

PRISM

VOL. 143



LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity this past year to work on Prism, an organization that strives to provide a space for students to share their passions and art. I've had the privilege of working alongside Assistant Editor Christine Castles, as we've worked to build an inspiring and unique publication for OSU. My personal goal has always been to be part of this kind of organization.

While working on this year's publication, Christine and I noticed many examples of self-expression in work that was turned in. There also seemed to be a release from some of society's pressures, as well as a greater sense of self-acceptance. This led us to title the issue "Bodies." This was one way to represent the ever changing differences that make individuals unique. We live in a dark and gray world, but our differences bring brightness to the world. "Bodies" not only represents our anatomy but serves as an outline for everything we go through. We aimed to point out that there's no shame in expressing who we are and sharing positive and negative experiences that make us who we are. This issue of Prism can remind us that we're all made up of the same, basic components and that we're in charge of who we want to be and how we want to be seen.

I want to thank everyone who believed in me and never stopped showing support, when I took the step forward as editor of Prism. A special thanks to my advisor, Steven Sandberg, for his amazing advice all year long. Thanks to the volunteers—their hard work will be forever appreciated. More thanks—huge thanks—to the creative team. Our vision would not have come to fruition without them. Lastly, thanks to the former editor, Natalie Harris, for believing in me and pushing me to be my best self. It has been an honor, to say the least, taking this year's journey. I can't wait to see what the future holds for Prism. I'm sure the next editor will nurture and create something beautiful—something that will change someone's outlook on life and help them get closer to achieving their dreams, closer to following their passions.

When it comes to picking what goes in a magazine, I like to be rather critical about why choices are made, or what the culmination of those choices says and means. Of course we would want "good art" in our journal but "good," if we are to deconstruct, boils down to a personal preference. One more question to add here is what is the purpose of Prism, or rather, what do we want to be the purpose of Prism? It's another query of personal preference. Ultimately, I view the process of creating a journal to be a similar catharsis as is creating the art that goes in the journal. Something that's just as expressive and a product that I hope others will consume and enjoy.

That all being said, I am infinitely impressed by the skill and vulnerability that artists show, both through their work I've had the privilege to encounter through my time at Prism, and everywhere else. Unbeknownst to them, they inspire me.

Additionally, I am so thankful for all our volunteers and review committee members, they're extremely valuable to us and we appreciate all the time they give. I'm wonderfully glad that Maricruz and Alan were the people I worked alongside in creating this journal. So thank you to all of them, to our artists, and to our readers for their part in this community.



CHRISTINE CASTLES

Assistant Editor



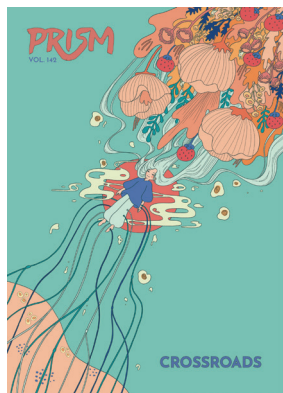
MARICRUZ TRENADO

Editor-in-Chief



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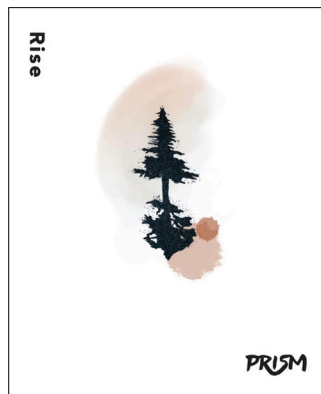
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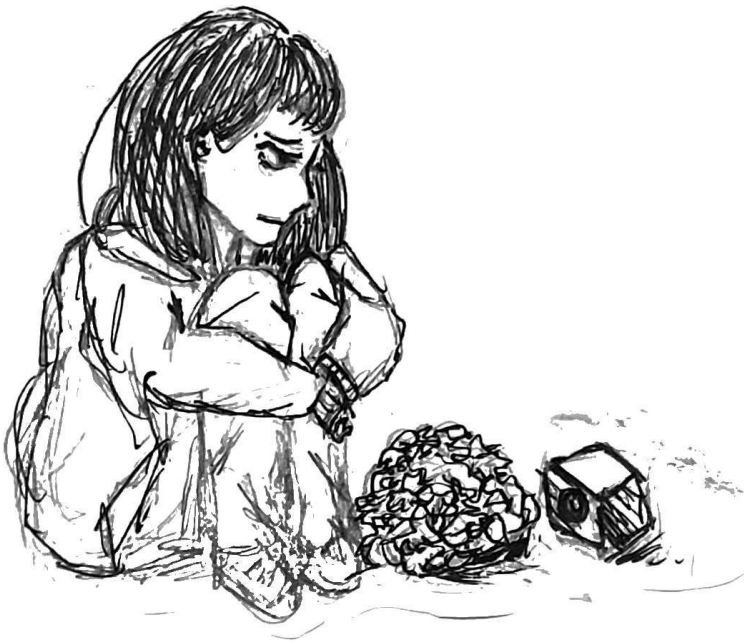
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EGG

Poem by Kasaundra Bonanno

I don't want to be bad anymore
in the streets I run away from myself, not toward anything because
what is to come is still undefined
in my spoon is an egg
walking carefully across the pavement I practice not dropping it
Sometimes I take it from the spoon and cradle it in my palms
I pretend it is a heart.
One day it will beat and I will not crush it



LONERS SADNESS

Black ink, pen & alcohol marker by Celine Loch

MEET THE STAFF



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Assistant Editor



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Gabiella Grinbergs
Charlotte Handick
Gala Smith
Stephanie Plata
Katie Livermore
Chloe Lee*

OUR MISSION

Prism is dedicated to the self-expression and creativity of Oregon State University students. Any student, regardless of major, may submit visual, literary, and multimedia art pieces to the journal via our website. Submissions are always evaluated by a review committee comprised of student volunteers and the Prism editorial team. One print edition is released each academic year with the intent of sharing the creativity and values of OSU students.

In addition, Prism runs a blog and the “Beyond the Page” podcast. Both feature more student work, as well as explorations into the artistic climate of our community and world. Visit our website for more!

prism.orangemedianetwork.com

FONTS USED

JOSEFIN SANS SEMIBOLD
Baskerville Regular
Baskerville Italic

COVER ARTWORK BY
Teresa Aguilera

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ON YOUR SUCCESSFUL
ONBOARDING!**
Brynne Boehlecke

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

Pen, collage and food dye by Rose Dixon



Ring the bell to warn those who stitch your organs together
Breath is packed.
Be ready

to disappear or be eaten time ceases when your options
culminate in existential expiration.
Listen to the heat or chill as you travel

cyclically
down a wire or hanging tightly to a river.
To indulge or starve,

be weary of your corpse
the warnings of blood
catching and returning to stay together in untimely harmony.

Your breath echoes
listen
to the dead or broken cycle which tethers you.

Fly over the Valley of Death
lay foundations of graves only to
pack it up and wash it off.

Life is better at home
where sight and breath are truncated,
root bound with broken wings.

Ring out your warning,
Unendurable and infinite time
comes closer and closer still.

CAST OUT YOUR CORPSES

Poem by Miranda Lenore



FAGRADALSFJALL

Photographs by Will Hawkinson

MOUNTAIN

Poem by Hadiya Riechers

Created in fire or carved by ice,
an explosion or ash, hot boiling blood, running slow or fast.
They say birth is the most traumatic thing to happen to us.
Soaring towards the sky on wide stone wings,
trying to touch a heaven it can never hope to reach.
Ground down by glaciers, by snow, by pain
there is no growing, just gentling by rain.
From soft round tops, to life-claiming ridges,
we call them spines, dividers, and praise their spires.
Dark green blankets over old, cracked shoulders,
we trace their lines on maps, and climb their shoulders.
Across the world they reach, our weather they dictate,
from rain shadows to jet streams,
they bring awe and cause us to speculate.
Graveyard and victory lap, they are all of each,
with the coldest arms you will always long to reach.
They have been around, long before you and I,
and long after they'll stay,
still reaching for the sky

THE BONE FAIRY

Prose by Sydney Marker

Children always await the arrival of the tooth fairy, impatient for the gifts left behind when their tooth is taken. They never care where the tooth goes or why the fairy bothers collecting teeth that will become rotten and brittle outside of their natural environment, cutoff from nutrients, no longer a piece of a living system. After all, it is the natural order of the world, the useless and worn out are discarded before they can cause problems. But what people never seem to wonder is what happens when the body is no longer in need of its bones?

That is where the older, wiser, and much more terrifying relative of the tooth fairy comes in: the bone fairy. Clad in armor made of bones they arrive soon after the reaper has stolen the soul and mother earth has reclaimed the flesh. It is rumored that a castle, adorned with bones throughout every hall, delicate engravings carved into a sinister medium that stare down at anyone who dares visit, is the home of this foul creature. The bone fairy never leaves their abode unless they are in search of new material to adorn the cold halls; collecting the remnants of living people reduced to inanimate objects void of any spirit by the ravages of time.

Although, some say that, when the reaper comes to take a life, a person can fight so hard that, though they are bound to lose, a little piece of them can seep into their bones, left without enough to live but enough to entertain a ghostly presence should their bones ever be disturbed. Even by the bone fairy. Especially by the bone fairy. Still, the electric buzz of fury alighting on the cold drafts blowing through the cavernous rooms can't give life to anything built on death. A grim reminder of the inevitable end hung on every wall, banishing thoughts of life and crushing mortals with their own mortality.

I would be lying if I told you that I thought the place was a thing of beauty the first time I walked through those cold halls. Humans are not meant to live with such a constant reminder of the end we fear so much; the hollow eyes of skulls staring after you, following every step you take as you venture further and further away from the reminders of life, of living and breathing and feeling the wind on your face. Upon my first visit, soaked to the skin by the driving rain and chilled to the bone by the frigid winter air, the ornately hung femurs and delicately carved skulls unnerved me, laughing at my fear as I ran blindly through the castle, abandoning the hunt for my quarry and settling for finding a way out once the shadows fell over the grinning faces.

They had found me, shivering in the corner, eyes wild with fear as I looked upon their twisted countenance. I was sure that would be the end. My cliched end. Another detective ended by their obsession. But that wasn't how my story ended. A story

indistinguishable from so many others at the beginning unveiling its unforeseen ending with a flourish of sparks and the screech of steel. Myself tasked with solving the murders that frightened the town to the brink of madness, then finding myself in the presence of the mysterious legend blamed for the carnage. A supposed monster who seemed content to rid themselves of my presence with a sharp gesture of their gnarled hand. I remember sitting in confusion for a long while as I watched them disappear into the darkness, no doubt assuming I would need no more encouragement to leave. And, if the story had played out like any other, I would have left. Instead, a twist of fate later, I ventured into the darkness and saved the bone fairy.



TREADING WATERS

Digital by Lian Moy

FAT BODIES

Poem by Jakki Mattson

We are hidden behind a moniker of “plus size;”
But we are actually liberated by our fat bodies.

Sitting down, lying flat - ink inserted into the skin;
As we rise, we can see our newly minted tat bodies.

Unrealistic beauty standards of thin waists and big heads,
The toy aisles at the store exemplify, personify Brat bodies.

Precision with eyeliner, lengthening eyelashes with mascara;
Layers of foundation, blush, and powder to create matte bodies.

No longer hide in the dark, in living rooms alone with others;
We’re out in the open, and It’s no longer hush-hush to chat bodies.

Halloween, an annual event, with candy everywhere;
Reese’s, Snickers, Twix – we also welcome Kit-Kat bodies.

Body shapes like hourglass, pear, circle, and oval;
If we’re applying arbitrary shapes, why not hat bodies?

Labeled as “obese,” “morbid,” “disgusting,”
Adjectives forced onto our non-flat bodies.

Verbal insults at the ready, scales to weigh us; B
MI is enacted, militarizes us into combat bodies.

We stand ready to defy your expectations;
We are large, loud, and proud of our fat bodies.



GRIP

Photography by Alexis Morris

ROSES

Short story by Siena Buchanan

Twenty-five years ago, an oath had been made under the bows of the grand spirit-tree. In exchange for the chance to make the world right, to end the pain and suffering that the Moonblessed had faced for generations.

The spirit-trees wanted Rose's power. She knew that. Not many people could claim to be both a Moonblessed and a Suntouched, after all. And so, she had agreed. Twenty-five years, they had given her.

Those years ended today.

The eyes of the spirit-trees were upon her as she stepped underneath the golden boughs. They were piercing, alert, aware of her presence, though none of them approached her as she continued on, walking through the silent rows of white-barked trees.

The grand spirit-tree lay ahead, wider and taller than the rest.

As Rose approached, a figure emerged from the spirit tree, humanlike in shape, but with a pair of branching horns upon their head and skin the same milky-white as the bark of the spirit-tree.

"Greetings, Rose."

"Greetings, Summer's Warmth that Brings New Growth."

"I have to admit, I am surprised. You held up your end of your bargain."

"Of course. You helped me succeed where thousand others have failed. I am grateful for that."

"Are you ready then?"

"I am," Rose lied.

Could anyone truly be ready to die?

Rose had lived a long and fruitful life. She had born six children and many more grandchildren. She had ended a empire and ensured that her descendants would not live in fear.

She, however, was still afraid.

Summer smiled, showing their pointed teeth. "Follow me, then."

Rose followed Summer as they picked their way through the forest. Neither of them spoke until Summer paused before a empty grove where a single, sickly looking black sapling stood.

"Is this the one?" Rose asked.

