

The background of the entire image consists of a dense pattern of diagonal stripes in a variety of colors, including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and black. The stripes are slightly curved and overlap each other, creating a textured, woven effect.

THE OAKLAND REVIEW • VOLUME XLII

The
**OAKLAND
REVIEW**

VOLUME XLII

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Volume XLII

The Oakland Review was established in 1969 as Carnegie Mellon's literary-arts journal. Edited by students, and published in the spring, it serves to represent the best literary and artistic work of the undergraduate body of Carnegie Mellon. The first alumni edition was printed in the fall of 2009 as a way to showcase the talent of Carnegie Mellon graduates. Submissions are evaluated anonymously.

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From the Editor

Dear Reader,

I am happy to present to you the forty-second Undergraduate Edition of *The Oakland Review*, Carnegie Mellon's literary and art journal.

In putting together this issue, we received a great number of excellent works from a truly diverse submission pool, comprising a wide range of majors and paths. It was exceptionally difficult to decide on which works to finally publish in this journal, and our dedicated staff deliberated over many hard decisions up to the very end of the evaluation period. Every single poem, short story, and art piece featured here was revisited multiple times by the editorial board before being confirmed for publication, as were the wealth of impressive works that did not make it. It is our hope and belief that this issue presents a distillation of some of the best literary and artistic work that Carnegie Mellon has to offer.

I would like to thank the Carnegie Mellon English Department and the Creative Writing program for their generous support over the years, and particularly Professor Sharon Dilworth, our faculty advisor, for her valuable guidance and encouragement. To everyone who submitted their work for our consideration, thank you for sharing your art with us. And to the members of *The Oakland Review* board, thank you for all your hard work.

And lastly, thank you for reading.

Sincerely,
Hyunho Yoon
Editor-in-Chief

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THE
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VOLUME XLII

K. Busatto

Hotel Poem #1

we're all in the hotel pool—
us & the smooth-legged boys
from some other silent town like the one we have
mothers, fathers cast us out
to spend time dreamscaping,
feeling their ways back to numb lip days
so here we are, splashing each other
that the chlorine might wash us
of our first~ lonely stirrings
beautiful, beautiful, let them touch
our hands & knees under the water
these boys, they know our age, our still love
us & the boys, we carve into our chests
with soft, skinnish fingernails
& pull out sweet beating hearts
drop them into the pool
beautiful things rise to the surface

K. Busatto

grandmother

in her bathroom
all soap
& shoeboxes
she dies
& i count
54 sweaters
with tags

Izzy McCarthy

How to Make Your Home

Before entering the tin vessel,
hold your breath in the platform
nebula and begin the process

of isolation; What belongs to who?
Unravel your levels of comfort: your
eighth grade lunchbox, your patch

of train fabric, your everyday
railroad, your view of the adjacent
town you've never been to. Picture

the town with row houses only
because that is where you breathe—
the in-betweens. Let the 6:14

route jostle inhales and exhales
out of your lungs until stop
13. Allow five minutes to pass.
Belonging is a matter of breathing.

Izzy McCarthy

Marathon

Sometimes you think you could run faster than the 9:03. Blur your body beside the tracks, chisel your calves until pathways schism your muscles. Let your Self flow through each route until you fountain out from your fingertips, unrestricted. Below: a smear of hair, eyes, lips, skin races across 79.5 miles on the map. In reality, you still cannot run a 5k, but in that same reality Manhattan has never hosted the Olympics.

Ariel Tian

Recent Murder

And the ocean continued its violent swing, reaching with icy fingers toward the shore before lurking back again, soft and low. Back and forth the waves skittered, and back and forth Mrs. Dunn rocked, filling up the empty house, sighing soft and low as well. The house sat erect against the cape winds, emitting only a muffled groan every now and then as proof of the battle it waged. Its sole occupant, too, sat erect. She listened for the noises that she had once taken for granted—the shuffle of slippers feet, the light phlegmy cough—but, now, her only company was an unnerving silence.

