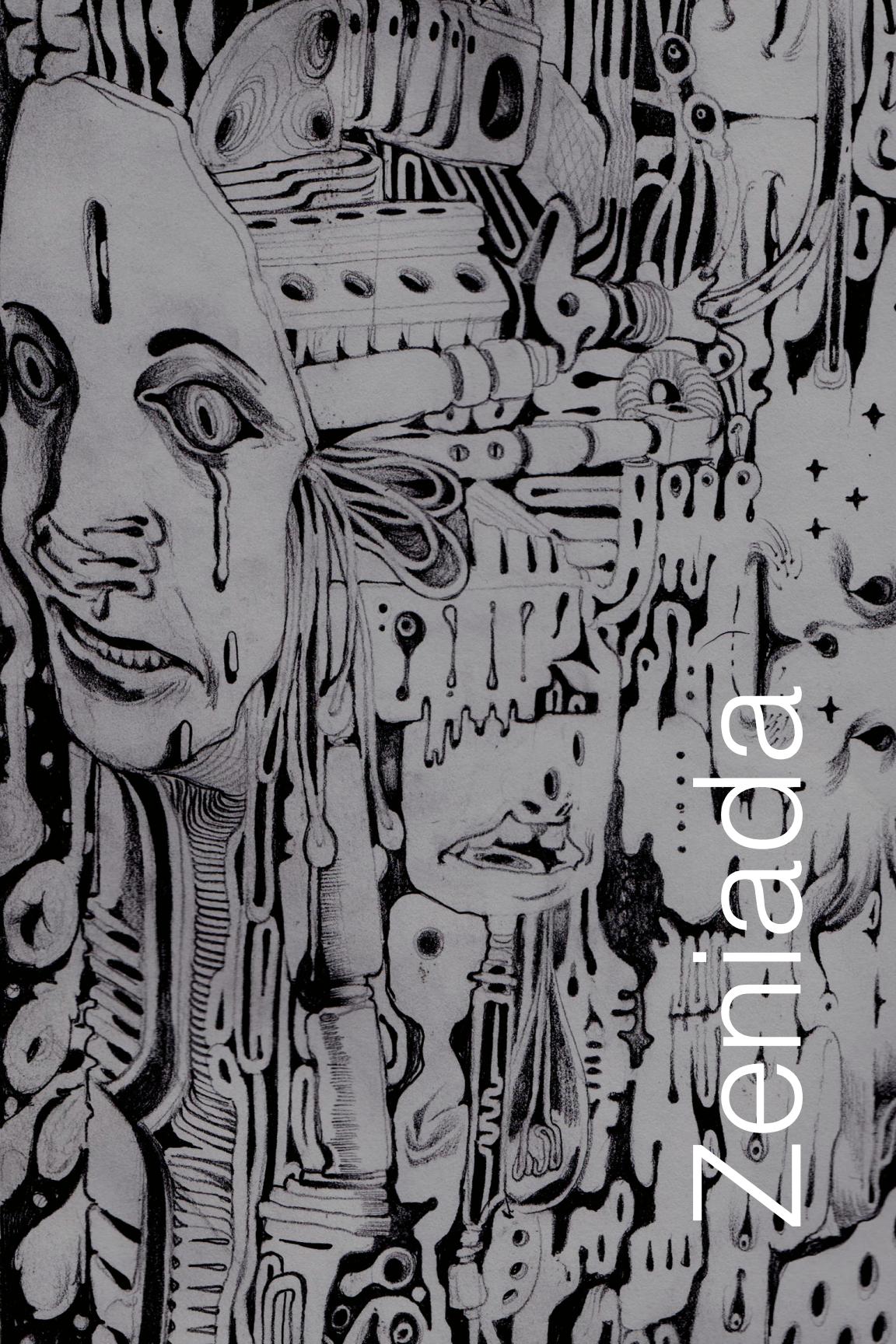


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Zeniada

Johns Hopkins University

Fall 2016



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# Hillside

## by Alan Fang

She makes art, makes skylines, wills them to drop and tumble  
and to scale and rise, all with the cautious flick of the wrist.  
She makes the Charm City circulate, revolving through  
black tar arterials, and the rows of harbor boats glide across the  
placid, adulterated water, to and fro, in place of the waves.  
And I, made aware of this human condition, saw  
Men wearing homeopathic machine gun rounds  
around their necks, like back in Normandy and Nam'  
Wearing wooden crosses across their chests  
or gold plated starry nights on alloy chains