"It is indeed. From one of our strongest sap-lines. When they have absorbed your power, they may be powerful enough to raise up a new God-tree."

Rose nodded. That was why they had wanted her, after all. Yet still, standing here, she felt fear, and sadness, and grief for all those she would be leaving behind.

"Do you need a moment, Rose?"

Rose shook her head. "I'm ready."

She walked, slowly, to the sapling, savoring the feeling of the sunlight on her skin. She turned back to see Summer standing there, watching her.

Rose leaned herself up against the sapling.

As soon as her skin touched the bark, it began to grow, the bark encasing her skin. She expected it to feel painful, but it was more itchy than anything. Yet still, every instinct in Rose told her to struggle, to resist, but this was her deal. This is what she must do.

Behind her, a vine snaked out of the tree, wrapping around her chest, and then it slid into her body, piercing through her heart.

The Suntouched power within her began to work, trying to heal the wound, but the tree simply absorbed that too, even as bark crawled further up Rose, encasing her in a cocoon like shell and leaving her in darkness. She was trapped, alone. Lost.

A light. A form stood before her, glowing with silvery light. It looked similar to Summer, with the branching horns and pointed teeth, but it was younger than Summer was, and somehow... less human.

"You gave yourself freely. Not many do that."

"I was fulfilling a oath I made. A long time ago."

The being nodded. *"Then this need not be a struggle of wills. Join with me,"* they said, reaching out a hand.

Rose took it, and felt something shift. A merge. A union of two souls.

Her senses expanded. The Spirit tree—Rose. Them. They tapped into the power Rose held inside of her, all of it. The Suntouched, the Moonblessed, even the faint glow

of power that was her spirit. All of it merged into one, pooling with the inherit power that lay inside the Spirit-tree.

Their roots began to stretch, growing, drawing water in as their branches stretched upward, reaching to the sun, the same source of power that Rose had carried within her for so long. The roots grew and grew, stretching across the forest, stretching further, stretching until they encompassed the entire land, strengthening it and bringing with it life. The leaves opened and bloomed, the tips of their branches stretching beyond any other tree in the forest.

Flower that Blooms in Dawns First Light opened their eyes and stepped from the bark of their tree, feeling solid ground beneath their feet. They found that they were

complete, whole. Powerful. Holding not just the power of a new grand spirit-tree, but beyond that.

A new god-tree had been born.

REALITY

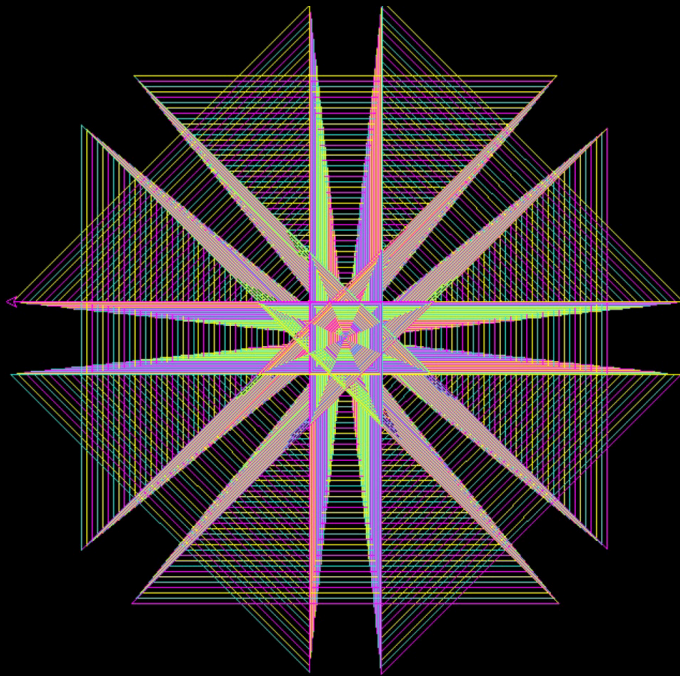
Photography by Leighton Guevarra



THE SOUND OF DESCENT

Poem by Joise Hartung

Falling is not for everyone
It hurts in ways no one expects
With your stomach constantly rising
Into your throat to snuff your voice
To quiet your scream
So that others remain ignorant
Of your downward spiral
Until you hit the ground
And question not what pushed you
To fall
But how they did not hear you
Falling



STAR

Python coding by Krisona Wen

RECOGNITION

Poem by Lucas Yao

I.

Do I wear my skin well now? It fit me poorly for
many a year, snug yet loose in all the wrong places. I tried
to tailor it, to cut it down to size, but my scissors blunted and
my needles bent. Patchwork seams scarred over, stitches r
ough, loose, colors unmatched and unraveling knots
left me poorly dressed and poorly postured,
no vision of myself in sight.

II.

Held a torch to my eyes, blinded myself to the light
and claimed it wasn't there. Brambles bloodlet every
breath of doubt, robed in hoary roses holding hostage
disconsonant thoughts like dewy drops wiped away in s
leepless dark, drops that raised blisters, boils, boiling
questions which simmered, sizzled under my skin,
and I let it burn.

III.

I bloomed while blind, queen of the night blossomed as King
of light, platinum petals plating my breast and iron-willed
thorns pushing through my thighs, my stomach, leaving
red points and dots of blood. After years I uncovered my
eyes, long-lost brother to me as sister, and grew, gradually,
into my skin.

IV.

And so I gaze upon the multitudes of myself,
adorned in this handmade suit of leather with all its
mispunched holes and stitched-up scars and this little brass
heart roughly pinned to its lapel, pockets stained black and blue
from the leaking pen which writes a reminder of comfort, discomfort, of hatred,
and Pride. I recognize these within myself, without myself,
and wonder if then would recognize me now.

OPEN MIND

Collage by Asher Whitney



MOM

Prose by Jenna Schoepflin

My mother is the embodiment of care, selflessness, and hard work. She is the mother to an adult daughter, bonus mom to three more teenage girls, and was blessed later in life when a new baby came bumping along.

She stands at the kitchen counter, sugar ants crawling with tiny feet pitter-pattering across the window sill. Mom has a lot of health issues; her blood pressure skyrockets high into celestial heavens, then crashes back into the atmosphere. It sinks deeper into the earth until she's not sure if she can resurface from the crust pressing down on her chest. I hear it when I call her over the phone, the pauses she must make to catch her breath after a lengthy recount of her day. I see it when I visit and sweep up my youngest sister, when she gets the chance to sit down and her eyelids fall with her.

At the kitchen counter she picks up her medications, taking as many as her body can handle. The ants march from the dishes piled in the sink to the crumbs forgotten on the stove. The all-knowing doctors don't know what's causing her body to attack itself. "She has lupus," they say. She is broken. They can't fix it, but here are some pills. They might make your brain foggy, they'll make your limbs soggy, but they'll help you get through your day.

So, she takes off the cap and counts how many she has to swallow today. When will it be easiest for her to take them? She can't think straight after this one, can't walk straight after that one. When does little miss need her bath? When does she have to be able to drive the other daughter to her dentist appointment?

The sugar ants climb down the oven to make their way across the linoleum floor in a single-file line. Mom takes what she needs to, screwing the top back on the pill bottle in one hand, then unscrews the cap of the sippy cup in her other. A sippy cup is a lot heavier than a pill bottle. Fill it with chocolate milk, step around the ants, we've still gotta get a new trap for those, and play outside in the sun. Mommy needs to lie down, and then do the dishes, and then make dinner before dad gets home.

IMPASTO FLOWER
Acrylic paint and impasto on canvas by Natassia Afonin



BEFORE DUST

Poem by Clare Akeman

And my dear, you are my nostalgia.
Arms length to finger tips intertwined,
I know I have loved you before.

A long time ago.

Before the dinosaurs.
Before the creation of dust,
When the universe was crawling, a toddler.
Clumsy, but sure of itself.

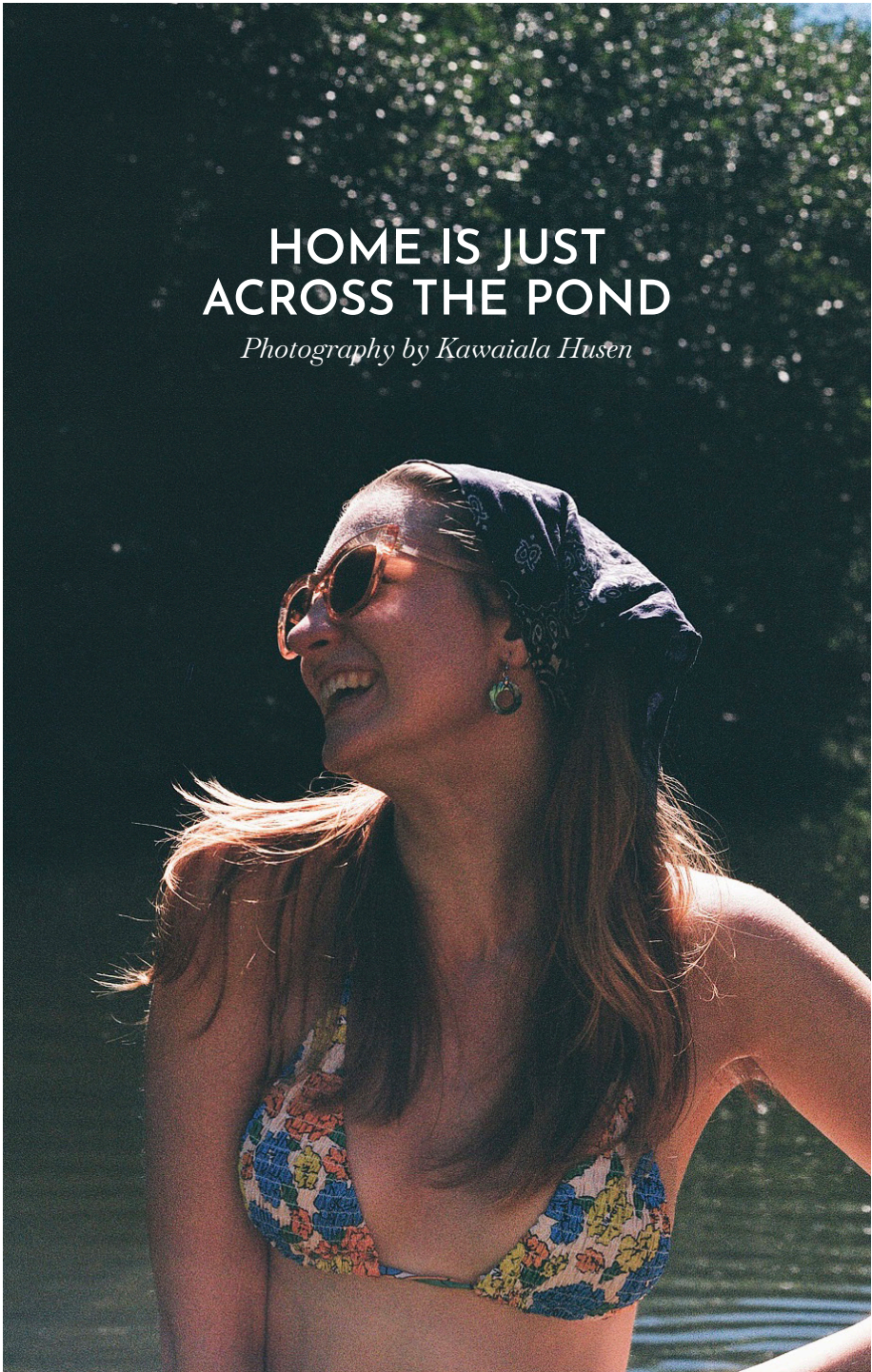
I knew you.

Atoms and molecules, cells built in synchronization,
Split apart, separated,
Gifted the challenge of finding each other,
In every lifetime.
Oh what a gift to be given,
To be able to love you in every lifetime.

I thank the universe for you.

HOME IS JUST ACROSS THE POND

Photography by Kawaiiala Husen



INNER PEACE

Acrylic on canvas by Jadon Allen





DISENCHANTED

Poem by AnaKarrinn Tracy

I'm growing disenchanted.
The world is slowing, slanted,
sloping into shadowed shallows,
murky madness, hollow hallows.

I've found I took for granted
the heady delusion of being in love,
the steady illusion of dwelling above
the clouds, segregated from insanity,
away from the crowds, immune to their vanity.

I'm stroking, scratching at the edge.
Myopia makes below the ledge
look misty, unmapped, beautiful.
I gaze through glass, trapped but dutiful,
ready to march right off.
Alas -
they hold me back but barely, stare me
down: *Succumb to self-absorption;*
marry the mirror;
count cuts, calories, crosses to carry
as you sit here in class.

I'm running out of skips.
A slap, a sting slips
from my loosening lips.
I'm more aware of my mouth and what goes in and out.
As I watch things go south, shame chokes back my shout,
my stab at making things right,
the proof of my feeble, forgettable fight.
Cursed with no reverse, undo, I traverse the same old slights,
each step a grim facsimile.
When I'm with you we blaze through,
plays you an unceasing symphony;
but my own solo soundtrack is punctuated by ads,
full of crap, doctored dreams, empty vows, falsehoods, fads.

For new reasons, I'm enchanted still
by sweet sibilants in songs by Cigarettes After Sex.
I still escape into them, let the sounds fill
the cavity in my chest,
lift gravity from me, wrest
from my fists this clenched control;
relentless lists gently unroll.
But now I hear the wrongs and regrets in the lyrics:
My lips your lips
Apocalypse.
That song I kissed you to was about the world's end,
and look at where we are.
I should have seen it was a premonition then,
in the backseat of that car.



