

The Paper Lantern

Vol. XIII, Issue 2

Spring 2018

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Back cover: **“November 11th,”** by Cara Kissell

September is the Month of Fruit Flies

by Rachel Lindo

I make my way down France Ave,
pokeweed beetles cluster the crumbling
black bike path, late guests to a beaver's wake
going on ten feet further down.

The beaver lay spread eagle,
his gnawed on lips boiled in the sun
from a damned kiss on a car's fender.
He had an estranged amphibian lover,

she couldn't make it to his funeral either.
She forgot her loose leaf speech at home
and when she rushed her leaps,
a tire smashed her needle bones.

At the crosswalk the frog's girlfriend,
a sparrow adorned in Fashion Week's feathers,
nestled dead with melted candles left behind
with cross dressed in the finest duct tape
where a woman's body crunched through a windshield
embracing the stoplight.

A Phoenix Fed Up with P.E.

by Rachel Lindo

Like dog shit in a paper bag, my regret's on fire. No, it's egg rot stench lingering at my doorstep. I hear a knock and answer, expecting a Girl Scout selling sweet, sugary nostalgia. No, it's a brown paper bag set ablaze. No, it's not that. It's a phoenix with sweat drooling under her bag-on-fire wings after being forced to fly a minute mile. Yes, I let her burn down my welcome mat. She wasn't spared from life, either.

Vintage Woman

by Marla Palomino



Chicago

by Katharine Johnson

We'd sit in the hotel room each night, the three of us,
rain drizzling down the window and pattering on the ground outside.
My sister and mother sit on the bed next to mine,
my mother telling me it's time to go to sleep,
lay down, close your eyes, turn the other way.

I hear my sister crying, sobbing as my mother holds her tight.
I stare blankly out the window, gripping the itchy hotel blanket in my
fists,
noticing the smell, it's almost too clean, tickling my nose,
I try my best to block out my sister's sadness.

I watch the water dribbling down the window.
Picking two droplets and guessing which one will reach the bottom
of the glass first,
racing raindrops as I block out the noise. A game I'll have mastered
soon.

It's hard to sleep when the light's on.

I've asked my mother why my sister cries like this,
why she calls every night we're in Minnesota,
why we spend seven and a half hours in the car one way
every weekend, why my parents left so suddenly that one night.
She's ok, it's her depression.
I wish depression would go away.

Eventually I can't hang on, and
the crying drifts into the distance,
out of my reach as

I internalize my dismissal,
shut my eyes tight,
and
finally
fall
asleep.

Chest cavity

by Gabriel Mianulli

We collide—

You, the meteor burning through the sky,
the shooting star I wished for,
magnetic,
made of materials unknown.

I'm the desert landscape,
dry as bleached bone,
a barren bed for you to fall on.

You crash
and leave your divot
in sands I rake like a Zen garden
for you to scramble.

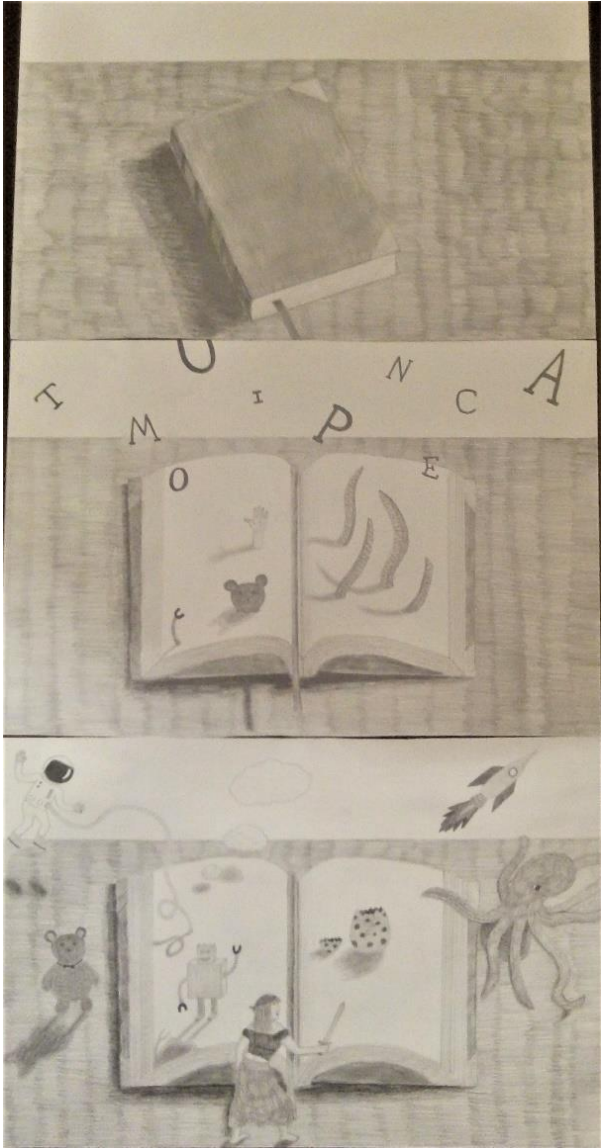
I meditate inside this chasm
that echoes every om
as acoustics of a heart-felt strum
magnified in the space you carved.

My aches are reverberating waves crashing
against the steadfast boulder in my gut,
the same rock that fell through the atmosphere
and broke into obliterated bits
defying reassembly.

I will forget again
this hole you scraped in me
is not an enclave,
but something to climb out of.

A Story Begins

by Haley Sargent



The Death of Main Street

by Jerry Carrier

the gray of the day through my windshield presents like a black and
white television

fast moving ground fog like a gray blanket stealing my sight
and a pale sun like a silver dollar shone weakly

bright red dogwood brags about itself in the white and gray
landscape

the smell of earthy damp ground like a future grave

empty buildings sit along a once prosperous road, a former bank, an
ancient drug store and soda fountain, and a hotel where the
Optimist Club met

the roaring roadhouse is now home to a man who sells used
furniture under a sign that claims they're antiques

the A&W Root Beer Stand once filled with cars and carhops is now
called Bob's Frosty because the chain stores left when things
turned bad

the car dealership abandoned, burned down by child vandals with
nothing to do

the interior of an abandoned building always seems colder than the
exterior

the roadside mixed with white snow, sludge and mud, a bizarre
Jackson Pollock

blue-green hues of pines seem to be the only things alive in the
landscape

large gray-brown trees stand dead with branches covered in bright
white snow

hoarfrost bejewels the foliage like a rich lady's diamonds at a
significant event

a flock of geese who decided to winter in the open water next to the
power plant fly overhead

the school once full of the promise of tomorrow is closed, merged
with three other towns and located fifteen miles away
children dressed like mummies in stuffed mattresses walk through
the snow to the school bus
the village offspring that once ran with abandonment through the
school and streets, that supported the skating rink and
bowling alley ran away to places like Minneapolis, Chicago,
and California
the park is now two rusty swings with small pathetic trees around it
to replace the large behemoths lost to Dutch elm disease
the smell of old musty books in a once busy library are like childhood
memories filled with hope and the promise of things
unknown

an impotent winter sun is no match for the arctic blasts
the winter wind slices through your clothing like a fire up a chimney
a rabbit hops through the snow looking dejectedly for something to
eat
a dog barks and cries in confusion as to why their master has thrown
them out in the cold
sounds of heavy footfalls as boots crunch through the crusty snow

bitter old men meet for coffee every day at ten in the morning at the
main street café to bitch about why it all went wrong
to stay afloat the café now serves the senior free lunch at 11:30 a.m.
which doesn't seem to interfere with the small lunch crowd
the elderly sit in unfashionable clothes at the senior center, built with
a state grant, feeling abandoned and lost like the buildings
along Main Street.
the family farmers who came to town every Saturday to spend their
money have gone, sold out to corporations whose owners live
in the city
to get a decent pair of shoes, a dress, a jacket, the townsfolk have to
travel to the "god-damned" WalMart twenty miles away

a dark foreboding hung in the air like a smelly wet wool blanket
the town graveyard with death's lawn in cemetery green all covered
in white snow and white crosses with their victims in their
assigned seats

gusts of wind cause snow to drift like a frigid desert sandstorm
landslides of snow fall from the roof of the houses crashing to the
ground

snow as fluffy as feathers lazily falls from the sky

as dusk falls shadows turned from silver-gray to cobalt blue
the drive-in theater long closed gave way to the video rental shop
which is also now closed

the VFW merged with the Legion and is now only open on weekends
the railroad closed in the 1980s and the county turned the tracks
into a bicycle path that no one ever uses

Phil's Service Station closed downtown and was replaced by a Kum &
Go out on the highway

at sunset a break of orange-cream twilight breaks through the clouds
as if it had grown tired of their assault on its dominance
rain falls gently in large drops, hitting the puddles, making small
circles that disappear in an instant

emerald green grass pops out from under the rapidly melting snow
ice covers the ground, the roads, and the trees, turning everything
into a shiny candy coated surface

the warm evening gave hope that soon will come the solstice and the
promise of summer

but the Morgans' and Andersons' houses were torn down to make
room for the candy factory which is now closed
on Main Street the abandoned dime store's roof collapsed but the
village doesn't have the money to demolish and remove it
the town clerk was told yesterday that her position is now half-time

the best and brightest leave, the Mayor is a school bus driver, the
minister is an alcoholic and the town cop is an old man with a
limp
And the last pharmacist in the county retired and the townsfolk have
to travel to the “God-damned” WalMart twenty miles away!

The Audio Tech Farmer

by Ryan Gay

Tom gazed out over his field. Rectangular speaker units grew on six-foot stalks in the pink soil. Some of them had cones as big as twelve inches. The farmer smiled.

“Marzia,” He called. “Looks like we’ve got some subwoofers this harvest. They’ll fetch a good price down at the fair.”

Waiting for this moment was always tense. Sometimes it was impossible to know if the program had run correctly until the end. This year there had been no bugs, no syntax errors, the crop had grown exactly as it was designed to. The speakers stood tall and they sang. It was a drone, a susurrus over the valley. It was cacophony and symphony, synthetic and organic.

With the rising sun cresting the mountains, the farmer stepped out onto the pink turf and listened. A cloud of dust billowed on the horizon near the mountain’s base. Below it, black specs grew nearer. The farmer spat out the long reed of dust grass he had been chewing.

“Marzia, you an’ the kids stay inside,” he said. “It’s raiders.”

Tom heard footsteps approaching him from behind. His wife stood beside him, gripping his arm.

“I said ‘get inside.’”

“You can’t fight them,” she said. Her eyes were wet and pleading.

“I know, honey-pie. Go inside, get me the salt, the sun oil, and my palmUNIT,” he might not be able to fight off a pack of raiders, but he would protect his family. “Make sure it’s the big bag o’ salt. Not the table salt, dear.”

Marzia hesitated for a moment, searched her husband’s eyes for weakness, he hoped she didn’t see it. Finally she sprinted back to the house. Judging by their distance, the raiders were ten minutes away.

* * *

Marzia returned, in her arms were the items Tom had asked for. Slung on her back was the sonic cannon from over the hearth.

Eying the weapon, he realized Marzia wouldn't leave him. Tom took the other items and said, "Marzia, don't blast that until I say. Just hold it out and look all threatening a'ight?"

She nodded, her hands shook; she stepped back onto the porch. Tom turned to the pink dirt. He didn't have time to ward his entire field, just the house would have to do.

