

Movement through a Lyrical Lens:

A Collection of Prose, Poems, and Photography

by

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A thesis presented to the Honors College of Middle Tennessee State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the University Honors College

Fall 2022

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Dedication

Dedicated to Coach Richardson—my first cross country coach, to my mom and dad—for showing up every cold and rainy Saturday morning to cheer me on, and to Eliza Fletcher—for running.

Epigraph

For a transitory enchanted moment, man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Dr. Marion Hollings for her guidance and crucial advice as I navigated the completion of this compilation.

I am grateful to my creative writing professors, notably Dr. Brewer and Dr. Arroyo, for their wonderful instructions in the creative writing classes which I have taken. Not only have they taught me how to be a better writer, but their belief in my potential has inspired me far beyond the walls of their classes.

A special thanks to my parents for supporting not only my love of writing, but my love of running—for 11 years and hopefully many, many more. It is not an easy job to be cross-country parents, but seeing you at each finish line is an image and feeling I will carry with me for *la reste de ma vie*.

Thank you to both my fellow staff at *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*, and Marsha Powers, a figurehead of the journal. *Collage* was the first community in which I truly found that elusive specter of belonging here at MTSU. You are doing wonderful, crucial, work, and I am so grateful to have contributed. In addition, I thank *Collage* for their permission to reprint two pieces, “A Run” and “Canopies,” which first appeared in the Fall 2021 edition and the Spring 2022 edition and have since been edited and adapted for my thesis.

An additional sincere thanks to the Homer Pittard Creative Writing Scholarship, the June Hall McCash Scholarship, and *Collage*'s Creative Expression Award.

Abstract

This creative project explores the connection between the body and the mind, as it reveals itself through movement in nature and the resulting mindfulness. The research component provides a historical background of athletics in Ancient Greece as they existed in relation to academic pursuits. The creative component then contemplates my personal interpretation of the subject through short prose pieces and poems. Photographs interspersed throughout portray various natural locations.

Preface

We are told conflicting theses about growing up: you will lose yourself; you will embark on an epic journey of finding yourself—no—you won't need to find yourself, but rather create yourself. I don't know which of these is true. Perhaps none. Perhaps all. I do know that there are days in which I wake up in a body I do not know and meet eyes with a stranger in a mirror. On these days, it feels impossible to know myself, find myself, or build myself. But I know I can go for a run. Whilst running, I reconcile with my stranger; I sort through my muted loss for the pieces of me I recognize. I feel so wonderfully whole and vital, that if just for an hour or two, I can escape the crushing weight of the self. I can run.

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List of Terms¹

Areté—the Ancient Greek term referring to an elevated virtue or excellence.

Gymnastiké—the ancient Greek art of exercise, as a disciplinary exercise for the intellect.

The *Gymnasticus*—treatise on Hellenic athletic training, written by the Greek Sophist Philostratus during the Roman Imperial period.

Pedia—suffix, relating to learning; from the Ancient Greek *paideia*, the early education system in Athens focused on imparting a rounded cultural background. Primarily through gymnastics, grammar, rhetoric, music, mathematics, geography, natural history, and philosophy.

Prose—a literary medium characterized by its irregularity and variation in rhythm; the lack of metrical structure differentiates it from speech or poetry.

Poetry—a composition through a patterned arrangement of language which expresses feelings and ideas with an intensity through distinctive rhythm and style. Elevated diction and figurative language characterize its departure from speech and prose.

Sophia—the Ancient Greek term for wisdom, or significant knowledge.

¹ All definitions are taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, sub verbo.

Introduction: Athleticism and Academia in Ancient Greece

Classical Greece is characterized by a cultural adoration of and reverence for athleticism and its accompanying physical aesthetics. Athleticism for classical Greece existed as part of a crucial moral education, with achievement denoting *areté*. Education, *paideia*, necessitated a well-rounded student, with idea that philosophy, mathematics, etc. were equally as crucial as athletic training to the development of a valuable Greek citizen. Athleticism equally existed within medicine as a central concept. Thus, athleticism is an inter-disciplinary art crucial to classical Greek culture.

