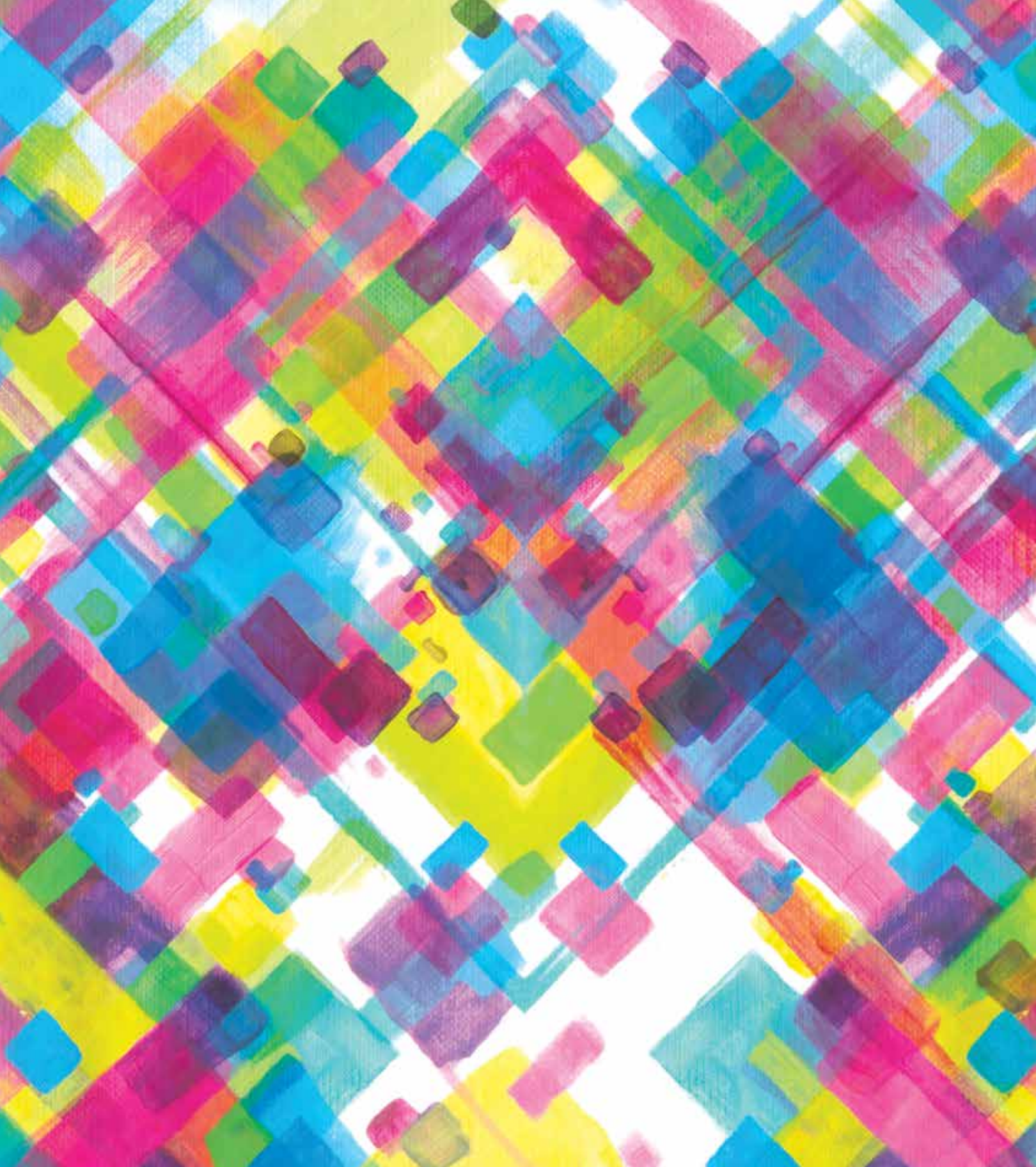


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VOL 36 2016

CLARK COLLEGE ART AND LITERARY JOURNAL





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ABOUT *PHOENIX*

Phoenix is published annually by the Associated Students of Clark College. All contributors, editors, and volunteers are members of the Clark College community. Anyone who is a student, alumnus, faculty, or staff member in the year of publication is eligible to submit work for consideration. We accept submissions online at www.clarkphoenix.com.

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EDITOR'S STATEMENT

The work to bring this year's journal together started in September 2015 with English 277: Introduction to Literary Publication. Over a series of collaborative meetings with the art and literary staff, as well as the heavy lifting from the winter Art 270: Publication Production class, a theme of accessibility took shape. To go with that, on the literary side, we noticed a recurring subject in the works we chose that relate to important progress underway at Clark College.

Take a look at the poem, "Enough," where the female speaker struggles with societal perceptions based on her gender. "Closeted," a flash-fiction piece, highlights a school day for our speaker and at the same time illustrates the difficulties she grapples with living in an environment that does not accept aspects of her identity. Our interview this year may have featured a member of the systemically dominant sex, but it also highlights a magazine, *Tin House*, that takes the representation of women in the world of publication to heart. VIDA, an organization that is dedicated to increasing awareness about women in writing and gender equality in literary culture, notes that *Tin House* is a publication that takes this seriously, soliciting women authors as much as men.

In 2006, Clark College's Cultural Pluralism Committee drew up a diversity plan, designed to support and ensure student success. What followed was the Clark College 2008-2014 Diversity Plan and then the Clark College 2015-2020 Social Equity Plan. This plan was enacted to "guide the college's efforts in promoting, developing, and sustaining diversity and equity in our college community" ("Clark College 2015-2020 Social Equity Plan"). This involves implementing strategies, like universal design, in order to create an environment open and accessible for all. With its clean lines and consistency of design, this year's journal utilizes many of the principles of universal design.

With a new focus on social equity, a fully accessible version of *Phoenix* is available online at clarkphoenix.com/2016. Although we've always had an online version of *Phoenix*, this year's version contains alt text of visual material for visually impaired students who can have the descriptions of the art pieces read aloud to them by screen-readers. For hearing-impaired students, we offer closed captioning on all student-produced videos.

Keeping that in mind, the work of an editor should not overshadow its contributions. The content should speak for itself. The best way to achieve this is through creating a platform that does not change the creator's craft—only highlights its strengths. In our interview with *Tin House*'s Cheston Knapp, Knapp summarizes it best: our process is similar to redecorating a room. The bare bones of all these works are from the Clark College student body and community. Our job is to move the sofa from one side to the other, straighten a picture frame or two. It is because of those factors that every *Phoenix* is different.

Looking over the 250 pieces submitted this year, we know this: whether based on gender and the implications society has attached—mental illness, identity orientations, or disability—these works show what is important to the diverse students of Clark. In the editions to come, we hope to diversify the *Phoenix* further, including more works by underrepresented student populations. Clark is a diverse community—growing more so every year. We need to showcase all of our student body. The least we can do is represent those voices.

Ashlee Nelson
Fiction Editor

**To read the complete Clark College 2015-2020 Social Equity Plan, please go to
http://www.clark.edu/clark-and-community/about/strategic_plan/2016SocialEquityPlan.pdf

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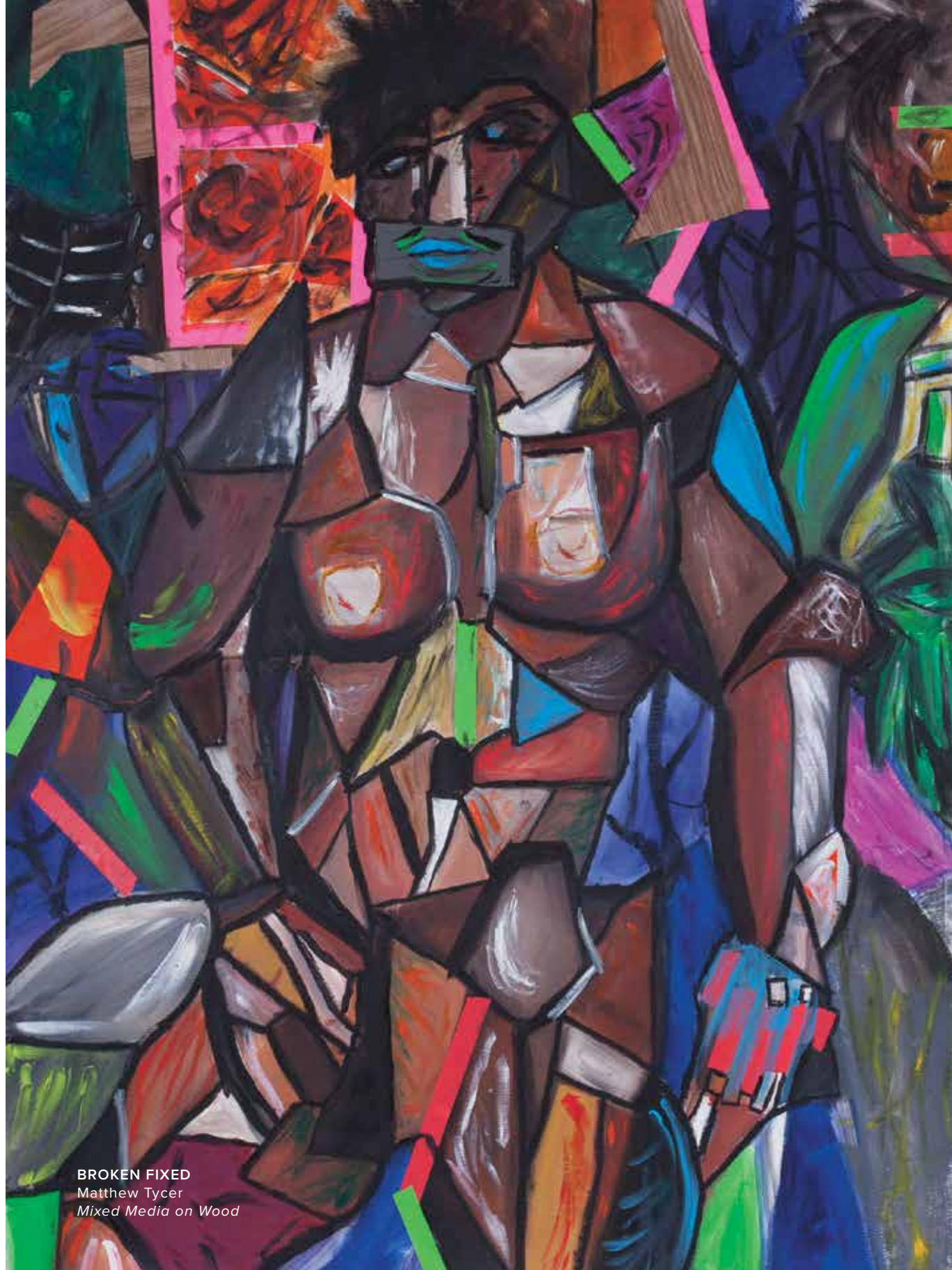
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BROKEN FIXED
Matthew Tycker
Mixed Media on Wood





WHOSE BED? HER BED

Diana Sanchez

Oil on Bristol Board

BLUE CATNIP *(opposite)*

Sugar Spears

Silkscreen on Bristol Board



CONSUMERISM OF TRAVEL
Diana Boligar
Indian Ink on Bristol

DONNIE WORTHLESS

RYAN LICINI

Donnie Worthless was standing outside the maintenance shop at Overlook Ridge apartment complex, smoking a cigarette and wiping dog shit off his shoe. It was still before sunrise, so he couldn't tell if he had gotten it all off, but he decided it was good enough and headed into the shop. The gray walls and concrete floor had cobwebs in every corner. Against such a backdrop, the oversized wooden desk was out of place in the center of the room.

Someone should take you out of this place, Donnie thought as he walked over and put his hand on the desk. He took off his coat, draped it over a filing cabinet, then walked back and sat down at the desk. He leaned back in his chair and let out a sigh. *I just have to make it through one last day*, he thought.

Donnie looked at the clock; it was 6:50 in the morning. Peter, Donnie's boss, would be showing up soon. Overlook Ridge required constant upkeep, and as its maintenance tech, there was a lot to do. An older guy with sleepy eyes, rosy cheeks, and a long gray beard, Peter looked a lot like Santa Claus. He had worked at Overlook Ridge for fourteen years, and Donnie was very fond of him. Over the year that Donnie had worked with him, Peter had taught him everything he needed to know about maintenance. He also mentored Donnie in religion. For a long time, Peter and Donnie met at work an hour early to study the Bible together, but over the last month or so Donnie had been finding ways to avoid the early study sessions. The fact was that Donnie didn't believe in Christianity anymore, but he didn't know how to explain that to Peter.

Donnie reached into a drawer and pulled out a leather-bound Bible. He placed the Bible on the desk, and opened it to Ecclesiastes. He leaned back in the chair again and closed his eyes. *Just one more day*, he reminded himself.

When Donnie heard Peter's truck pull up, he sat up and stretched out his arms. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes, leaned over the desk, and started reading the first verse his eyes could find. *Just one more day*.

"Good morning brother," Peter said as he walked into the shop. "Got here early, eh? Spendin' a little time in the Word, I see." Peter beamed at Donnie.

"Mornin' Pete," Donnie said, "Don't know about *good*, but it's mornin' anyway."

Peter hung his coat on a hook by the door, and walked over to the desk, "Whatcha reading there?" He peered over Donnie's shoulder, "Oh—King Solomon."

"Yep, my favorite book from the Old Testament." Donnie smiled.

"Not Genesis?" Peter asked.

"Have I said Genesis before?"

"No, but I always figured that would be your favorite."

"Oh . . . well, it's a good one for sure. But I like Ecclesiastes better—it's more relatable."

Donnie could see that Peter was thinking about what he'd just said, and Donnie wasn't much in the mood for follow-up questions, so he got up and grabbed a bucket and shovel from the corner of the shop. "I'm gonna go do the grounds."



One thing Donnie especially hated about the residents at Overlook Ridge was their tendency to let their dogs shit everywhere without picking it up. *Fucking people*, he thought. Donnie was only halfway through the grounds and had already filled a five-gallon-bucket one-third of the way with fist-sized chunks of hardened shit.

He sat on a bench in the central courtyard and lit a Marlboro. Just as he leaned back to relax, his phone began to ring. It was Peter, asking him to come back to the office. Delilah, their boss, wanted to see him.

Son of a bitch, he thought, *I avoid her for weeks, and—of course—today she wants a meeting.*

When he got to the office, Peter was already there. He was talking to Delilah, and she was smiling—smiling! *Haven't seen her smile for a month*, Donnie thought; he walked into the office, and sat across the desk from Peter and Delilah.

"Well, boss, we're all here," Peter said. Donnie found it amusing to hear him call someone thirty years younger "boss."

"Yep, we're all here." Donnie looked right at her. "But, *why* are we here?"

"You're here because I said so," Delilah snapped back. She sat back in her chair with one arm folded over her chest and twirled at her fake blonde streaks.

Peter looked uneasy; he glanced at Donnie and then Delilah. "Actually, Donnie," he said, "we're here to talk about you."

Shit, what did I do? Donnie thought. "Oh? Did something happen?" he asked.

Delilah took a slow breath, "No, Donnie, nothing like that. We want to talk about getting you promoted."

Donnie didn't know what to say. *Does this change anything?* he wondered. Delilah and

Peter were both looking at him in expectation, but Donnie could not think of what words to use. Peter's face became quizzical, and right when he was about to speak, his phone rang. He answered it and walked over to another corner of the office.

Donnie and Delilah sat there without looking at each other. Donnie used his index finger to trace the lines in the wood on Delilah's desk. He wondered if the wood was even real or if someone had just stained it that color and burned the lines in as an effect. "So, a promotion," he said.

"Yeah," Delilah looked at him from the corner of her eye. "Despite everything else, you're a good employee. It's been a year, and you deserve it."

"Despite everything else," Donnie repeated.

"Yes," she said, "despite everything."

"So, I'd be getting my own property?"

"Yep—in fact, there's one downtown with a position open right now."

He looked up and locked eyes with her. "Maybe I don't want it," he said.

"Why wouldn't you want it?"

Donnie looked back down at the desk, "Because, maybe I do want it."

"That doesn't make sense."

"Not to you," Donnie looked back up. "A promotion would be good. More money, less hours—there's nothing wrong with that. I could actually get some sleep, maybe even have time for a social life—it'd be a chance to live more comfortably . . . I want that a lot."

"Exactly," Delilah said, "so take the damn promotion."

"No," Donnie said, "I can't do that. I want to take it—and that's exactly why I won't."

"Bullshit," she said, "why are you even here if you're not going to move up? I'm sick of you, Donnie. You don't make any sense. You want to break up with me out of the blue, fine. But you don't get to stay here forever as a reminder. Take the fucking job and get off this property!"

Peter hung up the phone and walked back over to the others. "Donnie," he said, "we got a work-order to do. Bathroom fan went dead."

"All right, Pete. I'll meet you in the shop." Peter walked out of the office, and Donnie trailed behind. Before leaving, he looked back at Delilah and said, "I'm quitting today. Consider this my 6-hour notice."



Donnie knocked on the door to apartment 207 as Peter walked up behind him with a small ladder and the keys to the unit.

"No need to knock," Peter said, unlocking the door and opening it wide. "Nobody's home."

Donnie followed Peter into the unit and climbed the stairs to the third floor. "Hallway or Master bathroom?" Donnie asked.

**"I'M QUITTING TODAY.
CONSIDER THIS MY
6-HOUR NOTICE."**

“Master,” said Peter.

Peter handed Donnie the ladder and Donnie handed Peter the toolbag. Donnie set the ladder in the middle of the bathroom and began to dismantle the fan while Peter pulled out tools and a new motor.

“You know, Donnie, I’ve been thinking about Ecclesiastes since this morning.” Peter pulled at his beard while he thought. “Tryin’ to figure out why it’s your favorite.”

Donnie knocked some dirt loose when he unscrewed the motor from the mount, and he caught some of it in his eye. “Damn it,” he said. He rubbed at his eye, and squinted towards Peter. “I told you Pete—it’s relatable.”

“I remember,” Peter said. “But how? Most of it’s Solomon lookin’ back on a life we can’t possibly relate to. I mean, in ways we can, but not to the extremes that he went.”

Donnie twisted the motor off the mount and pulled it out of place along with the fan blade.

“Yeah,” Donnie popped the blade off the motor’s shaft. “Maybe the experiences are unrelatable.” He tossed the motor into the bag. “But the experiences don’t really matter to me.”

Peter pulled a new motor out of a box and handed it to Donnie, “I don’t follow.”

“Pete,” Donnie said, “look at this fan blade.” The blade was a cylinder, and on all its sides, there was a thick layer of dirt and lint. “How long you think it’s been since anyone looked at it?”