With one hand, Tom took hold of the palmUNIT. It was a small tablet with a miniature computer screen on one of its surfaces. He swiped his finger on the screen, scrolled through the list of programs. He selected one and set the unit aside.

Next he took the sun oil, a viscous gold fluid, and the knife he always carried with him. He made a slit in his left palm and massaged it until blood flowed from the wound. Then he poured a drop of sun oil on the other palm; it felt hot on his skin. He pressed his hands together and smoothed the fluid over them, combining the blood and oil.

In his cut hand, Tom took a fistful of salt. It stung; he grimaced in pain then began to pace around the home. He let the bloodied salt slide through his fingers. With his other hand, he aimed the palmUNIT at the salt line he was creating. The unit hummed as it uploaded the program into the soil.

When he had finished his circle, the raiders were near enough to count. There were six. Tom stood next to his wife. Blood oozed from his hand.

"I love you, honey-pie," He said.

Marzia looked at him, her eyes wide. The gun shook in her hands. The briefest suggestion of a smile flashed across her lips and was gone. At the rumbling sound of phase engines they both turned.

Tom's ward had grown. It was a wall of white-gold sunlight emerging from the ground where the salt had fallen. It rose to the height of the house. Through its transparent surface, the raiders could be seen dismounting their phase bikes and approaching the barrier. Their faces were obscured by masks and goggles.

The foremost raider spoke in a muffled voice. "Now, now mister, I hope this wall ain't for keepin' us out."

He reached out a hand and touched the barrier. He recoiled in pain. His glove smoked and he clutched his injured hand to his chest.

Muffled laughter emanated from the back of the group. One of the others stepped forward; he removed his mask to reveal a familiar

face. It was Tom's brother, Ed. He had aged since the last time they'd met.

"So that's Pop's old sun-ward executable, eh?" he said. "I should've guessed. You were never much of a programmer, Tom."

Tom ground his teeth together. Marzia aimed the gun.

Ed laughed. "Grandad's old sonic cannon? We both know it can barely hold a charge anymore. How many shots do you think you've got? Two? Three? Not enough for the lot of us."

"Enough to take you down, Ed. My guess is your little freak show is gonna run away soon as you're dead," Tom said. "Why're you back?"

"Oh, you know why," Ed said. "Give me Dad's final program. Peacefully, or I'll kill you, your pretty wife there, and the sweet little kiddies inside. Your choice, but either way, I get what I want."

"Dad's final program was flawed, unfinished," Tom said. "It'll destroy whatever you use it on."

"Flawed?" Ed scoffed. "You clearly didn't understand our father. That bit of code does exactly what it's meant to, delete."

"I can't give it to you, Ed."

"Have it your way," Ed pulled out a palmUNIT of his own and fiddled with the screen. "Heh, I hacked dad's sun-ward years ago. Don't worry guys, we'll be through in thirteen..."

Twelve, eleven

Tom grabbed Marzia's arm and pulled her toward the door.

Ten, nine

They dashed inside. The boys waited there wide eyed.

Eight, seven

Tom threw his wife to the ground.

Six, five

He shoved his kids onto the floor..

Four, three

Tom scrambled for the computer and grasped the hard drive on the desk.

Two

His hands shook, the drive all but slipped from his fingers.

One

Tom dove for the floorboards just as the wall beside him exploded under the concussive force of sonic blaster fire. Tom's ears

rang, his wife was screaming, the thudding beat of the guns was deafening.

It felt like minutes passed. When Tom's wits returned, he found himself hugging the hard drive to his chest.

From his position on the floor, he saw his wife and children crumpled in a corner, lying still. His heart sank, then Marzia twitched and he felt his strength return. He put his feet on the ground and rose, only lifting his head as high as the top of the desk. Through the wreckage of the computer monitor Tom saw Ed speaking to the others. He caught only a few words, 'hard drive' was among them.

Tom ducked and crawled to the remains of the doorway, now just a gap in the thigh-high wall. Two of the guys were on their way.

Tom drew his knife. When the first man's foot came into view, he slashed the ankle. The man fell screaming.

Tom stabbed up at the next man. The thug was ready and knocked Tom's hand away with the butt of his rifle then leveled the barrel at Tom's face.

A loud bang erupted in his ears. The world went black. Tom opened his eyes. The man in front of him fell to the floor, Marzia was kneeling with granddad's cannon aimed. The kids were still in the corner. Marzia nodded. Tom turned to the screaming man with his knife and silenced him.

He traded a look with Marzia, then raised his hand clutching the hard drive. He called out his brother's name.

"A little late to see sense, Tom," Ed spat.

Tom beckoned to his wife for the rifle. She handed it over. Tom then stood, aiming the gun at the hard drive in his other hand.

Ed's eyes widened for a moment but his coolness returned. "Tommy, you don't want to do that."

"Why not?"

"If that's all Dad's work, how're you gonna plant next year's crop? How're you gonna feed your family?"

"I've got copies o' the most vital programs."

"Clever you," Ed said. "Okay, brother, how do you propose we resolve this stalemate?"

"You leave."

"I'm not leaving without what I came for," Ed said. "I can pay you."

"Resources won't make us square."

“Tommy-boy, you bore me.”

Faster than Tom could think, Ed raised his gun and fired. A sudden pain exploded in his gut, the floor rushed up to meet him.

The world spun. Someone nearby talked, someone nearby cried.

Ed’s voice crooned. Tom felt himself being rolled onto his back. The pale purple of the sky came into view. Ed’s face hung over him like a warped mirror. He tried to breathe but he seemed to have forgotten how.

Ed lifted the hard drive, he grinned a devilish grin. Then the face of a wild youth appeared over Ed’s shoulder. Ed jerked away as the little boy grappled his throat from behind.

At the sight of his child, something awoke in Tom. He stood up with a crazed look in his eye, the pain in his gut was pushed to the back of his mind. He threw a punch at Ed. The force of the blow caused them both to stumble. Tom fumbled for his knife.

He pressed the knife to his brother’s throat and ripped away Ed’s sonic blaster with his other hand. Marzia took the hard drive.

“Tom!” She pointed.

Tom looked. The three remaining thugs were approaching the house. Tom forced the knife.

“Call ‘em off, Ed.”

“Nice joke.” The suggestion of a smile crossed Ed’s face.

“Think so?” Tom pushed with the knife until a trickle of blood rolled down Ed’s neck.

Ed’s eyes betrayed no emotion.

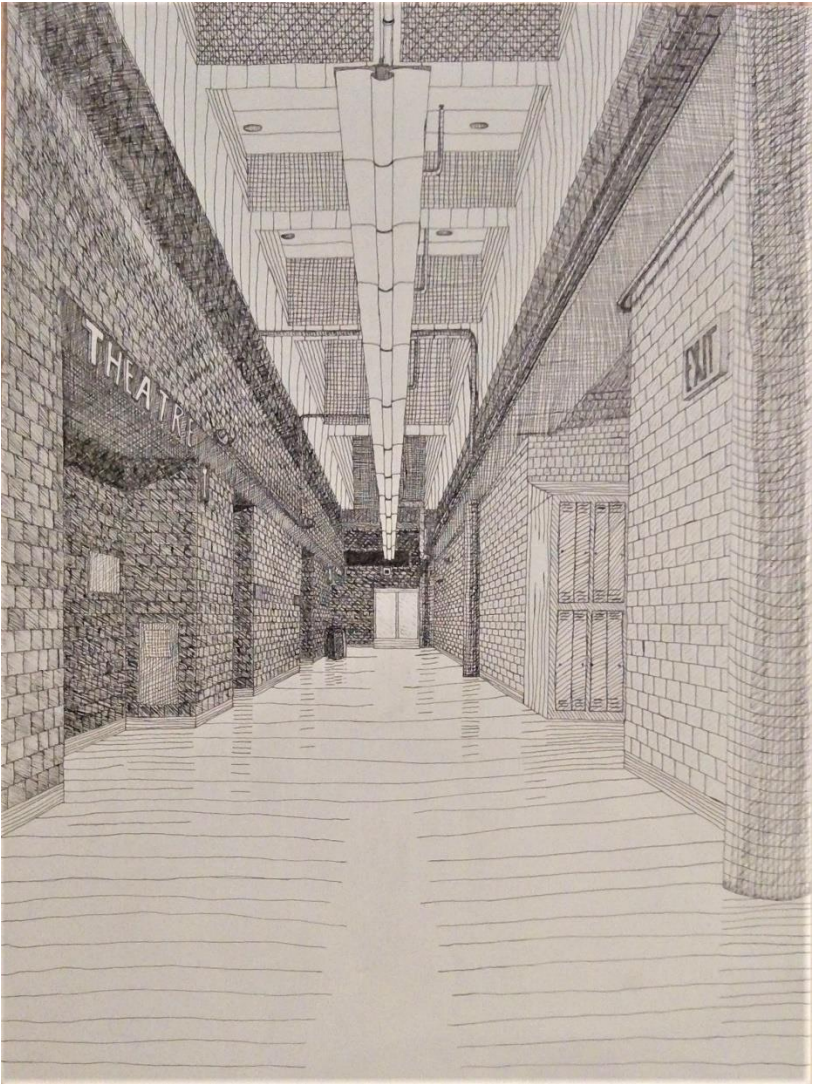
“Kurt, Alan, Jordi, back off.” He said. “Yeh happy?”

“Marzia, put down the drive.” Tom said, his strength was fleeing. He aimed the rifle and blasted the hard drive where it lay. It scattered into a thousand pieces. “Don’t come back, bastard.”

Tom let go of his brother. Ed retreated.

The last of the farmer’s strength vanished. He collapsed into his wife’s arms. A red stain blossomed on his shirt. His eyes watered. Marzia held him close, her scent was a comfort.

Across the pink sands, the speaker trees sang.



Normandale Fine Arts Hall

by Haley Sargent

Depression is My Freeloading Roommate

By Jennifer Meinhardt

Depression is my roommate.
The apartment, 123 Cranium Circumference,
is not big enough to accommodate us.
Yet here we are, crammed closely without
comfort or personal space.

He sits, feet kicked up on the
coffee table and sings loud and proud,
several octaves off key. I am intimately
aware of his intimates, as he tosses them
around in time with his tune, and when
I ask him to stop he instead yodels
into a megaphone and shoots off thongs
with a t-shirt canon.

One, bedazzled in a great big sparkly
sad-face, lands directly onto my face
and it smells faintly of strawberry
parfait. "This is very disrespectful,"
I tell him, banana hammock crumpled
in my palm.

"But did you laugh?" The mirror replies,
and my reflection is there, pretending to
grin through the specks of forgotten toothpaste.

Coping Mechanisms

By Jennifer Meinhardt

I said I'd pour a bit of whiskey while I was drinking,
for the damned. But damn if
I didn't want to, I drunk it down instead.
It was a caramel colored River Styx
snaking its way through my trachea,
then making a burning lake that sits in the pit
of my aching gullet, the 7th level of indigestion,
an underworld walking in the waking world.

Eating eggs, unborn chickens like
Hades processing the souls of the semi-innocent,
digesting sinners as a hangover cure the morning
after a raging bender at mass, a mass of beer bottles
lying empty on their sides in an attempt to forget
whatever it was that made me start drinking in
the first place.

Thou shalt not mix thy fabric or thine liquors,
lest you end up face down drowning in sour bile stopping
up the back of your throat. I hope there is someone
to roll me onto my side, not unlike a beached whale trying
to escape the thoughts that lead me here again,
ancient instincts saying to stay alive.

