

COLLAGE **SPRING** **2019**



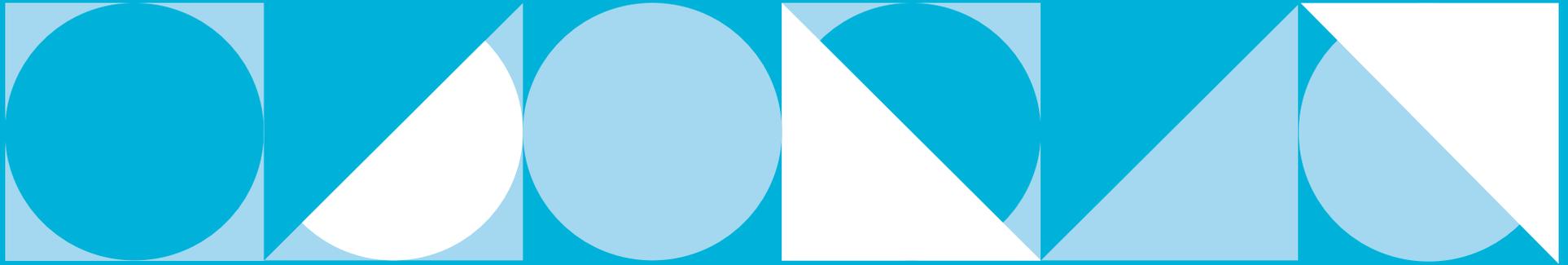
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COLLAGE

SPRING 2019
A JOURNAL OF
CREATIVE EXPRESSION



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I've found a home among the pages of Collage where the paper is stained with creativity and the ink is alive with passion. These pages hold immense life within them, and I'm proud to play a small role in their production.

While there are many aspects of Collage that are worthy of recognition, I want to thank those who made this journal my home—the staff. You don't receive enough gratitude for all that you do, and I'm overwhelmed by the energy and enthusiasm that you each incorporate into your roles.

You take hundreds of submissions, and in one laborious week, you select words that inspire and photos that captivate. You fill the pages of Collage with pieces

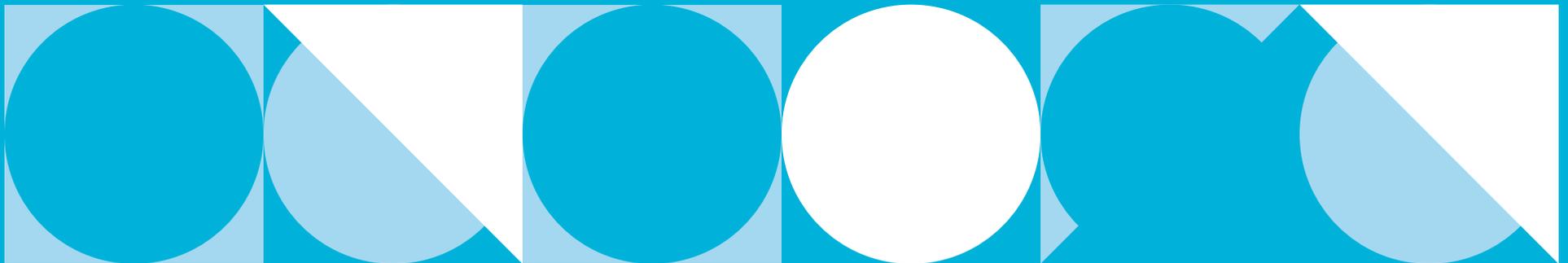
of your soul, personified through art and poetry, through prose and photography, and through song lyrics, plays, and designs. You spend hours in meetings, narrowing down hundreds of outstanding pieces and editing each one with care. I've never been surrounded by a group so enthralled by punctuation, color usage, lighting, kerning, and design, and I've loved every moment of it.

While I'm grateful for your devotion to the journal and its production, I'm also thankful for each one of you and the impact that you've had on me personally. You've shown me that the product of true dedication is always magnificent. You've revealed to me the overwhelming diversity within creativity and encouraged me to think outside of my comfort zone. You've taught me to seek understanding and to embrace community. You've given me friendship and a home where my Friday nights are always soaked with laughter and joy.

When I joined Collage staff during my sophomore year of college, I did so unaware of the impact that it would leave on my life. Yet from the moment I attended my first meeting, I knew that being a part of Collage was something so exquisite that it couldn't help but have a monumental effect on me. I was right. Now, as I prepare to graduate, I take with me all that Collage values: a love for literature, a desire for creativity, and a passion for art. Most importantly, I take away a home, one that is for all who enjoy spending hours grading submissions, arguing over comma placements, and eating pizza into the late hours of the night while perfecting a creative masterpiece. I will cherish this home forever.

Thank you.

-Hannah Tybor



POETRY

● Hushed Hannah Berthelson	6	Ode to the Record Collection	16	Friends and Their Lovers Rachel Lingerfelt	23
Divorce Court Addison Gentry	6	Hayden Goodridge		Eternity Jacob Rex	27
'Oseni Bell Doski	6	Beast Inverted Hayden Goodridge	18	The Fall Holly Pearson	27
Scrambled William Smith	8	Like Wildflowers Hannah Berthelson	20	Earthquake Hannah Newcomb	28
Resplendent Rachel Lingerfelt	9	Women Bryson Light	20	Skylines Hannah Newcomb	28
An Evening Train to Kongsvinger Jacob Rex	10	To Leave Behind a Life Like That	21	My Prismatic Revelation Valkyrie Rutledge	29
Wildflowers Bryson Light	11	Miura Rempis		The Untamed Woman Shannon Andrews	34

ART

The Moon is a Woman Alyssia Surita	8	Nina Ansley Pearson	20	A Day After Tomorrow	29
● Doberman Taylor D.	8	Loneliness is a Lie Maggie Strahle	21	Katherine Raymond	
Consequences Katherine Raymond	9	Shatter Maggie Shivers	22	Unknown to Self Morgan Westerbeck	30
A Proper Goodbye Jake Yandle	12	Gunslinger Courtney Gilliam	22	Poe Ansley Pearson	33
The Many Expressions of Marcella	16	I'm Glad I'm Moving On Haley Lambing	23	Bathing Beauty Joyce Sloan	34
Joyce Sloan		Man Gave Names to All the Animals	26		
Our Lady of Perpetual Control	18	Alyssia Surita			
Morgan Westerbeck		Dislexa Lydia Sims	28		

PHOTO

Lugano Destiny Seaton	6	City of Lights Bryce Bivens	14	Earth Splat Brenna Sharpe	19
Crosstown Concourse	7	Reach William Fahrnbach	15	Spider Rock Heather Pollard	26
Jasmine Weatherspoon		Captivity Electronic William Fahrnbach	15	Smirking Squirrel Dylan Henry	26
Hatchling Valkyrie Rutledge	7	Rome Wasn't Built in a Day Niki Yonkov	16	Savannah Road Sammye Sanford	27
She's Royale. Stephanie Van Horn	9	Thunder Pounds When I Stomp The Ground	17	Birds Destiny Seaton	27
● The Window Must Always be Left Open	10	Dakota Geren		Second Thoughts Dylan Henry	31
Haydin Oechsle		Glimmer and Warm Honey in the Yellow Light	17	Give and Be Rich Stephanie Van Horn	32
Final Days Luke Oakley	11	Dakota Geren		Unique in All the World Haydin Oechsle	34
Infinity Niki Yonkov	11	Theophany Madison Pitts	19		
Neeko Hudson McNeese	13	My Identity Sergio Villa	19		

PROSE

Ashes Under the Bridge Tré Wood	12
To Infinity and Beyond Hannah Berthelson	24
● The Familiar Darkness Bailey Hilliard	30

CONTENTS

Crouched on a cold tile floor
 in a suit two sizes too big,
 bowtie crooked, a uniform
 you were never prepared to bear.
 You had never looked so small,
 so old, doe eyes framing a sepia-toned warzone,
 violent and cracked, a picture of
 a drowning soldier plunging from
 a warship. Rescuers loomed,
 holding muskets out of lifeboats,
 whispering well-meant gunfire and
 drifting away feeling a better person
 for their efforts. They forgot you
 bleeding in their wake. Alone,
 you fought each crest with clenched fists,
 red marks tracing the waves across
 pale palms. Not a whisper,
 not a scream. Born of brutal storms,
 you rode it out in silence.

Across the hall, I sat on the floor,
 cold in my dress and rapt
 by a fellow child sent to war. I held
 the brittle picture of your eyes
 close to my chest and wondered
 how it must feel to drown.
 How long it would take.
 When they came for you,
 the small, tired soldier, you
 turned away. You closed your eyes
 and pretended I wasn't staring
 when you held your breath
 and went under the water.

I counted the seconds.
 I never saw you come back up.



Lugano
 Digital Photography | Destiny Seaton

'Oseni

Poetry | Bell Doski

Call me deep ocean.
 Be careful of my
 riptide.

I will tear you the
 way you shredded me,
 but I will at least
 give you the decency
 of a proper burial.

A burial deep
 within this grand
 body of water.