In one hand she clutched a note: *Finish the milk*. And so Mrs. Dunn rose slowly and brushed smooth the folds of her sweater. She wore a blue crew neck that bore the letter T for Tufts, the university where Mr. Dunn worked until retirement. Underneath, she wore a white undershirt, one of a pack split between her and her late husband, and when she rose it stayed scrunched at her waist, exposing a pale midriff. Mrs. Dunn tucked her shirt into gray sweatpants—out of habit, she thought with a smile. There were some things she would never forget to do.

But there were things that she might forget, and so the house was filled with notes. Beside the window, a man's picture was taped to the wall with the caption: *Doctor Augustino. He comes at four*. Mrs. Dunn stared at him now, his square jaw and surprisingly white hair for a man under sixty. She said it under her breath—*Doctor Augustino. He comes at four*—willing her mouth to remember the phrase her brain could not. It was quarter to. The doctor would arrive shortly.

•

Doctor Augustino coaxed his car off the highway toward thinner roads and thinner roads yet, until he found himself on the driveway of 1 Mooring

Path. He faced a lone white cottage with green frames and a weathered boardwalk that yearned for the sea. To his right was a beachside eatery boasting clam cakes on a faded chalkboard rendered obsolete since Labor Day. To his left, only naked sand.

He spent a minute gathering himself before bracing the stretch of nature between his car and the house. The door opened before he could knock.

"Doctor Augustino," was the salutation.

"Ah. You remember."

"I rarely make the same mistake twice."

Doctor Augustino stepped inside and shook the chill from his shoulders. The familiar smells swallowed him: chopped basil and ground cumin, fresh cod reeking of recent murder, the distant, omnipresent sting of salt and sea. The scents had alarmed him during his first visit. Sharp and crisp, they had demanded immediate attention, much like Mrs. Dunn herself back then, hovering about her sick husband. But that initial meeting was years ago. Now, Mrs. Dunn was his patient and Mr. Dunn was dead. The smells no longer perturbed him.

They moved through the required procedures that were second nature to the doctor but newly foreign to Mrs. Dunn. He checked her eyes, ears, blood pressure. He asked her questions about her past and she answered them to the best of her knowledge. She was ninety-one years old, she said, a longtime resident of Hampton and the art department head of its local high school until her retirement. She recited her social security and phone numbers. She told him her birthday, her mother's birthday, her husband's birthday.

"Good," Doctor Augustino said. "Good. Good."

Mrs. Dunn crossed and uncrossed her arms. "And how did I do yesterday, doctor?"

"Good," he replied, stiffly. "The same."

"Good." Mrs. Dunn closed her eyes and rocked, conjuring images of all possible yesterdays on the backs of her eyelids. Maybe, she was a fraud, toying with the doctor with feigned memory loss until the act consumed her. Or, she was a headlined comeback story: Woman Who Overcame Dementia Relapses, Forgetting the Whole Thing Happened (Ha!).

Perhaps, even, she was a victim of this man disguised as a doctor. He had

bashed her over the head during a failed heist and fastened his photograph to the wall. Yes, he had said, stone-faced. I am a doctor, he had said.

What a mess, Mrs. Dunn thought. She rocked with renewed vigor.

The doctor studied his patient and took notes. She is sharp, he thought. She fell into the category of patients who would remain dying for a long time, hanging onto her last thread of life with an iron grasp. Doctor Augustino sighed. He was a tired man. He used to anticipate his visit to Mooring Path on the balls of his feet, wishing time to fall fast until four o'clock when he would yank it slow, absorbing every second with the couple that had become his unlikely friends. Two years ago, the sweetest sounds to Doctor Augustino's ears were Mr. Dunn's raspy, high voice and Mrs. Dunn's soft, low one, each rolling over the other like puppies, the doctor swimming in their cacophony. Time stood still now for the Dunns, in their own unique ways. Doctor Augustino plunged ahead alone.

In his briefcase was a brochure, weary from friction. It was this that Doctor Augustino retrieved now, smoothing and smoothing its creases on his leg before beginning his speech. Mrs. Dunn watched his hands, deft with the stethoscope yet nervous when handling the brochure. She wondered if his hands shook at night, reaching toward the silhouette of his dozing wife, or if they grasped with the confidence of a man who knows that he cannot fail. She looked down at her own hands. *Finish the milk*, they reminded her.