“Don’t know,” Peter replied. “Years, probably.”

“Right. That means for years now, the blades have been covered up, so it probably wasn’t sucking much air.” Donnie studied the fan closely, “But nobody noticed it. They’d come in, turn on the switch, hear the motor humming, and assume everything was working fine.” Peter looked at Donnie curiously; he was trying to understand where this was all going. “You see, Pete, that’s why I like Ecclesiastes. I can’t compare to Solomon’s experiences, but that isn’t the point. The point is

that he reflected on them. He didn’t just assume everything was fine—he investigated.” Donnie banged the blade against the sink, and rinsed it off before sliding it onto the new motor. “That’s what I’m trying to do Pete—I don’t want to live life unexamined.” Donnie replaced the motor, screwed in the light, put back the face-plate, and collapsed the ladder. “Does that answer your question?”

“I guess,” Peter said.



After lunch, Peter received a call from another property. The maintenance supervisor there had gone home sick, and they needed someone to come help for the rest of the day. Peter went, and Donnie was left unsupervised. He spent the next several hours napping in a chair in the shop. When Delilah found him, she was so annoyed that she pushed him out of the chair.

**“I DON’T WANT
TO LIVE LIFE
UNEXAMINED.”**

Donnie got up off the floor and spun around. Seeing Delilah, he relaxed himself and went back to sit.

“Are you kidding me?” Delilah shoved him into the chair. “What are you doing?”

“Sitting.”

“No shit. Why aren’t you working?”

Donnie pulled a stack of work-orders from a drawer and dropped them on the desk. “I have been. The work-orders are up-to-date, I did the grounds this morning, and Peter would kill me if I started a project without him . . . so, I’m sitting.”

Delilah stared—probably trying to think of a new complaint. “Fine, then. Sit.”

“I am.”

Delilah turned and marched toward the door. She reached out to grab the handle. Before leaving, she stopped. Her shoulders started to relax, her back seemed to untighten, and she slowly faced Donnie. When she spoke, her voice was only a whisper. “Why are you quitting?”

Donnie thought to himself: can he even answer that? Yes, it’s simple: he didn’t like this job. The longer he stayed, the harder it would be to leave. There would never be a better time to quit than right now—even if right now wasn’t such a good time. But there was more to it. This wasn’t just an isolated decision; it was the tail end of a trend.

If you look at it like that, maybe it’s Delilah’s fault—when I started working here, everything was perfect; life made sense, and I didn’t have to struggle that hard to maintain—

If not Delilah, he could blame Peter. Peter was the one that showed him the natural progression of Christian thought after all.

I didn’t have to think; I had a religion that formed opinions for me or maybe Christian thought was fine; maybe if Delilah didn’t pull me astray, I’d be living a happy, thoughtless life—right or wrong doesn’t matter, the effects were real, so who’s to say that the whole thing wasn’t real—no, it wasn’t Peter; it wasn’t Delilah; it was me . . . it’ll always be me.

“Why are you quitting?” she repeated.

Donnie put his hand on the desk. The old leather Bible was still lying there. He thought about asking her if she’d ever read it but decided the conversation would last too long. “I don’t want to lie anymore,” he said.

“About that?” she asked, pointing to the Bible.

“Sure,” he said, “Among other things.”

Donnie picked the Bible up and tossed it into a corner. The way it landed made him think of old black-and-white horror films: a thick leather book leaning on a gray wall with cobwebs holding it to the corner.

He stood up and walked to the far side of the desk and started sliding it towards Delilah and the door.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

Donnie ignored the question and instead said to her, “Grab that end. I need help getting it to my truck.” The desk was more awkward than heavy, so the two of them had no trouble getting it loaded into the bed of his Chevy.

“Where are you taking it?” Delilah asked.

“Goodwill.” Donnie threw a strap over the top and started winching it down. “About as close to a fresh start I can think of.”

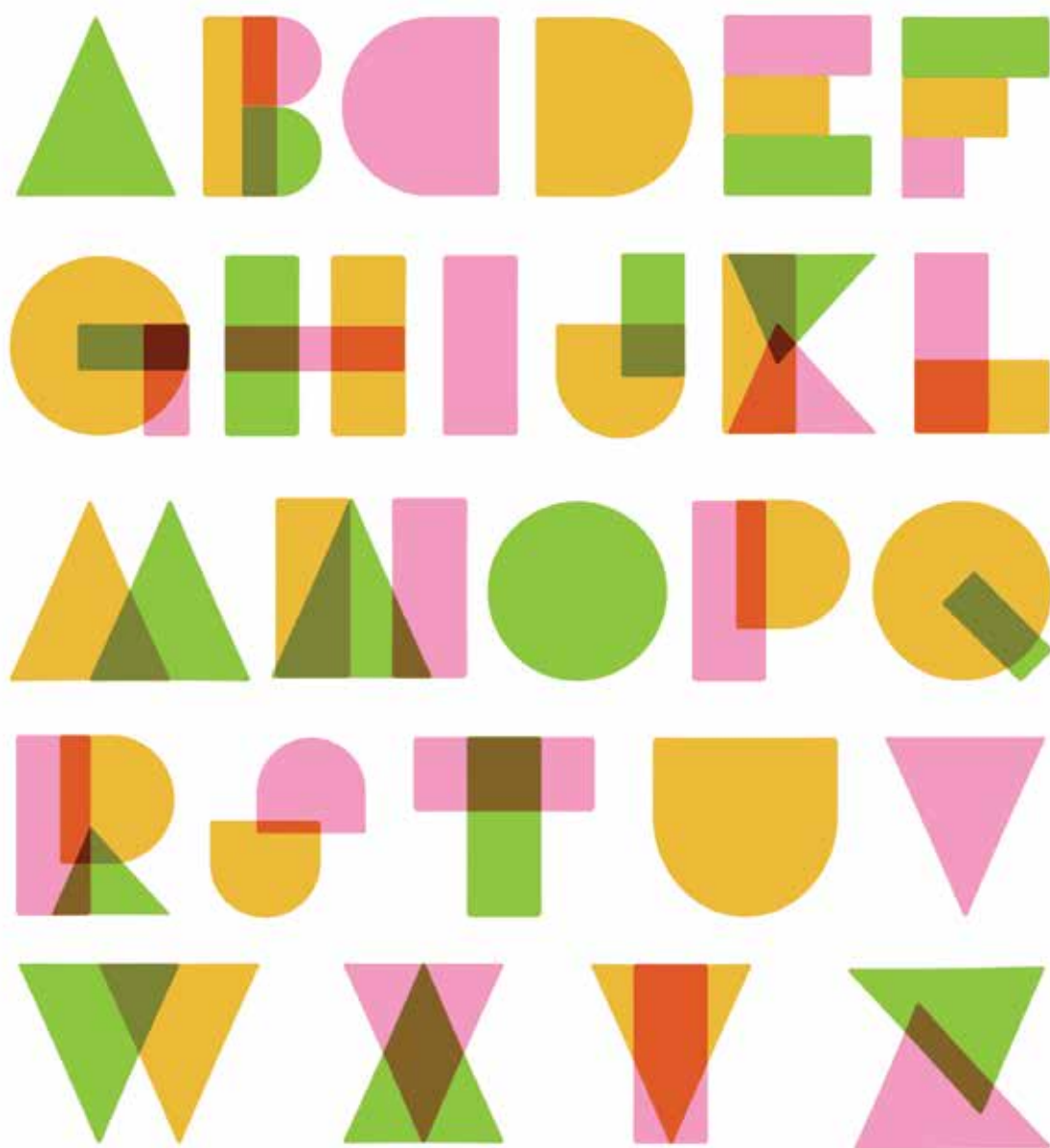
“You’re not keeping it?” she asked.

“Keep it?” He hopped down from the bed of the truck and started walking towards the driver’s door. “No, I don’t want it.”

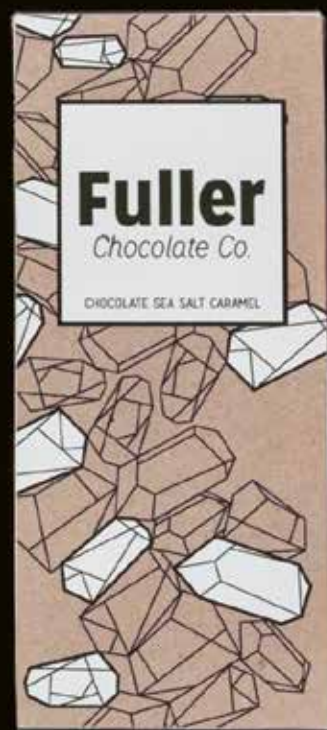
Before he could open it, Delilah caught him by the arm. “If you’re not going to keep it, why take it at all?”

“If I don’t, it’s only a matter of time before Peter paints it gray.” Donnie got in the truck and started it up. He rolled down the window and added, “Can’t let him ruin it like that.”

He drove away without saying goodbye.



MODULAR ALPHABET
Serghey Chuklanov
Digital Illustration



FULLER CHOCOLATE CO.
Ronnie Riske
Mixed Media Package Design

FORBIDDEN

CORY BLYSTONE

It came in my mouth
when I bit into the waxy flesh.

Sweet juices dribbling
down my chin, neck, onto my chest.

Sticky. Autumnal
flavors linger in my moist mouth,
sauce softly swirling
round my tongue before I swallow.

Red begs for round two.

Like Adam, I cannot resist.



JAKE
Julian Nelson
*Silver Gelatin Print
on Fiber Paper*



GRETA
Julian Nelson
*Silver Gelatin Print
on Fiber Paper*

LAS TRÉS MARIAS
(THE THREE MARIAS)
Sol Duncan
Acrylic Painting on Canvas



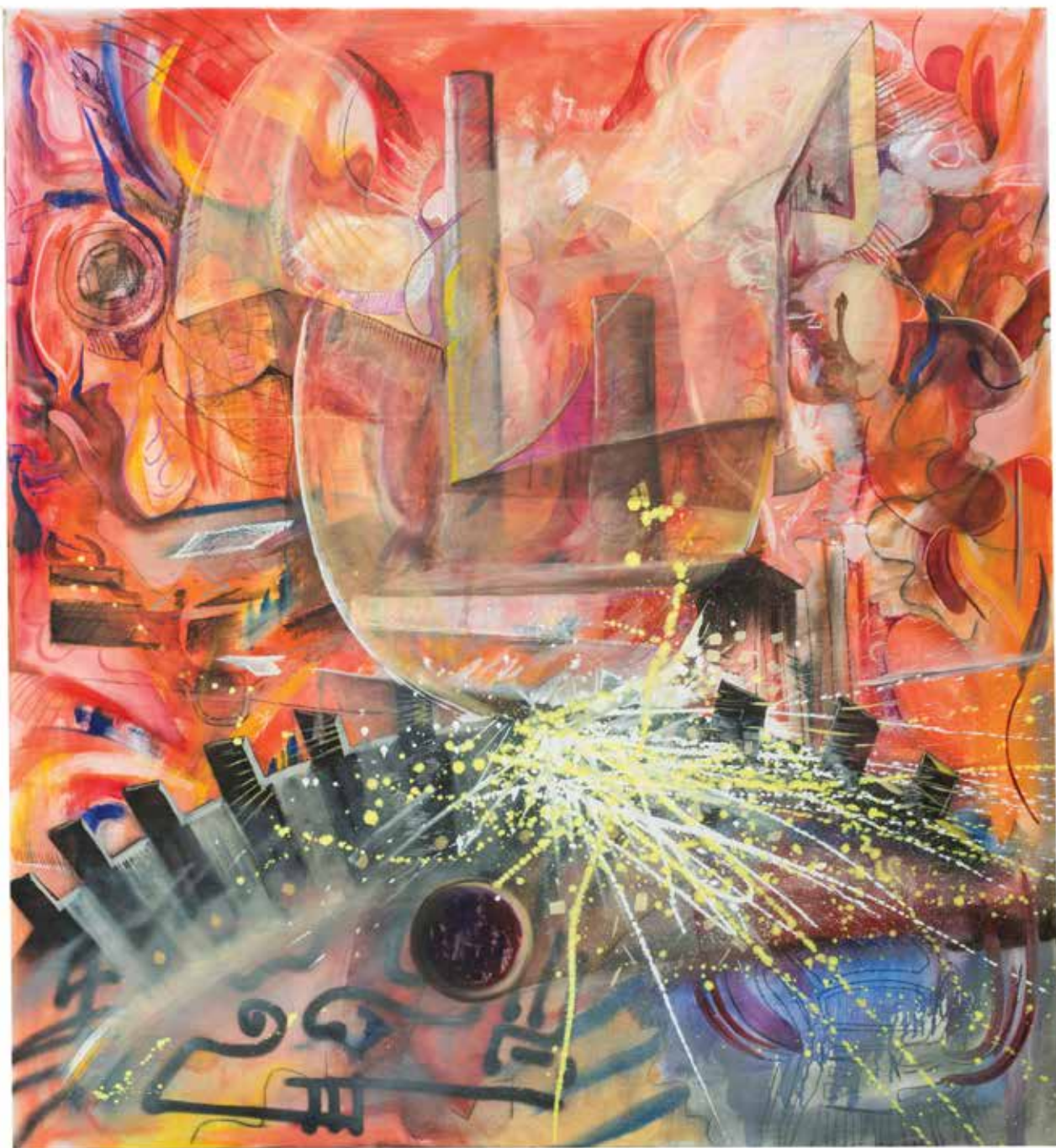
THE WISDOM OF SILENCE

TIMOTHY BEREZHNOY

It's in a moment that a word can topple you,
but in dumbness we learn of more profound languages
whose wordless eloquence is felt like caring hands.
Eyes drink in the sorrow and the shame,
but not to scrutinize or in loftiness
defame—
they see and give heartfelt sympathy,
and their flame radiates and warms
for words
yet keeps silent, waiting
for that gentle word that will not spew violence,
but in its breaking silence
heal the wounds of careless words that in moments past
have toppled you.



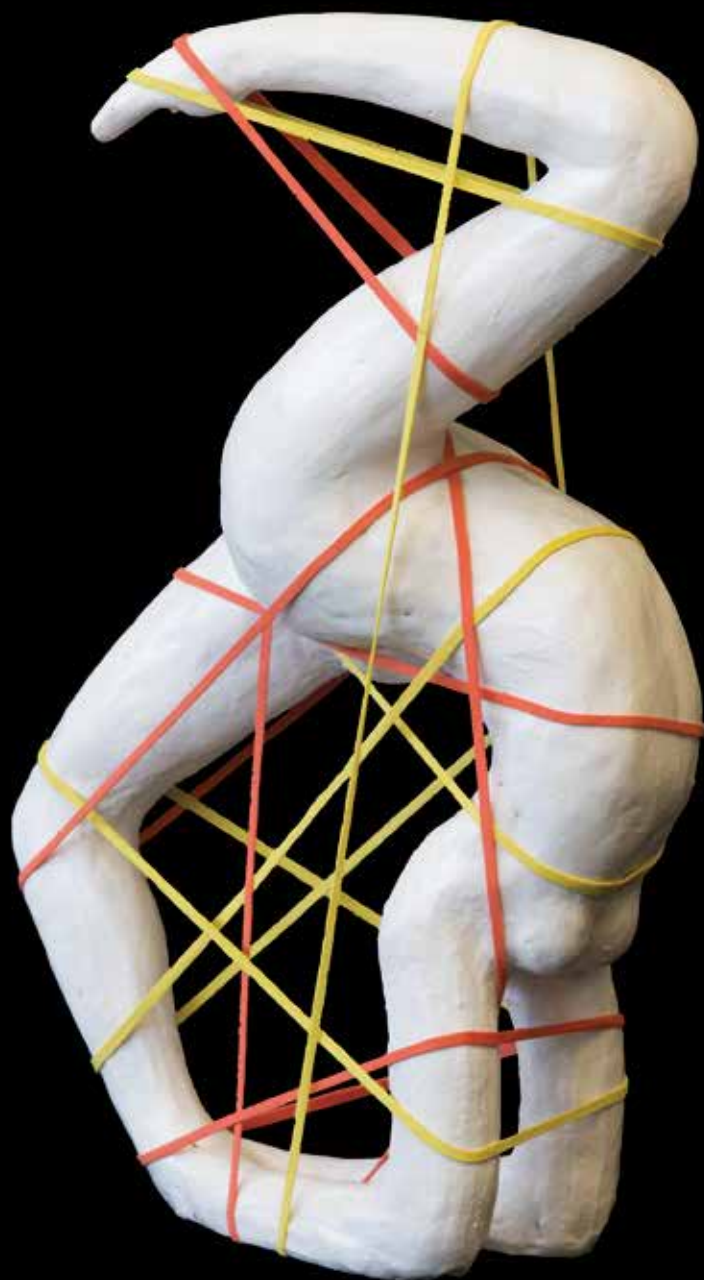
ONE AND MANY
Shawn Schmidt
Oil on Canvas



HEART
Matthew Harmon
Mixed Media Painting on Canvas



OLD CIRCUITS
Emma Shafer
Ceramic Mixed Media



STRETCHED OUT
Emma Shafer
Clay Sculpture



BOXED IN
Ealom Munoz
Mixed Media
on Bristol Board

LOVE AND MISTAKES AND REGRETS AND SENTENCES

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHESTON KNAPP

RYAN LICINI

Cheston Knapp is the managing editor of one of the most respected literary journals in America: *Tin House*. Over the years, *Tin House* has published some of the best contemporary writers—Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro, Pulitzer Prize winner Anthony Doerr, Stephen King, and more.

Cheston is also an accomplished writer, published in *Tin House* and *One Story*. In 2015 he received an Oregon Literary Fellowship for literary nonfiction.

Curious if I was going to meet a writer more Apollonian or Dionysian, more Superman or Deadpool, I set out on January 28th to meet with Cheston at the Dragonfly Coffee Shop in northwest Portland. We sat for more than an hour discussing editing, writing, life, and a bathroom door (ironically painted to resemble a forest). There is a great mystery surrounding what happened to the recording of that conversation (some have accused the NSA of swiping it; still others believe that the very aura of Mr. Knapp interfered with the equipment), but the fact remains that it was lost, forever. So it goes.

What follows is a tribute to that conversation, reconstructed via email with the help of Cheston Knapp.



LICINI: You received your bachelor's degree in English from The College of William & Mary. Did you pursue that degree with a specific vocation in mind?

KNAPP: Not really, no. To be honest, I didn't know there were English-type vocations out there that

weren't teaching, whether that be high school or college or what. And one of the things I picked up at school was this soul-deep, cockles-level knowledge that I wasn't meant to be an academic. My professors would be the first to confirm this. My interests were always too scattered and diffuse, too rangy for the demands of higher higher learning. What I developed there, though, was a work ethic. And so when I started reading contemporary literature during my senior year, I did so with the same degree of seriousness and attention that my Milton and Wittgenstein seminars demanded of me.

