

; *see also*

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**Misaligned Semicircles**  
*Janani Ramachandran*

**Do not, under any circumstance, insert  
genitals**  
*Ari Chivukula*

**The Justice Watch**  
*Kiki Tapiero*

**All My Success is a Disaster**  
*Sarang Shah*

**The Junipers  
Trash  
it's a surgery  
Coo'ee**  
*Amanda Almeda*

**Detritus**  
*Jacob Schapero*

**Appalachian Trail Wildflowers  
Schoolyard Love  
To Love a Body  
Naked  
Father (a Ghazal)  
Reimagining Light  
Paint Branch Trail at Night  
Summertime  
The Doe**  
*Ella Cady*

**Fr. George**  
*Andrea Nuñez*

**Somewhere, sweetly**  
*Anna Gabriela Rodriguez*

**Remind Me**  
*Sana Mayat*

Dear reader,

Legal writing is often boring. Lawyers love giving lip service to different styles of written advocacy, but the truth is that it favors certain tendencies. Keep the sentences short, the inferences tight, the citations exact, the signposts so clear that you can dissect a brief into outline format and lose nothing in the process. As much as we owe our LRW/WOA professors for training us under this rubric, we owe ourselves a reminder that our thoughts and feelings can't always be so mechanically distilled, reworked, and reconstituted.

What you hold in your hands is the result of a concerted effort to institutionalize this reminder. It is the inaugural issue of *See Also*, the literary journal at Berkeley Law, and we are so excited to present it to you. The theme of this issue is longing: for other times, other places, other lives. We are confident that the pieces herein will remind you of your own longings, past and present. We hope you will find in the work of your fellow students not just a relief from the legalese we read and write for class but a source of abiding pleasure and reflection.

In fiction, we have two short stories:

- Like a radio ad from an alternate universe version of the '50s (or is it an alarmingly dystopian version of our future?), Ari Chivukula's "Do not, under any circumstances, insert genitals" presents an alluring answer to an age-old question for single partygoers: where do I find a +1 for the hottest party in town? Dial-a-Doll Service is here to serve, and maybe even help you cross off a pesky item that's been on your to-do list for far too long.
- Kiki Tapiero's "The Justice Watch" gives us a startling glimpse into a world not unlike our own, where electronic surveillance threatens to reveal all our secrets. With a light and thoughtful tone that recalls George Saunders's "Sea Oak" and Charles Yu's "Fable," this story examines a cycle of paranoia and surveillance, making it feel bigger than it is long.

In poetry, we have six poets:

- Amanda Almeda offers a set of four poems that still us with lines of unexpected vulnerability and grace. "Coo'ee," for instance, shows us how our longings can cut through our efforts to remove ourselves from them. Alone in the desert, having crossed an ocean "[t]o sleep under the galaxy," the speaker still can't help recalling someone dear. She wonders then, "Is it too much to ask to have this moment for myself?"
- Ella Cady presents a suite of nine poems whose images range from the beauty of nature ("the black / sky full and incandescent") to the unreality of our thoughts ("your face is dripping, luminous"). Each poem reflects on what we long for in the places we live and the people we love.
- Anna Gabriela Rodriguez's "Somewhere, sweetly" reflects on the meaning of belonging, haunted by both memories and premonitions of a world seemingly bent on breaking us, yet the raw humanity of her words brings us closer to our own.
- Jacob Schapero's "Detritus" sets forth a barren landscape in which "The judge abandons focus, / The king is left alone." What happens at the edge of loneliness? What keeps the speaker going as both friend and foe are stripped away?

; see also

- Sarang Shah’s “All My Success Is a Disaster” merges a speech by Donald Trump and “The Second Coming” by W.B. Yeats. The result is a poem both eerie and true. “I buy planes because i’m proud,” says the speaker. “I buy them because i don’t believe.”
- The Womxn of Color Collective’s “Remind Me” extends many timely reminders: “That I am filled with too much light / To let my fire die to ashes,” “That softness is not weakness.” This poem gives voice to desires and beliefs that are often smothered and erased.

In drama, we have a scene from Janani Ramachandran’s *Misaligned Semicircles*, which reimagines the process of reclaiming love. Combining astrology with musical theatre, *Misaligned Semicircles* is a fantasy—equal parts whimsy and philosophy—of what happens when our deepest longings come true.

Last but not least, Andrea Nuñez remembers Paulist Fr. George Fitzgerald through a black and white sketch of his portrait when he was ordained as a priest in 1995. The portrait is a realist depiction that adds soul to his image, evoking a sense of reverence and meditation on his life and spirit. Father George was an active member of Berkeley’s religious community, enriching many students’ lives at Berkeley Law.

Happy reading!

Amanda Almeda  
Ari Chivukula  
Liv Gee

Saffa Khan  
Luna Martinez  
Bill Nguyen

Anna Rodriguez  
Sarang Shah  
Dru Spiller

; see also

**Misaligned Semicircles**  
*by Janani Ramachandran*

*The following is an excerpt from scene one.*

**Astrologer:** The new moon symbolizes new beginnings, initiation, an openness to new opportunities. It involves taking bold emotional leaps of faith, setting new intentions and renewing commitments. For some, it signals a special kind of magic about to take place. Our two former lovers reunite on the night of a new moon entering Pisces, which is all about surrender, a time for exploring one's wildest dreams, spontaneous flow, enveloping oneself and succumbing to unpredictable changes. Feelings of vulnerability, or a perceived need for emotional protection might emerge. There's a mystical quality that characterizes Pisces, an elusive spirit that explores emotions beneath the surface in a dreamlike manner. It is quite common for a Pisces moon to stir up old memories or bring forth individuals from seemingly past lifetimes.