SMOKING BUTTERFLIES

Acrylic paint by Hannah Lull



UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS 2

Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas by Angel Black



I KNOW WHERE THE ROAD DOESN'T END

Short story by Hadiya Riechers

The road ends at the grassy glen. Everyone knows this. There's always a fire pit dug into the center of the small meadow, and it's ringed with round river stones and full of blackened, cracked logs. Sometimes less responsible people will fill it with beer cans and cigarette butts and trash they don't feel inclined to pick up and take out with them. It makes the fire pit unsafe, full of rusted edges and awful fumes. No one likes cleaning it out, but a local always ends up doing it anyway. It's supposed to be our spot, so we gotta keep it up.

The turn off to the glen is marked by a t-intersection in the road, and the road that you turn onto doesn't even hardly look like a road, but people know it's the road because there's a pile of coyote skeletons marking the intersection, and once you've slowed down to an almost-stop, you can see the gap in the sagebrush and that's the road to the glen.

The coyotes smelled awful the summer they were rotting, and Lucas and I snuck out to take pictures as they decayed. We took the pictures on my mom's old Polaroid, and printed them off, taping them into a notebook and writing down our observations. We were going to be scientists, we said. Lu's favorite part of that summer was when one of the spines went missing, and we found it a couple hundred yards away, way up in a tree. Lu said it must've been an eagle that put it up there. I didn't think so, but we tended to avoid disagreements back then.

Once the turn has been made—away from the coyote skeletons that the locals leave there as some unspoken road marker—and the car is rumbling down the rutted, bumpy path that wasn't ever really a gravel road to begin with, it's a good forty-five minute haul to the glen. Not because it's a long distance, but because the road's low enough that the river floods across it every spring, so it's got ruts deep enough that there's no room to bounce a car or truck without knocking the axle against the center rise of the road; you have to drive real slow. My mom always talked about smoothing out the road, evening out the ruts, but Dad took all the farming and heavy equipment with him when he left, and any extra money Mom had she set aside for my college degree instead of buying any new equipment. "You're gonna get out of this place," she has always told me. I wasn't going to end up stuck in this empty place like she was, tied to the land as if it was the thing keeping her alive, not her heart.

Scan to read the full story!



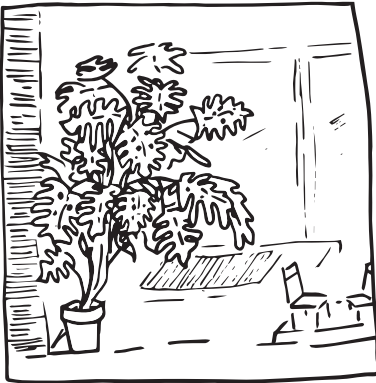
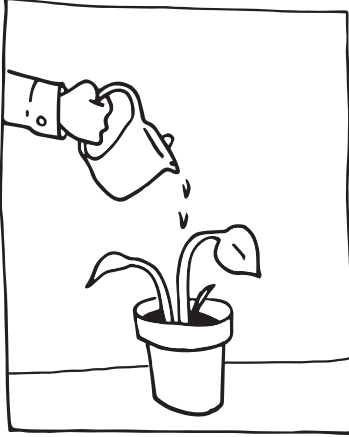
IN THE CEMETERY

Poem by Leah Kahn

In the cemetery I can hear the roots
Of the trees growing hungrily
Into the earth
Digging deep with fattened limbs
(Foraging for fruits the worms forgot)
Delving for the dead.
It's too quiet.
The summer heat hangs heavy on my skin
And my sanity runs thin
(The past like the humidity haunts me)
She only knows my name and then-
(Taunts me)
Not the pain I'm in-
(Flaunts my follies before me)
Or how far away from God I've sinned-
(Hell-spawned I see no glory)
She should've let me rot.
Yet here I sit
Against the stones
Waiting for her lilting tones
(Beneath the earth the trees crunch bone)
The wind escaped in tired groans
She should've left my grave alone-
Not asked me for my name.
Oh, foolish girl who crossed the stream-
And opened the gate and did not deem
This place of death a darkened dream
(Don't you know kind strangers are not what they seem?)
I'll be sorry when you're forgot
As your bones beneath tree limbs-rot.

THE MONSTER

Drawing by Kailea Warouw



I. interior

I'm eight foot fifty.
Weak—and long.
Startlingly ugly.

My arms reach my door-knob knees,
hanging loosely in their sockets,
clinging to me like wet paper-straw-wrappers.
They rip open, they fall apart,
they'd probably remind you of water.

I'm feeble like an overcooked noodle, mushy, lacking general structure,
like my sloughing skin, which drapes over my shoulders like a blanket,
everything's gooey, but it's okay, it's not a issue—
I just stopped wearing clothes and
started wearing eighty-two napkins.

FROM THE EARTH

Digital art by Cat Smith



The problem is—the goo festers in the cotton, so to cover up the smell—
I tied my wrist around the handle of a wicker basket full of green apples.

To move around, I just slop and flop on the floor and hope—one day—
I'll reach my destination and people stare—obviously—because what the **** is that?

Sometimes they scream—which I don't blame them for.
Especially when an apple falls from the basket,
and I sink to the ground, hoping no one notices
when I reach under my ribcage and pull another
out from my chest, letting it rest in my hand while
I wait for it to stop beating.

II. exterior

I abuse all my energy to sweat and worry
no wonder I rely on gravity
to keep my graveyard body moving.

There's always always
always more
in my head than
in my mouth.

It makes me wonder if there will come a day
when my ears will morph into lips and spew
every thought and sound and secret that's made
its deathbed in my soul—all the way back to
six plus seventy and
please *please*
do not
call
on
me

But
this
is all
in my head.
I've been this insane
since memory. It's all made up, and
if I pretend, it should all go away: the arms,
the legs, the brain, the skin, the napkins, and the goo.

But is it worth it
to resist the writhing, roaring instinct to duck under an
archway only eight feet above the ground and endure a
very frigid, sopping second until my head hits the—
Until I persist with a clean breath through to the other side.

EIGHT FOOT FIFTY

Poem by Sophia Adaleen Townsley

HOW TO MAKE A BULLETIN BOARD

Poem by Lucas Yao

STEP ONE: Choose a topic that is interesting and informative. It should be something highly personal that you are intimately attached to, but should also be easy to simplify. This is important because nobody will read it anyway.

STEP TWO: Look for sources that are accurate and easy to read. It may sound simple, but it will take hours and leave you exhausted. This is important because nobody will read it anyway.

STEP THREE: Separate your notes into a few simple sections with a few major takeaways to make your topic easy for nobody to absorb. This is important because nobody will read it anyway.

STEP FOUR: Choose a form that works for your topic. Do this by hand: pick colors individually, use scissors to cut out letters, draw your own designs. This is important because nobody will read it anyway.

STEP FIVE: Cut out your pieces and tape, glue, and staple everything together. What you make will not fit on the corkboard. Spend a minimum of two hours trying to make it all fit. Every piece is vital, and you already spent hours on it. This is important because nobody will read it anyway.

STEP SIX: Be proud. Invite everyone over – your coworkers, your friends, your neighbors. Grab your parents by their wrists and drag them over. Send a picture of it to your sister. She can't make it, but she'll ask you questions about your work. Bring snacks; crackers, chips, and dip. Cut these out of leftover cardstock. Bring drinks; bring soda, bring juice, bring wine, beer, tequila, vodka. Make these out of paper scraps. Pour the drinks yourself, watch your mother sip her single glass of red. She drinks slowly, and it's gone in a second. Sit back on the table you stood on to reach the top of the board and watch your father melt into the shadows of the room. He isn't sure why he's here, doesn't know what's going on, but he'll say he read your board anyway. He'll vaguely comment on it, drawing from snippets of the conversation around him. Or he'll repeat your mother's words. Watch your mother's face flush redder than her single glass of wine. She's leaning on you, hugging you, asking you if you need her to buy you anything – anything, she'll get it for you. Because she loves you. Scissors? You want new scissors? You almost out of painter's tape? She'll buy it for you, her petit canard. Your phone buzzes; your sister replied. She says she picked out two to five words and fixated on them for fifteen hours and she tells you it doesn't make sense, it's all made up, you're delusional but she'll support you because she loves you. Looking up from your phone, you see your mother stumbling over to your bulletin board. She gazes at it, tells you how beautiful it is, places her hand on the black backing paper, clenches it in her fist, and tears it.

INTUITION

Collage by Ari Knight



FINDING THE LIGHT

Sheet music & audio by Sydney Marker

♩ = 55

Flute

Piano

Slower *p* A tempo

9

Fl.

Pno.

13

Fl.

Pno.

Page 1 of 4



Scan to listen!



YODA IN THE KELP

Photography by Alex McIntire

THE PURPLE STRANGER

Poem by Pavel Sengupta

Deep in the midst of a throbbing heartland,
Of blood, emotions and strings that tie,
A sage of life had a question to ask,
Inwards bound as I passed him by,
A life of sorrow had brought me there,
When deep within my heart I looked,
Burning red with anger and rage,
And in that pain I found a voice,
With a question that started a dark descent,
How much does it cost to tether all ties?
Dismantle hope and damage faith?
How much does it cost to live or die?
I was left arguing with myself,
With me as a spectator of my show,
And the more I saw the more I felt
That I was out of tune and place,
All alone, how nice it would be
To share my solitude with someone,
And then it clicked, the tingling grew,
I was the narrator of this book,
I hold the pen and the key,
To write the blank or leave the show,
So I forged on my page a few lines,
Let such a morning call me awake,
Dedicate this afternoon to your thoughts,
Let this evening be kept for you,
Let such a night be the dawn of love.

So large a gesture life is,
That death seems fleeting,
So humbling is that vast living,
So sudden the veil of death,
That we must fight to save life,
Amongst those who are misunderstood,
Less understood or the not-at-all,
We must fight with love as the weapon,
For only once does a chance come
To create a fairy-tale life, a story
Seeming impossible at its very sustenance,
Yet we ignore its very possibility,
In order to do what is right,
Not what we truly yearn,
And that feeling which sets us free,
Goes by fleeting, subdued,

We return to the present logic,
And start begging, looking for more,
Looking to make us whole again,
But that moment is gone forever,
The faith that looked at us for hope
Washed away misunderstood,
Drenched of all colours.
And we learn the significance of life,
Of moments of joy in trickles of rain,
Of strands of sunlight on the grass,
Of a soul to share our solitude,
And for that, that very rare gem,
That golden hue on grass,
Is why we must love all the living,
With all our love undefined.

And let the purple iris bloom again,
For it blooms without light, in cold or rain,
It blooms in the desert and stone the same,
That spring of hope is all it takes
To spark the feeling of forgotten love,
To spark a fountain of all desires,
Those only cherished by we the living,
When the magic is rekindled, let it flow,
The inner soul does not search that far,
To be at one with the purple iris,
One in love and one in war,
For in this life we must connect,
Who knows how many chances we get,
To make a book while we live,
Changing the lives of the unfortunate,
The less understood or the not-at-all,
To make a fairy-tale come to life,
Or live a dream even for a day,
Who knows how long the iris lasts?
Those not tormented by blood and mind,
For we try to get what we do not have,
Yet the iris remains eternal,
And when comes a day that it quickly dies,
Our eyes are opened for all we missed,
Or failed to reach, to interpret,
And purple becomes the new blue,
And me, just another stranger,
Out of colour, but not today,
For a purpose grew to protect that
Which I love, and with time,
Be worthy of its bloom.

RSVP

Digital art by Mack Lieu





TRAIN CAR

Photography by Jason St Clair



CALL OF REUNION

Poem by Elana Roldan

The wind chimes whisper
The language of the sky
On their crystal tongues.
They say to me
Your time nears, dandelion.
A breeze weaves in
And out
Of my hair.
When I close my eyes, the feel
Of my mother's comb
Brushing through my tangled locks
Surfaces from aged memories,
And the ground seems farther
And farther
Below
With each kiss of the wind
On my forehead.
Soon, Mother,
I say.
Soon.



REMEDY

Mixed media by Scarlet Harrison



GROCERY SHOPPING

Poem by Grace Knutsen

I went grocery shopping tonight.
I tried to follow a list but ended up wandering the aisles.
You know, like usual.

I bought salad because the last one went bad,
A breakfast burrito (maybe I'll eat that tonight?),
And mozzarella cheese.
It's good on everything.

Cilantro (do you want to make burrito bowls this week?),
Port wine cheese spread because I saw it and it looked good,
And a chicken wrap for lunch tomorrow.

Oh, and spinach pizza because I've been thinking about it.
Not as much as I think about you,
But close.

PERFECTION

Creative non-fiction piece by Sheyenne Loose

pər-ˈfɛk-shən – noun

The quality or state of being perfect, such as: freedom from fault or defect, flawlessness; maturity; the quality or state of being saintly. An exemplification of supreme excellence; an unsurpassable degree of accuracy or excellence. The act or process of perfecting.¹

Perfection looks effortless. That is, if it's done right. You smile, you stand straight, you act as though achieving such *flawlessness* in all manners takes no effort at all.

Of course, that's a lie.

Perfection is impossible, unattainable, idealistic beyond reason. Perfection is what you aim to achieve but never quite touch, like the stars twinkling above in a night sky of satin and velvet. Yet, people still consider perfection to be something that can, and should, be attained—a desire for failure.