LICINI: In 2010, you published your debut story, "A Minor Momentousness in the History of Love," in *One Story*. Can you describe the process of getting that piece published?

KNAPP: I'd sent that story out to a handful of places and it came running home, shoulders slumped, in tears: Rejected! I gave up on it for a spell. But then a friend encouraged me to submit to *One Story*, so I trotted it out of its pen of shame and languor and to my surprise and delight they took it.

LICINI: You've said the idea for the story came from watching tennis in an attempt to distract yourself from an overwhelming feeling of homesickness. Do you feel that sadness and discomfort are necessary components of inspiration?

KNAPP: There's this Romantic poet named Novalis who thought that all philosophy was homesickness, "the urge to be at home everywhere." I like that. As a culture we look at sadness and discomfort as things to be gotten over, treated. That they're deficient states of being. I don't like that. Art is a response to our dissatisfaction with the way things are. It's both protest and embrace.

LICINI: In 2015, you received an Oregon Literary Fellowship for your work in literary nonfiction. I know you've written fiction before, but most of your published works have been creative nonfiction. Do you consider yourself primarily a nonfiction writer?

KNAPP: I don't really think of myself as one or the other. Identity markers like that spook me. I don't even like to think of myself as a writer. It's more like I'm a guy who writes. I can say with confidence that I can't imagine what my life would look like without it. As far as the projects go, I have a collection of essays that I'm finishing up now, a handful of stories in a drawer, and then a longer, third thing that might be a novel or might be nothing. Time will tell. I tend to cycle through working on them.

LICINI: What draws you to nonfiction?

KNAPP: I think I hit a wall somewhere in my mid-to-late twenties where I was finding it hard to get at everything I wanted to get at in fiction. I wrote a couple essays and found I could move more

freely in them. They more accurately matched the way my mind moved. Essays are a more protean and generous a form, in their way. They can be narrative or lyric or ruminative, can accommodate so much, whereas fiction has certain requirements that need to be met. Maybe it's that I hadn't yet grokked my own way of fulfilling those requirements.

LICINI: In the most recent issue of *The Paris Review*, there was an interview with Gordon Lish. Speaking about Raymond Carver, Lish says, "I saw in Carver's pieces something I could fuck around with." As an editor, what is your reaction to that?

KNAPP: Say whatever you like about Lish the man, but there's basically no argument worth a grain that those early Carver stories are better without Lish's cuts. That whole dust up about Carver and Lish was interesting to me only in that it pointed out how deeply we still hold on to the artist as a sort of monkish visionary who reports to us from the outermost limit of human perception and potential. Under this view, the editor is an interloper, an adversary, but really the situation's deeper and more complicated than just that. This involves quasi-mystical ideas about communion and trust and care, all of which are a lot harder to talk about than believing the artist is a lone wolf.

**THIS SOUL-DEEP,
COCKLES-LEVEL
KNOWLEDGE
THAT I WASN'T
MEANT TO BE AN
ACADEMIC.**

LICINI: You spend about 80% of your time at *Tin House* reading and editing submissions. Does spending that much time in other people's work have an effect on your own writing?

KNAPP: It's almost impossible for it not to. But that doesn't have to be a bad thing. I think what it's given me, in the end, is a sense of the kind of story or essay I'm interested in writing. After having read so many well-made stories, minor feats of emotional algebra, I think I'm drawn to stories that are at least partially broken, that have some rogue element that shouldn't work but does.

LICINI: *Tin House* was founded in the late 1990s. How does a journal achieve so much stature and gain so much respect in such a short period of time?

KNAPP: I hate to be cynical here, but I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that we came out of the gates willing to pay writers a competitive wage for their work. This was part of what our publisher and editor in chief, Win McCormack, wanted to ensure. But aside from that, I think the design elements were important, attractive. Another thing that had stuck in Win's craw was how boring other literary magazines looked. He wanted a magazine with more pizzazz. He brought in elements from glossy mags, like coverlines and pull quotes and subheads, which made the reading experience more inviting, more fun.

LICINI: What brought you from Virginia to Portland? Was it *Tin House* specifically?

KNAPP: I moved out here on a whim. Back in the mid-aughts Portland was still semi under the radar, a cheap place to live with a lot of bands and art and other stuff going on. I was only vaguely aware of *Tin House* at the time—only vaguely aware of what a literary magazine even was. I think this is true of a lot of liberal arts schools, but judging by the curriculum at W&M [William & Mary] you'd think that literature ended in 1964 or something. We just weren't exposed to the idea that literature was being made by folks who were alive, like now, folks who were breathing the same polluted cultural air and trying to make sense of it. Anyway, I applied for an internship at the magazine but didn't hear back for more than three months, during which time I worked a lot of odd jobs and for *The Oregonian*, where I wrote a couple columns for a suburban weekly they used to publish back in the prehistoric days when print papers were a thing.

I THINK I'M DRAWN TO STORIES THAT ARE AT LEAST PARTIALLY BROKEN . . .

LICINI: You have been with *Tin House* for more than half its life-span. Is there anything specific that you have implemented that has added to its success?

KNAPP: It's tough to say, really. On the business side of things, I've done my best to act responsibly, whether it be in renegotiating our printing contracts or in streamlining the production schedule. That's all pretty boring to talk about. But I think it matters—in order for a magazine to be successful, there has to be a magazine. There are magazines out there that call themselves a quarterly, but only come out two or three times a year. They're that far behind schedule. Editorially speaking, I couldn't say. I'm one voice on a board of five or six. So I can say I've influenced the content at least somewhere between 16.6 and 20%.

LICINI: Every year, VIDA chooses a group of literary magazines and does a comprehensive analysis of the ratio of male to female contributions. *Tin House* has been shown to have one of the best overall scores, with more than half of the journal being from female contributors. Is balancing male and female voices something that *Tin House* makes a conscious effort to achieve?

KNAPP: We publish the best stuff that crosses our desk in the span of about four months. If we're conscious of anything, it's to solicit work from as many women writers as men.

LICINI: Over the years, *Tin House* has published some major writers—Alice Munro, Ursula Le Guin, Stephen King—what is it like to work with these writers?

KNAPP: I can't speak for The King, who I didn't work with. But it's a surreal feeling, working on a story by living legends like Le Guin and Munro. With Munro, I remember writing out everything I wanted to say, every little query. I was walking around with her number in my phone for almost two weeks without calling her, like it was a juicy secret or something. I'd expected her to be this serious, über-literary woman, someone who would quote Chekhov or Babel at me or something, but when I got her on the phone she was spritely and energetic and totally disarming. It's among the best experiences I've had as an editor. As is the stuff I've worked on with Ursula Le Guin, who's patient and sharp and not unlike a sage. I learned so, so much from these women and I'm endlessly grateful to them.

LICINI: Did you approach their work in a different way?

KNAPP: As far as the game plan went, editing-wise, I just did my best to treat it like another story. I don't think you want to be too fawning or sycophantic with writers of that caliber. The way to win their respect is to show you've read the story as closely as anyone ever will. I sometimes think of editing as a form of feng shui or redecoration. I go into your living room and move stuff around. I rearrange the furniture, repaint the walls. All this is an effort to hold a writer accountable for the decisions he or she has made, often subconsciously, as they wrote. I want the room to be as welcoming and warm as possible. In my experience, it's the more accomplished writers who hunger for that kind of editorial attention. It's the fledgling writers who take exception.

LICINI: *Tin House* seems to make an effort to share new voices. What do you look for in a piece by a new author?

KNAPP: Oh man, this is a doozy of a question. Probably the most common and the toughest one I get. In short, I don't really know what I'm looking for. There's typically something about the language that grabs me, the style. Some slant way of describing the world, a character. I know some people read for story, for plot, and others for character, emotion. I think maybe I'm more granular. I just want to feel like I'm in the hands of a stylist, someone who wields words like a weapon, a whip. But yeah, it's always a hoot to publish someone's first story. It's an honor, really, to help launch a career. It's one of the reasons all of us on staff stay in the game.

LICINI: You started at *Tin House* as an intern and eventually worked your way up to managing editor. I'm interested to know how you transitioned from intern to staff.

KNAPP: I feel like I was just very lucky in this and many other things. For the year I interned, I made sure that no opportunity went untaken. And I'm not just talking about the chance to read a manuscript or whatever. If orders needed to be filled, I stuffed envelopes. If coffee needed to be

brewed or procured, I brewed, procured. If the garage needed tidying, I tidied. I think this conveyed to the powers that be something of my devotion or loyalty or work ethic. And the thing about a place like *Tin House* is it's small. It's got a family vibe. So when people move on, positions tend to be filled from inside the organization. I just happened to come along when there was some turnover.

LICINI: Are there specific things you look for in interns now, when you are considering whether or not to bring them on staff?

KNAPP: The one time it's happened under my watch, I was looking for someone who not only could fulfill all the duties but also fit with the family. It was a really hard decision because after we narrowed down the field, we still had four exceedingly qualified people. It's not one thing, never is. The margins we're talking are infinitesimal.

LICINI: Do you have any advice for aspiring writers in regards to getting published?

KNAPP: I don't mean to be coy here, but I don't. Working in publishing has only deepened the mystery for me. If anything, my advice would be not to put too much pressure on the publishing side of things. Focus on the work itself. This may be naïve, but I sort of think that the rest will take care of itself.

LICINI: What is the most important thing for a writer to do, when developing their craft?

KNAPP: Read. Fall in love. Make mistakes. Cultivate regrets. And hang around sentences.



With the interview over, coffee cups long since drained, we sat at that little table for some time just shooting the breeze. Cheston pulled out a camera and asked if he could snap a quick shot (a new hobby he's fallen into). I pulled out his debut story and asked for an autograph (a little memento of the occasion). I felt like the conversation couldn't have been more complete . . . until I remembered the question that I had most wanted to find answered . . . the question that had first formed my curiosity.

LICINI: Do you consider yourself more Dionysian, or Apollonian?

KNAPP: Ha. I've never thought about how this would shake out. I'm probably 60:20, Apollonian to Dionysian, with a rogue twenty percent in there that's neither and both.



COBRA JUICY
Luke Entwistle
Oil on Canvas





MY THERAPY II
Anthony Hamblin
Digital Photograph



OBLIGATION

ASHLEE NELSON

The first time you ever touched another boy—really touched him—you were fourteen and didn't know what you were doing. It ended quietly, the two of you never talking about it.

But that was years ago, and now Jimmy likes to brush your bangs out of your face so he can see your eyes. It doesn't matter who is watching or where. Can't get enough of the freckles that stand out on your milky forehead, he told you, so if you grow your hair out, he'll keep touching you. Even when it's too hot in summer to hold hands, he always touched your sun-warmed hair if he couldn't see you clearly.

You've never considered the possibility of marriage with Jimmy—though you figured you'd run off together somewhere. There's no way you can ever claim him, but the two of you can just exist together in the same space maybe. Gulp each other's breaths down in a locked pickup truck until one of you dies first from carbon dioxide poisoning, the oxygen burned out of your atmosphere.

In a car, going hundreds of miles an hour for all you knew, you and Jimmy were in your own world. Messing around like the two of you were all that mattered, a fixed point in time. This time, however, the reach of your long, fumbling fingers ended with a bang. An overturned car and a twisted, ugly arm that was nothing but meat and shredded bone leeching off Jimmy's otherwise healthy body.

You were unconscious at that point, the point of impact not on your side of the car, but you can imagine his muscular, tanned arm—no longer beautiful—and it fuels your apologies. Crying over his supine body in a hospital bed, the tears fall, and you're back at the place before Jimmy, where you're fourteen and the first and only boy you thought you loved doesn't love you at all.

"I just needed you to like me," you tell him. This was the only way, you should add, that you know how to make other boys like you. It doesn't matter if you enjoy yourself, as long as you can make someone love you in return. It's all you've ever wanted. You're not like your mother. You don't do anything out of obligation: no, there was something you wanted, and you went and tried to get it. "I needed you to like me."

"*Baby,*" Jimmy says, in a way only troubled, older boys can pull off, "you didn't have to try so hard."



Jimmy is five years older, and every sign points to him being too good for you. You're not enough, and you don't know how you caught him or made him stay when he's always packed up and ready to leave.

"I won't leave without you," he promised. He keeps old fishing photos of his father and him on his fridge, snapshots of better times. There are cutouts from auto magazines of cars he wants to own someday when the money starts rolling. It's a cluttered life that gives the impression that

Jimmy has lived, really lived and has a story you want to hear more of.

You used to pick at the edges of his old report cards he proudly taped on his busy kitchen walls. Mostly As and Bs. Before you met Jimmy and started spending all your time here in this world of motor oil and cheap beer in a mini fridge, you were just earning average grades.

YOU MUST REMIND THEM HE'S NOT BROKEN.

He's mostly talk, but your heart still tried to escape your rib-cage when he said he'll take you away from here when—not *if*—you graduate.

These are the tiny threats he used against you: "you can't come over anymore," "I won't kiss you anymore," "I'll tell your jailer you're keepin' grades from her and forging her signature on your teacher's notes." Jimmy believes in you in ways no one else has. He doesn't want you to repeat his mistakes—he wants you to be a *somebody*; he wants you to go to college. But you don't care, and when you snuck out of your room the next night and the night after that, Jimmy still picked you up, swung you around in his arms and pressed your mouths together with a grin like you were the greatest thing he had ever held to him. Then, he asked if you did your homework, and when you replied honestly, the threats poured out. They amounted to nothing.

Leave or stay. You'd never even considered which schools to apply to, but suddenly the future is a rushing train. You, regardless, are on the tracks.



The heart monitor has two important cords—the one that trails behind the bed, feeding into the outlet on the wall. The second is attached to his right hand—his only hand.

The nurse told you not to wake him. Instead, you rest your head easy, listen to him breathe. He sounds the same. He doesn't sound like a terrible car accident. He doesn't sound disabled for life.

You close your eyes, and you're in his trailer, limbs tangled on his bed. His left palm trailed down your ribs, ugly and protruding—hills in the canvas of your skin. Later, you'll realize: this is only going to be a memory. It cannot happen ever again. The fingers on his left hand, slightly more calloused than his right, will not get to touch you anymore.

The machine next to your head is humming. Your head is still a little achy, and it's hard to smile with the stitches in your cheek. A little green electric line traces the waves of Jimmy's heart.

His name comes out as a sigh, exhaled as you wonder how he'll see you in this clinical

halogen light: fondly, the light reflecting a yellow halo off your hair—or alien and sickly like a bottom feeder, limbs long and reaching.



The doctors seem to have a different face every time they come in to read the charts near Jimmy's bed over the next couple days. They always take notes. Sometimes they are dark haired with thick fingers and wide faces to match. Sometimes they are thin and wiry like bird feet, their noses sharp and somehow always turned up at you. Each talks about different things—Jimmy's bones, his muscles. His happiness.

They go by different names. But they are all Jimmy's "doctor," and they want to fix him.

You must remind them he's not broken. Every morning he takes stock of his surroundings and the changed body he resides in. Refocusing on you with watery eyes, he nods and thanks you for the gesture. It's a portrait of sorts, an image that stays with you: *Jimmy, defeated*.

There's a leftover sick feeling in the pit of your stomach for following this script of what you know you're supposed to do. You're expected to stay by his side and watch them unpeel the bandages.

The stump that was once his left forearm looks neater than you expected. The skin is shiny and pulled together, puckered where the stitches are. When the gauze is replaced, they place a sock over it. If—no, when—he comes home, you may be asked to change it for him.

You never asked for this. You are his, but you never agreed to this. Next year is your eighteenth birthday, and that's when you plan to tell your mother why those dates with the nice girls she set you up with only ended in awkward silence and never a phone call. She's too busy smoking on the patio, doing things out of obligation, to notice you've been dating Jimmy for the last six months.

And in this new town he's drifted into, Jimmy only has you, and every once in a while the notion is romantic. As it stands now, the idea fills you with dread.



Your nurse has gray, greasy eyelids, oily like the pomade Jimmy was wearing the first time you met him, and this is what you focus on when she checks your head wound. It's a distraction. It's something to look at. She isn't Jimmy, and it's nice to be around someone who doesn't make your chest tight. There is something behind your ribs, waiting to break out and it isn't a beating, blushing heart. It's a reaction. It's a dark, ugly panic and you hope they can drain it from your body like some awful humor.

"You don't have a concussion," she informs you, and you ask about your neck, rubbing the base of your skull. "Probably just whiplash. You'll be fine after a few days. There's no reason for you to stay here."

This should be a relief. Instead, there's a familiar tugging. You ought to stay. You should

spend the rest of your life at Jimmy's bedside, neck straining and shoulders heavy and painful from an uncomfortable night's rest. To leave now would be betrayal, a failure in devotion.

The nurse doesn't understand. She tells you to go home, Jimmy will be okay, and that your mother is going to pick you up. You can picture the display your mother will put on. Rushing towards you in the lobby, the scuff of her animal print slippers, as she smothers you in her bathrobe. Making a scene, cooing loudly. She'll press her wet mouth to your ear, leaving behind obvious lipstick kisses, the stink of cigarettes and her suffocating cheap perfume.

It's not her business to know who was in the car with you. The nurse doesn't tell her, so there's no reason she should ever find out. She asks, though, because it's what a mother ought to do. This could have been the first opportunity you had to tell her about Jimmy, the boy countless people have seen you walking around with and refuse to acknowledge. Jimmy, the boy who does various jobs for anyone who will hire him. Jimmy, who everyone wants to know but are too intimidated to approach.

Instead, you tell her it was just a friend, and she lights another cigarette, driving with one hand on the wheel. You pull on your long sleeves, cupping your hands around your mouth and nose—a mask to keep the smoke out. You lower the window, trying to get some air. Nothing is said to suggest she's interested in how you ended up in the hospital this time.

In the rearview mirror, the bruising on your face is slight. Purple splotches blossoming down your cheek with hints of healing shades of yellow and green. "A miracle," Jimmy had suggested, not looking at his own injury for comparison. It's no worse than the time your neighbor shoved you hard into the big tree in front of your high school. She broke your nose when she found out you had a crush on her little brother. She threatened your fingers would be next if you ever even considered touching him. *Too late*, you realized, because you had already.



It was after the homecoming game at the high school that you met Jimmy. You stayed under the bleachers, watching everyone cheer for the other team. You'd lost. Visitors won.

