed up for the 8:00am-9:20am time slot, so I could skip Chemistry and Algebra II. I sat through a half hour of lecture from the Physics teacher, Mrs. Swint (“Did you eat lunch? Here, drink this entire water bottle”) and the fifteen-minute questionnaire from the tattooed nurse (“Have you ever had a past partner that had HIV? Have you ever given oral sex?”). I was almost ready for the gurney, but there was one more test: the iron test. The nurse screened the tiny dot of blood on my finger. The minimum requirement for iron levels was a 12.5—mine was an 8.5.

“Girl, you need to start taking iron pills.” The nurse shook her head.

I couldn’t donate, but I did get a free cookie, a Mickey Mouse Band-Aid, and I skipped Chemistry and most of Algebra II.

Now I have fully developed into my fear of needles, and am thankful for my anemia, so I don’t have to give blood. My friend, Grace, who is a big advocate for helping humans, though she always shops at Urban Outfitters and H&M, attempts to patronize me into giving blood.

“It saves lives,” she says, “What else do you need to know?”

But just the thought of lying on those deep red gurneys and watching my blood leave my veins makes me lightheaded.

I sigh, hang my head and say, “I can’t, I’m iron deficient.”

Ironically, in order to get a special prescription for iron supplements (over-the-counter pills weren’t satisfactory for my 8.5 level of iron), I had to get blood drawn. I went in for the annual physical with my doctor, Brian. At that time, my bicep had been developing this particularly nasty bruise: deep blue and purple in the middle with yellowish green on the outside in a shape resembling a broken egg. Brian poked it.

“Do you bruise easily?”

The first time I was pantless in front of my boyfriend, his face scrunched up. I reached for my jeans.

“Fuck. Are you okay?” Jacob was referring to the collage of bruises on my legs.

“I’m anemic.”

He spent the next half hour counting my bruises.

“Yes, I do.”

“Do your nails chip easily?”

“Fairly, but I started taking those hair and nail vitamins.”

“Do you crave ice?”

Instead of wanting a bedtime snack of Oreos or chocolate chips, I wanted ice—crushed ice. I craved ice for whole meals. Sometimes, I added water to make it melt a little and easier to chew. Other times, I wanted it just the way it was. The best part of eating crushed ice was when the tiny pieces formed together like a slushy.

“Not so much anymore.”

“Are you tired all the time?”

Every day at two in the afternoon, I fall asleep. This is quite unfortunate on Tuesdays and Thursdays when I have Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, and Environmental Rights, which is even longer than the title suggests. I know it’s coming when Dr. Cort’s constant orange button up shirt and pink, blue, and purple tie becomes dull and swirled. Doodling the decaying Black-Eyed Susan’s outside can’t even keep me awake.

“Pretty much.”

“Are you cold all the time?”

“Cold is just a mindset,” my friend, Coby, said to me one day when he saw me wearing gloves in class.

“But I have low iron.”

“Breathing can solve anything.”

And maybe that’s true, but it certainly doesn’t help when my feet are so cold that I wear three pairs of socks.

“All the time.”

“It sounds like you’re lacking iron.”

I tried to tell Brian that I knew I was iron deficient because I couldn’t give blood two years ago. He wasn’t content with this answer, so he called the nearby hospital and made me an appointment to get blood work done. The hospital is named Magruder but nicknamed McMurder. I was extremely nervous. But everything went smoothly, and I left the hospital with a green apple Blow Pop.

The results came about a week later. McMurder informed me that I was indeed anemic and gave me a prescription for iron supplements.

I quickly learned that taking an iron supplement every day isn’t easy. Remembrance is not a strong point of mine, and in order to take the pill, I have to remember, so already I’m at a disadvantage. It is also quite crucial to take the supplement with orange juice. The acidity helps the body absorb the iron. If I don’t take it with orange juice, the possible side effects are heartburn, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, and cramps. I would rather not take it without orange juice. The problem is, I’m a college student. I don’t have orange juice, nor do I have a mini fridge in my dorm, and the orange juice in the dining hall makes me gag.

Frequently, I complain to Jacob about being cold or tired, or most likely both, and he’ll say, “Well did you take your iron pill today?”

“No.”

“Then shut up.”



Sunrise
Annie Karasarides

Dan's daughter had been in the bathroom for seventeen minutes now. He wouldn't have knocked if he didn't think it was serious, let alone his own bodily emergency. He hoped this wouldn't be one of the most intrusive mistakes he made as a father. After all, there are just some things fathers can't understand. He knocked anyhow.

"Lou, you okay in there?" he asked cautiously.