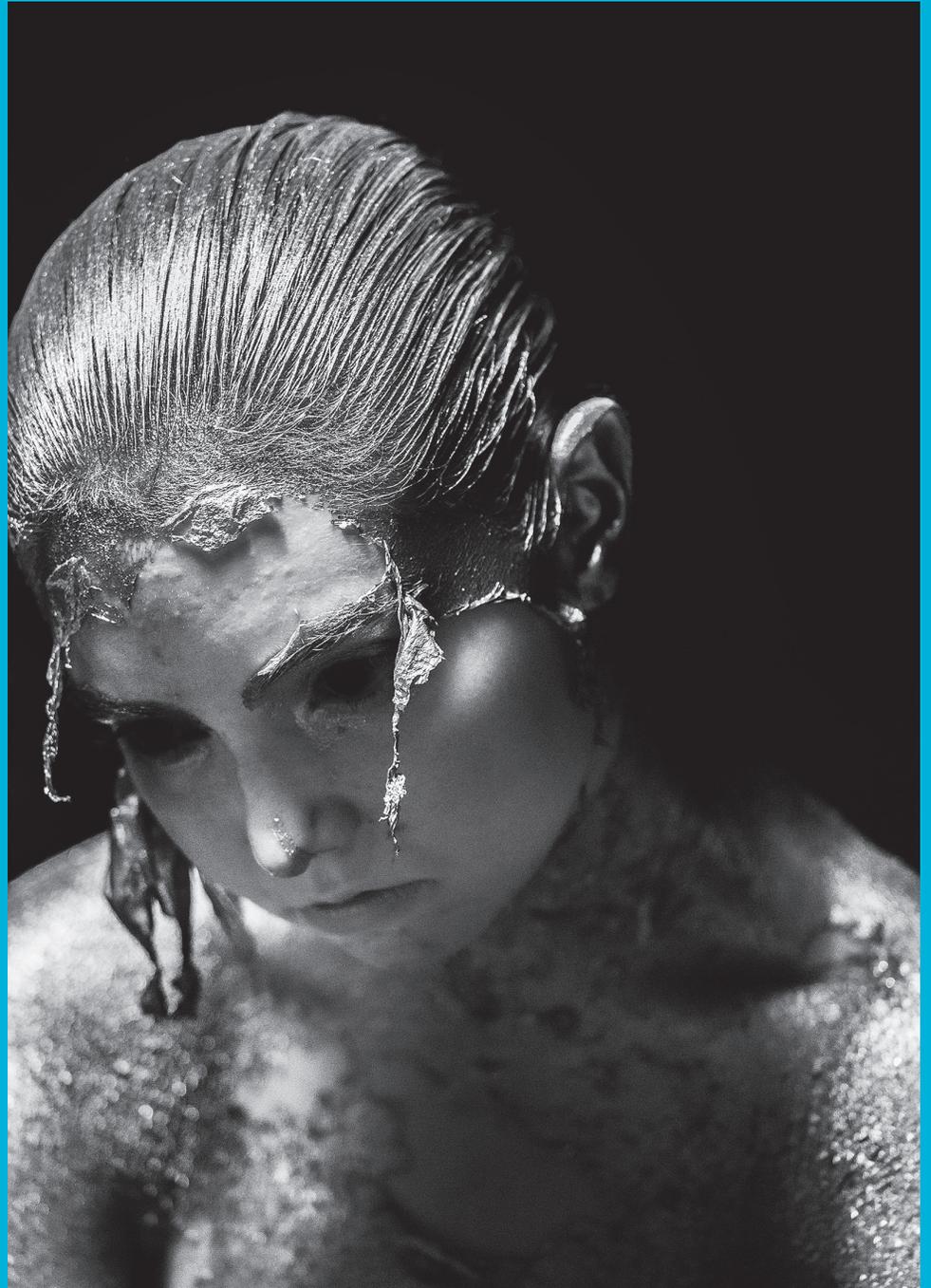
Hushed

Poetry | Hannah Berthelson

Dusk demands a certain reverence
 from the living things it enshrouds
 while the sun takes one last glance at the day,
 skirts of pink and white and orange
 trailing behind her as she goes.
 I strolled leisurely toward the sleepy horizon,
 with steps so silent I'd liked to have forgotten
 I was a tangible interruption in that indigo light,
 imagining instead I was but another
 crisp breeze floating through it.
 My lungs yearned to still entirely,
 so as not to take anything more
 from that moment;
 instead, with each fervent beat,
 my heart drummed syllables of praise.
 The birds sang a similar song,
 mere shadows in the lavender haze,
 and for a moment,
 my mind was hushed as it reveled
 in Spring's diaphanous embrace



Digital Photography | Jasmine Weatherspoon
Crosstown Concourse



Digital Photography | Valkyrie Rutledge
Hatchling



Digital Collage | Alyssia Surita
The Moon Is a Woman

Scrambled

Poetry | William Smith

Glitch

Digitized mischief
 In a binary field
 Worms and bugs crawl
 Eating electronic bits

The machines toil
 Currents instead of gears
 Unraveling your command
 To make or break

A glitch in the system
 Propagates continuously
 Churning out nonsense
 And all you crave

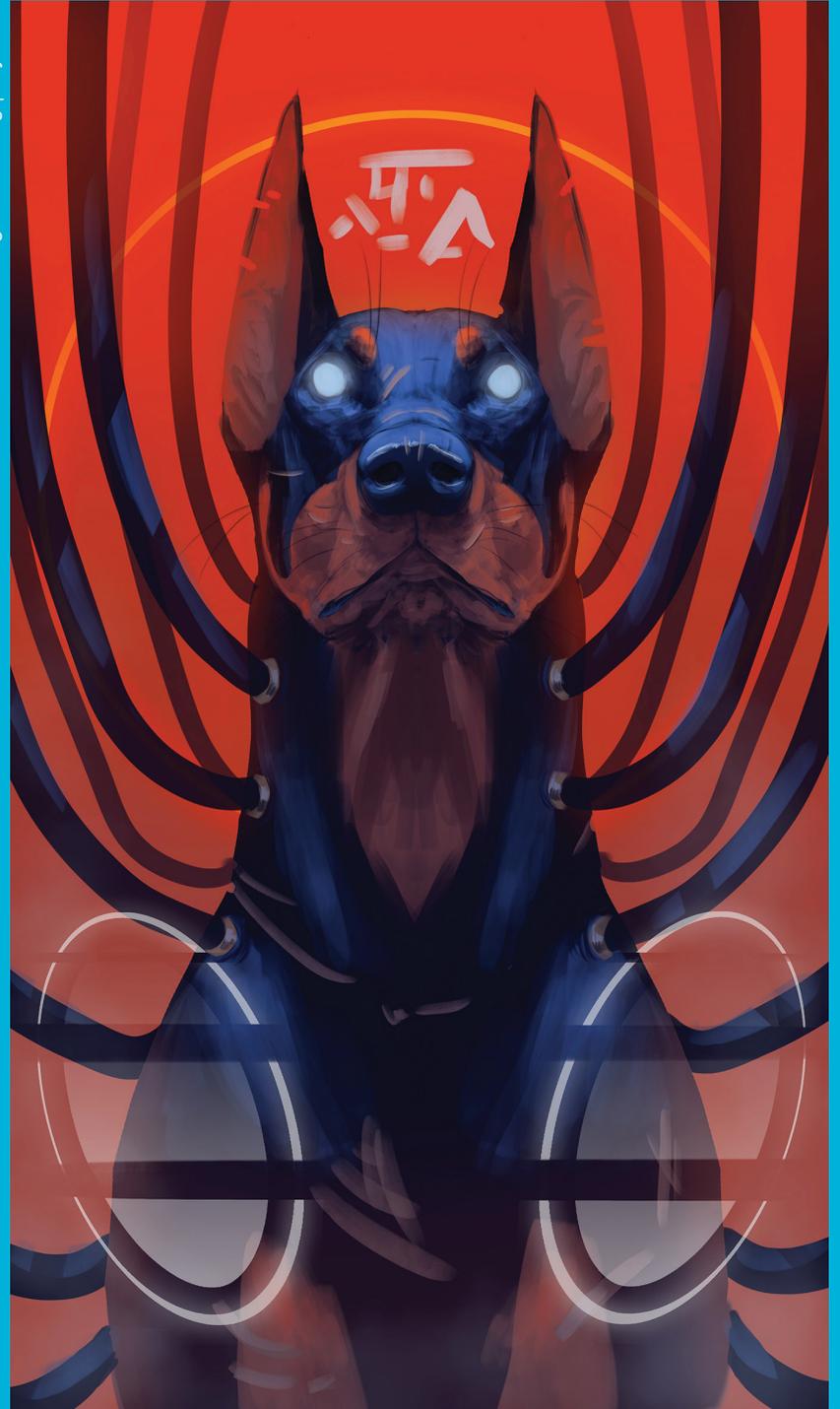
Poem

Digitized glitch
 In a binary command
 machines and Worms churning
 toil electronic gears

The bugs crave
 bits instead of currents
 crave your mischief
 To propagate or crawl

A command in the glitch
 crave continuously
 break out nonsense
 And all you Eating

Doberman
 Digital Painting | Taylor D.



Resplendent

Poetry | Rachel Lingerfelt

You wanted a girl who would make you her home
For her inconvenient desire to commit

She slides in through a side door, sorry I'm late, excuses,
Her voice is high-pitched honey butter laced with
Cigarette ash

"you are resplendent," she wrote,
And you are tongue-tied and embarrassed you have to
Look the word up at all,
Because isn't a writer supposed to be a repository for these words?

There is much an illicit mix of kissing and touching in
The ladies bathroom can fix, she promises
As she excuses herself away from her friends to show you how
Resplendent you are under her fingers,
And the nagging word of "commitment"
Lay dormant on the other side of the wooden door, eavesdropping

You wonder where she even learned that word,
Resplendent, not the most or least obscure,
But she fancies herself to be different than all your other lovers
So, she keeps some secrets for herself

And then the leaving starts
Slowly, and then quick as the snap of her finger,
The flick of her cigarette hand, which she promises she doesn't use
Anymore, honestly
And she asks why the words keep spilling out of you
All you can say is, "you taught me the ones
That I thought could make you like me more,"
And she laughs and walks out the door,
Promising she'll see you later,
With no vocabulary words she learned on
Merriam-Webster.com to sweeten the deal.

She's Royale.

Digital Photography | Stephanie Van Horn



Consequences

Mixed Media | Katherine Raymond





● **The Window Must Always Be Left Open**
Digital Photography | Haydin Oechsle

An Evening Train to Kongsvinger

Poetry | Jacob Rex

And after a moment
of being absorbed by that landscape
again,

I finally realized I was seeing
something purely intimate, objective,
from a seemingly one-way screen.

The tall stalks of grass signaling me in,
and the clouds painted over and over again,
and the farmer, forgetful of suns, waiting.

The fields wide and seamed,
no, hemmed, with the sky:
telephone-line-stitches.

Sitting here, I can faintly hear
me standing in the middle of it all
from behind the window.

Inhaling,

I feel walking with no weight,
napping as the soft wheat ripples against my legs and stomach
then, the forest and the hills and the water

exhale.

A lion belongs, an exodus of crows, a stoned horse,
a long wooden fence doesn't separate but hems,
a silhouette barn and a shadowed rain cloud and a child running.

A king would not dare throw his shovel,
there could be only a wild dance.
A bonfire lit by starlight, warm only to pleasure.

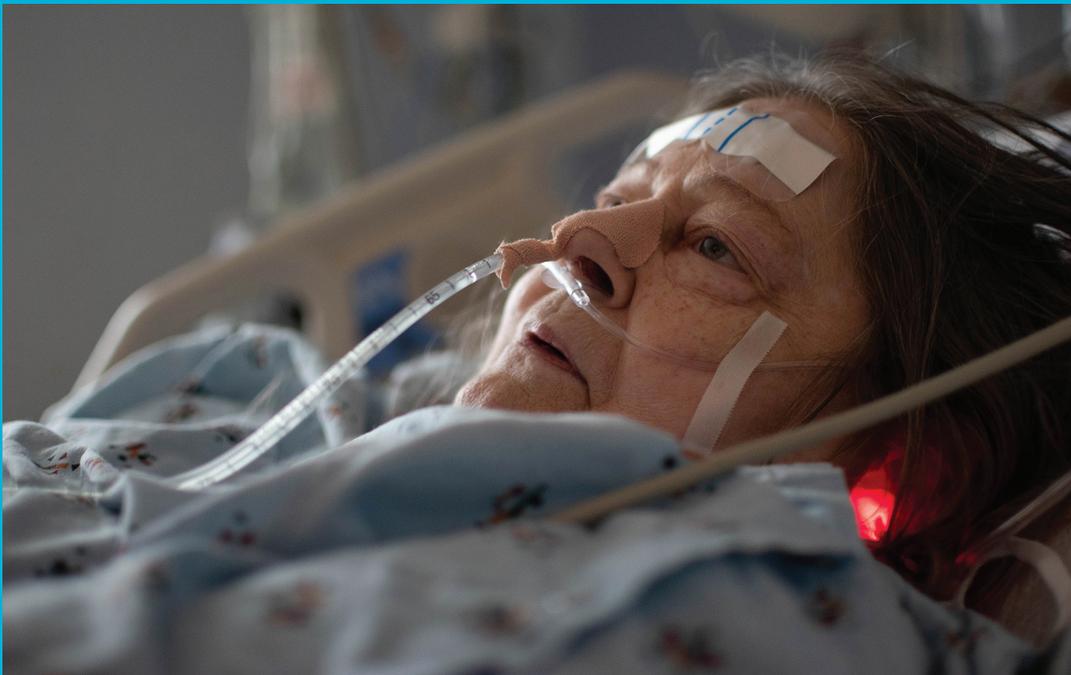
Drums, shouting, a pounding of bare feet, warm inhales,
cool exhales, eyes sink, distant cold thunder,
rose horizon, breathing earth, warm coals, rich inhale.

