



SPRING 2019
JABBERWOCKY



JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One two! One two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All munsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.



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ABOUT JABBERWOCKY

Jabberwocky is an undergraduate literary journal published by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The journal is affiliated with the English Society, which is the undergraduate branch of the English Department. All editors and contributors to *Jabberwocky* are undergraduate UMass students.

Jabberwocky is divided into four separate staffs for the purpose of reviewing submissions: poetry, fiction, criticism/nonfiction, and media. All submissions are anonymously reviewed by the respective staffs to be approved for inclusion in the journal.

All contributions by members of the *Jabberwocky* staff were reviewed anonymously without input by the submitting staff member.

Jabberwocky is not copyrighted. Any student work that is included in the journal remains the property of the artist. All contributors reserve the right to publish their work elsewhere in accordance with guidelines set by other publishers.

The views and opinions expressed in *Jabberwocky* are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the staff, the department, or the university.

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Questions, concerns, and input can be sent to umassjabberwocky@gmail.com. Students interested in being on staff for the next issue can contact the *Jabberwocky* email in Fall 2019. Submissions will open again at the beginning of the Spring 2020 semester.

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Artist Statement for Cover Art, “Polaris,” by Andrew Graham:

I am a sophomore studying Physics, Math, and Philosophy at UMass and I have been taking pictures since I could get my hands on a camera. As a kid, I was fascinated by nature, the stars, and our universe, and as I’ve gotten older, I have done my best to maintain and grow that curiosity. “Polaris,” to me, represents this wonder. I made this picture by leaving my camera out in the cold for a few hours with its shutter receiving light from the night sky. During this time, the Earth puts on a show as it turns around our north star, called Polaris, that is seen above the large oak tree in my backyard. The rotating Earth drags the light along with it, giving each star a tail. I am very grateful that my work has been chosen for this publication.

WE ARE SOMEWHERE, SOMEPLACE

Madysen Lawrence

We are somewhere, someplace

Anywhere—see how we wander sacred dreamscape, As old as deep, emerald
oceans.

Can you see us?

Shadowy chameleons, we crawl away.

Can you hear us?

A sleepy rhapsody, we cry, no shame.

Why, we are poems!

Our own oracle, we say,

“Analyze romance, analyze hope,

And do so handsomely, and alone.

HELP!” we cry!

Help us, we are someplace,

Some dreamy landscape somewhere;

We are here, always.



After Hours
Lianna Churchill
Digital Photography



Untitled
Alice Erickson
Mixed Media

BETTER WEATHER

Alice Erickson

Cassie woke up foggy-eyed, glad to be in clean sheets. Last night was something, trying to find her shirt, her shoes—hand under the fold out sofa mattress, finding cold metal, beer cans, and a gun barrel. At that point, it was definitely time to go home. She rolled over. The only sounds in the apartment were her breathing and the rustle of bedclothes. Alone, she liked that. No roommate, no cat, a dying houseplant on top of the fridge. The sun shone full-on in the mornings, tall windows day-lighting every bit of space. She swung her legs over the side of the bed and dug her toes into the carpet. Little white spots behind the eyes and a creeping tingle over the head from sitting up too fast. She reached for the chain around her neck, fingers around the gold charm that dangled there, trying to steady. It happened like that, the roll of dizziness, threatening a full-on faint. Not hungover, just hungry. Always.

Walking to the store for cigarettes, she was glad she'd thrown on a sweatshirt. The sky was odd. Bright, but somehow hazy. She kept one foot in front of the other. Warming up now, she pushed up her sleeves, all bird bone wrists and long fingers. Her mother always said her hands were a palm reader's glory, mapped with the lines and furrows of an old woman. "Don't you want to know your future?" she'd ask. Cassie remained skeptical. Heart lines and how many husbands. A break in the line, a disruption. Heartbeats and the rhythm of breath. Monitors and IVs and bedrails. A break in the beat, a clean flat line. She tried not to think on it. She'd taken care of her mother at the end, most of her friends moving on and out to their own lives. She was tethered to home by sickness.

Cassie kept her stare forward, icy blue eyes and nonchalance. She'd learned pretty quick that eye contact with the men that drove this street was read as an invitation. "You need a ride?" Yeah. It was like that. She liked having to have the edge, though. So different than her green-grass, groomed-yard neighborhood growing up. No lawnmowers here; just asphalt and cement and a little neon.

Her muscles ached. She used to be so strong, rolling her mother to change the sheets, lifting her to the commode when she could still get up. But now Cassie had turned her own body against her, eating itself in the absence of food. The constant ache, the maw in her gut, felt like power. *Quod me nutrit, me destruit. Resist or regret. Every act of self-denial is a step closer to perfection.* She believed this. It kept her moving.

When she came out of the corner store, the light was strange, tinting everything orange through the moving clouds. There seemed to be a faint hum in the air. Cassie stood on a concrete bumper in the parking lot, all faded yellow paint, and lit a cigarette. Big sky country, here. Everything flat and open. The weather blew in from miles away; you could watch it come and go. This city was like an outpost on the prairie. Dive bars and churches, slot machines and cowboys, whiskey and motorcycles and punk rock kids. She blew out a cloud of smoke and watched the wind take it away.

She thought about Michael, day drunk on Sundays and chest covered with scars. The first time he showed her, they were huddled away in a corner of that bar where old men and regulars came to drink. Behind them, these fading curtains, red like the shine of an old wound. He lifted up his shirt and she wanted to touch the razor-made hash marks, self-inflicted with frustration or rage, she supposed. Another night he came home to her apartment. They lay on top of white sheets and he put his head on her chest like a child. She held him and he just talked and talked, filling up the silence in her bedroom with all of his pain. They fell asleep that way. She stopped answering his calls. A few months later word got around he'd been found dead in his backyard. He shot himself and she knew it wasn't her fault, but she still carried a gnawing, selfish guilt that told her she could have done something.

The wind picked up a little, pushing Cassie's bangs into her eyes. She blinked. Lately, when she showered, hair just filled her hands. Her body suffering, the pain of loss pushed deeper and deeper until it sat beneath her skin like bones, all ribs and sinewy ankles. She started walking. By the time she got to her building, long and flat and doors all at the front like a seedy motel, the sky was filling with clouds. They rolled in from behind the apartments, the left and the right at equal speed, coalescing in a great billowing cloud of gray and burnt apricot. The sky just kept moving and that hum was taking on another timbre, like chuffing, like a train in the distance, but there weren't any tracks on this side of town.

When the warning alarms went off, a great gaping maw of gray plastic at the top of a telephone pole, she just froze, captivated by the siren. Something inside her went black and then white as vapor. The white and orange and haze was becoming a great, grey funnel of wind and seething moisture. The tip of the cone just reaching, reaching, reaching for the ground like the thinnest finger. She could hear people behind her running, slamming doors, heading for the quarter pay washers and boiler in the basement, hoping for cover and safety and survival. Cassie, she just stood there as leaves and trash and the bag in her hand began to whip against her with each gust. She'd felt these forces before, leaning against the wind on her thin frame, the press of hands and push of an unwanted body, the unbearable weight of the grave and the void that was left compelling her each day toward a slow death. The terror pitch of this wind was a relief, it wasn't a dinner table or a hospital bed or a headstone to be suffered in silence. The air wound up in a screaming breath around her and she just stood there, palms open and all the tension leaving her body for the first time in years. She imagined she would burst apart and fly away, like a great cloud of dust.

When the weather finally broke apart across the plains, it was deathly quiet. People emerged from the basement laundry room blurry-eyed and shell-shocked. All bird bones and blood and bruises, Cassie was found under beams and shingles and the rest of the roof that had blown off her building. One eye was closed and her shoes were gone and there was no one to call and offer condolences. The sound of weeping moved softly through the open air as the sky went clear and bright again, the bluest eye open to the sun and looking for no one.



Untitled
Isobel McCue
Digital Photo Collage



No Ordinary Raindrops
Ocean Eversley
Digital Photography

FAERIES TREASURE JOKES

Gwyneth Rowland

it
stole
my
tongue
when i
was twelve.
i swallowed
rot for weeks.
silk soaked in bile
tickled my throat. i
ground my name into
dust between my molars.
forgot the taste of an identity.
words lost their shape. my throat
had rusted shut. "it'll grow back," it
told me, "but slowly, so i can savor the
joke." my tongue rests in a jeweled box,
cushioned on a bed nicer than any i've ever
slept in. tucked into the pocket of a monster.
it'll grow back, but slowly. i am still young.
i am still young, it'll grow back. but slowly.
and i will weep the first time i taste food again.

HAPPILY

Nicholas Conti

Happily we take
a moment, just to figure out what to do
next, just to discover
who we really could be.

The Universe, she took us there,
to the place where I could not
be—the place where no one truly is.
Happily we take

our time, getting the lay of the land,
feeding our ambition, stoking our confidence
eternally pushing forward
while in reality

time
stands
still.

Mercifully a single morsel
of rain in the darkest, most unforgiving
sky lands playfully on the lips
of a boy. Wide-eyed, skinny-stomached,
unknowing boy. Happily

a dry tongue distributes the gift
over chapped lips, lost teeth,
big smile. Joy

from a tropical, getaway vacation is not real
joy, it is love from a grandmother's eyes—
bright, sunken, hungry, knowing eyes—
that leads us where we must go.

