



2014 PHOENIX

The Art and Literary Journal of Clark College • Volume 34

About the Phoenix

Phoenix is published annually by the Associated Students of Clark College. All contributors, editors, and volunteers are current Clark College students. Anyone enrolled in 100-level courses or above in the year of publication is eligible to submit work for possible inclusion. We accept submissions online at www.clarkphoenix.com.

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Editors' Statement

As *Phoenix* embarks on its 34th year, the editors and staff are delighted to present the 2014 edition. The planning and preparations began in early September and continued through April. As you explore the pages, you'll see it truly was a collaborative effort between the art and literary staff.

With the participation of both literary and art staff, we established a theme of duality, which you will notice through the cover. One side represents light while the other represents darkness, and there is a feeling of tension building and colliding. Look closely, and you should be able to tell that many of the shapes outlined on the cover are also used as a backdrop for the prose and poems.

Initially, the literary editors began the process by selecting a quote by Anaïs Nin that we believed best represented the works we wanted to read: "The role of a writer is not to say what we all can say but what we are unable to say." Through every piece that was selected, we captured our primary objective through unique, visual storytelling.

We are also excited to announce that we have included creative non-fiction this year. Last year for the first time, the English Department offered a creative non-fiction class, and we are thrilled to include a piece written in that class alongside the poems and fiction.

In addition, the literary editors have the pleasure of bringing you an interview with award-winning author Jonathan Raymond, whose work captures the essence of the Anaïs Nin quote that started our process this year. This is the second year we have been humbled by a creative master, so please take a moment to enjoy his insights on the joys and challenges of being a writer.

Make sure you also take a look at all the different artwork in *Phoenix*. We are fortunate to have many different varieties represented. Much of that is due to the diverse classes the Art Department has to offer, including those focused on painting, photography, ceramics, graphic design and more. During the layout process, the staff worked on incorporating art pieces with literary works in order to create coherence.

Lastly, the editors would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this edition. We received well over 300 works of art and literature this year, and could only accept a fraction of these works. Remember, it is only through the students that the *Phoenix* continues to thrive.

The Phoenix Editors



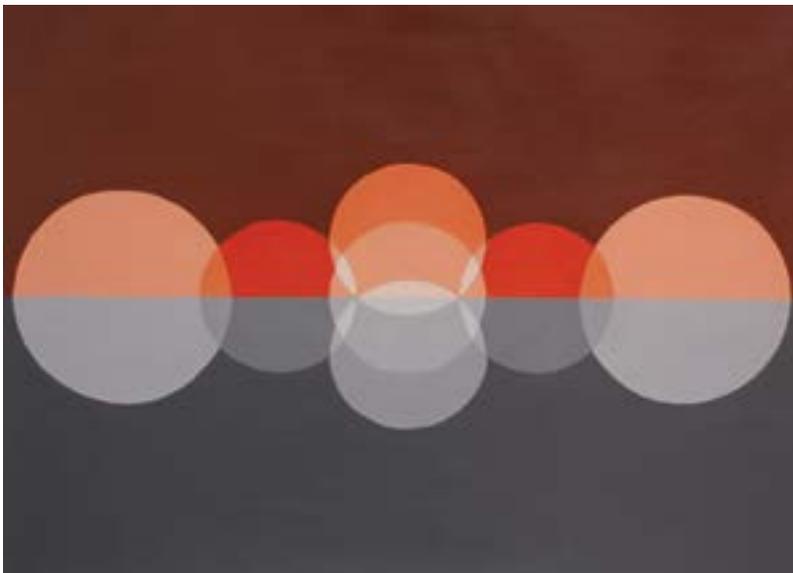
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Wave Sine • Jeffery Grimes • Welded Sculpture