"Mrs. Dunn, it is pertinent, as a person in your position, to consider the benefits of relocation to a place where assistance is more readily available. I've recommended Exeter to many patients in the past. It is fully staffed. Close to nature. The food is excellent." He handed over the brochure now. It was a pathetic thing: three columns of shameless advertisement, one of which displayed a photo of three old women smiling with impeccable teeth. Doctor Augustino felt the sudden urge to snatch it back and go home. But Mrs. Dunn was already reading, combing over every word like she always did. At last, she spoke.

"I used to volunteer there, you know," she said, leaning back. "Jim used to come home late—you know how the traffic on the interstate is—so I'd drive to Exeter and stay awhile."

"I am aware, Mrs. Dunn. It is in your files."

"I was very loyal to Exeter." Mrs. Dunn closed her eyes. In truth, she had volunteered at Exeter even after Mr. Dunn's retirement. On those mornings, she would listen for the familiar sounds—the shuffle of slippers, the light phlegmy cough—to signify that there indeed was another inhabitant of the house. She would then lay the lunches out: a brown bag each for Barbara, Ralph, Mrs. Hamilton and her husband, an unlabeled bag left behind implicitly for Mr. Dunn. I'm off to see the old people, she would announce, although she was well into her eighties at the time, older than Barbara, Ralph, Mrs. Hamilton and her husband.

"They have young volunteers now, Mrs. Dunn. Students from the private school. And it will be warmer inland. No sea breeze." The doctor paused, cleared his throat. "You can keep this house. If you so choose."

"Tell me, doctor." Mrs. Dunn leaned in, her breath warming the air between them. "How many times have you approached me about Exeter?"

Silence.

"Doctor, I've surprised you."

"Ah. Yes."

"This is the first time I have asked this question."

"Yes, Mrs. Dunn."

"Hmm," Mrs. Dunn hummed. "Interesting, isn't it? Curiosity. Presented with the same situations, unblemished by new memories. Still, it diverges."

"Mrs. Dunn. I cannot explain the range of human behavior with science—"

"I did not ask it of you."

"—but memory loss is an irreversible disease. It is the disintegration of brain synapses. In your case, the damage is temporarily localized in the hippocampus, the area responsible for consolidating memory, but we can only expect it to spread. Memories lost are lost."

"I am aware, Doctor Augustino. It is in my files."

Doctor Augustino reached for the brochure. He exhaled deeply now that the most unpleasant part of his visit was behind him. Not so bad this time, he thought. The worst, in fact, was years behind him, when he had presented the same brochure on Mr. Dunn's account. The brochure had been stiff and unused then, like Doctor Augustino's loyalty to the couple, and yet

Mrs. Dunn had thrown her arms up at the sight of it. Oh, she had exclaimed, I will never leave this house. Your husband's life depends on it, the doctor had said. Indeed, it had.

It was high tide at half past. The waves lapped at the underbelly of the boardwalk, scattering vibrations toward the house upon which it anchored. Mrs. Dunn observed the tide from two slits. She imagined herself as a little girl standing before waves that towered over her; as a young woman marching up the dunes, dreaming of a frighteningly beautiful world that she would never see. For a moment, Mrs. Dunn felt ashamed of the salts and the sands that had become all she knew. It is all I have left, she thought. Yet now, bound to her rocking chair, even the sea was a stranger.

When Mrs. Dunn's husband first fell ill, the sea had been his haven. The frigid ocean, although it would turn his skin purple as the evening, seemed to breathe life into nerves that had long since failed. Oh! I feel it, Mr. Dunn would exclaim when the waves submerged his lifeless feet. He would lie back in his wheelchair, purring and sighing. People who had come to Hampton for the summer stared shyly at the couple—the wheelchair standing stark against the raging waters, its owner marking time with the setting sun, the old woman standing beside him, tall and rigid against the cold. Young ladies seeing Mrs. Dunn and her crippled husband would reach for a hand to hold. Older couples would contemplate the Dunns with pity. The poor old man, they thought, lowering their heads. The poor old lady.