"Yeah, Dad. I'm just—

"Yep, you don't need to tell me, I promise, it's fine." Dan cringed at himself as he began to quickly walk away and leave his good intentions behind him. Girls shit too, he reminded himself. He should know. He was the one that changed her and trained her.

Dan didn't take five steps down the hallway before he heard, "Hey, Dad?"

He turned towards the bathroom door. "What's up, honey?" he called.

"I'm bleeding, I think I—"

"Did you cut yourself doing something?" Dan asked as he made his way back to the door.

"No."

"Do you need me to come in there and help you?" Dan's hand was gripped on the doorknob now.

"No!"

Dan's grip loosened. "Okay. You sure you don't need anything?"

"Dad... Dad, I'm *bleeding*, like..."

Dan's insides hollowed. He didn't know what to do.

"Oh!" was all he could muster before he asked, "Do you have enough toilet paper in there to, you know—"

"Yes, Dad! But it—it doesn't work like that! It never worked like that to begin with, anyhow!"

"No, I know, I know." But Dan didn't know. He leaned against the wall facing the bathroom door and ran his hands through his hair, trying to feel for a solution.

“I mean, I can run to the store really fast and grab whatever you need if you want,” Dan finally offered.

“And you’re just gonna leave me here on the freaking toilet?”

“Louise, I literally don’t know what else to do. Unless you wanna fold up some toilet paper and pad your—”

“No! God, I can’t even think straight right now.”

They both paused, waiting for one another to say the right thing.

“Fine,” Louise said, “You just make sure you lock the door on your way out.”

“Promise, honey,” Dan replied, “Hang in there, okay? We’re gonna figure this out.” He began to walk away and shouted, “I’ll just grab everything I see!”

He began to walk out of the hallway as he heard Louise yell, “We have no other option! You leave me here long enough, and my legs will fall asleep so bad I’ll become a freaking paraplegic!”

...

“Lou! You still in there?” Dan shouted as he approached the bathroom door with everything he thought Louise would need.

“I don’t know where else I’d go, Dad,” Louise replied.

“Good.” He began pulling products out of the grocery bags. “Now, I have a little bit of everything because I don’t know what’s going on. If you want, I can stand out here and read out all the details and—”

“Can you just toss it all in here?”

Dan felt that wouldn’t be the best solution.

“Are you sure?” he asked. “I can help you figure this out, I’m sure. It doesn’t look all that hard from the fine print here.”

“Yeah,” Louise answered, “Please. Literally don’t read any more of the boxes. That’s really weird.”

Dan was relieved, but also a little defeated. He felt his daughter’s uncertainty through the doorknob as he cracked the door open, wide enough for his arm to wiggle through and pass the

pads and the tampons over the sink and the weight scale, along the parallel wall into what sounded like Louise's lap. He asked if everything was at least in her reach, but there was no response.

Dan closed the door and leaned against the wall opposite. He slid down the wall until he found the floor, and he hung his arms about his propped knees. He waited for anything other than the sound of Louise rummaging through what she thought would work. He didn't know if he should leave Louise to it or not.

"How are your legs feeling?" Dan asked, attempting to lighten the mood.

"They're the only parts of my body where blood literally isn't rushing to right now, Dad," Louise flippantly responded.

Dan chuckled to himself out of discomfort.

"Damn it, Dad! What's so funny!" Louise exploded.

"Nothing, honey, nothing! I'm sorry, I—"

And in the midst of his sporadic apology, Dan heard his daughter gasp for air in a way he knew carried her tears. Her breath rendered him silent. He knew Louise was crying, even though all he heard were her exasperated inhales. All he could do was sit there.

"God, Lou... I'm sorry. I wish you could tell me what I can do."

Louise sniffed before groaning to herself.

"I just wish Mom was here right now, Dad, okay? That's—that's all I want!"

Dan's heart swelled as he breathed in. "I know." It shriveled as he breathed out.

"And I'm so lost without her that my—my own body is a stranger to me! I don't understand what I'm thinking, or how I'm feeling, or how I'm supposed to be! What I'm supposed to do! And I can't even, like, talk to you about it, Dad! How can you know?"

"I can't," Dan responded. It was the only truth he could offer.

"God, we knew this was gonna happen, too, Dad." Dan heard Louise ripping open a box of something, shuffling her fingers through plastic wrappers. "And I know you can raise me the only way you know how, but you can't help me now, okay? I really just need you to stay out of this."

Louise's cries grew more audible. Dan writhed his fingers behind his neck before moving his hands to the ground and hoisting himself up.

He then grazed his finger along the bathroom door. "Louise."

