

Totem

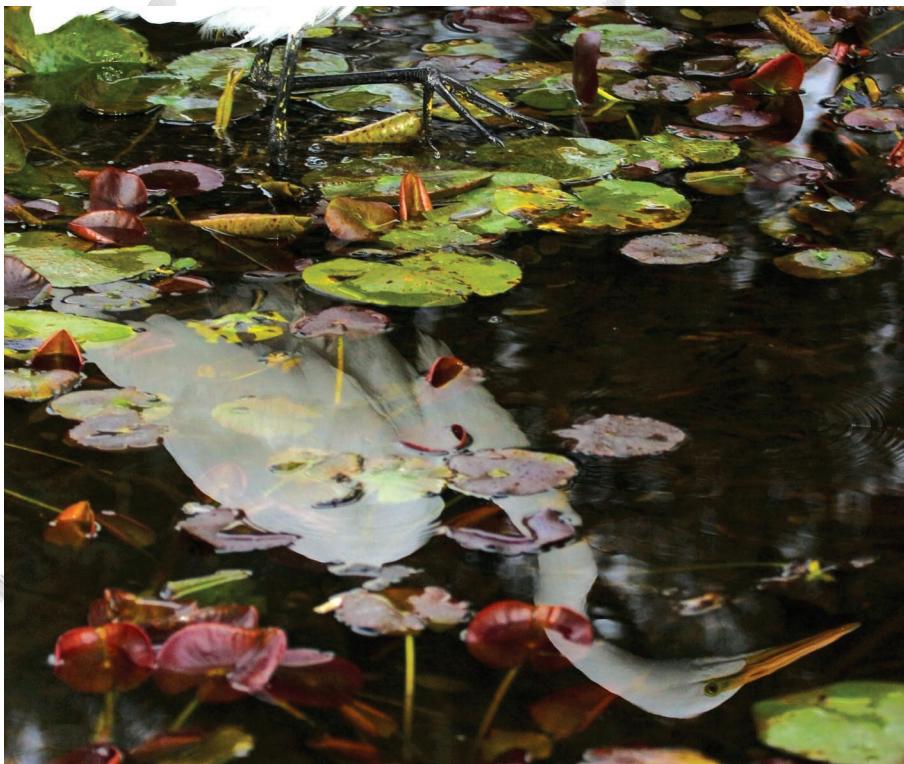
ID

Karen Wang

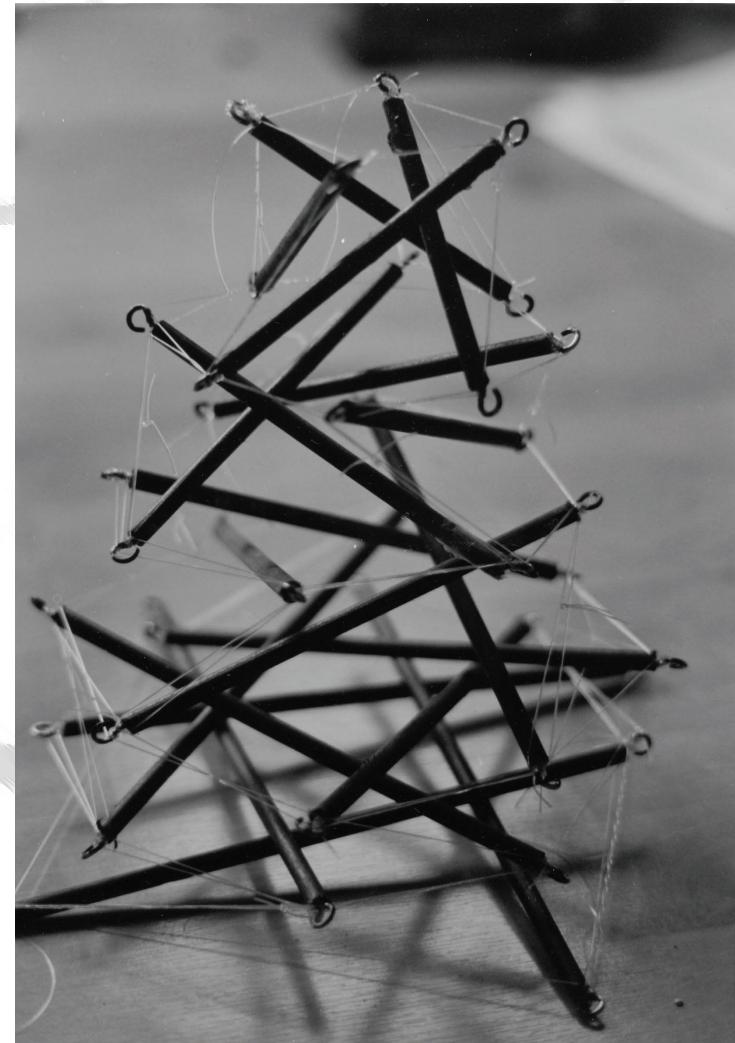
Uncondoned practices include
tasting the solution to find
acidity levels that elude
common litmus tests,

kind
words to good friends rife with
hidden messages that imply
a degree of too much what-if,
a happy or disappointed sigh

exhaled at the wrong time,
giving away one's identity
in meter, verse, and rhyme;
writing too much poetry.