Maintaining an image of perfection is exhausting. To everyone else, you become infallible, unshakable, an inspiration to be aspired to. Reputation begins to precede you, and you have to wonder *Do I deserve this praise?* as flattery and expectation is wrapped around you, over and over; the layers are light and breathable until they aren't, like a mummy being preserved to last through the ages and insight wonder in the generations to come—and that's when you wonder *Do I want to be praised? Do I need to be perfect?*

And then come the moments of truth: all this *perfection* is built up, but behind the illusory mask you are struggling to fill in the cracks that threaten to break the image you have built, the image that is now expected. What others don't see are these moments and what must be done to keep them mere moments; anything longer would shatter all you have done to create and maintain the idea that you are *perfect*, that anyone and everyone can depend on you to remain that steady, unwavering rock in a building stream of chaos. The idea of failure and letting down the people that have come to depend on your *supreme excellence* scares you, driving you to keep moving forward no matter what, no matter the consequence, no matter the stakes.

No matter the reality.

¹ "Perfection." Merriam Webster Dictionary. [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perfection](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perfection).

THROUGH THE RED LENS

Digital art by Cat Smith



HOW TO ENSURE YOUR REBELLION WILL FALL APART

Flash fiction piece by Cooper Theodore

1. DON'T HAVE A UNIFYING IDEOLOGY.

Uprising is an expected outcome these days. However, as with all things, there are going to be different ideas about how an uprising should be run. Additionally, there will be different ideas about why it should be run. Some will think that it's just the leadership that's an issue, and once they're killed, new members of the rebellion can fill the same roles. We'll call this Ideology A. Others will think that the entire government will need to be eradicated and rebuilt from the ground up and those who support the old system (Ideology A) are grabbing at power for themselves. We'll call this Ideology B.

2. LET IDEOLOGY A AND IDEOLOGY B ELECT THEIR OWN LEADERS.

We'll call Ideology A's leader Adam, and Ideology B's leader Bob. Adam and Bob will argue. A lot. This will cause a greater division. Now instead of x number of scrappy rebels, each ideology will have roughly $x/2$ number of scrappy rebels. In addition, depending on how badly these two groups get along (varies in each situation), the amount of opposition each group will face will rise from x number of oppressive government operatives (OGOs for short) to x number of OGOs + $x/2$ number of scrappy rebels.

3. DON'T SCAVENGE FOR MORE EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES.

Look, scavenging takes time, and your group's numbers will already be very low (because of the previously mentioned ideological differences within the rebels), so instead just attack quickly. One of leaders will say this, and this is a great choice for making the rebellion fail.

4. PLAN YOUR BIG ATTACK ON THE CAPITOL AT THE SAME TIME AS THE OTHER IDEOLOGY'S GROUP BY PURE CHANCE.

I know this is asking a lot, but if both can happen at the same time without communicating (presumably because both hate each other's guts so much) this will really help the failure along. With both groups' previously mentioned limited resources, the attack on the Capitol will be almost inconsequential. The troops of Ideology A and Ideology B will be confused and start attacking just about anyone since neither group spent time putting recognizable insignias on their armor meaning none of the rebels can tell who's friend or foe. Now, you may be thinking that this will accidentally cause a union of the groups as they would just focus on attacking the OGOs. Don't worry. If your troops are angry and stupid, this will not happen.

5. LET ADAM AND BOB FIGHT ON THE FRONT LINES FOR INSPIRATION.

It will seem like a good moral booster, however, with the limited resources and confusing enemies, both will die in the middle of battle very quickly (likely by each other's hands). As a bonus, they are likely to encourage their own troops to attack the opposing ideology as a dying wish.

6. DON'T WARN THE OTHERS ABOUT INCOMING OGOS.

The fight has gone terribly, and you are now basically on your own. You can't tell who's with or against you, and either way, everyone is on their last legs and full of sadness and rage. Use them as a larger target so you can escape.

7. WATCH AS YOUR REBELLION MATES ARE TAKEN AWAY.

It was pointless anyway. There's nothing you could have done. Better to save yourself at this point.

8. RETURN TO YOUR EMPTY BASE AND DON'T ALERT ANY POSSIBLE REINFORCEMENTS.

Your ideology's team might have others out there who would support it. Don't let them know you're here. Now you have all these great resources to yourself. Lucky!

9. SURVIVE OFF THE RATIONS LEFT OVER FROM YOUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHO WERE CAPTURED BY THE OGOS.

It's not like they'll need it anymore.

10. THINK ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES.

Think about their panic and fear. Think about what you've lost to the oppressive government and what brought you all together in the first place. The guilt will hurt, but not as much as they're probably hurting in prison.

11. CONTACT THE REMAINING FORCES OF IDEOLOGY A AND B.

Try and convince them to talk and come together for a last-ditch secret mission to save the unknown number of scrappy rebels being held in the Capitol's prison. They'll agree. Now you and both groups can plan a rescue and hopefully mend your guilty conscience.

12. BEFORE WHAT IS LIKELY YOUR LAST MISSION, WRITE DOWN A LOG OF INSTRUCTIONS TO ANY OTHER FUTURE REBELLIONS. THESE THINGS HAPPEN ALL THE TIME, AND YOU WON'T WANT FUTURE REBELS TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES YOU DID. NO ONE DESERVES TO CARRY THAT GUILT AND FAILURE WITH THEM. WELL, NOBODY BUT ME.

Good luck out there. We're counting on you.

EXAM TABLE

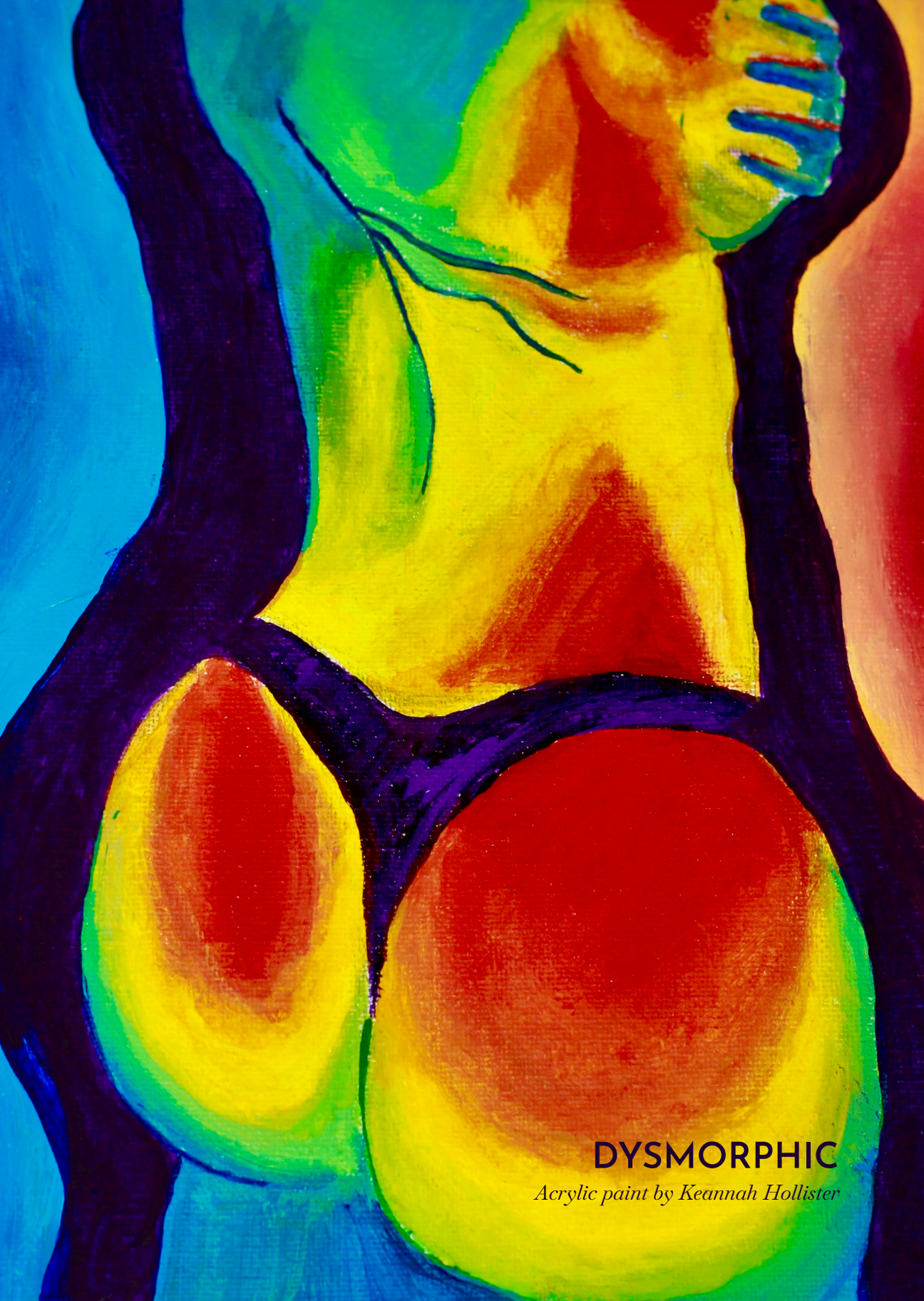
Poem by Sabrina She

Cut me open
Unmask the milky white muddled with rot
(It matches the mold on my bathroom sink, stinking and sour)
Tell me about this time last week,
When I scraped from my scalp the tiny hairs that are now tacked onto the basin
Dusty, dried up and desiccated
Should I show you the insides of me?

Cut me open with razor wire, ruined gray running down your wrist
Maybe I'm a piece of potter's clay, pockmarked and pathetic
Shuffled off to the side of some darkened shelf
"Store in a cool, dry place."
Store in the basement, where I'll abide by the rules and busy myself with books
(I must confess,
I can't resist the acrid scent of burning pages)

Seal me up with shining silver fishing wire
The sutures so slippery and sparse that I never heal
An incessant, insistent slicing away at my flesh that persists
Until I pull it out myself with a pair of pliers
The surgeon and the patient both
Autobiographical autopsy performed with full autonomy

Cut me open
I'm already dead
Aren't I?



DYSMORPHIC

Acrylic paint by Keannah Hollister

ESCAPING

Ink on paper by Eva Israelsen



HOPE IS NEVER LOST

Poem by Phoenix

As I look towards tomorrow
My heart aches
For the time lost,
Never to be regained
Friends I may never see,
Places I'll never be.

I pray you all are safe
Surrounded by friends
That are true
And family
That loves you.
We'll meet again
I choose to hold on
To that thought,
My candle in the Darkness.

I'll never give up
Though the road ahead
May
Be dangerous
Hard
And painful
As long as I have
Hope
I shall survive

TALKING IN PLACE

Poem by Phoebe Andromeda

Facsimiles of conversations
Corrupted memories of past dialogues
Live action role playing
of what human interaction
is supposed to be

One speaks; the other listens—nods along
They bat the ball of conversation back & forth
Monotonously
The air reverberates with sound,
The heart, with loneliness,
& the people, with pitiful, insignificant words.

HIDE ME AWAY

Digital art by Anna Gerber



A PRESENT WRAPPED RED

Poem by Anonymous

When asked in class
To write about gifts we received
For some reason, all I wrote
Were traits and actions
That I picked up along the way
On the right, all the things I hate
it was mostly from you.
I almost cried that day in class
When I realized
Everything I hate about myself
Is a gift from my mother

I can't eat without feeling a guilt
My friends call it a disorder
I try calling it learning from my mother
Cause mother knows best
But one thing's for sure
I shouldn't feel this way
Your voice is in my head with everything I do
I can't do anything without hearing you gripe
And it's all because of you

Messy rooms stress me out
I stress clean, and I hate it
It's from years of hearing you bitch about your house being a mess
You never did anything to fix it, you just complained
Your voice is in my head with everything I do
I can't do anything without hearing you gripe
And it's all because of you

I can't even bring myself to drink
If I drink my problems away
I'll be more like you
Drinking because it was a rough day
But so was yesterday
And the day before
I bet you don't even remember calling me last night
I can't do anything without hearing you gripe
And it's all because of you
A present wrapped red
And tied with a bow.
I hate myself
And it's all because of you

WHERE DO THE HORSES IN NEW YORK CITY GO?

Poem by Leah Kahn

Where do the horses in New York City go?
When the sun of the morning
Falls behind the buildings of silver and stone-
And like lanterns
Filled with stars and sweetness
The windows of New York
Light up one by one-
Where do the horses go?
Clopping through central park
In the heat of summer-
With a patience for the uneven roads
And pedestrian covered paths-
With roses round their bridle
And sufferance in their throat-
Where do they go when the stars come out-
When the moon
Like a shy girl at the dance
Peeks out from behind the skyscrapers
Searching for a friend-



Where do the horses of New York City go?
Surely, they do not live
In the silver skyscrapers
On the penthouse floor-
Eating nothing but caviar
Drinking fine wine and rum.
Perhaps deep under the subway
There is a secret stable
Where they are fed and warm
And if you don't mind some
Rumbling overhead,
(From the screech and shake of the subway
As he slithers through the dark
And dirty caverns of the earth-)
It isn't a bad place to sleep.
Perhaps there is a fair field
Far from the city
Quiet
Where there is so much sky
They can run through greenness and only see blue.
When the sun goes down
And night enfolds her favorite city
In a cloak of black-
Where do the horses of New York City go?

