

*such sudden fortune:
wind's gift of crisp, ripened fruit
fallen at our feet
-Founders, 1976*

Windfall

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Poetry, Prose, and Art
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Dear Reader,

I am happy to present you the 42nd edition of Windfall. The work in these pages is a testament the incredible talent and creativity of Truman students in many different forms. Additionally, the existence of this book is possible only because of two semesters of dedication and passion from Windfall's staff.

Before you get to these incredible pieces, I'd like to express my appreciation for everyone who made this year's magazine possible. First, I'd like to thank the faculty and staff of the English & Linguistics Department for their continuous support of both this publication and of many other creative endeavors on Truman's campus. By encouraging students to develop and share their craft, a vibrant community of creation has formed here on campus. In particular I'd like to thank our faculty advisor, Professor Ed Rogers, for his constant encouragement, vigilance, and guidance in the process of creating this magazine.

Second, I cannot overstate how thankful I am for the amazing staff I had the opportunity to work with this past year. I'd like to thank all of our genre editors for prompting us to engage in insightful, fair, and (mostly) on-task discussions of every piece in our meetings. I also owe a huge thank you to our Submissions Editor, Kristi Navalta, for her endless hours of hard work putting together weekly submission packets for us to review and collecting our scores. Windfall would have been completely unable to function without her unwavering powers of organization. I'd also like to express my gratitude for our Design Editor Meg Hodge for all her hard work in making the magazine you hold in your hands.

Finally I'd like to thank you for reading Windfall. The reason we continue to create this magazine is because of our readers. We exist to share the amazing works of Truman students with you and we hope you love them as much as we do.

2 / Sincerely \ Joseph Katz \ Editor-in-Chief

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I've Discovered the World and It's Beautiful

Jessica Krieger

He holds both the earth and the sky
In one of his eyes
How beautiful a soul he must have
To capture the opposite ends of the earth
In one single iris
The right side, an endless blue that invites you in
An open ocean teeming with creatures
The first clear sky beckoning spring
Robin eggs making their way into the world
And the left side, the warm soil that the toes of children sink in
The vast ground that we travel upon
Rich chocolate dripping from your mouth
A penny for your thoughts
I've found the point
Where the earth and sky meet

\Gladly

Jordan Chapman

I can take your hand, your coat, your hat
But I'll gladly take your bags
If you let me
Or better we'll take this
Hand over hand
Guiding me, guiding you
If you fall, I'll fall harder
So that I land first and catch you against me
I'll break the ice first
Do you like Bailey's?

\County Line Rd

*Kristin Geiman *

What does my life consist of?
Apple orchards and long
spring days, walking
through the gray woods
hoping to spot at least
one native creature who
never yet entered my view.
Some things take me back
to memories of silage bales
manure piles and picking
green beans. Some things
take me forward to regretting
long drives on gravel roads
and wishing for flight.
My life is made of small
things, small dreams,
promises, dandelions,
shared recipes, homes
swimming in a muddy
pond, running barefoot
in the grass. A line
between two counties
leads to my door, what
was my door, very far away.



\Neighbors and Faerie

Joe Slama\

Contrary to popular belief, the realm of faerie in literature encapsulates more than Tinkerbells. Sprites and pixies are indeed found there, oh yes: but there are also things other than that, in fact quite literally Other. That is in fact its function in literature: a dominion inhabited by things that are almost human, yet not quite so. In the fay are creatures of intelligence, cunning, mischief, purpose; but purpose different from, and indiscernible to, humanity.

In the medieval world, from which we derive many of our faerie legends, the line between human and not human was not just an intriguing intellectual puzzle, but a matter of pressing eternal consequence. If there were indeed sentient beings lurking in faraway forests (much as we speculate about extraterrestrials that whiz about above; alien simply means “foreign” or “other”), their status as human or Other would decide whether their peoples should hear the Gospel or not. The question of humanity was pressing both philosophically and practically. Crafty or kingly, rustic or regal, lethal or life-giving: the question of commonality is not in their activity but their essence, an essence that is ultimately ineffable.

My apartment, I’ve decided, exists in the faerie realm. The four-minute walk between campus and my residence is, all who have taken it agree, nightmarishly devastating, though for no easily articulated reason. I would rather drive through the whole of Kansas in one day (and I have) than make that walk once. The scenery’s not unpleasant: hills are visible in the distance, there’s a small field, and a couple nice houses can be seen a block off. But the fact remains that it simply feels like you’ve stepped off the face of the planet and are somehow suspended outside the normal passage of time every time you walk it. For absolutely no reason at all, this short stretch of sidewalk somehow surpasses the sorrows

Odysseus suffered at sea every time it's traversed.

One golden late afternoon last fall, I was walking home on that sidewalk when I decided to take the only conceivable shortcut: through a grassy patch I normally circumvent. It saved a whopping 35-and-a-half seconds, but the soft grass squished nicely beneath my feet as the sun hung suspended between its afternoon blaze and the exponential onset of darkness that comes in early October.

As I stepped off my unusual shortcut, I noticed I was trailing behind a pair of strangers. Moments before, at a distance, I had mistaken them for grounds workers; up close, a lack both of uniforms as well as of any visible sense of where they were going betrayed otherwise. They wore brimmed hats fanned out over the sides of their faces to keep off the sun that turned the shimmering cobblestones across the way into something almost like the Yellow Brick Road. Both were scrawny, one a man, one a woman. He was dressed in a navy blue button-up shirt and work pants, she in a flowered blouse and white cargos. Both had olive-dark skin and jet-black, shoulder-length hair. They carried a wicker basket, full of odds and ends obscured by plastic bags protruding out. The unknown contents were clearly heavy, as each had a hand gripped on the handles at either end.

The two cast a glance at me as I stepped onto the pavement behind them. I suddenly became aware that it might appear I was following them, since we had all cut through the field and my tall frame and hasty demeanor grant of sense of unwanted perpetual deliberation to my gait as I walk.

I slowed up. Their basket looked easily robbable, and I wanted to avoid the impression that was my intent. They nevertheless continued shooting furtive looks my way as we seemingly inevitably remained on the same path, sloping down a slight hill.

A block later, they slowed too, and I tried to seize the moment to pass them by. But as the man in the navy sat down exhausted on the slope, his flowery companion turned to me.

"Hello," she said, a slight smile tugging at the edges of her

lips.

“Hello,” I returned the greeting and the grin.

She turned and eagerly pointed toward a tree that towered over a nearby house, its lanky branches drooping and hugging either side of the path ahead.

“This is a persimmon tree,” she explained. “We have them where I come from. But I did not know they grow this far north.”

She craned her head up to look at its topmost branches. I had passed this tree almost every day for months, but only now that she gestured to it did I notice how it dominated everything around it.

“Where do you come from?” I attempted at conversation. The air of our exchange felt increasingly stagnant, though she paid no mind.

“I was born down south, and grew up across the border,” she answered. I noticed her voice. She had no discernible accent, but spoke as though wrapping her mouth around each word, crisply articulating each sound and especially emphasizing vowels.

“The fruit of the persimmon tree makes a great jelly,” she explained. “It is very sweet and can be so refreshing. But you don’t sit on it!” she seemed to chide her partner, perhaps jokingly, though there was an urgency in her voice. Either way, he remained silently seated on the grass amidst the fruit the woman so praised.

“It makes a very sweet jelly,” she repeated, stooping to grasp one of the fruit pellets scattered beneath the branches.

“Well, I never knew that,” I replied, edging away. “Have a nice evening!” I waved, and they waved back in unison, and she still beamed at the thought of persimmon jelly. I turned and set off down the pathway again, quickening my pace. I had no desire to taste the raw material for persimmon jelly. Lessons from my mother growing up, not to mention the story of Queen Persephone, had taught me better than to accept food from stranger folk.

I walked along the sidewalk as it swung up the hill

towards my building. As I went, leaving the persimmon pluckers behind, a man emerged from over the top of the hill. He was dressed entirely in gray with a stubbling beard to match. He gripped a bike several sizes too small by the handlebars in his right hand, wheeling it along at his side. He proceeded down the hill.

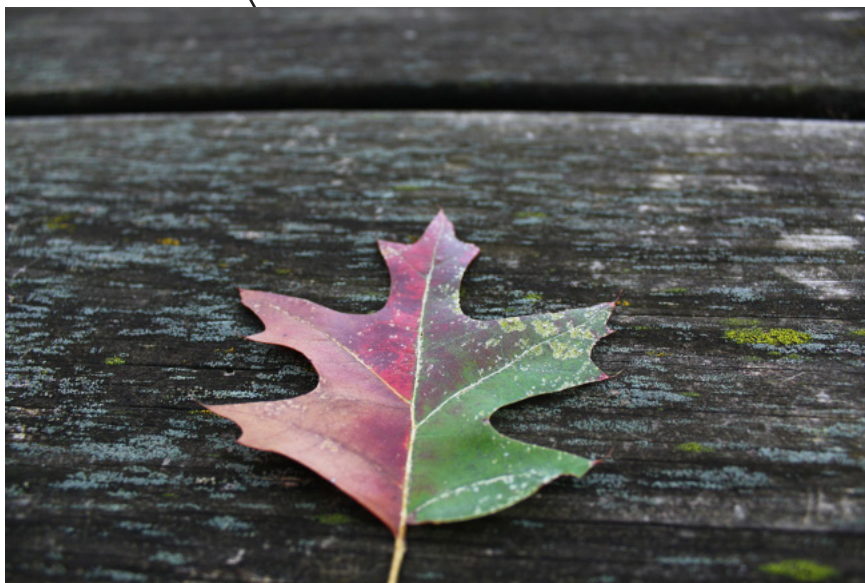
I pressed on, eyes straight ahead and cast slightly down, desiring no explanation for the approaching figure. I heard him mumble a series of nigh-indiscernible syllables as he passed me by that I chose to interpret as “hello.”