Rough dry dirt caked over lifted eyes,
the surrounding trees give one final shiver
stray exhales and inhales.

whir of lights rolls into view and the train finally stops.



Digital Photography | Niki Yonkov
Infinity



Digital Photography | Luke Oakley
Final Days

Wildflowers

Poetry | Bryson Light

Today I cry for a friend I haven't met
I send them off in a car I haven't seen
Close the door to a house I don't have
Lie down on a floor that doesn't exist
Stare up at an invisible ceiling
And cry

I feel the closeness of a presence
On either side of the glass
That is molded to my figure
Moving with me
Maybe a past life
Or plural
Whoever they are
Whispers silently

In the woods
Where my friend leaves
And where I cry
I smell my grandmother's house
Something so familiar
Plucked from a deep lake
Out of hundreds of swimming minnows
It came
By chance
Or did it feel me
Pat the earth
Blind
Looking for my friend
And follow
Searching with me
For where it came

I feel it
After walking for so long
And then sitting
I feel the relief of standing up

Ashes Under the Bridge

Prose | Tré Wood

Our line of cars formed a subdued funeral procession as the ashes of my Great Uncle Don rested in an urn in the trunk of my grandparents' car. The disc-shaped container held them in a pocket of thick paper, sealed and adorned at the top by what looked like a fancy paper plate embossed with purple, yellow, and green flowers. It'd been six years since his death, and we'd finally found the time and money to deliver his ashes to the sea—Thanksgiving.

The unofficial hearse—my grandparents' silver SUV—led the way into Savannah, Georgia. Behind us, Uncle Robert drove his small, beaten-up, faded green car carrying my Aunt Allison and their daughter, Priscilla.

Stuck in the middle of the parade, my dad drove our little red car that fit us all better when we bought it two years earlier. He wore a black button-down and reflective sunglasses, and my mom put on red lipstick while looking at the flip-down passenger mirror. She always wore red. My teenage sister, Sofie, leaned against the window resting her eyes, while my preteen sister, Selma, was squished as always in the middle with her feet together on the middle bump of the floorboard. I watched the highway end and glanced at the side view mirror where I saw my mom lean back in her seat, finished with her makeup.

As we passed the historic stone buildings, cemeteries, and statues connected by cobblestone streets, I pondered the memories of Great Uncle Don. He wanted us to take this trip when he died. *Don't be upset, make a happy memory of it.* This would be our sixth Christmas we didn't receive a giant box filled with random gifts—art supplies, movies, toys—he'd collected over the previous year. He would laugh as we pulled out each model car or Barbie doll, amazed to find more.

I was pacing, studying for my second math test in sixth grade, when my Aunt Allison called my mom. The phone static roared. *Stephanie, he's dead.* My heart dropped, caught at the bend in my knees, rendering them weak. My mom had warned me earlier they hadn't heard from him in a week. I heard my aunt on the other line and walked away in shock as my mom consoled her sister—or maybe herself. *Okay. Okay.* He had refused to go to the doctor, and while we were away at our lake house, a rare vacation with Grammy and Grampa, he coughed up the last of his blood.

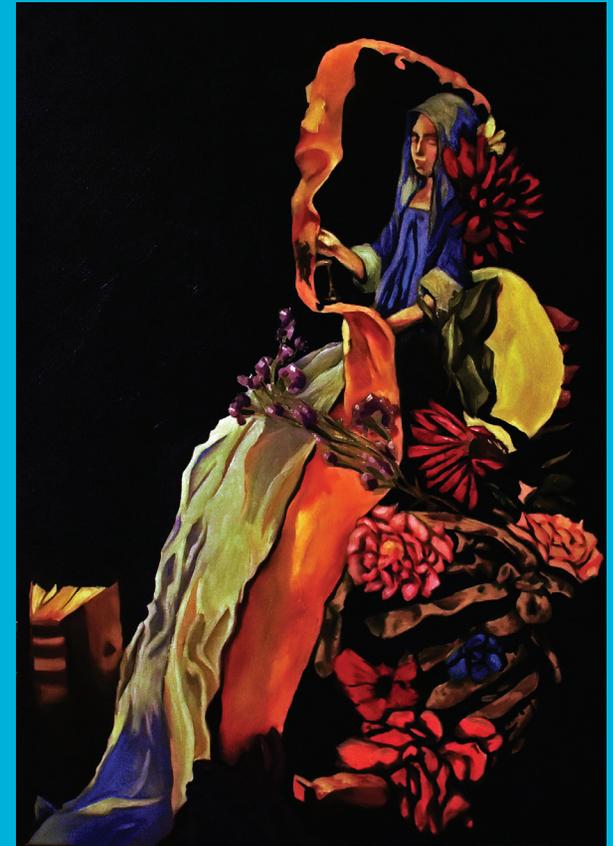
When we cleaned out his small house, passed down from my great grandparents, my sisters and I discovered why he gave us so much in the Christmas boxes. It reminded me of my grandparents' basement, before my aunt and uncle cleared it out for themselves and reminded me now of their garage where much of his things had merged with their own. The smell was a combination of feline fur and thrift store. Rat feces covered the floor, and cats wandered the rooms. It appeared everything he had ever given us was multiplied and thrown into random places in his home. As we scavenged the piles of clothes and discount movies and toys, tip-toeing through narrow walkways, we chose what we wished to keep. We fed his cats and giant goldfish living in a pond extending the length of his driveway. We threw away a dead cat we found behind his refrigerator. It was flat with matted, black hair. We threw out his food—all of it expired. We threw countless lamps and ships-in-bottles into the yard and posted a yard sale sign, which we found with others in the house.

“My mom had explained to me how he was found: down on his knees, face to the floor with his fists clenched and arms crossed over his chest—like a human preserved from Pompeii.”

Great Uncle Don's home became bigger each day as we cleared more useless junk from the rooms. I wandered through the house until I found

A Proper Goodbye

Oil Painting | Jake Yandle



it—the bloodstain on his green carpet. Maybe it was some sort of proof that he was really gone. Maybe it was just curiosity—the closest I'd been to death. My mom had explained to me how he was found: down on his knees, face to the floor with his fists clenched and arms crossed over his chest—like a human preserved from Pompeii.

Out the car window, twinkle lights waited to illuminate the streets, strung from restaurant to restaurant, while elaborate live oak trees brushed branches, forming canopies. We had a reservation at Paula Deen's restaurant. When we arrived, my Grampa let my Grammy out as she finished picking her hair—always graying at the roots—and my dad let

my mom and sisters out. My dad and I circled the tall building to find parking. We found a parallel spot and paid the meter. On the walk back to the restaurant, we ran into my Grampa, who had combed whatever hair he could manage to make his clown-like afro cover the bald spot on the center of his head. He asked us where Robert went. We had no idea.

"It all seemed like a simple joke. Where could Uncle Robert have gone?"

We entered the restaurant and walked to our table in the back of the narrow dining room to be asked the same question by the rest of our family. It all seemed like a simple joke. Where could Uncle Robert have gone? Aunt Allison wore her usual navy-blue cardigan with her faded blue jeans and librarian hair and glasses. She was at the table with pink-clad Priscilla, who wore rainbows and thick eyeglasses. Uncle Robert had obviously found the restaurant.

My Aunt Allison called him over and over for forty-five minutes. He never answered. The restaurant staff kept asking if we were ready to eat. We waited until my aunt's phone finally rang. I could hear him yelling on the other line. His words were not appropriate for our general audience family. My mom looked to me with her eyebrows raised and mouthed the word, *Pray*. I smirked. *I'm serious*. My uncle was furious with my dad for not waiting for him to follow him around the building to find parking. I felt the tension tie in my stomach. It turned out my Uncle had driven miles away looking for my dad and could not find his way back to the restaurant with his flip phone. He'd often been irrational, interjecting his socialist theories into our family's conservative conversations or dramatically storming out of the room, but he had never been so directly angry toward my father. I wasn't sure what might happen.

The longer we waited, the more I lost my appetite. It felt like another thirty minutes passed before the convicted felon finally stormed in with his

usual plastic bottle of Coke and red plaid pajama pants under his ripped jeans acting as a patch so as not to expose his pale knees. My dad, taking the high road, rose from his seat to apologize for leaving my uncle behind. The only response my uncle had was to nod vigorously. *It was slick*. He pulled his chair from the table with a screech. *Slick. And douchey*. My dad rolled his eyes as he sat back in his chair. The only thing that separated them was my Aunt Allison and the butter knife clenched in my hand.

We were ready to eat. My Grampa, sitting at the end of the table, held hands with my Grammy and Priscilla. He held his head down almost in anger and waited for us all to join hands. My dad and I especially hated the holding of hands before using them to eat, so we usually tried to avoid it. But this time, he gave in and held hands with my mom and her sister. I still held my knife and fork, while Sofie and Selma held my wrists—somewhat respecting my wishes.

I bowed my head but kept an eye on my Uncle. He giggled with Priscilla as if nothing had happened. Before Grampa could begin the prayer, Priscilla opened her mouth. *Father, mother, God*. I looked to her out of the corner of my left eye. Where did she come up with that? My Grampa lifted his head to furrow his brow—this was not his tradition. I felt my sisters squeeze their hands harder around my wrists trying to contain their laughter. *We thank you we are all here today to enjoy this delicious food you have blessed us with, which we did not even have to make ourselves. Amen. We all joined in on the amen and dug in.*

My nerves were too high to eat. I picked at my food, shaking from the cold flowing through my bones, as if my uncle's boiling blood took all the heat from my own body. My dad ate with no problem, but he noticed my struggle to eat. *Go ahead and eat*. I gave him a look, pointing my eyes from him to my Uncle. *Don't worry about it. Eat*. I ate a bite of a roll and sat back in my chair. I struggled to swallow, and the bread clogged my throat. I gulped my sweet tea to push it down.

Remember when we could eat in the dining room? Grammy laughed.

Yeah, back before we moved all our crap into that room? Grampa grumbled.

The adults would eat in my grandparents' dining room, while the kids ate in the foyer right outside. Great Uncle Don would sit closest to the door so he could turn around and entertain us.

He was always laughing. My Grammy looked to me and smiled.

(Continued on page 14)

Neeko
Digitally Tinted B & W Negative | Hudson McNeese



(Continued from page 13)

That's right. He was. She choked and sniffed.

After dinner, we went to the gift shop and bought a butter-shaped ornament that read, *Butter Y'all!*

The marsh stood still on either side of the road. Tybee Island did not seem like much of an island. The field of green reeds disguised the swampy muck one would find themselves in if they took one step off the road and through the series of palm trees guarding it. We drove until we found a pier with a real beach.

The sun was setting. We parked our cars with no issue, and Uncle Robert kept his mouth shut the entire time. Priscilla skipped across the parking lot. She knew too little about the world with how rarely her parents let her out of the house—our grandparents' basement. She'd never seen a beach before, and I felt sorry this was her first experience.