Small Town Boy in the Big City

by Alex Agar



Innocent's Memorial

by Anna Rolf

I dug a grave today
Past the property line of my Momma's house
There aren't any trees, just red clay
In a barren land

On my knees,
My fingers dug into the cold earth
The grave was shallow,
I had nothing to place into it
"I'm sorry." I whispered into the grave
The apology as hollow
As my womb

I looked down to my hands and saw
Red clay had stained my fingers and palms
"Please forgive me." I pled,
Not knowing if I'm talking to God,
Or you

Clump by clump I filled the grave
I firmly packed it down,
And placed a daisy on top
It felt useless,
Like spraying cheap perfume
To cover the smell of rot

Turning away, I walked back toward my home
My Momma was sitting on the porch and called out

"Wash up honey!
I saw you out there playing in the dirt!"
But I know that no matter how much I wash
And wash
These hands will never be clean

Evolution

by Gabriel Mianulli

I can declare my newest self
is a reinvention of the old one—
version 2.0, new and updated,
upgraded, with bug fixes.
The emergence of a chrysalis'
penultimate purpose.

I can say that old shell
bears no resemblance
to the metamorphic product
that is its descendant.
If so, can I still claim credit
for the cuts and edits?

In truth,
I'm still that lazy bag of organs and digestion.
The wings I say I flap now
are just dreams in that nap sack.
But... they're good dreams,
so I live in them for now
until my next awakening
as a reincarnated cow
that jumped over the moon
when his pasture wasn't enough.

Up on Cripple Creek

By Alex Agar



Becoming Poetry

by Katherine Ichinose

I used to dislike poetry. I couldn't stand the idea of art being confined to rhyme schemes and meter and other arbitrary requirements. I was always imagining what it could have been if it didn't have to follow the poetic rules. Whenever I would try to write poetry, I felt like my words were being held back from their full potential by these rules, and I wriggled and writhed under the constraints.

Like many girls growing up in normal bodies, I sometimes hated myself for not looking like a movie star. I told myself that if only I was free from my jigging thighs and had a more defined jawline, I would be more. If only I was free from my body's imperfections, I could be who I was meant to be, I could be more myself. (Of course, if you take *away* a part of you, how can you be *more* yourself?) But back then, when I looked at myself in the mirror, I felt like a poem stuck inside a meter I hadn't chosen.

Now, I'm less concerned with the silhouette of my body than with what I fill it with. (Yes, we know: it's what's on the inside that counts.) But here's what I also know: I like sonnets just as much as villanelles just as much as free verse just as much as haikus just as much as sestinas. I like long stanzas and short stanzas and enjambments and caesuras. The rules of the poetry, the form it is packaged in, are just the container that the poem shrinks or expands to fill. My body might be a meter I didn't get to choose, but I do get to choose what words and sounds I fill that meter up with.

My body and everything I dislike and enjoy about it is mine for my whole life. I cannot escape it. But the grace of poetry, I've found, is how poems bend and sway to fill their form. Humans are a little like that. We are forever inside our circumstances. There are some rules to who we are and where we come from that we cannot escape. But like poetry, we can learn to turn about within our circumstances and learn to fill them up with the beauty of ourselves. As I've grown up and found myself forever stuck inside boxes and rules, I still feel like a poem, but I like it.

The Painting

by Theresa Gaupp

Hemp wrapped tightly around a wooden frame,
Stapled together it will hold for an artist to be bold;
In his hand, a stick with bristles (made of hair)
A three legged stickman stands with an empty canvas that sits alone;
A paintbrush dipped in acrylics that float across a pallet
The artist begins;
Thin strokes, thick strokes, blots and lines
The brush caresses the canvas,
How divine!
His heart pours like a waterfall on the canvas
With colors of bronze, silver, and gold
(Like society; the inferior, the adequate, and the perfect)
As the colors blend, they become one, taste the metallic;
Like a strip of film that hangs in a darkroom,
The picture begins to develop
Yet it is not clear what it will be;
Rough and smooth
(Like people are; cruel and kind)
With all the different pigments,
Hues and tones
Like a captured moment, an image appears.

My Friend

by Cara Kissell



The Evidence of Us

by Katherine Ichinose

"Hope is the correct response to the arc of history"
- John Green

This arc of history is composed
of the smaller stories of us.
So when my brain insists
that I must not exist,
the correct response becomes
I am one of us.
These arcs of ours
harmonize towards hope.
And I am swinging out of tune.
This arc of mine is oblong—
half-formed, if even half.
How do I find the correct response when,
from my unsteady feet,
I can't even see what shape my arc takes?
If I am truly part of that larger arc,
if I am one of us
(and i am, i am, i am),
I must find the audacity to conclude
hope is the correct response to the arc of myself.

So Who is the True Pirate Under Oppression Anyway?

By Norhan Qasem

Once upon a time, long ago,
There was a pirate named Stanley Bo.
He was an honest pirate though,
For he never stole from any pirate his treasure or cargo.

One day, near the sea, he found jewels and gold.
Abandoned by a ship that appeared about a hundred years old.
He did like what every pirate was told,
And buried it so no one would steal the treasures of gold.
And that concludes the story of honest pirate Stanley as it was retold.

Had pirate Stanley not buried the treasures, you see,
They could have been stolen by other pirates, or people like you or
me,
Which could cause a lot of fighting, and people going crazy
All over the treasure that was found by pirate Stanley.

In this story, pirate Stanley is clearly smart,
But I'm not here to talk about Stanley's heroic part,
Rather to show you a new angle from the start.
To relate this story to a topic that is dear to my heart.

Allow me to introduce the main concept of the story, if you please,
The idea of protecting something with value makes your heart rest at
ease,
To know that you did the best you could to hide the treasures even
from the breeze,
Is indeed something that let's your eyes rest at night as you catch
some zzz's.

Before I continue, I want to make something clear:
For those of you who think I am simply speaking out of fear,

I swear my opinions that are presented are indeed my own, and not
someone close or near.

Please understand that every word I say is from a heart that is truly
sincere,

And neither mommy, nor daddy gave me a card to say, “this is how
it’s said, and done, dear;”

Rather I chose to say what I want to say, expressing my views, and
volunteer.

We can all agree that every one of us has his/her own values in life.
Whether it be something tangible, like a kitchen spoon, or kitchen
knife,

Or it can be someone precious in your heart like a mother, father,
husband, or wife.

It can be an identity, or a personality that guides or helps express
one’s life.

Some values, for reasons I don’t understand though,
Are viewed as a way to take away rights that everyone already have
had, and know.

Like the way a person dresses portrays and image, or shadow
An individual’s appearance that takes away freedom that was
granted rather than borrowed.

Permit me to give you a stereotypical example, if I may,
One that for some reason does not give me a say,
Unless my opinion is presented in your way,
And then my say is no longer mine anyway.

For those of you who don’t know me, I am a Muslim hijabi,
To you, I am an oppressed woman who has no say or identity,
A woman who has no sense of freedom of individuality,
A person with a borrowed personality.

And yet, on the contrary, none of that made any sense to me.
So I decided to take a step back, question and understand your view/
sense of normality. Don’t worry, I’ll explain it in a way where
both you and me can make sense of this ideology,
And put our differences aside so we can have commonality.

Let's begin with this oppression analogy, shall we?

Remember good old honest pirate Stanley, and how he buried that
treasure by the ship near the sea?

Based off of this ideology, he would be considered as the oppressor
rather than the oppressee.

Clearly, you probably disregard this point and think it's silly,

Pirates burying their treasure is normal, and I completely agree;

However, if you recall the main concept of the story,

With an open mind, you could keenly see

Exactly what I am showing you through the honor, value, and dignity
of a woman, like a hijabi,

In relation to those pirates, like Stanley, who hide their treasure by
the sea.

People have approached hijabis like myself about this topic with a
rather similar question:

So exactly how do you cope with such womanly oppression?

Forced to cover from head-to-toe is a form of regression

Since you can't wear simple summer attire due to this "anti-
women's-rights" obsession.

I could not believe these comments were ideal.

Just because I don't wear a simple t-shirt leads to misconceptions
that were so unreal,

Causing hijabis everywhere to begin to feel

All these internal conflicts that never existed, and not surreal.

Creating a wound who knows how long it would take to heal.

And before you know it, she is in a consistent spinning "doubting"
wheel.

Just because now beauty for a woman is the hair and the body's
appeal,

And not the way she speaks her mind, nor her personality ordeal,

Rather her appearance is what makes her, as a human being,
considered real.

If you thought that was bad, sadly it doesn't stop there.

Women soon enough would look in their closets not knowing what to
wear
Because their whole life revolves around that one picture they want
to share
Of themselves with that perfectly caked face, and straighten/curled
hair
Thinking that everyone is going to stop what he/she is doing, turn,
and stare,
When in reality only she should care about being comfortable in her
own skin and not theirs.

But who could blame them women and girls, sadly,
It's not only their fault that people spend most the money on the
advertising industry,
Who sell their products shamelessly through the woman's perfectly
photo shopped-body,
Which is also known as the woman's objectified actuality.
It truly pains me as a Muslim hijabi to view this as a sad reality.

Oh, but I should not have a say,
Since I have myself covered in such a way,
That I respect myself, and my body every single day,
And knowing this as I walk out to start my day,
I am so grateful that I have no need to say
That I feel so insecure around all these other girls dressed in this way
That makes them feel that way.

As I mentioned before to all of you,
I am a Muslim hijabi, and a woman too,
I never felt oppressed in my life, never had a clue,
Until I came here and was introduced to this stereotypical view.

Pirates understand the importance of protecting something with
true value of aspiration,
Just like a hijabi who refuses to be a symbol of objectification,
Rather she chooses to help women in our nation
Better understand that the true meaning of beauty is not the blush or
foundation,

But the new ideas and personalities presented and expressed in a
rather creative explanation,
Causing anyone anywhere astonished by her determination
Of wanting to make our country a more united and accepting nation.

I just have one question for you, and I'm done for the day:
So who is the true pirate under oppression anyway?
And with that being said, I conclude my say
With a thank you very much, and hope you all have a wonderful
day☺

Family/Cultural #1

by Maricela Karlen



Family/Cultural #2

by Maricela Karlen



Family/Cultural #3

by Maricela Karlen



Family/Cultural #4

by Maricela Karlen



Family/Cultural #5

by Maricela Karlen



Scrub a Dub, Etch a Sketch

by Gabriel Mianulli

I'm drawing in the dust-covered surface of my muse
pictures of stick figures orchestrating a coup.

This is no display case of vanity antiques,
this is swift erasure of the valueless things.

The anthro-outlines are glue holding
my personal revolution together,
hands joined like paper cut-outs
dancing around an ancient bonfire
that I'm not acculturated enough to understand
fully, but I can pretend to.
I can only marvel at the ceremony
and pine for the animals they'll sacrifice
to gods that don't exist
outside of myth and legend.

If a death of something less important
will bring fairer weather, healthy crops,
and better poems,
consider me a follower
and not the god that drew first blood.

Do I scrub this dusty plane clean
and lay new carpeting
or rip up the floor boards entirely?
Maybe to find my time capsule
buried, frayed, faltering—
nostalgia of reverse improvement.

Time encapsulates us all in these questions:
What should we be doing?
What where we thinking?
Where will we be in X years?

Where should we stall, and for how long?