Humans throughout history have discovered and re-discovered this secret. Notably, the Greeks and their cultivation of the well-rounded gymnast. Athleticism was found to foster educational and moral growth, leading to the inclusion of athletic training within educational curriculums. The term *paideia* refers to the traditional Greek system of education and reflects this principle of discipline. The system included a comprehensive curriculum built on the foundational belief that physical training is equally as crucial for the growth of a well-rounded student as education in mathematics, philosophy, and the arts. Lingered echoes of this philosophy exist in the education system today—with gym classes required in the high school curriculum, and the value and funding given to sports teams within schools.

Throughout history, the connection between mind and body has played a large part in many cultures' identity and values. For Ancient Greeks, the connection between athleticism and philosophical growth was fundamental. The philosopher, Philostratus, reflected on athletic training as a form of wisdom, equal to philosophy and poetry. Additionally, in *The Republic*, Plato's guardians' training not only included education in critical thinking and morality but also in

physical training, through gymnastics. In book two of *The Republic*, Socrates says to Glaucon on the development of the guardians as ideal figures that, “he who is to be a really good and noble guardian of the state will require to unite in himself philosophy and spirit and swiftness and strength,” to which he further develops, “ Can we find a better than the traditional sort?—and this has two divisions, gymnastic for the body, and music for the soul” (Plato 76). Plato goes on to clarify that literature is to be included in the musical education. This traditional education is that of the Greek system of Paideia, a comprehensive curriculum built on the belief that physical training is equally as crucial to a well-rounded student as education in mathematics, philosophy, and the arts. Similarly, poetry has often been considered akin to a medicinal art, for its therapeutic opportunities for the mind. This connection additionally has its roots in Ancient Greek tradition. Grube, in his article “Greek Medicine and the Greek Genius,” explores the idea of unity in Ancient Greek thought, especially as it connects medicinal and literary disciplines. For example, the Greek term for “cleansing [and] purification,” *catharsis*, “is both medical and moral from the very first” (Grube 4). Various forms of contemporary media continue to focus on these connections, such as the rising practice of guided yoga and meditation led in nature, which is aimed at joining the body in movement and the mind in reflection.

Athleticism arose as an equalizer for Greek society, and with it, spurring the move towards equality within poetry. The Olympics, first recorded in 776 BCE by the researcher Hippias, were groundbreaking in their premise of the “impartial contest,” where any non-noble athlete could be a victor, thus proving *areté* as a non-discriminant value able to be cultivated by anyone through training (Reid 80). Therefore, “as the individual fought his battle for political liberty in the city state, the lyric poets of the seventh and sixth centuries” seized the opportunity to prove that “the emotions of the individual . . . [were] as fit a subject for poetry” as the great

subjects of previous epic poems (Grube 124-125). Democratic ideals in Ancient Greece laid the groundwork for increasingly equalized opportunities for athletic victory within the Olympic games. This ability to prove the worth of the non-noble individual thus provided for individuality within poetry.

The unity of Greek thought in classical Greece additionally allowed for the intertwining of various disciplines, as arranged within the foundational system of *paideia*. Greek medicine progressed rapidly at the time, with one prominent theory arising involving the concept of “physical health as a balance of physical elements,” which was referred to through the musical metaphor of harmony, political metaphor for equality in laws, and a moral and judicial metaphor for justice (Grube 125). The Greek term for medicine referred to the practice of the doctor, of the poet, and of the craftsman equally, furthering the concept that medicine is not only a craft, but an art, requiring special knowledge just the same as other artistic endeavors (Grube 128).

Within the realm of medicine, there were three central types: temple-medicine, physical training, and medical schools. Gymnastic training was central to the physical training discipline of Greek medicine, a result of the Hellenic appreciation of fitness and the aesthetic beauty of athletics. Athletics of every kind were emphasized in the importance of the maintenance of individual wellness. Thus, with the crucial value of physical maintenance and wellbeing, physical trainers were highly respected as members and contributors to society (Grube 126). Sickness was widely believed to be the result of the environment, diet, individual predisposition, habits of the individual, and an unbalance (Grube 130-131). Hippocrates asserted that healing was contingent on the view of the body as a whole, rather than selective, meaning that the body must be holistically nourished in all facets in order to be maintain true health (Grube 132). Thus, athleticism was a central aspect of medicine and health.