Sunset on Pleiades • Lisa Archilla • Acrylic on Bristol



Unholy Trinity of a Creepy Mannequin • Bernd Hoffman • Oil on Canvas



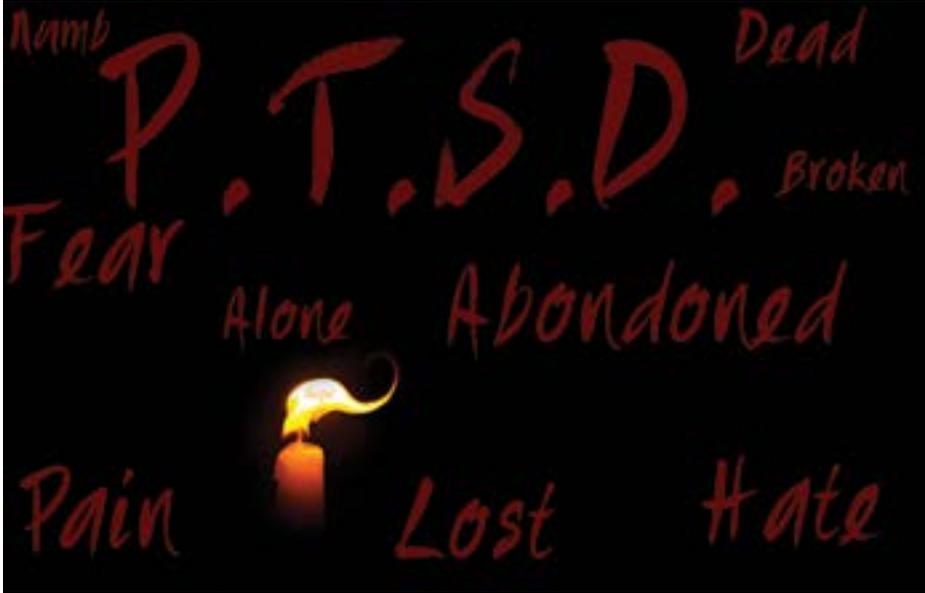
Into Darkness • Shannon O'Connor • Silver Gelatin Prints



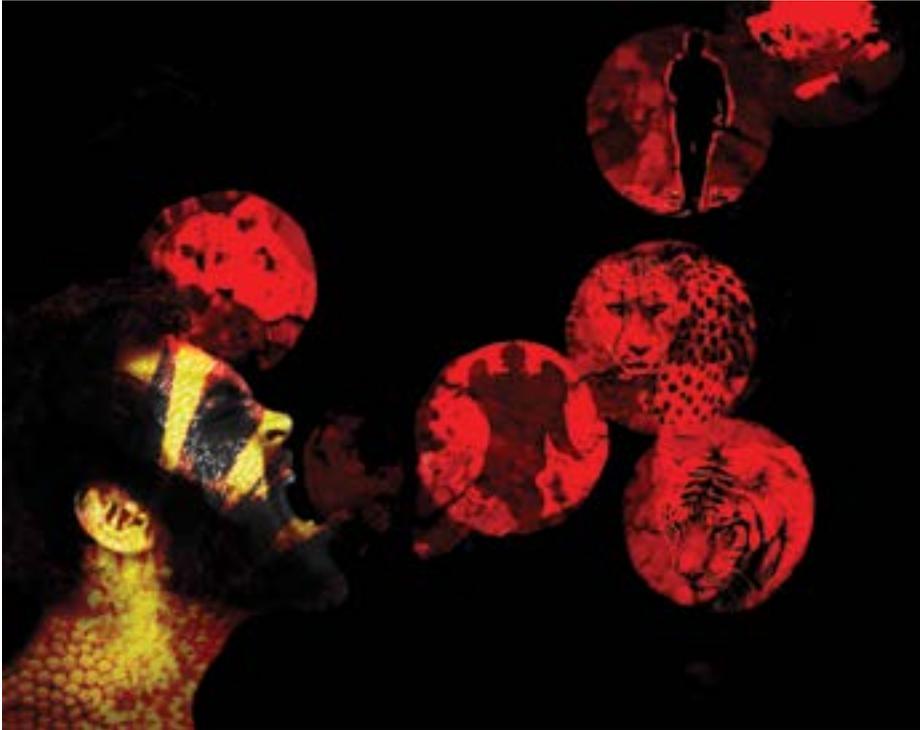
Watering Cans • Monica Kinnunen • Oil on Paper