You haven't fallen in love again, not since the first time where you learned it's always better to love a sure thing, but that doesn't stop you from staring at padded masculine bodies, shoulders plenty broad underneath and if you're lucky, they won't notice. The adults ignore you, and the ones that don't just think it's a phase. But these boys don't. They're scared of the attention, call you a "fairy" and aim for your stomach since teachers aren't going to know about the bruises under your shirt.

Having gotten what you wanted, you tried to sneak away from the bleachers and head the back way home. You didn't think looking was hurting anyone, but the boys and their girls must have seen you leave and thought otherwise. Trailing you, they'd began their taunts only after catching up and shoving you into the pavement. That homecoming though, the bright lights from the stadium must have attracted and unsettled Jimmy enough to take a walk through the neighborhood.

He waltzed over, asked what the holdup was. The moment they laid eyes on him, the younger boys wanted to be him, collected and experienced. Their girlfriends wanted to touch him, his white shirt tight across his chest. You wanted to have him, keep that precious regard he held for you in his every look, always near and close by. You had to have this one because he was wanted and couldn't care less: he only saw you.

Your classmates grew disinterested and left. Jimmy stayed. His jeans were a little muddy when he offered you a hand, hair slicked back. He tried to make small talk, admitting that he was bored and wanted to watch the game. Jimmy was from a state over, and feeling particularly nostalgic for the good old days where he was on a team, thought he could be a part of that camaraderie again. Jimmy laughed at himself back then, a little self-deprecating. It was so brief, this sadness, and you'd only seen it bleed through on occasion ever since.

He told you about his own bullies—his mom and dad, who thought they'd made a mistake with him, who tried to fix him. In that moment of subtle language, you both knew where the two of you stood and how this would end. He offered to take you home.

Later that night you made the mistake of mussing up his hair, dragging your fingers across his scalp in his car parked outside your house. You discovered how difficult wax-based hair products are to clean out from under your nails. When Jimmy noticed the next time he saw you, he swore off them.

"Not like I have anyone else to impress. No one ever tries to get to know the handsome stranger."

He'd propped himself up on his elbows, beaming up at you from his bed as you scrubbed your fingers at the nearby sink. His mouth is square, his teeth straight and white while yours are not. He belongs to magazines, in nicer clothes than the ones he finds at the second-hand store. It was a mistake that Jimmy ended up in a cramped mobile home with a skinny boy who can't find the missing ingredient to love back.

You swallowed, throat thick with guilt. From the start, you could tell Jimmy deserved more.

"Lucky you're not so handsome, then," you lied. Jimmy slid off the bed, pressing your warm back to his firm stomach.

"Darling, don't be cruel to me," he groaned, snaking his arms around your waist. "I adore you too much for you to be cruel to me." He rested his neck against the side of your head, and you glanced to see the sweat sliding down his neck. You swallowed again.

**I ADORE YOU
TOO MUCH
FOR YOU TO BE
CRUEL TO ME.**



"Thank God the seat belt wasn't jammed," your mother goes over the details with a neighbor, you in the next room. "Could've gotten trapped, pinned like a bug. I don't even want to think about it."

There are low murmurs, and you can't make out the words, but your mother still goes into exaggerated and gory detail about how the car could have exploded. All the fliers Jimmy brought back for you about different schools and funding options, scholarships you're not dedicated enough to apply to, are tucked under your mattress. Kicking at it, you think about how funerals cost less than raising a child in the long run.

Probably less energy too. Your mother would cry once in front of relatives and then carry on like she always had.

It'd taken you a few years for you to realize the only reason she did anything for you was because as her child, she owed it to you. In her mind she had to love you, but it wasn't for anything you'd ever done—you, lethargic and removed, unremarkable in every way. You could find no way to blame her. You were her's, and she had to love you. Nothing's hurt more than this acceptance.

At the very least, you think you cared enough not to hurt Jimmy like that. Slipping out of your room to grab the phone, you are careful to maneuver the long white cord under the door on your return. Once the hospital desk attendant redirects your call to his room, it's several rings before Jimmy picks up, a little breathless as he greets you.

In your room, alone with empty walls, it's quieter, and you can fill in the blanks of conversation with worried thoughts. You can see the full picture, and you speak with a calmness that surprises you. The two of you engage in unimportant talk before he wants to know if you're okay.

"You're the one in the hospital, Jimmy."

He laughs at the reminder and asks about your mother like Jimmy is still lost in the daydream that nothing's changed. Ignoring his question, you answer with one of your own:

"What's going to happen?"

He's quiet, and you imagine him leaning back into his bed, getting comfortable before answering. Wide shoulders sliding, hips lifting and adjusting.

"I get out of here. You go to school. I'll come by on weekends, and when you graduate, we'll go where we want." There's more shuffling on the other line. "Life goes on."

Your stomach drops, your gaze unfocused until Jimmy brings you back by whispering your name. In a vaguely apologetic tone, you tell Jimmy you have to get off the phone and make no hint that you'll be calling back.

"I love you," Jimmy says, and it sounds a little desperate, like he's trying to reel you back again, but you don't know if you can return. You've thought too much about space between you two now that you're here and he's there and he knows. You told Jimmy what you wanted. It's easy to imagine, lovely and lonely Jimmy, spending the rest of your lives with unrealistic expectations. Jimmy, the dreamer, pretending he didn't hear you one of the few times you were honest. Jimmy—who only wanted to get better and watch you wake up because he wished to be the first thing you saw every morning. Forever, if he was allowed.

Trapping the phone to your ear, your neck twinges.

"Me too," you say, out of habit.



AIYANA 4
Servando Nava
Digital Photograph





STRING SERIES I & II
Selena Jones
Ink Drawing on Paper



BECKI
London Rilatos
Digital Photographs





WORKMAN'S GLASSES
Macon Sumpter
18 Gauge Brass & Copper Wire

DENOUEMENT

ROWAN WALTER

When death is at the hands of a heroine
that rather belongs inside a syringe
and guns are held at head-point
of coffee and not roses or porcelain
is when the mass needs to do more than pray.
When berry lips and rouge cheeks
are considered invites to a woman's temple
and fire and injury are thought required
to control peace against corruption—
is when the sinking ship realizes the shore means nothing now.



FÉCONDER

Nikki Hansen

Oil, Mixed Media on Canvas

FRAGMENTS OF FAULT

LILY PIRAYESH-TOWNSEND

It was a one-time thing, I heard my husband say, somewhere in the past. I swear.

Cliff's eyes were stagnant at that point, a landscape too still to be alive. I imagined the needle suspended above his vein, just about to pierce the surface of his skin. Six months later, his overdose didn't take me by surprise.

The funeral was closed casket. Our daughter read a poem she had written about him. His parents talked about what a gentle man he had been. If only they could have seen the bruises.

I sat and cried, unable to speak, the wooden church pews digging into my thighs. Cliff's friends tried to comfort me. To them, he was just a high school math teacher from Brooklyn with a cool indie band and a nice family. What they didn't realize was that I wasn't crying out of sadness. It was anger.



The counter was cold against my forehead. Breathe in, hold, breathe out. As my heart stopped trying to escape my ribcage, I envisioned the actions I would take to stand up. Bend knees slightly, lock hips, push tile away from hand. I heard the front door shut as I shook my head and drew myself away, loose strands of coarse hair falling behind my ears.

Lucy stood in the entrance to the kitchen, swaying back and forth to the music I couldn't hear. Her blond hair, the exact same shade as her father's, glinted in the dusty sunlight sneaking through the curtains. I knew she couldn't hear me. She didn't want to.

"Hi, honey," I said, not forcing a smile. At least she had come home this time. "Where were you last night?" She didn't answer, but crossed the room to the counter where she pulled bread and peanut butter out of the sparse cabinet above. "Lucy May, I know you can hear me."

She sighed and pulled out her earbuds, shuffling towards me. When did she eat last? Had she lost weight? I was gone so often. Each day had twisted together after Cliff's death, one long strand of fragmented moments.

"I heard you, Mom." She rolled her eyes, but something wasn't right. Her face was puffier than usual, eyelids struggling to stay open. I knew that look.

"Are you hungover?"

"I love how that's always the first place your mind goes to." Her dark eyes swam in purple half-moons that told me she had not slept. Her father's sarcasm crept out of her voice when she was tired.

"Answer me. Now."

Lucy laughed the same way Cliff had when he was trying not to get angry. "Just because you're a cop doesn't mean you get to interrogate me."

"You're right. But I'm also your mother." I wanted to tell her about the fear that rose in my chest when she wouldn't answer me. Of everything that could possibly be wrong. Trust was something I had unlearned the day I found the scabs on her father's chest—the same day his hands had found my throat for the first time. It was the only time his regret had been palpable, his voice slipping under the bathroom door as I sat on the cold tiles, my entire body shaking involuntarily.

I'm so sorry, he had said. I never wanted to hurt you. I still loved him, even then. But the words coming out of my mouth didn't care.

It's your fault, I replied. You've already hurt us enough.

"I just had too much coffee," Lucy said, beckoning me back to the present. "Jeanine's mom made us a pot while we were studying."

"You're drinking coffee now, too? Christ, you're only seventeen," I said without skipping a beat, trying to sound lighter. I had seen too many people lie to think she was telling the truth.

I watched as she went back to her sandwich, her hands clumsy. She had always been a good kid, studied hard and got good grades. In kindergarten she even stood up to some kid's bully, which her teacher later called to tell me about. We were so proud, Cliff and I. He always said she had a noble heart. Maybe it really was the coffee.

"Let me do it, kiddo," I said, giving in. I crossed the room towards the counter, sliding the sandwich out of her unusually clumsy grasp.

"Go shower and put on some PJs. I'll leave it on the table for you before I leave. I'm covering for Wakefield again tonight."

"Always covering for someone," she said under her breath, rubbing her eyes as she disappeared down the hall.

I'm sorry, Cliff. I was crying. But this is not my fault.

I'm the same man you married, Lydia. Please let me see my little girl.

You're dangerous, Cliff. You have to go, or I'll call the cops. His smile was weak. Maybe he wouldn't be strong enough to hurt me this time. Maybe he didn't want to hurt us anymore.

You are the cops, baby. He lifted his hand towards my face. I recoiled out of instinct.

You should thank me for not turning you in. I'll cover for you, but that's it. Please go. The words clung to my throat. The last thing I remember was his fist connecting with my face.

As I finished putting the sandwich together, I watched the lyrics to “Hurt” flicker across the screen of her iPhone, where she’d left it on the counter. I wondered when she started listening to Nine Inch Nails. I put in the earbuds, listening to Trent Reznor whisper—*the needle tears a hole, the old familiar sting*—before quickly turning it off and leaning against the cupboard, my breath harshly whispering through my teeth. It was Cliff’s voice singing now, at a brewpub in Austin where we’d met. He’d been covering that song with his indie band in the days where he still wore eyeliner and bell-bottoms, with a red bandanna tied under his hair. I had almost spit out my drink when I’d learned he was a middle school mathematics teacher from Brooklyn, taking the summer to tour with his motley band of co-workers.

“Mom.” Lucy was back, her face having regained a little color. She wore low-slung jeans and a loose crop-top that read “Live every day like it’s your last.” She had undeniably ignored my modest values.

“Are you crying?” she asked, unsurprised. I had lost any sense of dignity when it came to tears. The night we buried Cliff, we had sat beside his gravestone and cried, holding each other, needing each other. That could have happened years ago, even though it had only been seven months. Now it was as if she was on one side of the Grand Canyon and I was on the other, shouting over an endless void, our words falling onto the rocks below.

I didn’t answer her, but it didn’t matter. She was out the door in moments anyway. It was late when I got the call. 10–33. Narcotics. My hands went numb. An emergency bad enough to call me for last minute Narcotics backup was serious. I wasn’t working that unit anymore.



I pulled up to the curb to face a large Victorian house painted a horrific salmon and green. Classic. Anyone who could afford a house as big as this could afford high-end smack.

Coroners were already on the scene, wheeling out a body. An overdose, most likely. As I walked towards the house, I saw a blond girl sitting on the steps, a blanket wrapped around her shoulders, her hands cuffed together. She looked up as I approached.

Lucy.

Every color seemed to darken in the dusk, until I could see nothing but her. My heart stayed at a normal tempo, and everything felt eerily still, like the first few moments after I’d found Cliff.

Oh my god. Curled in fetal position, his body lay just outside the house. Blood dripped from his nose, and his eyes were half-open, dulled to a grey color in the hours after his death. He could have been there all night. A strangled scream escaped my throat.

Mom? Lucy had heard it.

Oh—oh, is that Dad? She stood there, falling strangely quiet.

Don’t look, baby. Call 911. Now. I pressed my fingers under his jaw and on his wrist, searching frantically for a pulse I knew I would not find. I tilted his head upwards and blood seeped

**IT WAS THE
ONLY TIME HIS
REGRET HAD
BEEN PALPABLE.**

out of his mouth. Organ rupture. The track marks of his arms seemed to blaze in the silver morning light. I looked at the face of my lover and tried to imagine life into it. I couldn't.

It's all your fault, was the only thing I could sob into the body, as the ambulance arrived and the officer pulled me away.



"Are you with me? You need to listen to me, Lydia." Hearing my first name was jarring. Suddenly, lights were flashing and sirens wailed endlessly. The officer held onto my arm, her brow furrowed in concern.

"Get the fuck off of me," I said, twisting my arm out of her grasp.

"Possession." She spoke rapidly, knowing I didn't want to listen. "She's looking at seven to ten years. They'll charge her as an adult." Brushing her off, I walked over to Lucy. Breathe in, hold, breathe out.

"Was that your friend?" I pointed to the body bag across the street, stalling. Trying to figure out what to say next. Lucy looked at me, her eyes bloodshot from crying.

"Like you care," she said with quiet ire. For the first time in months, I really looked at her. The bones in her face protruded, hollowing her cheeks. The whites of her eyes were too yellow. Why didn't I see it before?

"Of course I care," I said. She nodded sarcastically, looking just like her father in the last month of his life.

"You didn't care about Dad." I had been waiting for her to say it for months, but it still felt like being pulled apart by the limbs. I wondered if Cliff could see what he'd done to us.

"After he died," Lucy continued, "I thought we would be okay. But you weren't there anymore. Not really."

SHE WAS ON ONE SIDE OF THE GRAND CANYON AND I WAS ON THE OTHER.

I thought back to the last months. Late nights at the station. No eye contact. Days spent sleeping, door locked. Never answering her questions. Telling myself I cared where she was, but letting her go wherever she wanted while rarely inquiring her whereabouts. Chalking it up to her father's absence, the late nights we spent arguing in the garage when I wouldn't let him in the house. His overdose. "I saw Dad using one time, before you kicked him out. I know how it works."

"You could have died," I said, lifting my hand to her face, and she recoiled, just as I had with Cliff.

I wanted to tell her it was all because of him. Tell her how much I had loved him and how much I loved her, and the hurt that had engulfed me after his death. But maybe, I was wrong.

Maybe it wasn't entirely his fault.



FUNDIBULUM
Jason Belmore
Copper & Stainless Steel



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS I & II
Nicole Clark
Silver Gelatin Prints





MOUNTAIN MIST
Brandi Dati
Acrylic on Canvas

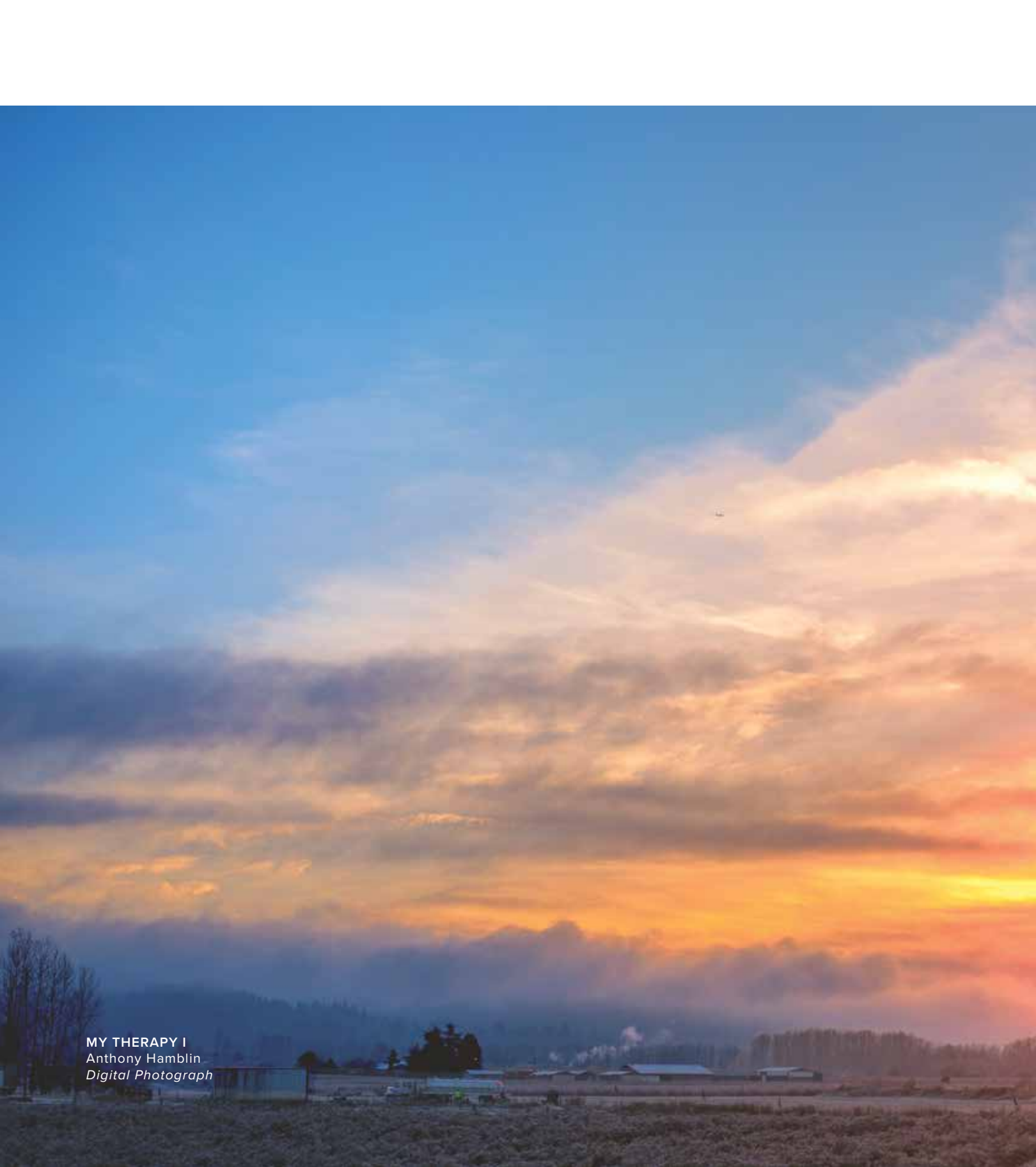
AND THIS IS WHY I CAN'T STAY

BRENNA TAYLOR

I see,
a color I forgot in the trees
and I want to touch it
to taste it, to pull it in and keep it for my own.
I see,
a sunset on a beach
and I want to feel it,
to hold its technicolor vibrancy in my bones.