As philosophy and medicinal thinking increasingly began to influence one another throughout the fifth century, the idea of the health of the soul became considered to be dependent on the health of the body (Grube 131). The discussion of moral values began to incorporate medical terms in its vernacular, expanding their meaning to reach between the two disciplines. For instance, *areté*, the philosophical ideal of virtue, was originally adapted from medical language. Socrates himself equated virtue, which was often able to be developed through athletic training, to knowledge in his attempt to apply the study of life to the study of principles and ethics. In Plato's Socratic dialogues on the soul, he advocates for attention to the maintenance of morals in medical terms, equating moral vice to a disease (Grube 132). Thus, the health of the soul and body are together the manifestations of morality. To achieve such health, as addressed by *paideia*, both intellectual knowledge and athletic training are crucial.

The Grecian ideal of athleticism and wisdom lingered after their fall. Following the Greeks, Roman philosopher Philostratus in his book, *Gymnasticus*, reflects on their athletic success and ideals. The text provides a historic point of view looking back on the Greeks, as Philostratus lauds the Greeks for their athletic glory, calling on Rome to follow suite and revive the artistic and aesthetic athletic ideals codified by the Greeks. The Severan period, C.E. 193-235, brought a period of revival of Grecian festivals, art, and architecture to the Roman Empire. (Redid 78). Along with Greek athletic festivals came the revival of *paideia*, the Hellenic education system. Thus, Philostratus is heavily influenced by Grecian culture and practice within the text, revering them as the height of society. He tells a story of the Greek as embodiment of the athletic ideal in order to "convince his audience of the worth of athletics, both in a practical sense and as part and parcel of the elite Hellenic identity that they covet" (Reid 86). While Philostratus focuses largely on the aesthetic function of *gymnastiké*, he reminds his audience of

the virtue, or *areté*, associated with athleticism, with sport's greatest reward not being money or notoriety, but "the kind of virtue (*areté*) that is a perfection of their natures" (Reid 77).

Philostratus further aligns athleticism with knowledge, "gymnastics (the the art of athletic training) is a form of wisdom (*sophia*), comparable to philosophy, poetry, music, geometry, and astronomy (Reid 77). Athleticism functioned as a vessel for the education of virtue, *areté*, and morality. Thus, when considering the aesthetic beauty of an athlete, Philostratus calls for a reminder of the *areté* which is embodied within this beauty. Throughout the text, the philosopher asserts that when accompanied by *sophia*, wisdom, athletic practice is inherently valuable and virtuous.

Athleticism for the Greeks existed as both a bridge between disciplines and a discipline in and of itself. The educational system relied on it to strengthen both the minds and bodies of students and citizens. Through this strength, the idea of the mind-body connection grew, and when united, became a vessel for enlightenment and *sophia*, or deep thought. This connection lingers in culture, in obvious ways within the Olympics, to more subtle mindfulness practice. In all of its degrees, it is a display of human potential, and that quality of thoughtfulness which distinguishes our species.

The Poems, Prose, and Photos

A Run

Rubber against dirt. The knee-shocking thump of my sneakers hitting the twig laden path—over and over again. I wonder briefly why they call them sneakers. I could hardly sneak anywhere in these, with their fluorescent pink and blue Nike swooshes and the loud crunch that ricochets against the surrounding trees each time they hit a fallen leaf. The thought dissipates and I leave it in my wake, my focus turning to the leaves. Leaves of vermillion and canary. Rust and gold. Leaves of countless colors that shift with the seasons, inevitably falling to their fate atop the forest floor where they await my obnoxious soles. I pass more trees. Another fork in the path. A red bird hurries from its perch.

Now, in the distance, a golden sun begins to rise—big and little bursts of it spilling through webs of branches and onto my path. I imagine that I am Apollo, pulling that golden sun up and across the sky as I run. This feels like heaven, and for a moment, I wonder if it is. I wonder if the cool air entering my lungs could really be the same air I breathe as I drive through noisy traffic, as I sit in two hour-long history lectures. I wonder if the way my legs propel me off the ground, leaving me for a moment suspended in the air—flying—could truly be the work of my body, not some sort of divine intervention. For each of those few seconds in the air, gravity disappears. This act, I decide, is the nearest we as humans will ever get to true flight. Airplanes, hot air balloons and helicopters—all desperate inventions created out of metal and sweat—are poor imitations of the gift we have always had. Only this, out here alone with the sun and the trees, is the real thing, unable to be fabricated.