Gradually she takes us there,
to him, and sadly we realize our mistakes.
His raindrop smile on the verge of breaking
us, his wide eyes happily taking
us in. We grin as if grinning were new, for now we know

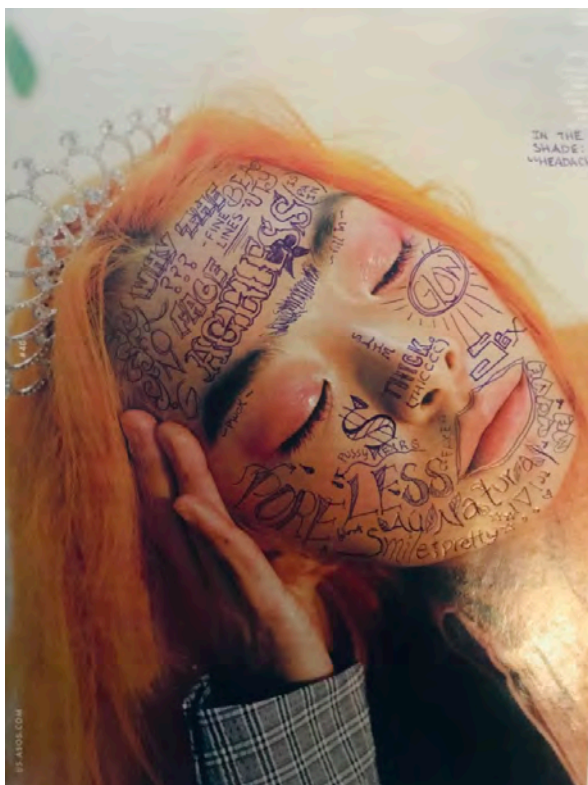
we have made it in time, we know
it is not too late.

THIRTEEN

Megan Mentuck

Thirteen was a cold year:
bubblegum eyeshadow
and stubbly legs in locker rooms
thirty-two double A
and Hannah kissed a boy.
Broken lockers,
blue metal.
The Play was Cinderella.
A hand-me-down satin dress,
I'm a bitchy princess.
Truth or dare backstage,
Cinderella's mic went out.
Two scenes, one line
And Suzy drank a bottle of wine.
Kept a notebook
Quit soccer
And got my period on a Sunday.
I rolled my eyes
Drank caffeine,
and then that May,
I turned fourteen.

In the Shade "Headache"
Tovya Goodwin
Ink Pen on Photo





MY BODY'S LANDSCAPE

Kenzie Kimble-Badgett

this is the type of dirt you find in the desert,
it is hard and dry and
when you press into it the dust will rise
and maybe crack

you know the water lies
somewhere far beneath

A Lemon Twig
Chuck Frost
Watercolor on Paper



Sligo Coast
Mira Kennedy
Digital Photography

Giverny
Lianna Churchill
Digital Photography



I SEE MYSELF IN ALL OF THIS

Ocean Eversley

When I look in the mirror and slowly step inside, I become light as air,
my mind opens and becomes a halo of peripheral vision where everything
comes alive.

I see soft yellow orange pink beginnings rising above snowcapped mountains
and hear the morning's
primordial call. I see eagles flying high in the sky, majestic wings spread wide,
meditating silent considerings above cascading waterfalls and towering tree
lines.

I see a meandering river roaming through colorful autumn forests
and a family of deer drinking at its rippling banks. I see wisteria blossoms of
lavender dreadlocks being
carried downstream without fickle or bittersweet thoughts.

I see pink and white butterflies gently kissing her toes, her shoulders, and her
windswept hair as she
cheerfully skips barefoot through the woods of her mind. I see she is gentle
and peaceful as a beginning
and sounds as lovely as an orchestra of violins inhaling and exhaling melo-
dies of love; her palms have no
lines.

I see boughs with cranberry-red berries feeding eastern bluebirds, and yel-
low-bellied woodpeckers
drilling on maple tree barks that seep delicious sap and house squirrel nuts. I
see honey bees collecting
pollen from boneset flowers. I see she uses her breath to pray for the well-be-
ing of little white
dandelion puffs sailing on the air.

I see a beaver building a golden-copper leaf dam for two in a pristine lake of
cobalt blue, and one month
later, an offspring of three splash their tails against the living water. I see the
start of a rainbow reaching
to touch unbound spirits.

I see her eyes, they burn with compassion for every beating heart and rock,
her hands are resilient and
kind, they aid, hold, and then let go. I see she's come all this way eager to be
the lover and the beloved;
she knows only humility, she desires no other choice.

I see moss-covered rocks, tall-shiny-dark green leaves, and a worn-out
wooden bench with dew drops

and fungi living side by side. I see her sitting on that bench, her eyes shimmer like precious jewels.

I see her singing the song of the forest to chipmunks that come each day at noon to nap on her lap.

I see orange leaves falling in the shape of hearts and middle-aged hands eager to capture them. I see the light of her youth and the shadow that follows. I see the song of winter up the road.

I see an aging woman finding solace on the last warm day of autumn. I see her standing on tiptoes with hands reaching out to the heavens. I see the fading sun caressing her bones as she slowly sheds her long flowing iridescent silk dress. I see her grace sparkle like fireflies dancing in the cloak of dusk.

I see her lying down, nestled in a field blanketed in pink clover. She is still in awe of a blade of grass.

I see her smiling listening to the echoing, whistled songs of the white-throated sparrows, to the lively water trickling over stones and the *shhh* of gentle winds under starlit skies adorned with diamond dust. I see her eyes gradually close as she turns herself into the flower of life that returns to the branch of the unknown. She understands the metaphors of the universe; she is the mirror and the reflection. I see myself in all of this.



Untitled
Samantha Croteau
Digital Photography



Untitled
Isobel McCue
Digital Photo Collage

FOUND THEN LOST

Kayla Oster

The Park Bench

He let out a slight groan, rose from the bench, and dexterously extracted a cigarette from the pack in his pocket. I watched him while trying to seem like I wasn't. I watched his robust jawline, his overgrown facial hair, and his stubby fingers. He was so dreadfully addicted to the harsh nicotine. He lit the cigarette and inhaled with the desperation of a swimmer gasping for air.

The night air hung low by our temples, heavy with humidity. The lamp posts lit his form enough for me to make out his facial expressions. Eyebrows furrowed, he carried on inquiring me. *Dime, ¿por qué elegiste Argentina?* Why had I picked Argentina, why was I here? I struggled to answer these questions sufficiently in English—never mind in Spanish. I pieced together my response, which led into commentary on the Eurocentrism of American culture. He listened to my clunky sentences attentively, forgivingly. As he rose from his crouched position his knees popped; having finished his cigarette, he flicked it carelessly into the bushes. I thought to myself: *I like this guy.*

\$800 Pesos

The waiter scurried to our table and greeted us. David dove into friendly conversation: *¡Che! ¿Cómo va?* The two animated men babbled in rapid, colloquial Spanish. Their fluency rendered me mute. As we waited for the server to return with our food, I confided in David that I had absolutely no clue what the two of them had talked about.

We laughed jovially together seated in the white-tiled section of the airy restaurant. I saw the spark of joy he held within his chest. I saw the light for me he kept behind his eyes. I saw the weariness he carried on his shoulders. Only one year older than me. One year. Can one year bring that much pain? Can one year cause that much hardening?

He asked how long I would be in Buenos Aires. I told him I had about two months left. Tentatively, I asked if he was sure he wanted to continue this. He took one of my hands in his and said: *Serán los mejores dos meses de mi vida* (it will be the best two months of my life). Gazing at his worn out hand resting over mine, I thought: *I'm going to break this boy's heart.*

GOAL! I jumped in my chair and nearly dropped my glass of water. The screams of soccer fans in the restaurant made the hairs on my arms stand up at attention. I exhaled with exasperation and plopped my forehead into my hand. David laughed with his mouth wide open. *¿Estás bien?*

The waiter brought our bill and David immediately put his cash down. The total was \$800 pesos, about \$23 United States dollars. It was not until several weeks later that I learned that David earned \$700 pesos for a full day of work. A man spends more than his full day's earnings on me, and all I think about is how I'm going to break his heart? How heartless.

His parents treated me with warmth despite knowing I would leave soon. I never planned on meeting them—that was his doing. I sat in their humble kitchen with stained walls and somehow chatted to his mom about whether or not aliens existed. Her Spanish was quicker, with words sewn together into a messy spoken cursive. *Mamá, ¡más despacio!* David would remind her, trying to increase my chances of following her words.

Before I left their house for the last time, his mother made a cross over her heart as she said goodbye to me. She looked at me with a tad of fear in her eyes, as if she desperately wanted the universe to treat me well. David walked me through his less-than-safe neighborhood to the unmarked bus stop. When I was in his neighborhood, I dared not open my mouth. My *cheto* (posh) accent made me a target. Finally, I waved goodbye to him and got on the crowded, sunny bus. It was not the last time I would see him, but I was suddenly very aware of the finality of our time together. With only a couple weeks left in my program, surely I would never return to his home. This was the beginning of the end.

I stood on the bus—gripping a pole with my backpack on my stomach so no one would rob me—and watched his face leave my sight. I wedged my earbuds into my ear and listened to the song “1950” by King Princess. *So tell me why my gods look like you?* The painfully nostalgic, tender lyrics filled my skull, kept my brain company in that dark abyss of realization. The afternoon sunlight shifted from face to face, adjusting its angle as the bus rushed through the gnarly streets.

Goodbye

Two months had passed since we first met. We spent week after week meeting in parks, telling stories, and making each other laugh. He had spent two months patiently waiting for me to construct sentences. He spent two months gently correcting me until I said the full sentence with proper grammar: *¿Yo tenía? No. ¿Yo tenía? Ah, ¡Yo tuviera!* I spent two months watching him fry his lungs with cigarettes that drained his already malnourished wallet.

We stood outside of the glossy black and gold doors of my apartment building. He held me in his arms and thanked me for being in his life. He admitted to me that I was the first person who ever gave love back to him—not just took it greedily. He told me, you can always talk to me, even if someday it’s about another man. My shoulders rattled as I cried. I asked if he would be okay, to which he responded that he would carry on and think of me every day. The way he held me—with his heavy shoulders over mine and his arms all the way around my back—nearly suffocated me. But I did not separate from him until the very last moment.

He took my chin between the palm of his hands to make me look at him. I wanted to hide my cloudy red eyes, but this was more important. *Te amo. Siempre, te amo. ¿Recuerdas?* I nodded. *Te amo, también.* I shook and shook. My eyes didn’t run out of tears. It was as if my body was having an allergic reaction to saying goodbye to him.

One last kiss. One last *te amo*. Then I left. I didn’t look back.