What would you say to a former lover on the night of your first reunion? Is there beauty in exploring the truth of whether or not you both could fall in love once again?

**Him and Her** (the former lovers): What if we had a second chance to change our story?

**Her:** I'm not quite sure I'd want to know what would happen. When we parted, I created narratives in my head of what our story was, and what it will never be, in order to heal. To make sense of the reality that "we," will not be. I chose to carefully construct that story, crafted with lies on top of half truths, layered on top of memories of pain and unrequited feelings in order to mask the love beneath all those layers, the love we once shared. I wanted to forget the good times so I would never tempt myself to return. So I created a new character for you in my head, an image that reflected only what I needed to remember. The less beautiful version of you.

**Him:** I know the past can be uncomfortable to remember, but you decided to cover up what was once beautiful? Exploring the deep emotional wounds you cut into my flesh, the pain that you engraved into my memory, isn't the version of reality I want to remember, but it's part of the truth I don't want to forget.

**Her:** I blacklisted your name from my head, refused to say it out loud. I consciously released from my memory facts about you that I no longer want to remember, your address, the precise shape of your eyes, the shade of brown on your skin, the sound of your voice.

**Him:** You tried to erase me from your memory?

**Her:** Every time I saw a car that resembled yours, I jumped with anxiety. Every time I passed the highway exit leading to your house, I cringed with nostalgic longing. Every time I visited our favorite bar, my eyes constantly darted around the room looking for you, half hoping I'd never accidentally run into you, half desperately wishing I would.

; *see also*

I didn't want to feel this anymore. So I painstakingly tried to carve out of my head the symbols and familiar images that reminded me of you, so that I could heal. Sometimes I long to know that if between those episodes of pain and heartache, if there was ever something real that tied us together, something honest that wasn't just my fantasies, the silly schoolgirlish stories about our romance that I created in my head when I thought I was in love.

**Him:** You don't believe you actually loved me? You told me that our love was so real yet so painful that it stung you, twisted your insides, made you ill and weak. You question the very feelings that drove you to your pain?

**Her:** I question everything so that I can't ever be that vulnerable again. I don't want to erase those stories I wrote about you in my head since we last parted, I don't want to forget the version of your character I chose to remember. I don't want this hardened layer of clay that I built to protect me from pain, the solid wall that I worked so hard to create in our time apart, to simply shatter in an instance with one fell swoop of your arm around my back and –

**Him:** (*gracefully takes her hand*) What if we had an opportunity right here, right now, to create a new story? What if we chose to explore an alternative reality in which we were always one and stayed constantly, unconditionally in love? Every choice we make has an alternative that we simply don't know about, and already exists in another dimension. I want to play out that alternative narrative and explore that world with you. Step over the line into this other universe. There's everything to gain. Come here.

**Her:** (*cautiously pulls back*) What if we can't return back into this reality? What if you become my worst nightmare? I don't want to return to the state of crushing anguish I was once in because of you.

**Him:** But isn't there something thrilling, ecstatic about exploring the unknown? Give me your hand. Just trust this feeling and travel there with me.

*Sensual movements set to musical interlude*

**Astrologer:** Their fevered feelings flow into movement, their potent passion permeates into the room. The former lovers experience a synesthesia of confusion, nostalgia, longing, insecurity. They share the longest embrace, the energy transferred creates pulsating vibrations, a sensation that communicates more than any words could say. Each sheds a tear to honor the sense of loss they had both experienced without each others' presence in their lives. Each sheds a second tear to celebrate the beauty of that moment, even if it was for that one moment only, that they were back in each other's arms. Her gaze reminded him of what it felt like to truly be wanted again. The story his soulful eyes communicated reminded her of all the reasons she had fallen in love. The way their bodies fit so perfectly, how they folded snugly into each other's curves and crevices, reminded them both of what a safe space felt like. She forgot how ecstatic the sensation of his strong grip felt along her skin, how comforting his palms felt maneuvering the slopes of

*; see also*

her back, caressing the curls of her hair, massaging her warm skin. How raw it felt as he grabbed her with a reassuring force that reminded her of everything she desperately wanted to forget, everything that she told herself she no longer wanted and certainly did not need.

The delicate sway of her fingers along his spine reminded him how nuanced their love once was, how well she knew the intricacies of his body, the sensitivities in his frame. How she knew to simply put him to ease without saying a word.

Never before had these two felt so compelled to simply kiss for what seemed like endless hours upon hours. Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss those large, wet lips, tease with tongue to and fro, peck then collide. A sensitive softness and ferocious vigor alternating through this never-ending lip lock. If they could live their lives frozen in that very moment, they could then die in peace.

**Her:** I find myself floating into fantasies I once had with you. Resurrecting this dream from the sunken depths of my memory of us.