I want to stay here forever, October's laureate lover, wreathed by the glow of dawn like the olive leaf-crowned runners before me.

Canopies

To exist quietly,
a moment in motion.

To inhale breaths of pine and sunlight,
exhaling breaths of body and soul
under a canopy of sage, olive, vermillion.

To be 19 and to not know the now comfortably
because millions of them stretch behind and before.

To strike the earth over and over,
pounding down and kicking up
chocolate, sienna, coffee.

Golden definitions to the edge of each branch,
each dip of muscle meeting bone.

It is everything and more,
to be content.



der Läufer

Passing others just the same as me,
a smile, a wave.

One brief moment

to acknowledge we are sharing something far bigger than ourselves.

And just another to forget,

to return to our solitary path.



Lonely Coming Down

Air rips the breath from his lungs and Paul lets it, hoping it will take some of the tired with it. House after house rushes by, phantoms of each other—white, two story, forest green shutters—washed in the pale pink glow of dawn. Pedaling as fast as he can, he races against the pinprick of gold emerging behind him, sneakers still wet with dew, slipping every so often as they spin. Faster and faster.

Straight down the middle of the road, white puzzle pieces sliding together. Movements quick, graceful. Only Paul and his bicycle—an urgent pas de deux.

Just as Paul begins to crest the hill, legs catching aflame, he stops. Off the shoulder there is a break in the trees, imperceptible to the cars that will fill the road in an hour or so, full of drivers yawning over the crackly voices of early morning FM, blinking bleary eyes on their drives to work. He drops the handlebars of the bike just inside the tree line and begins his pilgrimage the rest of the way up the hill.

Paul inhales, at once smitten with the heady scents, earthy and wet and full of sweet pine. As he walks, he runs fingers across scratchy bark—one of these trees has a dark stain just at eye level that smells so strongly of sweet sap. So sweet that he pressed his lips to it one morning expecting maple or blueberry fruit to meet his mouth, only to be disappointed when it tasted of dirt, leaving sharp granules for him to wipe away.

Wet leaves fall and cling to Paul's hair, grabbing at his sneakers as strewn pine needles weave themselves through his laces. It's not so cold yet, not as cold as it will be in a month, when

the yellow light of the sun will find herself trapped amidst the cool grey clouds bearing snow. For now, a sweater is enough to keep the chill from inside Paul's chest, inside his very bones.

The foliage becomes less dense as he reaches the peak, and with it the lone pine standing guard over the sleeping town. To Paul, this is the grandest tree in the forest, because you can see its pointed top, standing big and tall above the others, all the way from the road below. Perhaps its only because it's planted above all the others that it stands out as it does.

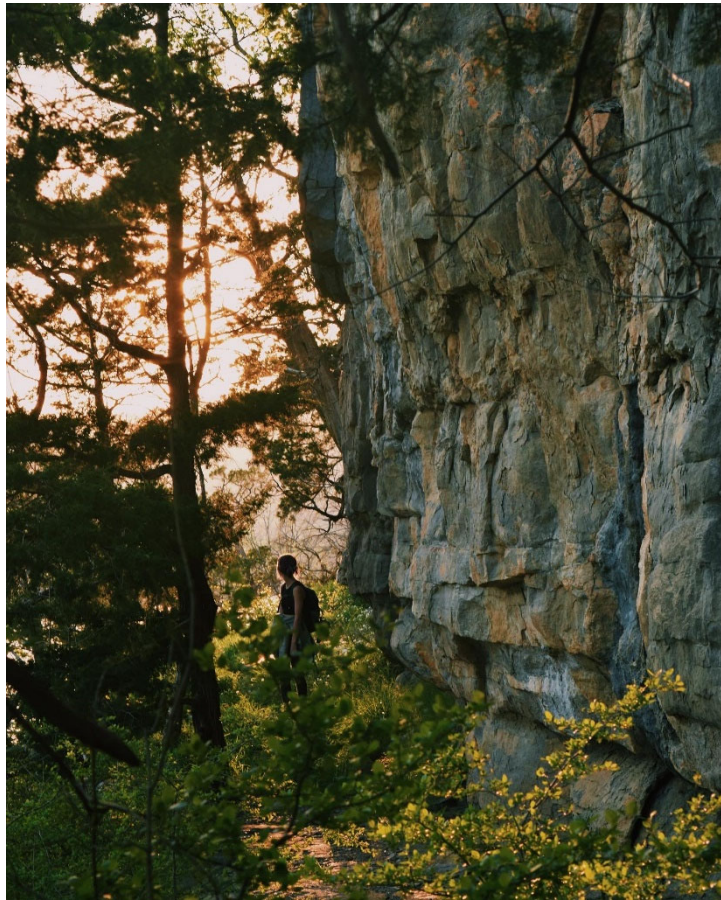
Another inhale—so clean and crisp up here. Still, not a noise to be heard except the rustle of a red bird or a grey squirrel. Once Paul saw a white squirrel, maybe more blonde-tan than white, but for a moment he was so stricken that he thought it must be an albino.