Until we fall into the presence
of the present moment
as it disappears like wood to ashes
in flames of an effigy's self-immolation.

Build me up a structure
that can reach the sun someday.
If it topples, let it stay
in the impression it will make.
Mark it off as a monument
for people to visit
on their vacation from their normal lives.

I lay fresh base coats daily
for cave-painted humanoids to spear a beast
that can feed them for a week or two.
Evolution will reduce them to primal savages,
history remembers them as if they were
reflections in a rippled river—
familiar, but strange enough to be strangers.

Pass me your favorite varnish and brush
if I look burnt at the edges.
Hold my hand, we'll make art with the other.
If it sucks,
let's start over,

but let's get closer.

Francis

by Peyton Oberbroeckling

The time has officially come, finally! I cannot wait to get out of this dump that is also known as my parents' house. I bet the Andersons have a nice and cozy bed for me to sleep in, all the snacks I can dream of, and a generous liquor cabinet. I wouldn't necessarily say that I'm looking forward to watching their cat, Francis, but that shouldn't be too big of a deal. I mean, he's a cat, how much work can it really be? Either way, I'm ready for this. Even if it's just for a few weeks, it'll be a nice break from the constant nagging I get at home. House-sitting, here I come!

As I walk into the monstrosity they call "home" I can't help but let my jaw completely drop. Their couch is the size of my entire living room at home. They have a ping pong table, a T.V. that looks like it belongs in a movie theater, and they even have art. What kind of people have enough excess money where they feel the need to buy art? Man, I want to live here forever. As I admire their astonishing home, I hear a distant "meow" in the background. I turn around to see little Francis checking me out from behind one of their big white pillars, which I can only imagine are load-bearing, otherwise I deem them completely unnecessary.

"Hey little buddy," I say to Francis, "looks like we're going to be roommates for the next three weeks. Geez, you've got to be the cutest, tiniest kitty that has ever existed." He looks me up and down, unenthused by what I've got to offer in the looks department, and saunters away.

"Alright, nice meeting you too, man."

I spent the afternoon getting settled. I think I successfully explored every room they have in this palace, but quite honestly, I got lost a couple of times. I finally found my happy place in their basement, where they have a cozy couch, a T.V., and most importantly, the bar. I helped myself to a little rum and coke, as I flipped on the T.V. My favorite show, *Breaking Bad* came on, and I knew I wasn't leaving anytime soon. I somehow managed to doze off sometime between midnight and two, until I was awakened by a screeching ball of grey fur pawing at my head.

“What in the hell?” I slurred, still half asleep. Francis’ only response was one loud growl as I pushed him off my head. *Well I guess it’s time for me to go to my actual bed now*, I thought to myself as I got up and walked over to my bedroom which was only down the hall. I shut the door and stumbled into my new bed. I was out like a light, and I assume Francis was as well, still probably curled up on the couch just in the other room.

Nothing too eventful happened over the next few days, although I did notice that Francis is a pretty needy little guy. I can’t sit down for two minutes without him somehow finding me to use as his cushion. I mean, this house has, like, thirty six rooms, but he can somehow manage to sniff me out and find me within seconds. Also, he doesn’t approve of shut doors. I’ll be going to the bathroom and he’ll need to be right there with me, or I won’t hear the end of it. If I so much as shut a door behind me for a minute so I can change, he will be right there, pawing at my door. I can handle all of this pretty well, as long as it doesn’t get much worse.

It’s my sixth night of staying at the Andersons’. It’s about midnight, so naturally I am getting ready for bed. I let Francis in the bathroom with me because I am not in the mood for a lecture tonight. As I’m standing over the marble sink shaving my face, he hops up and starts batting at my razor. For some reason, there’s something ingrained in cats that makes them need to turn everything into a toy. He hits the razor just right and causes me to cut my cheek.

“Ouch! You little piece of crap!” I yell as I toss him from the counter, out of the bathroom. I slam the door shut as I continue shaving the rest of my face. Francis is not a happy camper; I think I offended him by throwing him out. In retaliation, he screams at the top of his lungs while on the other side of the door. He even manages to stick his small, grey paws under the crack at the bottom of it, like he can somehow open it like that.

“Yeah, right, Fran. Try growing opposable thumbs and we can talk.” I laugh as I go back to shaving.

Soon enough, I am all warm and cozy under the covers in my bedroom. Just as I start to drift off into sweet slumber, I hear this huge “Slam!” against my door. *What the hell?* I think to myself as I waver between getting up and exploring the cause of that noise, or if I should just go back to sleep, considering it was probably nothing. As I am in deep contemplation, I hear that same “Slam!” again. *Be a*

man, be a man. Get up. Finally, I muster enough courage to stand up and check it out. I decide to whip the door open so I can surprise the perpetrator, only to find Francis sitting there, seemingly content.

“Meow,” he says.

“Screw you.”

I go back to bed only to have the same exact thing happen less than ten minutes later. This dang cat sounds like a two hundred pound man hurling himself into my door. How is this thing only the size of a toaster? It doesn't make sense. He must get some serious air time, because I swear he manages to wiggle the handle a bit with each body slam. *This is going to be a long night,* I think to myself as I cover my ears with pillows.

As each day passes by within the next week or so, I swear Francis gets angrier and angrier with me. He has started to leave little presents for me in my shoes. He also seems to drink out of every water glass I have, and then sneezes in them, every single time. This can't be by accident, this is straight up deliberate. I even tried locking my shoes up in my room so he can't get to them. But somehow this little jerk has learned how to get into a closed room; he is determined. I have never been home to witness him do this, but maybe he does have opposable thumbs after all. I shouldn't have joked about that before.

It's night eighteen. I can't handle this anymore. His incessant screaming has started to make me lose my mind. I'm not even being dramatic. He now howls all the time, not just when he's locked out. I thought he would've lost his voice days ago, but somehow it's only getting louder. All my shoes have cat excrement in them. I can't drink water without the threat of his sneezes. I can't leave anything out or he will knock it on the floor, he has broken three plates and a mug. I'm pretty sure he hid the remote from me. I can't even escape the devil because he has a nose like a hound dog! I hide in one of their many rooms and he is there, seconds behind, hunting me. There is no escape from this hell hole. How is something so cute, so instinctually evil?

The next two days I tip-toed around Francis, in fear of displeasing him further. Luckily nothing new happened, but he's still the same angry cat. Fortunately, tonight is my last night in this nightmare. I curled up in bed and put in my headphones in attempt to cover the cat abuse right outside my door. I'm having trouble

sleeping though, not because of what I am hearing, but rather, what I can't hear. The silence is more frightening than any noise that little thing can make. Just as I'm starting to get used to peace, I hear that same old "Slam!" but this time, my door opens! *How did he do that?* I jump up from my bed to try and find him to throw him out, but he's gone. I turn around to face my closet, and the devil is going to the bathroom in my shoe, again! Right in front of me. The nerve of this thing. I swiftly grab him and toss him out, but not before he hisses and claws me down my arm.

"That's it! You're getting locked up," I say as I shut him in another room down the hall. After grabbing some tissues to wipe the blood off my arm, I crawl back into bed. There is quiet for a while, but I don't have much time to get used to it. I hear the familiar "Slam!" but this time a little more faint. Soon enough, I hear his meow fast approaching, so I quickly jump up to lock my door, but there's no lock. *This house has thirty-six rooms and a home movie theater, but has no locks on the doors?* Sadly, my thoughts were cut off by my door being slammed into me. This thing can't be more than six pounds but has managed to overpower me with the door; I am losing control here. Before I know it, he's instantly in my room again. I grab him, he scratches me. This happens over and over; it's a vicious cycle. I have bloody claw marks covering my arms, and I may or may not have tears in my eyes. This cat is pure evil. While we are fighting, I can't help but reminisce about what my life was like before I met his cat. I remember shaving my face in peace. I would sleep unbothered throughout the night, and late into the morning. The only cuts I had were my own dumb fault, not the work of a sinister feline. I really took my life for granted. I snap back to reality when I realize Francis has left the room. After what seems like hours of wrestling back and forth with him, I finally tired him out. At last, I am allowed to sleep, which unfortunately is hard due to all of my battle wounds.

The Andersons are scheduled to come back at five tonight, so I choose to spend my day packing up and making the house look just as clean as it did when I arrived. At the beginning of these three weeks, I was so excited to be away from home, but now all I want it is to be back in my parents crammed two bedroom home. I'll take that over this evil ball of fur any day. It's three in the afternoon when I finally finish getting everything ready to leave. I check my phone as I zip up my backpack. There's a text from Mr. Anderson saying: "Flight

got delayed, we'll be back tomorrow at around noon. Hope you don't mind staying another night." The look of pure horror written all over my face, I turn my head to look behind me.

"Meow."

His Universe, Disturbed: A Montage

by Katherine Ichinose

It's been three months and he's still like this

Caleb bounced on the balls of his feet, sweat dripping off the bridge of his nose, throwing another punch, his bare fist thudding into the punching bag. The punching bag creaked on the chain suspending it from the ceiling of the unfinished basement.

Caleb's toes trembled on the cement as he punched again and again and again.

His knuckles were cracked, partly from the dry winter air, but mostly from punch after punch after punch.

When he wiped at the sweat on his face, he smudged blood across his eyes, like some archaic war paint. Through his earbuds, he was listening to Alec Guinness recite poetry. He started crying at the line "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."

He pushed out breaths like vomit, gasp after gasp after gasp.

He thought about the last time he ate a peach, and how Monica had told him how peach skin made her shiver because it was so fuzzy and made her think of a tarantula. He would rather disturb the universe than eat another peach.

"...till human voices wake us, and we drown."

Caleb was crying, sob after sob after sob.

He fell forward against the punching bag, holding himself up against its leather. Humans' voices go quiet when they die. To be human is to die and become silent. So maybe to him, she wasn't ever a human. To him, she must have been a mermaid.

On the way to her piano recital, nine months before

"I hate this bridge. The lanes are so narrow." Monica's hands were clenched on her armrest in the passenger seat.

Caleb chuckled and rolled his eyes because he felt the same way too strongly to admit.

"What? It's freaky!" But she was laughing at herself too.

Caleb jerked the steering wheel harshly to the left, as if to swerve into oncoming traffic, then back into his lane, proving his bravery to himself, disguising it as a tease to his baby sister.

"*Stop it!*" Monica snapped, and then they laughed together because look, *we're alive together.*

She bombed her piano recital. They went out for ice cream afterward, and licking her lemon cream scoop, she told Caleb how her mind had wandered to thinking about colorblindness, and she'd forgotten to play to the coda. Caleb listened but didn't understand what she meant of course.

They drove home the long way to listen to the rest of the newest album Caleb wanted Monica to like, then they gossiped about the kids in their grades while they did homework together.

The day after her funeral

Caleb sat at the kitchen table, looking at pictures of Michelangelo's paintings and wondering what people said about them. He pushed Monica into a buzz in the back of his brain, an itch that he refused to give the satisfaction of scratching. Already she wasn't human. Already she was a mermaid in the ocean of his thoughts.

The garage door ground open and the door thumped open and then thudded closed. Their dad (did he still belong to both of them?) kicked his boots off, left them lying sideways on the floor, and microwaved chicken nuggets which he took downstairs to eat.

A month after, and still it's a topic of conversation

Someone in Monica's grade said she thought it was suicide because she'd ridden with Monica and she was the safest driver she knew.