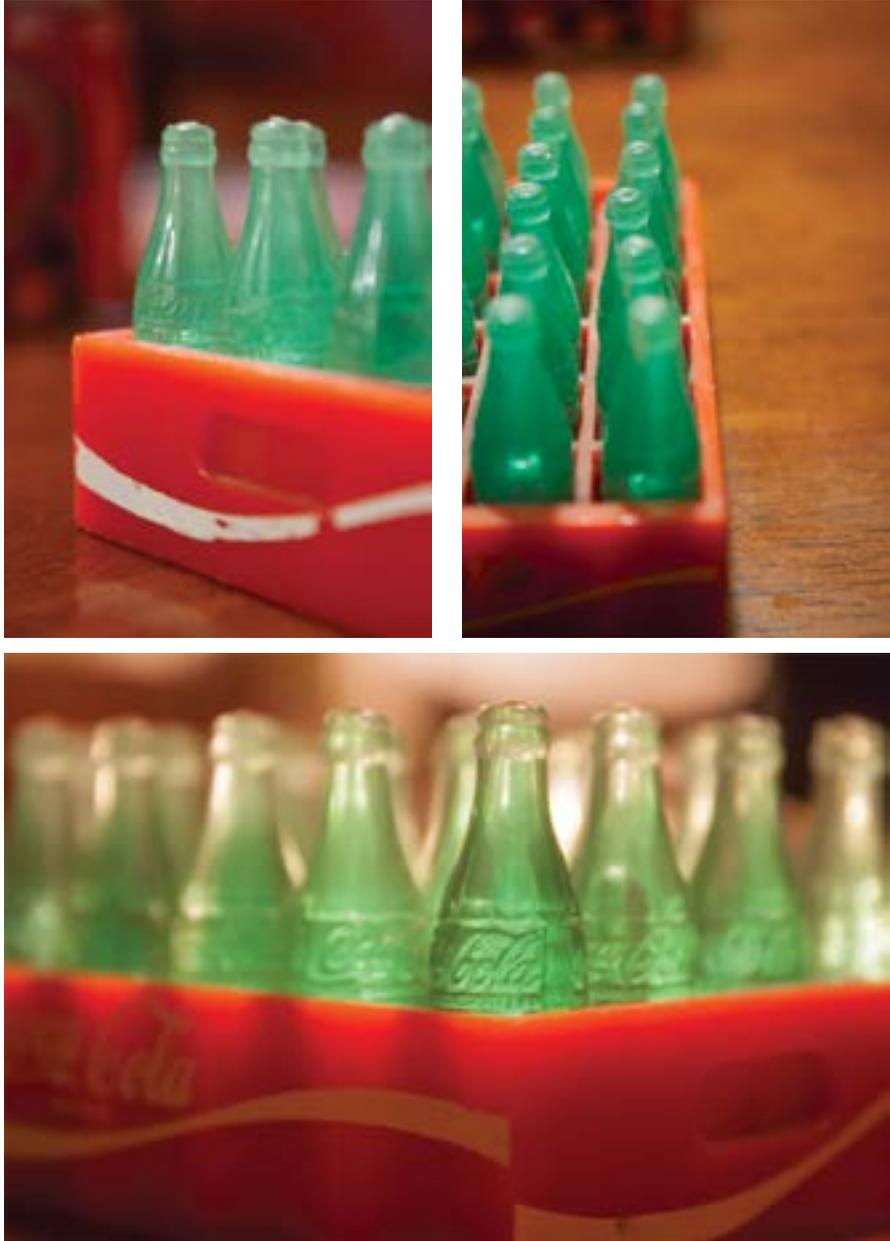
United We Stand • Dean Popek • Welded Sculpture