“Hi,” I responded quickly, inclining my head slightly in his direction as we both continued on our separate ways.

The sidewalk now curved towards the building’s door — or where there would be a door, had the architect had any sense of a normal place for people to inhabit; instead, there’s just a gap in the brick and a concrete walkway yawning open. The sun setting, and the shadows off the trees and buildings and fences along the street were stretching, beginning to blend into the blanket of the night. My pace quickened as I walked the remaining sidewalk, changing to a bolt once inside the concrete confines. I dashed up the metal stairwell, bursting through my front door in a hurry I didn’t quite understand the need for.

I bowed my head to the oil painting of the Madonna della Strada hung at my doorway and sat down, panting, as my mind reached the inevitable conclusion: if my apartment exists in the faerie realm, then who are my neighbors?

\ *Marissa Banks*



Transition \

Brandon Rose



Divine Poultry
(From the Depths)

\turquoise clementine

Emma Hartmann

I was born from the seafoam green
of your great grandmother's wallpaper
and the pearly pink
of her bathroom sink.

I sprung from the forehead
of my forefathers
with an arsenal of weapons
forged from brain-matter.

the moon cries for me.
her tears adorn my hair
like glitter,
or like stars.

and they all whisper,
"who are you?"
and they all whisper
my name

I met the devil.
he smells like Gucci cologne
and peach vodka.
he's got perfect posture

\Dust Bunnies

*Anna Deutsch *

Down in the dim, where the sun shines gently,
There lies a family, huddled and content.
Nothing ever disturbs them, nothing to resent.
This is their life, in lines written quite intently.

All is quiet, in that soft cushioned field
Where they reside, undisturbed for many a year.
No shouts, no troubles, nothing to fear.
This family has grown steadily, harmony sealed.

Then, from the distant plains, a noise is heard.
Gradually, it grows, the nearer it gets –
The children draw close, the youngest throwing fits.
Parents try to comfort, their latent terrors stirred.

“The storm is coming,” they hush and say
As far from the light they wait.
Sitting in anticipation of the actions of fate.
The sucking winds roar, then quickly go away.

Their only problem past, the family again breathes.
Life is peaceful, for those members meek.
The young get bigger, with every passing week,
Gaining more fur, sleeping in curled wreaths.

Soon, they will have children, in that place slightly sunny.
There is room for all – fat, slim, and furry.
Growing by the hundreds, but there’s no reason to worry.
This is merely the life of a bunch of dust bunnies.

\ You Were Saying about Yesterday

Aura Martin \

A Friday night in spring. Insert metaphor about blooming tulips. Images and quotes on t-shirts. Somebody tries to give me a ten. This isn't goodness. Open mouths, closed doors. Songs of money and loss. We didn't sit close together. It's always about him, but something buried won't remain that way. I can play a requiem for what I'll never have. Notes in music reach for something. Switch to a minor key and you feel incomplete. It won't land. You'll always be waiting for resolution. Clipboard art prints, constellation at my feet. Was I left behind? Yet again and always alone. Enough bodies nearby of people I don't care to speak to. I'm sick of people with friends. I have a furnace fueled by oboe music. Field of smoke. I never doubted I could love. Then no one was waiting for me in the audience. Just roses for basic bitches. I walk into a room and disappear. I never see myself the way other people do. He reminded me how fragile it was. I want to break every glass in my apartment and hold the shards with bleeding hands. No one wants me and never will. There's your fucking metaphor.

\Twenty to Nine

Maiya Cervantez \

O wild woman of an antique heart,
nesting in your perpetual grave,
you harbour what was torn apart,

awaiting the hour that would never start.
You, a vengeful, lonely slave,
dressed in shreds like your heart.

One shoe beneath your skirt,
you walk neither the road paved
or the beaten path set apart,

but idle, jilted, condemned, in part
by a man, in part by a wave
of sorrow for your rejected heart.

You waited for that hour to start,
but twenty to nine you were betrayed.
Defined by revenge to keep apart

the love of men, if it were to start,
and this chest of mine, your lonely slave.
I say this to you with my cold heart.
Love, Estella - your daughter in-part.

\Eulogy

Kayley Whyte\

He passed away unexpectedly,
although expectedly because he knew things like that.
He knew life was a clusterfuck mirage
created individually and that we were just here for
the ride on Willy Wonka's canoe.
I don't know exactly what shade he pictured when he said
his favorite color was turquoise,
but I imagine him gazing into an ocean filled with
robin eggs, Neptune, and that wallpaper
from a hotel bathroom on the coast of Maryland.
He would let those waves crash over him because
what else does one do for poetry?
I never understood why obituaries wrote "Survived by...",
almost like it was a game, and those who remain
are winning in some way. But,
I guess I have to mention it.
He's survived by you, and I don't know
what gratification you should feel from that.
I remember him mentioning something about vines
and a coroner with a butterfly net, so
I'm sure the coroner was surprised when they
traced his sternum with a scalpel and found
his chest cavity to be a garden.
I was never allowed past the gate.

\Third Floor

*Kimberly O'Laughlin *

It's like an elevator.

I open and

close and

open and

close. (I'm not so great

at speaking in prose.) Any

affection is an over

dose and then I'm nothing but

a dried up rosebud. How gross? She waters my

eyes and curls my toes. This is the floor

where my silence knows you, loathes you, grows two

horns, not thorns, and it's beauti

full of batshit.

The caves,

a sky in stitches

unfit for getting lit

with the witches of my REM cycles

with the bicycle tattoos who say their hearts

use icicles for pedals. And I misbehave and

after dark it's like

a glitch. I remain

o p e n

not closed and

t h i s

time when you embark and

impose, press the button

too proud to quit

I hope you remember

the hit, a voice that

won't hesitate:

it's britney, bitch.

\Causing Impact

Laurie Shipley \

I always try to put the lines back
From where I dug them up, deep.
Because thoughts on paper cause impact

I type for minutes and hours so that
The animated screen ink insults eyes,
Then I try to put the lines back

My soul expands, is moved, is cracked
By every earthquake, disaster, and fight.
Will thoughts on tragedy create impact?

Not unless my words come out with tact
And my inability to emote or explain conceals
Itself or else, people yell, put the lines back!

Writers' insecurities are constant, an old fact
And maybe the world could survive our silence
Yet, recall that thoughts on paper need to impact

Walls and green minds for no other reason than
It is a medium for people to think and understand
So every time you put the lines back
People forget your thoughts make impact.

\Star-Crossed

*Kimberly Ramos *

I'm sort of an expert on this place. I can tell you all the darkest crannies of the sidewalk, all the eyeballs that ever slid down my thighs outside the supermarket, all the different molds growing out of the auditorium ceiling. Black mold, even. They found it rehearsing for the school play and everybody had to wear gas masks to practice. It was sort of funny, I guess. Romeo and Juliet couldn't kiss because their faces had these plastic protrusions. If they took them off, then they really would have been dead, eyes starry and crossed from the stachybotrys spirits.

This place sticks with you, burrows into the intestines like a tapeworm. When I'm in some podunk rest stop I can't help but Google the population and compare it to this place. No other living thing does that. Bacteria don't do that. Bacteria in my gut don't wonder how much bacteria is in your gut. And bacteria in my gut certainly don't feel a swell of pride for being less numerous. I can't help it, though. I'm at the mercy of heaven's gassy bodies and any name that sounds small and sweet and malignant sends me fluttering towards love.

I love the way the movie theater seats are always greasy and busted, the way I come out of the darkness slick with butter and brilliance. I love lying on the kitchen tiles and daydreaming about our old and cracked linoleum. I love the whirr of a dying fan, the summer months lazily circling the porchlight. I love the deadness of downtown and the broken bricks masquerading as history. I love the shadow-eyed kids slurping up 7-11 fluorescence on a Tuesday. Yeah, go ahead and kiss me, Juliet. The five drug stores for the aging population can probably keep us alive, too.

Here's the thing: I always thought the people changed even if the place didn't. I'm starting to think I'm wrong. The transitions are so smooth. The old guy next door died and by next week somebody new was mowing the grass. Every spring some chubby kid goes door to door and asks if anyone wants to buy popcorn. He never ages. I blink and the flamingo girls are out again, posing with props like streetlights and boyfriends. The parents are all made of paper and apologies. The girl I hated in high school still writes her name on desks. I'm still sitting at that desk.

24 / Say, Juliet, you want to go to homecoming?

\In Your Fast Car

Becca Leslie \

I have a belly full of happy pills,
so why not lay my head
in the place where your neck
meets your shoulder
and wish, only for a moment,
that I belonged there?

You got so still, the playful fight
vanishing in a flash of neon.

I inhaled the heavy scent
of you, and held it in until
my lungs were soaked.

You called me a ten out of ten in your fast car,
and I tried so hard not to allow myself,
but in a lapse of loyalty,
it was unavoidable:

I nestled my guilty frame even closer to yours
and felt you come to a standstill,
then, hesitantly, begin again.

I thrive on stolen moments.
and no, of course, I can never
allow you to understand,
but maybe, in that breath,
I wished I could leave him and love you.