"It was difficult to remember. I'd allowed those memories to fade. By the time we finally took the trip to let him go, I felt I already had."

We walked slowly under a concrete archway and we made our way across the wooden planks of the pier with my Great Uncle Don—the last walk we would have with him. At the end of the dock, we ignored the fishermen casting their lines. My family stood in a circle, and we spoke our final words. So many years had passed since the memorial service at my grandparents' church. It was difficult to remember. I'd allowed those memories to fade. By the time we finally took the trip to let him go, I felt I already had.

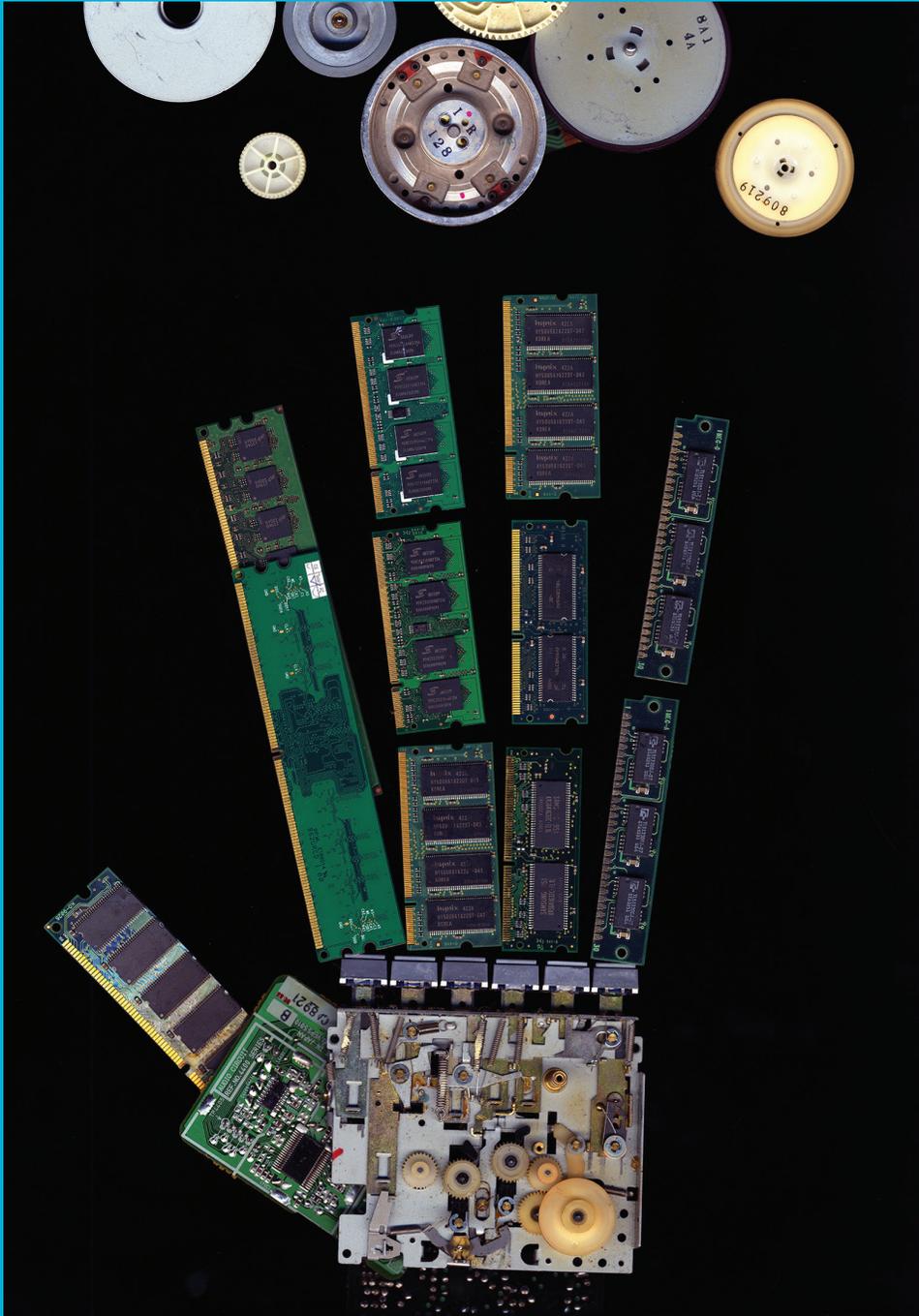
Grammy wiped tears from her eyes as she prepared to release the remains of her brother.

He told me he'd wait for me at the gates.

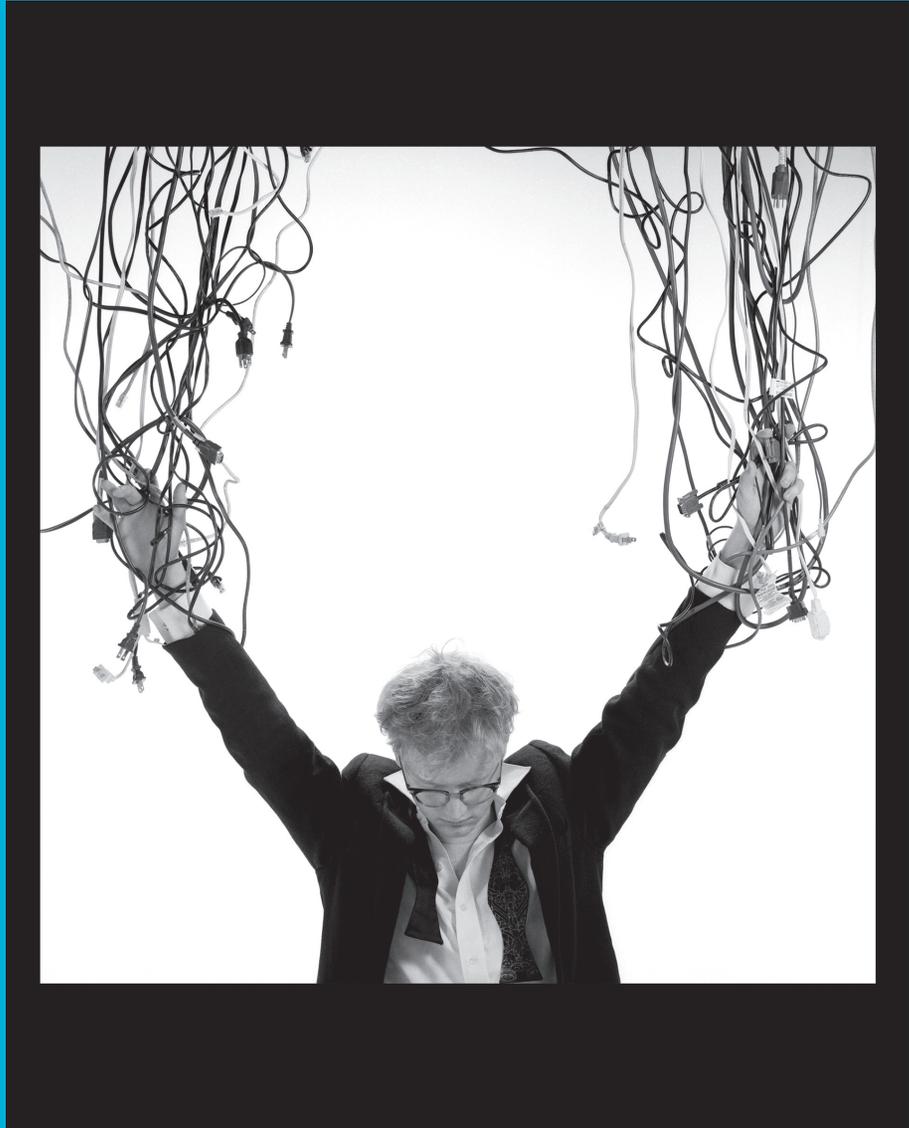
The instructions were clear: set the urn in the ocean, and watch the ashes fill the space around the painted flowery top.

Grammy and Grampa shook from age or emotion and slid the urn off the wooden rail of the pier. As the disc fell, it dove its thin edge toward the sea. The wind pushed it up again into the air, and Great Uncle Don flew under the dock. Our family of ten leaned over the rail to see the saucer land upside down on the wake. Waves engulfed the capsized urn, breaking it apart. Great Uncle Don was laughing. •





Flatbed Scan | William Fahrnbach
Reach



Medium Format Film | William Fahrnbach
Captivity Electronic



Ode to the Record Collection

Poetry | Hayden Goodridge

It is quite the inconvenient hobby.

Instead of rare stamps or regal spoons
arranged neatly in a book or on a wall,
I've chosen the one that takes up
roughly a third of the room,
twice my total weight, and
half of each week's paycheck.

The hissing of dusty, reclaimed records
makes Simon & Garfunkel sound as if
they're whispering through a pit of snakes on
Parsssley, Sssage, Rosssmary and Thyme.

Carole King was left out
a little too long in the heat
at the garage sale I found her—
warped and unplayable. She's now
neighbors with blue Joni Mitchell.

Just as Billy Joel begins his lonely whistle
on The Stranger, an errant groove—cut by
a young boy who heard the same song
for the first time in 1977—
makes the line repeat endlessly
until I get up with a sigh and nudge it on.

I wouldn't part with any of it:

every drop of the needle,
every flip of the disc,
every pop of surface noise,
facets of a perfectly inconvenient hobby.

Tonight, I'll pull one of the many ink-black LPs
from its time-yellowed paper sleeve,
place the needle to the outer groove,
and become wrapped in the stereo warmth.



Color Negative Film | Dakota Geren
Glimmer and Warm Honey in the Yellow Light



Thunder Pounds When I Stomp the Ground
Color Negative Film | Dakota Geren

Beast Inverted

Poetry | Hayden Goodridge

The entire car was upside down—
lying crumpled across the asphalt, underbelly exposed
like a slaughtered beast decaying on the open savanna.

Its fatal wound was splayed across the windshield,
tainting the ground with a wild crimson that
refracted off the fragments of glass beneath.
The source . . . dragged off, covered, hidden.

As each passerby turned the street corner
to uncover the metal carcass, their eyes
immediately flashed to the wound,
only for an instant, but an instant enough.

Even those who found solace indoors
—little shops lining the sectioned-off
resting place of the immovable creature—
could not elude the stench of leaking oil
curling its way into their nostrils.

Each suppressive sip of coffee,
each attempt at conversation,
had been tainted by the pervasive scene,
turning coffee bitter and thoughts foul.

*Cars weren't supposed to flip like that,
not in our little city,
not across our little sidewalks,
not for our little children to bear witness to.*

The sight did not discriminate.
Drivers, passengers, bikers, walkers
all swallowed it like forced syrup,
a remedy for mistaken assumptions
that their small lives were guaranteed
to continue each moment, safeguarded
into tomorrow by anything at all.