I hear,
a poem from the dead,
and I want to kiss the curling words
and feel their weight against my tongue.
I hear,
a song never sung
and I want to remember nothing
yet feel everything before it's done.

I see,
flowers in the city
and I want to be every leaf
loved by the sun, embraced by the breeze.
I see,
pictures of people but no places
and I need to know what they think,
before the lens clicks shut, and they stop to breathe.



MY THERAPY I
Anthony Hamblin
Digital Photograph





**SOME GIRL TALKING TO
SOME HORSE IN SOME FIELD**
Trevor Grover
Silver Gelatin Print



DEEPER MEANING
Rebekah Curtis
Silver Gelatin Print



TURQUOISE IN MOTION
Sara Hildebrandt
Acrylic on Canvas

MIDNIGHT BLUE

JENNIFER PRATT-WALTER

There is a midnight piano growing
in my chest,
indigo and glossy black.
My brain is a thesaurus
reading itself into non-being:
desist, finish, cease.

Below the piano
a nautilus coils itself into infinity,
breathing a salty song
across the cold blue keyboard; I taste
the yearning of the sideways harp
hidden within the piano's skeleton.
My mind is speechless
as a bone.

The nautilus slides my breath away
and presses hard beneath my sternum
as I chant the holy words known only to me,
which might have been us, but no.
I'm still wearing rain in frigid blue,
blue as the notes
unstrung from midnight's piano.



MY LITTLE TEAPOT
Stephani Ueltschi
Ceramic



COLOR SPLOTCH BOWL SET
Madison Loveall
Stoneware



DREAM OF TRANQUILITY
Leslie Rich
Digital Illustration

WINGED

LILY HART

"You're fifteen," I tell my sister when she comes into the dining room wearing yellow fairy wings over her sweater. Outside, it's raining. "You'll get teased."

Aletta rolls her eyes, her gray irises exuberating teenage scorn. "Be an individual," she says. I sigh heavily but don't bother to argue. The lies all the teen magazines feed girls like her—be yourself, don't be afraid to wear multi-colored tights like Pippi Longstocking. They think it's inspiring. It's damaging.

I watch her grab a cookie off the platter as I grab my backpack. "Eat a real breakfast." She doesn't.



When Aletta gets home from school that day, she slips into her room, strung with battery-powered fairy lights, and takes out her textbooks and endless stash of candy. I don't know where she gets it. Savings, I guess.

I'll ask her how school was, eyeing the wings as they press against the wall.

"We learned about the origins of the word apostatize," Aletta says.

"And what does that mean?"

"Abandoning beliefs, causes, things important."

I look away. "How was lunch?" I ask.

Aletta stares at me, as though willing me to stop asking. "Fine."



On Tuesday, there's a tear in her wings.

"Did someone do that?" I ask.

"What? Oh, God, Hannah, no," Aletta says. "Stop it. Why do you assume I'm being bullied?"

I don't answer; just take my books and leave.



“How long do you think you can forge those?” she asks me one day, her wings brushing my table lamp.

I inspect my mother’s signature on my high school’s community college enrollment form. As soon as I could, I petitioned my high school to let me take classes at the college and earn high school credit that way. “For four more months,” I say. Until I graduate.



The day my parents left, I watched from the doorway. They had been tipped off by one of their friends—their community, they said—that the police had heard there was a lab operating in this neighborhood.

No policeman ever came knocking on our door.

“Why won’t you take us with you?” I asked them again as they stood outside the house.

“You’ll be better off here,” they told me.

As they drove off, leaving us without any transportation, Aletta shook her head and swore.



My parents took us on a picnic once at the abandoned rock quarry down the road. I guess it was the closest thing to a park—most of the greenery on our street has died, wilted to yellow from lack of water.

It was one of the few times I remembered them smiling. Even as gaunt and worn as they were, sometimes I could trick myself into thinking they were just poor and starving, as if that were better.

We spread the blanket from my bed on the edge of the quarry, and Dad had laid out food—chips and expired cookies from the store. It was sunny, one of the few sunny days in Oregon, and they were more lucid than they had been for awhile.

“What do you think of the clouds? One looks like a horse, doesn’t it?”

Mom asked, her face upturned towards the sky.

I didn’t see the horse, but I told her I did. Maybe it wasn’t a trick of her mind, maybe it was just something only her eyes could see. Aletta furrowed her brow at me but didn’t say anything either.

I chewed on a stale cookie. A car went by. I wondered what people thought when they saw us—sickly parents and the two daughters having a picnic among rocks.



“I’m going to Starbucks with my friends after school today,” Aletta tells me on Wednesday, her wings as yellow as ever.

“You can’t,” I tell her. “They’re too expensive. We have to use money for food.”

**IT WAS ONE OF
THE FEW TIMES
I REMEMBERED
THEM SMILING.**

Her face falls. "But I want to hang out with them."

"I'm sorry," I say. Her friendships are important, even if they're fueled by coffee. But three dollars makes a difference. "I'm sorry."

"No," she says, drooping. "Don't. It's not your fault."



Aletta's not home on Friday. I check the list on the fridge, but there's no mention of after school activities. I bite my thumb, trying to think of reasons to ease away the worry when there's a knock on the door. I pause, dropping my hands to my sides. It could be them. They could be back at last. This could be all over.

Or it could be the police.

She could be hurt or worse. I close my eyes and make myself walk to the door. There's a woman on the other side in a suit. Blue and green. Not a police officer and definitely not my parents.

I blink, feeling the urge to duck around the door and shut it on her. "Are you selling something?"

The woman smiles, her expression indulgent. "No, dear, we aren't. Are you Hannah Holde?"

I pause, my pulse in my ears. I could count the beats. "No."

She sighs a little. "I think you know why we're here, Hannah," she says.

I shake my head. I've avoided this for so long—being separated from Aletta, losing the house. "I don't, and I'm not Hannah."

The woman holds out her hand. "I'm Anna Geraldts. I'm from Child Protection Service. "

I snap my hand behind my back.

"Nice to meet you, Ms. Geraldts, but I don't know why you're here." A somewhat convincing bluff comes to mind. "Do you want me to call my mom? Maybe she knows why you're here. Is it one of the neighbors? Did she call on them?"

She looks up for a moment, then shuts her eyes. "Oh, Hannah. I think you know that won't work."



"I want to drop out of high school," I told my mom once, standing at the edge of the garage, rotten eggs piercing the air

"Why?" she said, her voice harsh as she turned around. "It's a perfectly good high school—gotten too smart for them?"

I winced. "No." Not all. "It's just. . . I'm not interested in it." I knew the whispers around school about my parents—I'd have rather been somewhere where gossip didn't travel so fast.

"Well, you should be interested. You can't be home all day."

"I could work full-time."

"They won't take a high school dropout, a minor at that. " She looked at me with something akin to caring. "Don't drop out."

"Then I'll least switch to taking college courses," I said. I was determined to get out of that school.

"Can you do that?"

I assured her it was a simple procedure.

"No," she cut in. "Can you do that? Handle that?"

I flinched and looked down at my feet, thinking of my low grades. "Yes," I said and coughed. I had become more prone to coughing fits since their occasional interest in meth had transpired to a full on business. When I was younger, there was none of that. But then there was a fight with my dad's parents, and we moved. Jobs were lost. They started smoking it. Then, cooking it.

She made a face. "Will it cost us anything?"

"No," I said. That was a lie. It would. But I would get a part time job and cover the small fees myself.

"Do what you want," she said.

I WONDER IF ALETTA'S A DELUSION.



"Where's Aletta?" I ask. I'm sitting at the kitchen table, cowed into some sort of conversation with Ms. Gerald's. There's no way to deny the absence of electricity or the remnants of a meth lab in the garage after all. "Did you already get her?"

"No," she says after a beat. "Do you not know where she is?"

Ms. Gerald's gives me a sympathetic look. "You took care of her, didn't you?" she says.

Her expression makes me want to cry. It reminds me of when Mom—in moments—looked concerned. "Yes. I do," I say, collecting myself. I stare at the table, the scuffed woodwork looking back at me.



Before they left, my mother told me that they were going to do something we wouldn't like.

"What?" I asked, running my hand over the table, scratching at the wood.

"Don't worry, it'll make it safer for the two of you," she said.

She thought leaving her two children would make things better for everyone. At least that idea makes me feel better than the idea that they just didn't care.



They never contacted us. Aletta says it was probably convenient for them—the threat of the police just gave them an excuse to give up on raising children. It was too stressful. Ever since I was little, I remembered my father's parents arguing with Mom and Dad, saying that they were too young, that they didn't have the mentality for it, and that their lifestyle wasn't a way to raise a child.

They were probably right.



"Have you found her?" I ask Ms. Gerald. She shakes her head.

"No, not yet."

"Are you even looking?" I say, my fingers curling over the top of the kitchen table. "Why are you not looking now?"

"We have people there; I promise," Ms. Gerald says.

I look down, trying not to think of what I'm fearing. That, sometimes, I wonder if Aletta's a delusion. "Will I be able to get custody of her?" I ask instead. "I'll be eighteen in a few months."

"It will depend on a variety of factors. Income, housing." She frowns. "You not telling anyone that the two of you were abandoned may hurt your case."

"I . . . we could get separated in the system." I lean back. "I didn't want things to change for us."

I don't tell her I thought they would come back.



When I hear Aletta's voice again the next day, I'm not sure it's real. She calls my name and I feel her arms around my shoulders.

I look up. Ragged brown curls. Freckles. Yellow shoes. My sister. But something about her is different.

"I'm so sorry," she says into my shoulder. "I went to Ashley's house . . . I told you, don't you remember?" My breathing quickens. How could I not know this? I missed something. I didn't hear her.

"And then I came back and saw CPS so I went back and stayed another night at Ashley's," she says. "We can't go on living like this, Hannah. We can't."

"I know," I say, my voice echoing in the room. "I know." I wrap my arms around her slowly as though she'll melt away. Instead, she's real and solid, and she is here. "I'm so sorry Aletta." I feel myself shaking. My eyes are wet and I bite my lip to keep from crying.

Aletta leans back, and I take a good look at her. She looks tired and worn. Too thin. We haven't been eating properly, I realize. Her clothes are old and don't fit. Proof that we're poor and starving, like I imagined my parents to be.

I count to eight in my head and realize she's crying.

"Oh, Aletta," I say, putting my arm around my sister again. "It'll be all right, I promise."

"Don't promise that," she says to me, sitting back on her heels. "You're not an adult. You can't promise to keep it all right."

"I have to promise that," I say. The idea of letting her go makes my heart race. "I need to."

"You don't and you can't," she says. "We'll be all right, but not because you say so. Because we will make it so."

I shake my head. Her wings. They are gone.



FLOATING BALL
Erin Lysne
Watercolor on Canvas



THE SECRET LETTER
Juvele Canilao
Oil on Canvas



NATURE'S CHROMA
Kevin Gladwell
Digital Photograph

MEMORIES

JONATHAN MONTANO

It was warm. I've always hated being warm, but even in a coastal Washington town, most September days were intolerable. I was sixteen and we were moving for the fourth time since I could remember. The young folk and myself were in charge of unloading the truck. During our last move I had an accident that destroyed a washing machine, so this time I wasn't assigned any large responsibilities, which was fine with me. Instead, I was hoisting boxes and acting as gofer for the others.

After hours passed and piles of boxes came out of the truck, I found myself in charge of putting our cooler into the garage. My thoughts wandered as the warmth of the day dissolved into faint breaths, both my own and the sky's. Whatever it was the others were saying became a chattering of crickets in the background. My eyes were locked on a large cedar toy box, which had been painted in bright colors by my mother. Sitting there by itself, the toy box looked like an island among the multitude of boxes. Beside the toy box was a pair of mismatched boards. I stood there and stared until Shawn, my older half-brother, yelled to his friend in the truck behind me, and my trance broke.

I kept about my tasks for the day as the hours passed. Further stacks of boxes made their way off the truck and furniture found its way to the proper rooms, but for some reason I couldn't get the image of that toy box out of my head. It was a box large enough to easily fit a person, but it never found itself completely filled. I knew it had been in Shawn's bedroom back at our last house, but that seemed like ages ago.

Back in the garage, I found myself reaching a hand out toward the box. It was cold. This was the first time I'd touched it in years, yet my fingers were gliding along the glossy paint the same as I remembered from all that time ago. The box welcomed my hand, and some version of apology seemed to exist in its slick, cool surface. Faint images began to surface: a green blanket, a brown stuffed dinosaur, a pair of black-rimmed glasses. I suddenly wanted to cry, not that I had enough reason to do so in the moment, but I knew I should all the same.

My mother came out of the house and declared it was time for a break. Shawn and his friend went inside to get something to eat, but I just stood there, transfixed by the stenciled trucks, cars, and animals bordered in chipped white paint. I still wanted to cry. My eyes itched and my arms quaked, but still no tears came. I'd used those tears too often to get rid of my anger and pain, that now it seemed they had all been spent.

After blinking the dust out of my eyes, I moved toward the door into the house. Just as my foot was about to step inside, I saw the little button that controlled the garage door and pushed it. The gears and mechanisms above me groaned as they inched the garage door down. With a grim smile on my face, I swung the door in front of me closed. No one saw me close either of the doors. I was isolated.

I clicked the lock on the door between the house and myself, then picked up a hammer. I didn't know how or why it was there, but my fingers were white as they clutched the handle. I turned back toward the cedar box. I was still angry. Maybe if I made myself angrier, I could do something, anything, to alleviate this feeling.

I closed my eyes.



I couldn't have been older than seven at the time. I was trying to sleep, but Mom had been called in for an emergency at work, and Shawn took the opportunity to enjoy her bottle of whiskey. Drunk and enraged, he came into my bedroom. He hit me and I started crying. He told me to shut up, but that only made me cry more.

One wobbly step after another led him to my bunk bed's ladder. I cowered into the sides of my bed as I heard soft creaks of wood amidst my sobs. Finally, in the dim light, I saw his perpetually-tousled hair, then his face, and progressively the rest of him. He poured into the three-foot space between my mattress and the ceiling. His hand batted away the stuffed animals about me. My guardians were failing in their duty.

MY GUARDIANS WERE FAILING IN THEIR DUTY.

He grabbed me and pulled me from my bed. I didn't know if it was a beating he was after or something else. The answer came quickly as he undid his pants and ordered me out of my pajamas. I refused, and he swung at me. His fist was hot. I was disgusted with him, even at such a young age. But he was in charge, and pain was my biggest fear. I complied.

The threat of force kept me complacent as his hands and eyes wandered. For at least ten minutes, he tried in vain to bring himself to climax. He blamed me for the difficulty, saying my crying was making things harder. With the usual "don't tell Mom or you're dead," the boards of my bed's ladder creaked one last time and the sliver of light coming from the living room was all that was left. I'd grown silent, but my sobs never ceased. I eventually fell asleep clutching to one of my guardians, my snot and tears gumming up the fur.



As bad as that experience was and as much as it's stuck with me, it wouldn't help me now. Those memories would just make me fall apart. I needed something else. I needed to be angry. I needed to do something. My sweat dripped down onto the wooden handle, and my breath quickened. I was scaring myself more than I was growing angry. I tightened my eyelids and tried once more.



I was in Shawn's room. It was bland, musty, and repellant. The bulb in the ceiling cast a pallor on everything, and the piles of magazine and comics littering the floor had grown since the last time I'd come down. Toys of many years were cluttered beneath his covered window. I wasn't quite eight years old yet, and Shawn and his friend, Nate, had invited me down with the promises of fun. I stood awkwardly to the side, not wanting to intrude on their planning that I would have little say in. The two gave their usual guffaws, whispering to each other while I waited and stared.

I heard footsteps and looked toward Shawn, barely catching sight of him before he closed the three of us in his room. I could feel my body readying for whatever was next. From the corner of my eye, I saw Nate staring intently at me. My brother joined Nate, and I looked to the door again. I knew now I should be afraid, but despite being closer to the door than them, I could never flee fast enough to evade my captors.

"Are you ready to play," Shawn said. It wasn't a question.

Before I could process what was happening, the pair lunged at me and strangled my arms. I cried out and kicked, but they were not deterred. They brought me to the toy box. There was a hollow scraping of wood against wood as they pushed the lid aside. It fell to the floor with a deafening clatter.

Before I could right myself, the lid came back down. It was dark and cool, with only two hand holes to let in small glimmers of light. Miraculous as it was, the box no longer held action figures or LEGOs, but instead housed a plethora of stuffed animals. Those who were my guardians upstairs were also my fellow inmates down here.

I screamed out and pushed on the lid, but their weight had been added on top of the bulky cedar. I was trapped, but at least I wasn't alone. I held onto my soft friends and wailed. I could hear my wardens laughing harder and harder as each moment passed. Though they talked about what would happen next, I couldn't understand anything as I wailed and kicked at the box's walls.

I heard my brother leave the room. I roused what strength was in me and stood up, lifting the lid of the box ever so slightly. I heard Nate grunt in reply. I could see the yellowed light of the room. I was going to be free! But I was still too young. I could only push so long and hard. I couldn't

**PERHAPS I
SEEMED MANIC.
PERHAPS I WAS.**

find the strength to fully free myself, and what little strength I had was fading with my waning hope. I collapsed.



“Jonathan?” They had finished their break. It was time to continue unloading the truck and only now did they noticed the garage doors were closed. I was broken from my memories, but I needed to finish this one. I would finish this one. They knocked on the door. I looked over and saw them staring at me through the window into the kitchen.

“He’s got a hammer,” one of them said. I found their muffled voices strangely amusing. For no reason at all, they made me laugh. Perhaps I seemed manic. Perhaps I was.

Then they realized what I was standing in front of.

“He’s going to break apart the toy box!” another of them cried out. Shawn’s shouts accompanied strikes against the door. He was yelling something, but I was too focused on the box and picking up where I had left off to understand him.



The toy box was becoming hot. Between my fear and the incredibly insulating cedar, it took less than a minute for the animals about me to sweat. Shawn had returned. As the two laughed and talked, I slightly deafened myself trying to scream through the wood. Even in the moments I quieted down, I couldn’t make out a word beyond my prison.