\ i saw the white horse on the back
of the blue bunny delivery truck

Zachary Swope \

funny how with a bad
sense of humor
or field of vision
listening suddenly
becomes much harder
it takes a few
seconds to adjust—
to compensate for the swerve
of the wheel because
you thought that was
the right exit

or maybe it's just
foolish to believe
that the semi in front
of you is carrying a load
of heroin when in fact
it's something much
more sinister

lo and behold: blue bunny
the pestilence of ice cream

\The Untouchables\

Jessica Krieger

The untouchable souls are used to drifting by now
Floating through human beings like lonely ghosts
Perhaps slowing for a second to test the waters
To peer into the rushing river that is another's being
Maybe even stick a toe in if it seems promising
But more often than not
It turns out to be too murky, too deep, too dangerous
So they drift on with only their mind in tow
Just passing through
Window shopping
As they wander delicately through life
Searching wearily for another, any other
But others aren't burdened with the same treacherous weight
They cannot grasp the haunting that follows
The others, those others
They always know what to say and what to do and how to
act and who they are
While the untouchables are just there
Floating endlessly in the most dejected
Forsaken way you can imagine
And God, who even likes parties anyway?

\And the next one won't be yellow

Kate McIntyre \

The only thing that I can swear

Is the next one won't take
time and time and time and time
to tell

The next one won't be frozen
like this coal I've seemed to swallow
unsparked, cold and resting content
between my lungs

Next time won't be bitter
sweetness barely tasted
but lingering
on the tongue

I hope
the next one won't be long.

\roadkill season

*Emma Hartmann *

my grandma told me to drink,
to smoke, to do whatever. she said
a friend of hers never drank,
never smoked, and since my grandpa's
funeral she'd lost one eye, then both
legs, then her life. billboards

tell me to eat more hamburgers.
I eat more hamburgers. miles away now,
but I'm still wondering what it is
about a bar of soap that I find
so appealing, what it is about
sticky dragging shrunken pores and
smelling like my grandma's bathroom
that I could possibly find appealing.

my gray matter tells me I should
tuck myself into a pencil case, that
I'm snotty, congested, swollen, knotted
lacking buttons, lacking mops,
that I should kick a hornet's nest.
something smells like fireworks,
something smells like skin.
it's roadkill season once again.

\ Meg Hodge



Funeral Lace \

\Argentum

Vita Chaney

My lips are dry
There's a rock in my throat
And I watch you stand at the altar
Waiting for your bride

She's beautiful, of course
A delicate lace dress
A gentle smile
You're a perfect pair

I watch you stand at the altar
Staring at your bride
Thinking about the speech I'll make at the reception
Best men are supposed to, or so I'm told

My fists are clenched when you kiss her
You make eye contact with me when you pull away

I watch you stand at the altar
With your new bride
Like our nights together never mattered
Like those kisses never happened
Like you don't know just exactly how I feel

I smile at you
And my lips are dry

\Até¹ in the Kitchen\

Genesis Sanchez

Sing, O goddess, the anger of my mother
A being of mythic proportions
Her hair curling like ten thousand garden snakes
And gaze so powerful one mustn't make eye contact
Lest one calcifies under her awful, awesome concern.

Wooden spoon raised high to smite thee down
Teeth bared in horror and rage, spitting insults like hot oil
Incoherent at times yet never not frightening,
Burning,
Scarring.

Her love, her life unable to soothe or console
For he too is quite peeved
Throwing in his disapproval every so often
Like intermittent thunder during an already apocalyptic storm
we mere mortals must weather for another five minutes.

As the neglected food begins to smoke, her mind clears.
She turns her attention towards salvaging supper,
An offering fit for the gods,
But not before she scolds us once more
for forgetting to cleaning the bathroom

32 / ¹ Greek for madness-induced rage

\Our Earth

Laurie Shipley

Erosion

Her eyes cannot see
Absent trees from barren earth
The rain running free

River Trunk

The rain running free
Down trunks, spilled into dead zones
Factories pump waste

Air Loss

Factories pump waste
Into cleaner air leaving
Nothing left to breathe

Reality

Nothing left to breathe
But smog and sulfur blurred streets
Her eyes cannot see

\Season's Change

*Liam Rosenau *

The world encased with autumn rapture

Gravity beckoning leaves of reds and golds
With crooked fingers and silver tongues

The trees shivering
Wind lovingly embracing scandalous bare bark

Fidgeting fingers looking for excuses
To warm themselves in another's hand

Air crisp with the coming frost

\An Open Letter to Work

Brandon Rose \

“Wake up WAKE UP WAKEUPWAKEUPWAKEUP” blared a particularly irritable alarm our lead “protagonist” set four hours prior to the present moment. Phoebe Conifer jolted awake at neither the first nor the second, but the third cycle of phrases uttered by the diabolical clock, and now, fully awakened, she slammed her hand into the already cracked object, silencing her clearly livid rival.

Phoebe wiped the sleep from her eyelids and, now sitting up in bed, glanced at the flashing rose-colored numbers: 3:00am. Possibly not the best time for beginning a day with healthy ambition, but the time for such things had passed days ago. Today---if you, dear reader, choose to call it that---was not, in fact, a day meant for such things; no, today would be an exercise, or, I suppose, more of a test, in creativity and ambition.

Out of a desire for both artistic advancement and human interaction, Phoebe signed herself up for a rigorous December art course designed for aspiring young adult painters, hoping to gain some further sense of her own artistic capability. Students were meant to already hold a fine selection of pieces contained within an edited portfolio by the time class had begun, but as student ventures often go, Phoebe procrastinated.

A curse to be sure.

Back to our problem at hand, the class was to begin tomorrow—or, I suppose, now today—at 4:30pm, and Phoebe had reached little to nothing past preliminary steps as of yet. Phoebe stepped out of bed, changed, and had everything other than the dedication and creativity needed to create the masterful work she dreamed of unleashing upon the general public.

Today was not that day. Today was the day to get shit done and over with.

She plopped down next to her easel, and thought herself ready to begin. Right, now is the time of artistic expression, she thought to herself. Five minutes passed, then ten. The canvas

now held a silver sliver meant to indicate a waning moon, and that was the extent of progress yet made.

Half an hour passed. Then the hour. Nothing new had appeared other than a tangerine orange shard mirroring the other. Sighing, Phoebe began to inspect her mousey living space like a mechanic examining a rusted generator. The apartment consisted entirely of one room, containing everything necessary for the survival of a student. Any noticed cracks or holes were hidden by various cheap art decor pieces she found in the few escapades she convinced herself to commit to. Her favorite could be considered fairly simple: a pastel painting of the moon overtop a lavender landscape. The rest of the room was sparsely decorated, containing only a bed, a desk and chair, an easel, a single window, and a dusty flat screen resting on a table littered with old cases and discs. With nothing left to stare at, she returned to her limited work, dotting a few stars across the still paperwhite sky.

The clock read 4:30.

Phoebe began staring out her solitary window, and watched a few cars drive along the blacktop road. Outside, the sky rumbled and the window slowly became speckled with thin translucent raindrops. 'I guess I've done enough for now,' she decided, and opted to venture for the only thing that could now help her. She grabbed an umbrella and walked outside.

The rain picked up significantly; once small raindrops became massive pools of water for children both physically and mentally to play in. Phoebe refrained from immediately opening her umbrella, allowing the cold, refreshing droplets to hit her as she made her way down the road, and eventually shielding herself from the rain. On her way over, Phoebe met only a few other sleepless souls, limited mostly to a clump of feral cats perched around various residences. For once, tranquility held the world in its grasp.

She arrived at her intended destination. Like walking into a vat of coffee grounds, opening the shop doors instantly invoked the aroma of dark roasted midnight, a smell Phoebe knew quite well by this point. A new face, seemingly twisted into

annoyance, held siege behind the tall counter.

"What can I get you," asked the young man in more of a statement than a genuine question. The sound of dripping rain echoed throughout the small shop.

"I'll take a decaf black coffee," she responded, mentally rehearsing her order, and quickly adding, "Please."

"Size?"

"Oh," she wracked her brain for any coffee size. "Um small(?)," she said, her voice trailing off.

"One tall decaf comin' right up." He paused. "Doesn't that kinda, ya know, defeat the purpose of coffee this early in the day?" He gestured up at an antique cuckoo clock, and sped over to the series of bags displayed against the shop's back wall.

"Yeah, ya know," she stammered, "but yeah... I guess." Fuck, for the love of God I wasn't looking for this.

She could almost feel the warm spirals of steam as he poured the dark liquid into a paper cup. Handing it over, he said, "Have a nice ni- day. Yeah, day. Enjoy your coffee."

"You too," she responded, almost snatching the cup from him, and barreled back into the increasingly rainy night.

The streets fogged, and her coffee steamed in her hands as she walked further and further from home. Dim street lights and flashing, half-lit neon signs illuminated the stony walkway as the sky began to become ever-so-slightly lighter. She checked her phone: 5:45am. The world began to rise again with the start of work traffic. Men and women dressed in their supposed best attire pass by our friend as she continued down, stopping only to enjoy her surroundings little by little.

The light of a literal brick-and-mortar book shop lit up as she passed by, and prompted by an intense desire to continue procrastinating, Phoebe practically dove inside. The two story bookstore would've felt cramped if it weren't for the wide variety of colors: scarlet, mint, amber, among others, all created a sense of a home beyond home. The dusty old book-jackets and quiet atmosphere drew her into a feeling of contentedness.

She delved into a number of books, looking through some of the intricate wordsmithing great artists and creators have

created across time. The classics and contemporary works alike spoke to her spirit. More time passed among these antique shelves, and soon time was moving towards 7:00am. She glanced at her watch and noticed the coming hour. Oh fuck. That gives... about eight hours to finish.