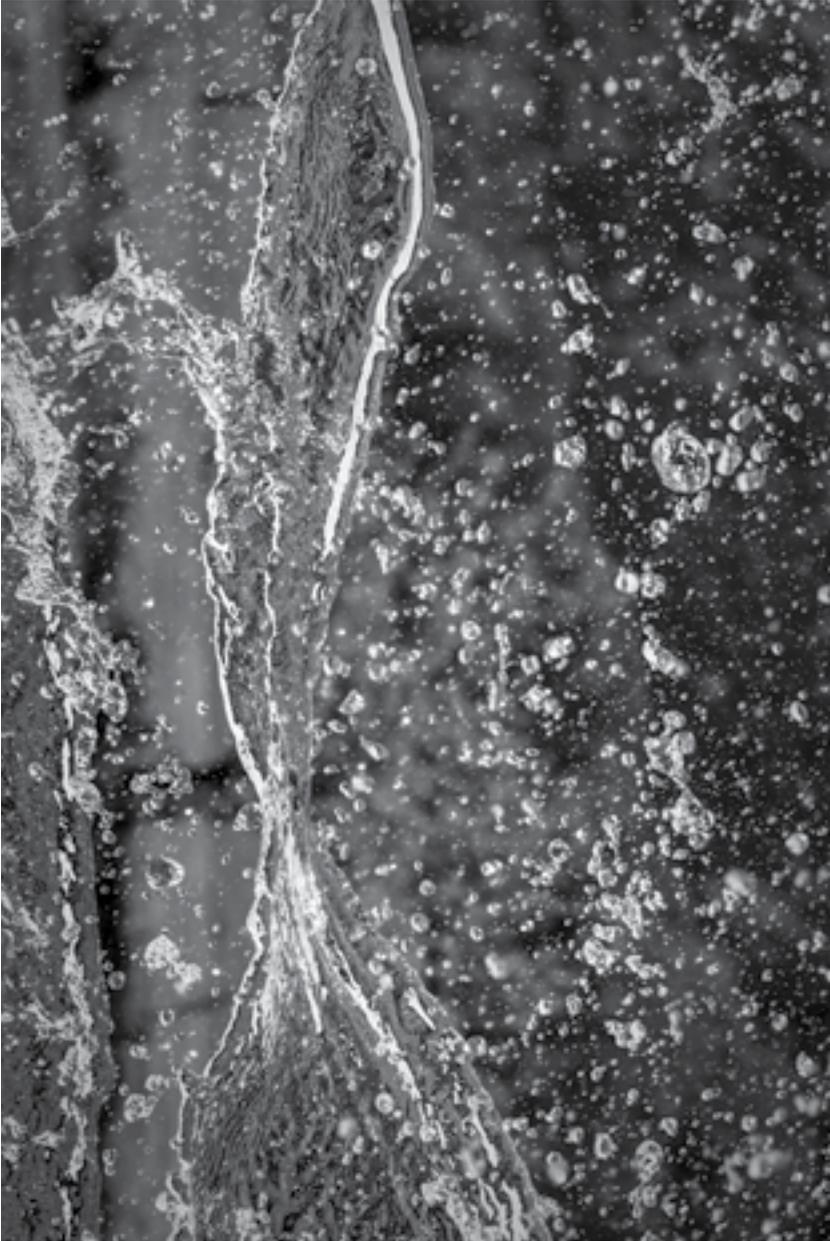
Alone with my PTSD • Derek Fuller • Digital Illustration



Carnage • Tyson Duerr • Digital Illustration



Emma Hanna • Mini Drinkables • Digital Photography



Liquid Glass • Braden Tuck • Digital Photography



Editors' Choice

We are proud to present the 2014 Editors' Choice Literary Award winner. "Small Things Cost the Most" is a powerful and moving poem that strongly conveys the ultimate costs involved with the human experience. Mike Shank's carefully chosen words and cleverly constructed arrangement on the page allows the reader to see and experience his encapsulated vision in an extraordinary way. Lines such as "Mind on mines, finding finds of finite size, rivers lined with lies / Praying to the god of Gary Busey, Lucy in the Sky" vibrate with energy and passion and create a lasting image.

Small Things Cost the Most

By Mike Shank

Color coding children, cut from the cloth of clarity
 For eyes the size of carats, taught that merit is a rarity
 Princess shedding pear-shaped teardrops 'til the fear stops
 Shimmering like fractal foresight in the clear nacht
 White money stacking, digits dropping from fatigue
 Ivory figures mounting for the Janjaweed
 Genocidal milestones stemmed from those who cry alone
 "Them," the droves of wild clones, gems, the stone of higher thrones
 Mind on mines, fining finds of finite size, rivers lined with lies
 Praying to the god of Gary Busey, Lucy in the Sky
 Twinkle twinkle, wrinkled single leaflets preach the word of Zales
 Crinkled crow's feet trap the pain in every wince, the stock worth sails
 Shaking shards of solid sunlight from the silt and salt and shale
 Setting stones in silver settings, slavery's clearance sale
 Spending seven months' salary is only apropos
 Blue Nile is in denial, never felt the rivers flow
 Stealing slum funds from Sierra Leone to the Ivory Coast
 It seems that it's always the smallest things that cost the most