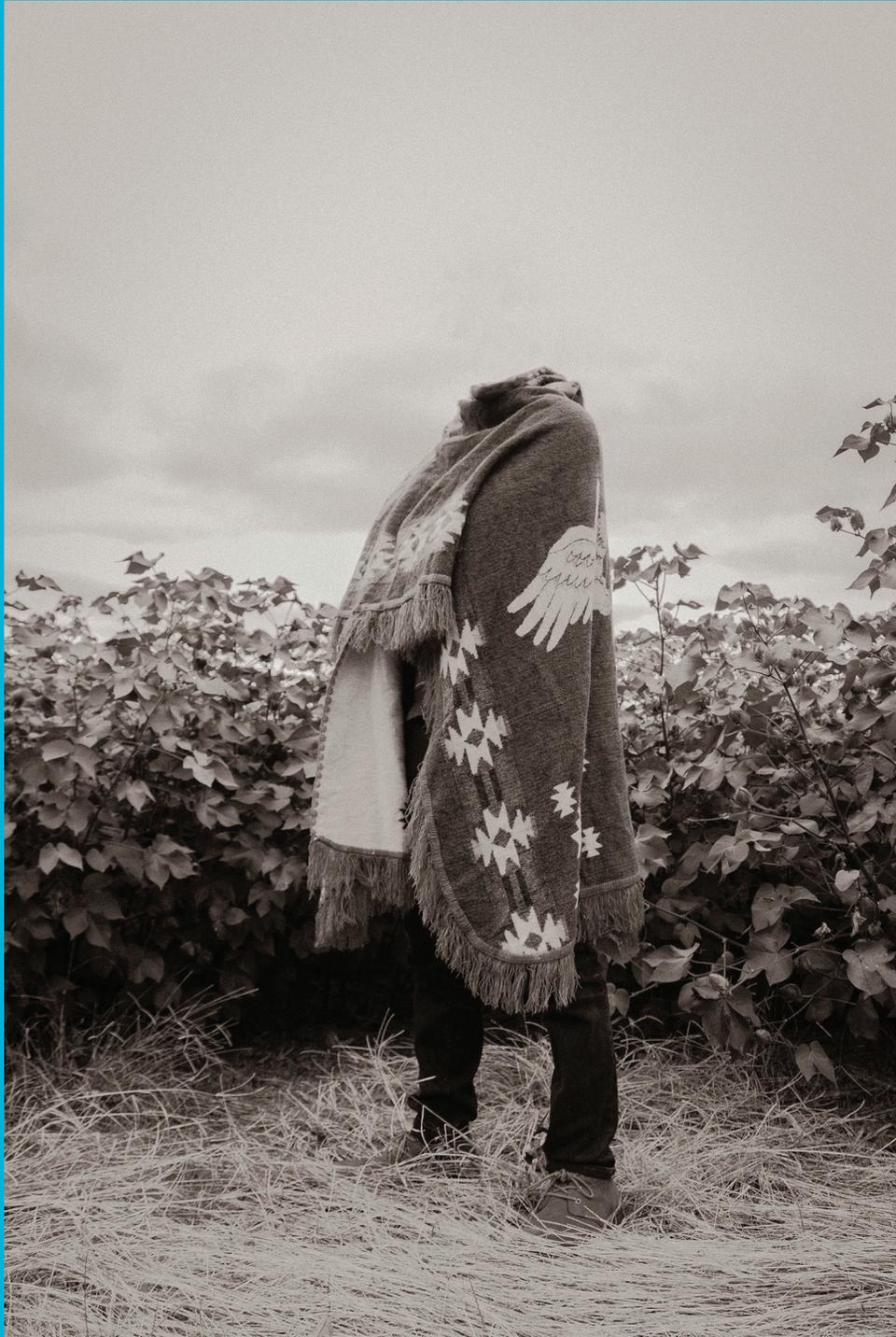
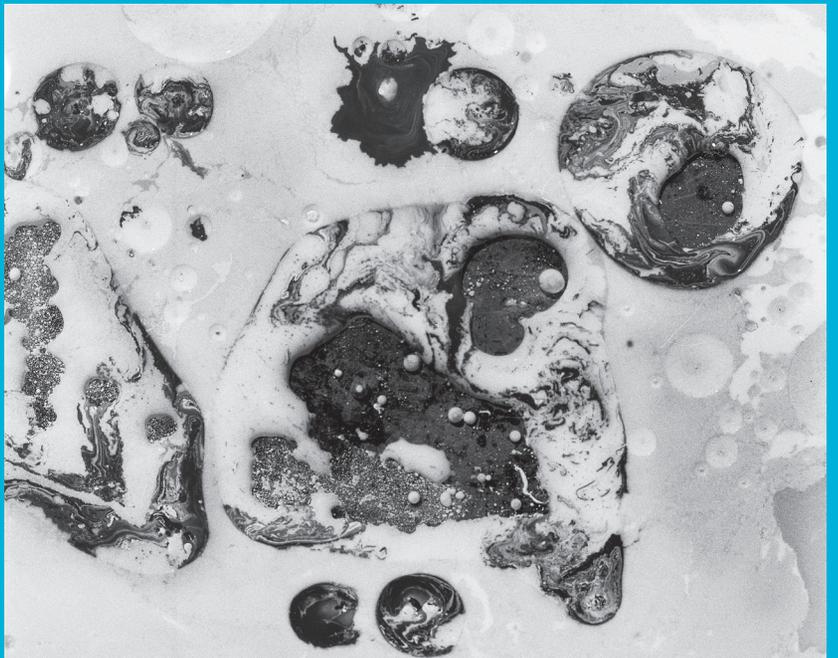


Film Photography | Madison Pitts

Theophany

Earth Splat

120mm Film Photography | Brenna Sharpe



My Identity
Digital Photography | Sergio Villa

Like Wildflowers

Poetry | Hannah Berthelson

How extravagant
and delicate
a phenomenon it is
to watch as someone
feels wholly
and undividedly
loved;
the way it blossoms
from their chest
like wildflowers
watered by the words,
"I see you.
I won't look away."
Marvel
at how
they beam
and stand taller
beneath that
warmth
only kindness
can bring,
as if it is a sun
with rays
everlasting.



Oil on Board | Ansley Pearson
Nina

Women

Poetry | Bryson Light

They are going into the woods
To squish grapes under their toes
And ferment their elusions
To dance with reason
And chatter with ravens
To laugh in a wild group
With their eyes closed
To sit in silence on pine needles
With their legs crossed
To have tears roll down their smiling faces
And water the seeds below
They are going into the woods
And I am not going with them
I will get as close to the secrecy as possible
But if a twig snaps, you will see me standing far away
And you will not meet my eyes
Because it is not my place to look
I do not want to be pretentious
For what needs to be said about a feeling
If all mouths fall short
Especially mine
Of describing the reaction it produces
Quick elation in which I only feel the escaping impulse
That fills your eyes with fever
And attaches so readily to your lips
I write this to myself
Because where I come from
And how far I've gotten today
Has been marked by female fields of female flowers
I am riding the tail
Of a fierce feminine wind
And my only request is a humble one
Please, carry me far

To Leave Behind a Life Like That

Poetry | Miura Rempis

To be the first rebellious woman
Who stole an apple from the tree
In pursuit of knowledge and life
Only to be punished for the tools
That were offered to taunt me
Oh, what it would be to leave behind a life like that

To be a female creature of magic
Banished to an island
To swoon men and lure them to death
With the song of my cries so beautiful
The men who survive must write to warn others
Oh, what it would be to leave behind a life like that

To be a woman spoken to
By the archangel Michael
Fighting for freedom on behalf
Of my home country of France
Only to be burned at the stake
On trial for heresy
Oh, what it would be to leave behind a life like that

To be a young woman
In a small Massachusetts town
Haunted by a flurry of mass hysteria
With neighbors accusing others of witchcraft
Fated to die at the bottom of a lake
Regardless of admission of guilt
Oh, what it would be to leave behind a life like that

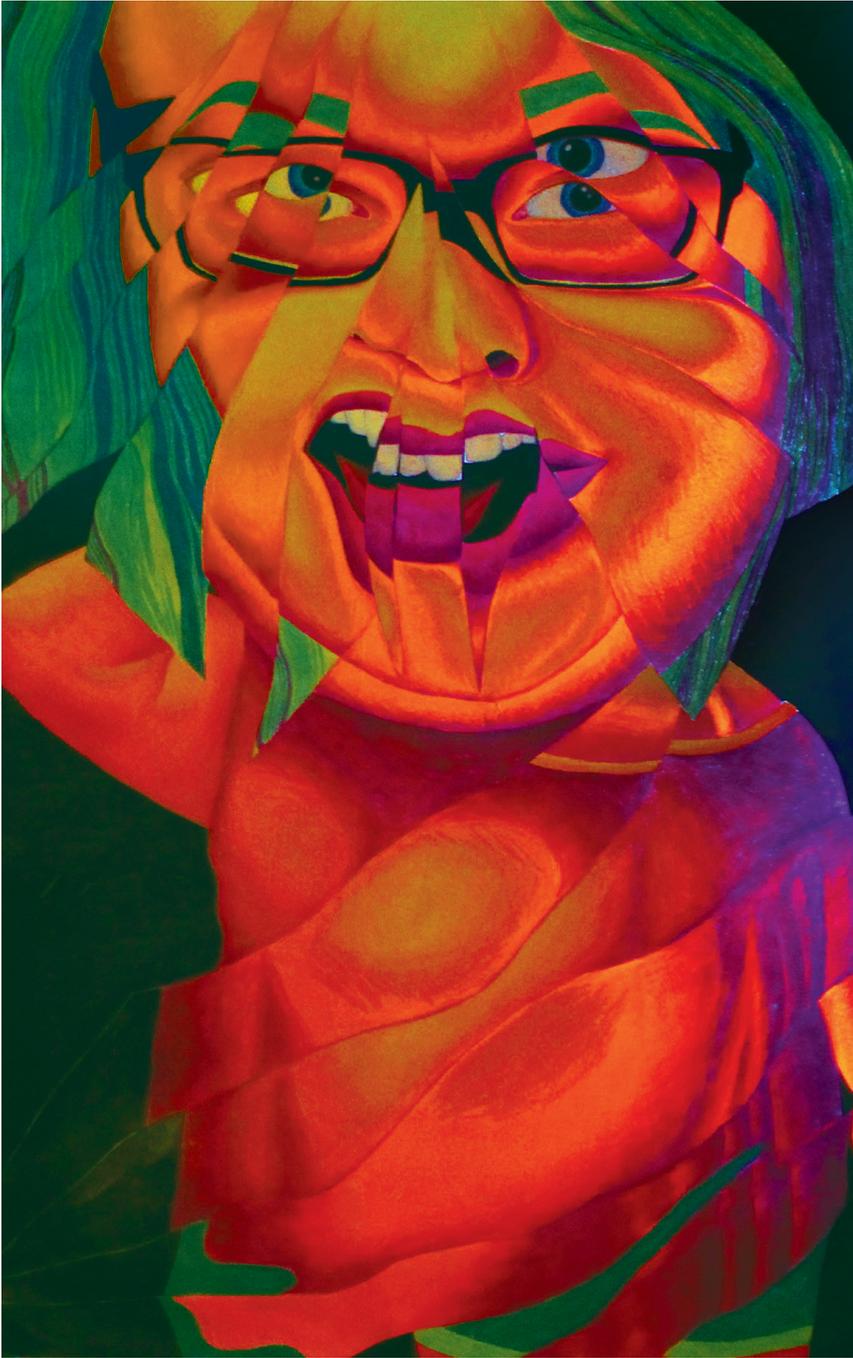
To be a child no older than eight
Who walked six blocks to school
To learn with children of her own color
In the city of Topeka, Kansas
Only to someday reverse the doctrine
That claimed you were not the same as a child who was white
Oh, what it would be to leave behind a life like that

Loneliness Is a Lie

Gouache Painting with String | Maggie Strahle



To be the first child of a family
Attending college with the intent of law school
To become the first woman president
To be named the first Supreme Court Justice from a non-Ivy League school
To help people who cannot help themselves someday
Oh, what it will be to leave behind a life like that



Colored Pencil | Maggie Shivers
Shatter



Silkscreen Print | Courtney Gilliam
Gunslinger

Friends and Their Lovers

Poetry | Rachel Lingerfelt

I'm lying sideways on her couch when her mom asks The Question:

"I understand you all aren't dating,

But if you were,

She would

Never

Be able to spend the night.