That's when Caleb hung up the punching bag and spent the rest of his evenings in the basement instead of doing homework at the kitchen table.

A week before. He noticed, he cared, and he didn't know what to say.

It was weird for Caleb, riding in the passenger seat while his baby sister was driving. He checked the mirrors every time she

changed lanes, but he couldn't see anything because they were adjusted for her point of view.

"It's weird," she said. "When I was little, when Mom would drive us places, I figured the lanes were protected by invisible walls or something I guess. But they're just dashes of paint. Literally just that."

"Yeah, it's weird when you think about it," Caleb said.

"And I always thought somehow that you *couldn't* run a red light. That something would stop you. Unless you're Dad I guess." And they laughed, because they liked to laugh at their dad, but never with him. "But they're just big colored flashlights. They do literally nothing. It's bizarre."

"Yeah." Caleb looked at her closely, and suddenly desperately wanted to have his hands on the wheel and have Monica in the passenger seat, her knees drawn up to her chest while they talked about music and what she liked playing and what he liked listening to. He didn't know how to hold the feeling of being scared. It spilled out from his hands like steam.

The first anniversary

Caleb stayed up for his dad to come home. When he stomped in through the laundry room, Caleb noticed that he wore the bottoms of his jeans rolled, and things made a little more sense.

"How was the drive home?" Caleb asked. "I heard the roads were bad."

His dad paused a little bit before coming all the way through the kitchen. "They were okay," he said. "One of the headlights is out though."

"Just the one?"

"Just the one."

A silence, an understanding.

"Just the one's enough to see by, though. At least for tonight."

Four Winds

By Paul Van Dyke

~after Sandy Perlman

Desdenova's vessel, I have been called
in these, this reality's end times,
we all have a role in the passing
of our world. War
is my birth mother. From her teat
suckle men with plastic faces. Drink of Mother's Milk:
liquefied organs, wet rotting feet,
ashes of an Ancient People, enough blood to fill a lake
poured back into the Earth.

A Tower of *hellish glare*
burns shadows into pavement
passing back through the door
to the bar at the center of all things

Tell Suzy, wind, like fire, has no origin. It burns, it blows, it is.
Our storms come from within.

Fire is our creation, our portal, out from the world of shadow,
hidden is the rain which once fell from the moon,
in my skin, a destroyer walked.
Even under cover of day, the *Queenly Flux* burns upon this world.

In a bar, where all converges, *where wind comes from*, she waits,
eyes fixed on mirrored door, waiting, waiting, for me, her Desdenova,
chimes fill the room, hands resting on the twelve, as one day dies,
and a new begins.

Italicized lines or phrases are from "Astronomy" by Blue Oyster Cult (1974).

Ethnic Women

by Maria Palomino



Flower

by Haley Sargent

stretch my arms up to
the dawn and let my dewy
tears evaporate

“Starry Night” by Vincent Van Gogh

by Theresa Gaupp

The slivery moon that stands proud in the dark
lights up the sky with its sharp touch,
yet the soft tones of blues welcome the light
while the waves of clouds creep by and by,
moving forward
and back.

We angels, stars in the sky,
watch over the people in tiny houses on one side
while listening
to the unknown on the other side.

The steeple points its finger towards heaven,
don't be mistaken for the trees with their willowy strokes,
they eavesdrop on the night. With
a hint of life (green),
a touch of death (brown)
they suck the life right out of you.

We angels, stars in the sky,
fall and vanish.

The swirly strokes of whispering voices hover by
and by,
the hills roll down in a rush to warn the people,
“wake up, wake up...”
one by one the lights go out.

Home

by Maria Palomino



My Reflection

by Katharine Johnson

I pull up to the house and sit in my car. I turn the engine and radio off and look at the house. It looks the same as it did fifteen years ago, except the grass is longer than I used to like it to be, the garden bed is flowerless and full of weeds, and the burgundy paint has faded and is peeling off. I sit in silence for about five minutes, as I examine everything about the old house. The last time I was here was the night that I left for good. The bright light from the early afternoon sun shines in all the right places of the worn down house to make it look as welcoming as it can to a man who abandoned it. It's been over fifteen years, but I still remember the house and yard as well as my reflection in the mirror. Both of them hardly seem to change at a first glance.

I go up to the house and ring the doorbell. This feels odd. The door opens, and the first thing in my sight is her face. I see her eyes and the memories all come flooding back. Grace doesn't look especially glad to see me, but gives me a warm hello anyway. Everything she says tends to be warm, but I can tell she's tired by the bags under her eyes, lack of makeup, and wrinkles she shouldn't have yet. Her clothes are plain and worn, and look like they are about ten years old. She beckons me inside, and I follow as I learn to be a stranger in the house I once helped pick out and buy.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?" Grace asks as she leads me into the kitchen.

"Yes, that'd be nice," I reply as I sit down at the kitchen table. The kitchen looks the same as it always had, except like it hasn't gotten cleaned in a long time. There are dirty dishes piled high around the sink and the garbage is nearly overflowing. But, like Grace always liked, the walls are still full of pictures and there's a lilac scented candle lit that makes the whole house erupt with spring. Grace always had the perfect ways to make a house into a home.

She sets the coffee down in front of me and says, "With a spoonful of sugar, like you used to like it."

"You remembered."

She pours herself a cup of coffee and adds almost as much milk as coffee, then sits down across from me. "How was the flight?" she asks, but I can tell she is distracted as her eyes stare past me.

"Not too bad, only about two hours." I say.

"That's good. How are you?" she asks as she stirs her coffee and milk, afterwards she clinks the spoon on the rim of the cup three times. I used to hear those three clinks every morning while I ate my breakfast over fifteen years ago.

"Oh you know, work's keeping me busy. How's Jason doing?" I pick up a picture of Grace and Jason that was sitting on the table. He's tall and thin. A lot taller than his mother. His hair is brown, like mine, and his eyes are the same soft blue as his mother's. He's a handsome boy. "He looks all grown up."

She takes a second, then replies, "He's doing good. He just got first place at his high school's science fair last Friday. He made a model volcano that erupts."

"That's great," I say, still staring into my son's blue eyes.

"He's what I need to talk to you about," she says, and then pauses. "He's been talking about you lately. He'd like to see you. He wants to know his father. He's at that age where he needs answers."

I look into her sky blue eyes and can see how hard this is for her to tell me and how scared it makes her. "Well, I'd like to meet him as well. I'd like to see what kind of a man he's turning into."

I know she doesn't trust me as she replies, "But you need to be ready to meet him. You can't leave. If you're going to be in his life you're going to have to be there consistently. He's had too much inconsistency already."

"I want to be there for him. I want to be his father."

She stares at me for a long time as she bites her cheek; she used to bite her cheek every time she was unsure about something. I know that she's terrified by my answer, but she probably doesn't realize that I am too. I didn't even know I wanted to be a father until those words escaped my lips. She finally breaks the silence and says, "If you really want to do this, you'll need to move here. You're going to need to spend some time with me before I let you see him. I need to make sure that you're up to this and I need to know that you're stable."

I think about it for a second before replying. "Alright, I'll have to arrange my job, but I can make it work."

“And you have to go to AA.”

“Grace, you know that I’m dry,” I protest. I haven’t had a drink in years. I don’t know what she thinks I’ll get out of AA at this point.

“I don’t know that. You live so far away, and it’s not like you’ve never relapsed before.”

“I’ll think about it.”

“Well, thank you. But Jason needs stability. I can’t have you running off for a month, sitting in a basement somewhere, drunk. I want him to have a chance at a good life. One with possibilities. One where he doesn’t have to worry about his parent’s problems,” she tells me. I can see that she truly means it. Her eyes sparkle when she talks about that kid. “Why don’t you take a few days to think about everything I’ve said. I’ll write down my number so you can call me once you’ve thought about it and we can meet and talk some more. This shouldn’t be some rushed decision you make overnight. You would become a parent, and that’s not something to take lightly.”

We sit in silence a few seconds before I respond, “I’m not sure what to say. I know how much this means to you, Grace. I want to be his father. I’ll take some time to think about it. I’ll really think about it.” Her eyes start to tear up a bit and she nods to me. “But, can I take this picture of him?” I ask. I had been holding the picture the whole time.

“Sure,” she says as she breaks our eye contact and hides the sorrow and joy she feels and has always associated me with.

We don’t say much after this. Grace walks me to the door, we say our goodbyes, and I go on my way. Walking from the door to my car, the memories come surging back: the day I carried Grace into the house after we returned from our honeymoon, the many nights I came home to a romantic, home cooked meal, and the day she told me we were going to have a baby. Days where we lived happily together. They felt so far away and out of reach, but the last time so clear: the day that I left with a packed bag, planning on never returning. I get in the car, and take one last look at that old house before driving off to my hotel.

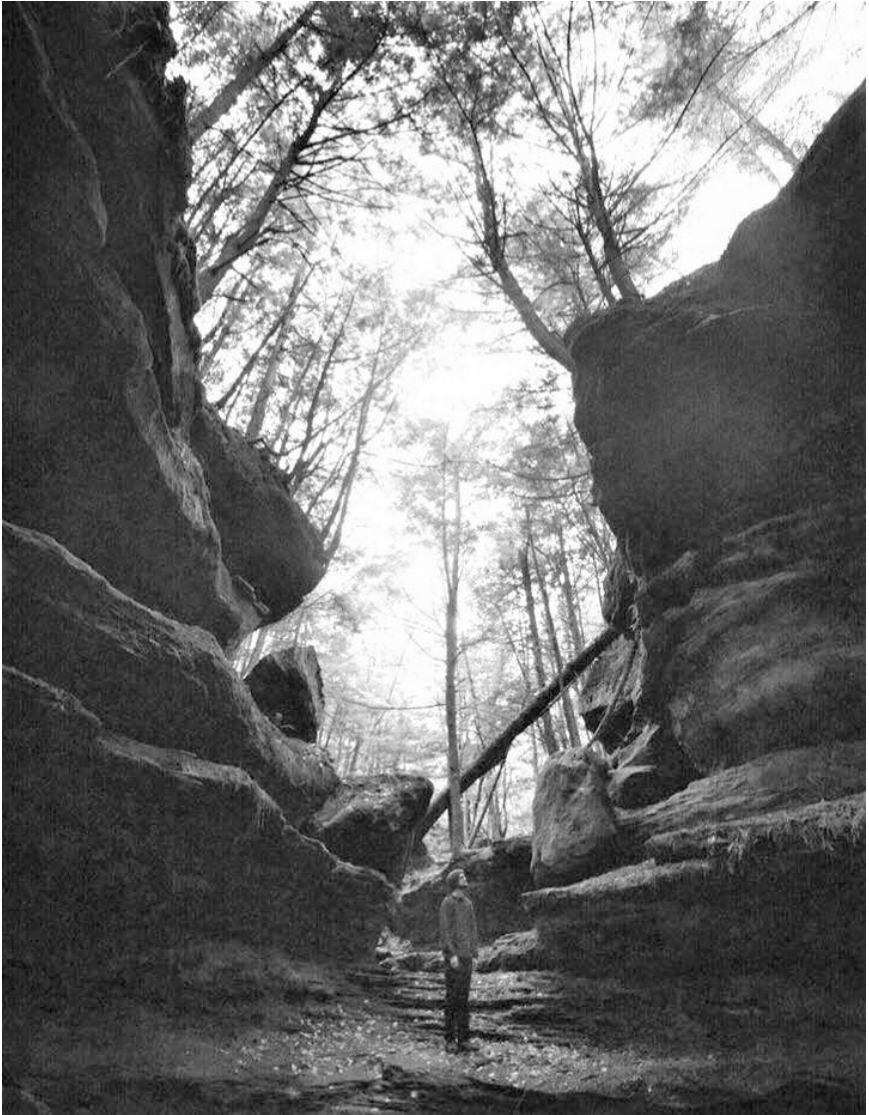
That night, I lie on the bed in my run down hotel room and flip through the countless cable channels of the worst late night movies imaginable. I lie, and wonder what Jason’s like. Does he like baseball or basketball? Has he seen my favorite movies? I always stopped myself from imagining before, because I was scared I’d

question my life choices. Now I look back at my reasoning and am ashamed. If I only would have called, maybe everything would be different. But one year turns into five, and five to fifteen, and no matter how much you want to call, you convince yourself that they're better off on their own. Why would he want to see me after all these years? After I cheated on his mother, almost drank myself to death, and left the house I helped make into a home, he wants to see me. Maybe Grace never told him the whole story. The story where I drunkenly begged her to take me back, but she turned me away and told me to sober up before trying again. The story where I finally did sober up, but never came back to see my son.