Snap judgments, begrudged beneath the bunker of subconscious
 Vapid pundits, trapped in their caucus until they're nauseous
 Collapsed republics, clasped thug cliques claiming blocks is obnoxious
 Techs tapped toward synapse, seconds lapse, your cleaned clock clicks cautious
 Bass vibrating through their face, breath bated, every whisper laced
 Juices dripping from your frame, liquid copper concentrate
 Choking, fading, coding, eroded slowing of pulse pace

Blood flooding your block like an engine, vengeance pumps the hearse race
 Paddles slamming on your chest, the vest couldn't block your dome
 Breath blown out by a blowout from street soldiers claiming coasts
 Other dealers pulled your card when you went to pull your toast
 Brother, it seems it's always the small stuff that costs the most

Resorting to comfort behind the shield of Dr. Seusseries
 Ignoring the choking force of how tight the noose of abuse can be
 He thinks the tonic tames him, sleeping with juice like a nursery
 You mention AA, he won't start, the master fuse is loose you see
 It don't take a statistician to see addiction is the cost
 Dad drinking 'til he sounds like Tony Danza, you know who's the boss
 Clapping closed fists to your cranium, your hearing is gone, hope is lost
 Beaten so often a coffin seemed a comfort, he found a line to cross
 The sound of the tab tearing the tongue resounds like a whip crack
 You know no speaking lest he leave you leaking with your lips fat
 Servant to a slave sipping the cider 'til his face is flat
 The small things cost the most, addiction is based on that

Smoking gravel and chalk until you lost the bigger picture
 Cloaking happiness and wonder with a permanent fixture
 Dropping the other shoe, the rubber rips, the plunger plugs the mixture
 A silver sliver slits the valley of the shadow of the ripper
 Obliques clenching, weeks of tension tearing through your facets
 Fiending for the cough-hack attraction of a baggie full of magnets
 Sipping purple rain, brain so rotten you would swear you're bleeding maggots
 Cashing in on madness, a pension plan paid out in liquid assets
 CC's changing species, a portal to pleasure made a black hole
 Freezing, seizing, then dry heaving, infection affects the withdrawal
 Black and yellow doesn't look so fly when your veins are strained and swole
 The small thing's price shot up and turned your arm a somber shade of coal

Prone to poking without a prophylactic
 Soaking satin sheets with your seed, spill lactic
 Seeing spots swirl like starry night, galactic
 Pulling out after you tap like a hat trick
 Wipe off, kill the wife thoughts, deuces to the dime
 Plan A was B, but your plan was banned in time
 Weeks passed, gassed on the single mingle and "me" time
 Going fast forward 'til that call made you rewind
 Your batter's bakin, but your pockets ain't cakin
 Your accounts dried up and frozen, cold raisins
 When the strip's hot, the folks expectin bacon
 Deciding whether to stay and raise it or roll Daytons
 You recollect the effect it had when Pops went soft
 His judgment lapsed, he went bottle caps and spun off
 Your mom bucked up, got them bucks up and bluffed
 Held a poker face when that disgrace said he had enough
 Tighten your laces and face the music, time to work kid
 Dig up the purpose of fatherhood, try to unearth it
 You were there for your bun and held her hand when she birthed him
 The smallest things cost the most, but sometimes it's worth it



Endings • Erin Merrill • Silver Gelatin Print



Train Sky • John Mangan • Oil on Canvas



Pavo • Jessica Kench • Brass, Copper and Cabachon



Philosophy of Formation • Ana Lai • Silver Gelatin Prints



Wash Over Me • Irina Burchak • Digital Photography



A Full Life • Claudia Carter • Ceramic

Eighteen Hours

By Tim Roduner

The only make-up Mom wore was lipstick. Perfume, if she used any at all, was relegated to a small dab behind each earlobe. Her hairstyle was whatever was in fashion, as long as it was easy to care for. She wore sensible shoes, along with inexpensive pantyhose. Her clothes were very practical, never flashy. She was seldom without her black, cat-eye glasses and always wore her wedding ring, sometimes accompanied by earrings and an occasional necklace or brooch. But the one thing she never left the house without was her girdle. Underneath all of her functional, practical clothing, Mom was always strapped tightly into her girdle. It was 1969, and in those days she wore the best and most popular brand available to the average American housewife: the Playtex 18 Hour Girdle.