Yet Mrs. Dunn felt more alive than ever. She approached her husband's disease with the fervor of a woman robbed of motherhood, and he with the irritability of a man forced to depend on his wife. He would sit at the window and wait for time to pass him by while Mrs. Dunn fussed about.

"We should go to the theater," she had suggested one day. He had waved her chatter away. "We should stroll through the arboretum. We should visit Exeter. Ralph's brother is there now—you remember Ralph?"

But Mr. Dunn only waved more emphatically. "Hmph," he would say through his nose. "If I went to Exeter, I may never come back."

Back then, Doctor Augustino had echoed the same, practiced speech. Irreversible. Would only spread. He had shaken his head when Mrs. Dunn spoke of her husband's daily baths in the sea. "What your husband feels are

memories," the doctor had explained. "Tricks played by the mind. He sees the water, smells the water, thus he believes he feels the water. But that is not possible, Mrs. Dunn." The doctor would sigh then. Battling blind optimism made him tired.

Of Mr. Dunn's condition the doctor had told the truth. The disease scaled Mr. Dunn's legs and found his spine. By his ninetieth birthday, Mr. Dunn was left with only the nerves in his eyelids. He blinked his approval as Mrs. Dunn ate two slices of cake on her own.

"Do you remember anything from earlier today, Mrs. Dunn?"

Mrs. Dunn rocked.

"Yesterday?"

She rocked some more.

Doctor Augustino waited. Patience had been hammered into him over the years. His wife had noticed a change in him, beyond the physical—white hair, deepened wrinkles. The doctor was slowly disintegrating, as if he were the sole sufferer of Mrs. Dunn's disease. Mrs. Augustino had inquired about the old lady only once, the topic being so exasperating for the doctor that it seemed to taint his house with the mere mention of it. "Yes," he had croaked then, "she is as lively as ever. I fear she will even outlive me."

After a long while, Mrs. Dunn stirred. "No, doctor. I recall nothing since I fell ill." Words that glided from her tongue as smoothly as if she had practiced them. She stood up slowly, tucking the rim of her undershirt into her pants. "But you already knew that, Doctor, didn't you?"

The doctor left as he always did, glancing back at his old friend whose eyes glimmered with waning recognition. He imagined her returning to her chair, rocking, letting her last impressions of the doctor leave her body with every exhale. And then, nothing. Just a little old woman in a big house, with only the photograph of someone she didn't know as company.

But today was different. Looking into the eyes of the doctor, a memory had stirred in Mrs. Dunn's gut like a bad serving of lobster. A pair of eyes, wide-set and resigned, imprisoned in a motionless body. Wheels biting into wet sand followed by footprints. Only footprints returning.

She recalled the chill of the ocean and the sound of its fury when she rolled Mr. Dunn into deeper waters. He had blinked up at her; she had

blinked back. Then, he had understood. They had long discarded language as their medium for communication. And so they parted, wordlessly. Mrs. Dunn placed one hand behind her husband's neck and with the other she gripped his forearm and tugged. Mr. Dunn slipped into the gray waters like a fish returning home. He did not fight it. The waves tossed his limbs into a wet dance and when the last bubble emerged from his lungs he sank into the sand, soft and low. Only when she felt his weight on her wrist did Mrs. Dunn realize she had clenched a fistful of his collar. She wondered if, facing death, he had felt pain at last.

Beyond that...nothing. The memory was an island in the uncharted waters of Mrs. Dunn's life; on all sides, the ocean scaled the shore, a silent reminder that the vestigial feelings—the final touch of the cheek, the hand grasping his neck—would soon disappear beneath the surface.

Mrs. Dunn stood with such urgency that her chair erupted in a flurry of notes. *Jim died of heart failure*, one said. *Bathroom floor is slippery*, another. She added a sketch to the collection now: a figure, tall and rigid against the incoming tide; another figure standing by her side. How curious it is, she thought, to patch the gaps between real memories with small, sweet lies. Tomorrow, her world would again be reduced to simple truths scrawled on paper squares. But today...she closed her eyes and let herself sink into this island of truth until it, too, eluded her.

