Vantage Point

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Vantage Point

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YANTAGE POINT

"There remains the mystery of how the pupil devours so much bastard beauty. Abandoned property. This land and I are rewilding."

Ada Limon, Bright Dead Things

We hope that within these pages you find some of that bastard beauty. Art and writing have always been a way of dismantling the abandoned spaces between us and reclaiming them as our own. Vantage Point is a place to return to - a place to encounter the raw, the vulnerable, and the wild. Join us there.

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Vantage Point **always** accepts submissions during the academic year. Send us your work at:

vantage.pt.submissions@gmail.com

We release two issues per academic year, the first in the fall and the second in the spring.

VISUAL ART should be tagged with a title and medium. Artist statements are welcome and encouraged, but may not be published with the piece. Images should be sent as .TIFF or .JPEG files in high resolution. Smartphone images will not be accepted.

LITERARY WORKS should be under 700 words and have a title and author name in their file name. Revisions are only accepted if they are substantial. You may send up to six (6) submissions. All mediums are welcome for submission.

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Training for the Championship Bout OR

Gold Canvas, No. 4

Michael Green

Fernweh

Emma Sorenson

the hieroglyph hallway

Eli Karren

There are no houses of the holy while we count our imperfections like creaky floorboards or flickering chandelier bulbs. There is only an ache

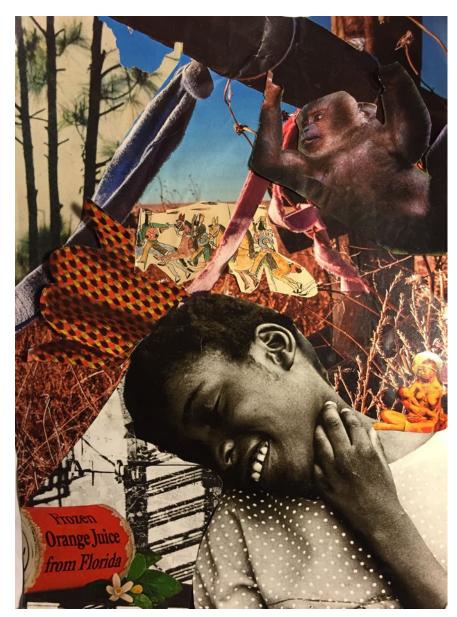
to escape. To slip under still waves of scarlet sangre and reappear like a magician's bouquet; a revenant with grotesque arms and a haggard smile who was allowed to reinvent himself

with disappearances. Here, adorations and apologies clutter the walls in languages no one has ever spoke. Run your fingers along their lengths and sense our defections;

where addiction turned our wallpaper yellow, and flake layers of skin away until we are only sinew peeled back to reveal hieroglyphs painted on our bones. These slit wrists pour forth as though the Nile

never could, but I no longer wish to find Anubis when the silt lands. I wish to stand in the shadows I once coexisted with, holding the remnants of a past I proudly bare no resemblance to.

I am an inner city bathtub Lazarus, praising a God who speaks through landlines, and we are exploring the ruins of my mistakes to find the flip book version of my Rosetta Stone.



Geborgenheit Emma Sorenson

Burning

Caroline Dababneh

He is seated on a bench by a magazine stand in Harvard Square, his beaming smile revealing to us pieces of the burning sunlight through the gaps in his teeth. He holds a few newspapers in his black hands, looks like he is selling them but I could be wrong.

He says something to my mother and I passing by, but we are rushing

to make a reservation, aimlessly blocking out the softness of the world.

I think it was, *any spare change, ladies*, but I could be wrong. I smile and keep rushing along. My mother says, "no thank you."

You have to understand she thought he was trying to sell us something.

I say, defensively, as we leave, he was asking for money, not selling anything.

Jesus Christ, mom. She is chuckling frivolously at her own misunderstanding,

when I hear her – another woman, skin darker than both of ours, repeating, wow.

Shaking her head. *Wow.* You have to understand she only heard our laughter,

thought we found it a joke that a man like him was asking people like us for handouts.

My mother walks away, and I follow, freezing and tensing up, eyes welling up

with every step. Freezing completely, now, *mom, I have to go back.*

Her response, And say what? Why?, getting softer and softer in

my ear

as I approach this woman. The words I tried to form, in my head.

sound something like, *That is not what we meant. That is not* те.