Nature's Mirror, digital photography, Leslie Tong



Tensegrity, film photography, Andrew Gong

All is Numeral and Warm

Garrett Ervin

All is numeral and warm:
Because they are whole, I count the building's bronze-red bricks;
I count the ribs in Lyca's side because they are whole;
Because they are whole, I count the strands in Lyca's hair;
I count the blonde strands of the air because they are whole.



Bienvenue, Mon Amour, scratchboard, Stephany Lai

Reading

Anonymous

He wore a black dress shirt.
(He always looked good in black.)
The sky sat blue behind, overlooking.

He smiled, I smiled, sitting.

Smoke rose from near his fingertips.
I crinkled my nose.
He noticed.

Looking into my eyes,
"How are you, friend?"
"I'm doing good"
"You look tired"
"I am tired"
Cigarette to mouth, his left-hand trembled.
I saw, and he followed my eyes.

"You should take better care
of yourself," he smiled.

Briefly my brow furrowed,
Eyebrows a shallow black V,
"I try to"
He smiled, expansive, right hand then
Resting over left.

Now I can see
Clearly, his skin a shade too wrong,
The pose of his shoulders somehow faked,
Too many new lines radiating from eyes that
Always read better than mine.

Then, though, I saw just little things.

"How are you?"
He looked away, and then
Returning to me: "I'm doing well."

He raised the cigarette, looked down, and then away again,
Fleeing from pain we'd shared and banished, but had now returned.
I know now on his body,
There'd be fresh needle marks,
Hidden behind black, behind my willingness not to see.

His eyes spoke,
I left mine silent.

We ordered food and when it came
I sank in as though the meal had power to replace reality
With something softer.

We talked of nothing much, and
I said nothing, seeing nothing,
Though will has more to do with seeing than
What's before our eyes.

We split the check, and the plates
Collected themselves, lifting away.

I rose to leave,
He stayed seated.

Brows furrowing,
"Take care of yourself."
"Goodbye."

I left in silence,
Feeling his eyes
Follow me out.

Pain's mirror is still pain,
And I feel that reflection deeply.
I wish we were both worse at hiding.

Let imagination be imagination, my eyes self-deceiving.
Grant us both another day,
That tomorrow we may rise,
And with courage,
Speak.

Untitled

Cliff Chang

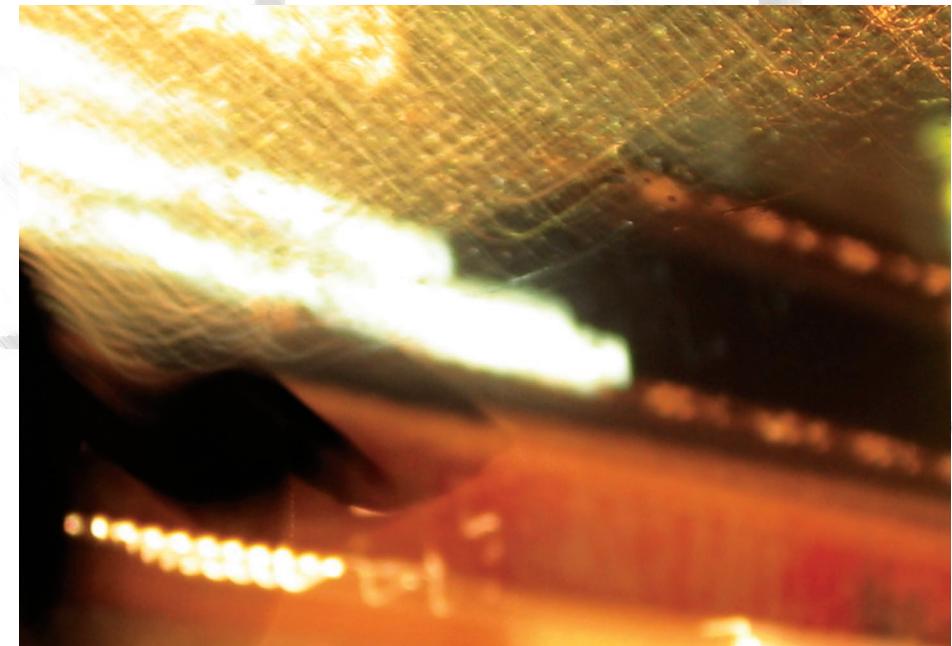
I traveled north, north, all the way north
until I was at the end of the earth.
Then further still I went until,
perched on nervous ice,
the greedy cold desiccating my every opening,
I waited at the pole,
my breath the only motion for hours,
and waited for loneliness.