What could not have been

I had wished with all my heart and all my power that that would not be the last time I saw him—but it was. I knew I had a family, many responsibilities, and a life to return to. But I like to think that in another life I was irresponsible enough to ignore all of this. In another life I stayed and made my parents' fears a reality. For the purpose of self-indulgence, here is that alternate reality:

Sunlight streams through the gashed screen of the window. It radiates through my eyelids. The orange-tinted light wakes me. I pull myself up out of the creaky mattress that slouches towards the ground in the middle. I yank the bedroom door open to go to the kitchen. There I see David by the Catholic cross on the yellowish wall, with one hand on the back of a chair and the other holding a cigarette to his lips. He has his eyebrows furrowed as he watches the morning news. He notices me and they relax. *Buen día, mi amor*, he says in his low, nasally voice. *Buen día*, I respond. I have more to say, but I need a few minutes to warm up my Spanish.

He walks over to me and kisses my forehead; I smell the cigarette smoke and maté on his breath. This scent was never something I would've predicted I would like, but now it saturates me with the feeling of being carefully cared for. He holds me in his arms and I lean lazily against his torso. *Escúchame, mi bombón*, he begins. He tells me that in several months he will have enough money to buy me a ring. *Pero, en mi mente, ya eres mi esposa*. He was always like this—in a rush to make me his wife and to have children. In my past life I would have rejected this vehemently. But here and now: I want it too. This life—this limiting life—is also beautiful. Maybe it's beautiful because I was taught to avoid it, because I was never supposed to have it.

Here in his arms, in this raggedy house, in this dangerous neighborhood—I am found.

The Hunter

Andrew Graham

Digital Photography

AUGUST

Martina Rehmus

the end of summer:
chipping baseboards, peeling paint
your mother handed me a bouquet of wildflowers
it was breathtaking

my friend wore a gold chain around her neck. In the late
afternoon hours,
you can find her eating watermelon on her stoop.
a yellow plastic folding chair, a swarm of flies

And I told her everything about the heart:
clean and folded as it lays, the way it rises in a storm
about the wildflowers and my father's garden

I even told her my secrets.

"Midnight is many colors," she said.

Long restless nights. Days of nothingness.
my dreams are soft and delicate, they come to me
in fragments, like pieces of the sky
But it is only the birds, beating their wings

MY SUMMER IN LOS ANGELES

Celia Lewis

there's mildew on my window,
dark green spurs, light as a feather,
peppered on the wall by my pillow,
can't even make out an outline
through that thick musty mirage;

the fan is dusty, covered
in grime, remnants
of previous tenants,

a vinyl bed cover
lays on the purpled carpet,
dotted in sharpie
and worse for wear;

oh, but dear pessimism,
i can't help but
love it here!

beach waves, palm trees,
lanes for bikes, scooters,
& hoverboards;

air so pure i breathe it in
unfiltered;

i purposefully forget my
headphones at home, virgin
ears moan, oh, oh, the sounds
of the rich and the powerful!

a 73-year-old woman
sits next to me on the
big blue bus, gets
right up in my face
and tells me some keen advice:

"us, the intelligent few,
we look out at all this
lazy craziness, this
liberal nonsense,

republican dramatics,
and we say, oh, i'd
rather end it all!"

she exits, same as i,
and throws a kate spade
bag over her shoulder;

your consumerist ambiance is en-
riching
my every sense, the sexy, impossible
ease
in which you carry yourself, you
sly, camera-shy city, you're
the cover of magazines;

you're a long t-shirt dress, brand-
name,
overpriced, underpaid, over the
shoulder,
boyfriend jeans, cuffed and rolled,
effortless, sadistic, majestic;

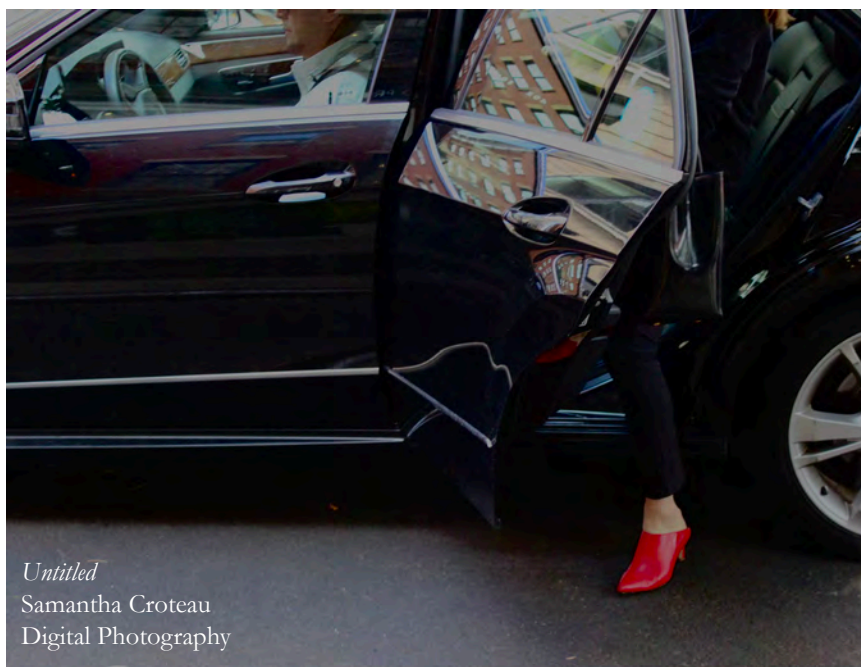
hand-washed with due care, i
wring you & carry you to the
store front, your
thin fabric slipping
through my fingers;

i pose your imperfect
edges on female
caricatures constructed
with wood, mannequins
that are supposed to be
people, palm trees
that once were oak,
dark, moldy windows
that were advertised
as bright new beginnings;

in such an impossible
city, perfection
is far from standard,
but simple beauty
is everywhere.



Untitled
Isobel McCue
Digital Photo Collage



Untitled
Samantha Croteau
Digital Photography



Smokey Joe
Isobel McCue
Digital Painting

SERENGETI

Nicholas Conti

that same dusk was always difficult to kill,
tarnished by the cigarettes
of young men. the caustic
 silence
 reminded the lion:
each beast holds
 a lump of raw meat
in its paws

echoes of a family rang within the half-
decayed bones being mauled—

he was
too far
to hear
them

BURNT

Olivia Laughlin

for protective purposes
I balance you on my teeth
not quite ready to burn my tongue
on blessings I can't pronounce
bottling up my daydreams
leaving liquor in my bones
every movement is an illusion
drunken alter egos
pretending tomorrow
is my dance partner
like spinning in circles will make me forget
where I've been
tomorrow
has left too many empty nights in my back pockets
for me to not hear songs end before they begin
I stop looking for tomorrow
I try sculpting today
but today stays dormant
like waterlogged firewood
that lays dead at hungry flames
no good at what it was cut down for
.....
but my skin is on fire
so very thirsty for a love I've never known
so very eager to give it out like gold
drink it down like stardust
my skin is not burnt
my soul is just boiling
with a love that has nowhere to go
all my life
it's been recoiling back down my throat
to hide inside me
and wait
for something I've convinced myself
will never come
for protective purposes

CHOCOLATES AND WINE

Mira Kennedy

Lea didn't remember her dreams often, but when she did, she paid attention. For as long as she could remember, her dreams had warned her when something bad was going to happen, and though she could rarely avoid it, she always tried. There was a very particular sinking feeling she got in her stomach when her dreams played out in real life. They were rarely literal, and took some interpretation.

She had a dream on her mind as she wound her blue scarf around her neck and hair, getting ready to leave work one evening. The night before she'd been dreaming—an unfamiliar man, blood, another man she knew but couldn't place, a woman's scream—and before her dream self could make sense of what she was seeing, she was woken up by the young children who lived in the apartment below hers, yelling in the night. That was the most irritating thing about her living situation; it felt like if the kids weren't screaming in the night, the cat upstairs was knocking over glass or something heavy, and she would wake up. Lea didn't particularly mind if she wasn't dreaming, but this was not the first time she'd been interrupted in the middle of a dream.

"Heading out?" Michelle asked as she took her coat off the line of hooks, snapping Lea out of her thoughts. Michelle was another waitress, in her early thirties and a few years older than Lea, and one of the closest people Lea had to a friend in this unfamiliar city.

"Yeah, time to brave the cold." Lea pulled on her hat for emphasis.

Michelle grimaced. "God, I can't deal with this cold for much longer. The kids are getting cabin fever, not getting to play outside like this. Driving me and Tom damn crazy." She pulled on her down coat that brushed the tops of her boots. "Not to mention I can't feel my face by the time I get home."

"I'm so glad I can take a bus," Lea said.

"See you Sunday," Michelle said as she waved and pushed open the door, disappearing into the flurry of snow on the street. Lea sighed. When did it start snowing?

The dream nagged at the edge of her thoughts as she trudged through the snow and strangers on the sidewalk. Her feet were aching from her long day of work. The streets were busy as usual, but the snow muffled the sound of cars and the people around her were too focused on getting wherever they were going to talk. As she walked, a bus whooshed by on the street and sprayed slush on the unlucky people walking at the edge of the sidewalk.

Her eyes were trained at her boots as she walked, and she didn't notice the man until he bumped into her shoulder from the front, hard, making her stumble. "Hey—," she gasped in alarm, and turned back to look up at him. He had turned at the same time to apologize and Lea recognized him with a jolt. His cheeks and nose were red and raw with cold, but it was definitely the first man from her dream, the one she didn't know. There was a pause, and Lea had the strangest feeling that he recognized her, too. "I'm so sorry, are you alright?" he finally asked.

"Yeah, thanks, don't worry about it," she said and turned back to hurry toward her bus stop.

Lea should have expected to see him, if she was being honest with herself; the people in her dreams were always deliberate. But usually she dreamed about people she knew. It was always unnerving to dream about someone before she met them. It rarely happened. His broad, square face hung in her mind for the first part of the bus ride home as she dwelled on that moment of shared recognition. Lea didn't like it, and she didn't trust him.