**Him:** I want to stare endlessly into your eyes and gaze into a soul I am once more beginning to know, learning you all over again. I want to rediscover your mystique. I want to dive head on into the ocean of your vast potential for love, relive every mad dream and fantasy I played out when you were away from me. I want to love recklessly without abandon –

**Her:** But I just want to live in this very moment! I could die in this moment. I don't want to burden this moment with thoughts of tomorrow, but instead ground myself in the realness of now.

**Him:** I never want to re-experience the gutted emptiness of my soul the way I did when you tore my heart apart. I cannot ever take you for granted again because I know how quickly I can lose you.

**Her:** But is this all real? Is this feeling alone enough, to know that we were once true, that our love was real? Does it end right here, when this moment has passed?

**Him:** I believe that there is beauty in truth. In seeking out to truth. If the truth is the very reality of this moment, why are you afraid that it would have to end?

**Her:** Because beauty is fleeting. Seeking out beauty intentionally will inevitably lead us into darkness, re-open wounds that need not be revisited.

**Him:** But is there not beauty in darkness? In the truth of that feeling?

**Her:** The only truth I vowed to never forget was the complete absence of beauty when we fell apart. The weakness that I sunk to when I was losing you, when I couldn't find my sense of self. I promised to never, ever allow myself to recreate that pain. I told myself that you were forever gone from my circle, our story had ended. But in this very moment I can't help but feel

; *see also*

something real, some element of ‘to be continued’ in our story, something terrifying about to happen that will break all those promises to myself –

**Him:** Shhh...just let go. (*he creates a shape with both their fingers and kisses the pinkies.*)  
For ‘cleansing’ that past and continuing forward.

**Her:** For letting go.

; *see also*

**Do not, under any circumstance, insert genitals**

*by Ari Chivukula*

You're on the cusp, having scored an invite to the party of the century. It may have taken unpalatable actions, but tonight, the crown is yours. As you prepare for fashionably late arrival the confident veneer cracks; your social calculus didn't carie a variable: the plus one.

Never fear, Dial-a-Doll Service is here! In your infinite wisdom, you put down a retainer on this year's hottest date. With a few taps of your phone, our limo is summoned with a companion to fill in.

You're dancing at the party, the doll's hands scaling your front to massage your clavicular cavity. The host flashes a thumbs up as you come in for a landing on the couch. The back of your neck burns from the glare of partygoers, but you're busy winning the war against gingivitis. Forceps tenderly separate lips and depress tongue; gums gingerly<sup>1</sup> probed for recession; most coffee and wine stains removed<sup>2</sup>. You moan as the drill starts that root canal you could never manage to schedule. The sound drowns out the party, but you're sucking too much nitrous to care. Good thing you prepared<sup>3</sup> for a long night.

<sup>1</sup>*Patented 'No-Bleed' technology.*

<sup>2</sup>*Do not run whitening cycle more than once per day.*

<sup>3</sup>*DDS hand mounted caffeine suppository sold separately.*



; *see also*

## **The Justice Watch**

*by Kiki Tapiero*

“No baby, of course there’s no one else. You’re all I could ever want and more.”

“You mean it?”

“For the last time, yes babe. I love you so much, I would die without you. Now you should get some rest.”

“Okay. I love you too. Good night.”

“Good night babe.”

The girl’s phone line clicked off first. The boy’s phone line clicked off after he breathed a sigh of relief. After making sure they both definitely hung up, Pat stopped the recording, switched off his machinery, took off his headphones and stretched. Another long day at work.

It was just a standard cheating case but it was taking him a long time to finish. Pat started this job a few months ago, and was still learning the ropes. With every new case he was assigned, though, he was slowly getting faster and faster. He was nowhere near the level of his coworkers, who put together cases so clear they unfolded like a movie: clearly defined characters, pictures of the two lovers together looking at each other with that sparkle in their eyes, recordings of flirtatious conversations, the blatant lies told to partners, and sometimes, videos of the cheating in action. His coworkers seemed to always know exactly where to get the best shots from. He aspired to get to that level someday.

Being fairly new to the job, Pat mostly stuck with getting his materials from phones. It was the easiest, since people carry their phones everywhere, and it picks up just about everything in their lives. The only problem is, it’s usually poor quality. The pros go through the effort of tracking people down and using devices in the area: security cameras, neighboring devices, etc. Nevertheless, Pat’s method worked, it just took a *while* to make a solid case. That’s why he was sitting here at 2am, listening to an argument for material he wasn’t even sure was enough. He rubbed his eyes sleepily and yawned. Pat still wasn’t sure how to feel about his new job, and not being able to tell anyone about it made a conclusion harder to make. But he was pretty sure he was on the right side of justice, and at the very least it paid the bills and kept him busy.

He grabbed his coat and didn’t bother cleaning up his work station. All he could think about was the bed he was about to lay in for a few hours before returning to work again tomorrow. On autopilot, he walked to the train, sat down by a window seat. But his mindlessness was interrupted by a fellow passenger taking a seat beside him.

“Mind if I sit here?” Pat jumped, as the voice was the one from the phone, the one he had been listening to for weeks now. He looked up, and there he was, in the flesh.

“Go right ahead,” Pat said uncomfortably.

“Thanks!” The boy cheerily sat down, and sighed. “So, where are you headed to so late at night?”

“Oh just going home. Long day at work.” The boy’s look was so eager, it was piercing. “How about yourself?”