It darted out from behind a trunk, short pale legs dancing quickly over the dying leaves. Paul had watched it for a moment before it disappeared back into the brush.

The slumbering town is a doll's town from here—delicate pastel houses and smooth winding streets. Main street is a collection of crowded red brick rectangles, the library unidentifiable from the bakery. Only the chapel stands out, a square of white amongst a small sea of scarlet.

With his entire life laid out bare before him, Paul wraps his arms around himself, feeling wonderfully small and insignificant.

The pin prick becomes a splotch, melting, hanging at the edge of the horizon. Sinking to the earth, spine against his toy-soldier pine, Paul watches as daylight rears her bittersweet head.



November 1st

On a welcome day off from school, we decide to kayak on the creek behind her house. We drag the heavy vessel through her backyard, down the sloped grass and past the now dead dogwood trees. My arms begin to burn with the strain and I worry I won't be able to carry it all the way. When we reach the dock, I point out how the edges of the creek, where water meets bank, are hard with ice. Her eyes shine at the surprise, a reminder of the fast-approaching winter.

"I don't think it's too cold though," she decides, and we push off anyways, cutting a shaky path through the deep water. Eventually we let the kayak drift with the current, tilting our heads back to look up at the crisp sky, watching as it is broken up into millions of shards by scattered branches. November's cold burns my chest, and my denim jacket does a poor job insulating me.

But still, we paddle on, and it begins to feel like our lungs were made for this air.

Fuel

It burns

quick, fast, bright, dirty.

I am winning the race,

muscles stretching, pushing, pulling.

Pearls of salty sweat rolling, dripping,

casting rainbows in the sun.