Suddenly, the box tilted. It was no longer firmly planted on the ground. I felt my weight shift as the box was turned onto its side. I hit the new floor with a heavy grunt and my screams grew. They dragged the box along the floor and flipped it again. And again. And again. Two full revolutions with only my guardians to break the fall, but they too didn’t have enough time to recover before it happened again.

Nate and my brother’s hands blocked my small stream of light in order to poke a straw into the box. I stared for a moment. Then came water. Mouthful after mouthful pushed through that tiny tube, they emptied their cup into the box and onto me. What had been a hot, dry, sweet-smelling cube was now a sauna containing wet dogs. My face was covered. I hid to the side, hoping to evade whatever I could of it. For minutes I sat as the streams came.

And then I heard a far-away sound. They heard it too. Mom was home. They quickly composed themselves and darted from the room. I sat there for a while, sweating and crying, worried they might return. When that fear left me, I stood with what little strength I had left. The lid slid smoothly along the box’s edges and I climbed out. I didn’t know what Shawn would do if I let Mom know what happened, so I needed to keep quiet. I took deep breaths to stop my crying, used the sleeve of my shirt to dry my face, and let my hands smooth out my hair. And then I escaped.



Mom pleaded for me not to damage her handiwork. She put much care into the box, and I knew that. But truly, her pleas would manage little. In my sophomore year of high school, I was pressured by a counselor to reveal Shawn's hidden abuses, which sparked an investigation by the police. Mom's response was to expel me from her home, claiming I had betrayed her for keeping this information to myself. My anger was no longer just about lashing out at Shawn, but at her as well. She was just as much to blame for my pain, turning me away when the truth was revealed.

My plan had worked. I was angry now, as angry as I wanted to be. I could tell that they were all shouting, but I couldn't bring myself to understand what. I didn't really care anymore. I was crying, and the hammer was still in my hand.

With a yell, I brought the hammer down. A crack filled the garage and stung my ears. The sound beyond the door stopped. At least I thought it had, but after the ringing in my ears ceased, I heard Shawn still yelling at me. Another crack, followed by more. A half dozen. A dozen. I swung faster and weaker, until most of the anger I had was gone.

But the box hadn't been touched. I couldn't do it. Though I cried, though I quaked, I couldn't damage the box because inside had been some safety from Shawn that time. It wasn't the box's fault. It was Shawn's. I couldn't take out my anger on my mother and the box only to seek hurting him, even with the pain she had caused me as well. Those boards, oddly placed, had taken each hit. Marks of the crow's foot, marks of the pommel, splinters, and splits. I couldn't do it.

The garage had grown hot and now I just wanted to be out of it. I dropped the hammer onto the boards and moved to the door. They'd all grown silent. I pushed the button again and the garage door started to open. I turned the handle in front of me and walked inside. Nobody spoke to me, nobody stopped me. I just went into the kitchen and sat, for how long I don't know.



GLIMPSE
Harold Walter
Ink on Paper

DIGGING THE WELL

RICHARD SIEVERS

You will dig deep.

Then deeper.

Fortune in the placement of the blade.

The water will well up.

Turbid and muddy at first.

Then gushing.

Be still.

Wait for the clarity.

When the sweetness comes, drink deeply.



DIVINE RESILIENCE
Ruby-Anne Chapman
Digital Illustration





PEERING THE VIEW
Oliver Bournival
Digital Photograph

AT THE OFFICE OF FORGOTTEN POETRY

GERARD DONNELLY SMITH

By firelight he committed to memory
the half-formed epics of would-be Homers
who dreamed no lesser dreams than their masters,
but who from Calliope never heard.

Closest to the walls mice chew clichés,
anthologize dead metaphors into nests,
pissed-stained manuscripts
never to tease the ear nor tickle the tongue.

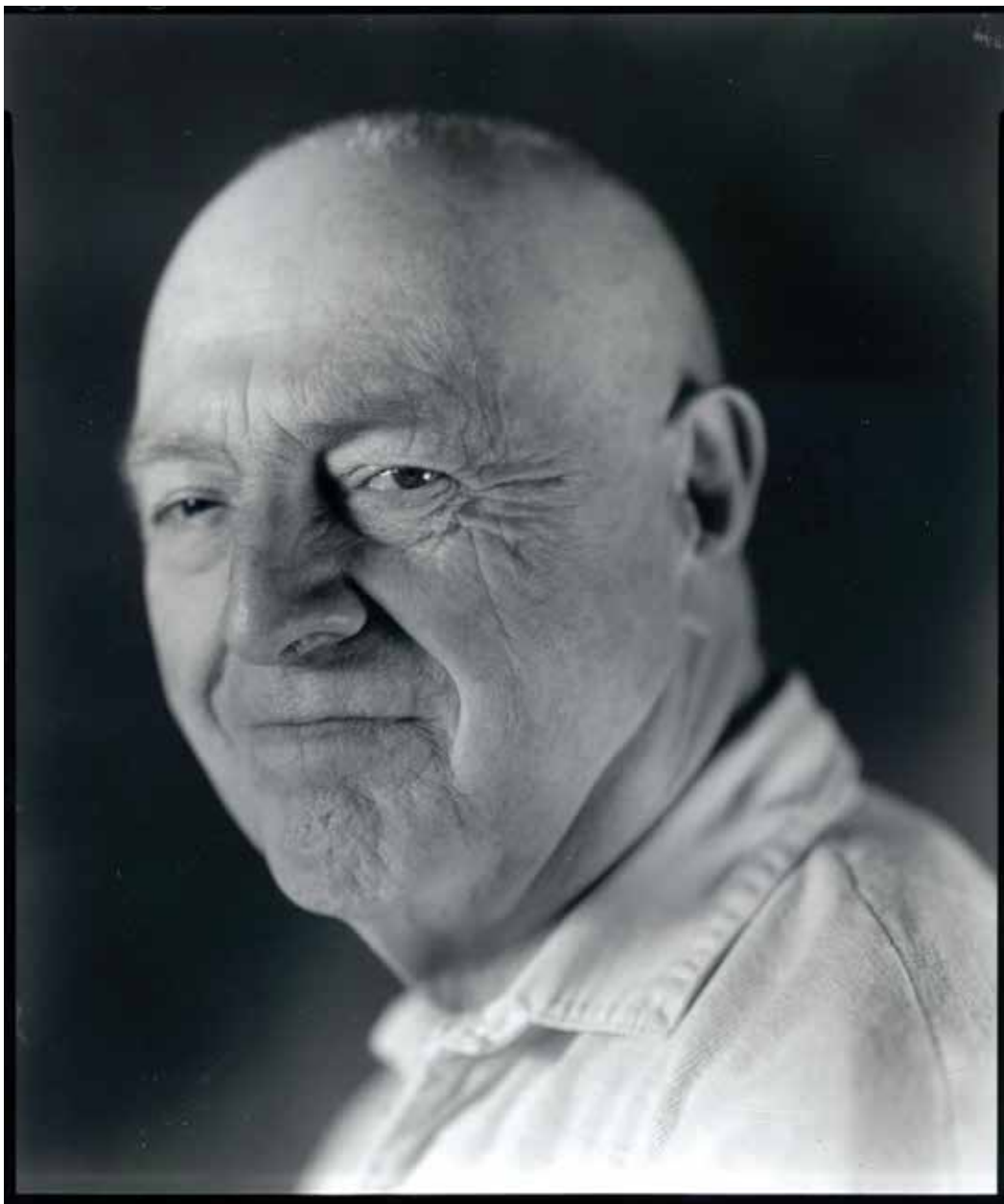
His office building packed with paper,
a literary labyrinth: a metonymic mandala;
the oldest parchments of skin and hemp,
abject insulation against the dark.

Some he barely recovered from garbage bins
stained with coffee grounds or grease drippings;
once from beneath an unused prophylactic,
a premature note of thanks torn in half.

Romantic verse scribbled by sentimental truckers
who stopped for coffee, bacon and eggs,
images of traveling, but never arriving.
Once clean and white, now mold on the napkins.

Somewhere a discarded poem soaks on a bar,
the ink dissipates in the alcohol; the theme melts
as the paper turns to pulp, a fiction
no one will ever know; he feels the loss.

He found poems this morning on his steps,
bundled nicely in plastic cellophane.
He paused, imagining your face,
then read, again, my love poems to you.



PAUL
Ian Beckett
Silver Gelatin Print

SMALL BLESSINGS (opposite)
Kelly Pearce
Digital Photography





SELF-PORTRAIT
THROUGH A PINHOLE
Kriza Uyan
B&W Film Photograph

THUNDER INSIDE

JESSICA LIDDY

I can hear their voices pound through the floor underneath my feet. All I hear is screaming. I don't know how much more I can take. My sister yells. My mom screams. My dad throws the television remote across the room. And it goes on and on and on. But not just for tonight. This cycle keeps going on and on and on, and no matter what I do or don't do, it will still go on. It has been happening for years. I didn't like it when it started, and I *still* don't like it now.



There is no cure for bipolar disorder. No magical medication that can make all the fighting and screaming and depression go away. Medicines prescribed are not like antibiotics that can eradicate an infection in mere weeks. Bipolar disorder can only be *treated*, which requires continual dedication to controlling the symptoms.



My sister and I, we used to get along. But then one day she got really cranky. She kept having what my mom called "blow-ups." I would find her and mom and dad screaming at each other. Just a little while ago, I found them all yelling again. My sister was crying and screaming, tossing and turning, rolling and roaring like the thunder I hide from under my blankets.



Bipolar disorder affects the brain, the body, and the exterior. More than one person suffers if it remains untreated. Friends and family are forced to experience extreme manic or depressive states alongside the affected person. They are no longer support, but an extension of the disorder. The symptoms of bipolar disorder are severe, and the emotions are borderline uncontrollable without treatment: medication, psychotherapy, herbal supplements, and support groups.



As of three months ago, anxiety was officially added to my medical records. My anxiety disorder is most likely panic disorder. I have panic attacks. My house is not a safe place for me mentally anymore because of my sister. I no longer have the capacity to handle conflict. My body shakes, my fingers twitch, and I start bouncing my hands in front of my torso as I rock back and forth.



Every person is unique, and their disorder affects them in different ways. However, those with success stories of conquering bipolar disorder have shared characteristics: commitment, determination, support, and hope.

SHE FLUSHED THE PILLS DOWN THE TOILET.



Commitment: the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause.



My sister refuses to do anything about her disorder. She hates that the medicine makes her feel “bleh,” like her personality isn’t all there. I hate the way her personality, off the medication, tears our family apart. She despises going to therapists, says they are “too nosy.” I despise going with her to therapy anymore because all I hear is that our family is to blame for the way she acts. We hate her, apparently. We don’t. The medication made us all better, not just her, but she flushed the pills down the toilet. She does not understand the trade-off. Her life could be so much better, if she stayed committed to treatment, but she does not see it as treatment. She sees it as restraints.



Determination: firmness of purpose; the controlling or deciding of something’s nature or outcome.



I still have not seen a therapist about my anxiety disorder, but I will. I have spoken to my doctor and am starting to explore options for treatment. I want to improve. I do not want to hold myself and others back because of my panic attacks. Though medication is not the first option I plan to pursue, I would take it if it came to that. I want to feel better. My disorder is restricting how I live everyday life. Concentrating, driving, and working are excessively difficult. Instead of carrying out a task, I am stressing about school, or worrying about the next time conflict will spring up out of nowhere. I am living in fear of something I cannot control, but I am determined to change that.



Support: give assistance to; bear all or part of the weight.



The floors in my house are eggshells. Anything could set off my sister. One morning, my dad asked her to clean the baking sheet she'd left in the sink from dinner the night before. My sister doesn't crawl out of bed until the sun is at its highest point in the sky, so the tray was in the way when my parents were cleaning their morning dishes. Five minutes later, all hell broke loose. My sister was in her room crying and screaming about how awful my parents were and that she *hated* them. She said that word like it was sour candy in her mouth. We are not support, but collateral damage to my sister and her disorder. I want to help her, but she refuses.



Hope: to desire with confidence.



Her head is left confused by the words she is told she says. Her heart is broken because she feels her family does not love her. Her eyes are deceived by the way she views the world. Her body shakes because of the tears she cries again and again. All that is left is her outer shell. And though the shell may seem untouched, it is still fragile. Her smile hides the sorrow. Her face hides the pain. The way she tries to continue on in life hides the fact that she is really shattered beneath the surface. She denies that she needs help. She bans all chances for hope. All I ever think of anymore is how to make it right, how to fix the family. In the end, the ongoing problem is convincing my sister that there is, in fact, someone that needs to be helped. Denying her disorder does not accomplish anything, because one day she is going to have to face it. And by that day, the damage might already have been done.





UNWANTED WASTELAND

Michael Stoltenow

B&W Film/Hybrid Darkroom Process



VOLKSWAGON SILKSCREEN

Nicole Clark

Silkscreen on Bristol Board



K-KIDNEYS
Luke Entwistle
Digital Illustration



ON HER THRONE
Nikki Hansen
Mixed Media Painting

FAMLIAR STRANGER

JACOB SALZER

I remembered his face in sleep
one last look from the familiar stranger
one long look into his weathered face
that told stories I never knew

the colors that once stared at me, unmoving
with old eyes that speak a forgotten language
while the remnants of words had long been silent
since I arrived

he lived without speaking
working alone through long hours of daylight

and when night came
he glanced back at me once again
staring into my face for a long moment, unmoving
like a loving grandfather asking if I
wanted to hear an old story he has already told
many times before—the same story he told years ago
but deepens each time he listens to the sound
waking from memory

I will never know what remains hidden
within his face
and when morning came

I watched him looking out the window
still without a sound



A BRIGHTER LONDON

Diana Boligar

Mixed Media/Digital Illustration



GOLDFISH
Sinh Huynh
Mixed Media



RIGID
Nathan Baldwin
Oil on Canvas

TRIALS

HAROLD WALTER

The day after I figured out what Corbin was doing, I tried to ease the truth out of him.

“You haven’t been yourself recently,” I said. “Is everything okay?”

In traditional twelve year old style, he rolled his eyes and told me he was fine.

“You spend so much time locked in your room upstairs.”

“God, Blake, this house is boring. The Internet’s the only interesting thing here. You know that.” My little brother gave me a look suggesting that, of everything in the house, I was the duller installation of all.

Corbin flopped to the floor and spread out in an x-shape, the ceiling fan whirring frantically above him. It was a sweltering September day, and he and I had been forced by the heat from our rooms upstairs.

“How’s school going?”

His shoulders twitched, the most apathetic suggestion of a shrug I’d ever seen. “It’s okay.”

“Made any friends?”

“ . . . I dunno.”

“Wanna get iced coffee? I’ve got today off. And Starbucks has AC.” I hoped speaking casually with him would throw him off his guard.

The offer piqued his interest. “Anywhere’s better than here,” he told me, bouncing to his feet.



Starbucks was packed with throngs of people trying to beat the heat. The racket was just what I needed though. Nobody would hear or pay attention to us when Corbin and I took our place at a table. I hoped that the chilled drink I bought him would be incentive to keep him there long enough for the interrogation to start.

The truth is that I’d gone into his room and seen his journals; it’d been like looking at my own writing ten years back. As my little brother sat sipping at his coffee, his cheeks still round with

baby fat, I couldn't help but think *why you too? Jesus Christ, we're two birds of a shitty feather.*

"You know, I get how it is. Being twelve is hard." I paused, wanting Corbin to take the hint.

"Was one of the hardest years of my life."

He groaned. "Yeah, so?"

"I know you're not okay, Corbin. Talk to me. Mom won't understand, but I will."

Corbin eyed me suspiciously. "I already told you I'm fine, *Dad*." His glare—and I wondered where he'd kept such a thing hidden in his little face—was surprisingly malicious. Had I looked at people the same way when I was his age?

Of course it isn't in the nature of most twelve-year-old boys to spill their secrets at the slightest bit of questioning. I knew I had to ramp it up if I wanted to get anywhere.

"Did Mom ever talk to you about Dad?"

"A 'lil."

"Did she tell you he was possessed by demons?"

He nodded.

"And Satan?"

Another nod.

"D'you believe that?"

Corbin peered over his left shoulder at the crowded room. After he seemed sure no one was snooping on us, he lowered his voice. "I don't."

"Good. Because there's no such thing as demons or Satan. There isn't even a Jesus Christ."

Corbin's head shot up. He'd never heard such blasphemy from his older brother. His mouth hung slightly open. His eyes shone.

"Do you know how I know?"

He didn't.

"Mom said I was possessed, like Dad. By demons, by Satan. But I never heard any demons or saw them, and nobody else did either. Just Mom. And Dad—if Jesus Christ was real, he would've saved Dad from those demons, because Dad was the most God-fearing goddamn man on the block."

I'd never spoken to Corbin so candidly; he seemed almost enraptured by the fact that I'd revealed to him this crude side of myself, something usually reserved for other adults. He masked a chuckle with a cough. Now that he was engaged, I dropped the bomb.

"I'm telling you this because you know, if she finds out about what you're going through, she's gonna say you're possessed, too."

Corbin fidgeted in his seat. His mouth grew firm.

"You brought me here to grill me." He slouched and I felt the table shake as his worn-out Nikes bounced against the table leg.

A GREAT BIG "FUCK YOU" IN THE LANGUAGE OF ADOLESCENTS.

This, I understood, was a great big “fuck you” in the language of adolescents. Speaking would be useless now. I’d pushed too hard, and he’d retaliated by putting up a wall.

His face was red, and he looked everywhere except at me. The knuckles on his right hand were white; he clutched his cup so hard the plastic buckled beneath his fingers. The young man’s cool facade had evaporated, leaving behind an obviously distressed child.

“ . . . Nah. Sorry if I’m being a pest,” I said “Just a little worried is all.”



When we left Starbucks, the two of us were slammed by the sultry summer air. The pavement created wriggling mirages at our feet.

“God,” I said, “It’s too hot.”

“Yeah? Why’re you wearing a long-sleeved shirt, then?” he said.

I could say the same to him.

“Corbin,” I said, smiling because I didn’t know what else to do, “I guess you don’t remember. When I was your age, I scraped my arm up real bad when I ran into a glass door and it shattered. See?”

I drew my sleeve back. I saw my little brother’s eyes widen. He didn’t speak to me at all on the way home.



CRYING MOON
Mary Niemela
Graphic Novel

Though in the beginning
they had been
cautious of them.



With time, their cautiousness
began to change.

Both the creatures and humans grew to
mutually respect one another.



Living side by side for
thousands of years.

Until the years
1492-1502



When the first Europeans
came to the Newland.

Unlike the Indians



The settlers never accepted the creatures, and began to slaughter them.