My three siblings and I were quite familiar with Mom's girdle because two or more of us were always recruited to help her get into it. Once she stepped into the leg openings, it took a couple of us kids to pull it up and lock her in. The routine was simple enough: a kid on each side of Mom, pulling up as hard as we could over her ample flesh until the girdle was snugly in place. Mom would then suck in her stomach and hold her breath while she barked out the command, "Zip Mommy up!" One of us would grab hold of the zipper while the other grasped tightly to the two sides of the girdle, drawing them

together until the zipper could inch upwards and reach its end. After that, Mom needed help pulling on her slip and dress over the girdle, making sure everything was lined up and in place. Since she was a stay-at-home mother, this ritual was almost exclusive to Sundays, when we all wore our best clothes and went to church in the morning and in the evening.

The First Baptist Church of Lakewood had been built in 1963 and was quite modern for its time period. It was a traditional brick structure on the outside, but inside it sported a more contemporary, space-age feel. I often imagined that the Jetsons would have felt at home in our church, with its futuristic design: upswept ceiling, geometric shapes, and bold use of steel, glass, and wood. It was all tied together with sky-blue walls, upholstery, and carpeting. During the service, Mom would give me the church bulletin and a pencil. I would keep myself busy filling in with lead all the Os, Ps, Qs and any other letter that contained an enclosed space. This would keep me occupied for most of the service, and if I ran out of spaces to pencil in, I often ended up drawing little pictures of my imaginary worlds in the margins of the bulletin.

When church was over we would head home, and the moment Mom was in the door, she'd shout out, "I need some help getting out of my girdle!" Once free from the thing, one of us would fold it up and try to fit it back into the package it came in. I often stared at the packaging, reading its fancy gold type: "The original and still the best. Playtex 18 hour girdle." To my nine-year-old brain, I thought that the eighteen hours was the total amount of time it could be worn. For example, if Mom wore it for three hours last week and five hours this week, that meant that she could only get nine more hours out of it before she had to replace it. But my older brother set me

...a kid on each side of Mom, pulling up as hard as we could over her ample flesh...

straight on that idea. He told me that the fibers magically regenerated themselves after taking it off for a short while, therefore becoming practically brand new the next time Mom needed to wear it again.

Imagine a tsunami of elastic fabric, thread, snaps, and a zipper, traveling at lightning speed...

So, through my powers of deduction, I surmised that one could only wear the girdle for a *total* of eighteen hours before it would begin to unravel and explode off the body.

When I explained my theory to my brother, he confirmed my belief and swore that he saw the girdle on a teacher's aide at his junior high school explode one day. Just like that, my suspicion had an eyewitness account. I doubted I'd ever be able to witness such a sight. Mom never wore her girdle for that length of time, and I sure didn't want to be around if she ever did. Imagine a tsunami of elastic fabric, thread, snaps, and a zipper, traveling at lightning speed, all aimed directly at those closest to her. Someone could get their eye poked out! And there would be my Mom, her dress and slip ruined and hanging in shreds off her body, looking like a sandwich board of torn and tattered clothing. Everyone would laugh and point, and my Mom would be humiliated, all for having worn her girdle for eighteen hours and *one second!* It would simply be *exasperating*—a word I was quite familiar with as a nine-year-old since Mom used it often to describe my antics. A scary thought indeed. But I never had to worry about that happening since she only wore the thing in smaller increments of time. At least she did until one particular Sunday. Time became the enemy, and I was certain that my mom was flirting with a clothing disaster.

The Sunday in question Mom was dressed and out the door before any of us had gotten up; Dad helped her into her girdle that morning. Mom was part of a ladies' group that sponsored different

missionaries associated with the church. Once a month the church had a missionary Sunday where those out in the field would come in and host a luncheon, along with sharing reports about their experiences in their chosen corner of the world. Mom's group worked with families that were missionaries in French Polynesia. Since the theme of the luncheon was tropical, Mom spent all day Saturday in our kitchen cooking up little cocktail weenies that she then pierced on a toothpick with a chunk of pineapple. This was exotic food in my estimation, and I secretly wished my family had been called to be missionaries so we could indulge in these tasty, tropical treats. She also made several Jell-O salads and carted them, along with the weenies, to church the next morning. She and the other ladies set everything up, and then she headed off to engage in her regular Sunday morning routine. After church we were all together at the luncheon until we had our fill. Afterwards, Dad took us kids home while Mom stayed and helped clean up. We eventually met up with her again for the Sunday evening service.