and wearing themselves out, travelling hours for the sole sake  
of the view from the city's all natural peak, from Federal Hill,  
Out from its underbelly, the faded pastel colors and shades  
of the brick face seen from the stoops and alley streets and  
Here was where I wanted to watch my brain matter be scattered  
over the asphalt, as Bavarian flower girls marked their territory  
with tender flicks of their wrists, leaving serene  
Flutters of pink gray petals, that carried in the wind  
Gas and steam, vapors hallucinate, ready to escape from this  
Earth and into the atmosphere, beyond—beyond.

She makes the city oscillate at her feet, and as well, me,  
and I acutely understood every feeling that overloaded my  
Sunbaked brain, over and over, were words like  
god help me, punish me no longer, let me live,  
Until I lost the orientation of the rage in my soles and  
I had visions of my feminine hands and fingers and  
Drunken self and wished for nothing more than to  
Become colorless and rigid and to love this frustration  
and never again wonder why.

# onscreen.

**by Allison Jiang**

This is a poem for Peaky Blinders-era Cillian Murphy, the enigmatic, sooty, violent, and soft-hearted man of my dreams-  
he puts on his shirt and then his waistcoat and then his vest and then another waistcoat and he smokes cigarettes and loves women.

Like really loves them

like they did in the old days but then I remember that  
Peaky Blinders-era Cillian Murphy's hair is soft and brown  
under his pageboy hat and that

he only uses Chinese girls for their sham red-powder mysticism and sometimes I forget that everything about me is sharp and pointed and I forget myself and I forget to make my voice soft and round so that they know that I can be like them, too.

I look down at my hands to make sure they look like they could hold a gun in post-Great War Birmingham and to make sure they look like Cillian Murphy's could (realistically) help them hold it.

Sometimes I wonder how it's possible for me to feel this way and for them to think that I don't feel this way and to think

I don't feel this way because my black hair and my spacious eyelids are things that make people not feel things.

Cillian Murphy has spaces between the blue part of his eye and the top part spaces that are there

all the time and

he doesn't realize that girls like me dream of living in them; dream of being more than

what we are; long to lie down on that beautiful robins-egg icy electric slate gray

Midwestern midwinter

"ethereal...alluring to a camera" -Vogue Magazine round as fuck blue ground and look up at a white sky that goes on forever.

I know I will never be the red-powder explosion in a beautiful gangster's grey world-

and when I watch Peaky Blinders-era Cillian Murphy punch somebody with a razor in slow-motion I feel like seven-eighths of a person and I'm sure that if he were to love me I would feel seven-eighths loved and if the writers had us hook up somehow I would be allowed

seven-eighths of good time  
because it's just different somehow.  
The episode always ends and I always  
see my reflection in the blank black and that's  
why I'm like what I'm like.  
Does that make sense  
to anyone else?



# Red Cynosure

**by Angela Zhu**



# Trichotomy

by Katherine Xiang

# Becoming Unmade

by Evelyn Ho

The hands I have belong to my father,  
and fathers before him who carved their lives  
out of porcelain, fragile like the daughters  
they forged into sons so they could survive.  
So in my rough palms flow smooth lines, scratching  
numbers into cracked bones, words on dry skin-  
sensations to hide behind while searching  
for the perfect path to comfortable content.  
But my nails I chipped in attempt to change  
with the rush of time and against the tide,  
doctrine internalized, breeding disdain.  
Smooth lines turn rigid as past and me collide.

These hands of mine are scarred beyond repair,  
But they are mine alone, not to be shared.