DESOLATE

Photography by Jason St Clair

THE PERFECT WOMAN

Poem by Arleen Bahl

dark eyes, angry lips,
 shadows peeking, lonely wisps
desiring all, heart bleeding
 crying out, but she is leaving

marble stone, cracked edges,
 perfect symmetry, blank spaces
no smile but rosy cheeks,
 vacant soul, his new peak

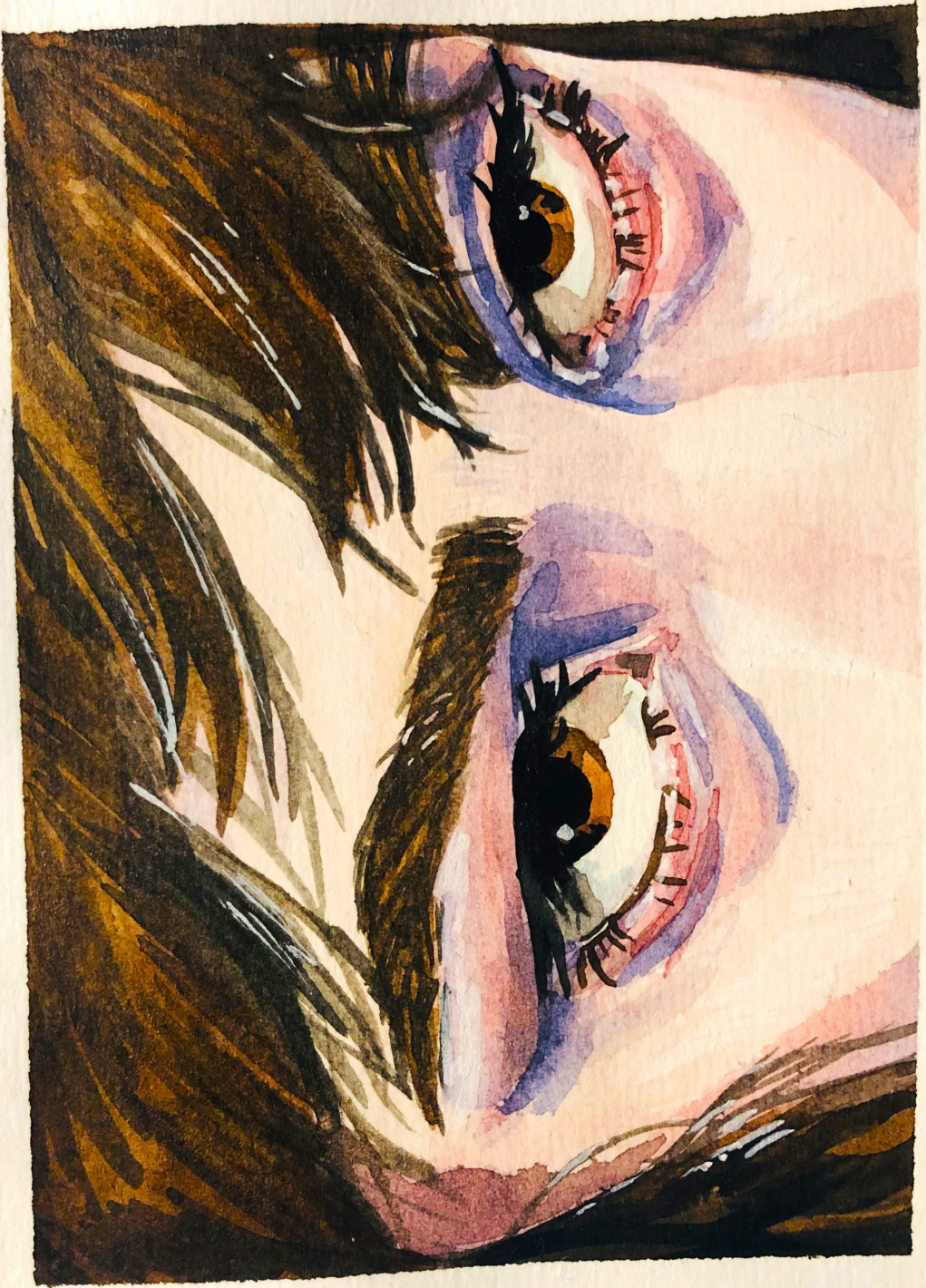
smiling strangers, lying games,
 she was blessed, the chains remain
cloudy skies, bright red suns
 kneeling lords, subjects undone

clothes stripped, hands held,
 smiles forced, eyes welled
silent screams, scornful wishes
 one more night of bleeding kisses

a perfect woman, the imperfect man
 follow the script, keep with the plan
he was born, and she was bred
 for imperfect women end up dead

SEETHING

Watercolor by Krisona Wen



"OBSESSION" ART CONTEST WINNER



SENSE OF SELF

Acrylic by Kae Ranck

CENTIPEDE

Poem by Sophia Adaleen Townsley

If you pressed your thumbs against my corneas
you'd hear *pop* *pop* and
see blue eyes fall between my teeth.
Through the dark sockets would come
trillions of buzzing house flies
feral and thunderous,
and beneath, on the floor of my head,
a clear lake, brimming with stolid fruit flies.

If you climbed inside, and turned to face the sky,
you'd see my brain, more purple than pink,
and dug into the waxy flesh: a recipe
for lukewarm water—and stale bread.

If you cut open my throat, tugged on a cord or two,
you'd see that everything there
has been replaced with knots
that won't be untied,
sour paint,
a bout of entomophobia, and
a yellowed picture of myself,
walking with my eyes closed.

Now, if you pulled just a little on my chin,
I'd open up like a pez dispenser, and
be turned inside out, so all the squishy red parts
could get a taste of a salty sea—cerulean sky.

If you left me like this,
I'd rot and decompose, be
consumed and recycled,
so inside out—outside in
wouldn't even matter,
I'd still be a blazing carcass of
one-hundred memories,
scrambling—in the pure-handed sunlight.

FEAR OF INSANITY

Poem by Andres De Los Santos

Insanity: It's defined as doing the same exact thing over and over and over again,
thinking that over time, something will change.

I didn't believe this at first, and when someone told me this for the first time, I laughed
in their face, and called them crazy.

But as I've gotten older, I'm now convinced that I'm insane.

I've been doing the same exact thing over and over and over again for the last couple
of years, and I keep thinking that something will change, but nothing ever does.

I go back and watch the same four shows every week, not because I like them or
anything. I just know what to expect, and I hate surprises. I can recite those shows
word for word.

I have the same routine every morning. Wake up, breakfast, coffee, shower, out the
door. If I do anything outside of that, it throws off my schedule completely. And that's
never a good thing.

I often listen to the same four songs every day, cycling between them. I treat them as a
mini playlist just for me. It's one less thing for me to worry about in my chaotic life.

I try to see the same people every day, even if it's a phone call or a text. They just need
to know that I didn't forget about them. It's nice to not feel forgotten.

While I've had the same life routine for the last couple of years, I expect things to
change eventually. But nothing ever has. Ever.

Is it cause I'm not trying hard enough? Or is it because the universe is trying to tell me
that something needs to change? I couldn't tell you.

But I don't want to change. Change is scary. So I'm just going to keep do the same
thing, over and over and over again. Hopefully something will change soon.

Maybe I am insane.

UNTITLED

Paper, copic marker and pen by Anonymous



FAITH

Prose by Sydney Marker

Another day has passed, another piece of my being crippled; my strength fails me. Any patron who believes in a god sees them as a vessel of unwavering, unbelievable strength. If only that was true. The sad reality is a God is only as strong as the faith of their most ardent believer. All of mine have abandoned me. My temples lie in ruins across the countryside, crumbling shrines and decrepit statues the only remnant of what I once was. My glorious days as a God revered by my people as a caring, sympathetic god who always answered their prayers. And now I lay in my own temple, sapped of strength, its only visitor.

I am the God of the lost, the forgotten, the lonely. I gave comfort to those who had no one else to turn to. It is ironic, really. The God who gave comfort to those who only sought the warmth and steadfastness of a love that could never die lying alone, doomed to a God's death, the saddest of any being in the universe. A god's death is not like a mortal being's where the body ceases in its function and the soul ascends to its begotten afterlife nor a total destruction through valiant battle or cosmic catastrophe rather it is a slow, painfully wretched loss of use. And mine has been brought about by the vitiation of love for love's sake by those gods who promise power and wealth and long life. I promise none of those things – I only promise companionship and strength when you feel alone. Pathetic when compared to a god that grants victory to the warriors, gold to the merchants, and power to the politicians.

I hear something. Could it be someone entering my temple? I hear the faint clicking of heels on tile...no not heels. Nails. Claws. As I gather what strength I have left I, enter one of my last remaining statues so I can see who this devotee is. I search the room unable to see anything until I hear a faint breath. It sounds...ragged, like something panting. Finally, I see the worshipper. It is a dog.

It isn't a beautiful dog, nor a particularly ugly dog. Not a pure bred, just a common mutt. But I think it is the most beautiful being on the face of this planet. I watch it as it slowly lays down, curling up at the base of my statue, nose tucked beneath its tail, eyes cast up at me. Its large chocolate eyes soft and full of a devotion I haven't seen in years. The longer this dog remains at the foot of the statue, the more I feel my strength returning to me. Soon, though weak from lack of sheer numbers, I find myself sustained by the presence of this dog. The steady beating of its heart filling me with an energy I haven't felt in years.

Despite my weakened state I can feel a deep sense of loneliness in this dog. I can feel the void inside its heart, an empty hole that used to hold someone. An owner, perhaps? Maybe another dog? I can't be sure but, just as with every patron who once visited my temples, I feel a responsibility to ease its pain in any way I can. I will guide him through this as I have many others. And, at least, if I die trying, I won't die alone.

PARTNER

Photography by Wanyu Zhu



BILDUNGSROMAN

Poem by Charlotte Handick

Drifting off to sleep in her embrace,
she hums soft hymns from above
and she whispers – or is that just the wind? –
“I was a little girl once, just like you”,
she sighs, “Oh, it’s like it was yesterday, like it was
yesterday”, and in her ancient eyes I see the stars
spinning across the timeless heavens, faster now,
the night blurs and I am lost in them
and all I know is that it is not
yesterday, it will never be yesterday.

ENDLESS

Digital art by Kite



BALLERINA

Poem by Sophia Adaleen Townsley

I am her, bony and grey, dancing in the dark
with a twisted spine—double helixed
like a thick strand of DNA—crooked and bent,
protruding from her shoulders—hosting
a mess of spiny twigs, twisted umber flowers,
white bones going brown—squirming and thrashing
like a parasite—trapped in the decaying thigh
of a body six feet under—the coffin and the ground.
Is this why she dances—to quicker decompose
in the dark room, high above ground,
in the scant red yellow green of the street lights outside?

LOOK AT 'EM GO

Digital art by Elana Roldan



HANG IN THERE

Photography by Hailey Toedtli





FEBRUARY

Poem by Anonymous

When I first saw you, I imagined us exchanging sighs of smoke and smelling of it. Of musk. I decided then there would be things to give up just to have you. Exchanges to be made. Plans to cancel and reschedule and cancel again. And again. Anything, I thought, for your smoke mouth. Your palms, hot and branded onto the flesh of my chest. In the end, we had no choice but to catch fire. Came down crashing, though shuttle-bound, into each other. A tortuous descent. But it wasn't really the end, was it? We made it back to Earth—miraculously—by the skin of our teeth. Let me be honest—now I can't get anything done like this. I'm hungrier and I'm useless. And in my restless sleep I sweat and dream of all sorts of things. The risks we took, getting here. The words I said to you; plump with truth and possibility. What I would do just to lay in the crackling hearth of your breathing body.

BATHROOM OF DOOM

Poem by Katie Livermore

there's a kind of gloom
where chance at community
turns into opportunity for immunity
in this tomb of bathroom.

the sinks are stained with
a charcoal toothpaste mess
the mirrors splattered with speckles
one couldn't think of anything less
then a room painted in
gray freckles.

is it an art form?
or does it simply add to the gloom
of what is the bathroom
in this dorm?

the damp door hinges
squeak and scream under the pressure of
watching such strange bathroom behavior:
flossing blood unto the mirrors,
tossing mud onto the floors,
glossing sinks with rust of water.

enter the dark cave
of the shower stalls
if you're brave
you'll find a suite of plaited hair platters tied up
like a spaghetti surprise on the floor.

to all of the lovely people who must take a broom
into the mess of
this bathroom,
I sincerely apologize.