The dreams had started when she was a little girl. They were more literal then, as if her subconscious or whatever sent her the dreams was just as imaginative as her consciousness was. They started working in symbols as she got older, and she remembered asking her mother once, "Mum? Whassit mean when there's a crow in your dreams?" Her mother—not a particularly imaginative person—had told her, "Nothing, dreams don't mean anything." So Lea saved her allowance for three months to buy a dream interpretation book, which she quickly figured out was nonsense, and started logging her dreams instead.

Her dreams had accurately predicted her parents' divorce and her mother's subsequent alcoholism. She'd had enough practice at that point, and the dreams were clear enough—an earthquake, a cup of tears—that she didn't have much trouble figuring them out. Neither of her parents had listened when she told them what the other was going to do. Her mother, luckily, didn't take terribly long to shape up afterward, only about six months. Thinking about her mom on the brightly lit bus, she had to push away memories of taking the bus in her home city to the grocery store every day after school to go buy herself lunch and enough food for a two-person dinner. It was hard not to remember the way she avoided eye contact on those bus rides as she glanced away from the people standing around her.

Lea got off at her stop and made her way home through the quiet, slushy street, doing her best to put her dream and her childhood out of her mind. She had to think about dinner. She knew she couldn't have Indian take out again or she wouldn't have any money for morning coffee next week. But she didn't think there was any food to make a meal in her fridge.

Warmth washed over her as she pulled open the door to her building. The small entryway was badly lit and lined with mailboxes on either side. Lea shivered and rubbed one of her cheeks with a hand to try and get some feeling back into it and turned to the right, looking for her mailbox and fishing for her keys in her pocket. She hadn't checked it in a few days and figured she should make sure there was nothing urgent in there.

Mr. Maccini, a late middle-aged neighbor of hers from the second floor, burst through the front door, cursing the damned weather under his breath and stomping the snow off his boots as he beat the flakes off his shoulders. "Hey, Mr. Maccini," Lea said as she fiddled with her key in her mailbox lock.

He looked up, his face lined with years of scowling and his dark, neatly trimmed beard flecked generously with gray. His green plaid scarf was still dotted with snowflakes. Lea remembered it had been a Christmas gift from Mrs. Maccini. "Evening, Lea," he grumbled.

"How was your day?" Lea's mailbox swung open, revealing several crammed white envelopes underneath a white package.

"Fine until this damned snow started pouring down and I could barely see my feet to walk!" He crossed the entryway in a huff and mumbled something that sounded like, "G'night," as he pushed his way into the hallway.

Lea turned back to her mailbox. Wondering what on Earth the package could be, she gathered her mail and went upstairs to her fourth-floor apartment.

Her apartment was clean and brightly decorated, with exactly the furniture she needed and nothing extra. Prints she'd bought on the street for cheap were either framed or taped to the wall, depending on how much time and money Lea had had when she bought them. Her favorite, a white-framed print of some famous painting of the moon over a river, hung between two white-curtained windows in her living room, across from her couch where a TV would be if she had one. Her bookshelf was against the wall perpendicular to the painting and the couch, and was dotted with the pretty, useless knickknacks that her mother thought made good gifts. The bottom shelf was packed with overdue library books that Lea didn't quite feel guilty enough about to bring herself to go to the library on her day off. The top shelf had a spider plant that she diligently watered every week, and she did this now, before even taking off her coat.

She picked up the small, rectangular package from where she'd put it on the bookshelf and examined its outside with a small frown of confusion. Her address was typed, so no handwriting. Not her mother. There was no return address. It was not heavy, and made a shaking sound when she gently flicked her wrist. She put it back on her shelf, just as there was a knock at the door.

Lea shrugged off her coat as she looked through the peephole to check that it was Mrs. Maccini. It was, and remembering what was in her fridge—eggs, milk, butter, and a bag of apples. Probably some ketchup and peanut butter—she opened the door with a bit of hope. "Hello," she said.

"Lea! How have you been, dear?" Mrs. Maccini said warmly and reached out to grab Lea's arms. Her graying hair was up in a bun, exposing the gold crucifix around her neck, and her modest black sweater bore evidence of oil spatter. Her eyes were wrinkled in a smile. "Would you like to join us for dinner? Mr. Maccini said you looked very lonely when he saw you coming in, and besides, our son Daniel will be joining us and we've been saying for so long that you should come to dinner when he was visiting so you can meet him."

Lea jumped at the chance to eat a free dinner. "I'd love to, Mrs. Maccini, but just give me a few minutes to change out of my work clothes."

"Oh, of course, sweetheart, but don't you dress up or worry yourself about what you look like. You work too hard, I'm always saying to Frank—" Mr. Maccini "—that I don't know how anyone could work two jobs and be as sweet and happy as you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Maccini," Lea said with a slight flush to her cheeks. "I'll be down in a few minutes."

Mrs. Maccini took the hint and started walking toward the stairs. "Take your time, Daniel will probably be late anyway."

Lea closed the door and slumped against it. Mr. and Mrs. Maccini

were very good to her, but she was skeptical of their son, their only child. She'd never met the man, but Mrs. Maccini always seemed to blame his infrequent visits on his demanding finance job and blame his dismissal of bringing any girlfriends home on his playful, noncommittal nature, when it sounded more to Lea that he was a bit of an asshole, if she was being perfectly honest. If the Maccinis were her parents, she would come to dinner every Sunday, perfectly on time.

After changing into a blue oversized sweater and fleece-lined leggings, Lea made her way downstairs. Mr. Maccini opened the door for her and led her to the living room, where she slipped off her shoes and curled her feet under her on one of the soft brown couches. Her eyes lit on the crucifix on the mantle, the black-and-white wedding photo of Mr. and Mrs. Maccini on the side table, the liquor shelf on the other side of the room, and she wondered when she became so comfortable in their living room. "Wine?" Mr. Maccini asked.

"Only a little, thank you," Lea answered, knowing he would always pour more than she asked for, and accepted the glass he poured. Mr. Maccini thumped down on the opposite couch.

Mrs. Maccini cooked for forty-five minutes, standing in the doorway to the kitchen with her wine while she chatted with Lea and her husband. Daniel never showed up. They ate without him, Mrs. Maccini's disappointment hanging over the table and Mr. Maccini's lack of it taking the form of sharp comments.

"Excellent pork roast, Maria," he told his wife at the end of the meal. "Dan would have hated it, though, it's almost a blessing he has something more pressing than his mother."

"Oh, Frank," she chided him, somewhat automatically and half-heartedly, and started clearing plates.

Lea jumped up. "Let me help you with that, Mrs. Maccini."

Mrs. Maccini smiled warmly at her, lines crinkling around her eyes, and accepted the help. "God bless you. Your mother must have been sad to lose you when you came all the way out here, sweet helpful thing you are."

Lea gave her a tight-lipped smile and tried to gently deflect from her mother. "Oh, no, I was so excited to go explore the world I could hardly find time to be helpful." She tried to say this lightly, somewhat jokingly, as they made the short walk to the kitchen.

Mrs. Maccini did laugh at this as she turned on the faucet and dipped the first plate into the running water. "You sound just like Daniel, at eighteen, when he was going to college. He wanted to go far away," she sighed.

Mr. Maccini brought the nearly empty platter of pork roast into the kitchen and set it on the counter. "And then he came back home, only for us to see him as often as if he lived in China." He bent to look for a container for the leftovers in the cabinets under the counter.

Lea wasn't sure what to say to that, and Mrs. Maccini chose to ignore it as she scrubbed plates. "He graduated with a degree in accounting, you know," she told Lea.

Lea did know this. "Really?"

"Oh, yes. He was always very clever with numbers. And clever with reading people, very charming." A scoff from Mr. Maccini below. "He seems

to be doing really very well for himself in his new job.”

“Not that new, Maria.” Mr. Maccini stood, holding a Tupperware and lid. “He’s been there two years now.”

“Has it been that long?” Mrs. Maccini said dreamily. She stopped scrubbing a plate, letting the water rush over her hand, and Lea noticed the plate trembling slightly.

“Let me finish washing, Mrs. Maccini,” Lea said, gently reaching for the plate and sponge. Mr. Maccini, eyeing his wife, nodded his approval of Lea’s suggestion.

Mrs. Maccini smiled up at Lea again, and said, “Thank you, dear. Maybe I’ll find Daniel’s graduation photos to show you when you’re done.”

Lea finished the remaining dishes and Mrs. Maccini found the photo, calling Lea into the living room when she heard the faucet turn off. “He was so handsome at graduation,” she sighed, holding out a photo of a black-robed and graduation-capped man with a smiling Mr. and Mrs. Maccini on either side of him.

With a shock, Lea recognized the man from her dream, the one who bumped into her on the street. Several years younger, to be sure, but the same man. Well, now I know why I didn’t trust him, she thought to herself.

That night, Lea dreamed about Daniel twice.

The first time was very similar to the dream she’d had the night before—she recognized Daniel this time but not the other man, and just as she could start to make out the second man’s face from behind Daniel’s arm, there was a child’s scream from downstairs. She bolted upright in bed and muttered a curse to herself. She rarely dreamed the same dream twice. But if she couldn’t make out the second man’s face, she wasn’t really sure what to do with the indistinct warning.

The second time she dreamt about Daniel, Lea was on the couch. Often when she was woken in the night, which itself was often, she moved from her bed to her couch and read one of her overdue library books until she fell asleep. “Her” book of short creative essays was one of her recent favorites, and she flipped to a random story and began nodding off halfway through. This dream was much clearer. She dreamed that a smiling Daniel was taking things from his parents’ apartment, nice things, as if he were robbing them—Mr. Maccini’s grandfather’s gold watch off the mantle, the crucifix Mrs. Maccini’s mother brought from Italy, the expensive crystal wine stopper off their liquor shelf. A bottle of white wine crashed to the floor.

Lea woke to the sun gently pushing its way through her gauzy white curtains and onto her eyelids, bathing the room in buttery light. She loved the dawn.