Please, you have to understand that is not me. But in a slur of shame, all that comes is,

What you heard, me and my mother, I...I. And over my scratchy excuses for words.

the familiar repetition of wow. A wow she has earned the right to spit at me.

I walk away, turn back, and see her offering him money, them laughing in the burning sunlight.

I think, that should be me. I should be the one repairing damage, not causing it.

My mother, later at the restaurant, says, stop crying. You went back.

That means more than a mix-up. She wouldn't let you explain. *She was judging us, thinking we were laughing at him.* I think, yes, and she has earned

every "wow" and shake of the head. And I think, tomorrow she will go and tell

someone about the white people laughing at the homeless man. And she will be talking about me, and that will always be me. And I will never get to explain. That will always be me, I think, as I slide into the taxi, sun down now, but the image of her shaking head still in my mind, still

burning.



Peanut Butter 4 Stephen Chevalier

Liminal, supine, sore

Anthony DiMario

You can count the lost-loves in the school's field As they run out from a dusk blue forest. How quickly their brassards shed As they crash into the fertile earth.

What about when winter dances to attract An old autumn haunt? Husks and foliage Slipping off her much like a dress; To be lubed by cheap wine, To be covered ghostly white.

And what is love when you don't hurt me?

These chimeric bodies in syncopated machination, Making indents with their sweet, dirty fingers. They rust. Friction:

A stony gaze petrifies a cold bedroom.

On other sides of the canyon, Water dripping, cooing, craving, carving its name in your chest. There's generosity in self-deprecation.

And I'm amazed by all these insecurities laid out on the carpet. All that we might have in common is that we hate ourselves somewhere,

Like mussels freshly shucked. The fetid glaze unfurling, There is no color less imposing Than my lackluster beige.

A lattice work of empties on the coffee table revealed by old candle light

Speaks of a reptilian world, molting and revolting The discomfort in a permanent skin.

It was the first time in six years that I went to the old field yesterday.

Anthony DiMario

It was the first time in six years that I went to the old field yesterday.

Six years and it has remained in a state of subarctic loneliness.

Field grass:

Mowed over by wind,

Combed into tractor tire grooves

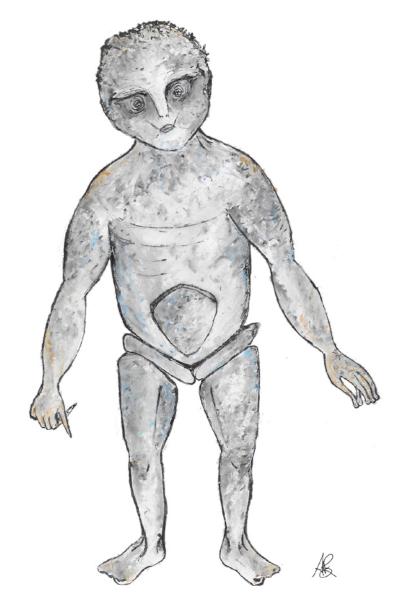
Like dead Russian soldiers.

Smoothed and paled gourd shells scattered like hastily buried bones.

Their innards, offal and seeds, long since devoured Or rid to semi-glazed rot.

The ravens...they really need no introductions. They're there, coughing and laughing in an orbital arc, A bitter and dusty mobile fixed just low of noon.

This place is like the foyer to my depressions, Kick off the mud before you enter The maze of late and arid November.



Lapilli AriaRay Brown

Deadline

Jeffrey Christie

Dreary Wednesday rain hangs like a noose over the once postcard-perfect landscape, choking the vibrant colors and textures into dull, death gray.

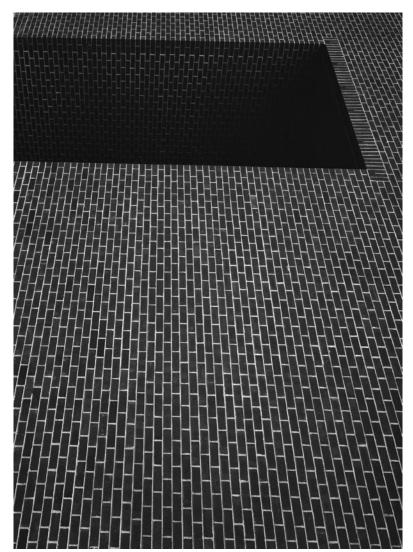
A lone pianist adds a whisper of flare while accompanying me in the near-vacant apartment, playing a beautiful little number that breathes life into each empty room like their pulses gave out.