There was no response.

"Call if you need me, Louise."

Dan sighed as he walked out of the hallway, into a new stage of life out of his control. But he couldn't cry about it. Louise might see, and she might not know how to handle that.

Babel

Tuuli Qin-Terrill

prayer flags	hanging
between	paper lanterns
soaked up	incense stained
blessings	sounds of
fall	tangerines and
short	drowning chants
we are	stuck
choking	in our throats
on our own	whispering
prayers	we love.

AFTER *LIZ AND CHAIR* (MICKALENE THOMAS)

Isabel Ostrowski

This summer I burnt peach colored candles for Sekhmet and you still look upon me with unadulterated scorn. God says “no” sometimes. God says sometimes you have to take matters into your own hands, so expect me in your office, sometime this week, cloaked in furs and smelling of floor cleaner, bright and stinking and fresh from the field of the corner store. Expect the worn sole of my sandal connecting with your temple and rattling the altar in your skull, snuffing your incense with spit-wet fingertips and shattering the clay idols you cast in your image. I don’t care who you are. I wove my throne from palm leaves and salved my blisters with your snot, hot from blubbering.

The Steps You Take

Katie Lauck

right up over down over left.

up down over up over over down over.

over up over up over down over down.

up over over down over up over down up over over down over up over down.

These are the steps you take to avoid looking at the dead man lying in the hot Jamaican street.

These are the steps you take to keep your mind off the murder you're not quite implicated in.

These are the steps you take to solve the final layer of a Rubik's cube.

Step 1: right up over down over left

You step out of the customs room you have been standing in for hours and head *right* to the bathroom. You rummage through your backpack and pull a skirt *up* from the bottom of your things. The skirt feels much better than the long jeans you had on in the overwhelming Jamaican heat. You walk out of the restroom and look *over* at the beautiful palm trees outside. The corners of your mouth never fall *down* from their smile because this is your first time outside of the country, and you have been waiting for this vacation for months. Your mother calls you *over*, and you quickly get on the bus that will shuttle you to your resort. You're lucky - you make it just before they shut the doors to drive off. You fight your sister for the best seat, but eventually you win and settle in next to the window on the *left*.

Step 2: up over down over up over over down over

Your bus driver looks *up* from the road and *over* at the rest stop on the side of the street. He turns the wheel, and the bus heads *down* to the stop so you and your fellow passengers can get a drink. Just before the driver gets to the parking lot, however, a motorcycle comes out from his blind spot. As your bus hits the man on the motorcycle, he flies *over* his handlebars and *up* against the window next to your head. He falls *over* into the road. You hope against all odds that he will move, but he

doesn't even roll *over*. He is dead. And for some God-forsaken reason, his dark eyelids are not *down*. As you look into the eyes of a man who can no longer see you, your own eyes begin to sting, your heart speeds to an alarming rate, and your stomach turns *over*.

Step 3: over up over up over down over down

The bus finishes pulling *over*, and the driver leaps *up* out of his seat and runs *over* to the man as a crowd of onlookers gathers around the scarlet stained street. The adults on the bus stand *up* and scramble to the windows around you. You want to look *over* at what's happening, but you're too terrified after seeing the man's eyes, so you instead look *down* at the Rubik's cube in your hand. You solve it once, twice, three times. Each time you finish the final layer you start *over*, so you have a reason to keep your head *down* and your mind distracted from the whispers of a cracked head and bleeding mouth.

Step 4: up over over down over up over down up over over down over up over down

Eventually the police show *up* carrying the biggest guns you have ever seen and lay a sheet *over* the man. You solve the Rubik's cube for what must be the thirtieth, but you can't stop; you simply flip it *over* and start again. Out of nowhere the bus driver gets back on the bus and announces that he will now be taking you on to your hotel. As he sits *down*, you look *over* at your mother in confusion because you had assumed you would get more information about the man you had just killed or at least would have been moved to a bus where his blood was not smeared across your window. Your mother seems just as confused as you, but her lips turn *up* in a reassuring yet frightened smile. For the rest of the drive *over* to the hotel you keep your head *down* so nobody will see the tears that have formed in the corners of your eyes. The rest of the vacation goes well, but it's hard to ignore the dark cloud hovering *up* above it all. On the last day, your family takes a private car *over* to the airport and your hands have a slight tremble in them the whole ride there. Over the next few weeks, you can't seem to get the man and his vacant stare out of your mind. One day you get an idea, so you sit *down* at your computer and spend hours pouring *over* obituaries and death reports from Jamaica to try and figure out the name of the man you hit, but to no avail. As

time goes on, the weight of the event lifts *up* from your shoulders piece by piece, and you begin to numb yourself to the pain as best as you can. But no amount of time will ever fully numb you, and you know in your heart that you will never truly get *over* it; you may not have directly caused that man's death, but you were a part of it and for that a piece of your heart will always lie with him six feet *down*.