# From Mt. Rigi

**by Calvin Qian**



Barren  
by Calvin Qian

# for the excavator operator who fled the market st. building collapse

by Maxwell Gontarek

Back to the train-ride, the curled-up passengers  
that take two seats at a time to sleep off the meaning  
of short goodbyes, to dream them better than they  
were: regret looks like a blocking sled  
from the window-seat. Guardrails smooth into one  
another and the track-signs bend back like parents  
in tall hugs. Real regret comes in the rubrics  
about train accidents that happened far away  
but close enough that lurch: *it could've been him,*  
*it could've been her.* If you're a Lonesome Fugitive,  
*it could've been me.* I've heard when you sleep you're more  
likely to survive a crash. In the Bohea collision,  
you don't tense up, your muscles temper to chimney  
bricks: when they're mid-air, free-falling to the cobbled snow.

From the tracks, factory-lights scrim the power stations:  
tangles unknot in the insect-legs of transmission towers,  
and feign indigenous. Quiet Car, I've seen enough—  
from their cliffs, above country mountain valley mouths,  
towers remind you that you're not lost: through the branches  
all you have are power-lines that lead to them—  
polluted vista rot behind catchpenny businessmen  
minding the gap. Even at night, white  
hardhats can be seen lining the silo rims:

try winning the lottery, and know cancer.  
From the window-side, Point-No-Point:  
Rohm and Haas hired teenagers that grew up to be caterers  
driving drunk through the Thanksgiving Day Parade,  
saying: *this isn't how it used to be.*  
Point-No-Point is Imaginary Country:  
*no wider than a ploughshare, and as strait as an arrow,*  
it appears to be a point, and then you close  
in on it, and it becomes an ordinary cape,  
and then again, rowing closer to it,

it's gone. I've felt my misgivings in train vestibules,  
important failures—and the farmer continued to plow—  
others played a role and have yet to be held.



Untitled  
by William Stanton

# Joyeuse

## by Alan Fang

I made a list of all the things that you love and I tentatively decided to place myself at the very end

because I'm a narcissist, too much in my own mind

Storm clouds roll in, yet the sun perches itself upon my shoulder and tells me lies about the imminent

summer and about the ghost that I am and about Manhattan ready to burst under the weight of  
its homeless hearts

Storm clouds roll in, still the sun caresses the back of my neck, feels out the crevices, every vertebra

and draws figure eights I'll never see

The wind rises and the shower head, O Mother have mercy for I who arose from your earthen soil roots

my atoms are your own my bones my flesh all yours they are

I want to be celestial–angelic like all the lesbians every weekend, puffing on marijuana fags to feel that

dull dull electric

I want Heaven to wander down, stroke my cheek, read me Naked Lunch all in a dulcet monotone I

dream to be as undisciplined, to live those vignettes the way they play out in my mind

Forget adolescence and chastity and propriety and your good holy nature, god let me live, Mother let

me forget the tempest that stalks in my wake

Remember youth among the American elm and the spastic joy and Samuel's cradle and all of the

hormones and purgatorial nights that built up to this very moment

Remember me going to war for you clutching a lodestone and a gun barrel in each of my pink baby soft

palms, trudging to the asphalt trenches to carve out new scars on my knees

Nights I spent discussing realpolitik with chapped lips and labias and twelve angry jurors and whatever

commie delusion spell I swear I was under

Mornings wherein my eyes melted out of their sockets over washed out printer paper photographs of

the hudson river and mister rogers and balding jewesses

Mornings that devolved into ballroom dancing wearing nothing but my own holy good nature muttering

disembodied sacraments and manuscripts

The stuffs of legend and floodlights and art household movie dealings and cannon bard epics and

tokyo tower of babel & all at once

Please forgive that which exists among the red threaded morbid sex-crazed dramatics that

live only in swamp new jersey theater companies

But more than anything to understand the human heart, that which could be attained sequestered behind

chinese immigrant registers, the knowledge of aging & peeling oriental wallpapers, the secrets of