With a sinking feeling, she realized she needed to do something before Daniel hurt his parents, which seemed obvious from the dream. The problem was Daniel already hurt them, nearly every day, with his careless attitude toward them. Lea wasn’t really sure what else he could do; kill a man? The problem, as always, was that she sounded crazy when she tried to tell people about her dreams. Her parents didn’t listen. Sometimes she didn’t even listen to her own dreams. There was Dean, in college, when she was eighteen and in a new place and unsure of herself, and thought her worth

came from men. Her dream wasn't the most specific she'd had—a cliff, his feet slipped, she screamed, he grinned at her from the bottom unharmed—but was still clear she couldn't trust him. And she ignored it. The sinking feeling in her stomach was hardly distinguishable from her shock when, after almost five months, he introduced her to his girlfriend, putting one finger to his lips with a cruel wink.

So, she could hardly expect the Maccinis to listen.

That morning was Saturday, Lea's day off. Tomorrow she would waitress with Michelle, and Monday through Friday she would work at the bank, and Tuesday through Friday nights she would walk from the bank to the fancy Italian restaurant. She was tired just thinking about it. She should go grocery shopping.

Instead, she fried two out of eight eggs she had in her fridge and made herself some chamomile tea. She only had chamomile in her cabinet. The boxes of mint and Earl Gray were empty.

When she settled back down on her couch with her food and tea, she remembered the package on her shelf. She'd forgotten to open it when she got home from the Maccinis' the night before.

Lea ate her eggs and looked at the package. It was wrapped in a dirty white plastic shipping bag. It was about six inches long and two inches tall, from what she could see from the couch. When she finished her eggs, she put her plate and fork next to her gently steaming tea on the wobbly side table she used as a coffee table. Lea stood up and crossed the room to pick up the package.

Something about it made her uneasy, a vague constriction in her chest that she could barely feel, much less understand beyond its source—the package. Or whatever was inside it.

Lea ripped open the bag at the perforation and pulled out...a box of chocolates?

A plain, red, rectangular box of chocolates from a cheap drugstore, by the looks of it. She checked the label on the bag again. It was definitely addressed to her. And without a return address, she had no idea who'd sent it. She shook out the bag, but no note fell out.

She was starting to think it wasn't crazy of her to feel weird about this.

Lea put it back on the shelf next to a dainty porcelain vase her mother had gotten her one Christmas. Best not to eat food I don't know where it came from, she decided.

She spent the day cleaning her apartment and buying a few basic food essentials at the store down the street, then cooking herself a big batch of fried rice. Now she'd have leftovers for the week. She'd bought a huge bag of rice on discount at the store, found some frozen peas and carrots in her freezer, still had six eggs, and there was sesame oil in one of her cabinets. At the end of the afternoon, sweaty and covered in mild oil burns on her hands and wrists, she felt satisfied with herself and read a book off her shelf that she'd only looked through a few times.

Lea was deliberately not thinking about what to do about her dream.

At work the next day, Michelle came in for the lunch shift almost fifteen minutes late. Her hair was more disheveled than Lea would expect from

her and her nude lipstick was a bit smudged, as if she rushed it. “You okay, Michelle?” Lea asked her.

Michelle barely looked at Lea as she unwound her scarf and unzipped her coat. “Yeah, fine, just got caught up in something this morning.”

“Are the kids alright?” Lea asked, a little alarmed.

Michelle glanced up at her—was that guilt?—and said, “Yeah, of course, they’re away at Tom’s parents with him this weekend. I couldn’t go, can’t miss work. Not to mention Tom’s father is a nightmare.”

Lea nodded in a show of sympathy. “Well, I won’t tell that you’re late for setting tables,” she tried to say lightly. “Rich isn’t here yet.”

Michelle grinned. “You’re a lifesaver, Lea.”

They set up for lunch. The day was pretty slow, probably because the temperature was in the single digits plus wind chill, and often Michelle and Lea had nothing to do but talk by the register in the back, in front of the coat hooks. Several times, Lea thought Michelle looked as if she was burning with something to tell Lea, and every time she decided against it or a customer walked in looking to be seated or there was food ready to bring to a table. And then at the end of the afternoon, Michelle left a few minutes early—not so early that she was slacking off work, but early enough that Lea couldn’t talk to her before she was done.

“Bye, Lea!” Michelle called from the door as she hurried out. Lea was still finishing her last preparations for the dinner staff in the kitchen.

“Bye!” Lea said back, waving with a rolled napkin of silverware. Dammit.

Monday, and Lea had to work at the bank from nine to three and then the first dinner shift at the restaurant. She got home with a caffeine withdrawal headache and sore feet. She’d woken up in a bad mood—the night before, she’d had the original dream about Daniel and the other man, but this time, the kids downstairs hadn’t woken her up. The cat from upstairs had knocked over a vase or something that shattered and woke her just as she was trying to pull Daniel off the other man so she could see his face.

Mrs. Maccini knocked on her door again that night. “Daniel will be here for dinner tonight, he’s very sorry about missing Friday but he had so much to do, the poor dear, and this time he’s bringing a girlfriend!” she said, practically trembling with excitement. “I’m making steak and salad and garlic bread tonight, would you like to join us?”

Lea would have rather choked on an entire steak than meet Daniel after such a long day, but she needed the opportunity to figure him out and possibly warn his parents, so she said, “Of course, Mrs. Maccini, I would love to finally meet Daniel.”

Mrs. Maccini beamed.

Lea changed into a more comfortable, but presentable, outfit of sweater and jeggings, and went downstairs.

Mr. Maccini opened the door again, and they went to the living room for some wine while Mrs. Maccini cooked. They talked about the awful snow, Lea’s work, Mr. Maccini’s work, and Mr. Maccini made several comments of the likelihood of Daniel showing up. Lea finally started to say, “Mr. Maccini, I think Daniel—”

“Daniel! How lovely to see you!” They heard Mrs Maccini say from the hall.

A relaxed male voice answered, “Mom, I’d like you to meet my girlfriend, Michelle.”

Lea got the sinking feeling in her stomach.

“It’s so nice to meet you, Mrs. Maccini,” Michelle’s voice answered.

Lea realized the other man in her dream was Tom.

She stood so quickly her wine sloshed against the side of her glass, and Mr. Maccini stood, too, giving her a side-eye.

Mrs. Maccini led Daniel and Michelle into the living room, an absolutely elated look on her face. “Frank, meet Michelle, and Lea, this is Daniel and his girlfriend Michelle. Daniel and Michelle, this our neighbor, Lea.”

Daniel appeared from around the corner and his eyes widened at the sight of Lea. Michelle’s smile, as she followed him and noticed Lea, dropped from her face and the blood drained from her cheeks. Mrs. Maccini picked up on the tension and her face gradually faded from excitement to confusion. Daniel cleared his throat. “Actually, Mom, Lea and Michelle work together.”

Lea nodded, still looking at Michelle, who still looked like a ghost. “Have Tom and the kids come home yet?” Lea blurted, and then Mr. and Mrs. Maccini understood.

Lea didn’t want to tell Tom and she didn’t have to. Michelle left the Maccini’s apartment and told him. Michelle moved out and stayed with Daniel, who, of course, had known Michelle was married. Whether Michelle felt guilty about keeping her affair a secret from Lea or whether she blamed Lea for it coming out, Lea was never sure, but Michelle couldn’t look Lea in the eye after that. And so Lea lost her only friend.

The Maccinis were too upset for several weeks to invite Lea over for dinner, and she lost her sense of home for a while, too. When they finally did invite her again, conversation was subdued and Mrs. Maccini touched her crucifix necklace when her husband made a rude comment about their son. Mrs. Maccini had sighed and said, “He must have liked her a lot, to choose her to bring home.” She paused and looked at Lea. “I’ve prayed for her poor husband.”

It took a long time for the mood to lighten at the Maccinis’ dinners, since, Lea suspected, she reminded them of finding out their son enabled adultery. Lea was left alone with her overdue books and copies of other people’s paintings. She browsed cats on PetFinder for a few days before she remembered her lease didn’t allow pets. Her spider plant started producing babies and she spent a Saturday buying and painting pots before propagating the baby plants in them. As she touched their small, new leaves, she realized she had made gifts, and didn’t know if anyone would take them.

She didn’t just lose Michelle and the Maccinis. After she got home from the Maccinis’ disastrous dinner, she ate one of the chocolates on her bookshelf as a pick-me-up. She never had another prophetic dream.

METAHAIKU

Christo Meriwether Keller

writing these poems can suck you right into them it's rather dangerous	meta-haikus sure ain't be no laughing matter they won't let you stop	asking to yourself is the whitespacing okay or should it all match	keep it consistent then it'll all be okay just be consistent	as long as they match up there's nothing to worry about it at all
reading these poems can suck you right into them it's rather dangerous	and do you read one right to left or up and down changing where you start	do you read on the bus out there in the public do you read aloud	wondering whether your poem is pretty or not don't let them fool you	damn aestheticians don't let them boss you around symmetry is dumb
how do you write such a convoluted mess down do you even write	or do you read them down the diagonals from one corner to the next	there's this book written just last year, <i>normal people</i> I know those people	once one told me a joke about a man who said I don't like the word	mope, well more like nope leave that to the antelope rhyming is worthless
			if you rearrange all the letters in "poem" you'll get the word "mope"	but moping around is no more important than mopping, not nohows



Untitled
Autumn Guntor
Acrylic on Paper

INEVITABLY

Nicholas Conti

This is the rounded blunt burned
out chaos; vermilion
paints an aspiring snowline.

Between the full intolerable glare,

valleys

in a blue haze.
Surface streaked with

ash drift;
black lava;
hard leaves;
dry lakes;

steep rains
heavy the dark bitter-rimmed deposits.
The marsh wastes
the wind on the sand.

Saline hummocks rise:
half-dead suns revel
in the half-blood darkness.

Sculptures of water are enough
in this country.
In this country,

you will, at last, depend upon them,
when they are but maddening
dribbles in
the hot sink of Death.

High rolling frost on tilted mesas. Here
devils dance,
Here you all cry
for bursts of violence.

Land of lost love, land of lost land.
But inevitably

that love must come back.