But she did not come, for as I waited
in solemn anticipation, I felt
the million pulls of a million tiny needles,
countless compasses in as many questing hands,
all asking questions to my body.
I could feel the Americas in my kidney and Cambodia
in my heart and Turkey in my ear, every unsteady
wobbling pin which turned and turned and ended up
at me, pulling as the distant stars pull on the seas,
and as heaven tells the Earth it is not alone,
so I knew that I was not yet alone.

So instead I swam, out, out into
the widest green, and when I could swim no more
I waved farewell to the sun
and let the insistent sea into my
every cavity, and watched as my body
traced a slow tumbling arc through the ever dark
water, losing sight of the light like a lover on a train platform.
My being stayed with my body,
and waited for loneliness.

But she refused to come, for as my bones
were crushed to sand in the blackest cold,
they joined the dust of all unlucky sailors
and too-bold children,
and in that stillness where only the mantle below breathed,
every grain that was once a nerve felt every wave
from every motorboat, every kick of every swimmer's knees,
laughing and diving in all the seven seas.
Every propeller-turn and toe-push moved me,
slowly arranging my dust, and
so I knew that I was not yet alone.

But ah, here, sitting on this bench, watching
the strangest people go by,
telling jokes that I will never understand -
she is not here, yet. But she nears.



Pittsburgh, digital photography, Gina Gage



Amber Haze, digital photography, Joe Donovan



Untitled, digital photography, Debbie Tseng



Sara and Joe, silk painting, Jim Barry

Frida's love charm

Noele Norris

the hummingbird
he frantically beats
like my heart when it nears yours
he weaves back and forth
working so hard
for love love perhaps
and yet looks so graceful
confident

i will watch him carefully
follow him back to his small nest

when he dies

his beating heart
his beating wings
do they truly stop

i will steal him
from his loved ones

i will tie him to my neck
with the passion of thorns

and maybe then
his little heart
still beating

working so hard
for your love love I hope

i will steal it



Untitled, clay sculpture, Ransom Williams

A Course in Combinatorics

Kath Abela Wilson

if you meet my eyes
looking over the hydrangeas
how do you know your computer will work
what are your lower bounds
the parameters the minimal explanation
of our complicated interaction?

how could we generalize to maximize our aim
what probabilistic asymptotic
computational construct could make this
roux for two
covering arrays displaying
our pairwise compatibility

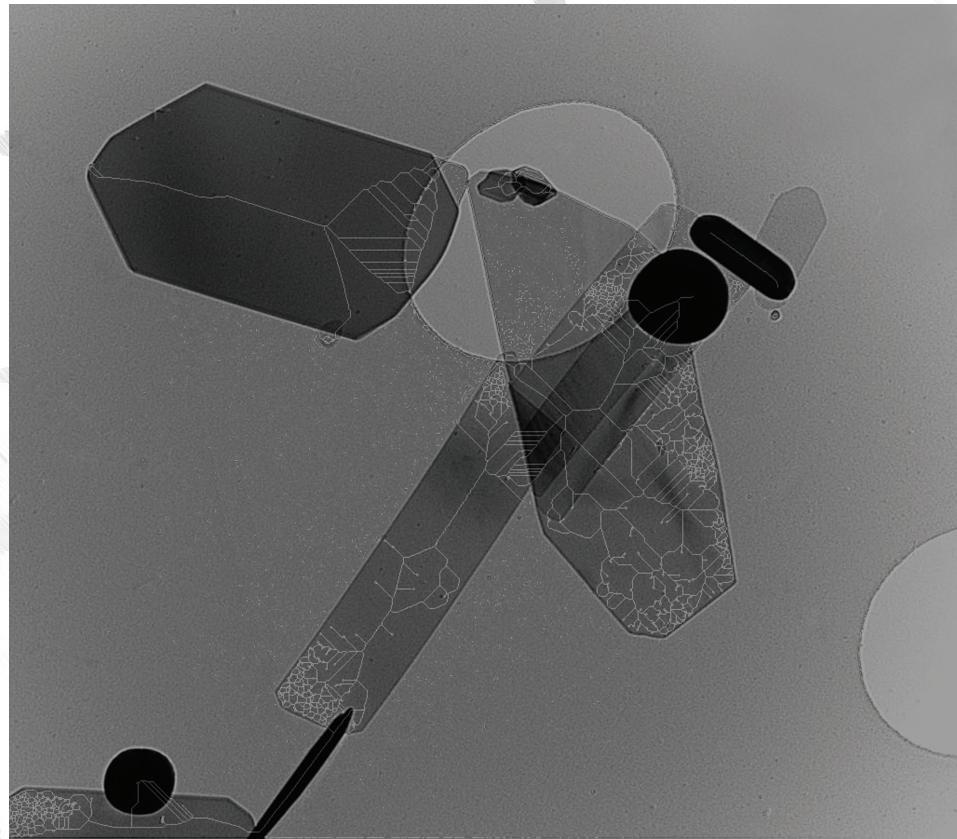
now into the serene pool the look
amidst the framing moss and tall grass
nodes, degrees, diameters,
our eyes are bubble sorts recursively constructed
staring through bamboo channels
floating rafts of iris