My Father's Car

Tonio Zacco

One of these days I will remember what it felt like
to be the child in my father's car.
I will recall the rear-view glances
and the mercy his eyes carried,
benevolent light clouded by scars I struggled to understand.
I will remember, too, the temper he could not dispose of,
how I learned to be silent and look to passing landscapes.
There is now a hushed sputter of steam
where the roaring fire in his voice used to be.
With each day I neglect to call him
the task of picking up the phone
seems at the same time more daunting and crucial.

I have drawn up the same home many times.
Only today does it become clearer in my imagination,

gentle but
empty now.

The Question of a Poem Called “Before the Fire on Church Street”

Robert Garber

When I first wrote the poem, it had no title. I had just attended my third and final poetry night at a cafe called “Java Monkey” in Decatur, Georgia. People would sign up to read poetry and stories, even sing or play instruments. I always signed up, reading some poem I had written a few weeks or days or hours earlier, and almost always instantly regretted it, realizing the stupidity and uselessness of my own writing in a moment of stark self-reflection best summed up by the mental utterance of the word “shit.” But they would always clap politely, and I got to hear such powerful rhythm and skill with the English language, the kind could only be spoken between the hours of nine p.m. and one-thirty a.m. Sunday night in a small cafe on Church Street.

A couple months later, it was burned to the ground. The man behind it, oddly, was no religious extremist, angry at our often derogatory, even heathenist opinions. He was not, as might make sense for Georgia, a white nationalist or homophobe angered by the gathering of such a diverse and outspoken group of people. No, it wasn’t the provocative things we said, or that spirit of unity that caused hate to lash out like a toddler with a knife. Instead, that night in November 2018, a disgruntled ex-employee appeared on the recovered footage behind the store, carrying what seemed to be a broom handle, and walking in the direction of a window later found broken. All the buildings on that block of Church Street touched one another, and as Java Monkey burned, several nearby buildings caught fire as well. But only the walls of the cafe, once covered in hand-drawn, original art, and the floors, stained with the coffee and tea drunk by our latest philosophers, were blackened and turned to ash.

For nine months, there was hope and a promise of repair. Then the owner finally gave up.

There aren’t any churches on Church Street. At least not any more. I wonder if we drove them off, or if they left to make room for us; sitting so loud, every Sunday night, half-inside, half-outside, preaching from the foot-high stage. But they’re gone now, and so are we. And the remnant, called Java Monkey Speaks, wanders like a nomadic tribe from coffee shop to coffee

shop; three hundred and sixty-five days may as well be forty years deserted, but still praying, every Sunday night. They haven't come back to Church Street since. And I haven't stopped working on the poem that I started that night, because it relies no small part on hope; And I think that I may never again have the hope I did before, when all the pent up anger, and all the power, and all the love in the universe lived Sunday night, once a week, in that tiny shop on Church Street. And I hope I can always live by what are now the last words I had written there, my final thoughts before the fire;

do not forget us,
we, the fringe, unbidden people,
hidden beneath the cracks
living between the moments,
breathing life.



Infinitude (Back Cover)
Annie Karasarides

At The End Of The World
Maeve Quinn

I don't want it to rain tonight.
My yard gets muddy,
a first-grader tells me,
her chubby fingers stuffed
inside blue safety scissors,
eyebrows knit.
And in the morning--
she hacks at a paper triangle--
my house will slide away.
I imagine the rain
soaking the earth's layers
to mud, 6371 kilometers deep,
and everything sinking and
sliding, melting off a molten core
into space.

When I was six,
I was afraid of being sucked
down the pool drains
and into dark pipes,
straight to the ocean.
The ocean always scared me.
That's where Nemo
lost his dad, and where

Japanese spider crabs grow
to leg spans of thirteen feet.
We are flimsy organisms
next to their shells, that
red, ruttled armour.
We are inside-out,
flesh exposed

and bruised. In the summers,
we flaunt fresh skin,
kissed and toasted
by the sun, peeking berry-brown,
between denim waistbands
and tight tanks,
shimmering beneath
hair-dusted arms, golden
in the sun. At the end of the world,
we don't want it to rain.
We want to feel the ground
firm beneath bare feet,
layer after layer
of strong, dry earth
against flesh.