As she found her way back outside, she noted the now azure sky. 'Limited time crunch,' she thought to herself as she sped along back home. The remnants of rain were everywhere, but the world was bright and sunny again. Little to nothing crossed her path on the morning walk back to her dingy little apartment, but it would be unlikely that Phoebe would complain about such a venture.

Her problem, despite the calm morning, hadn't gone away: Phoebe lacked any sort of inspiration whatsoever, but she now felt the gentle buzz of motivation gearing her into art-mode. In her daydreaming, she continued past her apartment, wandering into a section of town otherwise unfamiliar to her. She walked, and walked, and walked, trying to piece together some single image to dedicate herself to finishing. In this dream-like faze, Phoebe wandered into a nearby park, dead-silent and without a soul within.

The day began hours ago, but the park had not yet reflected this. A few leafless trees guarded the entrance, standing on now dead, yellow patches of grass and mud. Like a miniature swamp, patches of the ground sunk as she stepped onto different layers toward what could only be described as a colossal tree. Its limbs, already gnarled by age, twisted around the branches of other, smaller trees, almost creating a web in the area. The tree still held its deep, pine-green needles in spite of the frigid weather. Stories, images, worlds seemed to echo from the inside of the ancient beast, and Phoebe could barely look away. Then, it dawned on her. Inspiration.

Phoebe rushed back along the twisting road to her apartment, threw open the door, and began finishing her partially worked-on canvas. Turquoise and teals, crimsons and coals began to be splotched everywhere in the otherwise dark space

as she worked her way through the images ingrained within her mind. In the midst of an hour, Phoebe outlined everything she imaged: the trees, sky, vibrant lights and twisting figures, all thrown onto the landscape, and in another hour, she finished a first piece.

Now at 10:00am, Phoebe reclined, dominated with mental exhaustion, and examined her work. Wonderful, a masterpiece, she thought, fully aware her opinion would sour within an hour or so. Our protagonist felt like she'd drawn a thousand pieces, and opted to close her eyes for a quick moment.

As to be expected, she fell asleep.

In all likelihood, her day was now done. She slept, exhausted, through the rest of the day and into the night.

\Watermelon Seeds\

Mary Stowers

When you're seven, you're told
you are what you eat, only
what if you eat watermelon seeds?

What if you die and
the doctor cuts you up down the middle and
there's a big green garden in your tummy?

Well I sat down at a yellow
table in the kitchen and
picked orange peels out from under my fingernails, 'cause

we all know there are some bits you're not meant to eat.
Like if they're bitter, or hard, or if
maybe they'll make you sick.

I know I'm all full up but I always feel like
I'm still hungry, only you can't eat apple cores...
unless you don't know you're not supposed to.

After all the watermelon seeds, I switched
to swallowing little round beads, maybe
wood or else plastic or small gold nuggets,

and now I know it all was true 'cause I
am still finding them in my soup.

I went to the dentist last week. He
shined a flashlight down my throat and I
asked if he could see them, only I couldn't speak
for all the light between my teeth.

I think if he understood he'd say, there they are,
about ten a day, maybe fifty, and they've all sprouted
pretty vines and ink-black flowers.

I can feel 'em when my heart
skips a beat
a little quivering tickle of roots, moving
and swaying

to the thump, thump, thump of the red rivers
running right under my skin, and
sometimes I get a little nervous, 'cause
what if they just grow forever and then

I'm stuck standing still, all stuffed up with green grass, and it
sticks out at funny angles. Like maybe it was all a cure
for being human — so I'm not human anymore,
and there are lovely lilies where my lungs used to be.

Sometimes I dream a gardener coming and
weeding it all out with tough leather gloves except
I come right up with it,

like when you tug at one stem and it pulls up the next one
and suddenly you're holding a nervous system,
all tangled up in your hands and I
am there, somewhere in there, only now

I'm dying.

So I wake up scared and tell you all about it
and you smile 'cause
kids say the funniest things sometimes.

\Morton Salt Girl\

Micaela Saathoff

When it rains, it pours they say
Slipping through the scene
Tried and true of quiet drip
And harshness of the smattering

But tell me, little smiling girl
With yellow dress and shoes
When the raindrops hit your feet
Why do you refuse

To lose your smile, plastered on
That dimpled little face
With umbrella wide as you are tall
Yet it hinders not your pace

Oh happy, salty, little girl
Right foot forward fast
Carefree laugh and losing none
As whiteness marks your path

Dare you find, nay, share the store
Of blessings deep within?
By mending thine own precedent
Or gilding of thy sin?

Pray you, darling, labeled girl
With seasoned footsteps bold
Tell the secret of your happiness
Which salts your very soul

\Inebriated

*Kayley Whyte *

Everything is ablaze,
and that's due to our kindling words,
flickering from our phoenix lips.

My eyes travel from flame, to flame,
to stringed lights, to flame, to sparks, to
you.

To him.
A little boy who crouches over a stray
byproduct that has leapt from the fire.

He places a plastic cup over the glowing ember,
as if finally capturing the something
created just for him.

Removing the cup, he places his unmarked hands
over the fluorescent orange, unafraid of the inevitable
scorching.

And suddenly, my boundaries ache
because we're chasing shadows, and I
long to be a part of it all.

\Stares Intent on Disappearing You

Aura Martin \

A Thursday evening back home. This cafe enveloped in misty hills and brick streets, an outpost in eastern Missouri. Scratched surfaces, assorted wooden chairs. We sat close together. My not-date delights in bashing people. Always in pursuit of capital T truth, his fist pounding the table. I'll tell you what people don't know. His eyes flickered as he saw me coming. Someone unafraid of my gaze. It's hard for me to forget this song, always on repeat. I need someone, find me someone. Fingers curled on the same chords, the same lyrics. Find me someone, I need someone. My hand not on his, my name a penny on his tongue. My throat tightened. Have you ever swallowed a beating heart? His had teeth. He'll never call me by another name. Sweetie. Darling. My love. He won't reach for my hand. He pushes his lemon brandy tea toward me. I drank from the same cup. It's true there was a sheet of glass between us. I'll get a tattoo of a heart. Rupture the colors and paint me a scream. I wish he would dream of me. A vision of the dirty blonde. My voice, my presence, my slipshod smile. I am someone, you found me. Now come closer.

\ *Claire Benevento*



Nothing Gold Can Stay\



Brett Kavanaugh Sees Rocky III on June 13, 1982

*Kimberly O'Laughlin *

Sometimes a breath of fresh air
is wasted on the wrong person.
A hot, alcoholic breath shared between
two people, I mean one person and one angry bastard
with no recollection and no
control is given too many
chances and too many
breaths. Life is not a
dance. People are not
your partners. The air
does not belong to you.
How many more movie
theaters will you attend?
How many more films will
you watch contentedly while
every single woman I know who
has been assaulted or raped has to
listen to men like you defend more men
like you? In films, in literature, in real life?
How many more jokes do I have to sit through
and enjoy because oh you don't really think that and
oh you're just being ironic and funny and likable? How
many more SNL episodes and Onion articles are going to
force feed us capitalized truths that we've been breathing since day one?

\Swing

*Kristin Geiman *

Swing until your hands hang
 Until your heart fails
Swing until your lungs sing to the rhythm of solitude
Grip the chains until your fingers fly
Reach with your legs for the sky
 and let the wind catch you.
Feel the rush as your head falls to the earth
Lean into the weight of youthfulness
and rest in the arms of sunlit memories.
Hold to the chains until your fingers fall
 Until your body sleeps with waking monotony
Whisper to the air of its magic
Wait for its embrace
 Stomach floating, wingless
Let your spirit swing.
Watch the earth swing beneath you as you stand still
 Then stretch out and touch it,
 hold it to your chest

\Fingers

*Maiya Cervantez *

Breathe in, breathe out
arched back over loud lungs
saltwater cheeks
from pointed fingers and sour tongues
lilting, rocking
vibrating like a music box
the shrapnel of voices
grieving your gears to lock
faulty, wet fingers
cracking the rejected light
are hardly shelter
for your face from their sight
breathe in, breathe out
dirty fingers on a cold pane
rain washing the other side
again and again
Who ever said
you were of any worth?
fake three steps back
and forth, back and forth
Folded fingers
bowed head in a silent song
saltwater hope
Can't you see that you're wrong?
your king is a myth
you believe lies, stories
how can silence
bring peace to your worries?
Breathe in, breathe out
you're alone with regret
bruised blue fingers
and still yet
raising broken fingers
to a being divine
holding you in solid hands to say
'you are mine'

\Pastoral Exhibition

*Kimberly Ramos *

I.

If you want to admire human suffering, you don't have to go far. You don't even have to live near an art museum. All you need is a Walmart at 10 pm on a weeknight.

II.

The student always outdoes the master—
take Knoblick, a forest fire lookout that the kids used for a
different kind of blazing.

III.

The man in the blue shirt eyes us from across the frozen
vegetables. His lips are parched and in need of a Venus.
Unfortunately, this isn't Urbino.

IV.

I went to Knoblick the year I left.
A floorboard sharpie Sistine littered with saints:
JA + RE, until next Tuesday.

V.

In between the aisles we play infatuation. The rules are to cut
off
your ears, boxing up the blood and
sealing it with a kiss.

VI.

Knoblick Tower was our Pont des Arts. Kids clicked promises
on the chicken wire while
the gas stations in the distance glittered like Paris.

VII.