Ree Sherwood

Midnight,

smoking outside a hotel
our ashes
 piled
our cheeks
 burned
under streetlamps

the stray cats cried
that they wanted
to go home

home
a language we lost
on a train from Marseille

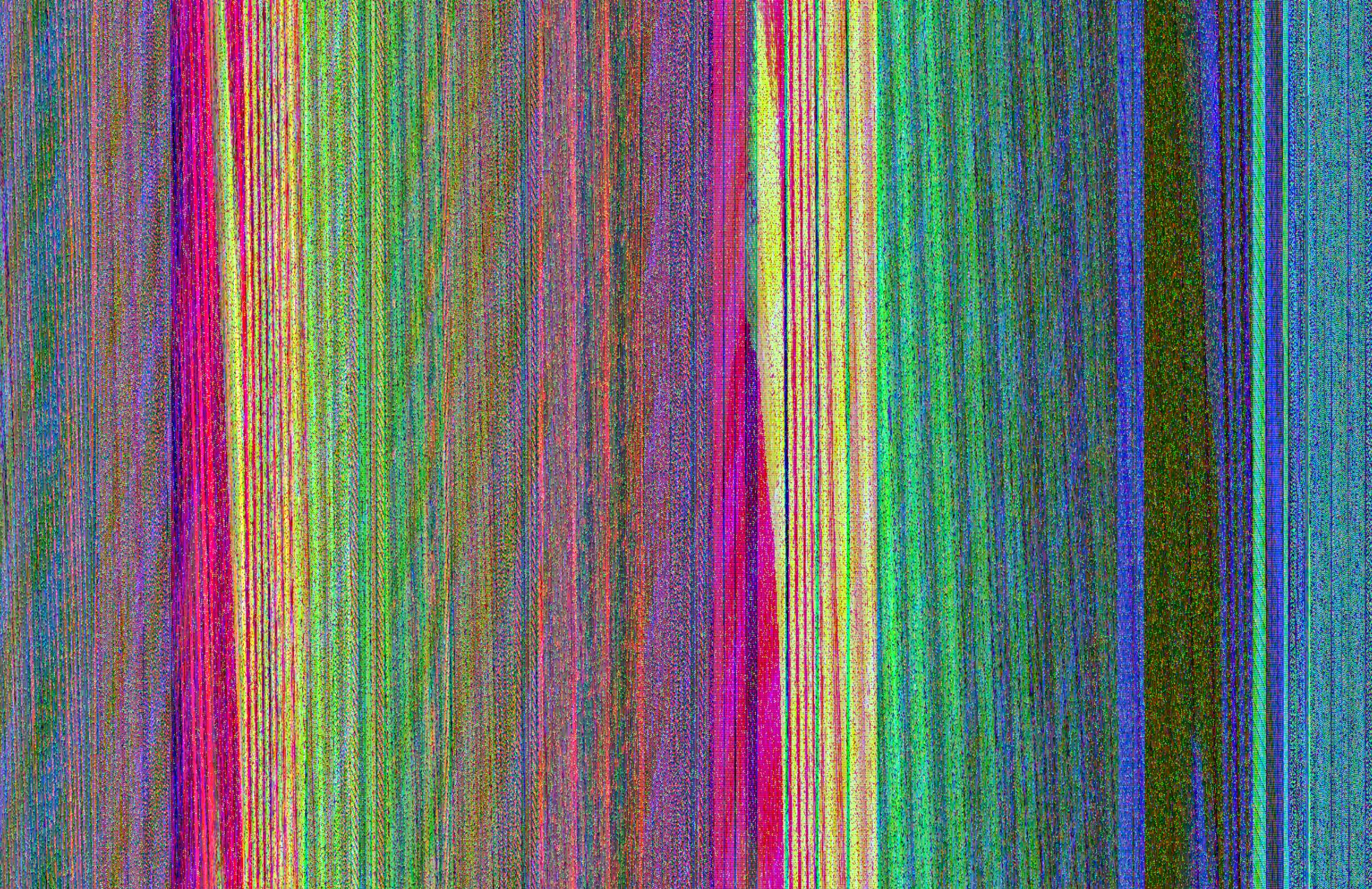
 we held our tongues
still

Steve Chab

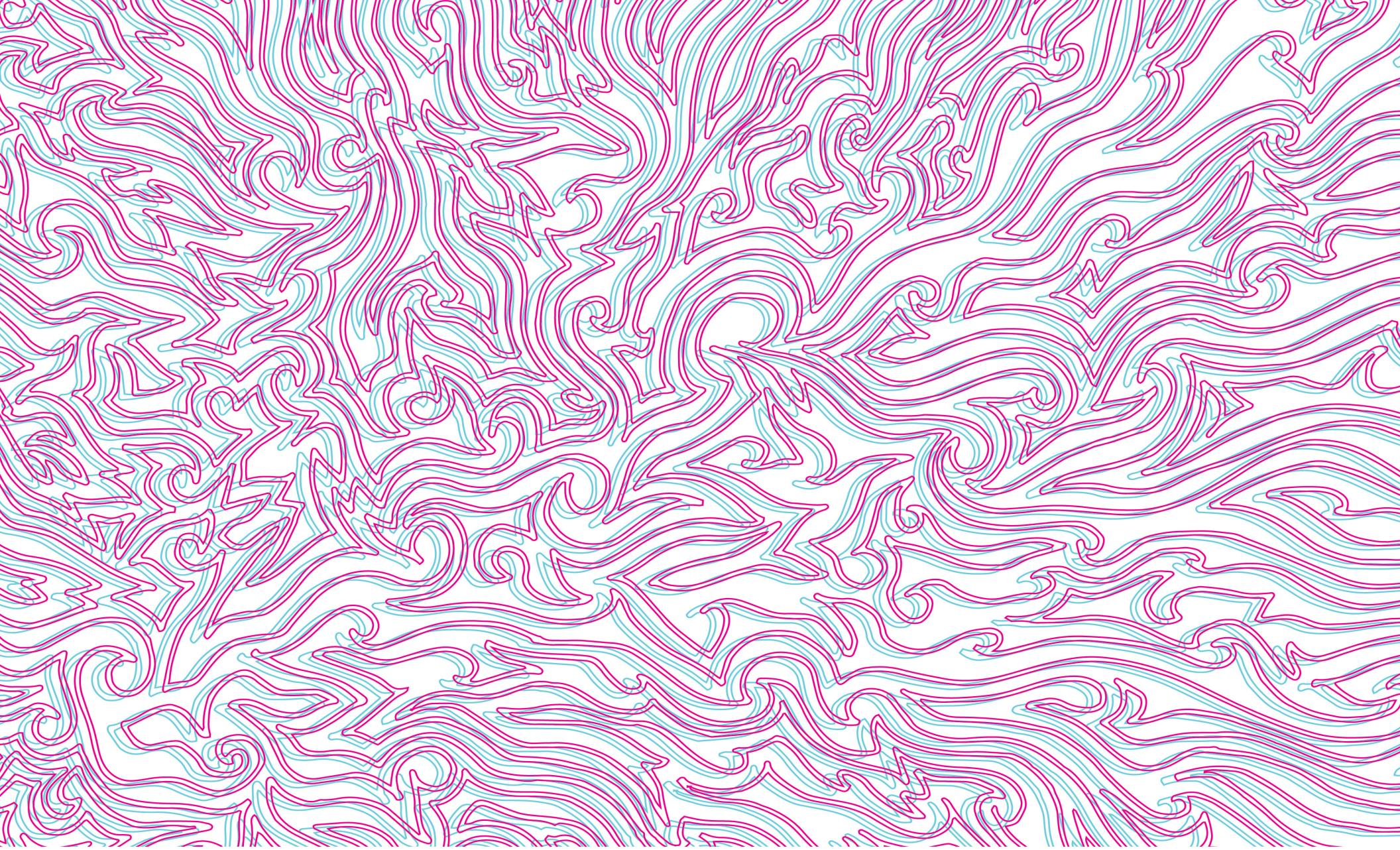
Photoshop Glitch 2



photography



Steve Chab — Photoshop Glitch
photography



Olivia Kung — Untitled 02
digital art

Bronwyn Kuehler

Don't Move



screenprint

K. Busatto

on windowless cottony heavens

you are not like my shadow painting.
you are not like my atonal piano accompaniment.
you are my twin
my belly-dweller in tandem. together
we are begotten whiskey-children
fingers interlaced
flank on flank
giving each other lessons in converting
amniotic fluid to oxygen
the first plunge we take into air.

Mariel Bedell

Quantum

Each state exists countless
more infinitesimal moments
an endless array of possibility
lays forth every prediction
ever dreamed
to say we'll marry on the thirteenth
day of the sixth of June
posits a truth in potential
for which we cannot guarantee
in a dimension we call our own
to wonder is to know
the outcome of an alternate observation
dependent on innumerable outcomes
before the onset of a moment
we're lucky to witness
for which we count our chickens
too late to revive the discarded

Juliana Schnerr

Mother, Moon, Glass

Mother

I would recognize you anywhere
Any body
Any voice
Any time
Our heartbeats play to the same rhythm,
The one your Mother passed to you.
What does it mean that all the words I have,
I want to give to you