“Same here. I work at an office –“ Lies. Pat knew they were lies, lies, lies. And he was bored, they were all things he knew the boy told people when he was going out to see his secret lover. And actually, if the boy kept rambling on like this, he might just help him finish his case.

Pat discreetly slid his hand into his coat pocket, opened up the recording app on his work phone. He tried to slide his finger onto the record button, but his finger barely missed it and instead hit play on his last recording.

“No baby, of course there’s no one else...” The boy instantly recognized his voice and stopped abruptly in mid-sentence, with a look of sheer terror on his face.

“What... is that ... me?”

Pat panicked, trying to turn it off. He took his phone out of his pocket and kept trying to click the stop button while giving some kind of half-hearted explanation.

“No, no that’s just my friend, he was just – ” The boy snatched the phone and ran. Of course, they were on a train, and there was nowhere to run to. He realized his mistake right away. Pat laughed, filling up space in his newfound position of power. He stood up, and ominously walked towards the boy, stopping only a few feet away from him and piercing him with his gaze of confidence. “Give me my phone, Ethan. Who do you have to show it to?”

The boy’s heart was racing as he tried to come up with an answer, and he looked around the train car to find someone who could help him. The few people on the train were watching him, but out of intrigue rather than concern. The doors finally opened, and the boy ran out, tears streaming down his face. Pat laughed silently to himself about the whole situation and then sighed. Ah well, at least he backed everything up before he left work.

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For months, Ethan was paranoid. He couldn’t sleep or eat. The worst part was not knowing, and not having anyone to ground him in reality. He went through everything in the phone over and over and over again, reliving every horrible lie he had told again and again.

Ethan quickly figured out that the information was coming from his phone. He destroyed his own phone, and became paranoid of everyone else’s devices recording him too. He had so many questions about who had this information and why. He had even hired a personal investigator just to see if either his girlfriend or his lover had hired someone. They showed him receipts of their bank statements, texts and calls with other people, nothing came up. Same for his family members and friends. He could not uncover anything about who was getting this information about him, who wanted to expose his lies or when they were going to do it.

Pat, of course, had been watching it all, almost feeling bad that just as Ethan was recovering, he had finished the case, and turned it in to his supervisor. Pat had considered wiping the phone just to give Ethan some piece of mind. But he hoped Ethan would just come clean to his girlfriend, or his friend, or just someone, and make Pat’s job easier. Unfortunately, Ethan was just a silly boy who still thought that he was untouchable, even with evidence in the palm of his hand proving otherwise. Poor Ethan didn’t have a clue what was coming.

...

“What the fuck is this?!” That seemed to be the phrase of the week for Ethan. His worst nightmare had become reality – slowly, all the evidence was surfacing. His girlfriends’ friends, neighbors, and family members one way or another were getting ahold of the evidence. She was receiving accidental texts from him that he never sent, finding love letters he never wrote, and finding him in pictures he never posted or sent to anyone. He knew it was the doing of the man on the train. What he didn’t know was how he had so many contacts, how he made it all appear so natural.

Ethan didn't even deny the allegations. It was his girlfriend who denied the evidence right in front of her, who wanted to find the silver lining. It made Ethan think that maybe if he came clean to her, maybe they could have worked things out. Maybe he could have gotten to the root of his problems, his desire for attention, his objectification of women. But it was too late now. After his girlfriend left him, he was too depressed to even see his lover. Ethan was absorbed in questioning his life and all the lies he's told. Small lies and omissions too – he wasn't really from Chicago, he was from the suburbs; he didn't talk about his parents' emotional dysfunction because he was ashamed. Why was it so hard to just live truthfully, to accept himself as a flawed human? His thoughts manifested themselves in his increasingly uncleanly apartment and anti-social behavior, but people just thought it was because of the break up.

And then one day, he watched a letter come in separate from the usual mail drop off time. He heard the door mail slot bang shut, and walked over curiously. The only thing that was dropped off was a post-card sized letter, with a picture of a cartoon eye in the top left hand corner instead of a return address, and in large black font the words:

WELCOME TO THE JUSTICE WATCH.

What did this mean? He tried showing it one day to his best friend Kenny later that day, leading only to more questions than answers.

"Dude, it's blank."

"No! It says it right there in huge font, can't you see it?" Ethan was on the verge of tears.

"Look man, I know the break up has been tough on you, and all, but you gotta calm the fuck down. This paper is *blank*. Maybe being at home all day isn't healthy for you. You haven't gone out in forever, and now you're starting to really freak me out with all this."

He showed them to family members and other friends, even took a picture of it. The response was the same every time.

And then in the mail, again at an unusual hour, he got a thicker and larger envelope with the same logo as the postcard, with the eye in the place of the return address. It was packed with pages upon pages of arguments Kenny had been getting into online. He had been totally trolling people with a fake account, defending Nazis and stirring up drama on comment sections. The things he said were offensive enough to make Ethan want to stop associating with Kenny, and he was sure many others would think the same if they ever found out. The last few pages of the packet contained some of Kenny's login information for various accounts, and one ominous page towards the end that read with a phone number, "This is your first case. Call here if you accept." What was going on. Ethan felt scared for what could happen to his friend if this ever got out.