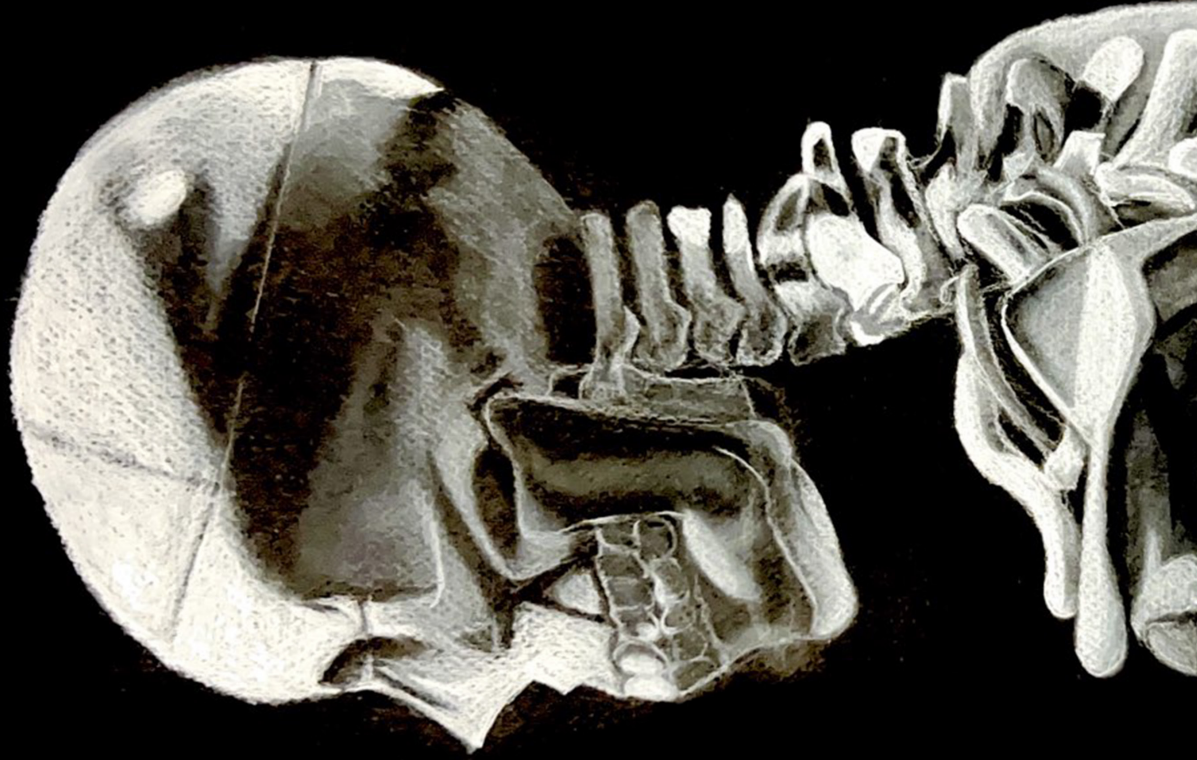


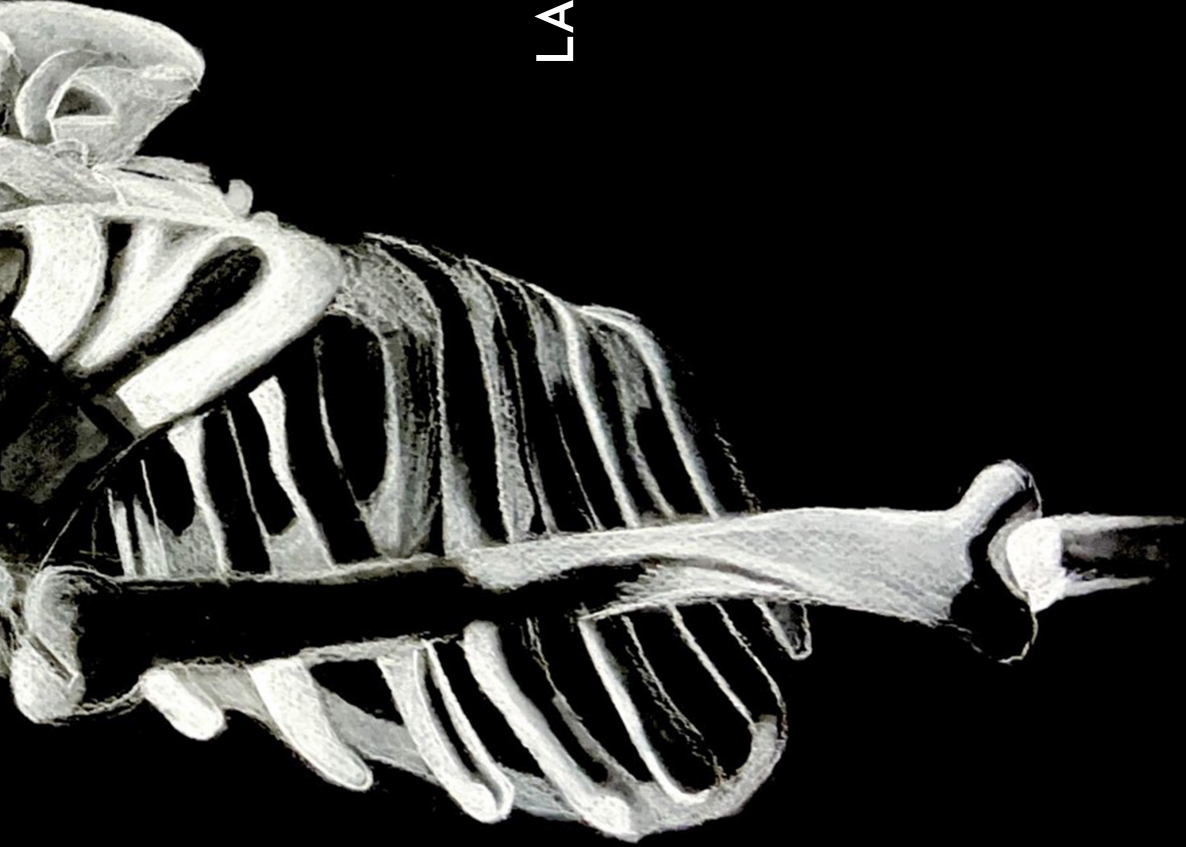
PLEASE SAVE US

Black ink and pen by Celine Loch

SKELLY

White charcoal by Stephanie Plata





LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

Poem by H.B.

When I die, don't confine me to a tomb,
Lay me by a slow-moving stream and
Let me decay until I am part of something *greater*;

Until rainwater courses through my veins
And my skull mosses over,

Until my heart crystalizes
And my bones turn to wood.

Let some traveler use them to light a fire,
Let my ribs protect him from the cold,
If only for the night



OVERWHELMED

Photography by Hailey Toedtli

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESFUL ONBOARDING!

Poem by Brynne Boehlecke

First is sitting in the car with the air growing steadily warmer as
the sun trudges sleepily up the steps and squats on the roof of the mall, arms
stretching and peeling the smoky blue paint from the celestial ceiling. My sweater
matches the sky before the pink paint is poured. Perfect pink. Second
is a room, and there are people there but they don't look at me for a while,
until one of them says my name wrong. I pull my rings off my hands and
switch them around until they are back where they started, silver
circles scoring green lines below the bloodied knuckles. Except
they aren't bloody right now, only in my head where they pound
against rolling eyes and nervous wrists. The rest is easy and
not worth saying, but I say it anyway because what comes
after is more difficult. The rest is magnets poked into
seams and shirts stretched over plastic hangers and
hangers swinging on wheeled racks, and then it's done, but
now they say my name right. What comes after. I cut my
hands off in the car, leaving them white-knuckled
and bloody-knuckled on the steering wheel, the
perfect pink polish glowing in the sun. The sun is an eye today.
Tomorrow, it will be nails, bitten and broken. Perfect polish
on a severed hand. But those are my hands. The eye scratches
and scrapes with bitten nails, peels the skin off my face
and plunges it into the suds. Scrubs until the water turns pink.
Pepto Bismol pink. Perfect polish pink. The nervous wrists
and bloody knuckles return in the cool air of the kitchen where
I pull the sky-colored sweater off. My bones go with it. Me and it.
We compose violent life together, cover the bones in pearls and silk
and bury them in the garden. Gentle genius sublime. The sun
climbs into bed, pulling a blanket over its blinding head. Guess what
color the blanket is? Cotton candy sugar cookie soapy
sudsy Pepto Bismol perfect polish. Pink.



DICHOTOMY

Digital Art by Kite



A NOTE TO AN OLD FRIEND

Poem by Ai Ana Richmond

if one day the moon speaks to you
like you are old friends,
do not be surprised.

i tell her stories of you every night,
in the flat grey light
that flits across the windowpane.



GONE TO SEED

Poem by Oliver Harkola

Leave me
in the garden
things are simple
in the dirt

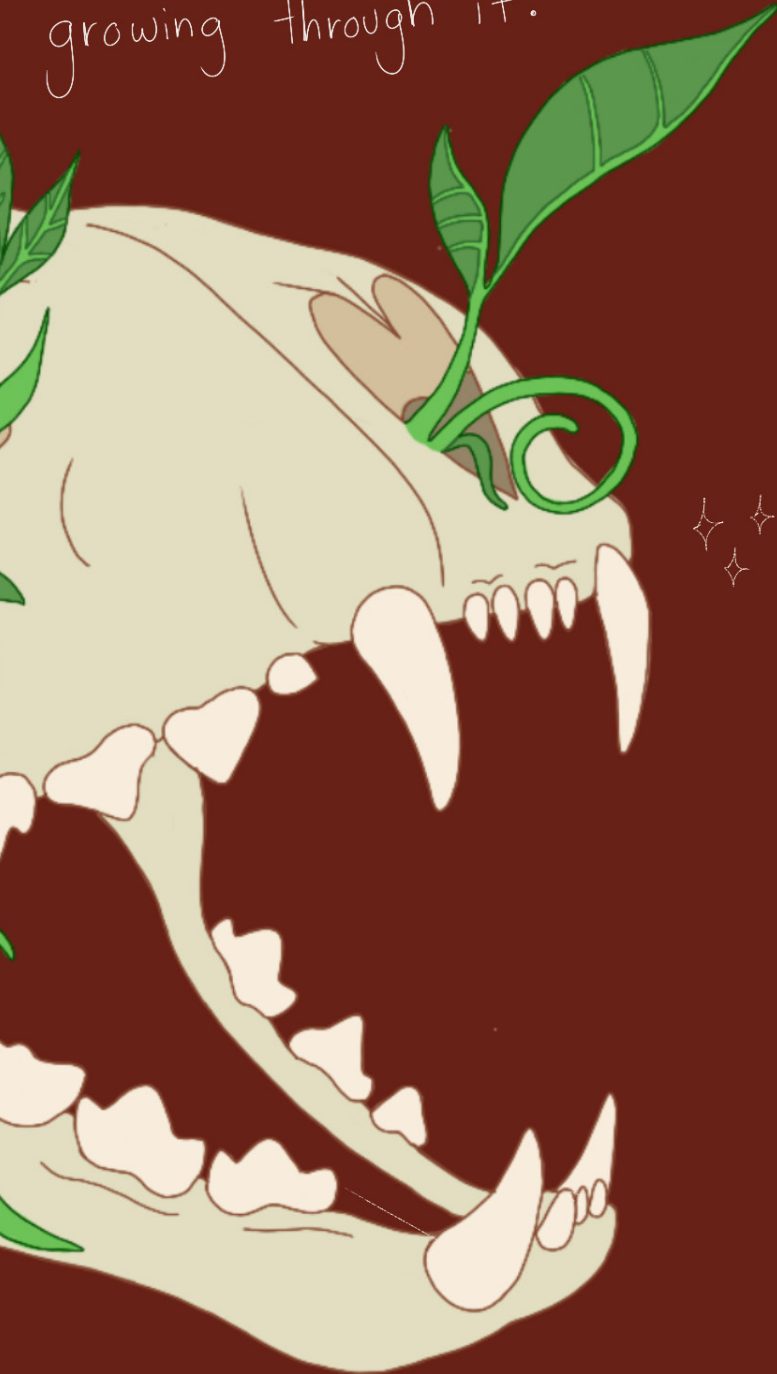
wrap me
in some soil
i have already
gone
to seed

i'll be back in the spring
with the peas

GROWING THROUGH IT'

Digital Art by Trinity Farr

growing through it.



ACNEDOTE

Poem by Katie Livermore

I wish my cheeks
had that rosy glow
like the pretty people have,
you know?

instead my face
is spotted
but not with the beauty
of a leopard or giraffe.

traced constellations,
pink stars that sometimes ooze
because they cry
from the scrapes and
tears of words.

everyone tells you
to become an artist,
to paint over every single
bump, scar, pimple, mark.

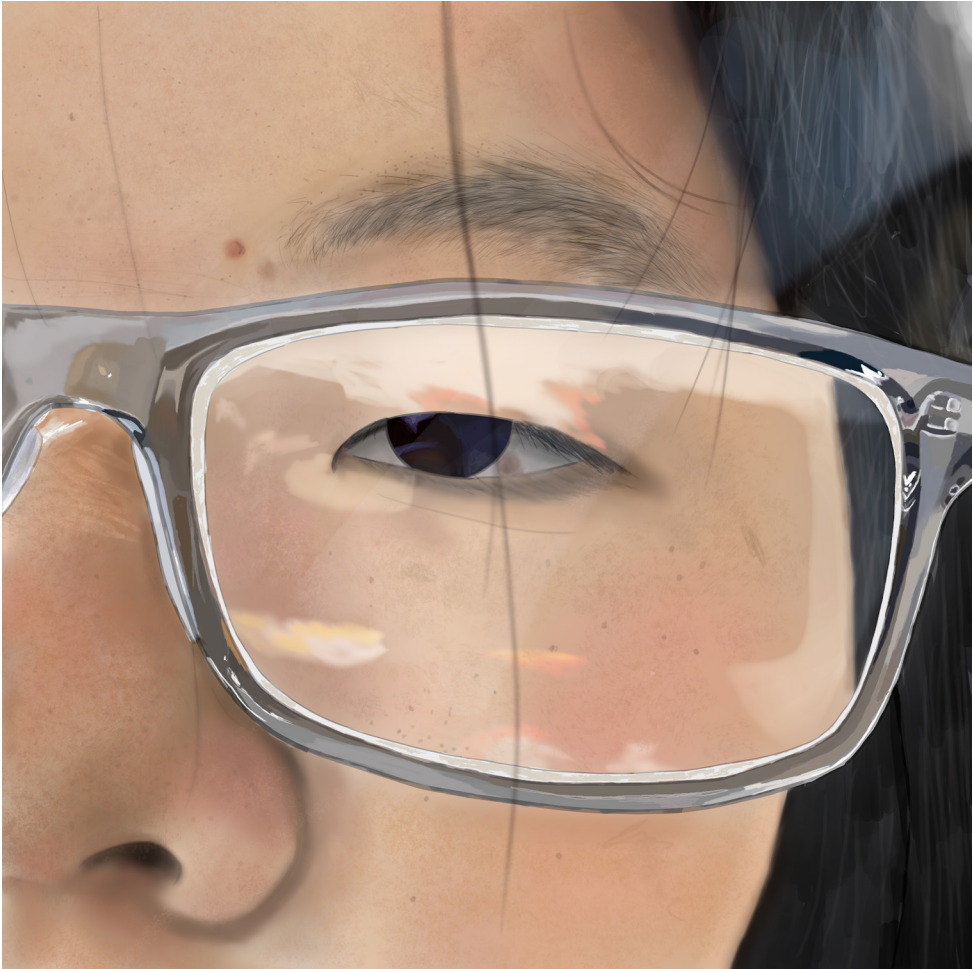
but whatever I do
the marks stay,
and I've learned
for now that's okay.