how can you keep me
pristine, singular, for yourself against
suspicious users unwilling to pay the price?
embed me
watermark imperceptibly
what you want to keep

through paths into the hills
we've relaxed our plan thanks to your intent
let go one end of it
that need not be on the circumference
we're decomposing bridges
found low ceilinged a darkish cave

a subpath of our outer walk,
a subgraph of a particular kind
let this be our focus,
the long time representative
surface of us has wrapped around itself
and our embrace has turned spherical

our proof is elementary but not trivial
consider the rational coefficients
the number of congruences
the power of our prime
the bound is the best possible identity
we omit the details



Orthorhombist I, microphotography, Dennis Callahan

Koi

Anonymous

Wind
backward and forth
pressing against my palms
beside the river rocks-
glistening and ebony and cavernous.

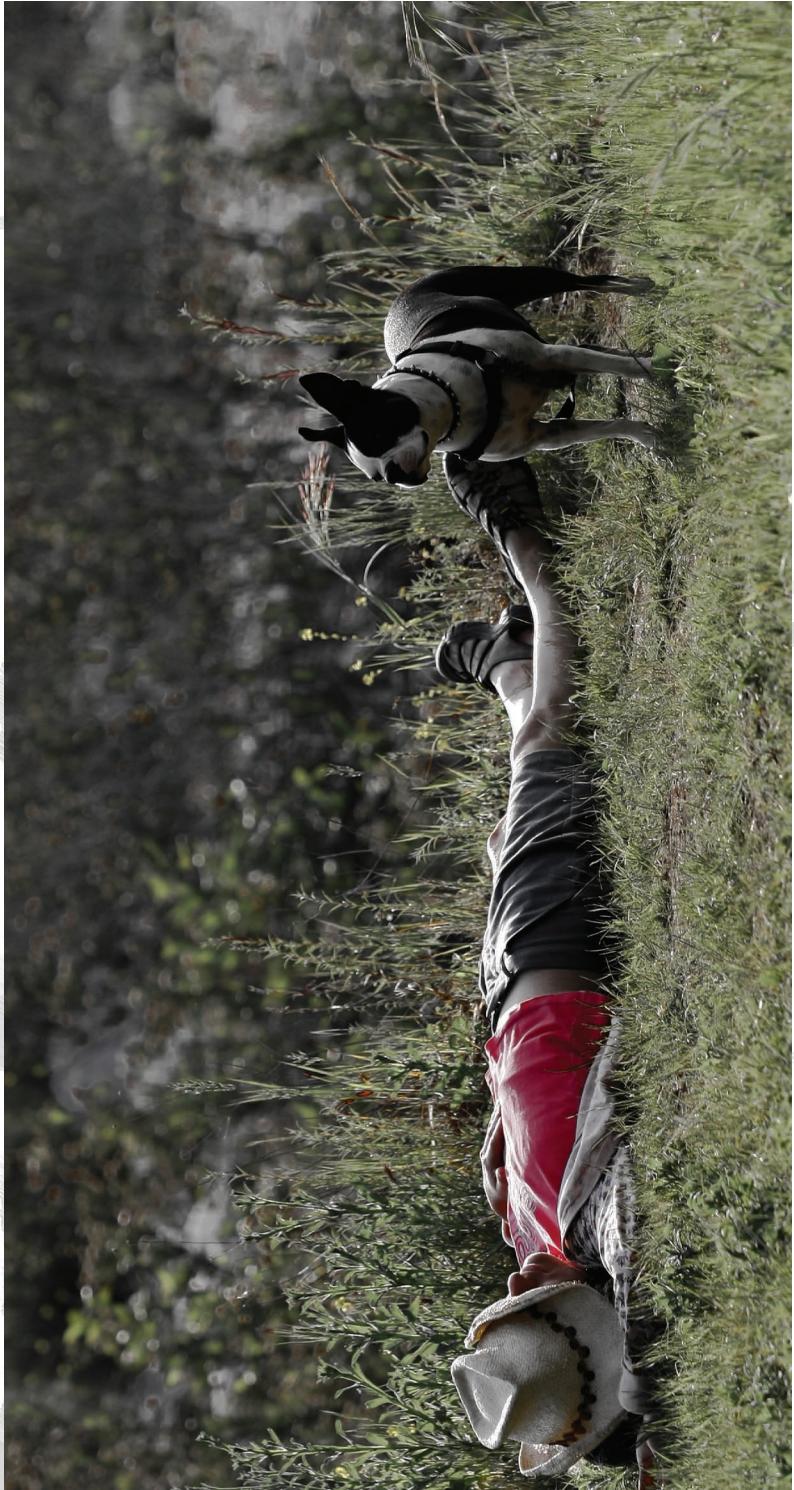
Sharing pools of sun in the thunder
Looking over
bridges onto lily ponds
and wondering if we were two koi in the lake
and from wooded hills, frenzied stars of swimming
toward
the core,
brewing,
soaking in dining and shoved upwards to dryness,
twitching on the scaly backs
of our brothers.