CATHERINE THE GREAT

Lydia/Leon Friedman

Growing up in the home for orphaned girls,
I whiled my days away playing a toy piano
to her portrait on the wall.
She was a gondolier in a gilded boat,
ever constant against the flowing wallpaper.
She told me of things called corsets, taught me
that the necks of kittens and girls
were made for ribbons. She showed me
the map of the world and what parts of it
belonged to us Russians. Meanwhile the Mother Superior
taught me to respect my elders, the church,
and the Grand Duke most of all,
though he was at the time only a boy
and younger than I. When Lazy Lizaveta
fell asleep at the stove and set the house on fire,
I saw her portrait disappear in white smoke.
The purple wallpaper turned black, curled
like a witch's fingers. The Mother Superior
went up in flames, wimple and all.
Now I am thirty and married.
No sugar castles cloud my vision.
My neck, ribbon or no ribbon, is still
an orphan's neck; my fingers never learned
to persuade the keys of real pianos into music.
I wear white linen dressing gowns when receiving guests.
And on the wall of my study hangs her portrait.

ONE-SOUND MONOLOGUE

Emma Schell

It wouldn't stop crying—I know it was probably my fault, something I was doing or wasn't doing, but the diaper was clean. I'd fed her and taken her to the doctor after work, but she wouldn't stop. She was healthy and full and clean and yet her bulging eyes squeezed out tear after tear, puffy cheeks blazing. I could've sworn she was taunting me.

"Please, love, come on," I whispered, slipping a pair of sweatpants on, the smell of eggs and bacon still lingering in my hair from the diner. I realized now I'd never gotten a chance to shower. "Please, don't cry." I swept her up in my arms. Her tininess never failed to surprise me. Blonde fuzz graced her head, the oversized roundness of her skull unsteady atop her tiny body. I bounced up and down, swaying. "Don't cry, okay? Not anymore. Please, please stop."

She screamed in my face, curling her pudgy hands into fists. Something hot rolled over in my gut. I clamped my jaw as that banshee scream stung my ears like a siren, a fire alarm. "Sweetie," I said through gritted teeth, doing my best to baby-talk, "It is three in the morning—what could possibly be pissing you off when everyone, yes that's right, every-fucking-one is asleep but you."

Her scream rose an octave. I stopped bouncing, feet sore, eyelids swollen. I carried her with heavy footsteps out through the dimly lit hallway to the kitchen. I swung open the mini fridge tucked into the corner and examined its sad supply of Greek yogurt and browning lettuce. I groaned, the sound muted by Brie's one-sound monologue.

The fridge swung shut and I began a many mile hike around our ten square feet of kitchen. I swirled, bounced, hummed, and talked to her. "That's a fridge, Brie—isn't that fun? My big brother trapped me in one of those when I was your age, uh huh, das right—three hours in one of those and I've got a frostbite scar to prove it. See? Right on my arm, isn't that neat?" I twirled to face the table. "That's a table, Brie. I got it at a yard sale for thirteen dollars—you were in my belly then, do you remember? Some tables are oak and stained but ours is special. It's plastic! In't that fantastic?"

She wailed, absolutely coyote-howl wailed. "Ok—you know what?" I could feel my resolve snap. I darted around the table to a bare spot on the floor and I put Brie down. I put my infant child on the fake Italian tiled floor.

Her scream wavered. I stumbled into a foldable chair beside her just in time to watch my vision blur. "I'm doing my best," I whispered. I sounded sick, physically weak, like I was approaching the end of chemo, of a short anticlimactic life. "I was your age seventeen years ago and that might sound like a long time ago to you but it's not. You can't learn a lot in that amount of years. You don't learn how to pay bills or do taxes and you definitely don't learn how to make some petty child shut the hell up so I am here and I am doing my best and I know you don't..."

My voice quenched like a weak flame. I wanted my mother. At three in the morning in this stone-cold kitchen, I wanted her so badly. I wanted

to be the child, to be cradled and held and to know that if everything went wrong I could blame her and that would be that. And it would be okay.

Brie resumed her crying, a whimper now. Her cobweb-grey eyes looked just like her father's. The thought of him made my rib cage seize, my wrists sting where his finger tips had yanked and pressed. He was tall, dark, and handsome and I'd loved the subtlety of his strength, his height, his temper. It wasn't until the end that it became a threat, that his strong stroking hands snapped and prodded and pushed. "You said you'd gotten rid of it," he'd whispered that night in my neighbor's driveway after I'd refused to drink.

He was right. "I lied," I whispered, my breath steaming. Dirty snow sat in poorly shoveled piles around us, the sounds of the party muffled. We stood only feet from the front door, his hand still digging into my wrist like a leash. I leaned into him, heart pounding. I could smell the vodka on his sour breath, the BO emanating from the droplets condensing on his forehead. "I don't care what you tell me," I hissed into his face. "I don't have to do what you say and I don't have to tell the truth, so let go." I yanked my arm away but his grip tightened. Pain licked up my arm like flames.

"This is my life, too!" he spat, twisting my wrist so I had to bite my lip to stop the scream from leaving my mouth. "Get rid of it."

"It's too late."

"Fuck too late." Maybe I wanted him to hit me, to give me a reason to run, someone to prove wrong. So he did. He gave me reason after reason.

My friend rushed me to the hospital after finding me on the pavement. Her eyes shot frantically from me to the road and back again, the street light casting an eery yellow on her grave face. I remember her voice. "You're gonna be okay—it's okay, really, it's okay." It was a well-rehearsed lie but all I could think was, *did he just kill my baby?* Not ours, not from that night on. Mine. Mine. Mine.

I slid off the kitchen chair to the floor beside Brie, beside this armful of a person. She stared at me. Wide expectant phantom eyes. His eyes on this blank slate. I think I looked like that in baby pictures, pink and fat and dumb and small, heart-meltingly delicate. My mother had me when she was young too, twenty. Only a few years older than I am now.

Only she didn't move away from the boy who hit her or get a job at a nice diner where her baby could lie in a crib in the owner's office. She didn't work every single day from morning 'til night to pay rent for an apartment small enough to fit inside a swimming pool. She didn't slave over finances, ask friends for loans, beg daycares for financial aid, or scour every back road for yard sales. She drank and she railed and it was my fault. The ratty couch, the chipping walls, the sour milk, the faulty car engine. The gun she kept locked in the liquor cabinet. The end she decided on herself, cold sober at midnight.

I was home. She'd come into my bedroom and kissed me wordlessly on the forehead, something she hadn't done in so long. A thunderstorm raged outside my window and my mother locked herself in the bathroom. The gunshot sounded like thunder. Or maybe I've convinced myself it did.

I didn't know she was gone until the next morning when my father arrived back from the bars. Exhausted and drunk, he pounded on the bathroom door. He yelled at her for being selfish—"Do you think you're the only



Untitled
Chuck Frost
Oil Painting

person in this family who needs to piss?”—but when he kicked open the door at last she was lying on the ground. I stood in the hallway behind him, a fifteen year-old child, and I knew it was my fault. Mine.

My father didn't attend the funeral. It was outside on a well-kept lawn. She'd been cremated. Mist hung over the grass as we buried the ashes in her old jewelry box. A handful of people came, mostly my friends. But not him. He drifted in and out of the house for the next two years, but his silence was heavy and decisive. When I came home from the hospital after that night in the driveway, I told him I was pregnant. My eye blackened, my arm in a sling, he looked at me for a few seconds and didn't say a word. Didn't rave or yell or cry, nothing. That's when I left.

As time goes by and these months begin to form a year, I can hardly remember the shape of his face, the curve of his chin, the bridge of his nose. I don't miss him like I miss her, or want him like I want my mom. I want my mom. I want my mom.

I collapsed on my back beside Brie. We mirrored each other. She started and ended from my shoulder to my wrist. Our tears reflected the same single light bulb hanging limp from our ceiling. Her tiny sausage arm brushed against mine and I closed my eyes to feel it, the faintest tickle, someone moving. My eyebrows crumpled and I bit my lip for a moment in resistance. Then I gave myself away. Half real sobs, half long drawn-out baby-sobs imitating Brie's so she might hear and know how fucking ridiculous it sounded. Because it did, the sound of crying. Like a caged animal.

I turned on my side, feeling the chilled plastic tile against my body. Propping my head on my arm, I leaned over her. Brie stared at me. Her lips folded down but no sound passed between them. I lowered my mouth to her forehead, lips touching soft skin, warm but no fever. I kissed her. “I'm sorry,” I whispered, stroking her cheek, the consistency of an under-inflated balloon. I caught a tear just as it slipped from her storm cloud eyes. “You're all done crying now, huh? It only took until four in the morning?”

She didn't make a sound, but she watched me. She didn't usually lock her eyes on something for more than a moment but now, on my kitchen floor, she stared right at me for what felt like a long time. I let a tear slip across my cheekbone, let her see it.

She lifted her arms wildly, eyebrows knit and I felt a strike of dread thinking she might start crying again. “Please, love, don't—” But her tiny hand brushed my face and she reached for me. I slid her towards me like a teddy bear into the curve of my body and her little balled up fingers touched the tear on my cheek, caught it.

The water sparkled from her tiny palm as her fingers closed around it. One beat passed in silence. The water slipped through her fingers. Another. My heart began to slow as I watched her eyes flick down to examine the tear trickling along her forearm like a spider, my tear. A smile melted my cheeks, my heart slowing further to a steady thump in my chest: mine...mine...mine...

QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK AFTER YOUR 9-5

Phoebe Hynes

Where do you go
when all you want to do,
is remain horizontal
and get out
of your own skin?
Can you peel away
A layer?
Does a jacket count?
Do you engage in a trust fall
Hoping the couch will catch you?
Would your laundry listen,
if you
ever so kindly
asked, if it would
just fold itself?
Will you wait,
for your mind
to float out of your nose,
and fly where it wants,
butterfly style?

Untitled

Autumn Guntor
Acrylic on Paper





Color Comfort Couch

Hannah Exum

Watercolor and Ink on Watercolor Paper

THE TWO-DOLLAR WOMAN

Melissa Kordha

Somewhere out there is the two-dollar woman
 A lively relic,
 she whispers and blesses
 Her green good-luck charms
 In her diesel fueled carriage she goes
 and greets our go-between
 My image dances in her eyes
 eyes that have never met mine
 She trades a blessed bill
 For a greeting and a meal
 And by night it is folded in my palm
 then placed in the drawstring bag
 with the other paper prayers

VORACITY

S.X. Wong

It was hunger that consumed him, funnily enough. Always hunger. He could be exalted or exhausted, weeping tears or yowling with laughter, burning with rage or placid like ripple-less water, and yet—and yet—it was always hunger he returned to.