I think the saddest composition is the Pieta: a mother holding
her wailing child because goddammit he's a brat and he
doesn't deserve a Hot Wheels.

VIII.

The way to Knoblick was long and disingenuous.
That's how I got to know the shape of the roads, the
branching capillaries of Pollock mist.

IX.

Everybody burns water lilies hoping they'll open a portal to
Giverny. The smoke makes the room cloudy
but doesn't change anything.

X.

Stay here long enough and you'll make yourself marble,
dick out like David—
except he wasn't a pervert.

\Black Sheep

*Mattea Buerge *

Dark and colorful ink covered his bare skin from his chest to his bruised knuckles.

His bloodshot eyes squinted at the faint, early morning light coming through the window blinds.

His breath was stale and stained with regret from last night.

What day was it again?

He couldn't remember. As usual.

Broken booze bottles on the stained carpet, next to an almost-empty pack of cigarettes.

His tongue felt like sandpaper in his mouth.

Something gurgled in the pit of his stomach and slowly rose to his throat.

The vomit was mostly liquid with a whiff of whiskey.

He didn't make it to the toilet in time. As usual.

Not again, Jesús told himself. You said—promised—this wouldn't happen again.

Yeah, well, you're a liar, the voice in his head said.

He rubbed his tender eyes with the heel of his hand and wept, not in a garden before his sacrificial death but rather in the bathroom of his two-bedroom apartment that was two months behind on rent.

Jesús felt like he was dying though. (Dying was probably better than this.)

His ex-girlfriends always felt the need to tell him he cried ugly, which was such a shame since he was so beautiful.

Dark hair, dark eyes, dark hands.

I can't fight this. I can't fight-fight-fight this. I can't fight this.

—

"I'll keep praying for you," chirped the old woman in the back pew at the cathedral.

He was Catholic so he went every Sunday even

though he didn't really believe in anything; it was something his mother would have wanted him to do, but she didn't care what he was doing these days.

"You're always up to no good," she'd tell him on the phone during their two-minute conversations.

No good, she repeated in Spanish.

Those two words always stuck with him for some reason.

Maybe because he had heard it his whole life from Father, Mother, brothers, sisters, teachers, principals, friends, exes, prison mates...

The list goes on. And on. And on.

His older brothers Miguel and Alejandro majored in business at the local university.

Not a criminal. Not an addict. Not an outcast. Like him.

A disgrace to the Hernández family, his name was forbidden.

His wool was the color of the devil; his inner demons tore him apart from the inside and stripped away his innocence.

Like the Son of God he was mocked and rejected by his own people.

—

The walk to the underground train station was uneventful.

The early morning rain dripped down his face and soaked his clothes; his shirt clutched to his cold, punctured skin.

He had always hated this kind of weather.

The last couple of weeks had been a dry spell so maybe the rain would do some good after all.

It always brought out the vibrant colors to everything. He stood on the concrete steps, gripped onto the railing, and lifted his face to the gray sky.

People swore under their breaths as they maneuvered around him to escape the mighty downpour and disappeared

into the darkness towards the screeching train tracks.
I'm going to keep fighting this, he thought. I'll never stop fighting.

You said that last time, the cunning voice whispered into his ear. I mean it this time. And all those times before, too.

Yeah, right, you—
“Shut up.”

Jesús skipped down the concrete steps and took the train to the nursing home to see his dying mother.

He hoped she would be happy to see him.

Her vision was pretty bad, maybe she'd think he was Miguel if he played it cool.



Tape and Ink \

when
you say my name,
I feel like beer
foam. I bubble, I froth,

I burn. but ashes are ice cold,
and everything you've done
in the past week
has found some way
to make my teeth

rot from my gums. march began
with hands,
losing my guts. I
swear they were here just yesterday,
in february, when

everything was pink and paper.
nothing feels real except
your bones, but even
they are made of plastic. if I split

the tangles, will the knots come undone?

today I am a mushroom
(a toadstool, a fun guy), today I
sit with my arms flopped uselessly

about my sides, too late to be of
any use. I want you to wrap
yourself around me like a ribbon
while I stand
absolutely still. I

want you
to
leave me alone

\all we have left is a snow globe

Zachary Swope \

i leave you with this:
whether it comes down like
snow or a bad morning after
i have never predicted it
correctly. faith is the only trust
that accepts the meteorologist's
mistakes because if weather
were at all predictable, it'd
likely be snowing all the time

remember 'fore you go
to shake the little globe
hand me once and for all
the breath you held for me

Three Scenarios in which Ashlyn Doesn't Win

Claire Benevento

I.

For some reason my mom would get offended if I didn't return to my tiny hometown at least once a year to visit her. I guess she needed me to be there before she could remember that she liked Kimmie better. The last time I visited, Kimmie would have been forty, because I was forty-six, but she spent a lot of money on looking like she was still twenty-seven and I always got the impression that my mom thought I should have been doing the same thing. And that I should have married a chiropractor with perfect teeth and no soul.

I usually tried to plan my visits so that I wasn't there at the same time as Kimmie, but last time we were both there because my mom was dying. I still almost didn't go, but I wanted to see if she would make any time for regret in her last days.

"Why don't you wear makeup anymore?" Kimmie asked me one night. Mom had just fallen asleep and we were sitting across the coffee table from each other in the living room. "You look fifty and you don't have to."

"I'd rather look fifty than look like you."

She didn't seem to know how to take that.

I couldn't sleep that night, so I went to the living room and sat in my mom's cushioned rocking chair and tried to find memories of sitting on her lap in it, but all I could remember was sitting on the floor, watching her feed Kimmie. I've told myself lots of times that I should stop holding grudges. It hasn't happened yet.

I didn't actually expect my mom to apologize, but I thought she might at least acknowledge that it could be her fault I didn't want to visit more. But if that thought ever occurred to her, she didn't express it, and she died without having made amends.

She did remember us equally in her will, which surprised me, though it didn't make things better. Especially because I witnessed Kimmie's reaction: her brow furrowed for a moment, but soon she laughed loudly, looked at me, and said, "Weird. I was always her favorite."

II.

I should have been asleep, but instead I was lying there in the dark trying to decide whether or not I cared if Matt Something-that-started-with-an-n saw me without my makeup in the morning. Because the mascara was starting to make my eyes itch and I knew that my skin wouldn't be happy with me if I left my foundation on overnight.

But I didn't really want to get out of bed. My core ached and I had a nagging memory of the way the last guy had looked at me when he'd woken up to just my face—sort of like he was wondering why he'd let me seduce him. It was easy to imagine Matt looking at me the same way.

I'd expected more of Matt. After pleasantries we had talked about the #metoo movement and I believed that he was sickened by everything that women had to deal with. But it was his fault I was still awake. I knew a med student once who explained to me that there are certain hormones released when you orgasm that lower your stress and make you relax, and I was not relaxed—Matt had woken something up inside me but forgotten to rock it back to sleep. I guess not every guy who says he supports women's rights is a feminist in bed.

III.

Mommy spent a long time doing my hair that morning. She curled it with the hot curling iron and she pulled it back all tight and it made my head hurt. And the hairspray made me cough. After that she said I got to play with her makeup, but that's not really what she meant. She put it on me, on my eyelids and my cheeks and my lips. I kept rubbing my eyes 'cause they itched from the makeup, but she pushed my hands down and told me no.

Then she told me I got to wear my new dress. It was purple and shiny and it had a big skirt with lots of layers. I asked her why I got to wear it, since it was the Soybean Festival and I always played and she got mad at me for getting dirty, and she said I was going to be in a contest. I asked what a contest meant and she said I was going to go on stage with the girls from my kindergarten class and they would judge to see who was the best and the prettiest.

“Look, don’t you like being so dressed up?” she asked me in front of the mirror.

I didn’t like my eyelids being blue, or how pink my cheeks and my lips were, but I didn’t say that.

Before we went outside she showed me some new shoes she got to go with my dress. They made me taller and when we walked to the park for the Soybean Festival they made my feet hurt. And my dress was too hot. I wanted to go back home and take everything off, and I told Mommy, but she wouldn’t let me, and she told me not to cry or I would mess up my makeup.

She made me sit with her instead of going to go play until it was time for the contest. When it was time we went behind the stage, and Kylie and Torie and Camden and McKenna were all there. Camden told me at school that she didn’t want to be my friend anymore. She was wearing a long white dress, and her lips were dark red, and her eyelids and her shoes were silver and sparkly.

They called us to go on stage one at a time. I was second. I stood there with people watching and a lady I didn’t know told all about me, like what’s my favorite food and what I like to do at the Soybean Festival. When we were all on stage they put a song on and told us to dance. I went to dance class, but I hadn’t practiced for that song, so I just put my hands in the air and spun and spun and spun and spun. None of the other girls danced as much as I did.

After the song was over we waited a little bit, and then the lady put a crown on Camden. I went down off the stage and took my shoes off. The backs of my heels were all red and

they hurt when I touched them. I cried and rubbed my makeup off and Mommy came and told me to stand up off the ground so I wouldn't get my dress dirty.

We stayed there all day and I didn't have any fun. I wanted to go to sleep when it was night and they were having the contest for the big girls, but Mommy made me stay awake and look at their dancing and their singing and their pretty sparkly dresses. She told me when I'm big I'll get to wear an even fancier dress like them, and everyone will cheer for me if I win. I don't think I won that day. I don't know why. I was the best dancer.

\The Myth of Feminine

Kimberly Ramos \

Roses tucked
between clean white sheets
those pristine angels, those gory dolls:
She pulls her shoelaces tight,
leans over deeply
and the boys are watching,
waiting.