Both our fingers choreograph a ballet over the keys, dancing and tapping, prose intertwining with 12 bar blues.

5 stories below, little streams of runoff congregate like old college friends at a downtown bar, babbling without pause before spilling out into the street. Needs met, Ales alleviated.

The aroma of cheap decaf intoxicates and floods the senses, drowning out the twinkling notes drifting like fresh smoke from the speakers. Eyes go heavy, hot water on wool. Tuning out, fading out, falling out.

"Play me out, Oscar." Legs relax, hands loll, shoulders slump. "Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend." Today I'm feeling generous.



The Next Wave of Nameless Fallers

Aleah Gatto

There is a boy who tells me he loves me and writes me letters in pencil.

He says he wants the words to feel organic

like the graphite of the tool

itself, chiseled from the sediment and as old as the Earth.

Although we say so, neither of us can remember the day the Twin Towers fell. *It looked like a bird flying across the TV screen*, he said once, though he, like me, was only four years old, was probably sleeping while the second plane hit the second tower, while our parents were running home to us, while our older siblings were being herded into gymnasiums and while

those two people

thought it easiest to hold hands

because they knew that it was their last moment,

that they would do nothing more

for the rest of their lives.

I keep his pencil letters. Sometimes

I find myself rubbing the paper with my cheek, then looking at my reflection to find some of the pencil has rubbed off, the words

have faded, wiped away in the oils of fingers or lost in the creases of pages.

I've been told, too, of the smoke pillars that could be seen for weeks afterwards from a certain point on Route 17 where city skyline rises from highway asphalt. Today, he and I are driving

down that spot holding hands, but I drop his.
For some reason, I want to make him understand
what neither of us can understand: how we can fear but can't
ever fear

like they feared, how we have names but can't ever be named their names.

[flip]

In fifty years or so, all the letters will be blank.

In this way, they will have been organic, decomposed like the whole generation of post-9/11 people, washed away from wandering, from folding and unfolding our parents' stories who folded and unfolded their parents' stories, and so on to the beginning of mankind, to the first people who created fire and squatted in their caves and cooked their bloody meat and warmed their bony hands and knew exactly who they were.

Off Route 17, he and I are at a coffee shop. The woman behind the counter asks for my name and I say, *Alice*, because it's easier to remember than my real name, but also easier to forget.



Flosculi AriaRay Brown

splinters

Emily Johnston

certainly, it's been a while since I sat here last. we bought this very nice bench all wood and metal, with twisting, curling designs for me and my mother and sister to sit on, to wait for the kindergarten, first grade bus. now, in college, nothing is the way it used to be. even this bench, too nice for a bus stop bench, chained to the telephone pole, it has splinters, and so do I.



DirectionCharles Teissonniere

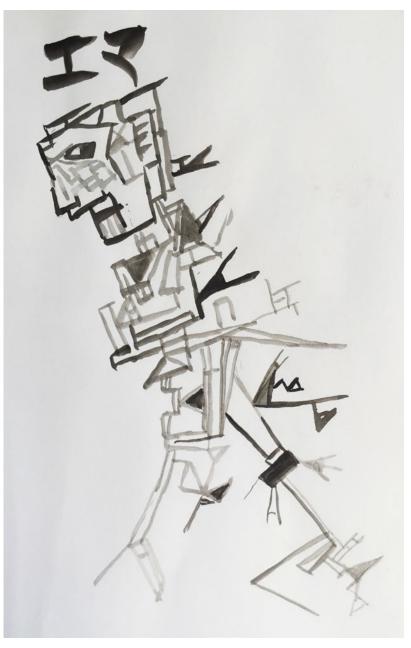
burn-out

Emily Johnston

and the songs stuck in out heads, reminding us that we tried to grow up too fast, like the yellow-leaf veins, crevices in our pinecone minds, we feel golden sunlight thrust our silhouettes down on the dead grass, littered with our burnt-out cigarettes and blunts of rolled up childhoods, burned and broken and snuffed into the earth.



Untitled Ben Johnson Published by ScholarWorks @ UVM, 2016



Staubfänger Emma Sorenson

Late-Night Streets

Jesse Keel

The shadowy embers of the smashed tail light burn subtly at the wayside.