You are not together, correct?"

A challenge from a woman who enjoys this kind of charade.

We laugh and shrug it off

Act like we never even had the "we're just friends" talk

Two months prior

Me, crying in the bathtub

Her, probably eating ice cream or flirting with some guy.

Later, when I put on my dress, she fixes the straps

And tweaks the elastic of my underwear

"Calvin Klein,"

She giggles, and I feel my heart pound

Like The Question was never asked

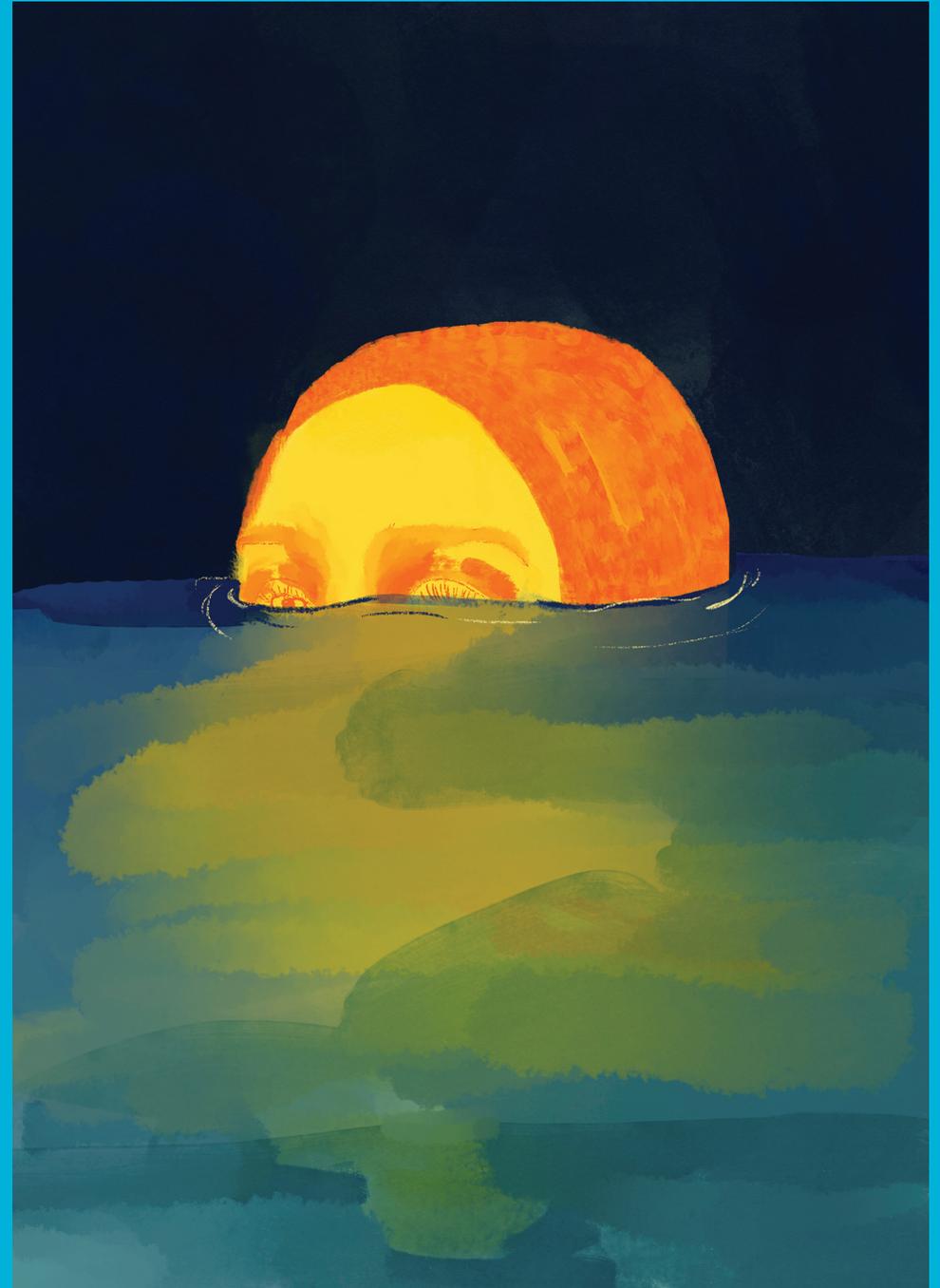
And we're back in the gray area again, inevitably.

I do not know how female friendships are supposed to work

When The Question

Is asked so many times that you don't even

Remember what the answer is supposed to be.



I'm Glad I'm Moving On

Digital Painting | Haley Lambing

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

A Story About How Stories Are Made | Feature by Hannah Berthelson

"To infinity . . . and beyond!" I hear the pitter-patter of tiny feet racing down the hallway, carrying my brother onward to save the universe. In a flash of white, purple, and green, Chase whizzes past me with such speed that I could visualize the imaginary spaceship he was manning. He turns and halts, gazing up at me with flushed cheeks. His hair is buzzed, clearing the way for his bright blue eyes to shine unobstructed as he speaks rapidly of aliens and laser guns and his mission to defeat Emperor Zurg. I smile, understanding exactly what he is saying. As he slows down, I declare in my best villainous voice, "Must destroy Buzz Lightyear!" and run after him as he sets off giggling down the hall.

"He was always speaking rapidly, as little boys do, but it was significantly harder for him to share his words with a communication disorder controlling their production."

He was always speaking rapidly, as little boys do, but it was significantly harder for him to share his words with a communication disorder controlling their production. For his first ten months, Chase was afflicted by severe ear infections that caused his speech to be unclear once it developed. At only three years old, he experienced fear, insecurity, and exclusion from peers and adults. His immediate family were the only people who understood him. Those who did not understand him, such as preschool teachers and strangers, ignored him or stopped trying because they found the difficult



Chase Berthelson, an inspiration for We can All Be Friends

interaction to be uncomfortable. He soon began speech therapy with Mrs. Carol, a speech-language pathologist who took care in mending not only Chase's broken speech but also his broken emotions.

Now, my mother remembers wishing there were resources to help him better understand what he was going through. She found limited access to TV shows, books, or movies that aided a child in understanding a communication disorder or speech therapy. When I began constructing my thesis, these words coalesced into a new meaning for me. There were insufficient resources educating families and children when Chase was young, but resources were still scarce in 2016.

The desire came to create a children's book that aids children with communication disorders and their families by depicting a day in speech therapy so that they know what to expect before their own first day. Roughly two years later, I held in my hands the resource my mother once so desperately wished for: my illustrated storybook entitled *We Can All Be Friends*.

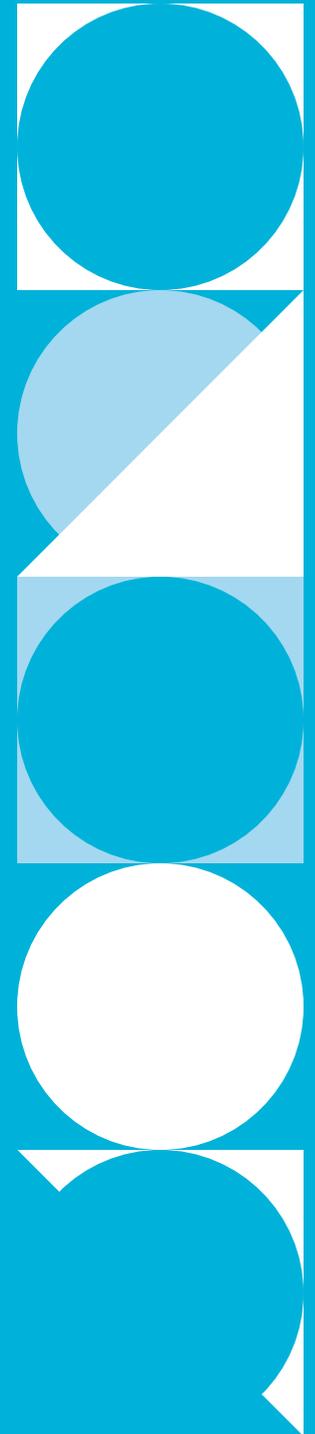
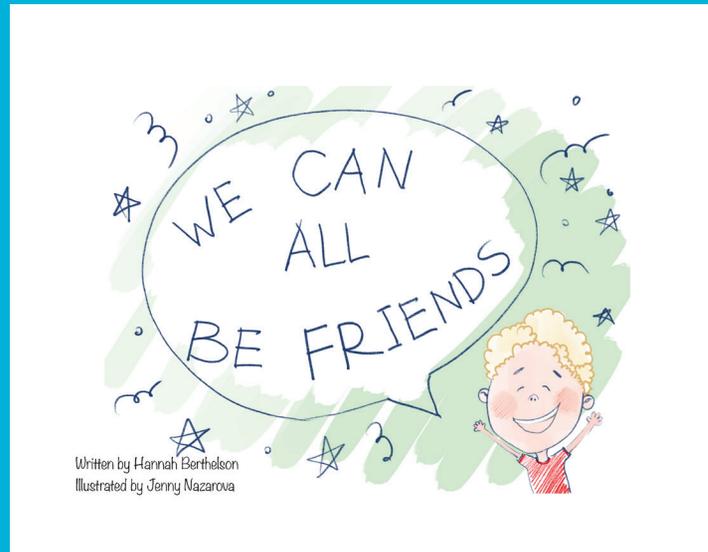
The heart of my project was structured to help children understand that everyone has differences, visible or invisible. Some visible differences may be more common, such as glasses, freckles, and birthmarks, while others may be more noticeable to young people, such as physical disability, cultural dress, and prosthetic limbs. On the other hand, there are invisible differences that may cause others to act, speak, hear, or think differently, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, hearing impairment, and communication disorders. I felt that this approach would allow all audiences to be able to see themselves and their peers in the pages of this book. I told the story from the perspective of Sam, a young boy with an articulation disorder, who tells of his first day going to speech therapy and meeting his speech therapist, Mrs. Carol. My favorite part of designing this story was depicting a communication disorder to child audiences in a way they would understand. When Sam introduces himself in the book, he brightly expresses, "My name is Sam, but when I say it, it sounds like Tham!" Not only does this convey that Sam cannot produce his "s" sound, but it also expresses that this is okay,

and Sam is just as okay with it as the reader should be. After interviewing multiple families going through similar situations, I concluded the story with a "Tips for Parents" page, based loosely on advice given by real parents.