I'll follow the constellations
of my face
and my body.

they're there for a reason,
so why cover up
what's meant to be?

REFLECT

Digital art by Lian Moy





KNOWING, DOING

Acrylic by Mack Lieu

AN INORDINATE FONDESS OF BEETLES

Poem by Sam Groetsch

Tree
bound beetle
crawls
along
mossy branches
in rain,
I see him,
but is he aware?
Troubling.
By chance we meet,
some probability:
troubling too,
This small crawling bug
with endless complexities,
molecules and odds.
Emergent properties,
thoughts from cells, meaning from mere chance-
rain parts, the moment ends.

CPR

Poem by Rebecca Knight

Oh yes,
Crack me open.

I've been told
It's painful.
It's so painful,
Half-dying people flail,
They'll try to hit you,
As your seraphim hands,
One on top of the other,
With fingers woven together,
Punch a hole in their chest.
Their heart sputters,
In need of jumper cables
Or a thunderstorm.

My sternum cracks
In the mornings, when I am late for class.

I can't breathe
At card-draw times.
I draw breath through thick spiderweb,
And drink down metallised air
Save me,
Respironic.

The doctor told me my heart was normal,
Of average size,
In the pictures they took of it.
They were worried it was too large, inflamed,
And that's what was making me sick.
But it wasn't that
After all.

I'd like very much
To see those
Glow-in-the-dark
Pictures.
Once for marveling,
Twice to check and make sure my heart isn't
Made of thick paper
Or citrus flesh,
Prone to tearing open,
And dripping down your wrist.

Break my ribs.
Thirty compressions,
High-quality.
I think it'd be nice for someone else to pump the blood
around my body
For a change.
I've never once had a break.
Someone should really do something
About that.
Put canned-plastic breath into my still lungs,
Fast filling with lymph.

In consciousness,
I worry that these lungs
Are temporal,
Or on borrowed credits.
That their lifespan
And my lifespan
Might not match up.
But of course, they will.
We are bound, lashed together, firmly by raw sinews,
And wires the diameter
Of a single cell.

Where they go, I go.
In fear,
In ill,
I go.

I long for quiet,
Or maybe for grief.
And when it comes, I can't stand it.
All of this—
It means I am dying.
My god,
Have I already reached my zenith-state?
Am I right of the bell curve?
Please,
Turn that background whirl back on
Before I teeter off completely.
For Chrissake,
Give me those keys.
I am dying

A CHILD'S BLOOD BARGAIN

Poem by H.B.

They never told me
How my bones would crack apart,
How my throat would tear in half

All so I could come out *better*.
They never told me
That, in order to be born anew,
I'd have to die.

They *tricked* me! I thought
It was a sacrifice I was willing to make.

That if I just broke enough,
I'd become what I wanted to be.

They never told me
I would wake up with the ache
Of all the failed attempts
As the only thing holding me together.

POINT OF VIEW

Digital art by Arensymotis



TEAPOT OF THOUGHTS

Poem by Katie Livermore

I try and I try
with all of my might
to get every single
tiny answer right.

studying is boring
so I found a new way—
it involves pouring.

everyday I take
a brewed teapot of thoughts
put the spout to my ear
and wait till it stops.

but sometimes
right before a test
I lean too far over
and pour out the rest.
letters will scramble
and I'll start to ramble
words in Spanish
will just start to vanish
and all that's in my
teacup of a head
will be as useful as lead.

studying is as muddying
as boots in the rain
I'd rather dance in puddles
than burden my brain.

WRITING YOUR THESIS PAPER

Tang poem by Erica De Sutter Summerville

talk think read draft write
work sweat book scribe cite
late night neck ache quick
quote pen mark cry type

4:00 AM

Poem by Olivia Eiler

your back gleamed in the moonlight
like a dewy hill
and i sat there running my fingertips
across every freckle
mourning already where we would have go from here
any second now
any second

you laughed at the way my face looked,
unblinking in the dark while
i memorized how your smile looked
as if memorizing a eulogy
crumpling up the scribbled notecards
and facing the congregation
“We are gathered here today..”

it was in the first beams of morning
watching you blink open your eyes
that i learned what religion must feel like
and i saw God in your furrowed brow
i felt the holy spirit between your teeth
I was witness to the reincarnation
the resurrection
i could have said “amen”
when you asked me to leave





EQUINOX

Digital art by Trinity Farr

UNTITLED

Digital photography by Wyatt Cross



THREE

Flash fiction piece by Maria Tejada Solórzano

Sometimes a story can be told in three parts.

Number One: You are born and you can see her, your lifeline and creator, the one who raised you and taught you how to say *“Te quiero mucho”*!

Number Two: You change, transform, grow as tall as her, and you love her with your whole heart, even as you extend that love to the others she bears after you.

Number Three: You watch as she is lowered into the ground. Hands grab your shoulders, tug at your shirt, and the ones she bared after you ask *“Now que nos va a pasar? What are we going to do?”* But you say nothing as she is finally laid to rest.

LEAVE!

Poem by Nicolai Trung

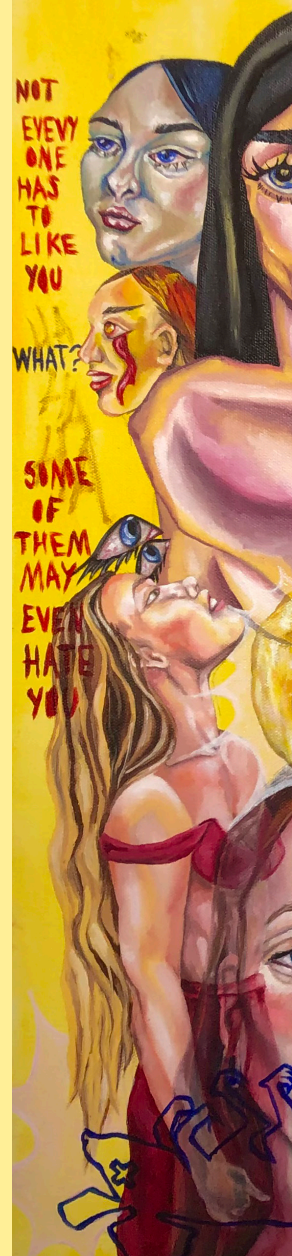
When someone I am interested in leaving me for the pursuit of another/others
I let them go and wish them luck.
for another great couple is about to be formed
for I am practicing and learning to be happy for others' harvests
for I know mine has yet to come and will come and is going to come
for a greater promise that I made to myself
"You accept the love you think you deserve"

and I
and you
deserve better

Maybe not even better
just different
some other types of love

full of sweets
full of life
full of lessons

So
i wish you luck, love, and light
for another great couple is about to blossom
for one day someone would give me the same blessings
i will embrace it
tightly
mine



CASUAL ACQUAINTANCES

Oil in canvas by Adeline Hull



I WILL MISS YOU.

Poem by Keith Tyler Revilla

You pressed my heart with yours
I clung to you
When I needed you most
I held your short paws
You pulled them away most of the time
I laughed every time

Every time you snuggle into the smallest spots
The way you laid your whole belly onto the floor
The way you struggle to get up on the couch
The way you dropped your chew toy
When you did get on the couch

But now
I realize you
You are the loss
I'm struggling the most with
Thanks to you
I have what I need
To move on
You're not gone yet
But I know the end is drawing near

For now
Can I hold you?
One last time?

PUFFIN PALS

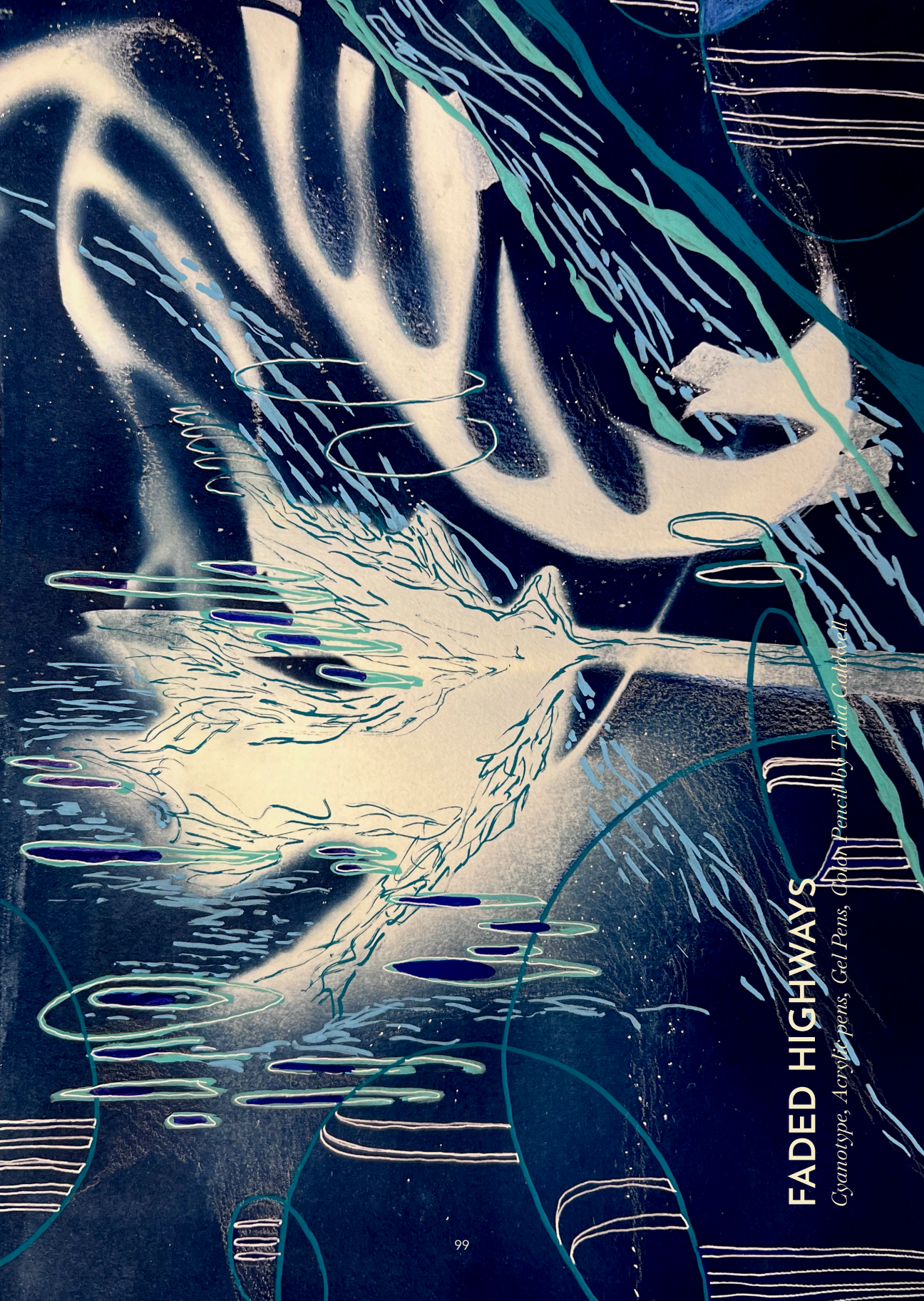
Linoleum black print by Talia Caldwell



THE FATES' ABECEDARIAN FOR SLIPPERY SPIRTIS

Poem by Brynne Boehlecke

Authenticity is not a statement of fact.
A mirage of honesty is inevitable, when the
Borders between fact and fiction stretch
from life to death. When the birds land on the
Chthonic cracks splintering across the
meadows, when the organs turn to mud and
Detritus on the floor of the poplar box, a
feast for the bugs and beasties—
Every truth is dust. Persephone folds you
in her blossoming arms, wrapping vines and
Flowers around your withering limbs.
She whispers into your hair, mother and murderer,
Gardens of promises disintegrating at her
feet. You don't care, happy to be
Home, in one way or another. You don't
yet realize what's gone. What you've lost. It's an
Innocent moment, uncontrollable, two
friends reuniting. You hope it never ends, because
Justice can't live where nothing else does.
Or maybe we're wrong again, maybe the only
Kindness in a place such as this is the
inescapability of knowing. What is lost is
Lost. Does it matter if it was real or not?
Of course it does, you yell at us as your body
Mummifies in the damp earth, black fabric
becoming bandages; We understand. But we are
Nocturnal, most aware when the light dims.
We're trying to help, we sob as you
Open black holes in the cemetery,
swallowing breath and beads and wax and feathers.
Persephone holds you by the ankles. A void
is only what you give it. And it doesn't let go.
Quickly, as if the eulogy never happened,
dirt and rocks crumbling around thin fingers, you
Rise from the flower beds, perfectly turned
just for you. We are upset. You
Surrender the serenity we wove for
your sleep. She wouldn't have hurt you. The lies were
Temporary. The sincerity was real. You're
irrational, dear, casting lines into graves. It's
Unnerving, really, the roots you disturbed
and the fires you set. We miss you. Your
Vanity is forgiven. Please come home
(in one way or another). You don't have to
Weather any more storms up there.
You can be warm, safe. Persephone will kiss you until
Xanthic petals bloom from your pores, tinting
the world gold, and we will hold your hands,
Yarrow and daisies curling from the ends
of your hair. You can be as you were at the
Zenith of your life, radiant and whole and
blissfully ignorant of the abyss calling you home.