“A Day in the Life of the Average American According to Commercials”

Adam Frost-Venrick

The Average American will wake up every morning wearing a night-cap and satin pajamas after a refreshing night sleeping with his hands propped against the pillow. The sun will be pouring in through the windows. He will awaken with his wife sleeping opposite him, her back turned. They will not be touching.

He will meander into the bathroom to shower, where he will notice mold growing on the walls and think to himself: *If only there was some way to get rid of all this mold without hours of scrubbing, straining, and stressing over these tiles.* He will then check himself for lumps. If he finds one, he will talk to his doctor. Fortunately, this morning, he does not find one. Meanwhile, his wife will wake the children for school while remembering to fix them a healthy breakfast of orange juice, an egg, toast and a certain cereal that is considered to be part of this balanced breakfast. She will then retire downstairs to use Jane Fonda’s workout tape.

Meanwhile, her husband has stepped out of the shower and is now lamenting his hair, which is thinning as he enters middle age. He will try and be confident about it, but deep in his mind, he will wish there was a topical cream that could regrow up to thirty percent of hair. And now there is!

He will then walk down the stairs and have a frank and honest conversation with his son and daughter about opioids. He’s been deluding himself for too long about those pill bottles he keeps upstairs, anyway. He will then pull his two-point-three-five children, a boy, a girl, and an assortment of skin, hair, and organs bound together in a baby bjorn, aside separately before they leave for the bus and give them “the talk,” explaining in great detail the concepts of sex, nocturnal emissions, and fallopian tubes, which he can’t quite identify, but will soldier through anyway. He will tell his son, freshly eighteen, about the importance of condoms-- the big ones, that are ribbed for *her* pleasure--never considering and thus not preparing the young man for the eventuality that his penis may not actually be that big. And why should he? The Average American’s member is pendulous.

At this point, his wife will emerge from the basement and grab only a single bagel from the fridge, despite the fact that bagels were not being served for breakfast. Then, she will kiss him goodbye, hurriedly and on the cheek so as not to show too much emotion, and will then motion for her children to follow her as she walks out the door to drive them to school.

Meanwhile, on his way to work, the Average American man will be beset with burdensome heavy traffic and struggle with acid reflux from his coffee. Fortunately, he has some relief pills on hand, and after taking them, both the acid reflux and the traffic will miraculously be gone. Also, the sky will be bluer and the music on the radio will be clearer.

Meanwhile, the Average American woman will be out on a jog with her friends. They will propose going to get iced coffee and will give thumbs ups, at which point, after a prolonged, awkward smile, the Average American woman will double over in pain, clenching her stomach and lament that having IBS and/or Crohn's Disease is keeping her from living her best self, and if only there were a pill that she could take once a week that would clear up her stomach troubles.

Meanwhile, at school, the Average American teenage male will look in the bathroom mirror and feel troubled by his newest breakout of acne. After calling his doctor's office and flat out *demanding* to speak to his physician right just then, he will be reassured that acne is merely the result of hormones and that there are many topical creams he can apply that will make his skin clear up. He will then be on the football field for some reason, high fiving his friends.

His sister meanwhile will sit in class, listening to a muffled lecture, turn towards camera and explain that classes with ADHD used to be so hard and that all the drugs she used to be on for it only made her lose her appetite. But *now* there's a fast acting ADHD medication that *really works* and doesn't mess with her appetite, so she can get back to being *her*.

At work, meanwhile, the Average American man will watch, out the window, as a group of smokers take their break and lament that he has tried to give up smoking several times. At which point, the man in the cubicle next to him will reach over and offer him a pack of nicotine gum, which will curb his urge to smoke. He will shake the man's hand from over the cubicle wall and then will go out to use the bathroom, passing, as he goes, a group of financially illiterate adults talking about how they don't know their credit scores.

Meanwhile, his wife will be at the supermarket buying that night's supper, because for some reason, this family buys their groceries one day at a time. As she walks through the store, she will pass the row of potted flowers which are conveniently mere feet away from the meat counter. She will stop to smell the largest and most unnaturally colored flower, and in doing so, lean in and really grind on the flower with her nose, then lament that *she loves flowers, but the pollen always gets to her*. What she needs is a fast acting allergy drug that doesn't keep her awake at night. This will be offered to her by a sentient cartoon bee, with whom she will become friends.

She will then buy a pack of chicken tenders, which came from chickens raised on a humane farm, under humane conditions, with none of those processed, GMO nightmares. Later, she will burn the chicken while attempting a fairly straight-forward recipe.