fortune cookie vats, the mass produced cellophane & sugar wafers, the wisdom of black marbled

tabletops who unwittingly eavesdropped on the hushed confessionals dancing over steam noodle

soup

Chinatown nook cranny and crack and jazz and math, the hints of universe and god and prophet and

side-a-ways glances and the modern era erotics

Of colossal brown grim dark irises and bedroom innocence wraths and arteries of all sorts, faux

mescaline manias and impulsive grunts wasting brain matter and cash

And above all the disappointment, the only explanation for your limp dick diathesis and yellow fever and

mallon-esque facial structures

And above all that pre-bolshevik showroom mantelpiece magnum that emancipates me through all of my

flesh and muscle and tissue disintegrations and ram rods as fine may eleventh mists and dust never to return

# Prince of Convenience

## by Hannah Thorpe

His contentment, his despair, he curates,  
etching tattoos of circles and shut doors—  
sketches that symbolize only self-rape,  
an artist that likes to tear his skin sore.  
His world at his disposal, he wants more  
adderall, more lift and fall,  
he wants all  
the blurred nights and crowds,  
the dark sounds that pour like mother's milk,  
like mother's grounding drawl.  
Crashing cars, high on coke  
that makes him crawl  
up the front lawn  
and still feel infinite.



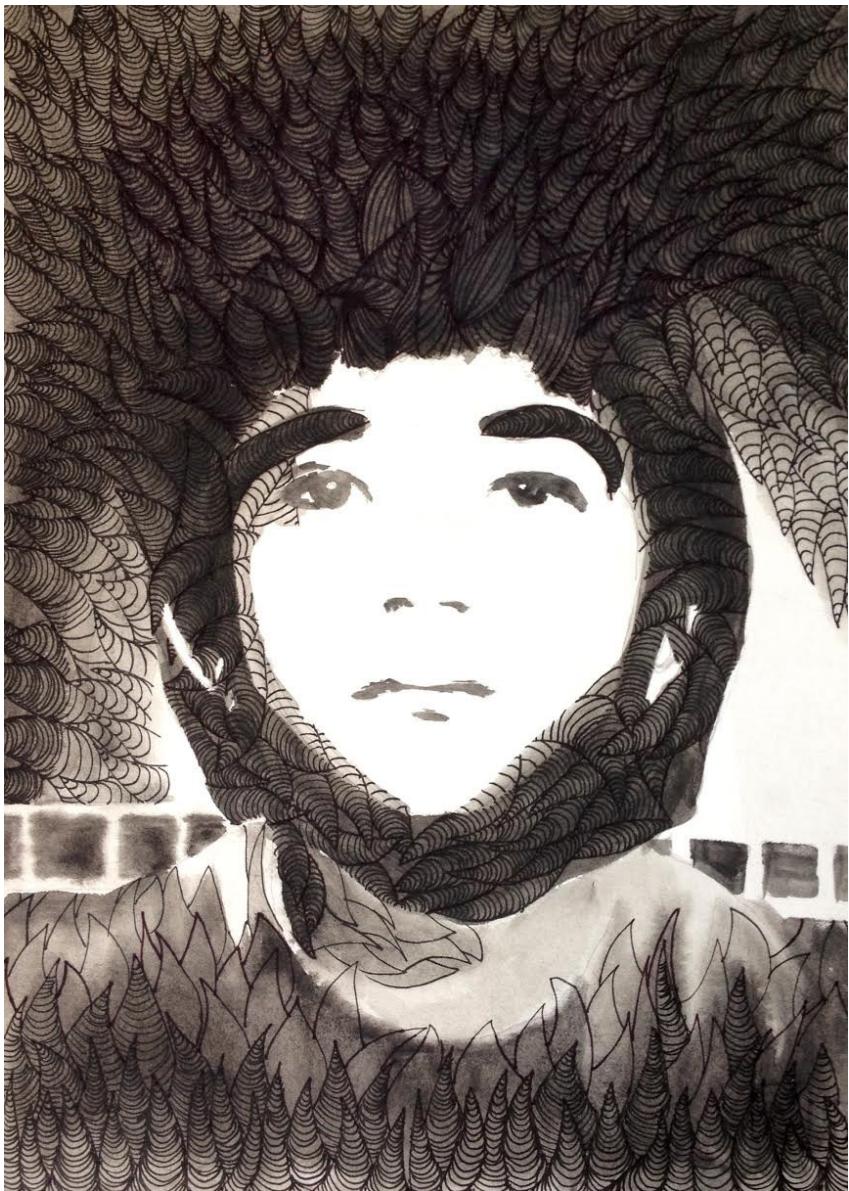
Experiments with Light and Shadow 1

**by Grace Windheim**



## Experiments with Light and Shadow 2

**by Grace Windheim**



## Experiments with Light and Shadow 3

**by Grace Windheim**

# magic.

## by Allison Jiang

### I.

Allison Jiang is scared most of the time but has learned how to squeeze that fear into a ball and make it bounce; she has learned how to stand so that her hair curls right and cry so that plants grow right and live so that she is scared but is still ok.

Allison Jiang has accepted that things may never be good, but after some time in front of the bathroom mirror,  
they might be enticed into being ok.

Allison Jiang is a movie with a cheesy message,  
a spoon when you need a fork,  
a force of black-haired-girl magic and driving slowly that is ready  
to finally be known.

### II.

Black-haired-girl magic is what I discovered far too late  
for any of that mess in junior year;  
black-haired girls you see they're smooth. Smooth in the way that we were built to love,  
smooth in the way that takes you back to a time when the moon was a lot bigger  
than it is now.

I used to want to hide my face inside so that no one would be able to tell  