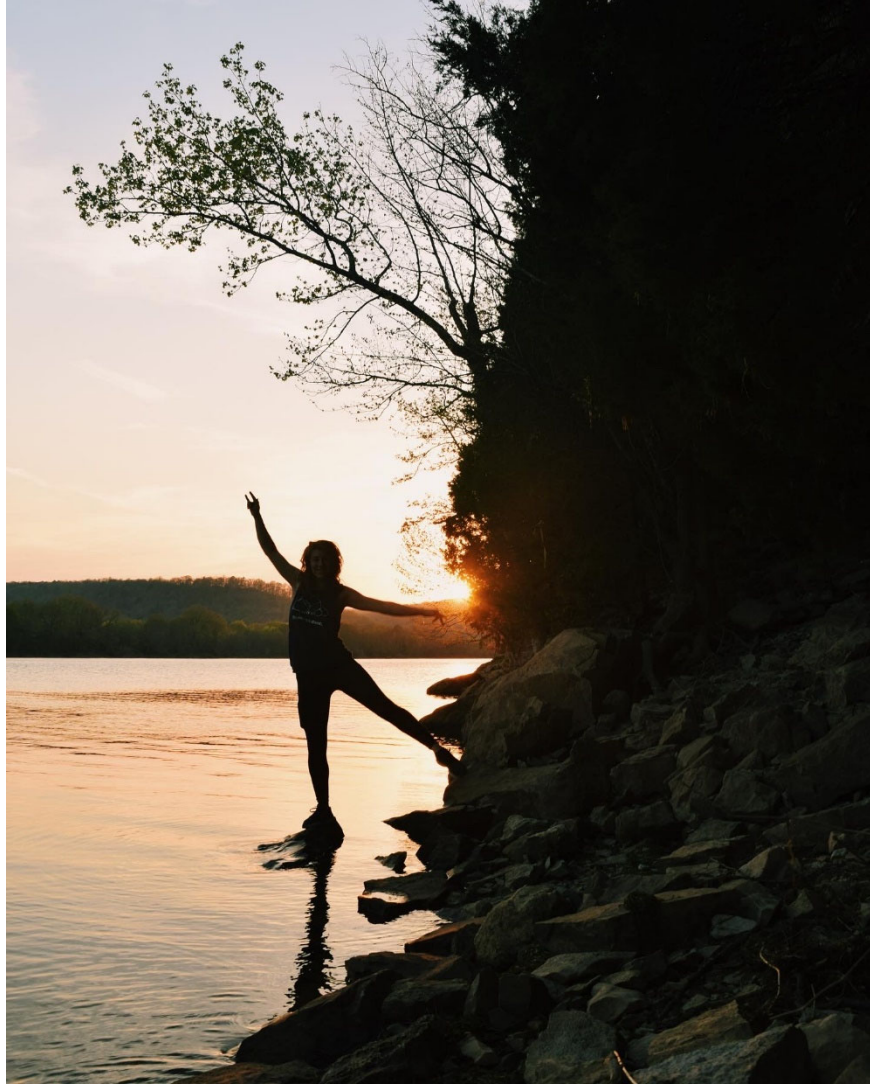
L'Oiseau de Feu

A bell tolls above a slumbering town,
over the peaks of roofs,
 sliding down between valleys.

Hundreds of birds sing along,
voracious and tender,
 clamoring to match pitch.

The bell stills.

The birds do not,
 forgetting the mimicry.



Goose Creek

I have an insatiable craving to be small and warm,
to feel the sun's rays hot on my cheek, head inclined out the window
fingers burning away from a hot metal buckle,
long lying in the still heat.
thighs sticky against leather
slick with sweat.
Coconut and salt rushing in, out.
as we approach
the still place,
 hanging suspended,
frozen in time until we arrive
when the sweet breeze will rustle back to life,
and birds of cherry and lemon will resume their tender songs.

Pamlico River

I grew up under the watchful eyes of the Pamlico River.

Home nestled deep amongst trees of Cyprus, their trunks submerged under murky water, lapping at the bark, rubbing it from scratchy to smooth. Wide windows open onto a landscape of vermillion, green. Red cardinals stop their work to peer in on my mother, sitting on her yellow linen chair.

I go, letting the screen door slam behind me, shoes forgotten, overturned at the threshold. In a quick step I am tearing through the soft grass, wet with rain between my naked toes.



Meeker Morns

The cure for tired eyes is droplets of sunshine against your back,
wildflowers of technicolor,
a warm shot of espresso left long sitting in the sun
maybe the shade of a willow tree,
if the drops become a pour.
And to fall into the air as if falling into the pages of a novel,
quietly, openly.



Simple Pleasure

Dandelions bleed yellow on her skin as the sun carves her face into the girl's tan-lines.
Weeds tug at her ankles, she dashes through their knotted grips.

A visceral exhibition of her own vitality, a young girl taking flight, blooming in motion.

Yet as she careens through the summer day, heavy with heat, battalions of gnats rise to meet their grim fate, morbidity made sudden from the impact against her shining skin. How many there are, she fails to count. Delicate black dots she will wipe from her neck, with a guilty conscious and shaky hand.

She hates the sacrifice her body demands in return for its simple pleasure.



Alive and Vital

Running is a constant reminder

that I am alive and vital,

as it sets my lungs aflame,

and fire licks at my limbs.

The skin of my nose, cheeks burns

scarlet against November's chill.

Trees, leaves—the infinite and finite.

All belonging to no one,

owing nothing to me nor I to it.

I know the only thing truly mine is this run.

Stuttgart's Hills

Green hills beneath my feet,

the road stretches for miles.

Tectonic plates tussle with one another far below,
ridging and dipping,

so it is not so easy to reach my end.

Instead I am left to fight mind and body as I climb
and relish a reprieve as I fall.



Drinking Dew

Amidst the lush verdant green,
you bring your lips to the tears of weeping blades.

The cicadas and crows will scream without you,
the sea will crash
in, out.