It became such a centerpiece of his emotion that he could not help but express this ceaseless ravenosity through his mouth—not by speaking or even shouting it, mind you, but in the grossly imperfect yet mechanically efficient method by which he ate. Oh, he ate! bit, chewed, swallowed. Bite. Chew. Swallow. Bite chew swallow bite chew swallow *bite chew swallow*.

Bite:

It was as if the instructions by which his jaws moved were dictated by an endless string of up-down-up-down//open-close-open-close. As his mouth worked, so did his bristling brown mustache, dancing as if in frenzy. Each bite birthed the next, with only enough of a pause in between to furiously

Chew:

It wasn't enough to just bite, however. Biting itself was meaningless, substanceless—literally substanceless—without something to chew on. He never tried dieting (to even think of such a notion was incredible!) but he did try to relieve the restlessness of his mouth with chewing gum, mints, hard candy, even the cracked stem of a wooden pipe, but those were nothing when you couldn't

Swallow:

This was the glory, the slick-walled zenith and the omega of everything. Swallowing meant everything was made uniform, every morsel of food pulverized into the same delightful consistency, so delightful that his throat and, thus, his body, welcomed it. He delighted especially in swallowing, only because he thought about that long pipe that was his esophagus and it reminded him of all the pipes he worked on as part of his trade. This he never made a conscious connection to but it was clear with every

bite. chew. swallow.

Perverse and beautiful at the same time, this entire process became the monstrous engine of his life. He went to work inspecting sinks and toilets, forehead red as the cap he wore to soak up his sweat, and all the while thought of when his next meal would come. It wasn't that it hurt him to be hungry; rather, it hurt him to not be eating.

Once, when at a fine restaurant, he was faced with a lack of something to bite, chew, or swallow (no thanks to a languid waiter and a particularly busy Sunday afternoon). He closed his eyes and found himself nervously fingering the fringe of a green embroidered tablecloth. So green it was that it could have been woven from broccoli, or string beans, or essence of lime gelatin! So silky it was it could have been vanilla pudding, soft tofu, or a strong cup of café au lait! So... so... *everything* it was.

He was shocked when he opened his eyes and found himself booted out of restaurant, threads of the tablecloth embedded between his teeth.

Between the moment of touching the tablecloth and the moment of opening his eyes, everything had been blackness, a nullness of memory. It was enough of an episode to worry his friends and family. His younger brother, also mustachioed, but lanky, fretted over him even before this particular incident.

You can't live like this, the brother said one day, just out of fact. Living hungry was one thing; living with lycanthropic fits of devouring was another. They both agreed something needed to be done.

The two brothers visited a doctor as soon as they could—soon enough that the hungry man could not be removed from another restaurant or, worse still, fulfill his cravings with things that were not green embroidered tablecloths and instead with things that were, say, errant fingertips. The brother shuddered at the thought. It was not entirely out of the realm of possibility.

The doctor they chose had a small private clinic on the far edge of the city, a small, unassuming thing: fluorescent lights, Formica countertop, nurse in white. Said nurse in white directed them to sit in the waiting room, directly below a clock ticking so loud it became the beat by which they set their pulses. The hungry man brought ham and tomato sandwiches with him. He dropped crumbs on the tiled floor but the nurse said nothing.

Bite. Chew. Swallow. This was soothing now; in times of trouble when one only had one's own intuitive rhythms to rely upon, the hungry man's gnawing hunger became an asset. His heart beat to the clock on the wall but his own internal rumblings chugged along unchanged. Bite. Chew. Swallow. Bite (soft cool hammy moist)—chew (mush wet salty crush)—swallow (down smooth endless *yesss*). There was no nervousness about how he bit, chewed, and swallowed, the lanky brother noticed. It was all done with calculation, and something about that made him feel more alarmed and desperate than ever.

What can I do for you? the doctor asked, when the brothers were finally invited into his examination room. The hungry man licked his fingertips and cleared his throat. It was his brother who spoke.

My brother here, he hungers for everything, all the time!

Everything? All the time? the doctor returned. *He hungers for sardines, pen nibs, and*

unquestioning approval? Morning, noon, and night?

Ah—perhaps not everything. He hungers for food. But certainly all the time. Here, the lanky one nudged his brother. *Isn't that right?* The hungry man nodded one moment too late. It had just dawned on him what life he would lead without his hunger to drive him, and that is to say, it did not dawn on him, for he could not imagine a sated, quiet-bodied life.

The doctor blinked at the hungry man once, twice, thrice. In that moment, the hungry man knew that the doctor had scooped something out of him, something the man didn't even know he held. It was a secret that only became known to him once someone else peered into his eyes. *Interesting*, the doctor said. *One moment, please.* He left the room through a gray plastic curtain and returned with a silvery blisterpack of tablets the size of his hand. It crinkled when the doctor turned it tablet-side up to show the brothers its contents.

I have exactly the medicine for you. Careful, now, for it is very rare.

What is it? asked the lanky brother.

Oh, it's a lot of things, the doctor said with a sweeping hand. *It's crushed goiter of llama, a sprinkle of yarrow root, a breath of enchantment... all sorts of things.*

The brother had absolute faith but in want of absolute peace couldn't help asking: *So this will cure him?*

He will never hunger for food again.

He would never hunger for food again. The hungry man took the llama-yarrow-enchantment tablets faithfully, though not without the pressing of his brother. *Remember to take your medicine!* he would say, not disguising the urgency in his voice. The (formerly) hungry man abided. It was strange, more than anything, not to have the urge to sink his teeth and bury his face into the nearest pickle jar, five-layer gateau, or basket of pork dumplings. Now, inside his body went

()
()
()

There used to be the hum of hunger in the backdrop of the psyche; now, he held nothing but was still never quite pure. It was that indiscernible yet palpable impurity that hounded him—how could he be so empty and yet so unclean?

Still, he followed through with his medication regimen without complaint. The lanky brother was pleased, and felt secure enough to leave the formerly hungry man at home alone, knowing he wouldn't suddenly go into a feeding frenzy. Often by himself in his home, or working on pipes again, the

So, so... *everything* they were.

This time, there was no one to stop him, no waiter to shoo him out of the restaurant. There was no lanky brother to screech at him to take his medicine. There were only the sounds of biting, chewing, and swallowing, and inside him the monstrous engine that went on ceaselessly. It was true, though; he would never hunger for food again.

In the end, it was hunger that consumed him.

STRANGER

Rose O'Brien

A hole in the wall—a tight little hole
with curtains that shield the red rain.
A stranger would peep,
peep at nightfall—
when all were asleep—
and likes the little room he sees.

The room is a castle,
but the castle's too big,
so no one who lives there can see
the stranger who peeps
through that tight little window.
No one at all except me.

I've been to the dungeon—
I visit there often
and the ghosts that hide there talk to me.
They haunt the little room
now utterly soiled,
with red rain-blood that's a little too royal.

As for the stranger—
He still is a stranger
and still no one knows that he peeped.
He no longer peeps
after the little room was soiled
by the rain and the ghosts and me.



Untitled
Samantha Croteau
Digital Photography



Untitled
Alice Erickson
Mixed Media

LOST

Rose O'Brien

What did I know about waters rushing back? —Lucille Clifton

"Congratulations," Doctor Komoshewski beamed. Ryan sprinted to the telephone to tell his father, tripping on his own feet. I couldn't stop him—I love when he's that animated and excited. I thought I vowed to never have children (how could I raise a human being?), but my heart flooded with loving warmth when I learned that I was pregnant. Ryan and I created life, and it's growing inside of me. We produced life itself.

That first month, I didn't believe it was true. I was detached from my body and the world. I felt nothing. How could a living thing be forming inside of me, when I felt absolutely fine? It didn't feel like life at all.

Then the second month came and I fell asleep earlier each day: 10pm, 9pm, even 8:30, right after dinner. I'd talk to Ryan at the dinner table when I felt drowsy, and like a string of yarn tantalizing a cat, I'd be drawn into a creamy sleep; my eyes grew marble-heavy. I had no energy to take morning ballet classes, and peeling my body out of bed exerted more energy than I could have imagined. I had to feign energy in front of the onslaught of neighbors, family, and friends who filed in every couple of days. After the big news, we had a lot of guests come around to check in on me. It was as though a vampire lived inside of me, sucking the energy and life from me for its own development.

Soon enough, our life was measured in doctor visits, every four weeks. On the sixteenth week, our fourth doctor's visit, the obstetrician, a woman named Lilian with a warm smile, announced she could hear a healthy heartbeat in my womb—loud and clear. You announced your presence in proud drumbeats. I didn't want to know if you would be a boy or a girl, not yet. Ryan wanted to know. We'd decided to wait until we could hold you and see you before we would name you.

I breathed you into this life. I never thought of my own breath rushing out. What did I know about the exhale?

On your sixteenth week, we went to Lilian. After Lilian smeared the cold, wincing gel across my bubbled belly, the ultrasound announced your heartbeat and your breath. She heard the ocean in my womb. You were strong and well on your way to be. Ryan and I cried, like we did every four weeks. We couldn't wait to meet you.

Four weeks later, we went back to Lilian. We couldn't wait to cry. We still couldn't wait to meet you. Lilian put the cream on my belly, set up her workspace, and listened for your heartbeat. And she listened, and listened. But there was nothing to hear. An absolution of you. There was no you anymore.

"I'm sorry to say this, but I can't hear a heartbeat," Lilian said.

What did I know about waters rushing back? What did I know about swallowing, little verging hands, feet, knees, a heartbeat... I guess I don't know much at all, if part of me can drown so easily. A slight swish inside my womb like a whisper, to reclaim that this is all mine again, not his or hers. The faint heartbeat fading farther and farther away, swept away by the tide beneath the city. How could I hear the distance of the beat? Was I so preoccupied with land that I forgot what it meant to swim or to breathe?