Waterfall, acrylic, Po Ku

s m t w r f s

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Independence Day 4
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		



Vigilant Guard of Carefree, digital photography, Leslie Tong

S m t w r f s

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Ramadan begins

Last night war all but declared
in an ultimatum.
We hold our beloveds quietly
and wait.
The petunias in our courtyards
seem disproportionately fragile
and lovely
to this day.

Petunias

D.M. Solis

Now wind whooshes hard and cold
parting my hair
so my scalp stings
as I pull aching shoulders
up around my neck.
Petunias hunker down
in the stark sunlight
where the azure sky
seems too bright to be ironic.
Around me brilliantly
they are pushed down, almost flattened
against the brittle ground
by the burning cold.

There will be fires
and monarchs boasting.
There will be dead sons and daughters
all of them ours.
And even the flowers
will be drenched
in humanity's shame.

At the end of the day, digital photography, Lainam Chaipornkaew



s m t w r f s

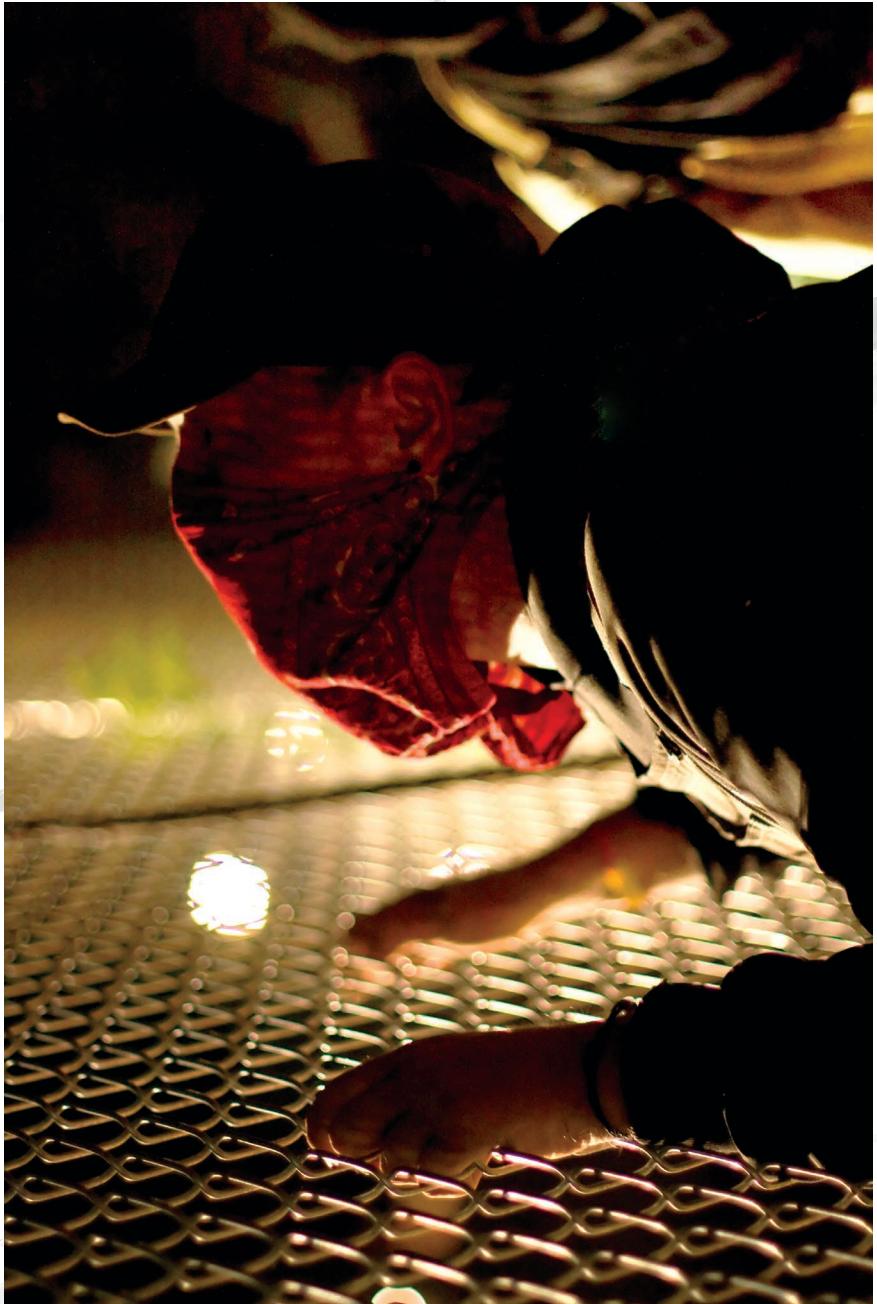
				O		5
6		1	2	3	4	
13	Labor Day	7	8	9	10	11
		14	15	16	17	Rosh Hashanah (sundown)
20	international pre-orientation begins	21	22	new student orientation begins	23	24
27	Yom Kippur (sundown)	28	29		25	26
					30	