That on days when the sun hits my eyes,
I am full of it
Of a need to remind you
That we are sewn together,
That I have nothing to give that is not
For, or from,
You.
We are mirror image,
Reflected, refracted and eventually,
Bouncing back to each other.
Sitting on the front step under a full moon,
I can feel you breathe
Here, almost across the world,
I feel your voice on the back of my neck
And forget that I am not home.
You are the permanent home I carry,
Abalone shell that I fit inside,
I promise to never outgrow the spaces where we fit together.

Moon

How long have we known each other?

How many times have I left you on my windowsill,

Only for you to creep inside when I am sleeping,

And lay the back of your hand on my cheek

Do you remember all the times you lit the path for me and countless others,

Into the forest,

The future.

I have not told you to your face,

But you are the reason

I still believe in magic,

It is dark

But you are still shining,

A friend is laughing,

and my heart swells as you push away scuttling clouds.

We have made it to this moment

Do you feel it?

I guess I ask out loud

I put out a hand,

And someone takes it

It doesn't matter who

Body to body,

We carry each other home.

How do you stay young, I whisper

But you do not answer me,

And I do not begrudge you.

How could I?

You are the light in the corner of my eyes

You are the sense of time and place I carry

You hold every thing I've never said aloud in the craters of your surface.

I promise to remember you on my last day,

lay myself down where your arms can always reach me

Glass

They ask,