"When Sam introduces himself in the book, he brightly expresses, 'My name is Sam, but when I say it, it sounds like Tham!'"

Writing *We Can All Be Friends* was an incredible process that would not have been possible without the endless support from my thesis advisor, Dr. Rebecca Fischer, and so many other loved ones who knew of my dream. In November of 2018, it was no longer a dream when I presented this project at the American Speech Language Hearing Association's national convention alongside Dr. Fischer. I remember the dizzying realization that speech-language pathology is synonymous with "purpose" in my life. "To infinity and beyond," I whispered to myself, eyes alight with gratitude, and I remembered the bright eyes of another, who taught me what it really means to say those words and go there.

The cover of Hannah Berthelson's book We Can All Be Friends



Eternity

Poetry | Jacob Rex

Off the mangled road runs
a casketed creek in the center of a vale,
cold, wind creeping down the sides
of the hills of leaves.

The whisper of invisible birds fills the air
blending with the background of groaning trunks.
The sun is beginning to sleep as
a gray glow falls to the floor from the ethereal sky.

I am alone
surrounded only by trees,
black towers standing over the woods
watching me walk.

The trees moan to one another
that all chapters of all men of all times
sleep in these hills of broken leaves and crumpled bones
where only worms visit.

It is here I decide eternity will exist:
where I wonder if heaven lets you bring your own baggage
where a nearby tombstone sits marred and shattered and unreadable
where a pile of scrap metal rusts and sinks farther into the soft dirt
where I engrave our names into a tired, old tree.

The Fall

Poetry | Holly Pearson

She makes friends with the devil on the left.
Tantalizing words dripping from their lips
Allow them to commit the act of theft.
Stealing innocence protected by scripts,

They gleefully watch the sweet surrender
Of those who can't resist the temptation.
However, looking to the right, splendor
Lights up her countenance. Accusation

Is not seen, but remorse resonates deep.
Seeking forgiveness, she drops to her knees.
Verses spun quickly fall on deaf ears, cheap.
She breaks apart, unable to appease.

A broken halo hanging on a horn;
The cast aside angel is now reborn.

Savannah Road
Digital Photography | Sammie Sanford



Birds
Digital Photography | Destiny Seaton



Skylines

Poetry | Hannah Newcomb

We build up dreams of people in our heads.
Without so much as a hint of reality,
assumptions, fantasies, and false hopes
erect skyscrapers in our imaginations of who people are.
With grand, sweeping works of construction, we draw blueprints
out of the simple phrases spoken tenderly,
out of the soft caresses passed slowly,
from the steady gazes and meaningful looks.
Without the proper skills or education,
we designate ourselves as architects.
The more time we spend with them,
the more detailed the skylines become.
Eventually, though, the cityscapes start to crumble.
The words spoken stop building, replacing cement with cracks.
The caresses no longer give the foundations support.
Steady gazes become broken glances.
The realities set in, and
the buildings
fall.

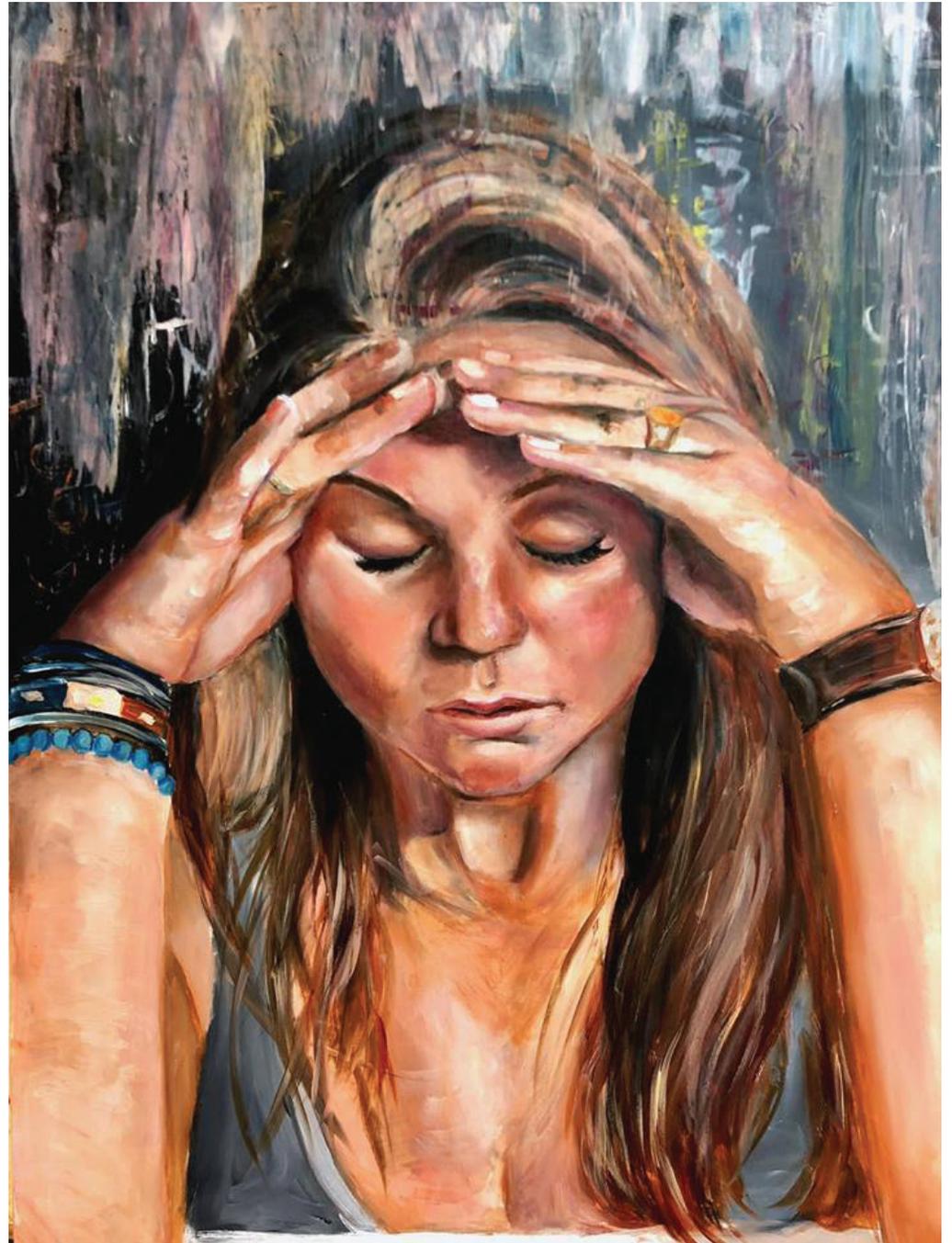
Earthquake

Poetry | Hannah Newcomb

I'm sure that the earth completely shook
the day you were born.
The grass quivered,
the sand swirled,
the oceans raged,
and the world quaked.
I am sure.
Like a great cataclysm,
the roads must have cracked.
The roots of trees sprang forth from their dirt.
The animals ran from their nests, burrows, and fields,
and the world quaked.
Your entrance to this world must have been monumental, ground-breaking,
for I know that the introduction of your life
into mine
was Earth-shattering.

Dislexa

Oil on Board | Lydia Sims



My Prismatic Revelation

Poetry | Valkyrie Rutledge

I once was a desolate woman
A violent, violet wilderness
Setting every tree aflame
With the whispering craze of an arsonist
Commanding troops with splattering scorn
A grotesque plea, a festering morn

Upon your arrival at the crashing shore
Hushed whispers resounded “more, more, more”
Indigo embers dance in your skull
That rioting, raging inferno
Your soul
Once cold, once coal, once idle—unwilling to flee my marrow
A breath of exhilarating life

Love is a dreadful, revolting curse
Sent to plague the sweating earth
And much to my lament, be swept away in a rushing hearse
To wallow in the hollows of your collar
To taste the sweet, no longer
Damn the sun and all his might
Damn the rainstorm and her fright
For blue is the bitter night we met

Ache
A frothing chasm
Stitched rows of rotted teeth
Petals wilt when greeted with a sentiment so sweet
Sickening
Diseased is this planet of atrophy
Burning, churning, tables turning green
Wrinkled skin-canyons of blood and gasoline
A humming light that swaddles me—lulling me to sleep

We met by the bank of a bubbling stream
’Neath a glowing grove of the tallest trees
Alive with glee, yellow beams of leaping light
Dancing across cheeks, lips, eyes wide
Tossed seed in fields asunder
Yielding life—yielding wonder
Swooping hills of daffodils
A blissful kiss goodnight

A Day After Tomorrow
Acrylic Painting | Katherine Raymond



A warm bath drawn in the cavity of winter
What hellish mold for a swollen splinter
A graveyard of Agent Orange
A boiling, feverish stew
Silk on the skin of my chest
The tomb of my hibernal heart
A quiet place to rest

Ghost-gardens in my periphery
Blade hunting, lunging, plunging
Red ribbons, flooding moats
Such gentleness enveloping my body as a cloak
At last, free of capture
I surrender

Unknown to Self

Oil On Board | Morgan Westerbeck



The Familiar Darkness ●

Prose | Bailey Hilliard

She could hear it approaching. It was not a symphonic collaboration of noises but rather harsh and erosive like the sound of a steel building being fissured like a pane of glass. It grated on her ears every morning, making her heart pound and her hands shake. It was a loud and unwelcomed, but necessary, aspect of her everyday life. Her mornings and evenings were enslaved to this chaotic amalgamation of steel screeching against fellow steel, the manmade wind rustling the trash around her, and the onslaught of strangers boarding and

disembarking. She could feel the oppressive weight of the civilization above her, looming with life while she stood in the underworld of its existence. She could hear it approaching, and every cell of skin and sinew of her being was screaming at her to run away.

Annie boarded the Manhattan-bound 2 Train at Barclays Center almost every morning. It felt like the boatman ferrying her across the River Styx, and yet she swiped her metro card each morning and stepped into that boat unforced. Even though she hated going into the city to work, it was a small way of taking ownership over her empty life. Living in Brooklyn provided her with a buffering membrane to the city. That distancing was necessary for Annie. She needed the separating space to breathe and exist in private without the all-seeing eyes of the city stalking her movements. Originally, when she had moved from Chicago to New York seven months ago, her intent was to live in the city and be like the carefree young women in movies and TV shows, conquering life in the sexy Big Apple with the help of martinis and an endless line of mysterious and beckoning suitors. But Annie was more like Beth March than Carrie Bradshaw. She preferred mint tea to gin and vermouth, and so far, the men she had met in the city made her want to run away from them rather than into their arms. Annie had cares that she could not let run free. She had memories she could not escape and fears that formed a labyrinthine cage around her life like a claw.

“Even though she hated going into the city to work, it was a small way of taking ownership over her empty life.”

When the 2 Train slowed to a halt before her, Annie merged into the crowd and slipped into a seat in the back corner of the train car. She mentally counted in her head the twelve stops until 72nd Street. She had twelve stops and about thirty minutes to ride the subway with these strangers, united for the span of a few minutes with the intent of traveling into the city. Alienated from one another by the silence engulfing the train but banded together on the same quest. This subway car was one of the older ones without the electronic screen displaying the various stations. Instead, the stations and stops were printed on a faded plaque about a foot wide on the spaces above the passengers' heads. The doors and windows were smudged by the thousands of hands that had touched the glass. The seats were worn with scratches and old gum that had been carelessly glued to their undersides. *This car could whisper some interesting histories*, Annie thought to herself.