I get up from the bed and go into the bathroom, where I wash my face and look at myself in the mirror. I stand there for a long time, examining everything about face: the mole I've always had, my chapped lips, and my bushy eyebrows. My reflection never changes much. I'm still the same brown haired, long faced, clean shaven guy. Just with grayer hair and a few more wrinkles. But I used to have a drinking problem. And I used to have a family. I had a wife. And I had a son. Why doesn't my reflection show that? I've been living an empty life, and I finally have a chance to escape.

The Ravine

by Alex Agar



Sacred Heart No. 1

by Cara Kissell



Economics 1121

by Sean Scott

The abrasive detention officer called my name. “Gabriel, Leo! Get your ass out here! You’ve been bonded out.” I opened my eyes to the vulgarly tagged ceiling and sat myself up realizing my pounding head ache. I had been passed out for the last six hours and was reminded that I was still in the Maricopa County Jail drunk tank by the thirty or so gentlemen laid out around me. After I received my property and was handed my court date I walked through the exit doors into the blinding afternoon sun, and out emerged Sara. Fuck! I knew exactly what she was going to say. Something about *Do you know how much money this costs me?! Why do I keep helping you?!*

I tried giving her a line, “Hey Sara, I promise I will pay you back this,” And before I could express my bullshit she interjected.

“Just stop Leo!” she yelled, blinking back tears. “Do you have any idea how much money my husband’s family put into this wedding?!” She was heated. “Do you know how embarrassing you are?!” I have seen her infuriated at me before, but this time it had a dark shadow over it. I knew this would be the last.

~

I met Sara back in the fall of 1999 in our ECON 1121 class at Arizona State. She was a tall thin blonde with an athletic stature. Her hidden brown eyes always met her inviting smile whenever I would see her chat with other students. I know she didn’t notice me leading up to midterms, but it was during that week when we finally met. She came in ten minutes late to class and sat down next to me and I immediately detected her Tommy Girl perfume. As I was plowing through my test I noticed her eyes veering towards my exam. I paused with nervousness. I took a quick look up front, remembered what my grandfather told me about fate, and then decided I was all in. She looked to her left and discovered me tilting my Scantron towards her apprehension, as her eyes discretely shifted to the professor, then back to my Scantron. We were the last

students to leave and to this day I am in awe that she finished before me. After the test, she handed in her exam and waited for me out in the hallway and we started a dialogue. When I came out she instantly approached me, “Hey? Leo, right?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m Sara.”

“I know we’ve introduced ourselves on the first day.”

“Oh yeah, I’m sorry.”

“No worries.”

“No I’m sorry because I read your name on your Scantron.

Leo, like DiCaprio.”

“Yeah it’s okay, I wouldn’t remember me either.”

“So hey, thanks for letting me copy question twenty-six.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Okay, but thanks. I don’t even know why I took this class.”

“Me either. My counselor made it sound interesting.”

“Stevenson?!”

“Yeah her. I’m not even passing.”

“Seriously?”

“No I have an eighty-seven.”

“So you wanna get a beer? My treat.”

“I’m not twenty-one yet.”

“Did I ask if you were twenty-one?”

“No, but where are we going to go?”

“My dorm mate works at Fat Tuesday’s.”

I thought about her offer for a second, then said: “Sure why not.”

That’s when the two of us started our tradition after every exam by getting a Fat Tire at Fat Tuesday’s on Mill Avenue. It was one of the most frequented bars on campus. By day you could just hang out with a cold brew in the patio under the misting system, and by night it turned into a club. After that Econ midterm we had our first drink together. We asked each other how we thought we did and what we answered on certain questions. She told me about her course load and her internship at Allied Signal. A company to this day, I still have no clue what they do. That afternoon, under the refreshing bellowing mist, we found out we had the same taste in music. When our Fat Tires turned into empty soggy mugs she asked

if I wanted to take shots of Bacardi. I politely accepted. She jogged inside to order at the bar then walked over to the jukebox and selected a song. She then walked back to the bar, grabbed the two shot glasses and winked at her dorm mate. I could hear the intro to *Days of our Livez* by Bone Thugs~n~Harmony pounding from through patio speakers. Sara came towards our table mouthing the chorus, “*No come into our world and see that we are more than thugs, more than thugs, more than thugs. With just a little twist of harmony we’re smoking lethal warriors, warriors, warriors.*” I was in love.

I could tell she was happily buzzed and I was starting to slur my words. But she was making me laugh hysterically and gathering attentive smiles from the surrounding tables with her off beat jokes. Her dorm mate brought our check out and Sara grabbed it before I could see the damage we did. She looked at it, then unconsciously began to describe her boring life in Wausau, Wisconsin. I had never been to the Midwest, but boy did her portrayal of it sound boring. She told me that her father was a police officer and a drunk. That most nights after his shift he would come home and sit on the couch watching television, drinking gin, ignoring everything and everyone around him. Her mother worked at the Marathon County Library and was pretty much the glue of the family. Sara was an only child and an aspiring engineer. It was heartbreaking to hear that she never quite accepted her life in Wisconsin. She wanted to design and build things that helped people live better lives. In a drunken voice she said, “I got a full ride scholarship to ASU. I packed my bags and I ain’t never going back!” I just listened to her the whole time staring at her emotional eyes. Then I sprinted to the restroom and vomited violently.

~

After college, and as the years grew on, we stayed in touch. Having never moved away from Phoenix we often would meet for lunch. She was eventually hired on as an engineer at Allied Signal designing jet parts for the military, I think. Truth is I never really understood what she did there. The way she explained it though, it seemed as if it was essential for them to have her on their team. And more importantly, for her to be a significant engineer with the company.

I myself had problems with substance abuse after I dropped out my senior year. More accurately, I was kicked out for smoking weed in a friend's dorm when he wasn't there. The RA caught me and called campus security. I was only six credits away from completing my under-grad.

I never kept a job more than a couple of months. By the time I was twenty-five I had been arrested four times. It was so bad, that my parents cut me off until I agreed to check myself into an in-patient program for my drinking. At that time, I was in denial, and I didn't feel like I had a problem at all. Sara always told me that she would be there for me if I needed help.

Sara knew all too well that I would go to her before I would go to my parents. I would only call her for money so I could get drunk for a weekend. One time, I couldn't pay my tab and she came in with her glasses on and in her baggy sweat pants. As she was paying and simultaneously giving me the silent treatment, a drunk bar-fly had made a deliberate comment to Sara about paying my tab. Sara threw sixty-seven dollars at the bartender, walked over to that bitch, and hit her so hard that she flew into her adjacent drinking buddy. Standing over both of the intoxicated women she yelled, "Get in the fucking car Leo!" I was already out the door by then.

~

I hadn't seen Sara in almost a year and one afternoon she called me and asked to meet for lunch at Chili's. I ordered a tall Fat Tire like old times. She had an ice tea. When the server left with our lunch orders Sara placed her hands around mine at the middle of the table and looked me in the eyes.

"Leo, I have something I need to tell you." Living in the negative at the time I expected bad news. "I'm getting married!" I was completely in shock. I didn't even know she was dating anyone, or that she was engaged. She told me what a great man he is, how they met, and that I would get to meet him at the wedding. Which was this weekend. I anxiously accepted the invitation she handed me because I didn't know if I could handle seeing Sara tie the knot. After she paid for lunch she kissed me on the cheek she gave me a long hug then got into her car. "I'll see you Friday then?" she said inserting her key into the ignition.

“I wouldn’t miss it for the world.” I didn’t want to seem like the drunk Sara had bailed out so many times; nor the pathetic man she probably described to her fiancé. I took the bus from Tempe all the way to Glendale to tell my parents that Sara was getting married and that I needed a tuxedo. They agreed immediately to send me to the tailor, and even let me borrow their Lexus.

~

I jumped in the car with a fresh tux and turned the ignition. I was so nervous that I was drinking Disaronno from my engraved flask. The one my grandfather gave me when he thought I was graduating from college. Feeling good now I began to scroll through my phone looking for that Bone Thugs~n~Harmony song we used to jam out to at Fat Tuesday’s. Just then I dropped my plugged-in phone and swerved to the right, but not before the left wheel hit the curb and a blue mailbox landed on top of the hood when the car came to a halt. As I sat there in a brief panic, *Days of our Livez* started playing. I took another swig of amaretto and pulled away. The lines started to blur and I could feel the buzz creeping up on me quickly.

When I got to the church the bride and groom were already exchanging their first kiss as man and wife. I smiled and teared up as I stood in the back of the church. After all she had accomplished she found a husband worthy of her and her hopes and dreams and maybe even a family for her own. All that she had talked about. I was all the way in the back, so no one knew I was even there. I took a sip from my flask and thought about all the laughs we had at Fat Tuesday’s. Just then a Phoenix police officer tapped on my shoulder and asked me what was in the flask. He had followed me to the church after someone called in to report a silver Lexus hitting their mailbox.

He told me to turn around and put my hands behind my back. When he read me my Miranda rights and placed the handcuffs on me the happy couple was skipping out of the church. I caught a glance from Sara while the officer escorted me towards his police cruiser. Sara ran towards the car and was beating the on window of the cruiser like it was my face. Tears streamed down her cheeks and ran onto her expensive wedding dress. Her new

husband was holding her back, and their curious families were pouring out of the church looking on in disgust.

~

This being a Friday evening wedding, I had no choice but to sit in jail until Monday. So, there I sat in my holding cell in my wrinkled and stained Aramis tux the entire weekend. Sobering up. Thinking about Sara. Our College experiences. That barfly she slugged. And most importantly, the embarrassment I cause her on her special day. I shamelessly walked through the exit doors blinded by the afternoon sun closing one eye to see. My eyes then adjusted to Sara standing by her car. She was beautiful as usual. I was expecting her to tell me to shut up and get in, but she didn't. In her nerdy glasses, oversized faded Arizona State sweatshirt, and denim shorts she was sobbing intensely. She told me that she was not going to bail me out after this. That she was moving on. She stepped inside her car and turned the ignition. She asked me if I remembered the time I let her cheat off me in our Economics class during our freshman year.

I said, "Yes."

She said, "You shouldn't have let me do it."