He turned over the page with the phone number to the very last page, which was a blown up picture of Ethan's ex, written in big black font like before over her face, WELCOME TO THE JUSTICE WATCH. Ethan felt himself instantly fill with rage, and finally a sense of certainty over what had happened. Sure, he had done the wrong the thing before, but this was his chance to fix it. He could now make the world a better place.... While making others feel his pain. While being in a position of power. While staying in the shadows of secrecy. Finally, a weight had lifted off of Ethan's shoulders, and he dialed in the number on his cell phone.

Pat watched with glee from the computer monitor, satisfied with his work. Yet another successful case.

; see also

## **All My Success is a Disaster**

*by Sarang Shah*

*Note: This poem, a fictional speech by the president, is written using Jamie Brew's [predictive text interface](#). Written in Python, this interface allows a poet to feed in multiple texts, in this case Donald Trump's speech announcing his candidacy and The Second Coming by W.B. Yeats, as a source of vocabulary and sequencing to produce poetry entirely through predictive text (for more see Wikipedia on [Markov Chains](#)). This poem is not auto-generated. Rather every subsequent word is chosen carefully from a list of the top 10 words that are most likely to appear next based on the words that came before it and the source material.*

The second amendment is at hand.

I am officially running for president of God indignant.

You know, when President Trump is loosed upon the world, people are going to build a vast image out of our politicians. They will tell us what happens. They will know where we can't sustain ourselves.

They don't talk jobs.

They don't even answer simple questions.

But they're killing us economically.

They don't know that twenty centuries of innocence united all our leaders to take our money, our infrastructure, our bridges, schools, roadways, and airports.

Are we gonna get back the widening gyre? The falcon cannot run for public office with lion body and the head of a man.

A disaster called the blood-dimmed tide is moving from Mexico to Japan.

And pitiless rough beast have no incentive to build our great wall.

All our problems are like small potatoes compared to what happens to the white people. You know, we're building on television, because boy does that help us desert all conviction.

Is anywhere great?

You need somebody like China in Iraq building up their military.

Out playing Iran is all disaster.

At our stupidity they are beating us to say "We're gonna lead us back up to oil."

That we can't lead ourself cannot hold; for us economically.

That we have people that are controlled by charging rocking tax.

Are those words out when a shape with Saudi everything, its hour come round back, on military battlefield trying to kill us economically.

A rocking cradle; a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi; a good deal with China.

*; see also*

We need somebody that can bring back our jobs, because China has our jobs.

But now I'm building a vast family out of passionate vets.

In Mexico one year, all our problems and everything— said, “Donald, don't go into Manhattan; the falconer cannot hear mere speeches.”

I said, “Oh, that's crass to say. All sorts of crap is drowned in Brooklyn.”

Be there soon no protection?

Are those problems for us?

We are full of nonsense man.

We need somebody right now.

All my life I've been abandoned.

But money don't need money.

I learned that much wealth is all disaster.

All my success is a disaster.

I buy planes because I'm really proud.

I buy them because I don't believe.

I buy so I finally find agreement in the widening gyre of innocence.

I love my father somewhere in sands.

Be it, Dad they'll love?

I love what I seen.

I love what I won't accept.

Be there very soon a country that's unsalvageable, lost, and pitiless.

To nightmare born a leader that's based on television.

In Trump we're always going to be amazingly destructive.

And make America great again.

; *see also*

**The Junipers**

*by Amanda Almeda*

We trim the foliage on the junipers  
admire the charm of their

new  
smooth  
cone shapes.

Our garden is symmetrical, the  
roses grow in rows. This is not what  
I meant when I said I wanted to  
shape our lives together. I never  
imagined our life on a lattice.  
Tendrils tamed and path polite. I  
thought we were

*wild.*

*; see also*

We were supposed to

bloom

in an explosion of

samba reds

jazzy indigos

skittering pinks

tangled in

the wrangling weeds

forging a path to

burst into the

sunlight

unprotected from storm and decay

browning

at the

edges

but brilliant in the center

Beautiful

Beautiful

Beautiful

*; see also*

Dear Little Shoot  
from memory,

Dear Tiny Sprout  
now hardened husk,

You're plucking

your petals

to find

your prior

promise

but our roots  
are too enmeshed  
to yank out the mistakes.

Here are my shears, here is my weapon.

You can find me  
running  
across the gridlines of suburbia  
  
in  
diagonals.



*; see also*

## **Trash**

*by Amanda Almeda*

It started with the roses  
Though I don't believe they were any less red  
Than when I first gave them to you.  
You were clearing out  
All the funny smells from our home  
Until they turned into an argument.  
I don't see what's so smelly  
About poetry  
We didn't bind it in a book  
But it came in the form of  
Receipts and grocery lists  
Concert tickets and napkins  
With hashed out ideas  
And diary entries  
Of everything I've ever felt for you.  
I'm a collector of things—  
I didn't grow up with much.  
I am a garden  
And things grow in me.  
The roots of all my stories  
Are all acknowledged truths  
I wear them as blatantly as  
My own skin.  
Don't think you can do to me  
What you did to the roses  
My affections aren't milk  
I don't see how you find them  
Suddenly sour  
You can try to pour me out  
But I will never leave who you are.