Now

Because of those Damn Settlers

My Life is a Living Hell





EYEPOD
Stephani Ueltschi
Ceramic



BETTER NEIGHBORS THAN FENCES

Jenn Coffman
Acrylic on Wood





**HUNDREDS OF ACRES
OF WOODS**
Emily Shirron
Digital Photograph



CONFLICT
Irada Mustafayeva
Charcoal & Graphite on Paper

BLACK WATER

MEGAN COVER

“You don’t understand. Your baby is going to die.”

I tried to focus on the words of the doctor. *Die?* The concept seemed foreign to me. As if right on cue, I felt a strong kick from within. I wrapped my arms around my swollen belly. Dr. Lee frowned as I shook my head. I was staring at the pin affixed to his coat. It had a black background with red text that said, “Doctors are Never Short on Patients.” His frown deepened as he heard a weird giggle bubble up from somewhere in my throat, which felt like it was closing. I focused my eyes on the pin and wondered how much patience this guy really had. I heard a terrible scream coming from the curtain next to mine. The nurse rushed in and pricked my arm with a wicked needle. I began to slowly lay backwards on the ER. stretcher as the scream sounded farther and farther away. Before I closed my eyes, I realized I was the one screaming.

I was more than halfway to my due date. After years of trying to conceive, I was ecstatic to find out I was having my first child in November. So far it had been an uneventful pregnancy with the exception of intense morning sickness that caused me to lose 35 pounds. I was unable to keep food down for long and vomited an average of ten times a day. This did not seem to concern the doctors. I accepted it as a small price to pay.

At 24 weeks, I felt abdominal pressure that I knew was not right. As I waited in the ER. for the doctor, the pressure became regular contractions. The doctor tried to dismiss it as Braxton-Hicks contractions and wanted to send me home. I insisted on a cervical exam, and he grudgingly complied. After finally taking a look, he inhaled sharply and his brow creased with concern.

“You’re dilated to seven centimeters and the amniotic sack is partially in your birth canal,” he said. I felt my chest tighten as my daughter kicked the hand I was rubbing along my side. I breathed in, trying to stay calm.

“My friend Deb had premature labor,” I said, “Tributylene to stop the contractions. And bed rest. I can do that.”

He shook his head, “You don’t understand. Your baby is going to die.”



When I was eight, my best friend was Stevie. We were neighbors and schoolmates, and our parents were friends. His mother was beautiful, with shiny black hair that tumbled in waves down her back. I thought she looked exactly like Deanna from my dad's favorite *Star Trek* show. Even her name was beautiful: Catalina. I called her Aunt Catta. Stevie had an older sister, Christina, who hung out with my older sister, and sometimes me. Of course, that was only when they were not shooing me away with claims that I was not old enough to do the things they were doing, which always

seemed to be ratting their bangs up high and applying endless coats of Bonne Bell Lip Smackers amid a cloud of Aqua-Net and smoke from carefully pilfered cigarettes.

**I FELT LIKE HE
CURSED THAT
BABY TO FOLLOW
THE OTHERS TO
AN IMAGINED
GRAVEYARD.**

Both Stevie and I had little sisters who also played together. He claimed that his little sister, Starlina, was a "miracle baby." I would stare hard at her and wonder what made her so miraculous. She looked normal, even a bit plain, to me.

"She was supposed to die," Stevie said matter-of-factly. "She was born too soon and couldn't breathe, was even smaller than a baby kitten."

I rolled my eyes, only half believing him. I squinted at Starlina. She was small.

"She's going to have another one," he said, sounding disappointed.

"Another what?" I asked. He picked at a small scab on his hand.

"Duh. A baby! Two already died while they were still in her stomach, and now she has another one in there. Stupid thing. It's probably gonna die too." I felt sad for those poor babies who never met their own mommy.

"Maybe it'll be a boy and then you won't be the only boy," I said.

"Girls are stupid," he muttered as he got on his bike and rode away.

A month later, I watched Stevie's father help his mother from the car into the house. She hung her head on his arm and cried the whole way, knees buckling. I stared from the driveway, where I was attempting to draw blocks for a hopscotch tournament with my older sister. I had not seen many adults cry, and it made my stomach hurt to watch. I learned from the hushed whispers of my sister and Christina that yet another baby died while trying to grow in Aunt Catta's cursed belly. I thought back to what Stevie said about this baby dying too, wondering if he caused it somehow. I know now that he did not, but at the time, I felt like he cursed that baby to follow the others to an imagined graveyard with miniature headstones and weeping mothers.



I woke up in a dim hospital room. My belly was wrapped in stretchy fetal heart monitors that dug into my sides. I tried to swallow, but my mouth was parched and my throat was scorched. A nurse entered the room and began to flip through my chart.

"I'm ready to go home now," I tried to say, but she showed no indication of hearing me.

"We've contacted your emergency contact, which is—" she consulted the first page of the chart, "your mother. She'll be here shortly." She poured a small cup of lukewarm water. I drank it.

"Nurse, I'm going home. I am not staying here." I could hear the edge of hysteria in my voice and so could she. I began to remove the stretchy bands, as they were really digging into me. Dr. Lee entered the room and whispered something to the nurse I could not make out. She grabbed my wrist and inserted another needle into my I.V. tube.

As I floated away, I heard myself say, "So much for your fucking patience." I swear I heard the nurse stifle a laugh.



We sat outside Stevie's house as people arrived carrying casseroles in plastic containers. Stevie said they were all assholes. It was his newly minted bad word.

"You said the baby was going to die," I remembered. He pretended to not hear me. I repeated it.

"Shut up asshole!" he yelled.

I sat there in stunned silence as my eyes welled up with tears. The front door opened, my aunt kissed a well-wisher on the cheek and then walked her to the end of the porch.

"What happened, Megan? Why are you crying?" my aunt asked, concern clouding her eyes.

"Stevie called me an asshole."

My aunt smacked Stevie's mouth in a quick flash of jangling gold bracelets. He reeled back and grabbed his mouth, "She was making baby sounds like 'waaahhhh' and saying 'I'm dead mommy waaahhhh!'" he said, imitating a sing-songy chant.

Horried, I shook my head from side to side, I wanted to scream and say, "No. I would never say that!" but all I did was cry hot tears and shake my head. My aunt Catta looked at me with broken eyes.

"Watch your mouth, Steven," she spat and went back into the house.

I ran home and cried in my room. I cried because Stevie had lied and my aunt thought I had said those terrible things. I cried for the three dead babies she had picked out names for. Stevie and I never spoke again.

**MY AUNT SMACKED
STEVIE'S MOUTH
IN A QUICK FLASH
OF Jangling GOLD
BRACELETS.**



My mother and closest female friends were with me on the maternity floor for the first three days. I could hear the cries of newborn babies and exclamations of overjoyed grandparents and new fathers. I hated them. Why did they get to hear their babies cry while mine was silent? She was perfect in every detail, from her tiny fingernails to my chin and her father's nose, yet silent in a way that made my chest burn and my heart turn into a hot stone. She was dead. I begged God to take

me instead. I swore that I would be a better person, the best mother. In a moment, every dream I had for her and myself died. It felt as though I had died inside, and my punishment was having to live with this permanent ache in my chest that made me unable to breathe. They left me on the maternity floor for three more days.



I dreamt the night my daughter died. I dreamt of Stevie telling my Aunt Catta that I had made fun of her dead babies. I dreamt that he stood next to my hospital bed and chanted, “Waaahhhh! I’m dead Mommy waaahhhh!” As the darkness of my hospital room became water, my bed became a boat whose sides I clung to. I looked over the edge of the boat and into the black water. There were babies floating and struggling against the cold darkness of it. Their tiny arms and legs were visible for a second before sinking again. I tried to reach them, but the closer I got the farther the black water carried them away.



Stevie died when we were both ten. He had gone to visit family friends for the weekend and had burned to death in their heated shed. I saw a picture of the headstone but have never gone to the cemetery where they laid him to rest. We all watched my Aunt Catta spiral into depression and alcoholism after losing all those children. She slowly withdrew from the world, her husband, and her children. She drank and cried and tried to understand what she did to deserve the horrifying reality her life had become. With each of her four children she laid in the cold ground, she laid pieces of herself with them. She would never be whole; she longed to be with them. She used alcohol to numb her pain, but because she did not want to feel it, she was never able to let it go. This showed me how easy it would be to crawl into my own pain and never come out, as she had done.

I chose the hard road. I was determined to honor my daughter by refusing to numb my grief. I needed to feel it. I wanted to remember those few precious moments I held her in my arms. I wanted to always remember the shape of her long fingers and the blue of her eyes. I still feel the raw ache in my chest, but now it is a reminder to love my babies as hard as I can, while I can.

After Stevie’s funeral, my Aunt Catta asked me to stay the night with Christina. She did not want her to be sad by herself. My older sister was gone for the summer and Aunt Catta figured I would do. Christina fell asleep crying. I went into the kitchen to grab some water, and I found my aunt sitting on the floor, sobbing and clutching a tequila bottle. She motioned for me to sit next to her.

“My Stevie was the most beautiful boy,” she said as she choked on sobs that wracked her entire body. Not knowing what to say, I just nodded. She repeated his name like a mantra. I sat next to her and we cried together on the cold floor. As I hugged her, in a clumsy attempt to console her, the dark waves of her hair covered my face like black water.



SMOLDERING

Meakia Blake

Ink, Mixed Media





SUNSET ON THE ROCKS
Drey Davies
Digital Photograph



LIGHT, REFLECTION, AND SHAPES
Deborah Corzine
Digital Photograph

THE VIOLINISTS

TAKUNDA MASIKE

I walk the maze of truth unsung
With a staccato rhythm in my step,
Strides of purpose and intention.
Under the moonlight that evening, I found her again.
Crafted with its elegant curves.
I tenderly take up the violin
To play an unfeigned swan song
burning with memories.

She played the violin, caressed the strings
With her bow and delicate fingers,
The beating of my heart attuned to
A blissful melody.

Frequencies echo in the chambers,
Longing to be a lasting symphony,
Only to fade into melancholy impulses.

I told her she's my favorite harmony;
My words surfaced in a whisper
Under her resonant euphony.
We at last synchronize,
Our song, an undying dolce chorus.





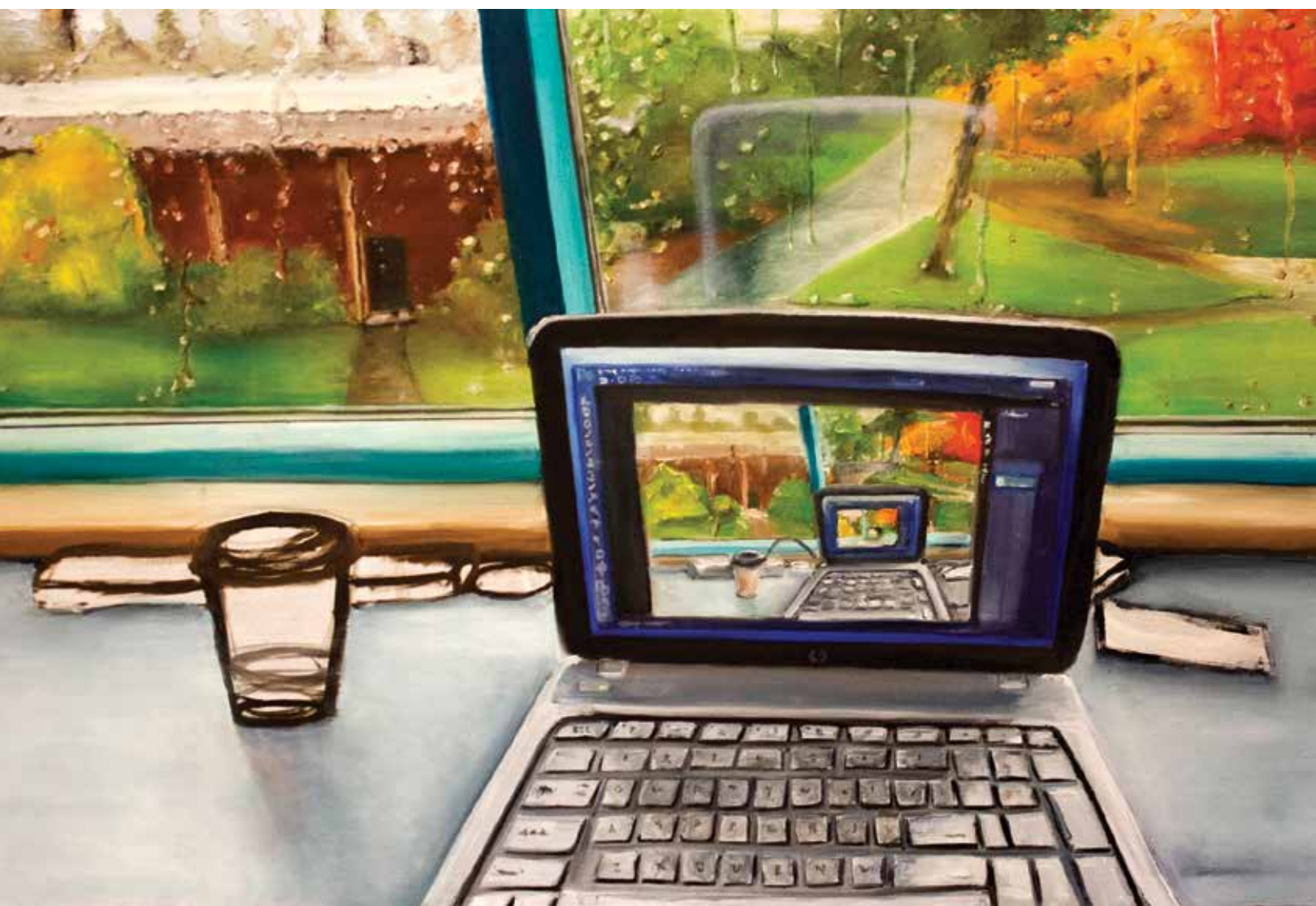
FRÄMMANDE
Jacob Schulstad
Markers on Paper

ENOUGH

KARLY MURPHY

I am nineteen
I am a girl
I don't know much
I am foolish
I should be smaller
I should lose weight
I am too heavy
I should wear makeup
I am not pretty
I had a boyfriend
I used to love him
I used to be a virgin
I had sex
I have hurt during sex
I have bled during sex
I was raped
I have cried
I am not good
I have felt numb
I have been cold
I have had enough
I can't give enough
I am not enough

I am nineteen
I am a woman
I don't know much
I am learning
I am not small
but I have curves
and they're sexy curves
I don't wear makeup
but I am beautiful
I had a boyfriend
I used to love him
I used to be a virgin
and that's okay
I had sex
I have hurt during sex
I have bled during sex
I was raped
and that's not okay
I was hurt
but I endured the pain
I have cried
but I have felt joy
I have been cold
but I have felt warmth
I am not good
I am great
I have enough
I can give enough
I am
Enough



MY LIFE AT CLARK
Shawn Schmidt
Oil on Canvas

CLOSETED

GINGER CLARKE

My eyelashes crystallize in the mid-winter Montana streets. I blink, letting them thaw on my cheeks, only to freeze again. It's about the most fun there is on a twenty minute haul to the bus stop walking up a hill in a foot of snow that the neighbors hadn't shoveled from their sidewalks.

I trudge my way through the snow to the middle of the street to walk in the tire tracks, thankful that someone made an early morning drive. I hike up my backpack several times by hopping and shrugging my shoulders, unwilling to take my hands out of my pockets when it's ten degrees outside even if I am wearing gloves.

I regret not wearing thicker socks, but my pride had been on the line. I told my mom I didn't need them with my sneakers. Giving her the satisfaction of anything was inconceivable. Besides, even if the bus was late, I'd only be out for a good twenty minutes and that's not enough time to start losing toes. Right?

As usual, I'm the last to the bus stop, which is expected as I'm the furthest away. There are times I arrive earlier and am able to watch parents drop their children off at the bus stop. They can't live that far away or they'd have a different stop. I try to take solace in the idea that their parents are bad parents, unwilling to let their children grow. It's better than the idea that some parents are willing to drive the few blocks so that their kids aren't walking in below freezing temperatures, or that mine don't care.

Strangely enough, I like the bus rides. I take the first seat I can find. I can't be too picky since mine's the last stop. I hug my bag to my chest and close my eyes. It takes thirty-two minutes to get to school. With luck, the tall guy, whose name I can never remember, won't try to talk to me.

I overhear two boys say something about going to Las Vegas with family. A bump in the road rattles us all.

Shut up, I want to say. You're in high school. You can't gamble or drink. Stop pretending Las Vegas is going to be the time of your life. Besides, going anywhere with family sucks.

“Hey, how are you?” I open my eyes to see the tall guy towering over the seat as he twists to look at me. “Tired, huh?”

I smile as a courtesy, but I don’t say anything.

“I was wondering if you’d like to hang out sometime, yeah?” he asks and my smile fades. This is the fifth time he’s asked.

“Sorry,” I answer and close my eyes again until I’m jerked back to reality as we pull into the drop-off zone.

I’m the first one off the bus when we arrive, and I speed through the brick entryway to my locker, quickly tossing my stuff in and grabbing my books for my first few classes before I head to homeroom. The empty classroom disappoints me. Becky was supposed to be here. I sigh, tossing my books onto my desk as I take my seat and open my text book.

I look up at the sound of my name and I see her. I tuck a strand of hair behind my ear and bite down on my lower lip as she approaches. Becky. Suddenly I’m hyper aware of the beating of my heart, and I set my book down to steady my shaking hands.

In my sneakers and t-shirt one size too big, I feel underdressed next to her, who can somehow make casual look good. Her hair, shining red in the right light despite its dark hue, reminds me of black cherries. She’s everything I want.

“Hey,” I say. “I almost thought you weren’t showing up today.”

“Nah, my bus just kept hitting all the red lights this morning,” Becky says as she takes a seat next to me. She reaches over and takes my hand, lacing her fingers through mine. Her fingers rhythmically tap away, and I can’t help the big, goofy smile on my face. By the looks of things, she can’t either.

“Still planning to stop by this weekend?” I ask, even though she’s reassured me several times before. My hand still shakes, but with each tap of her fingers, I find myself calming down.

“Of course. Your mom still doesn’t know, right?” she asks, leaning in close to rest her head on my shoulder.

I nod, though she can’t see. I remember the off-hand remarks, the disapproval, the cold shoulder she gave my aunt. I remember the awkward family reunions, the heartbreaking silences. I’m terrified for that to be my relationship with her. Instead, I say, “Not the right time yet.”

She smiles, as radiant as ever. “No problem. Not like she suspects anything, anyway. Gal pals, right? I’ll bring over some candy and movies, your favorite.”

Again, I nod—this time with a smile—and give her hand a little squeeze. “I’d love that.”