They try to melt and mold into gravel, but fail at the fault of their unnatural color and plastic foundation.

Yet that was the only red rendered on the street last night when the rabbit rushed out.

Only to leap lastminute into a ditch as I laid on my brakes cursing the lucky little creature that was saved.

But was it luck that spared us both from whiplash? That supplied our safety?

It must have, I suppose. For usually we find that loose gravel plus a loose heart leads to loose change flung onto late-night streets.



Untitled Back Road Stephen Chevalier

train station at midnight (library at 2 a.m.)

Aleah Gatto

Maybe it's because you haven't smoked in a while, or slept in a while, but it seems that being high and being tired are sort of the same thing.

Think about it, or don't think and let the thoughts come on a midnight train chugging past an open window, say, far away through a knot of twisted trees.

Feel alive, feel sad, or something. Something you must remember:

a diet of Pop-Tarts and Powerade is not good for you, tonight. Neither is listening with your mouth open, tonight. Five bucks to whichever apparition can get through a sentence without saying me, myself, or I. Similarly, if ohm is the sound of the universe then um must be the sound of its souls caught off-guard. Listen.

Hear that? It's Elliott Smith.

No, hear the train?

Here the train:

when it comes around jump, make a pass (do you mean flirt?). Grab on, jump in and ride it out your window to whatever makes you feel happy—better—whatever makes you feel safe.

Drink up whatever tears the breeze breaks. Salt reminds you of sugar

reminds you of morning coffee.
Sunday service kids holding cups of coffee steaming from cups of hands, clasped.
Brave heads bowed. For you, only finger wags.
How do they fit their Bibles in their bookbags?

A lyric: People you've been before that you don't want around anymore.
Hush, Elliott Smith.
Incessant daydreaming (nightdreaming?) of running off a road that forms before you put your foot down. Chugging past passed moments of holding your own hands, thinking one of them belonged to someone else but then looked around and found you were completely alone.

Stars for eyes. You've convinced yourself that this is where power comes from. Instead, you go melancholy and find you are still alone.

Spirit on the moon. He says, I'm trying to pass the time. I'm trying to make your night make mine.

Over the sleeping um of earth, you spy infinities of imbecilic longing for laugh tracks on repeat: the need for the voices of the dead.

Dare we whisper: childhood, nostalgia.

You're learning to take time for what it really is, to live the terse breath taken between two sentences.
Write it down before the nighttime chugs out. Ride it up before you plummet from the train car's open window

to the spinning world below, and vanish to the thoughtless wake of daybreak.



Untitled Emily Johnston

Message in a bottle: Desire to escape. Seeking stability and peace.

Katie Hickey

Don't know if I'm foolish enough to think that I can find that in a person. Searching is hard when you don't want to be open your wounds visible to see but at risk for further infection.

When I was little, I thought when I floated in the ocean, I was in God's teacup. His hold gently rocked the tide as He watched the small human swirl and float face up towards the sky. The salty brew cleaned childish scrapes and scratches.

I was safe.

The tide always brought me back to the brim, sand, home.

At night in bed, under cool sheets and distant sounds of a broadcasted Red Sox game, I felt the waves drift me to sleep. To calmness. To escape. Back to God?

- or maybe to myself

I don't know if I will ever feel this way again.
If there is a next time,
I hope I won't be alone- that another body with mine will warm each other, rocking us
to sleep, to peace, to love.



Scarf Emily Johnston

Do you want to stay for breakfast?

Harley Phleger

"Do you want to stay for breakfast?"
She asks this as she slips from the car,

One hand still on the door,

One leg still not quite removed from the footwell.

And I watch her face,

Her mouth twitching at the corners, Her purple veins pulsing faster in her neck, Stretched tight against the skin,

Just under the ear.

And I wait, silent, admiring

The bruise on her elbow, and The drying blood caked on her knee, and

The dizzying sweetness of her perfume and

The dark almond eyes.

And she waits, silent,

Lip caught between her teeth, Knuckles white, gripping the doorframe, Eyes boring holes in my forehead, Fingers picking at non-existent insects.

And I laugh.

And I say nothing.