Why do you write of Mother, of Moon, but not of Man?

Haven't you read the stories?

Don't you know where love lies?

Yes, love lies in this handful of my father's ash that I keep beneath my skin

Sometimes at night it bubbles in my blood

And reminds me I am an ocean.

Yes, love lies

But I have not put mine down to rest.

Have I told you what it feels like to hold a dying man's hand,

To write a eulogy in your sleep?

No,

Well I did not have to tell

Mother or Moon

They already know.

I look at my own face and remember more than history,

An hour looking into my own eyes,

And I have a sense of where I'm headed,

I have been walking towards the desert

To the closest I can be to the horizon

Without falling off the edge of the Earth.

I have tried to let love lie on my surface

Where he might see it and,

Well, from what I've seen,

He always reaches out to take it.

Lovely, mirrored surface,

Shining sea glass,

Until he holds it in his palm,

Bloodied from the shards

I am waiting for someone who sees the jagged edges and says,

Of course.

I have cut myself into so many pieces,
Giving them to Mother, Moon,
And all those who fit between us

That is where it lies,
In the broken mirror of my insides
I am waiting for someone to say
 Of course,
 I know.
And wrap their hands in bands of cloth before asking if they
 May reach out.

I am overflowing
I swell and crest within myself
 I am not looking for a hook latched beneath my ribs
I am looking for the one content in a small boat,
 Without anchor
I promise I am waiting
 But sometimes,
 I feel like I have no piece left to give.