Reverence? Or impiety?
Hands folded over one another in
decorum or
to hide something?
She can't know until she gets close
very close,
hips against hips close.

The boys are watching,
keeping numbers in
notebooks.
Measuring worth in cup size
in the color of her eyes—
or maybe they are really writing
poetry?

Waiting
by her doorstep.
Stands up, leads her to his car
holds the small of her waist.
Possession? Or worship?
Her palms,
tingling.
Will her hair be yanked back or
gently brushed aside?
Her lips, opened slowly in veneration

or roughly slammed wide?
Hands, held or gripped,
into jean-back pockets, slipped?
And which does he prefer?

They've made it to the movies:
here's your popcorn, salted with uneasiness.
What will happen in the dark?
Shh. The picture's starting to move.
Hold her close.
There, that's it,
now she knows she's screwed either way:

Idolization?
She'll fall from the pedestal
sooner or later, skinning her perfect knees—
even the gods tire of sacrifice,
wishing to mingle among the
mortals.
And the incense? It's awful!

Debasement?
The violating tongue tastes
foul, leaves tracks of mud in the mouth,
covers her in handprints.
Dirties her up like an old barbie doll
then sells her naked for fifty cents at
a garage sale.

Nice guys good guys
bad boys dumb boys—
you, boy.
Open wide so I can see your
tonsils and anything
lurking in the nether regions of your throat.
What are you really looking for?

You raiders for the Myth of Feminine, abandon.
Benediction?

She was not born of sea foam and blood,
not your goddess in a temple.

Territory?

She is not the spoils of a covenant,
not your promised land.

No, she is made of the same
dust and clay as you.

\ *Adrienne Campbell*



Dawn \

\ *Marissa Banks*



Touch the Stars \

\Munitions to Mankind

*Willaim Fries *

A mathematical construct,
novel but simple,
was able to shake governments
and empower the people.

Ciphers share secrets,
but they need some setup.
See, keys protect secrets,
the same key for decipher and lockup.

One must share knowledge,
which is the key,
though to not just anyone,
but only those who should see.

Alas sharing is dangerous
and it requires trust,
that those who possess keys
will never go bust.

But mathematicians in academia,
where new understanding is wended,
through discovery or invention,
a new cipher, they founded!

A mathematical beauty
condensed in an algorithm,
presents a novel idea:
split the key in a schism.

One key is now two,
a public and private.
Share half all you want,
but the other is always secret.

World War II concluded,
won by broken ciphers and trust,
so this new innovation
was feared with disgust.

First Amendment protections
give US citizens freedom,
but the borders imposed
no regulatory limitation.

So borders were sealed,
via strict regulation.
Though just mathematical,
sharing the idea became treason.

"Export restricted!"
"Its munitions, they say!"
"I'll petition my rights,
which they can't throw away!"

Philosophical wars
about freedoms and thought,
raged in academia
and the Internet throughout.

Academic papers,
could not flow through borders,
so in disobedience
they were printed on pullovers.

As ink is to paper,
so it is to skin.
Tattoos of ideas
made munitions of men.

One international flight
would make them arms traffickers.

Ideas proclaimed by mere existence,
such tenacious subverters.

But the Internet,
it knows no borders,
so restrictions were rejected
except by self enforcers.

So mathematical ideas
in software form
proliferated the world
via Internet forum.

Limiting knowledge
is nothing but vain,
and governments soon realized
it was impossible to contain.

Court cases were dropped,
investigations halted,
and with a sigh of relief
the people exulted.

28 years later
the cipher persists.
Used in everyday life,
it allows you to exist.

Green URL padlocks
to unbreakable phones,
from the signing of deals
to the purchase of scones.

But impact isn't limited,
so mundane to extreme:
it protects activists in
the most repressive regimes.

So governments still debate,
what is its proper classification?
Though possession takes nothing
but some mild memorization.

Thus a mathematical construct,
novel but simple,
is able to shake governments
and empower the people.

This knowledge may be export restricted in your region.
This knowledge was classified a munition under US export
law until the year 2000.
Prior to 2000, any individual exporting this knowledge outside
of the US would
be considered an international arms trafficker.

```
#!/bin/perl -sp0777i<X+d*IMLa^*IN%0)dsXx++IMIN/  
dsM0<j]dsj  
$/=unpack('H*',$_);$_=`echo 16dio\U$k"SK$/SM$n\  
EsN0p{IN*1  
IK{d2%Sa2/d0$^lxp"|dc`;s/\W//g;$_=pack('H*',/  
((..*)$)/)
```

\Paper Blinds

Adrienne Campbell \

A spider - long and lean - makes haste across my fragile folds. Dust has settled deep within the pores of my faded creases. Once crisp and crink'ly, I now rustle gently in the breeze. I boast windows of fifty years, no screens to keep anyone in or out. Windows open, I stand as the only barrier. The sun beats down on me, but I make no complaint. I stand between its warm rays and the scuffed wood of the floor. The cat who sleeps beneath me on the top of the scratched desk flicks his tail and startles the spider, who clambers away into the curtain. I have hung here long before the spider, long before the cat, long before the girl who curls up in bed each night, pulling me down and drawing the curtains in before me. I have seen many girls, cats, spiders. And these will not be my last. The spider - dark and daring - hurries again across my fragile folds. And I am content to know that tomorrow I will once again greet the sun, ready to meet its rays.

\Two Virgins

*Stephen Poindexter *

Could not look up to my Father,
as he ignored my plea.
Closed door, black shoes, “beautiful feet,”
I saw when he touched me.

No control with his ordained hands—
rosary on the ground.
Hand on my mouth and in my pants—
silence the only sound.

His black robe blocks the picture of
Jesus Christ on the tree.
Mother Mary left the room to
distance herself from me.

Quelled lust for men that made him sin?
Or the lack of a wife?
Two virgins losing innocence,
me, much sooner in life.

Don't know why I let him do it.
I froze. I did not flee.
Suppose I was taught to desire
the hands of God on me.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
O, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
to priests who do the same.

\Cheap Tricks

*Brandon Rose *

Welcome to my port of pastel colors;
Come for the transposed thrills--
Stay for the performing palisades.

Feel free to recline, take it easy as
The skies grow hazel with the shade
Of your learned malice.

Drink from this chalice I like to
Call happiness, and you, my friend,
Will win my obsession;

For now, grab my hand
And whisk yourself into batter

Drive your insecurities into oblivion
And snap our hands in half.

Leave your bandages at home--the drama at
Our lovely rose door.

Improvise your Emprise;
Become my guide as I am yours

Excuse this jaded jest, if you would.
Or don't.

Either keeps me humble.

\The Creator

*Kimberly Ramos *

We are just girls, sitting in the garden and digging our hands into the clay. Where we live, the dirt is red and sticky— good for molding but not for growing— the zucchini plants drag on the ground, fruitless. The humidity makes our brows bleed, the ground slurping up what drips. To repay us, it yields easily, crumbles and reforms for our adolescent eyes. We scoop up great fistfuls and compact them into seeds.

She rolls her clay into a ball, pinches the edge into a little chin. She passes her hand over the blankness and sinkholes form for eye sockets and mountains for lips. She leave the ribs intact, because the creation is meant for herself.

She likes the distinctness of a nose, she says, and a ridge emerges, prominent and proud, the main feature. It is fashioned after a shadow man from her dreams, the one that holds her so well in the in-between.

And pools live in his eyes, she says, pouring water into the empty sockets and watching it swirl there. And he dances, so limbs rise from the clay that are fit for movement. She takes a small hand and imagines the weight of it on her shoulder, real solidness.

That day the sky was clear so we couldn't hope for electricity to make him breathe. She took a spare take-out box, the styrofoam squeaking as she placed him inside, a makeshift coffin and stuffed that into the fridge— for later, she said.

It has been ten years and the box is still pushed to the back with old ketchup. I have seen her walk with wood nymphs

and kiss them in the shadows of her backyard, their brambled fingers catching in her hair. She bears through the cuts on her lips and teeth.

I caught her looking at him last night, staring at his cracked little body, frost on his upper lip.

She carved out a tiny heart on his chest and kissed it as tenderly as one would kiss a dandelion-headed newborn.

She went out into the garden, the same red clay lit under a waning moon and compacted him, his feet in his ears, turning over the sticky ground like waves. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust, clay to clay, she said, with the red water overtaking him

\Forgotten Usually\

Micaela Saathoff

Knees get shaky and backs get sore
Feet get corns and husks and more
Fingers get slammed in dresser drawers
Hands get dirty from doing chores

Stomachs get aches and livers turn weak
Brains get tired and soon reach their peak
Teeth get holes and swell the cheek
Bowels are whiny and sometimes leak

Yet one of the body's greatest parts
Has none of these problems and masters the art
Of contributing nothing terribly smart
Dear elbow, you wry coward, you only scream when I play
tennis!

\ *Kali Teague*



Exigency \

\The New Lone Tree

Laurie Shipley

You've heard the one about the
The lone tree standing
In a field of tall waving hay

But new is the story
Of the three story house,
Used to be one of a bunch

Of bustling busy neighborhoods
And streets paved by humans for
Humans who outnumbered rabbits

Until they were bulldozed, one by one
And overtaken by a yellow seed sea
Leaving only one owner, leaning just as

Lonely, standing crooked, head cocked
to the side staring at an equally crooked
Tree that was getting its rights back.

It had been pushed by wind, pulled by time,
Bark cracked as skin exposed to cold reality.
It was concentrated on the old man's stare.