This will prompt her whole family to go to the nearby fast, casual sit down place, where they will order a variety of Americana dishes, and sit, all facing the camera, with the most attractive or visually striking member of the family looking on, raising their glasses to the restaurant and proclaiming the night a success. They will consume over a thousand calories each this meal. Fifteen-hundred if they get dessert, which they will, because they've had their eyes on that new, tantalizing chocolate-fudge brownie cheesecake pie deluxe.

And Mom and Dad will celebrate the evening gone right with a beer. Or a couple.

But the night's not over yet, because when the family gets home, the children will go up to finish their homework, which is going easier now that the children have found tutors which work around their busy schedules. Then, they'll go to bed, because studies have shown that growing bodies and growing minds need a full night's rest.

After the children have gone to sleep, the Average American man will get into bed with his wife, where he will struggle valiantly against erectile dysfunction. After this is over, they will lie down opposite each other, as they were when their busy day began, but they will not be able to sleep. Fortunately, there's a twenty-four hour mattress store open a few blocks over and they're able to order a new adjustable mattress that can be configured *for him and for her*.

They'll wake up the next morning after a good night's rest to the sound of "Dream a Little Dream of Me" playing non-diegetically and will go downstairs and into the shower to start the process anew.

And in all this, they will never bother to clean the mold.

Longjaw cisco sounds like the name of a gunslinger from a John Wayne western. But it was just a type of deep water whitefish in the Great Lakes sought after by fisherman. The fish were most abundantly harvested in the 1930s when they were smoked and sold to the masses, presumably fueling the economies of the region and filling many dinner tables. But overfishing, pollution, and predation from introduced species eventually led to its inclusion as a member of the first class of federally protected endangered species in 1967. However, by the 1980s, fishermen weren't even pulling any nets up to throw back into the water. It was declared extinct in 1983, just a few years after John Wayne died himself.

~

The American mastodon went extinct about 11,000 years ago. They roamed North America in search of twigs and grasses to munch, but often found tar pits and saber-toothed cats and hunters that consumed the mastodons instead. An important source of meat to our distant ancestors, the glorious hunts and mastodon feasts were probably recounted fondly for generations, before the stories were seen as only old fairy tales or simply forgotten. It wasn't until the 1700s that the bones of a mastodon were "discovered" by people who might have descended from the hunters who probably killed and ate the last one.

~

The Falls-of-the-Ohio scurfpea was a plant native to Rock Island along the Ohio River. It was thought to be commonly eaten by the American Bison, which had been killed off in the area by the early 1800s. This correlation, that was spun as a possible causation for the plant's decline, seems odd considering their dynamic as plant and four-legged lawnmower. Perhaps it's an oversimplification to assume a plant doesn't find some value in being trimmed by the teeth of a buffalo. Perhaps it should also be pointed out that the plants didn't disappear until eighty years

after the last bison in the region was shot. Not that it matters much to the scurfpea, a dam was built in the 1920s that flooded Rock Island and would've wiped them out anyway.

~

Rocky Mountain locust swarms were said to reach biblical plague sizes as they ate their way through farm after farm. In April of 1875, it was said that a 198,000 square mile swarm made its way west. Some states once offered a bounty of up to one dollar for each bushel of collected locusts. Others required all able-bodied men to spend at least two days during harvest time killing the locusts or face a ten dollar fine. Less than three decades after these insects blotted out the western sun, they seemed to have disappeared. The Rocky Mountain locust had been so plentiful that not many specimens had been kept for future scientific research. Now dead ones are pulled out of a glacier in Montana that's slowly melting away.

~

The ivory-billed woodpecker is often listed along with the dodo and the passenger pigeon as the holy trinity of birds driven to extinction by humanity. Taxidermied specimens are mounted to old cut logs, their faded feathers and lifeless glass eyes on display in cabinets across the country. But there have been blurry instamatic photographs, shaky video footage, and echoes of the ghostly bird's tin trumpet call ringing through the woods since its last confirmed sighting in 1944. Perhaps one day we'll find a pair living their lives out in the woods, unaware that we had been looking everywhere for them.

I wonder if the ivory-billed woodpeckers, seeking refuge from the world that assumes they're probably dead, tell stories to their chicks about Longjaw Cisco, the non-existent gunslinger. Cisco is probably standing in a muddy street outside a saloon, facing the villain who smoked his father. The villain probably says some stereotypical line like, "this town ain't big enough for the two of us!" before reaching for his ivory handled revolvers. But Longjaw Cisco's hands are quicker than a grasshopper, and the villain drops to the ground. Then Cisco mounts his trusty steed, Scurfpea, and rides out to the next town.