Her car pulled away from the police station and I could hear the bass and harmonies of *Days of our Livez* trailing her as she disappeared. I never did meet her husband.

When I was sentenced I spent six months in jail for driving under the influence. It was the first six months I had been sober since college. I read. I wrote. I played softball. I went to A.A. meetings. I tried writing Sara but could never finish the letter because I couldn't ever express all that I wanted to say.

That was thirteen years ago and I haven't had a drink since. Sara passed away in January of 2011 from complications during her pregnancy. A couple of months later I received an envelope from Sara's parents. I opened it and I was suddenly in shock as I welled up with tears. It was a picture her dorm mate took of us at Fat Tuesday's after our Econ exam. I had forgotten about that. On the back Sara wrote,

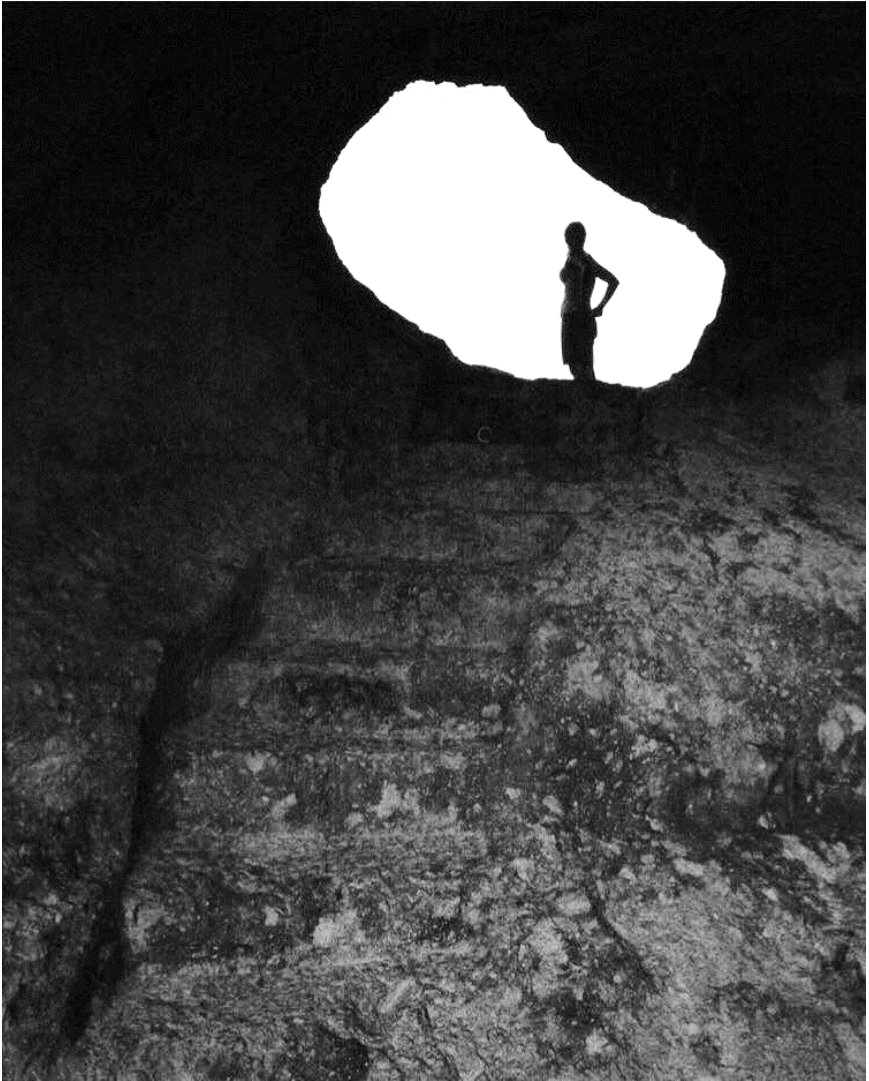
Leo like Dicaprio,

*Thanks for helping me get number twenty-six wrong,
Love,*

Sara

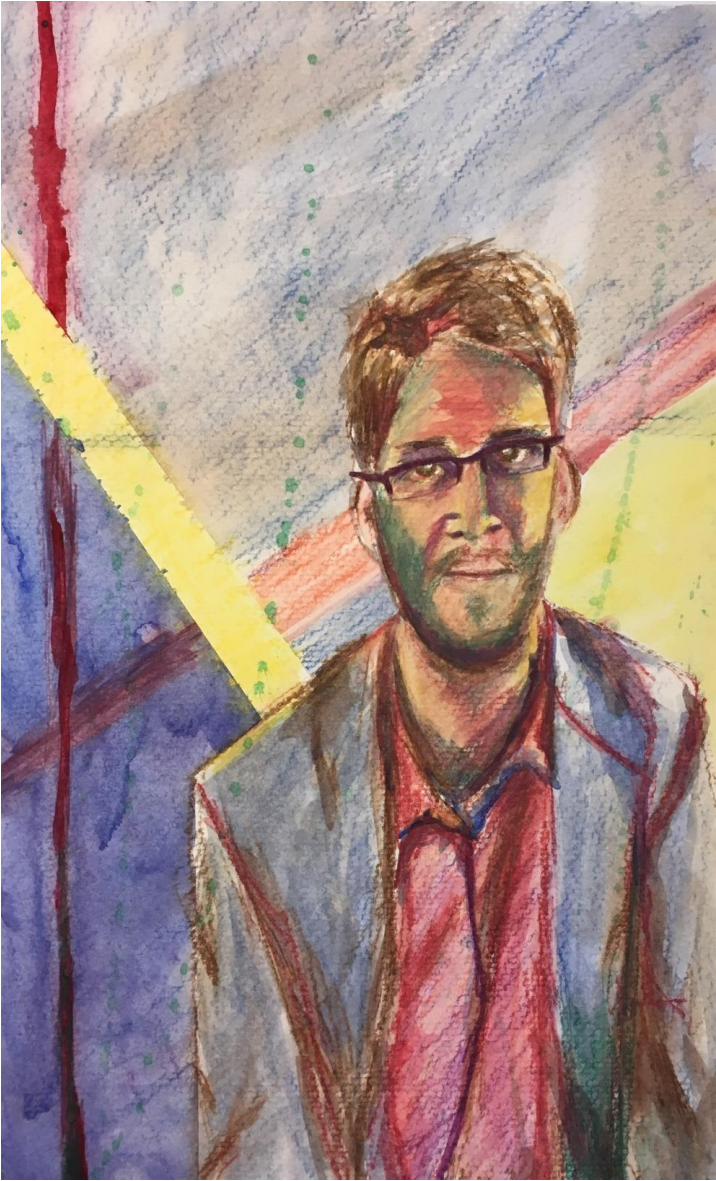
Sister Silhouette

by Alex Agar



A Man on a Bed Once

by Cara Kissell



Condemnation

by Jerry Carrier

We had one last house to inspect before we went home. It was the end of a long cold winter's day when Big Bob and I drove out to Fairchild. It is a small, old and poor village on the far eastern edge of the county. The nineteenth century commercial buildings on Main Street were now mostly empty and rotting. The street was empty except for a rusty red pickup truck and one old green car. We stopped at the far edge of town and got out of the car. I had on my wool overcoat over my suit and a wool scarf around my neck, but the sub zero wind whistled around my ears. The purple shadows on the snow were growing long in the late afternoon sun. Despite the harsh cold you could smell the pines.

Big Bob and I went up to the house. It was a ramshackle little building with peeling white paint that showed through to old boards. A broken picket fence surrounded the house with a gate that lay on the ground. I guessed the snow on the ground covered many other sins.

"It looks like another condemnation, another one for the bulldozer," Big Bob said.

We knocked on the door and Mr. Nelson yelled that it was too hard for him to get up and for us to come in. He was an old man with a walker, white hair and wolf-like gray eyes. I engaged Mr. Nelson in my usual friendly method. I struck up a conversation with him while Big Bob began to inspect the house. Big Bob was all business, a tall no-nonsense guy. He looked intimidating. He was an excellent building inspector and nothing went unnoticed.

Inside the little house was a small living room with a small table and four chairs on one side of the room with a dresser that was used as a buffet. The dresser had an old mantle clock on it and a picture of a woman taken some years ago. Mr. Nelson explained to me that it was his wife who had died of cancer ten years before.

I complimented Mr. Nelson on his mantle clock. It was my habit to find something nice to compliment even in the worst of houses. It seemed to put our clients at ease. Housing Authority directors and building inspectors are a frightening intrusion. We

were invaders inspecting their private lives. We had the power to condemn houses. My compliment was a necessary nicety.

On the other side of the room was a small dusty bookcase filled with books, mostly Zane Gray westerns. There were two worn out dirty gold easy chairs with a table and old lamp between them. The lamp shade was yellowed with age. Beside one chair lay an old black dog that was turning gray. In front of the chairs was an old black and white television. Upon arriving I had noticed the wind bent television antenna on the roof like a bone sticking out of a carcass, an ancient curiosity that soon would be useless. I realized that his books, the television and his dog were probably all there was to his present life.

The vertical hold on the television was bad and the picture rolled every few seconds. The television was too loud. Mr. Nelson was hard of hearing. I asked him if we could turn it off so we could talk, but he asked me not to because he was worried that it wouldn't come back on again because the knob had fallen off and he had lost it.

"I think the dog ate the damn thing. At least he probably chewed it up," he told me.

He petted his dog affectionately and said, "You like to chew, don't you, Willie?"

I began to explain our process to Mr. Nelson emphasizing that depending on what we found we may or may not be able to help him.

Mr. Nelson cut me short, "I know the God-damned social worker reported me and I know my house is a piece of shit. I may look like it, but I am not a slob. If you can fix it up that would be great. If not...." He trailed off lost in thought.

I noticed that also on the dresser was a small wooden shadow box with a glass front and in it were two medals, a Purple Heart and a Soldier's Medal.

"Where'd you get these?" I asked.

"At Pork Chop Hill, in Korea, you ever hear of it?" Mr. Nelson asked.

"Yeah," I said, staring at the medals. "How bad was it?"

"The Chinese sent thousands at us, wave after wave, but we took it. I lost a lot of friends that day."

"You won a Soldier's Medal?"

The smile left his face. "Yeah, I was a medic. They gave it to me for saving guys while we were getting the shit kicked out of us. I must of patched up at least twenty guys that day while the Chinese were all around us, wave after damn wave. I just kept running from foxhole to foxhole patching the guys up until I got this."

He patted his hip. "It shattered the bone. They couldn't patch me up. I was lucky they were able to chopper me out to a MASH unit. Most of my guys weren't so lucky. I was nineteen. I came home a cripple. I got a little VA disability pension. Marge, my wife, worked as the lunch lady at the school. We never had much. Now all I got is this house and Willie, my dog. But it's okay. I get by."

The house had two other rooms, a small bedroom and kitchen and Big Bob inspected these as Mr. Nelson and I talked. After some time Bob appeared and said to me, "You better come take a look."

We walked through the little kitchen and Big Bob opened the back door. A smell of human urine and feces attacked our noses. I began to breathe through my mouth. The snow was littered with human waste, a bucket was on the porch and a roll of toilet paper was on the porch floor beside it.

Mr. Nelson had followed us with his walker and he began to sob. "I know what it looks like. I am not a slob. I can't make it through the snow to the outhouse anymore. I just can't..."

I looked at Big Bob who looked as if he felt as bad as I did.