that I loved it, loved everything about my almond joy-eyes because I didn't want them  
to see me  
thinking that this was beautiful.

I was afraid that if they looked me in the eye they would find the secret stash of confidence of beauty that I hid between my pupil and my iris,  
that they would find it and think  
it was funny; but now I show it to them before they can laugh  
and I wear the irony of my eyes  
like a pair of comfy shoes, and I feel  
that black-haired-girl magic flow behind me like an ink trail, like my hair and I feel  
bits of the stars from way way down in my blood and I feel  
like I'm sitting on a mountain high high above the clouds where I can see  
that we can be loved after all.



# Contributors

*Alan Fang* is a freshman Writing Seminars major from Westfield, New Jersey who enjoys the Beat Generation, strawberries, existential philosophy, and bubble tea, among other things.

*Maxwell Gontarek* is an undergraduate Writing Seminars major at Johns Hopkins University. He plays in the bands Jose F\$ckhead, Beast Install, and D.S. Burner.

*Evelyn Ho* studies at Johns Hopkins University.

*Allison Jiang* is a freshman from Holmdel, New Jersey. She hopes to one day own a big dog, play with words for a living, and set the Guinness World Record for most television watched by a human person.

*Calvin Qian* is an amateur, self-taught photographer who has been taking photos for just over a year. He relishes in the journey behind his photos as much as the photos themselves, always searching for that next hike or road trip. Currently focusing on photojournalism, he hopes to take impactful photos that raise questions, change perspectives, and provoke thought.

*William Stanton* is a Writing Seminars major and a Computer Science minor at Johns Hopkins. He enjoys drawing in his spare time and usually focuses on working with ink and watercolor.

*Hannah Thorpe* is studying Writing Seminars and Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University. She is from Topanga, CA.

*Grace Windheim* is a freshman at Johns Hopkins University. She loves creating art of all kinds and considers the outdoors to be home. She lives by the motto “life is crazy.”

*Katherine Xiang* was born and raised in Norcal, where she developed a penchant for doodling and a love for design. She also likes physics, fencing, and chillstep.

*Angela Zhu* is studying at Johns Hopkins, where she plans on majoring in Public Health and minoring in fine arts. Her favorite academic subjects are English and history, while her hobbies include drawing, painting, and more recently sculpting.

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