But when the chicks grow up, perhaps they'll have to face the fact that Longjaw Cisco

didn't actually win. He lost his duel with humanity and now all that seems to remain is a brief Wikipedia page, a blurry photo of a fish on a blue background, and my desire to photoshop that fish's head onto a cowboy's body and put it on a t-shirt. I wonder if the fish would find that funny, or if it is insensitive since my species is the one that fished them out of existence.

~

I wonder if we're doomed to keep wiping out entire species – like we're just the bullet in the chamber of a gun, pointed toward target after target, held by some gunslinger of extinction. We dredged all the longjaw ciscos from the depths of the Great Lakes. We killed off the mastodon 11,000 years ago. We washed away the site of the scurfpea's extinction with a dam. We squashed all the swarms of sun-blotting Rocky Mountain locusts. But maybe the ivory-billed woodpecker is still out there. Maybe it's defiantly calling out in the woods that it is alive and dares mankind to really give it their best shot this time. Maybe it doesn't even know what humans are anymore. Maybe – hopefully – the ivory-billed woodpecker is the one that got away.

I hate the drive but I love the ride
Claire E. Tierney

My Dad and I rolled over the endless fields of corn and past the little but proudly standing farm villages. He told me about a song he loves only because it was on the radio while his parents were driving all of them up the mountains of Colorado to ski back in the 60s. He remembers seeing how happy they were even from the back seat of the station wagon, the white one with the ugly wooden panels. He reminded me that he would never tell anyone that. I thought about the time my Mom mentioned that one New Year's Eve back in the city when he finally just sobbed on her shoulder because both his parents were really gone. She insisted that I never tell him I knew about that moment. Then he told me that Bob Dylan song, "Mr. Tambourine Man" which was playing on the radio in the hospital when they first handed him his tiny wide-eyed boy.

Tire Swing

The heat from the sun on the black tire burned her little thighs as she grasped the hard metal chains so tightly, her fingers grew numb. She was beginning to feel limp and nauseous. She stared at the woodchips below as they got blurrier and blurrier like an all brown kaleidoscope. Yuck. All the other kids moved over towards the sandbox. She peered over at him and could see that his smile faded as he too noticed that they had all left. He abruptly reached out, giving the tire one last thrust to the right causing her to whip around as her feet dangled helplessly. She caught repeated glimpses of his blue light up sneakers running away, blinking with each stride, getting farther each time she flew around. Not knowing how to stop it, she just let herself keep spinning. She was the very last kid left on the swing set. In her dizzy state, she faintly heard the whistle in the distance but she ignored it and stayed, still spinning as her classmates sauntered over to line up. That was the very first time.



Transition
Cody Tieman

Exaggeration
Imani Congdon

Sweetheart, I love your eyes
the way a door loves its frame.

The way that feet have no use
but for the ground they walk upon

Exile Contributors

Sarah Barney '22 is an Environmental Studies major with a concentration in Narrative Journalism. She is from a small town in northern Ohio called Oak Harbor. On campus you can find her watching movies in the library, studying at the Open House, or wandering the Bio Reserve.

Michael Ball '22 studies Political Science and Arabic. Raised in the mountains of Colorado, he uses photography to critically explore the interactions between humans and their surroundings in the hopes of building a horizontal world of self-determination, mutual aid, trust, and respect. Ball's work was showcased in a juried student exhibition titled "Confronting Climate Change Through Photography" at Denison in Spring 2019.

Ben Bowers '20 is a Geoscience major with a Narrative Journalism concentration from Ada, Ohio. He is currently writing an article about Leroy "Ace" Morgan for his senior project in Narrative Journalism in the hopes of having more people know about Morgan. After college, he plans to get an MLIS to become an archivist. Bower's also enjoys listening to his ever-growing record collection, taking long walks, and going thrift shopping.

Ian C. Bradshaw '23 is from Summit, New Jersey. He plans to major in English literature. He enjoys reading Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Restoration poetry, which he attempts to imitate in his writing.

Imani Congdon '20 has spent much of her life involved in the arts, starting violin and voice training at a very young age, and writing creatively throughout primary school. She majors in both Classical Studies and English, and plans to extend her study with the American School of Classical Studies in June.

Scarlett Constand '20 is an English-Literature major from Grosse Pointe, Michigan. She enjoys being President of DUwop a cappella and writing poetry. She hopes you enjoy her work.

Cordero Estremera '23 is from Iowa City, Iowa and studies Economics and English. He's always been interested in stories and books; however, it wasn't until sophomore year of high school did he take this passion more seriously. He's played a ton of video games throughout his life and believes this activity is the source of his creativity. If videogames are the source of his creativity then life itself is the source of his writing ability. The world he's experienced has brought many questions to the forefront of his mind about life, but the one question he's most interested in is: what is happiness? We all know this feeling, but he at least struggles to point to exactly what this feeling is.