And she shudders as she steps out and

Shuts the door and

I pull away slowly, and

Watch her grow smaller in the mirror, where

She stands in her yard, with her arms crossed tight,

Holding it all together, and

I turn the corner, and

I disappear, and

I continue.



Untitled Sarah Pell

Song of the Pines

Harley Phleger

In the pines, I heard the rugged word Which softer hands can't teach That carries on from beasts and birds And echoes out of reach

It tells of rough-hewn hardwood beams With grasping leather bound Of smoking lungs and rising steam And covers made of down

It sings of rivers clear and deep That murmur in the trees And howling winds in winter's sleep That softened once to breeze

It speaks of starlit glassy shores And waves that hiss and fly Of painted stone that came before The mountains knew the sky

It whispers in the summer shade Of paws that weary trot From esker down to wooded glade As night from day is wrought

On those who pass it sets its claim And settles in their gut An awful love for wind and rain Once binding never cut

Some echoes of this mud-worn song Call home to present ears

So daylight fades and nights grow long, It draws me far from here.



whisper Emily Johnston

Linus & Jules

Harley Phleger

Linus sipped his coffee. He pointed out the window.

"See that there Ford?"

"That's a VW."

"Whatever. You see it?"

"Course I do."

"You see the license plate?"

"Sure."

"Well? What's it say?"

Jules squinted.

"F-E-A-R-L-S-S."

"And what's that spell?"

"Fearless, Sorta,"

Linus scratched his jaw.

"Now let me ask you somethin'. You think that guy there is really fearless?"

Jules eyed at the car. Linus crossed his arms.

"What're you askin' for anyway?"

"Well, as you know, I like to consider myself a man of moral standin' is all. Straight with the Lord and all that. And far as I know, lyin' is a sin—right up there with sleepin' with your friend's wife. So I been lookin' at that there plate and I can't help wonderin' to myself: 'Is that there man a liar?'"

Jules looked at the truck, then across the street.

"Well, Linus, I reckon he is."

"And how do you reckon that?"

Jules folded his hands.

"Well, far as I know, ain't no person on earth ain't afraid of somethin'. There's plenty of people say they ain't, sure, but not one of 'em tellin' the truth. I bet you take any person on that there street—you tell 'em, you say: 'God ain't got no plan. You're gonna die. Same as me.' I bet you, I bet he gonna be real quick to turn all to jelly. You stare in his eyes, really make him

know you serious—he gonna be shaken in his bones, right quick. I'd bet my own skin on it."

Linus frowned. He looked at the car, then at the other trucks in the lot. They shimmered in the heat.

"I suppose you're right."

He fingered the rim of his mug, then exhaled and put his hands on the table. Jules kept looking across the street.

"Let's get goin'," Linus said.

"What're you afraid of?"

"What's that?"

Jules stared out the window.

"What're you afraid of Linus?"

"What? Me? Well...well that's a conversation for the road. Let's get goin'. We can—"

Linus moved to leave the booth. Jules turned and they stared at each other. Linus paused. His hand gripped the cushion.

"I'm afraid of the dark," Jules said. "And snakes."

He looked back to the car.

Linus stood.

"And I'm afraid of missin' deadlines. So let's get a movin', alright?"

Jules turned and smiled at him and stood.

"You're right. Let's go."

Linus slapped his back. Jules wiped his palms against his pants. They walked toward the door. The car outside shuttered to life. As it pulled out of the lot, Linus lit a cigarette. Jules stood in the shade of the diner, his hands crossed on his chest. His eyes were on the license plate as it pulled away. The dust billowed and stung. The engine roared. Jules stepped from the shade and walked to the curb. Across the street, a man was sitting in a chair by a storefront, his head bowed to his chest, his hat pulled low. As the car thundered by, the man jumped, catching his hat as it fell from his head. He glared at the bumper as it passed, muttering something to himself and shaking his

head. He pulled his hat back on and slid down in the chair. Jules watched as the car turned out of sight at the end of the street. He leaned forward and spat in the dirt.

Linus called. Jules went to him. He grunted as he heaved himself into the truck. Linus drummed his fingers on the wheel as he pulled out of the lot. Jules watched the man in the chair.

"You see that?" He said.

"See what?"

"That man in the chair."

"I seen him. What about him?"

"He got scared."

"Yeah? What of?"

"That guy. The liar."

"What scared him?"

"The car."

"He afraid of cars?"

"Why not?"