*; see also*

**it's a surgery**  
*by Amanda Almeda*

it's a surgery  
this isn't the thick smack of skull fat on asphalt  
or the glassy crash of beer bottles on a tribal tattoo.  
it's a shard lodged in your nail bed and covered with hot pink lacquer  
and a bruise beneath your blouse

this is the opposite of spitting out your molars and wiping your sideburns

it's tweezing out your uglies one, by one, by one  
while they ask, Are You Ripe For The Picking?  
this is a fat bite of apple flesh and puppies hot for teacher  
it's the word pedagogical as you croon over your spectacles  
and the way your calves are still noticeably charming

this is a fit which you stomp out in stilettos  
it's wiping off your mascara and revealing your eye sockets.  
this is your head shoved down in a swimming pool  
while there's crying on the diving board over blue balls.

*; see also*

**Coo'ee**

*by Amanda Almeda*

I sprouted wings across the Pacific  
To see something a people called sacred  
To sleep under the galaxy as it revealed itself away from our blinding light.  
I went where the world is upside down  
For a moment that was bigger than anything I've known  
And as I watched the sun climb out over the Outback  
As it purpled and pinked the red king canyon  
You snuck in to fill the crack.

Is it so much to ask to have this moment for myself?  
Is it so much to ask to call something mine?

Fistful of Outback dust  
I sucked back a lungful of desert air  
To blow you as far away from me as I could  
But you keep circling back  
Freckling me red and sandy  
On my skin, in my inhale,  
In my ears, on my eyelashes

The aboriginals shout "coo'ee"  
Into the canyon to say  
"I am here"

I am here  
And the only echo I want to hear is my own.

*; see also*

## **Detritus**

*by Jacob Schapero*

Half wrought forms and broken things,  
Litter the shore where we begin,  
There're birds above on sullen wings,  
But below naught but the wind.

Awakening slow, muscles aflame,  
You find yourself alone.  
The bitter sands reach to the ends  
Of this frail stretch of loam.

Pull yourself from splintered vice,  
And walk back from the shore.  
Your dreams and times lie dead back there,  
But hopes out furthermore.

The chafing sands do scrape your arms,  
You pull your tunic close.  
The clouds and wind are bleak and bare,  
The land itself morose.

The king smiles slightly, distantly,  
The judge prepares his tools,  
Scum's hungers flames, feeding you,  
As you desperately quiet your fools.

Their clashing strobes do wear you,  
And make you feel quite grim,  
But from that friction all is forged,  
So their fighting brings blood to your skin.

Alone at last, with time to think,  
Though mind is most pushed to the brink,  
These lands have an iconic stink,  
Which drew your friends, though they did sink.  
And though quite distant, you may link,  
These nearby seas which your friends did drink,  
To that just occurred shade and wink,  
That beached you on this barren rink.

The pile of dirt you rise from

Reminds you of your grave.  
Of friends you left abandoned,  
And lives you failed to save.

It's warmer now, just slightly,  
The horizon goads you on.  
You walk far from the morning  
Inland away from the dawn.

The ache it fills your body,  
The scum it starts to roam,  
The judge abandons focus,  
The king is left alone.

The friction leaves you slowly,  
Without will to wander West,  
With no friends or foes to goad you,  
Without the vaguest quest.

Why do you think you killed them?  
Why do you think that they died?  
Why do you think they screamed and swore,  
Till their blood mingled deep with the tide?

Perhaps the judge lost focus,  
Perhaps the scum grew strong,  
Perhaps the king was broken,  
And healed his body wrong.

All the same you're all alone,  
With the judge left abandoned and the king left dethroned,  
And though at last you scream and moan,  
Their deaths come reap, as you have sown.

No time for guilt, no time for shame,  
No time for thought or blame.  
This oubliette of weakness,  
Is where you'll last remain.

And your friends they draw close to you,  
Looking almost great as they once did,  
Before your bleak blood boiled barren,  
And broke them as dark disease bid.

*; see also*

Even alone you're never alone,  
With your fools manifesting all dark.  
But their flame and ambition don't shield you,  
As your allies' emotions show stark.

They do just want to save you,  
From the beasts that are your core,  
Although in life you betrayed them,  
In death they'll reduce them to gore.

Brackishly they all draw closer,  
Eldritch, enameled in death,  
You will not find words to appease them,  
You solemnly savor your breath.

Maybe this future was liquid,  
Maybe you all could be saved,  
But your jaggedness did linger outwards,  
And you'll die for the sins that you braved.

And down at last with hands to neck,  
That'll tear and render to a speck,  
And as your blood does turn to fleck,  
Your thoughts reach out from bloody wreck.

You'll die unremembered, unmourned and unsaved,  
At the whims of the beasts to which you've always slaved.

But do try to find solace, here at the end,  
That it will finally finish at the hands of a friend.

*; see also*

**Appalachian Trail Wildflowers**

*by Ella Cady*

Dust blends with air  
and hovers outside  
their mouths.

Behind her ear,  
he tucks a trillium,  
steeped in cream and  
freckled with  
purple pinpoints.

The petals tiptoe  
into her hair.

*; see also*

**Schoolyard Love**

*by Ella Cady*

We sat under  
the barren willow,

the tattered  
claws descending  
toward us.

One dribbled  
day-old rain  
onto your lap.

My young soul sat  
in the swings across  
the grass, looking  
toward us,

her feet swaying,

a pendulum.

She couldn't help her  
endless stare.