The Red Umbrella, acrylic, Stephany Lai

s m t w r f s

					Sukkot begins (sundown)	3
O	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	Halloween 31



Defence, digital photography, Andrew Pullin

S m t w r f s

	O						
Daylight Savings Time ends		3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	drop day registration for winter term	19	20	21
x ⁷		24	25	Thanksgiving Day	26	27	28
22	23						
29							30



Untitled, Yellowstone National Park, 2008, film photography, Ahuva Mu'alem

s m t w r f s

	O					
1	2	3				5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	O		31



Echo Cliff Chang

Illoveyou flees my belly
Emerges awkwardly into the world
And cries in terror and triumph.
Stumbles out into the street,
Flows among all the speech of man,
Meanders dimly out above the sky,
Joins the pilgrimage of words and
Flies away from home.

Still stars merely watch as
our Everythingsfines and
our Canyousparemeadimes and
our Ihaveadreams

Brush by them as they meditate.

They must cherish every
Tellhimwhatthesewon and
Watchwhereyouregoing and
Ohgodjustlikethat -

Our murmurs are

The only things they have to keep

The chattering of so many magpie
Can they even glean impressions
Of our fiercest passions,
Weary and thin with travel?

Somebody is listening,
For an echo returns from the edge
Of the universe, and the Heavens
Whisper back to me
Iloveyoutoo.

neither here, film photography, Gina Gage

s t r w t m s



Good Morning SoCal, film photography, Nickie Chan

Sleepy California, film photography, Nickie Chan

s m t w r f s

		Groundhog Day				5	6
	1	2	3	4			
	7	8	9	Chinese New Year (Tiger) 10	11	12	13
● Valentine's Day	14	President's Day 15	Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) 16	Ash Wednesday 17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	drop day 24	registration for spring term 25	26	27
O Purim	28						

my watch

Noelle Norris

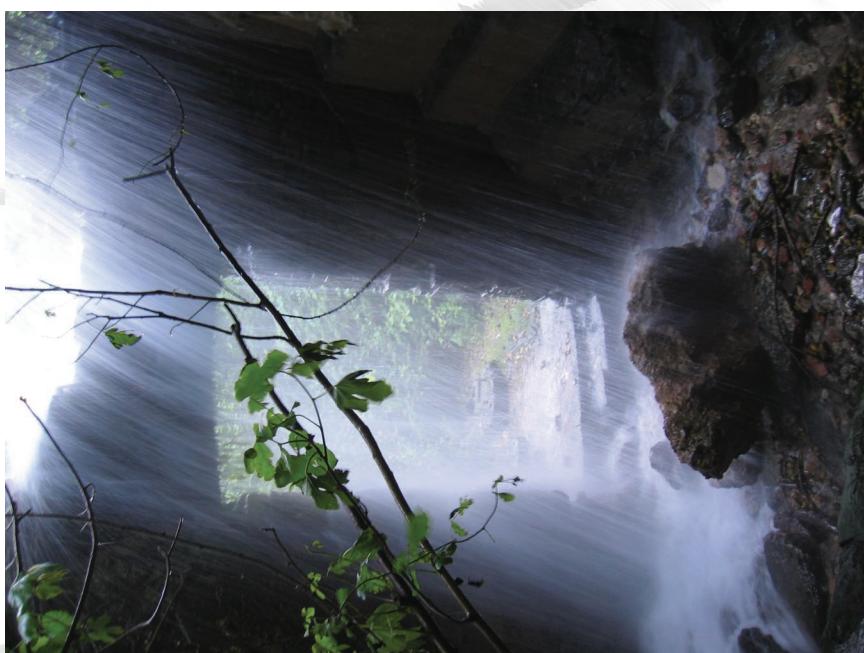
my body aches
the way an empty glass does

I live in a glass bead game
consumming and illusive

is each bead
knotted into the string of time

her majesty's ship
flies at one hundred knots

they pass through my hands
as I watch the sand slip by



Hydroelectric Power, digital photography, Kenny Oslund

s m t w r f s

	1	2	3	4	5	6
			last day of classes			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	●		St. Patrick's Day end of winter term	17	18	19
14	15	16			20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		O				
28	29		Passover	30	31	

m a r c h



Thompson Center, Chicago, digital photography, Katherine Breeden

s m t w r f s

					Good Friday	
					1	2
					3	
Easter						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			●	Tax Day		
					add day	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			○			
25	26	27	28	29	30	



Sun Struggles Storm, digital photography, Joe Donovan

S m t w r f s

			Cinco de Mayo			
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mother's Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
			drop day	registration for fall term	II	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
				O	last day for seniors and grad students	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30			Memorial Day			31

m a y

Morning Routine

David Nichols

Sunrise.