FADED HIGHWAYS

Cyanotype, Acrylic pens, Gel Pens, Colored Pencils by Talia Catlowell



DESK OF A BUSY MIND

Paper collage by Eva Israelsen

AN OLD TOME OF POETRY

Poem by Leah Kahn

There is a sweetness hid
Between the crackling pages
Of an old tome of poetry.
The pages rip with reading
As if the book is bleeding
So old that it needs heeding
Or in two volumes it will crack!
But hidden neath the rippage,
The ink blots,
The snippets-
A secret rose garden scents the blotted ink
And yellowed page.
If you wait and listen,
Find a jar to rest your pen in-
Letting your eyes drink in
The words written cross the page-
Child you'll find gardens,
You'll find lovers
You'll find riches
(far more valuable than any man can say)
For by poet's law is written
And by God's good grace is given,
Love-
In between the pages
Of an old tome of poetry.

MANIC PIXIE MERMAID

Prose by Anonymous

It was Halloween and I came as I am in a glittery mermaid costume that was a tad too tight but no one else noticed because I remembered to wrap my arms around my midsection whenever compelled to bend or sit. I wore false eyelashes, waterproof eyeliner, waterproof lipstick and waterproof glitter on my cheeks. One has to be pretty underwater too, or what's the point?

It was nightmarish. It always is. To giggle like a fairy princess at punchlines I either didn't even hear or didn't understand. They just kept talking and yapping, somewhat sensibly at first till the alcohol filled their warm veins and it all just cascaded into a twitching gray slush of half living primordial diction that I could hardly believe I was tolerating. I hadn't had more than a single shot that night. I wanted to cut back; I didn't want to turn into the tearful mess that Tom would let lie beside him through the morning while he dreamed of other girls.

Tom told me to take my top off because he thought "It'd be funny," so I did, and it was. It was funny that I would do something like that for a boy as obnoxiously tit focused as Tom, arguing with him at first as if I really had some semblance of my honor remaining. I could have killed him if I'd wanted to. Could have dragged him with me under the icy waves and tied his body deep down at one of the lonely edges of my forest. Who would know it was me? Who would guess that the cheery, easy-going Mira was the real culprit?

But Tom's the only one who knows who I am. Not a soul but him has seen my fires; has seen me scream in a rainstorm and still had the guts to invite me to his halloween party. I spend most of my time around him wondering what sort of face he'd make choking ocean water down into his tar - crusted lungs, but the thought of having no one to complain to about men that act the way he does keeps me from it every time. Not to say he's seen the bed of sandy green bones I sleep upon. That's all mine.

I was standing fenced in by a circle of flesh, slime and spraying spit, dreaming of dense emerald waves, when I realized that I'd been asked a question. A boy in an elf costume stared blankly at me through intoxicated eyes; cloudy gray, devoid of any complex thought. "Well, do ya Mira? Do ya?" I tried to think of what he might have asked. I glanced at Tom for support but he was far too entranced by the dense emerald of his jello shot. *Damn.* Their dewy eyes beamed into me like flood lights, and I shook and sighed and said,

"I uh, I think I'm gonna throw up."

Nauseous, I stumbled into the cold October air in nothing but my bra and skirt, outside of a pale yellow house that had been left to Tom by his late grandmother. I felt sick, but I was fine. No vomit this time. I was sober.

Why had I stuck myself in this dome of shallow joy? Wondering, endlessly; what would happen if I were to yell? To scream? To say I'm just tired and I want to go home? Would they even believe it? Leave me in the dust? Stranded on the icy shore like driftwood?

I shoulda stood up. I shoulda set Tom's shirt of fire with his own lighter, dumped tequila on the bastard and said "Fuck you, you're a misogynistic coward and you use women to boost you're ego cause you're dad left you and everyone knows it."

How could I? If it weren't for Tom and his boisterous friends taking me in I'd be alone again. Just me and the kelp. So I waste my time on boys that don't know me. Let them enjoy a feigned smile for a few hours before I kill them. I act like *her* and they love me. Then I act like me. Real me. Red eyed, spiky toothed, demon - with - a - tail me. I love to see the horror in their eyes before they go. Because I'm horrible.

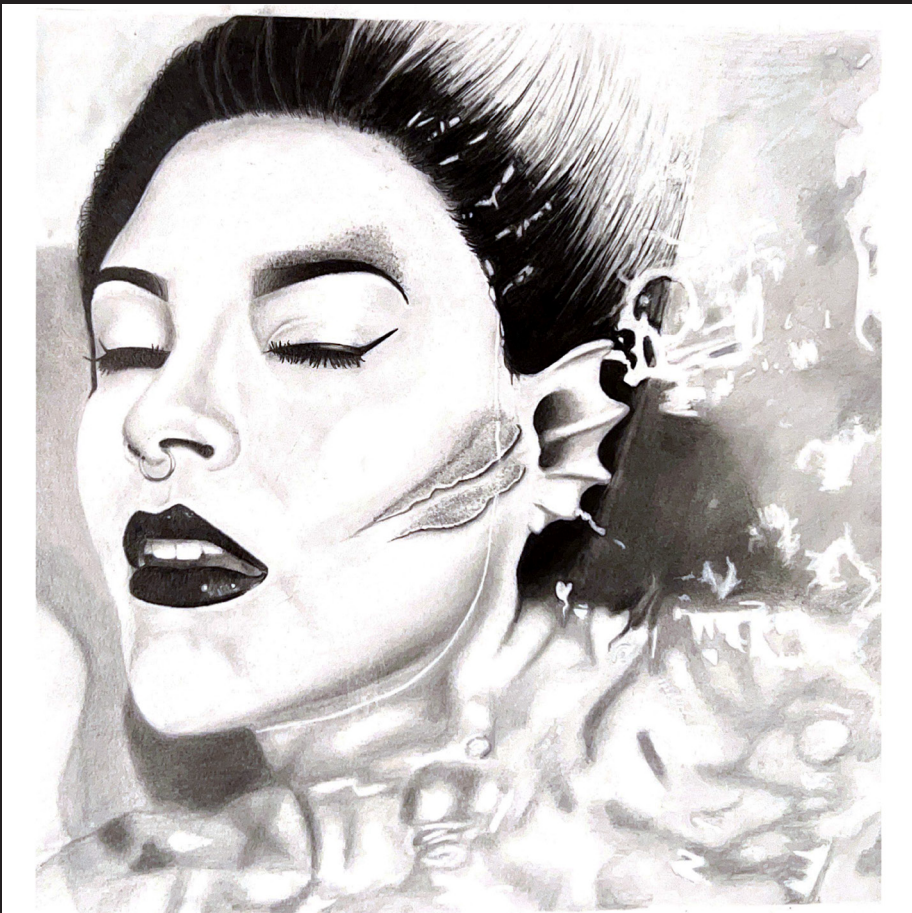
I sat on the steps and waited for Tom to come out and play The Knight. He loved to play savior.

A platinum haired boy all dressed up like the douchiest of lumberjacks came sauntering towards me. *Oh, a poor girl sitting all alone. All dressed up in costume? She musta come from the party, musta got her heart broken and left early. Poor poor girl, Maybe she's sad enough to sleep with me.*

Come find out.

"MERMAID" SELF PORTRAIT

Graphite by Stephanie Plata



IMAGINATION

Acrylic by Hannah Lull



IS MY BRAIN A BEAUTIFUL PLACE?

Poem by AnaKarrinn Tracy

Is my brain a beautiful place?
If a stranger were to come inside,
would the shards of thoughts zinging by
resemble colorful birds?
Would a poignant poem, an intricate art,
form out of the jumble of words?

Words enter through my ears and eyes,
my mouth, my hands, my memory.
I test them on my tongue,
some sweet and smooth, some salt and emery.
Rough words: they scratch my soft brain matter.
They cause transmitters' routes to scatter.
To the unsuspecting stranger, does this chaos, disarray,
look like a bright, carefully choreographed scene from an innovative play?
The shards of glass, of brass, of sass,
are extras running to and fro;
the speeding light, the fight, the fright,
are jazzy dancers in the glow
of hot stage lights.

Is this what someone else would see?
Would the tucks and folds of my neural tissue be like a jungle filled with steam,
with shadows darting like my thoughts, which fail to filter through the screen?
Would feathers rush and shush like wind through grasses in a glade?
Would wild creatures lurk like stealthy mist in shifting shade,
before letting loose their haunting screams, untamed and free:
unbridled life echoing soft against the greenery?

In other parts, would jags and crags of city silos pierce the sky -
a milky blue oasis punctuated by and by
as jets and helicopters slice away at paradise,
carting first-class thoughts to nosebleed seats to sit and sigh,
and watch as riffraff fills the front seats, buzzed and blurred and high?

And then, above the green and graphite, urban grid and wooden tangle,
might a visitor look to the sky and marvel at bright dreams adangle,
tethered to the heavens by fine threads of deepest thought,
like stars, bejeweling space, bestowing light where there was nought?
Would my fancies spin like planets in that lofty silken space,
dancing with each other through a realm of cosmic grace?

2023 Provost's Literary Prize - Poetry Winner

INTERSTATE EXIT 675: THANKSGIVING

Poem by Flora Snowden

The freeway along the line where Oregon turns into California looks different this year. Things change. I know. But I don't remember the trees shouting this orange, or how the evergreens hug their blazing neighbors like they know the flames won't last. I know that time turns in circles, so why am I constantly reminding myself not to claw my fingernails against the edge of it? Walking down my building's halls at night, I let my right-hand touch lightly to the texture purposefully painted onto their walls. My fingers love this; the contact. I wrote recently that I want someone to hold me the way a body hits the surface of moving water. I feel the need to state this again. My cousin says she cried when she read the last piece I sent her; while in a dimly lit, yellow-hued, hotel stairwell, I had the most honest conversation I've had all year. She was wearing my coat and I was pretending not to shiver. An hour before, she made me laugh until my lungs tapped out when she ran from the security guard walking his rounds. She bolted, our joint still lit in my hand. He passed without a word; her 21-year-old face sheepish when he nodded to her standing 15 feet away. My face was already splitting, sitting on the second of three concrete steps below a sign that read "warning snakes", its red edges warped and waning. She says she's not good in a crisis, but I'd argue she's worse when there isn't one. We've both gotten used to toeing that line. We'll keep coming back though, and not because of the turning trees or even because her father shared his parents with my mother, but because looking out over the steep and rocky drop-off behind the hotel, I see my mother driving her beat-up high school car down the highway over the river. She probably had long hair and I can't put my finger on why the image of sunglasses shoved on the bridge of her nose and the orange glow bouncing off the ripples of the river is the only way I can imagine her here. Maybe it's because it's the only way I can imagine myself here. It's a snapshot that I'm not even sure existed, of 1981, and dark chestnut hair, and I think a dream of leaving town. That's what I feel every late November behind the freeway-sidelined hotel; I feel the desire to leave. It brims the bottom of my stomach in a familiar way. It isn't desperate or urgent. Actually, it makes me seep deeper into my seat, the same way I imagine my mother's right foot pressing into the gas pedal as she left for college. Hands at ten and two, sunglasses and a sunset.

2023 Provost's Literary Prize - Prose Winner

HAROLD AND HAROLD

Prose (excerpt) by Lillian Hayden

It's always the birds. No one believes me, but it's true. One time a flamingo unfolded its leg and spoke to me through the bars that were keeping me back. She told me her secrets. I will not be sharing those.

Another time a pigeon stole a meatball from my spaghetti.

On top of spaghetti/all covered in cheese/I lost my poor meatball/to a bird named Maurice. That's not how the song goes, but that is how it went. The bird didn't tell me his name. That would be ridiculous. I read it on the collar around his neck.

But this time was different. I'm not so sure it wasn't real. Or I am sure it did happen but reality is something no one can over grasp. Or Spring Grove should've kept me for a few more weeks.

Janet is a good friend of mine. We met when we were just seven years old. We met again at Spring Grove. I was the only one who was a patient. I felt embarrassed at first, but then the little cup she gave me each day grew heavier. I only hang out with her for the pills now. But she also likes drugs. So sometimes I'll let her do them with me.

Last Wednesday I went over to Janet's. I only planned to buy some stuff off of her, but then she showed me her new parrot.

"His name is Harold," Janet said.

"He looks like a Jonathan," I said. We both stared at him.

"I know." Without looking at me, she continued, "I have to go to work. You can watch Harold for me."

"No, I can't."

"There are some papers on the table over there that tell you how to take care of him." I looked at the table she gestured at to see papers of all colors covering the entire surface.

"Why are they rainbow?"

"They're not." Janet left.

I stayed.



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PORTAL TEE

Fashion by Jadon Allen