"Never heard of someone afraid of cars is all."

"There's someone afraid of everything. Cars is just another thing. Or maybe he's afraid of liars."

Linus sniffed. The truck groaned as it slid across the gravel.

"I suppose you're right."

The cab was hot. As the truck pulled onto the freeway, Jules slid down in his seat and put his boots on the dash. He leaned his head on the window and chewed his nail. Linus put on his sunglasses. They were crooked. They drove for an hour before anyone spoke. As they passed an airport Linus said,

"I'm afraid of needles."

Jules didn't turn around.

"So am I."

Linus exhaled. He ran his hands along the steering wheel. Jules closed his eyes. He was asleep before they reached Utah.









Scarf Emily Johnston

Determination, Growth and IntellectLizzie Ames

Charming Man

Thomas Durivage

It was beautiful. Everything he wanted, and more.

The small ranch house was pale yellow, slightly faded by the sun, bestowing on it the sincerity of an elderly smile. A small white porch melted harmoniously into the side of the building, and provided a home to two rocking chairs that rested upon it— perfecting the pleasant appeal. The house reflected the simplistic charm of the man.

The door hung slightly ajar, though it had never bothered him. The only thing the man loved more than his sweet little home was his wife. She was calm but never boring, intelligent but not arrogant, respectful but not passive. They had met eight years ago. It was mere months later that they were married. He left for work. He was smartly dressed—tidy and elegant, but not stern. Him and his wife ate dinner together every night—a pledge they had taken on their wedding day. Subconsciously he always knew the magic of young love would eventually dissipate and their vow would be overlooked. Inexplicably his prophecy never came true. Eight years passed and he had not once arrived home a minute past 6. Maybe it was love, maybe it was routine.

It was past eleven when he finally stumbled in. His once handsome garments were now tattered and stained. They hung loosely from his slouched shoulders. His face seemed to mimic the clothes, as if both were tired of their task of concealment. His worried wife was pale. He stopped and stood in the doorway. It struck him as odd— in 8 years time, he never once recalled seeing his wife stripped of her soft, red cheeks. As foreign as it was, the new color made sense to the man. He stood in silence for a few moments. He finally looked at her. She was immediately taken aback for she scarcely recognized the face. The simple charm was gone. The world had found its way in. He looked at his shaking hands, then back at his wife. He

tremmered, "is this who I really am?"

The man wildly stumbled outside. He could no longer exist inside his pleasant little home.

The cool evening dew dampened his trousers as he sat in the yard. With his trembling hands, he cupped the bloom of a delicate flower. He wrestled for comprehension: How could he have been so wrong? Was he wrong? Where between his delusion and melodrama does reality lie? While he consciously debated such thoughts, his subconscious was struggling through it's own battle: his hand was tense, fighting to close its grip and crush the dainty plant. This force was matched by an equal desire to pluck the flower from the dirt, bury his nose in the blissful smell and treasure the delicate touch of the petals. He heard the door close and soon his wife was standing before him. She looked at him deeply. Her eyes were caring but not forgiving. Her mouth was confident and firm. She held steady while her gaze wrestled him to submission. In that moment, looking at his wife, a woman he was seeing for the first time, his conflict melted away. He could see that she understood it. All of it. The tension eased away. He had never felt so connected to another being.

It was not love—silly, frivolous, meaningless love.

The flower swayed back into its natural position as the door closed and the two returned to the house.

As night fell and the veil of darkness coated the landscape, the flower became less and less distinguishable.

Without the yellow rays of sunlight gilding the bloom, it faded to normality. To what it truly was when left to stand on its own. The flower was as beautiful as the weed and the weed was as ugly as the flower.

The sound of the wind rattling the door slowly eased the man into a restful sleep.

At the Pier, When We Disagreed About My Future

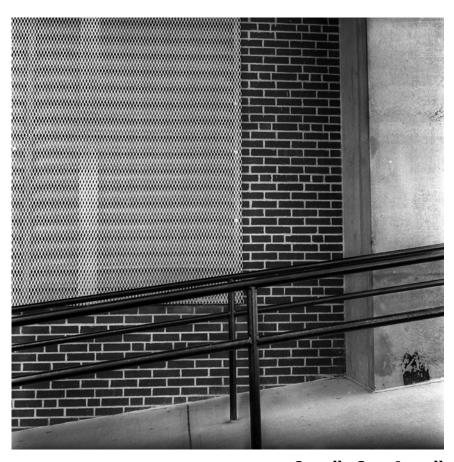
Ali Wood

We fed each other cheerios on the boardwalk, Olympic gold hoops jumped through in the summer of 2012 when athletes wore animal hides tanned and chafed in the glaze of a frosted window where outside banyan trees raised their palms.