CELEBRATION
Kevin Gladwell
Digital Photograph



CLOUD IN A ROOM
Brooke Stoddard
Oil on Canvas

ASHES

ASTRID DUBOIS

The sky dressed the ocean
In somber hues
The white foam as cuffs
On an expansive gown
Of mourning

Huddled together, the
Smell of sage in the air
The gift bags
Holding a present none
Would suspect

The water beckoned me
The line where the surf touched the sand
The clouds opened
Leaving a clear bowl of possibility

In my hand the fine dust of a human
The shell of a life
The grit of bones
Slowly, haltingly
I released the dirt
All of it into the water

To live on.
In a way.

VIDEO

FEATURED ON CLARKPHOENIX.COM



WAREHOUSE
Gabriella Moussan
Video



ANIMALS SAY STRANGE THINGS: THE FISH
Robert Roles
Digital Animation



22 TIL NONE
Tyler Frongillo
Video



BAD DREAM
Romney Kellogg
Video



METAMORPHOSIS
Rose Goedecke
Digital Animation



LINE
Gabriella Moussan
Stop-Motion Animation

CONTRIBUTORS' STATEMENTS

ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

Nathan Baldwin – *Rigid*

In my search to understand how form is made existential by physical elements, I've put the ideas of the artist's synthetic reality against the ideas of true natural form versus a measured construction by the hand of man. As an abstract statement, the piece isn't real unless it exists; if it exists—and it does—it's reality is not subjective and time cannot affect it.

Ian Beckett – *Paul*

I have an interest in preserving old photographic equipment and processes.

Jason Belmore – *Fundibulum*

A solid brass rod creates a wire form that shows movement and insinuates the guidance of an object not seen. While creating this, I imagined a black hole with irregularities throughout.

Meakia Blake – *Smoldering*

This piece was made while listening to a song from an Icelandic post-rock band. I wanted to capture the feeling of chaos and angst while also providing comfort and motivation.

Diana Boligar – *A Brighter London*

Since London is often referred to as a gloomy, rainy city, I decided to give it more light and fun in my diorama piece. By bringing in a vivid color palette and some playful elements, I think it looks quite sunny.

Diana Boligar – *Consumerism of Travel*

Consumerism in travel doesn't only occur through transportation but also through our wanderings.

Oliver Bournival – *Peering the View*

I find photography to be an easy way for me to capture and remember eventful moments in my life whether the time was bad or good.

Juvele Canilao – *The Secret Letter*

There is a lot of space for us to explore and find our happiness, but the problem of this world limits us to what we can do.

Ruby-Anne Chapman – *Divine Resilience*

I've always been fascinated with mandalas and feminine art. I feel like the women in both pieces have reached a point where they are completely in tune with themselves on a higher level and are also aware that they have a lot more room for growth despite the harsh realities of life that they will continue to face.

Sergey Chuklanov – *Modular Alphabet*

This started as a mundane assignment for a typography class and ended as an A.

Nicole Clark – *Head in the Clouds I & II*

I wanted to create something that felt like I was in a dream. Clouds are pretty, and floating in the sky would be beautiful.

Nicole Clark – *Volkswagen Silkscreen*

Being the Volkswagen enthusiast that I am, I wanted to create a detailed bitmap silkscreen to show the variation of colors and shades that this bus holds.

Jenn Coffman – *Better Neighbors than Fences*

My work looks at notions of value and how those in our society place value on objects, particularly what we throw away.

Deborah Corzine – *Light, Reflection, and Shapes*

This picture was taken using the Lensbaby on the iPhone 6. It is reflections of a stairwell with the sun on the brick wall with images of people.

Rebekah Curtis – *Deeper Meaning*

This is part of a series of portraits that represent me. I have chickens; I love them and their curiosity.

Brandi Dati – *Mountain Mist*

Most of the time the Pacific Northwest is shrouded in damp gray, but it is possible to catch fleeting glimpses of its beauty. I wanted to convey the feeling of looking through the fog by applying generous amounts of acrylic paint rising off the canvas.

Drey Davies – *Sunset on Rocks*

The picture was taken from a mountain in Alaska in an avalanche zone. It took me a few moments to regain my footing before taking the photo.

Sol Duncan – *Las Trés Marias (The Three Marias)*

By contesting the division between the realm of memory and the realm of experience, I make work that generates diverse meanings. Heavily influenced by Picasso's early Cubism techniques, I chose myself, my daughter, and our dog as the subject matter, since we all share the middle name Maria.

Luke Entwistle – *Cobra Juicy*

Working from photographs is convenient but limiting, so I deviated into my imagination.

Luke Entwistle – K-Kidneys

Humor is how I express personal turmoil. It allows me to share without being pitied or making others too uncomfortable.

Tyler Frongillo – 22 Til None

This is a PSA for veteran suicide awareness.

Kevin Gladwell – Celebration

I wanted to take the bold and bright beauty of a sunset and portray it in a way that was different. I wanted to make the sunset the main idea but still hold its place in the background.

Kevin Gladwell – Nature's Chroma

I have always been inspired by Landscape Photography and the work of Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and David Benjamin Sherry. I wanted to branch off the idea of Sherry's color washing technique and add a tint to my images to give them a new approach in their meaning.

Rose Goedecke – Metamorphosis

This stop-motion animation depicts the life cycle of a butterfly.

Trevor Grover – Some Girl Talking to Some Horse in Some Field

I took this picture on a hike.

Anthony Hamblin – My Therapy I & II

I have a connection with my cameras that's quite unique and comforting. I find inspiration just about anywhere, and I find it fascinating that my best pieces come about unplanned.

Nikki Hansen – Féconder

Through layering multiple styles, I created an abstracted reflection of nature.

Nikki Hansen – On Her Throne

This painting started out as a realistic detailed sketch of a nude model and transformed into an abstract piece as we learned about the history of abstraction.

Matthew Harmon – Heart

Shadow in my house; never go to Hollywood; rockin' back inside my heart; the bird sang a song for us; walk among the pines; never go to Hollywood; rockin' back inside my heart; we heard the owl nearby.

Sara Hildebrandt – Turquoise in Motion

With my artwork, I attempt to recreate the splendor and awe that lies just beneath the waves. Viewing aquascapes are the closest thing anyone will come to stepping out of the mundane world of man and into the arena of the fantastical.

Sinh Huynh – Goldfish

The goldfish is thought to represent a humble wish for stability, and a goldfish as a gift is a blessing of good fortune in the New Year. One of the biggest issues facing us right now is global warming. I used recycled material for this project with a message: "Put your recycling in the right place."

Selena Jones – String Series I & II

I attended the School of Art Institute of Chicago, where I completed a Masters of Fine Arts in sculpture. This series of drawings begins to explore primal notions of containment and struggle by contrasting figurative gesture drawing with compartmentalized, line-filled shapes.

Romney Kellogg – Bad Dream

Made by the Clark College Film Club, this is our first short film. The purpose of the club is to allow a creative outlet and experience for students interested in entering the film industry.

Madison Loveall – Color Splotch Bowl Set

This set is an exhibition of throwing. The glaze interaction in the bottom of each bowl is similar, yet different, and the bowls were thrown to the thinnest proportions to achieve the lightest weight possible.

Erin Lysne – Floating Ball

I have always loved Japanese floating balls. My love for all things nautical shows through in this painting.

Gabriella Moussan – Line

Made with pins and string, this is a stop-motion video.

Gabriella Moussan – Warehouse

I created this while examining the industrial area of Portland.

Ealom Munoz – Boxed In

Have you ever had that "trapped between a rock and a hard place" feeling, like how you would like to do things, but you just can't? That's where the idea for this piece came from.

Irada Mustafayeva – Conflict

The biggest battle we face is the one we have with ourselves.

Servando Nava – Aiyana 4

Aiyana 4 is 4 of 20 in a series called *Echoes*.

Julian Nelson – Greta; Jake

I am intrigued by working with my 4x5 Linhof Technika camera. I inherited the system from my uncle many years ago and it continues to capture the world of light and compelling subjects, just as it did for him in the 1950s.

Kelly Pearce – Small Blessings

There are a lot of bad things in the world that can make us feel like we are insignificant, unloved, and powerless. No matter how dark the world may seem, I believe in finding small blessings in every person and place I see.

Leslie Rich – Dream of Tranquility

For this piece, I was inspired by the essence of tranquility and spirituality. I believe that every animal has something powerful to teach us. The deer teaches us to have gentleness and understanding. Continue along a path like this and life will bring you graciousness.

London Rilatos – Becki

These photos are a snippet of a personal fashion shoot I did. I wanted to showcase who the model is while photographing her in my own style.

Ronnie Riske – Fuller Chocolate Co.

I took the idea of a family business and crossed it with a form of packaging that could be made with several iterations but in a way that could carry a brand. With that in mind, I created a series of three different chocolate bar boxes, each of whose pattern indicated the flavor of the bar inside.

Robert Roles – Animals Say Strange Things: The Fish

This is a political piece influenced by the confederate flag situation that gripped the nation last year. The sound effects were created with Mario Paint software for the Super Nintendo.

Diana Sanchez – Whose Bed? Her Bed!

This painting took two days to complete as I started with Estrella first and worked my way to the nail polish and then bed. I used burnt sienna and burnt amber for undertones.

Shawn Schmidt – My Life at Clark

For my project, I decided to look at what my journey at Clark has been like, and it resulted in this painting.

Shawn Schmidt – One and Many

I was challenged to create a painting with the theme of "one and many." What exactly this piece means is interpretive—it is art, after all—but it had to be something personal to me.

Jacob Schulstad – Främmande

The creation of this piece was done by listening to music and letting my mind go blank. In other words, I was not thinking about what I was going to make prior to beginning the creative process.

Emma Shafer – Old Circuits

This project was inspired by the idea that the brain is like a machine: cluttered, complicated, and fascinating. I chose to make it an old man simply to diverge from my usual twenty-something busts and figures. When plugged into an outlet, the piece lights up.

Emma Shafer – Stretched Out

There was a brief time in my life when I aspired to be a contortionist. This piece was part of a mixed media collection I was doing, so I added the rubber bands to fit with the theme as well as to represent the muscles.

Emily Shirron – Hundreds of Acres of Woods

I was photographing my cousin while people were walking past and cars were driving by. Then for a moment it was a peaceful enchanted forest.

Sugar Spears – Blue Catnip

This "rainbow" printing technique was done by using different shades of blue ink that were pulled across the screen. My intention was to imagine what it would be like to be a cat on catnip.

Brooke Stoddard – Cloud in a Room

I wanted to do this painting because I love clouds. I wanted to paint a cloud in a room, but I knew it would look very out of place, so I challenged myself to make the cloud look like it belonged. I did that by making the room itself surreal.

Michael Stoltenow – Unwanted Wasteland

In this photograph, timelines meet graciously in unconnected pathways. The devious, worldly panorama of the human consciousness is my focus. When out of focus, I like to think of where I stand today, where I will stand tomorrow, and what places I will see between these infinite lines.

Macon Sumpter – Workman's Glasses

Inspiration for this piece came from my own glasses as well as a multi-tool that I own. I looked at my glasses and saw a bunch of parts that I could make into functional tools, while still keeping a fairly normal pair of glasses.

Matthew Tycer – Broken Fixed

After taking a class with Professor Hottle, something he said will resonate with me for the rest of my artistic career: "Make bold moves and intelligent decisions." My pieces reflect things learned from him, such as working in layers and building upon those.

Stephani Ueltschi – eyePod

This Ceramics I assignment was to make a hybrid piece using a human body part and an organic object. I chose a pea pod and eyeballs. The pod is a slab of clay, formed around balloons to form holes that the "peas" go in. The eyeballs are two hollow halves of a sphere scored and slipped together.

Stephani Ueltschi – My Little Teapot

I made this teapot during Ceramics I. When glazing, I couldn't choose which color I wanted, so I used both. I love to learn new media and acquire skills that can be applied to other media. I find that if I just start making something, it turns out better than if I go in with a game plan.

Harold Walter – Glimpse

This artwork embodies a piece of instrumental music called "The Spider's Lullaby" by Paul Collier. The song's repetitive elements make it easily tuned out, as if it's ambient sound; to hear more than snatches of the music, one must make an effort to listen. In the same manner, one must stop and look closely at my art piece to recognize the myriad details that are mostly obscured.

Kriza Uyan – Self-Portrait through a Pinhole

For this pinhole photograph, I wanted to do a self-portrait in an unconventional way that would take a viewer a second to understand its meaning. I wanted to tell a story about myself and let the audience interpret it however it sees it.

Beloved Zeal – Indigenous Dream

When I drew this piece, I happened to be sitting in a room of teenagers I was working with. As I observed them, I felt the desire to draw a circle. That circle evolved, and after a month of working on this piece, it had become what it is today.

AUTHORS' STATEMENTS

Timothy Berezchnoy – *The Wisdom of Silence*

I wrote this poem to help myself and others understand there is a language that is spoken before we speak. Unless we learn to listen, our words often come out harshly and without sympathy.

Cory Blystone – *Forbidden*

Food can be pornographic if you have a dirty mind.

Ginger Clarke – *Closeted*

A closeted life, for all intents and purposes, can look and feel normal but over time will gnaw away at you. The fear of coming out stems from the idea that you might be tossed out and left to fend for yourself. Still, having someone to hang onto while hiding in a homophobic society is sometimes more than enough.

Megan Cover – *Black Water*

One in four pregnancies end with empty arms and heartbroken parents. When asked how many children we have, we simply state, "Two that walk and one that flies."

Astrid DuBois – *Ashes*

On December 28, 2015, I joined a few family members to scatter the ashes of my grandfather in the ocean. Theodore Rognald Dankmeyer, "Roggie," passed away from Alzheimer's Disease at age 77. As I walked down to the ocean at dusk, the opening lines of the poem came to me.

Lily Hart – *Winged*

This started out as a response to a simple prompt and was only a few paragraphs long. In a writing class, it grew into a full-fledged story; the heart of it is about the relationship between sisters.

Ryan Licini – *Donnie Worthless*

I wrote this story in response to two authors: Jorge Luis Borges and Charles Bukowski. I wanted to try and create a character like Bukowski's Chinaski and have him occupy a surreal, distorted setting like Borges might create.

Jessica Liddy – *Thunder Inside*

The lyric essay is an intriguing creative nonfiction form. It depends on structure and carefully selected diction to create an overarching theme. This piece required extensive research and creativity, which pushed me to develop a different perspective I didn't realize I had on an issue I'm passionate about.

Takunda Masike – *The Violinists*

I wrote this piece to try and capture the atmosphere and emotions of a pair of violinists playing their last piece together. The poem also alludes to the transitional point in a relationship where two people either come closer or drift apart.

Jonathan Montano – *Memories*

I didn't have the best history with my brother, which this story shows. But what happened to me isn't the full story; how I interpret what happened makes the story complete.

Karly Murphy – *Enough*

This poem is about the inner struggle with the aftermath of a traumatic event and the interesting way all things can be seen from many perspectives.

Ashlee Nelson – *Obligation*

Inspired by something we all fear, I think. It's quiet—the cruel voice in the back of our heads that still manages to shake our foundation.

Mary Niemela – *Crying Moon*

With humanity out to extinguish the mystical creatures that have roamed across the North American plains for centuries, a shape-shifter named Liam Rose defends his kind against the cruelties of man.

Lily Pirayesh-Townsend – *Fragments of Fault*

Emotional pain often comes from a collection of moments, and I wanted to capture those traumatic experiences through a series of short, blunt moments to go along with the theme of the piece: fragments.

Jennifer Pratt-Walter – *Midnight Blue*

I have been crafting poetry for most of my life hoping to discover, create, or amend a path that might lead me to myself in a way nothing else could. I'm also a musician, so imagery related to that finds a home in my writing. In the end, I hope we find understanding and common ground because that's the only way peace can grow and thrive in our precarious world.

Jacob Salzer – *Familiar Stranger*

This poem is about a stranger that I often encounter at unexpected moments. This poem expresses a feeling of *déjà vu*.

Richard Sievers – *Digging the Well*

This is a poem about tenacity and vision through the hard work it takes to achieve one's dreams.

Gerard Donnelly Smith – *At the Office of Forgotten Poetry*

After having written the poem, I knew that all my rejected work, all my wasted love poems, would be read and kept by an immortal chronicler of verse, and then I felt better.

Brenna Taylor – *And This Is Why I Can't Stay*

Because sometimes when I see beauty, I feel starved.

Harold Walter – *Trials*

This is an excerpt from a story I wrote in my fiction writing class depicting a young man's struggle to dance around a difficult truth in order to create a connection—rather than a divide—between his younger brother and himself.

Rowan Walter – *Denouement*

This piece was written about the backwards events going on these days.

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SUBMIT TO *PHOENIX*

Do you write, draw, sculpt, or sing? Have you taken a creative writing or art class at Clark? Then you should submit to *Phoenix*! We are accepting submissions for the 2017 edition starting May 30, 2016.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- You must be a student, faculty member, staff member, or alumni of Clark College. We encourage the Vancouver-Portland community to engage with *Phoenix*, but our goal is to highlight the Clark College community.
- You must submit online through Submittable (clarkcollege.submittable.com/submit). Please do not email submissions, but you are more than welcome to email questions to phoenix@clark.edu. You can also visit clarkphoenix.com for more in depth guidelines.
- Submissions must be anonymous. No names should be included anywhere on your work.
- Only submit the allowed amount. For literary submissions, please limit to six total, with a maximum of two pieces per genre. For art, please limit to four total, with a maximum of two pieces per medium. Submit each work in a separate file, regardless if two works are the same genre.
- Please format your literary works correctly and present your art in the best way possible. Literary works must be Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, and include a word count. Art works should be scanned and photographed properly; for tips check out the *Phoenix* website listed above.
- There are many literary and art categories to which you can submit. Literature submission genres include fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. The art submission categories are photography, ceramics, 3D works, drawings, painting/watercolor, digital/graphic art, music, animation, video, performance. We also accept graphic novel excerpts.

Interested in learning about the *Phoenix* editing and production process? Take English 277 or Art 270. Both courses will be offered Fall 2016.

Many of the students who take these courses go on to become paid staff members. For more information about how to get involved in *Phoenix*, contact Elizabeth Donley at edonley@clark.edu or Kathrena Halsinger at khalsinger@clark.edu.



COLOPHON

Phoenix was produced by Clark College Students on Apple iMac® Computers, using Adobe Creative Cloud® software. *Phoenix* images were digitized with either an Epson® Scanner or a digital camera.

Phoenix was printed by Brown Printing in Portland, Oregon on uncoated 80# Lynx Smooth White Book and 80# Cougar Super Smooth White Cover stock.

Headings and body text were set with Proxima Nova, designed by Mark Simonson Studio in 2005 and licensed to Adobe Systems, Inc.