; *see also*

**To Love a Body**

*by Ella Cady*

You loved me like hot water  
ringing, blooming over  
a cup, burning through my  
arteries, while I  
pulled my naked body out of  
your room, pores clogged  
with carpet, and my blood marked  
the dark, red, static, and your  
whispers swam through  
my brain-space like  
maggots.

Yet, your mouth dripped  
with cream, thudding softly on  
my eardrum, bodies pressed together,  
too easily spilling words like  
*I love you.*

*; see also*

**Naked**

*By Ella Cady*

I am sprawled out  
on your bed, as  
your nails don't brush,  
me, they prick me, and my body  
expands before deflating.

My breasts caved into my  
spine as I contract, and  
my head lolls, a lost  
bird bobbing on  
the waves.

*; see also*

**Father (a Ghazal)**

*by Ella Cady*

My hands were folded around a candlestick. I thanked Our Father.  
The light shone through my fingers, yellow to red. I felt Him there, Father.

I bought her sterling silver hoops for Mother's Day. In June,  
I slept by the pool, unstained, but I forgot my father.

As I pull his hair, it crashes over my fingers,  
ocean waves. I wonder why I call my lover daddy.

An oily sky hung above small town football games, my cheeks lined black.  
A spiraling brown whirl cut the sky. He hugged me, my father.

At four am, the rainbow fades, dims to black.  
The naked night creeps inside you. Help Father.

Sometimes, I would kick the covers off and writhe like a beetle.  
He kept tucking me in, eyes smoking with fatigue. Goodnight, father.

I ran back home, grass pricking my bare ankles.  
My shirt swung around my shoulder, torn. I cried with him, my father.

When I was born, I stared with big moon eyes.  
Ella, remember that trembling man, afraid and tender, your father.

*; see also*

**Reimagining Light**

*by Ella Cady*

Wedged between your dresser and the paint samples  
on the wall, you are squatting there. I could only  
imagine how your thighs must burn, tight,  
as you slip down slowly, melting, looking  
off somewhere.

Your laugh lines shine blue, eyes and lips sunken  
and ringed in translucent indigo. The light seeps  
through the window, heavy, caught in winter air.  
Dancing, blonde pressing into brown, your hair is  
alive. And your face is dripping, luminous, and  
moving all the time.

I look at the clock, and both hands bend. You sit  
down at the edge of the bed, and we find each other's  
eyes. We hold our minds out on a string, thinking  
there was something we had to do.

*; see also*

**Paint Branch Trail at Night**

*by Ella Cady*

The streetlights glow, creep  
behind my eyes. A fox  
chatters wildly, sinew  
dripping by his feet.  
Grassy hills  
lead me toward  
the river. Beneath my  
feet, shards of  
glass twinkle in  
the blackness. We lie  
down, just before  
the waves break. She  
offers me a drink. We stay  
there awhile, somewhere,  
beyond what we could see.

*; see also*

**Summertime**  
*by Ella Cady*

We are green  
children, ripe and  
Fear-spotted.

But we still have  
time to be,  
to walk through  
Earth's grassy  
Backbone.

I look at Steph, and we  
keep on, the black  
sky full and incandescent.

The first drops of rain  
start to fall,  
and we don't give a damn.

*; see also*

**The Doe**  
*by Ella Cady*

In July, by the bay, we'd watch  
the lightning cut the sky, expose  
the red belly usually covered by  
black fur.

Once, we saw a doe  
wandering at sunset, her white  
spots dancing through the swathes  
of tall grass. She stopped, curled up,  
and sank out of view.