Here you told me I was too young to die, but I gestured at the linen corners of the ocean and asked, how old is she?
You swallowed so much krill and salmon trying to answer that your eyes streamed with salt.
I answered, two-million years too old to live.

Hearing me, a leopard seal with deep-set eyes and a cold throne heaved itself out of the peeling wood and sang a hymn I did not know, always too busy chewing edges off prayer pamphlets to hear forgiveness, with a throaty thwack like the sizzle of onions hitting the pan. All that olive oil

and gasoline clogging the subway, our bodies packed dense into ice cubes clinking at the bottom of a soup bowl, clay and cracked, excavated from our stomachs. Those bodies stretching out, oil and water in heat, in a church bell rumba. Her jackal breath hummed it.



Costello Gym, Lowell Stephen Chevalier

A Lullaby for Liminal Spaces

Caroline Shea

Swaddled in sleep. Tangled in Codeine dreams and IVs. My body floats over the white-capped current of life-giving machines.

I am here/not here.

I wake alone, gaze cotton-gauzed, metallic taste of fear clotting on my tongue like curdled milk. The fact of absence sharpens itself against the serrated edge of unwell.

I am eight years old when I realize the borders of my body are porous. I leak fluid and love. Bruises snowflake across the backs of my hands.

I choke on the warm wounded animal of my fear, my throat thick with fur, its body contorting in my chest like a circus trick or a saint. My ribs rattle like a thurible—perfume of antiseptic and bedpan slinks across the tile floor.

A body that is mine/not mine stumbles towards the red call button. It trails rubber tentacles and tattered cloak of cotton gown.

Its legs flail, souvenirs fished from the wreckage.

The foreign country of pain shudders with imperial intent. My fingers curl, uncurl. A fist is a kind of wound stitched shut. Each time I write this story it is the last time and the first.

Before and After(glow)

Michael Green

like sheets thrown aside static crackles, hum, and jumps through twined pair of legs

steam curls off of us while our hips roll in sync and yes, more are the words

even the dust hangs like stars morning sunlight



UntitledEmily Johnston



Reap Ben Johnson

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Training for the Championship Bout OR

Gold Canvas, No. 4

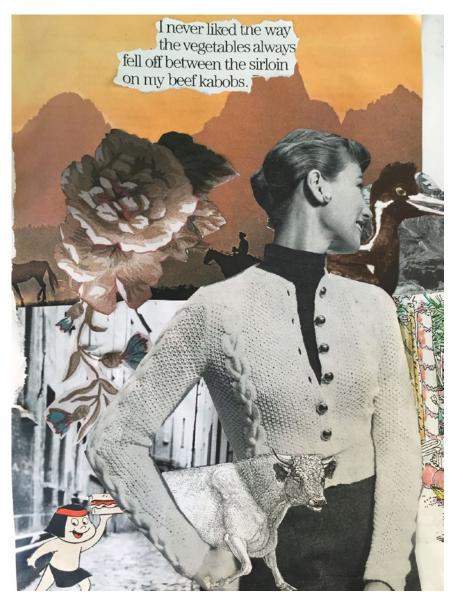
Michael Green

dripping
from a freshly fractured nose:
deep red-black
and
slick on skin.
an accident,
a mistimed fist.

she was
apologizing (and embarrassed) apologizing (and embarrassed)
he was
laughing.
then;
hugged her
as fathers do daughters.
(close as the boxer's clinch—
but never two embraces so dissimilar)

droplets
falling
into her hair.
strands of sunlight
now flecked
with pinpoints
of rich, human color.

a Pollock? no. truer than even that.



Fernweh Emma Sorenson

This publication favors no form or content above any other; it is simply a journal of art that thinks. Our success is imposible without the creative talents of our contributors who continue to reawaken the journal's spirit. Our goal is to stimulate and support an artistic community, which will unify and strengthen the university as a whole.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue. Vantage Point wouldn't be possible without you!