Mother, Moon, Glass

They asked me,
 Have you ever been in love?
 And what I said was,
 Yes.
But what I wrote,
 was this.

Julie Heming

Ante

Before ticks latch onto a host,
before they furrow under flesh
and siphon precious blood
so slowly, so softly,
you barely know you're dying
Before the fatigue hits
and you see a fat black bulge
pulsing in your temple,
that once-holy place,
Before violent throbs shake
your foundations
and make flames sear
beneath your eyelids,
before the blood
bursts from your mouth—

the ticks just wait,
black specs hidden quietly
in blades of green, green grass.

When you forget me

“Did you finish the laundry?” says a quiet voice,
belonging to the woman who repeatedly rips
the sweater sleeve in which I sewed my heart—
by dinnertime, she grafts her own skin to thicken it.

I say yes and then she is whirling away in the
sunflower nightgown she wore the morning
her only daughter was born, whistling the tune of
flies buzzing in her ears, under a sky lit by electric stars.

In the kitchen her fingers prepare sandwich squares
like well-oiled clockwork, but when I move closer
her pupils darken as a curtain dims her eyes, and I let her
place my newly shrouded body in an unmarked grave.

When she recognizes her sunflower nightgown
she finds me in the living room and sets down a plate
of manicured sandwich squares. Her mouth shapes
words again swallowed by air: “The laundry—did you finish it?”

Contributor Notes

Mariel Bedell

is a senior biology major and creative writing minor at CMU. She plans to go to medical school to become a doctor in neurology, oncology, or radiology. Despite her scientific pursuits, she lives a very artistic lifestyle writing poetry and fiction, as well as writing music on guitar and creating art with graphite and paint.

K. Busatto

is a first year dramaturgy student from Pittsburgh, PA.

Steve Chab

is a progressive gospel artist, poet, designer, programmer, and Pittsburgher. His themes are Biblical and occult; critics have said he has a "subtle obsession with specificity." He has produced, composed, and engineered tracks for bands and rappers, provided creative direction for artists, edited music videos, designed album artwork and websites, and even programmed music for a robot. Steve has studied music technology, sound design, and creative writing at Carnegie Mellon University where he is currently a web designer and developer. Steve lives in Pittsburgh with his Messianic Jewish family and wants you to know that Jesus loves you. website: www.stevechab.com

Julie Heming

is a current sophomore majoring in Creative Writing and Professional Writing, with a minor in Religious Studies. She hopes to delve deeper as she continues her writing, drawing on experiences both real and imagined for inspiration.

Bronwyn Kuehler

is a senior in BHA studying art and professional writing. Her artwork deals primarily with video, performance, and printmaking. This year, Bronwyn has been investigating Pittsburgh witchcraft and magic communities as part of her BXA Capstone project. You can find her most weekends observing Wicca rituals in the South Hills.

Olivia Kung

is a junior astrophysics major. She dabbles in repetitive patterns.

Izzy McCarthy

is a soon-to-be-senior majoring in Creative and Professional Writing. While she normally serves as poetry editor for the *Oakland Review*, she took the semester off to study in Dublin and attempt to become the next James Joyce. No word yet on her success in the latter, but she is honored to be featured in her favorite literary journal.

Juliana Schnerr

is a rising sophomore at Carnegie Mellon University. She studies Design and Creative Writing.

Ree Sherwood

is a Western PA native. She's currently a senior Creative Writing and French double major. Her work will be published in the upcoming issue of the *Allegheny Review*.

Ariel Tian

studies computer science and creative writing at Carnegie Mellon University. She would say that she does cool things—like extreme parkour ice wrestling—but unfortunately she spends all her time trying to run 400 meters quickly.

When she is not on the track, you can find her listening to Les Mis and preying on fried chicken. After graduation, she will move to NYC to work for Jane Street Capital.

Linda Xia

is an Information Systems and Human-Computer Interaction major, who hails from the Bay Area, California. In her free time she writes occasionally, enjoys memes, and tends to her two chickens and cat.