I turned to Mr. Nelson. "We don't judge, Mr. Nelson. We have been doing this for a while and we know folks have to do stuff to get by. It's okay. We are here to see if we can help."

"Please don't condemn my home. It is all I have," Mr. Nelson pleaded.

I tried my best to console Mr. Nelson. I told him I had not made a decision and that the county could give him fix up funds from HUD if we determined the house was worth saving. I told him that he would have my decision in a few days. We went back to the living room while Bob finished his inspection.

Mr. Nelson was glum. He suspected what our verdict would be. He knew we were going to condemn his home. He was bravely trying to accept it because he had no choice.

"I don't know what they'll do to us," he said to his dog as he patted Willie's head.

When Big Bob was done I said goodbye to Mr. Nelson and we got in the car to leave.

“How bad?” I asked.

“You’re not fucking serious?” Bob groaned.

“How bad?” I asked again.

“He needs new siding and paint, new flooring in all three rooms, the furnace is shot, the hot water heater will go next. The fridge doesn’t work, the electrical system is shit. And if we add on a bathroom we also have to put in a septic system because he isn’t on city sewer and water. The well needs to be tested and probably redone because of nitrate contamination. Oh yeah, and he needs a new roof. You want me to go on?”

“Best guess how much?” I asked.

“At least forty-five thousand dollars and the house in its current state is only worth the land price and probably less than that since anyone stupid enough to buy it would likely need to tear down the house. It is a piece of shit that should be condemned and bulldozed. The old boy would be better off in veteran’s housing,” Bob said.

“I know, but it’s like a dormitory at the VA home and they wouldn’t take his damn dog,” I replied. “The house, his dog and his broken television are all he has.”

“You can’t be serious. We’d never get our money back out of it!”

“Yeah, I know.”

“You know HUD will give us major shit for this.”

“Yeah, they will.”

“You’re a crazy fucker. We could lose our HUD funding or our jobs.”

“Nah, they’ll just make threats and yell at us,” I said.

“The County Board will give us shit.”

“Maybe, but I’ll point out they should be more worried about the bad publicity of kicking a disabled vet out of his house.”

Big Bob shook his head, “Are you doing this for your Dad?”

“Probably.”

He let out a long heavy sigh. He knew he wasn’t going to talk me out of it.

Big Bob and I were Vietnam veterans and members of the John O'Malley VFW Post. The post was named after my father who was killed during the Korean War when I was a just a boy.

We sat for another minute and Big Bob slowly smiled, "This is a good day."

"Yeah, today I like my job," I replied. "Let's stop by the VFW on the way back."

"You thirsty or something?"

"Nah. We're gonna guilt them into buying a new color TV for a disabled vet."

Big Bob looked at me and laughed loudly. He nodded and started the car.

I am Broken and He is Whole and We are Both Wrong

by Katherine Ichinose

His skull has become a skylight, as if
its lid broke off of its hinges, and
now his brain is exposed to
sunlight and vulnerability.
His eyes are rolling backwards as if
they are trying to lick his elbow but
his elbow is in his brain and
he doesn't know where the pain is coming from.
I am now hyper-aware of my
intact skull
my comfort
feels like an itch
and I am compelled to scratch at it
until it bleeds.
They are looking at him too,
wrapping their arms around their children,
and checking his criminal record
and his library card.
They talk about every problem except
the flaws in the majority
and demand that he keep his brains
from spilling out onto their property.

In the Yard

by Lilyanne Wendt



Natural Disaster

by Carlie Knudsen

You breathe a sigh of relief.

For once in your life,
the fingertips of a man don't burn you;
like the tip of the lighter after you've lit a cigarette.

He makes you feel safe,
letting you build a home in the crook of his neck.

You revel in the moment.
Counting the freckles on his back
waltzing between them with the tips of your fingers.

You inhale deeply,
his scent makes you dizzy.
The dimly lit room paints a shadow across his skin,
it haunts you in the most poetic way possible.

He kisses you on the cheek,
as soft as an angel's wings fluttering up in heaven.
He whispers about your beauty, assuming you're asleep.

You struggle to hide your expression, wiggling closer into him.
Wanting to spend eternity in his arms.

Finding safety in another human being always seems to result in the
largest natural disaster.

You convince yourself that he is worth a tsunami.

Snus

by Leo Kellogg

Nick & Johnny came in a box sent to my house
from a UPS plane in Gothenburg, Sweden.

They arrived at my doorstep with their legs crisscrossed
and squished against the plain brown box packaged in
saran wrap.

Now Nick & Johnny stay in my freezer next to the tater-tots
and below the row where my mother puts books and clothes.
There they stay pure, their fair-skinned, Scandinavian complexions
are
white and dry.

When I am ready, I take them, their essence contained in a plastic tin,
I put them in my pocket and bring them with—together we have fun.
They listen as I stumble words, beneath my lip the two tremble as my
voice
patters the cunning of consonants and voluptuous vowels.

And when the flavor has become sour, the crisp *crushed ice* has gone
old,
I'll grab a piece of moose cheese and spit ol' Nick & Johnny onto the
floor.
Their purpose is consumed, their duties are fulfilled.

Nick & Johnny weren't my friends, they're were clones,
replicants of perfection. In the tin in my pocket
there's 23 more of 'em.

in my freezer there's
a whole 'nother roll.

In Stockholm there's a man in pants
with a shirt and a cap

that says "Swedish Match"
emboldened on a hand sewn patch
and he's making more; thousands of Nick & Johnny's for the whole
world to enjoy.

Nicotine for all, for every girl & boy.

A Tale of Old Shoes

by Lilyanne Wenndt



Contributor's Notes

Alex Agar has been attending Normandale for a few years now and has a great admiration for Photography and Creative Writing. He is pursuing a forestry degree but hopes to continue photographing and writing for years to come!

Jerry Carrier is a Normandale Creative Writing and Art student. He has published four nonfiction books with Algora Publishing.

Theresa Gaupp is currently an undergraduate enrolled at Normandale Community College to earn an Associate Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing.

She grew up in rural Minnesota where she still resides with her three adorable boys and a wonderful husband. She has always enjoyed reading and writing.

Ryan Gay is a 23 year old computer science student at Normandale. He plays a lot of Dungeons 'n' Dragons and dreams that one day there will be a selection of his own books in the Sci-Fi section of every major book seller.

Katherine Ichinose is a PSEO student in the AFA in Creative Writing Program at Normandale. She has been published in Minnesota's Best Emerging Poets: An Anthology and has won the silver key award from Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her writing. She will pursue English and Psychology at St. Olaf College in the fall.

Katharine Johnson is a PSEO student at Normandale Community College who loves to write. She plans on majoring in either Psychology or English when she attends St. Olaf College next fall.

Maricela Karlen: Art is important in my life. I always have been interested in art since I was a child, but as a teenager, I recorded most of my life events in photography. Now that I am an adult and I have family and kids, I record a lot of my family events in photography. It's more fun for me!

I have learned I can be creative by mixing art and family. Art can be more exciting when family is involved.

The inspiration of my art is unique due to our family's dual culture dynamic: American and Mexican cultures blend together. And blending those cultures in my life with my family helps me to be more creative. I want my kids to recognize our family roots. I like to bring my culture into my art to express myself, express who I am and the transformation I have made from the two different cultures.

That's why I choose photography because my kids can see the pictures and have those memories through time. Art makes me feel free to be who I am. I can express many feelings through art without saying a word.

Leo Kellogg was last seen at 5:23 p.m. eating a very hefty sandwich in a storm drain. He was wearing a purple tube top with no pants. If you see this man, please contact the authorities.

Cara Kissell is currently at Normandale completing prerequisites for a Masters in Education in Visual Arts and a Minnesota Teaching license. She prefers to work in water-based media with most of her work centering around the question of individual identity and the power of names.

Carlie Knudsen has been attending Normandale Community College for two years. She will be graduating this spring with her Associates degree. She will be furthering her education at the University of Minnesota fall 2018, where she plans to major in English. Writing as always been her escape from reality. She hopes to eventually turn her passion into a career.

Rachel Lindo is an AFA Creative Writing major here at Normandale. She often enjoys writing at her grandparent's cabin with the company of her knitting-obsessed mom and her two cats. She is also a strong believer of fries before guys.

Jennifer Meinhardt is an AFA Creative Writing major at Normandale. She enjoys spending time with her dog, Watson, and strumming on her guitar. She considers herself a pseudo renaissance (wo)man, an attempter of many things yet a master of maybe one or two of them.

Gabriel Mianulli is in his last semester at Normandale and would like to send his deep gratitude to the Normandale English Department for the amazing experiences he's had over 6 semesters. He looks forward to attending Hamline University in the fall to complete his BFA alongside several of his Normandale friends. He'd like to encourage all students to keep plugging away at their studies and dream big. The hard work will be worthwhile in the end, he promises.

Peyton Oberbroeckling: This is my first year as a Normandale student! So far I am loving it, especially the writing courses I have been privileged to take. This short fiction story is the first piece I have ever submitted, but I hope it is just the beginning for me.

Maria Palomino: I am a student currently attending Normandale Community College in hopes of transferring my credits to acquire a BFA in Studio Art.

Norhan Qasem: I am double majoring in Psychology and Creative Writing.

Anna Rolf: My name is Anna Rolf, and I am 24.

Haley Sargent is an AFA in Creative Writing student. She has previously graduated with an AA in Liberal Education and plans to transfer to the University of Northwestern next fall to pursue Theatre and Biology. Her interests include reading, writing, art, theatre, nature, and being a huge nerd. Ephesians 3:20-21.

Sean Scott: I wrote this four hours before my fiction writing class in college. The prompt was something that happens over a weekend. Once I started to get going, I realized where I was going with this story. The narrative is loosely based on my early college experiences with my first love. The names were changed to protect the innocent of course. I just wanted to express what “Sara” meant to me and my future in writing.

Paul Van Dyke is a Creative Writing AFA student in his final semester at Normandale. He's going to Hamline University in the fall.

Lilyanne Wenndt was born during a classic Minnesota snowstorm in early March 1997. She grew up in St. Louis Park three blocks from Minneapolis surrounded by the sounds of sparrows and city buses. She still calls St. Louis Park her home but roams a bit farther now. She is currently attending Normandale Community College and will graduate with her Associates of Fine Arts in the Spring of 2018. She is the recipient of the Felicity Abby Jane Mathieu Art Scholarship. Lilyanne is going to continue to explore art and illustration at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in the fall of 2018. You can find Lilyanne’s landscape and animal cards at the Ideal Green Market and Kemper Drug and Gifts.

The Paper Lantern is the student literary journal of Normandale Community College, 9700 France Ave. So., Bloomington, MN 55431. It is edited by Normandale students. The project is made possible by the Normandale Student Life Activity Fee.

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Front Cover: "Praying Girl," by Maria Palomino

Back Cover: "November 11th," by Cara Kissell

Submit your creative writing to the Fall 2018 issue of *The Paper Lantern*! All work is reviewed anonymously and acceptance is based on literary merit. Submission links and more information can be found at www.thepaperlantern.org.

Works in all genres of creative writing (poetry, fiction, memoir, short plays, etc.) are considered, with a limit of 1000 words for poetry and 2500 words for prose and drama. Multiple submissions accepted. Submission is open to registered NCC students only.

Submissions are received via the online service, Submittable. Submittable is a free and easy way for writers to submit work to a variety of publications.

The Paper Lantern online is made possible by a generous gift from the Kevin Downey estate.