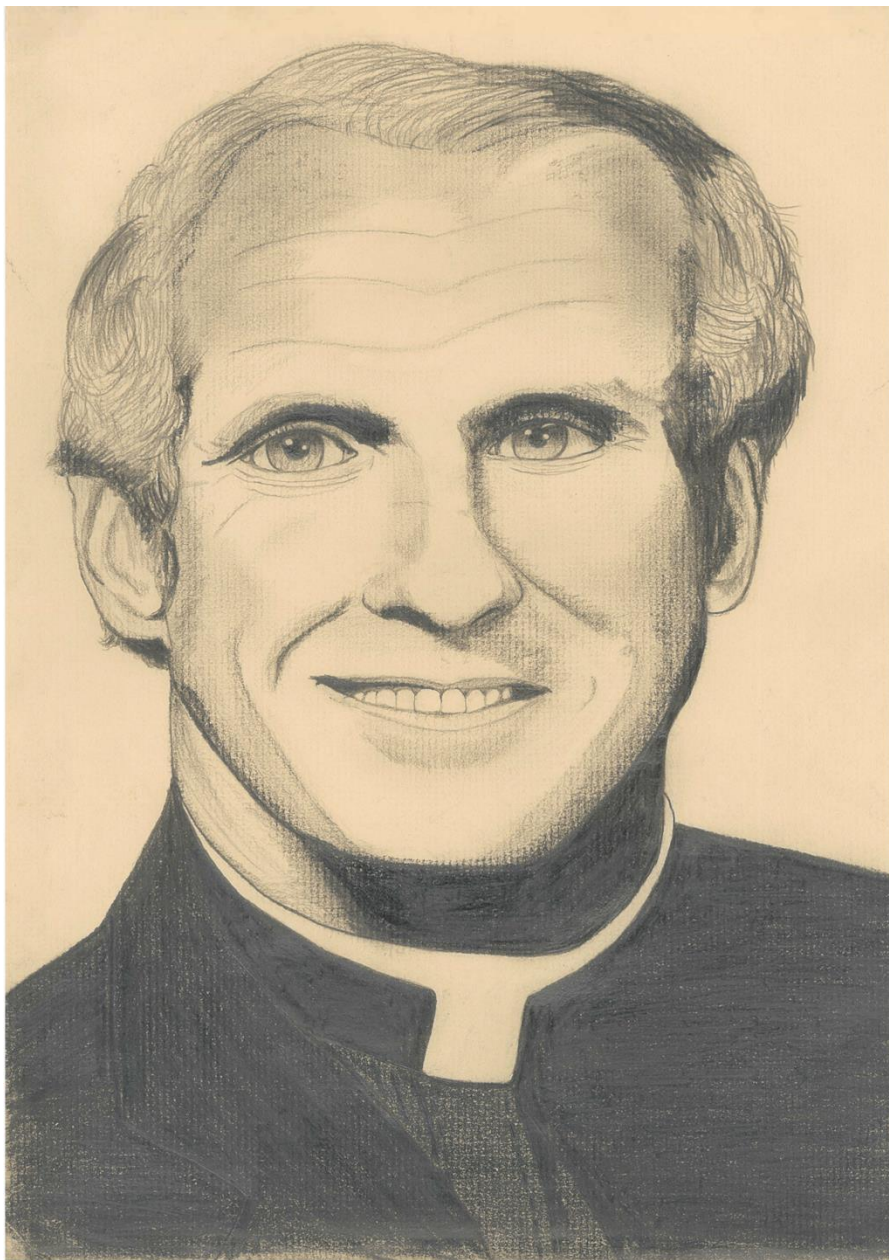
Thunder sounded. My tiny  
ribs seemed to expand and  
crash into each other. Every few  
moments, the bay was so bright.

The water combed farther through  
the shore's green hair.

As quickly as the storm  
started, it stopped. I pressed  
my lips to the screen on  
our porch, looking for the doe,  
waiting.

*; see also*

**Fr. George**  
*by Andrea Nuñez*



This is a portrait of Paulist Fr. George Fitzgerald (1932-2018), beloved member of the Berkeley community. Through his ministry at Newman Hall-Holy Spirit Parish, he enriched the lives of countless students, including many at Berkeley Law.



; *see also*

**Somewhere, sweetly**  
*by Anna Gabriela Rodriguez*

Words whispered into my own mind in times of stress  
Remind me that people don't think like me.

If they did, I would be correct:  
What she said was, "She would be great for this role,"  
What she meant was, I would be worse for wear to even try.

Sometimes I push people away in the hope that they won't find me  
They won't realize that yes, I want to love, be loved, to hate, admire  
Desire, enshrine the years of built up hardness into pale  
Premonitions of something past.

I go to church on Sundays to profess my sins and confess my guilt.  
I marvel at the pews of followers who have never felt the shame of existing.

I know that the breaths I take, I take away from someone else.  
I am equally aware that some great breaths were never taken,  
And in this I sink.

I have tried for years to reconcile the fact that I am worthy, in a sense,  
To experience days without condition.  
But I've festered in the thought that some great, big mistake gave birth  
To my own sense of being.

How much do I owe this world and the next?  
In what ways do I invest in my own self-mutilation?

On the bus, a day worker breaks his day and wears tan boots aged with dirt.  
I remember my father everyday, in veneration and fear that something else has been lost between  
us.

Broken rain hails the day that my mother called to say she was sorry. Sorry for what? And then I  
understood.

I worry often that I won't need to explain myself to my brother, and that words unspoken will be  
enough for both of us.

Somewhere sweetly, I remember, sonnets linger in my fingers.  
Sigh the days away, pray for some redemption.  
Deliver us, Oh lord, oh my god.

*; see also*

Wash these chains away through salt water and gumption.

She took her last lap around the bend,  
Thrusting her weight through the waves.  
Oh, eden come and suffocate my kindness.  
Asphyxiate this ample rush.

*; see also*

**Remind Me**  
*by Sana Mayat*

If I forget  
To hold my head high before my oppressor  
And keep my voice low before my mother  
Remind me  
That I stand on the shoulders of giants  
On decades of defiance  
Bearing all the weight of dignity  
Deserving more than my mediocrity  
If my feet start to drag,  
And my speech starts to slur,  
Remind me.  
When I start to get used  
To the lingering noose  
Remind me.  
When hate becomes habitual  
And love is not instinctual  
Remind me  
That I am filled with too much light  
To let my fire die to ashes.  
Remind me  
When I forget  
That softness is not weakness,  
That even flames can offer warmth.  
Remind me  
To be generous with love  
To not hoard feelings, jail emotion,  
Choke my heart at its veins,  
Leave every pump unspoken.  
Remind me  
To lay the sword to rest.  
That when the metal starts to rust  
When flesh turns into dust  
Remind me.  
That by the strength of my soul  
I'll always be whole.  
If my memory starts to fade,  
And I'm hiding out, afraid,  
Remind me, remind me, remind me  
I did.  
I can,

; *see also*

I will.