His branched waved one twig like
A reprimanding finger waved as a reminder
That it was his fault, his turn to lose his livelihood.

\Rattle

*Jessica Krieger *

Wrap your boney hands around my ribcage
And rattle it all you want
Slither heavy through my veins
Like the venom you claim to be
Squeeze tighter, tighter around my heart
And drown in the waves of my heartbeat
Run laps like electricity through my body
And scream as loud as you can
Rewire my brain all you want
Make me believe everything is a threat
A worry
A fear
Because at the end of each day
I'm the one who's breathing
Laughing
Dancing
I am the one in control of living
In this great big world
And all you have is this body
And all you do in there is scream

\Overdue

*Kimberly O'Laughlin *

Confessional poetry
sounds a lot like you did something wrong.
We all live out our mistakes to the fullest
sometimes too long.
But this poem in particular
isn't confessional, isn't bittersweet.
But I will call it confectioner's poetry.
Because it burns in my throat
stings in my teeth
and makes my hands shake.
Remember when we watched Netflix together
or when I saw you naked?
Can you remember the pool parties
or smoking joints in your mom's basement?
Do you remember when your dad
didn't want you to sleep over at my house
because of my last name?
No matter how many times I submerge
my scalp in a darker shade of dye
or behead my busted curls
with old scissors while I'm high
I can't ever get you out of my head.
You keep exposing yourself in
the roots
I never asked for
the ends
that always split.
Maybe it's because the last time we hugged
it took me by surprise that you would even bother
after not talking to me for months.
Maybe it's because you told me you wanted to kill yourself.
And I asked your mom if you were okay.
And I asked your sister if you were around.

And I asked myself what I had done wrong.
But you replied to me,
hours later.
I found out it was just because of your homework.
And as much as I understand joking about suicide,
it still hurts that you would do that
after all of the times
you had meant it.
After all of the words I had said, trying to get you
to listen
to breathe
to wait.
Remember all the times you said I saved your life?
Remember when you removed me as a friend?
I decided to pretend
I didn't notice.
So I kept talking to you
like nothing happened
hoping you would add me back,
say it was an accident.
Instead
I became the life that you ended.

\Empty

Eli Nielsen \

A couple of months after the urn that held her was placed on the fireplace, a thunderstorm swept through the town and took all the electricity with it. Silas was awoken by the first clap of thunder, grumbled, and got out of bed to try to turn the light on. Nothing. He was alone in the deep darkness with only the silver light of the moon creeping in through slits in the window. Though he could not see his surroundings, just the essential shape of things around him, Silas made his way towards the back-up generator in the basement. Even in the dark he knew the layout of his house from the beige living room couches to where the first and last steps of the basement were.

However, by the time he reached the living room everything felt hollow. A hollowness that made the chairs, curtains, windows, TV, table, lamps, floors, ceilings, walls, fireplace and urn all seem from another world while still retaining an unshakable familiarity. He stumbled up against the wall and was surprised by how cold it was. With each step and trembling hand after hand groping the wall, the chill of his empty house coursed deeper and deeper into his blood until he collapsed on the wood floor crying out for his wife but could only hear his own ragged panting, the omnipotent pitter of the rain on the windows, and the gnawing unending silence that festered around him.

\Moonlight

*Maiya Cervantez *

Silver
wading silver
draping blue
around your
shoulders, bowing
shoulders, pushed
to acquiesce
your glow
in favor of
sun and hatred
of nightfall;
you recoil in
shame to
Luminesce
so uniquely
all I can do
to resuscitate
the resplendence
your smile
greet to the
sky; you are
no aberration,
nor distortion
of expectation.
Darling, you
have the stars
at your feet;
you can't find
the light in
the darkness,
because you
are the moon.

\Unanswered Questions

*Bethany Cutkomp *

There was something about summer sunsets that initially exploded with every hue known to man, then faded out into a dusky purple, drizzled with stars that disappeared if stared at for too long. Watching that transformation was my favorite part of our camping trips. We replicated the sky's masterpiece through our own bonfire. Flames danced in tendrils of scarlets, apricots, yellows, and ivories. Ashes fluttered up and joined the constellations above.

Through stinging eyes, I squinted at the rippling figures of our campout. Accompanying my father this summer was his brother Otis with his kids. Charlotte was fourteen, only a year younger than me, and her brother Jesse was seven. I liked them enough because they were family, but Otis was on the wild side and his children took after him. My uncle's teeth rotted so he wore fake ones. He'd always pop them out and spit them at me or the kids when he had too much to drink. My cousins walked around barefoot and shoved worms down their pockets. I once joked to my parents that my uncle Otis was the leader of a little wolf pack, because his side of the family was so bizarre and smelled like wild animals. My father told me to keep that to myself, but not before chuckling first.

So it was the wolf pack, my father and me, and the mosquitoes. My father and uncle drank and shared memories of their boyhood. Otis's trumpet of a voice squawked over everyone else's, so I figured I just wouldn't talk at all. And in between phrases, I heard the sticky smacks of my cousins' lips as they stuffed their mouths with marshmallow and graham cracker. The way they chewed with their mouths open reminded me of Thanksgiving dinner at the kid table.

Later, Jesse had to pee so Otis took him out to the trees. Without them jabbering away, I could actually enjoy the quiet warmth. My attention wandered toward something I'd stumbled upon earlier today. I took the opportunity to change the subject.

"Hey Dad, what's the deal with that truck on the hill out

there?”

Before he answered, Otis emerged from the dark and hijacked the conversation. “Remember that truck we had back when Ma was still alive? She used to let us ride in the back.” My father lit up at the memory. He and my uncle talked while the rest of us waved smoke away from our faces. They traded slightly different versions of the same narrative back and forth, until eventually they called it a night.

“Dad, wait,” I said.

“Tell me in the morning, okay? I’m tired.”

I started to argue but he was already tripping over the tent door and zipping it shut behind him. Even with my back turned to them, I felt the kids staring at me across the crackling blaze.

“Beau, tell us a story,” Charlotte requested, like she did on the holidays. “You always tell the greatest stories.”

There was a reason for this. My stories were true events, seasoned with a little improvisation. My mind drifted to this morning. What I had seen was just enough to create nightmares if I told it effectively. I made direct eye-contact, leaning forward so that the flames just barely licked my exposed skin.

“Someone died out there in the forest behind you.”

Jesse and Charlotte scooted forward, intrigued.

“You guys were setting up camp. My dad sent me out to collect firewood, remember? I went out farther than I was supposed to, and there I saw it. A truck flipped upside down, roof crushed and caving in.”

I paused, remembering the rusted over exterior, so bad that I couldn’t tell what color it had been. All around it and even inside, ferns, wildflowers, and tree saplings grew tall, shielding it just so that you couldn’t see it unless you were right there in front of it.

“The car was so beat up, I knew the driver didn’t survive. He was probably driving on that road up there.” My cousins followed my pointer finger tracing the street curving around the mountain behind them. “My guess is he went over on a turn. It

could've been raining. He could've been drunk. Or tired. But can you imagine it? Losing control and feeling yourself flip over and over, seeing the forest whirl around into a blur, hearing nothing but the crunch of metal and glass as you lose consciousness?"

I spoke with variance, ramping up the louder parts and then dropping off into silence. The bonfire spoke for me, wood hissing and popping during pauses. I let the kids simmer in thought before stepping it up a notch with my storytelling.

"You should've seen the body," I said. "I've never seen something more gruesome. There was blood all over the steering wheel. His entire body was mangled. When I left, I stepped on something and it might've been his arm."

"You're making that up," Charlotte said. She had a wet hunk of hair in her mouth.

"Do I look like I'm lying?"

I watched the flickering light reflecting in their glazed eyes and knew that they were terrified. I had them good. I wanted to add that I picked up the severed arm and slapped the guy just to see if he would wake up, but I didn't want to overdo it.

The bonfire had reduced itself to embers, wood crumbling in on itself and glowing amber in the dark. It was quiet except for the fire's crackles and knuckle-like pops, a subtle melody against the crickets and cicadas.

In reality, the wreckage had to have been decades old, but there were so many questions unanswered. I wanted to know the real story behind it, not just the artificial horror tale I fed my cousins. Someone's got to know what happened, unless it's been forgotten after all these years.

Someone was shaking my shoulder. I lifted my head, disoriented. Jesse held his lantern up to my face.

I shielded my eyes. "What is it? Do you need to pee?"

"Shhh. Can you hear that?" Jesse whispered. He leaned in closer. "I think it's the dead man. He heard your story."

I still wasn't fully awake. "What?"

"He's out there, Beau. Right outside our tent."

He was in his imaginary world. I closed my eyes. "Stop it."

Go back to sleep.”

But then I heard it too. Something was shuffling around out there. It sounded like pacing between the tents, back and forth. I unzipped the tent window but saw only darkness.

Charlotte woke up and asked me what we were looking at.

“Nothing. It’s probably a racoon or something,” I said. “You did clean up the food when you went to sleep, right?”

The uncomfortable silence told me otherwise. “Oh come on, guys.”

We slithered out of our sweaty sleeping bags and crept out into the night. While it took us a moment to adjust to our surroundings, the mosquitoes found us right away. We alternated between swatting them and cleaning when the sound came again. The footsteps were farther away now, headed toward the mountain. Then came something else. A cough rattled from the trees, unmistakably human.

“That wasn’t a raccoon,” Jesse whispered.

Charlotte said, “We should tell our dads.”

I glanced over my shoulder but saw nothing. “No, get back in the tent.”