Micah Frenkiel '20 is a senior Creative Writing major. She writes fiction, poetry, and screenplays. She is into Judd Apatow movies, gun control, and teriyaki sauce.

Robert Garber '23 is a Creative Writing and Psychology major who enjoys fencing, reading, and creative writing. He is currently working with some friends to create and publish a board game.

Annie Karasarides '20 is a Communication major and Studio Art and Economics minor. In high school, Karasarides was a gold key winner in the scholastic art awards and showed her work at CCAD.

Katie Lauck '23 is an English and Theatre double major from Warsaw, Indiana. This is her first work to be published. Though she usually writes fiction, Lauck decided to try creative nonfiction after reading a collection of essays by Joan Didion. She hopes to eventually work in the entertainment business in many capacities- as a writer, performer, or director- essentially, she hopes to one day be Greta Gerwig. Lauck cites Jo March as her greatest literary influence and hopes she too can write "good strong words that mean something."

Ethan McAtee '20 is a Cinema Major and Creative Writing Minor from East Aurora, NY. He is the President of the Denison Film Society and a member of Sketch'rs Sketch Comedy Troupe. Outside of Denison, McAtee is the Evening Program Director at YMCA Camp Gorham. He wants to thank coffee for all the moral support during writing sessions.

Isabel Ostrowski '22 is a Studio Art and Creative Writing major and likes to garden, collect rare books, and speaks Moroccan *darija* Arabic

Alina Panek '20 is from Chicago, Illinois, studying communication and narrative journalism. She's looking for a career in journalism, her diploma, and her favorite sock with rubber ducks. Her favorite place on campus is in a hammock on South Quad sipping a chai. Panek's goals for the semester are to feed a deer a grape, learn how to analyze data using R to write a story, and climb the South Quad stairs without hyperventilating. When she's not writing, she serves as President of First Generation Network and Vice President of Denison Venture Philanthropy.

Tuuli Qin-Terrill '20 is a Biochemistry major from Traverse City, Michigan. For fun, she enjoys cooking, traveling, and fencing.

Maeve Quinn '20 is a Creative Writing and Spanish double major from outside Chicago. Over the past four years, her work has been published in *Exile*, *Prologue*, and *The Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle*, as well as in the anthology *Ohio's Best Emerging Poets*.

Cody Tieman '20 is an English Major and Women's and Gender Studies Minor. When he's not tucked into a random corner of the library writing, he's probably painting.

Claire Tierney '21 majors in Communication and minors in English with a creative writing focus. This semester she is studying and interning abroad in Prague, Czech Republic. "Growing Up" is a series of fiction pieces about how small moments and memories in life can have a lasting impact.

Adam Venrick '21, is a junior Theatre Major and Anthropology and Sociology Minor from Columbus, Ohio. He is an actor and writer who, in addition to being excited to contribute to *Exile*, is directing and acting in a play he wrote called, "The Nuclear Physicist's Guide to the Apocalypse," this April. His play "The General at Dinner" also appeared last year during the 2019 Fringe Festival. In addition to writing and acting, Venrick hosts a weekly podcast through the Doobie called "The Coffee Hour."

Dylan Walczak '22 is pursuing a double major in Creative Writing and Political Science. This is Walczak's second story published in *Exile*. His other work has appeared in *Prologue: A First-Year Writing Journal* and *The Denisonian*.

Anna Wojeski '20 is a Creative Writing major with a concentration in Narrative Journalism. She's from New Hampshire where she spent the majority of her youth in the library memorizing page numbers of books and her library card number (which she still knows.)

Tonio Zacco '22 majors in History with a concentration in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and is from Seattle, Washington. Zacco is also a member of La Fuerza Latina's executive board, serving as one of the DCGA community senators. In his free time, he enjoys writing and reading poetry; his favorite poet is Dorianne Laux. After graduating, Zacco hopes to one day become a high school history teacher.

Alexandra Terleski '20 majors in English-Creative Writing and minors in Studio Art. After graduation, she will be moving to Steamboat Springs, CO, where she will be working at Vista Verde Ranch as one of their wranglers. After this, she will most likely return to Los Angeles, CA and work for her long-time horseback riding trainer, Deborah Rosen. She looks forward to taking these next few years to discover what she wants to do, whether that be continuing to work with horses or perhaps joining an art department for a TV show. Who knows? She certainly doesn't.