I awake to find
A golden orb
And a few trembling leaves
Throwing a confetti
Of light and dark
On the far wall.

Thin threads
Of the screen
Cut the incoming soft breeze
Into little square columns
That tickle my legs
As I climb out of bed.

Under the surface,
I glide on my back
As light rays bounce
Through all jagged angles
Transmitting and reflecting
All around me
Earth. Moon. Sun. Sky.

I find a glass of water
And let the cool
Pass throughout my body,
Although I know
This won't be sufficient
To fend off
The incredible dryness of being.

Instead, I search out
The nearest body of water,
Take in whatever air I might need,
And stretch as long as I can,
Adapting my form to the fluid.



Jacaranda, oil on canvas, Phil Lindquist

s m t w r f s

6	7	8	9	10			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	O
Father's Day							
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30				



A Californian Winter Day, film photography, Nickie Chan



Together, pencil, Grace Lee

Orange Backpack, Green Umbrella

D.M. Solis

He resembles the clouds
...each turn floating
into the next...

who randomly appears
wearing an orange backpack
like an afterthought...

riding a bicycle through
my courtyard
in a soft clay-scented rain...

holding open and aloft
a big green umbrella
like a sail...

grinning up at himself
from his reflection
in mirror-pools on the ground...

gliding wide...easy...circles
almost without a sound
but for a dull rhythmic whirrrrrrr
when a tire rubs the frame.



Plum, chalk pastel, Justine Chia

On a Postapocalyptic Oasis

Fedor Manin

Run away one morning from the pulses of policies,
The multicolored echoes of public display,
To a roughshod sorrelly California solitude
Where a lawnmower sings just a wind away.

Up above, an inquisitive whiskery pattering;
Beneath, a footprint of broken grass;
Nearby, a fire alarm running out of batteries —
No one to replace them —
no one will pass.



Chaos, acrylic, Christina Theodoris

Smile

Dallin Akagi

Slowly drawing back the corners of my
mouth, confidence
injects my red-flushed face,
lining my failing
ego.

Cool, composed, convincing.
Who am I kidding?
Not even close.

It's a game.
I'm losing.

If I let on that it haunts me, then I'm weak.
If I carry on like it's nothing, then I'm heartless.
If I keep thinking about it, then I'm obsessive.

So I think of possibilities and
memories, and hope that
incredibly, things will change:
luck or fate or chaos, anything, so that
eventually, some day,

you'll smile at me like you used to.



The Busker, digital photography, Dongkook Lim



Kokorozashi, custom designed/assembled guitar, Nam Nguyen

The Playwright

Daniel Haas

We danced across the rooftops
Under a backdrop of painted stars
The night before she exited, stage right
For the duration of Intermission
With carefully chosen dialogue
The audience was clued in
That I had fallen.
We could all see how this would go:
A small friendship would blossom
Some sort of conflict would arise
(A problem seemingly insurmountable)
Sappy music would montage between us

Before a climactic church scene
I object!
We'd kiss as the credits roll
Lights come up, the man cleans the floors
Shows again at 7:05 and 10:45
But the world is not a stage
And when you peel back the film you see
That the cigarette burns are real
Life is not split into Acts,
And all of her can't be contained
By a pithy rejoinder from some comic relief
Or a dramatic monologue
And our dance was not the foreshadowing
It was merely the shadow



Working on a Horse Shoe, digital photography, Kenny Oslund



My Backyard in Winter, digital photography, Sierra Petersen

Fork

Dallin Akagi

Just like so many times before, he found himself standing at a fork in the road, with the sun setting on a spring evening and the opportunity to choose. Despite his being very much alone, he voiced his sentiments, his tone reflecting his surprise and annoyance: "Ah, crap."

After so long on the solitary mountain path, the rises and drops had become familiar to him. The path never doubled over onto itself, but as he had continued the steady march somehow he grew to be able to sense the upcoming bends, and knew what he would see at each successive clearing before reaching it.

The trail itself was not for the weak, and he took pride in that. But he didn't expect to have to make a choice. Its sudden appearance left him a little unnerved, and a lot unprepared. He stood with his arms hanging limply at his side as his eyes darted between the paths before him. His forehead scrunched up, showing his intense concentration for the task at hand.