You are no Apollo on his golden chariot,
the sun will continue to make her great celestial pilgrimage across the sky
long past the day you return to the cool embrace of Matron Clay,
and the corpse of young Adonis has been kissed by Death's barbed tongue.

Yet this run
this moment,
exists dependent on you,
fleeting but real.



Freshly Mown Grass

Emerging above the distant horizon,
pricks of golden sun,
dipping and spilling
onto the dew-drenched grass below.

Fresh, unmarked,
until the runner enters the scene.

Fluorescent shoes cutting dashes and dots through the still blades,
racing the sun against an internal clock.

Dashing and dotting through the field and onto the path,
winding through pines, oaks.

Air stings the nose as it rushes past,
Breathes of wildflower and soil.

The runner goes
as far as the earth will permit,
as far as there exists pine needles to crush underfoot,
and beetles to scurry away.



As I love to run

Do we all worry we will never have the capacity for love, I wonder often.

I am so frightened by intimacy—I cross the street at night, glancing over my shoulder once, twice. In the grocery store I wait half an aisle over, pretending to look at the farfalle pasta until you are finished with the cans of great northern beans.

I hold my breath indoors, passing through halls.

Not until I am amongst the trees, deep beneath the fanning foliage, do I inhale, exhale. I close my eyes and do not count the seconds. I trust my legs and the blue, blue sky to carry me safely over the pools of emerald.

I want so deeply to rest here forever.

The Stallion

I have run so many trails
and grown too afraid to stop
I linger in movement, in racing,
my toes grow numb, my body weeps.

At night my heart is unaware I have stopped.

She beats like a stallion,

I taste her in my throat,
a second heartbeat grown envious and cruel.

So many trails must I run through,

stumbling on roots as I search for you in the faces that pass.



Shoe Dog

She is scared of her closet, of the shoes that threaten and strain and bulge from behind white doors. Wooden white knights, a last bastion against the enemy army rallying just out of reach. Inside, Emmeline keeps every pair of running shoes that has ever been so kind as to house her feet, stacked with haphazard care. Some in boxes, some not. A mess of startlingly bright colors: pink and blue and green and crimson red.

She opens the door wide, removes her glasses, and presses her back to wall until naked vertebrae crunch against plaster. A sharp, minute pain. From here, the shoes blur into one big puddle of rubber and netting. Once a vital reminder of the autonomy and power of her body, today a menacing reminder of the ever-lingering oblivion she cannot wash the taste of from her mouth.

Fear that they will come alive and run themselves out of the small white closet slithers into her brain, slimy and slippery and parasitical amongst pretty pink tissue. Will they trample her as she has trampled each of them? She hears their kinetic energy buzzing, swarming inside her ears. The buzzing of the bees and wasps and men that haunt the periphery. The shadows in the tree line on a dark night on a rugged trail. Always coming. Eyes on her legs until her legs are no longer her own. Emmeline clamps her hands tight to her ears. She does not want to hear them. Glasses are put hastily back on, and the shoes are innocent, stagnant, useless. Heavy breaths of relief, release.

Dropping to her knees, crawling to the threshold, she picks up an electric blue shoe and holds it to her left ear, a seashell, rushing with all of the bittersweet harmonies of exertion. Turning it over reveals the underbelly, scrubbed smooth and soft. So much erosive dirt and

asphalt have pushed the tread far past its factory's intent. Emmeline knows it is dangerous to run on shoes with this little tread, but she refuses to not drive each pair to its very last stride. There is an urgency in this task because she is aware of what a cruel fate it is to be used for a few hundred miles and discarded permanently, stripped of purpose and importance and potential, doomed to eternity in a purgatory opposite of their creation.

Emmeline knows a running shoe is designed to move, to carry her, so who is she to decide they no longer have the opportunity to perform? She is not their God. She is hardly her own.

The Bluffs of Wolf River

Chasing a red bird as she flits from branch to branch
she moves faster than my limbs can propel me from the ground,
 leaden.

With each stride, I am above the dirt for one moment,
before gravity snatches my soles.

I can only repeat

Until she disappears into the leaves, and I pause,
chin out over the bluffs, to the river below.

The current is quick and strong,
squiggly patches of sunlight,
 flashing and disappearing.