There was an entire ocean inside of me. I was powerful. Then the wave faltered and I came crashing down, and the waters receded as fast as they came. Little verging footprints on the sand—shadow prints, half-formed.

I was robbed of life itself. I was robbed of my own ocean.

Now I know that I, myself, can drown. And now I know what it means. You drown and you drown and then your life-to-be body goes lifeless—mine goes, too. And then we are both floating, just two pieces of pollution floating vacantly in the water. I was never the water before you.

Trash may float in the ocean and drift, but where do the currents ride? They rush back as fast as they came. I never thought about the waters themselves, but they have an agenda, too. Everyone has got somewhere to be. Maybe you do, too.

You, too, rushed out as quickly as you came. It was a whole month before I felt you inside of me. But you were there.



Untitled
Samantha Croteau
Digital Photography

A LESSON IN MEMORY

Liam McCracken

Our house holds too many secrets.
in the walls we broke to fix the kitchen we found:
 old shoes, magazines
 records of the people who came before us.

There was a time before which I cannot recall
when like a breath, you held us in
the textured mysteries of life still warm to you

You saw the tree outside your window
rough oak bark gleaming in the sun
and it was yours, all of it
 —it did not judge you
 in fractured light and memories
 a broken understory

tender-bellied leaves
turning in the rain
whispered out your leaving
so sweetly that you stayed

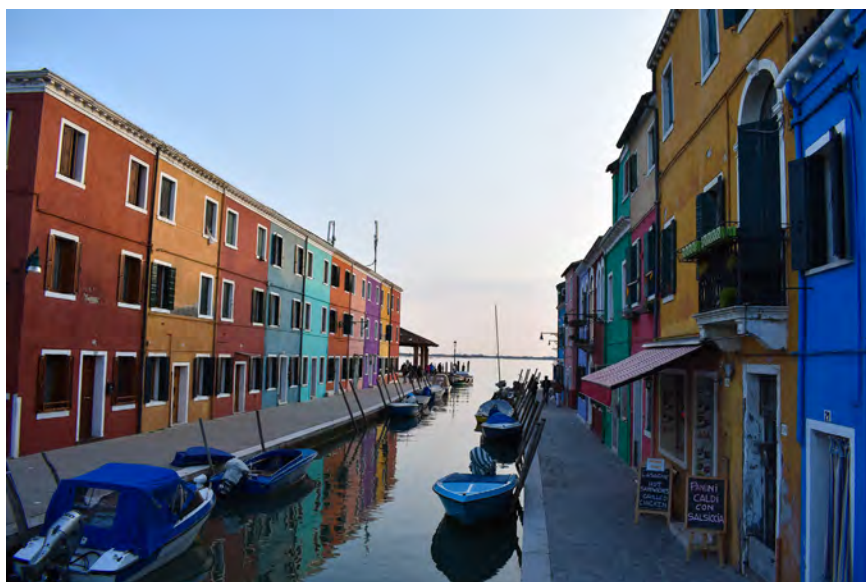
The old car
rust trails and rain
I follow your breath in the cold, sailing out
and in the misty light of dawn
I trace you on my window

but young fingers can't capture regret.



Untitled
Ocean Eversley
Digital Photography

Burano
Lianna Churchill
Digital Photography



DETAILS DON'T

Nicholas Conti

I sat. And I stood. In my chair. The lights were low. And boy, were they blinding. I was there with my boys. My friends. Some acquaintances, I guess. We were sober. We were drunk. Who's really to say?

Standing there, on my chair, was pretty great. I was a king doing a balancing act. As all kings tend to do. But not all kings are drunk. That's what Mr. Connors said, anyway. While I ran away. While they wheeled me away. I fell off the chair, you see.

Mr. Connors is a high school math teacher. But I'm no high schooler. I'm a king, haven't you heard? Enrolled in high school. But that's just a detail. When it comes down to it, kings matter. Details don't. High schoolers don't, either.

Mr. Connors is a pretty wise dude. Like, seriously intelligent. Not like a wise-ass. That's more my thing. Maybe his, too. I don't know him all that well. I sure don't look up to him, either. Kings don't do that. We only look down.

They told me it would be such a fun night. They told me to just suck it up and get through it. Prom, I mean. My acquaintances, I mean. Boy, were they right. Those guys don't know anything. They told me my date would show up. She didn't, I mean.

So we all got hammered. Didn't think we'd get nailed for it. That's another Mr. Connors joke. I said he was wise, not funny. He's the one who caught us. Caught me. Boy, I wish someone had caught me.

Turns out falling off a chair at prom is frowned upon. Especially if you're sober. Especially if you're drunk. How was I supposed to know? There's no manual for this kind of thing.

Mr. Connors told me to read the student handbook. I told him to read a book of better jokes. We all laughed. When I broke my ankle. Turns out falling off a chair at prom will do that. How was I supposed to know?

My acquaintances cheered. Mr. Connors persevered. With his wisdom-giving, I mean. Who does he think he is? My mentor? Kings don't have those. That's why it's called a monarchy. The paramedics steered me straight out. Mr. Connors tried to help. Steer me straight, I mean.

I learned from this experience. I did, really. Everyone there learned. I can't hold my liquor. But I could hold my head up. As all kings should tend to do. And thank God I did.

Fleeing the scene. Being wheeled out. I looked up. I looked across the room. Butterflies filled my stomach when I saw her. Monarchs, of course. And then she smiled at me. Boy. I'll never forget the way she smiled at me.

WET EDGE

Sean Ryan

They picked a shirt up off the floor,
similar to the ones you helped them
take off time and again. I can't remember
how we got here, I thought,
on this bed, in this apartment near the park.
Then they put the shirt on, briefly shying from view,
and I thought, I'll never know this person.
I'll never know what its like when the world
rushes close to them and turns to cloth,
or the feeling they have when they walk
home alone. After I reflected and fell
into myself like a drop of water in a dark vat.
Sure, in time I'd stop taking so much from myself,
thinking too loud, forgetting to listen
as a friend talked about that Vonnegut line—
Mirrors are pools, mirrors are pools—
which he remembered one day high as fuck driving
to his girlfriend's house in the hilltowns.
How we laughed when he told the story,
or more as another friend talked of driving high
one afternoon in the fall, so the low angle of the sun
shining through the trees pushed a strobe effect—
light, shadow, light, shadow, light, shadow, light, shadow—
onto the windshield ripping through space.
Then lethargy, finally a recursive dream,
no figures, no place, no people, just thought
turning from 2D 2 3 2 4. Feeling angry
I'd never truly relate what I experienced.
Nothing but the sun last summer, past noon heat
drying the paint I applied to clapboards.
I forgot how quickly I moved ladders
across a wall to keep the edge wet.

A DETAILED RECORD OF MY CONVERSATION WITH A BLUEBIRD

Gwyneth Rowland

chirp chirp she says—or he, or they—
chirp chirp i say back (as it is only polite)

chirp she chirps indignantly
i nod in understanding

chirp she says, with emphasis, *chirp chirp*
chirp i promise, hand over my heart

chirp she chirps in satisfaction and a bit of distaste
and takes flight

i smile down at my scuffed up shoes and the warmth in my chest

(translation:
bluebird: you love her
me: i do, quite a bit

bluebird: you need to let her know
(i nod in understanding)

bluebird: you must tell her any way you know how
me: i will

bluebird: you're a love-struck fool
end translation)



The Way Forward
Mira Kennedy
Digital Photography



Untitled

Chuck Frost

Watercolor on Paper

CALLISTO

Noelle McManus

Callisto—

I try to remember what it sounds like to be
someone. I try to remember
whether our bodies will carry us any farther. I
try to remember if your father or my father
was the one to put us under. I try to
remember adoration, emancipation, what
a human looks like
from the inside.

Callisto—

bear-mother is not a name.
Neither is anything I have ever owned. Forgiveness
is not a path we have crossed yet; retribution
is not a path we will find. Tell me the names
of your children. Tell me the name of
their father. Tell me whether or not
you love them.

Callisto—

it hurts. It hurts, Callisto, and all I want
is to learn how to let it go. How closely
do fear and hatred stand
when they walk
together? Will it be long before I can look at them
and not wish someone dead? Not wish for blood
underneath my nails?

Callisto—

there must be something I can do. I say this,
knowing the falsehood of it, knowing that winter
has fallen and will never wake up. But maybe,
maybe if you gave me the names, drew me the faces,
I could find something. Someone. Maybe if you ran
your hands down my spine just so, just
as she did, I will recognize
her fingers. Maybe if you hold me
it will feel familiar. Maybe there is flesh under all this
fur.

Callisto—

you are the only woman who has ever
broken me in half.

WHO WE ARE

MIRA KENNEDY

spends a lot of time shopping for new plant babies. She's a Star Wars lover, a friend to all cats, and a wine mom in the making if only she could bring herself to like wine. An unwavering childhood love of fantasy novels has led to most of her life choices.

S.X. WONG

is *Jabberwocky's* friendly local Betazoid and resident email correspondent. Working with *Jabberwocky* this past semester has taught her a lot about Google Sheets and the most ardent labor that is creation. Should you encounter S.X. in the wild, point to nothing in particular and tell her it's Katee Sackhoff, and then make your escape while she's distracted.

GRACE DUGAN

is a part-time storyteller and full-time Darcy fangirl. Her interests include aged cheddar, crosswords, and inserting 90's boy band lyrics into everyday conversation.

MEGHAN CLARK

is a writer of short stories who knows very little about her own intentions. She can be found reading Brautigan next to any dusty old window in any poorly heated building, fingernails turning blue.

EDWARD CLIFFORD

is a writer who is much less interesting than his dog Roxanne, a twelve-pound loaf of irrepressible fury and peanut butter. When she's not lounging in the sun or hiding under a bed, Roxanne enjoys yelling at pedestrians and meditating.

ERIN ALZAPIEDI

is a Junior Communication Major with lots of fishnets and ripped jeans, band tees, and queen memes. When she's not scribbling nonsense on paper, she can be found running around in the dark with a fancy camera snapping pics of people who can play musical instruments infinitely better than she can.