She pulled her book, *Sofia Petrovna* by Lydia Chukovskaya, out of her bag, but observed the faces of her fellow passengers over the ridge of the pages. She loved examining the lines, contours, and emotions displayed on the strangers' faces. Annie always felt that if God pulled back the metal ceiling of the subway car, he would look in and see the passengers assembled like the columns of colors in a watercolor kit. A man sitting diagonally across from her was dressed smartly in a crisp black suit and smoothly shined leather shoes. He was reading *The New York Times* with intense concentration. Most likely the financial pages. *A Wall Street man*, Annie mentally commented. *I wonder where his wife thinks he disappears to on his lunch break*. To his left was a woman in brightly colored clothes that reminded Annie of

childhood sunsets on Lake Michigan. Spilling out of the thick wool pockets of her overcoat were bags of multicolored birdseed. Annie pictured her reaching into those pockets and spreading their contents onto the pavement of Central Park, the pigeons and finches flocking to her feet. In her hands, the woman was holding *The Nether* by Jennifer Haley. *Oh, that's a good one. I hope you don't have any grandkids, though. It might make you feel a bit queasy if you do.*

"She had memories she could not escape and fears that formed a labyrinthine cage around her life like a claw."

Annie loved literature and plays. That's why she worked at Lincoln Center. To clarify, she worked in the ticket booth of the Beaumont Theater in Lincoln Center, so it wasn't as glamorous as it initially sounded, she had told her parents. But she hated her job because it was a constant reminder that the lives of the characters in the plays produced there felt infinitely more full than her own. Annie was envious of the fictitious people given life on the stage because they seemed more real and lifelike than herself at times. The characters knew how to navigate and take control of their lives in a way Annie could not understand. She felt more like a toddler who had been given a Rubik's Cube and ordered to solve it than a twenty-four-year-old woman who lived independently in a strange city. Part of her hated riding the subway because it reminded her of that haunting feeling of not being in control. She and her fellow passengers swayed and shifted to the gravitational will of the subway car, controlled in its cavern. The overhead announcing



voice that called out the stations and stops was like a prison warden or some god-like figure, all-powerful and the keeper of the keys of freedom.

(Continued on page 32)

Digital Photography | Dylan Henry
Second Thoughts

(Continued from page 31)

Annie looked back down at *Sofia Petrovna* and began to read. Her mind wandered into the lives of the Russian people during the Stalinist Revolution and their utter lack of control and feelings of consuming terror. Stalin was the limitless driver, and the Russian people were the passengers on his train of revolutionary progress.

“Blood staining the concrete. Blood staining her hands. Blood staining his favorite Cubs t-shirt.”

Suddenly the subway car lurched to a stop, violently yanking Annie from the safety of her thoughts. She looked out the window and read “Chambers Street.” *Four more stops.*

In the shifting of people boarding and leaving the train car, a middle-aged woman carrying a vase of flowers stepped across its threshold and sat in the seat opposite Annie. The woman’s hands were clenched around the neck of the vase, and her fingernails were painted bright red. The kind of red that cosmetic companies label as “Hot Tamale Rouge” or “Carnal Red.” It quickly jarred Annie and resurfaced thoughts which were buried in a daily ritual of intentional evasion. Blood staining the concrete. Blood staining her hands. Blood staining his favorite Cubs t-shirt. She could hear the blade being pulled from his chest cavity and the quickly retreating footsteps of his murderer. Annie and her older brother had gone to The Lincoln Park Zoo for the day because he was on his Christmas break from Northwestern. But on



Digital Photography | Stephanie Van Horn
Give and Be Rich

their walk home, a homeless man had stopped them in the fading twilight and asked them for money. Annie’s brother kindly but clearly said that they did not have any cash and then took her small hand in his and tried to walk around the man. But the man had suddenly become violent and began shoving and yelling at Annie’s brother, accusing him of lying about his lack of money. Out of nowhere, the man had pulled out a switchblade and plunged it into Annie’s brother’s chest, ripping the blade violently upward before removing it. Annie watched as the man cut open her brother as if he was slicing open a bag of grain, spilling out

the contents. Her brother had never let go of her hand, and by the time the police had gotten there, his hand had become cold and stiff around her small, warm palm. The traumatic event had taken seconds to unfold, but it had been haunting her since she was seven years old.

The train suddenly lurched forward again, and Annie looked out the window with panicked eyes. She read 34th Street on the station’s sign and exhaled in relief. With tightly shut eyes, she thought to herself, *two more stops, two more stops.* She felt a hand on her knee and opened her eyes to see five red fingernails holding her book.

"Here, sweetheart. I think you dropped your book," the woman with the vase said in a concerned tone.

Annie thanked her curtly and tried to steady her breathing like she had been taught to. *It's just a memory, just a memory, just a memory.* Times Square. *One more stop.* But before she could completely calm herself, the doors on the opposite end of the car opened and a shabbily dressed man stepped across the threshold. He was holding a dirty baseball cap upside down and beseeching the passengers for their spare change. All across the subway car, as if a spell had been cast, the passengers shifted their eyes down, refusing to make eye contact with the man and acknowledge his existence. This was the moment Annie had been running away from since she was seven years old. Now she was being forced to confront her greatest terror. The train was speeding through the underground tunnel. There was no exit, no doorway to freedom. 72nd Street, her salvation, was seconds from arriving but seemed an eternity too late.

"This was the moment Annie had been running away from since she was seven years old."

The man made his way down the car, turning left and right to ask the passengers his rehearsed question like a marionette. As he approached her, Annie's grip on her seat intensified. She dug her nails into the ancient gum stuck there and felt each of his steps reverberate in her chest, and her blood pulsed in her ears. Finally, he was right in front of her, leaning in and fully focused. He was older

than she had expected, maybe sixty-four or sixty-five. He wore an old army jacket, and his beat-up hat had an American flag sewn to the side. His eyes were kind but pained by years of feeling like an exiled untouchable. They were not the crazed, clouded eyes of the man who had murdered her brother.

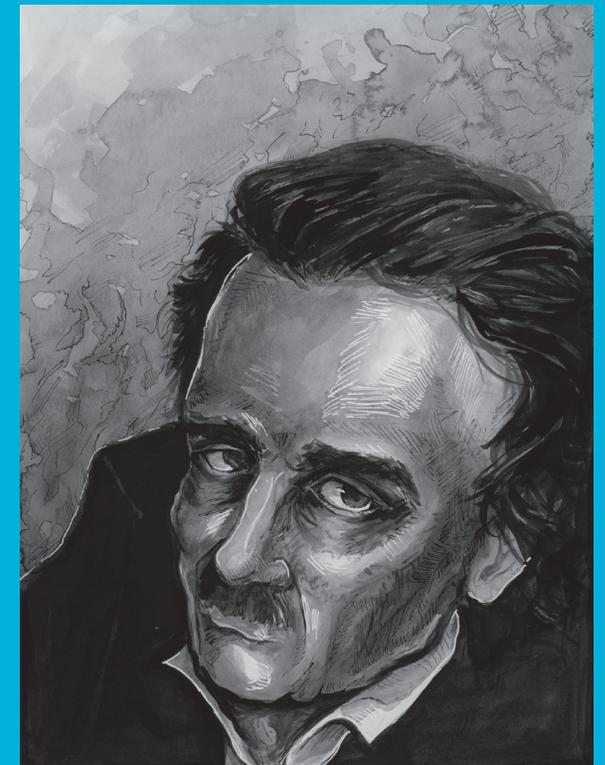
"Excuse me, do you have any spare change, please?"

There was a distinct note of mourning in his voice. Mourning for a life that had escaped him and mourning for the disaster it had left in its wake. Annie recognized this sadness because it was the same grief that consumed her life. It was the mourning of the coveted life that she had wanted for herself. A life that was clean and unmarred by trauma. A life where her brother still came home for Christmas, and she had never felt the cold claw of death. Annie recognized this man's mourning, and it made her fear him even more. She mouthed words but could not summon their statement. *This man is different. He is not the same man.* He is not the same man. This was her chance to take ownership of her life and finally move past the night that shadowed her existence. This was her time to make that fateful choice she had often dreamed about. This was the opportunity she had been waiting seventeen years for. But her mind was flooded with images of her brother's blood on her clothes and the feeling of his cold, dead hand inescapably clamped around hers. That cold hand that would not allow her her freedom. That cold hand that caged her life in fear.

She looked deeply into the man's eyes, their pale blue depths begging her for human kindness. "I—I—I CAN'T."

The train stopped abruptly, and Annie fled its confines, gulping in fresh oxygen like a strangled victim. She ran out of the station and into the clean, cold sunlight of the world above. But as she began to walk down 72nd, she could feel the familiar darkness lurking behind her back, stalking her steps. It was the shadow she could never escape. •

Poe
Ink, Ink Wash & Technical Pen | Ansley Pearson



The Untamed Woman

Poetry | Shannon Andrews

There was a Woman at the beach,
with hair tousled by the Waves
and by the Sun, bleached—
the Summer-soaked sand far too noisy to decipher Her speech
as She danced around the Sunny enclave.

I stopped to watch Her, a moment, with fascination
as She skirted around the Spume
and moved in my direction
until, close enough, I could decipher the freckles dotting Her
complexion
and how Her every gesture resembled a flower's bloom.

She smiled at me, noticing My gaze
and winked, and laughed, in Her playful fashion
a laugh that was fire to set Me ablaze
that tempted Me to, with my companions, part ways
and follow after Her liberated passion—

Then I heard a voice
Farther down the shore
And I turned to look by reflex, without choice
To that familiar sound I recognized deep in my core.

When I turned back the lady had gone,
The laughter hushed and the waves low
And I knew she had danced on, away like the dawn
Leaving my thoughts bathed in her afterglow.

Bathing Beauty
Oil Painting | Joyce Sloan



Unique in All the World
Digital Photography | Haydin Oechstle



About Collage

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Collage accepts submissions year-round. Submission forms and guidelines are available at mtsu.edu/collage. Creative work, such as art, photography, short stories, essays, short plays, song lyrics, poetry, audio, and video, may be submitted digitally to mtsu.edu/collage or may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Honors 224, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Submissions are accepted from MTSU students and recent graduates.

Creative Expression Awards

Each semester, four submissions receive Creative Expression Awards, one from each major category: art, photography, poetry and prose. Literature winners receive the Martha Hixon Creative Expression Award, and visual winners receive the Lon Nuell Creative Expression Award. Winners receive \$75 awards.

Winners

- **The Window Must Always Be Left Open**
Digital Photography | Haydin Oechsle
- **Doberman**
Digital Painting | Taylor D.
- **Hushed**
Poetry | Hannah Berthelson
- **The Familiar Darkness**
Prose | Bailey Hilliard

Columbia Scholastic Press Association Awards

Gold Medalist Certificates

2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

Silver Crown Awards

2019, 2011, 2008, 2007

Gold Crown Awards

2015, 2013, 2012

Production

Technology

Apple Macintosh Platform
Windows Platform
Adobe CC: InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop

Typography

Futura | Helvetica

Paper

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80 lb. Athens Silk Text

Binding

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