A branch fights against the tide, bobbing, and losing.

I am thirsty and it looks so cold,
 taunting.

Pearls of sweat roll cool against my cheek.

The sun is hot on my back, reddening my skin under its incessant kisses.

I cannot push her mouth from mine.

Refreshing, although a murky umber

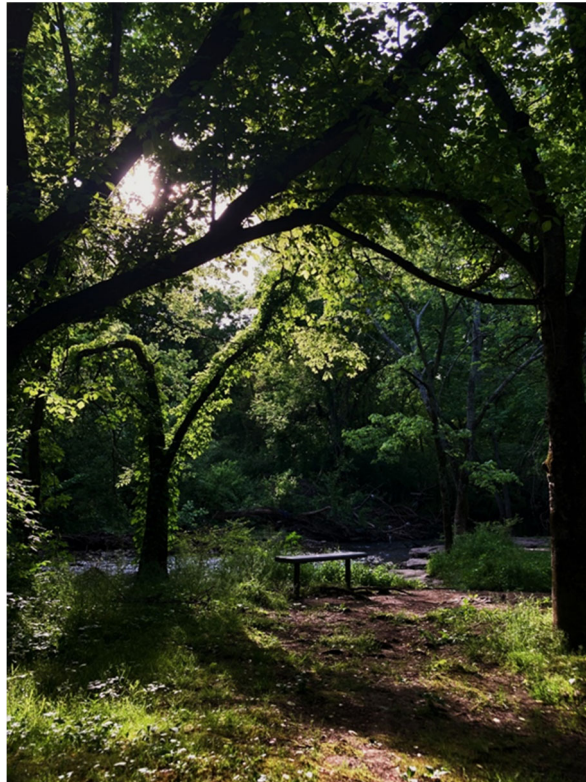
I trust the earth and dirt and fish will not hurt me,
we are made of all the same matter.

So I am jumping, finally flying,
tumbling through the sloping underbrush, crashing,
coming undone by the fistful of briars I press into my eyes.

I am in pain, I long for the water to cool, to soothe,
to envelop me and swallow me and drag me under her weight,
for her fingers to push away the sweaty hair stuck to my feverish brow.

Why have I not yet reached the water?

A crunch behind me,
a father pushing a stroller across the lush carpet of rusted leaves.
And I am standing on the bluffs,
while the water waits below.



Reflection

This creative project has given me the chance to truly dig into what my own movement, running, really means to me, where it fits into my life and my sense of self. I've always been a runner; I joined the cross-country team in the 5th grade, and never looked back. College was the first time since then that I hadn't been a part of an official team, and I felt lost without that aspect of my identity to hold on to amidst the changes. But I found I could still run on my own, and for a long time I viewed it as just that—a solitary endeavor. But as I wrote and ran for this creative project, I began to feel that I was trying to capture something that was much bigger than myself. I needed to step back. Travelling across Europe, I noticed just how big the running community is. Runners were everywhere—Germany, France, Ireland, England, Scotland. Through every city and countryside, no matter the time of day, there were runners. I began to seek out local running clubs in various cities and join them for group runs. Although we had practically nothing in common—different cultures, different ages, in some cases different languages—our shared activity bridged that gap. It gave me a team, and I saw that this team did not go away, even after I left them to run alone in a new city. Rather, I was carrying my fellow runners inside me, carrying their effort, their inspiration. As a writer, sometimes it's easier to think in metaphors—perhaps an individual runner is a Russian nesting doll, or perhaps they are the giant waves made from the ripples of a pebble cast into the sea. What I mean by these images is that when we run, we have the chance to inspire so many others. We make ripples of inspiration, and one day when we have run ourselves empty, one of those ripples may come back to us when we see another runner. We gain inspiration from them, and the cycle starts anew. This mindset gave me a new light by which to see this project, a fresh perspective. Learning about the traditions of Ancient Grecian runners thousands of years before myself only strengthened this feeling of movement as

something that lives far beyond an individual. This project, and my writing, began to feel much less selfish, and much more important.

My thesis has given me the chance to grow as both a writer, and a runner. I believe I have achieved what I intended with the content of this project, a meditation on the power of movement through my own experiences. Now, I only hope that when others read this, they too feel called to move, to stand up and step out of the thinking mind, to fly.

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