I knew what they were thinking about, and felt responsible for telling them the story in the first place. There was no arguing that someone was out there, but it certainly wasn’t a revived corpse. I tried telling that to them but they were already in too deep.

Jesse took off toward the forest, merely a blob of light hopping away. We only had one lantern among the three of us, so Charlotte and I followed after him. The night was black but the trees were darker. A myriad of insects murmured from the branches above. I felt deliriously awake. Jesse stopped when we caught up with him.

“Take us to the wreck, Beau. That’s where he wants us to go.”

I snatched the lantern from him. “It was just a story. There’s no dead man. I made it up.”

The wolf cubs fell silent. They wouldn’t even look at me, but this was not the time to apologize. I held their hands to keep

from tripping over the underbrush as we hurried back to camp, but then something snapped to our left. Charlotte tore away from my grasp and pointed.

“There he is!”

I had no idea what she meant until I turned around. In the weak light surrounding us, we saw him.

“It’s the dead man, Beau. You were right.”

The dead man squinted and then, bizarrely enough, zipped up his fly. My pulse picked up as he inched forward until he crossed into our small circle of light. We stood there, staring at each other for a second. The kids let out the breath they’d been holding.

“Dad, what are you doing out here?” Charlotte hissed.

Otis scratched his beard and looked at us one at a time. “I could ask y’all the same question, now, couldn’t I?”

He didn’t have his fake teeth in, adding to the confusion. On our way back to camp, the kids blurted out a discombobulated version of my story to my uncle. I tried untangling truth from fiction, but only came up with my unanswered questions.

Otis nodded to me. “Looks like someone has some explaining to do.”

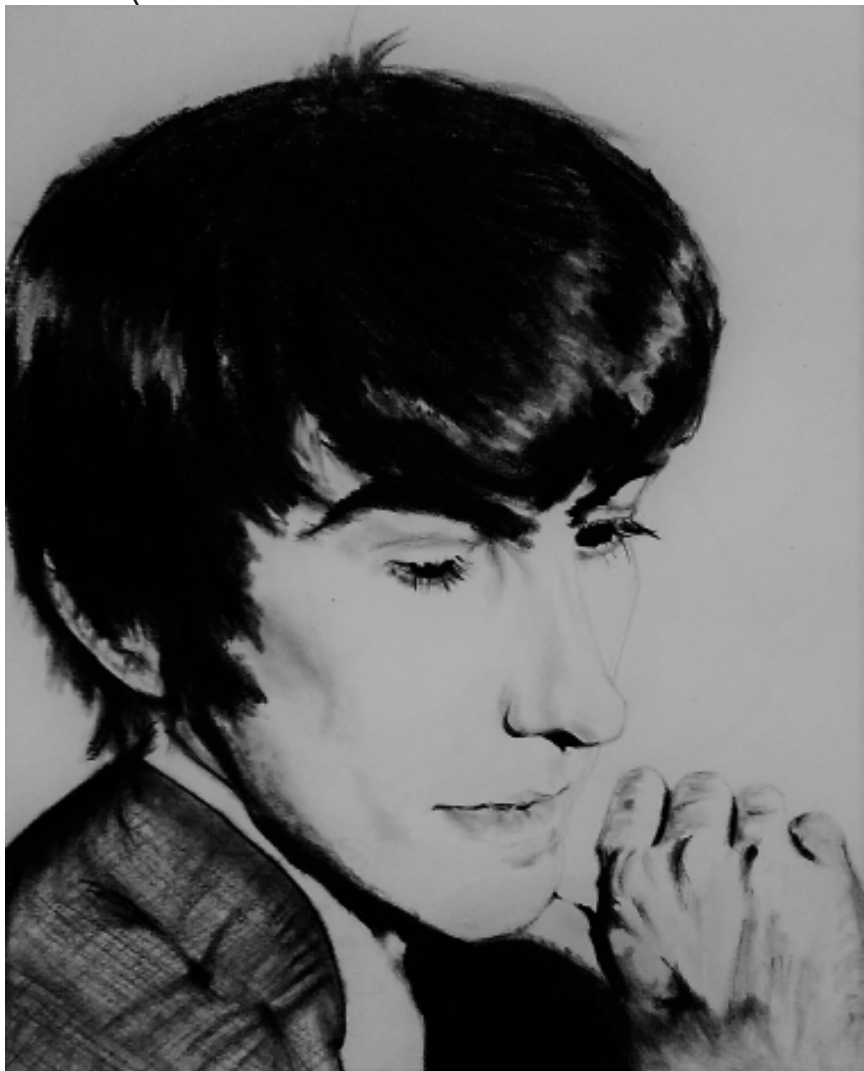
I felt them all looking at me, and turned away.

— — —

The next morning, I woke up my father just before sunrise. We sat beside the bonfire ashes, watching the sky’s vibrant evolution reverse itself. It ranked as my second favorite part of our camping trips. Contrasting melodies from the birds filled in our silence until I asked him about the truck on the hill. He thought about it for a while and then smiled.

“Nobody out here knows what happened for sure, but I’ve got a hell of a story for you.”

\ Micaela Saathoff



George \

lincoln's lies

Emma Hartmann

the dome lights
lining the sidewalk
mimic the moon
like a child playing house.
you be mommy,
I'll be daddy,
the cat will be baby
and the dog will be
the dog, will be
honest as abe
(the man, the myth,
the Legend of Lincoln).

the first thing that erupted for us
was the volcanic volume
of a tree's bark,
worse than its bite,
but only marginally.
I remember watching
my father throw a football
impossibly high into the stratosphere--
fingers crossed it might
eject into space--
I remember watching
gravity throw a football
directly back down,
a constant game of catch.
I know you hated how I
wailed in grocery stores,
tired of aisles of grains,

veggies I didn't want to eat.
I know you hated how I
would crawl upstairs in the middle
of the night like a ghost,
but please understand I only ever wanted
someone to lay with me and
stroke my hair until I fell asleep, I
only ever wanted to sleep.
when you left I always
shut my eyes tighter and
pretended you were still there
on my twin sized bed, wedged
between me and the lilac wall.

\Childhood Secrets\

Coal Chedwick

The weekdays are always busy and full of small organic moments that come with images like this: His father's strained pull, the rising pail of water, bringing myth and memory up from the depths of some hidden well that smells like mud and ocean winds; His mother, standing in the door, numb to the darkness, carrying a night-time potion that would dispel all evil – in these moments he would stare at her as if she knew something of God, as if she could seize for him some great secret just out of reach of his slight fingers that pull up, ten years later, a tattered rope and dried up tears.

\Acknowledgements\

Zachary Swope

For you, not for you
If not, I'd never had seen
today or yesterday; I'd
never had sang songs
by Gregory Alan Isakov;
I'd never had smiled from
ear to ear. At least, when
I thank you I can show you
photos of sherbets and
train stations I've visited
and the cars I almost rode
but stopped because they
drove directly into the sea.
I wonder, would a fish ever
dream of the moon?

But this is for you.
Because we dream of the moon
because we dream of goodbyes
and lullabies
and fireflies in the winter
and leave in the summer.
Oh, to come back to you
to exalt in camaraderie
and drink in decadence

Should you half-step into this green light,
hold tightly to this unwinding clock

\Autopgraphy

*Joseph Katz *

You told me once
that you have several tattoos
no one else can see

vines greening your left kidney
(my right), a dragon curled
around your esophagus, your childhood
room inked carefully onto ventricles

the canvas of your internal anatomy
contains so many tightly compacted
years

years that twist and overlap like a
small intestine (dream catcher,
you kind of regret that one now)
waiting to surprise a surgeon
or the coroner

who watches them escape you
in a swarm under her scalpel
and does not succeed in catching
all of them with the butterfly net
she keeps under her desk specifically
for such occasions

Is that your gallbladder with a tiny ankh
climbing the stairs to the maternity ward?
To the room where you are
cradled in tired arms?
About to open your eyes for
the first time

\ *Liam Rosenau*



Subtle \

\ Meg Hodge



Leery Light \

\City of the Saints

Joe Slama \

The city's lamps illuminate the spirits of the saints,
our hallowed dead who trod these cobbled streets,
provenient from every part
to touch the ever-beating heart
of a body spread across millennia
and sitting immortal in the ashes of an empire.

\Endlessly

*Kayley Whyte *

I'll probably hand you all my baggage at some point,
and that will be the day you board the train,
but for now, I'll rest my lips on the skin behind
your ear.

If I could be that black loop, clinging to your earlobe,
I would hang from you
and on your every word,
endlessly.

Steal my steel heart
and make it a virgin of
this love that has come along to tear away
my skin and expose the straited muscle that so longs
to be tensed and touched.

We're treading on broken concrete, and a gust
of wind could be our demise, but
I'd walk you home every night
if given the chance.

\Bees

*Danielle Capehart *

"The time for minor poets is coming."
Charles Simic

The poet's fingers bled.
His eyes like paper.
The words that escaped
his chest stung as though the bees
from under the wooden seats
outside had come through the walls
and made a home in the sharpened
wood in the poet's hand.
The giddy dog laughed as the young
boy played in his small expanding sandbox.
Time skipped. As the dog lived
long and finally died—
the boy stayed young and decided
to never leave.

The merit of breaking your own
fingers is something we all envy.
Walk down the road and look
at everyone's feet. They're wide,
aren't they? Paddles
slapping on the gray hard ground.
The ground, it's rough. You rub the tips
of your nails along the lines
that have been scratched in the dirt.
The lines, they are beautiful
aren't they? They are on her palm.
The love he holds is now in his hand—
as the bees continue to eat
away at his knuckles.



Colophon

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