Each possibility seemed as promising as the other, but a nagging thought stole the confidence that he sought to make the decision: he didn't know how far each would lead, or where they would end up. Even worse was that he knew that there was no turning back; if he were to choose poorly, he would find himself stomping through the trees and bushes, eventually stumbling upon the solitary mountain path once again. He balled one fist and let the other hand wrap around it, holding the two in a protective gesture in front of his mouth as he breathed deeply, his elbows tucked in tight to his sides. It didn't make him feel any more secure.

As he stood there, analyzing and contemplating, the paths ahead seemed to grow maddeningly more narrow. Minutes passed. Hours passed. The longer he refused to choose, the more unlikely the success of each route seemed. The sun sunk lower and lower, finally disappearing behind the trees. The choices before him were closing off. He watched the shadows and branches slowly swallow each path before him until he was standing there alone in the dark, with no path before him.

In the dying light of dusk, he clenched his jaw tightly, exhaled abruptly through his nostrils, and kicked violently at the air in front of him while screaming out in rage. Furious at himself for once again letting uncertainties stop him from action, vowing that next time will be different, but fearing that it won't, he stepped forward into the darkness, knowing that by daybreak he would find himself marching on the solitary mountain path.



My Backyard in Winter, digital photography, Sierra Petersen

Some days...

Isaac Hilburn

Ugly little monster in the window sill,
I do not like you
Sitting there with your ugly little eyes
Always staring at me.

Go somewhere else! Disappear!
Cover yourself with a little wash cloth
So I can't see your ugly oval face.

When I woke up today
There you were with that not-quite-a-smile,
Sitting. What did I do to have
You, spiky tail rapping again
Against the inside of my window pane?

Perhaps, I'll scream
And make you go
Perhaps I'll attack you with a stick
Or throw a shoe,
Or light a small fire,

But you will always be there
Lying belly up and blowing
Tiny smoke rings from each nostril.

Something put you here – I know what,
I know how to make you gone, but for now
It's easier to let you sit, hidden
Under a dirty sock (until
You blow it off
With a high pitched sneeze).

And who knows, maybe tomorrow
You'll be gone. Or maybe there'll be
Two tails tapping softly
On the inside of my window pane.

Goddamn it, the Koalas are back!

Perrin Considine

Goddamn it, the Koalas are back!
****, I tell you, they're freaking everywhere!
Ready the machine guns, and fire grenades!
Man down!
Man down!
Sergeant, Dan's down; his machine gun's unmanned—
Then go take his place, if you're just half a man—
Sergeant, all I've got left is my broadsword,
And the furs are still coming on STRONG—
(My voice is so hoarse; I must rally my men; but
How can I fight this marsupial force?)
Sergeant, please help me; oh help me! OH GOD!—
(God give me the strength to defeat this damn horde.)
Stay cool, men, stay cool. Stick together and let
No damn paws get the man on your right or your left
Martinez! Martinez: grabbed from behind,
And they're falling from trees; and they're pulling men up!
This jungle's our worst damn enemy
(If every time someone died I got a penny...)
Sergeant, where are you? Sergeant, please look!
(What's that that's grabbing and pulling my foot?)
Oh, god, they got Sergeant! They got him! Oh f--!

And suddenly, one private (just one P.F.C., no
honors aside from the scars on my soul), I'm
alone.
No Karen to kill, no infantry at my back.
No friends, just blood and fur and pieces of flak.
In the middle of a lonely jungle clearing,
My soul is all alone, and night is nearing.



Untitled, digital photography, David Koenitzer



Looking Towards the Future, digital photography, Ioana Aanei

authors and artists

ioana aanei • dallin akagi • jim barry • katherine breeden
dennis callahan • nickie chan • cliff chang • laainam chaipornkaew
justine chia • perrin considine • joe donovan • garrett ervin
gina gage • andrew gong • xinmei guo • daniel haas
emily hamecher • isaac hilburn • david koenitzer • po ku
stephany lai • grace lee • dongkook lim • phil lindquist
fedor manin • ahuva mu'alem • david nichols • nam nguyen
noele norris • kenny oslund • sierra petersen • andrew pullin
d.m. solis • christina theodoris • leslie tong • debbie tseng
karen wang • marissa weichman • ransom williams • kath abela wilson

sponsors

admissions
ascit
caltech y
division of hss
gsc
mosh
public relations
student affairs
student diversity

totem staff

kimberley ho • christina theodoris • angela zah

professor kevin gilmartin

ioana aanei • donatela bellone • yasha berchenko-kogan
cliff chang • jessie ge • ellen hsu • michelle jiang
emily kim • patrick kim • stephany lai • grace lee
dongkook lim • jennifer ma • juying shang
sue shiao • fei yang • wubing ye