Sitting there in the pew with my parents and siblings, I hadn't given Mom's girdle much thought. It normally didn't cross my mind much anyway, outside of helping her in and out of it. As I sat there in my seat, pencil in hand, busily blacking in the enclosed letters on the church bulletin, it was probably about as far from my mind as it could get. We stood up to sing a hymn. When that was over, we all sat down. Mom leaned across me and whispered to my Dad words that ignited terror in my heart: "Boy, I can't wait to get out of this girdle. I've been wearing it all day."

My brain raced as I tried to take it in. How long had she been wearing that thing? Was she anywhere near the eighteen-hour time limit? Anxious, I tried to total up the number of hours. It was now

about 8:30 p.m. When would she have had to start wearing the girdle to make it eighteen hours? My mind busily added and subtracted the hours. In the end, I panicked and came up with about seventeen hours and forty-five minutes. If I had kept a cool head, I would have realized that meant that Mom would have had to put on her girdle at about 3:30 a.m. However, when you're nine years old and anxious, logic doesn't necessarily factor into things. So there I was, certain that I was sitting next to my Mom and her soon-to-be clothing disaster.

I snuck a glance at my parents. They looked completely unsuspecting of the terror that was about to visit them. Mom looked weary, and I could tell she was in one of her no-nonsense moods. I reached across her lap and tried to get my brother's attention, but he was only interested in sticking his tongue out at me while he picked his nose. What was I going to do? Was there any way to avert this catastrophe? I turned and looked in the row behind me. There sitting with his family was Larry Fink, a kid from my Sunday school class. He was bigger than me and loved giving me wedgies when I wasn't looking. Because of that, I was careful to avoid Larry Fink at all costs. Suddenly, I wasn't as worried about Mom's potential embarrassment at having her girdle explode; I was thinking about Larry Fink and the golden opportunity he was about to be handed. I could never live it down. He'd tell everyone he knew that I was the kid whose Mom's girdle exploded in church!

I looked at Mom's wristwatch. Ten minutes had passed; I needed to do something quick. I grabbed Mom's arm and tugged at it. "Let's go to the bathroom!" I whispered to her.

"Oh, you're a big boy—you can go by yourself," she whispered back to me.

I sighed and slumped in my chair. *Very well, Mother*, I thought to myself. *I tried to remove you from your audience, but if you won't leave,*

then there's only one thing for me to do. I got up and walked quickly out of the sanctuary. I pushed open the wooden and steel doors leading to the large lobby with its miles of sky-blue carpeting. Once on the other side, I stood there resting with my back against the doors. At least I was out of there. How much time did I have? It must have been pretty close to exploding now. Well, I wasn't going to stand there and listen to the screams and gasps. I hightailed it out of the lobby and headed to the men's room. Might as well take care of a little business while I had the chance. Going to the bathroom, flushing the toilet ten times in a row, and drawing a face with soap on the mirror took up plenty of time, as did walking slowly backwards through the hallway and into the lobby. Once there, the only sound I heard was of the Pastor preaching. No screams or shrieks.

As the minutes slowly crept by without any unusual noises coming from the sanctuary, I found myself hoping I had dodged a bullet. Eventually, singing wafted out to where I was waiting. The final hymn—that meant that church was almost over! Sure enough, once the singing was done, people began to pour out of the sanctuary and fill the lobby.

Spotting my family, I ran up to them, squeezing in next to my brother. I told him that Mom's girdle was past its explosion time. He just smirked at me, rolled his eyes, and shook his head. I checked the time. It was now about ten after nine. What had happened?

The next day at school I told some of my friends about the incident, and most of them agreed that they would have done the same thing I had done: waited out in the lobby for an explosion that never came. All except David Lindburger. He said he would have stayed with his Mom and waited for her to explode. But he ate paste, so what did he know. 🤔



Bubba • Kiersten Wesley • Ceramic



Us vs. Them • Azure Calder • Watercolor



Cover Girl Collage • Monica Kinnunen • Watercolor



Portland Lumberjack • Ly Huynh • Ink on Paper



Hipsters In Love • Marisa Roberts-Hauptman • Diorama



My Town • Austin Fields • Diorama

Flatmate's Love Song

By Ashlee Nelson

Tuesday night you're
the blanket between my legs
our fingers are brushes and combs
as I run mine through your hair

Why don't you love me like I love you?
and honestly I would have confessed
but the television is blaring so

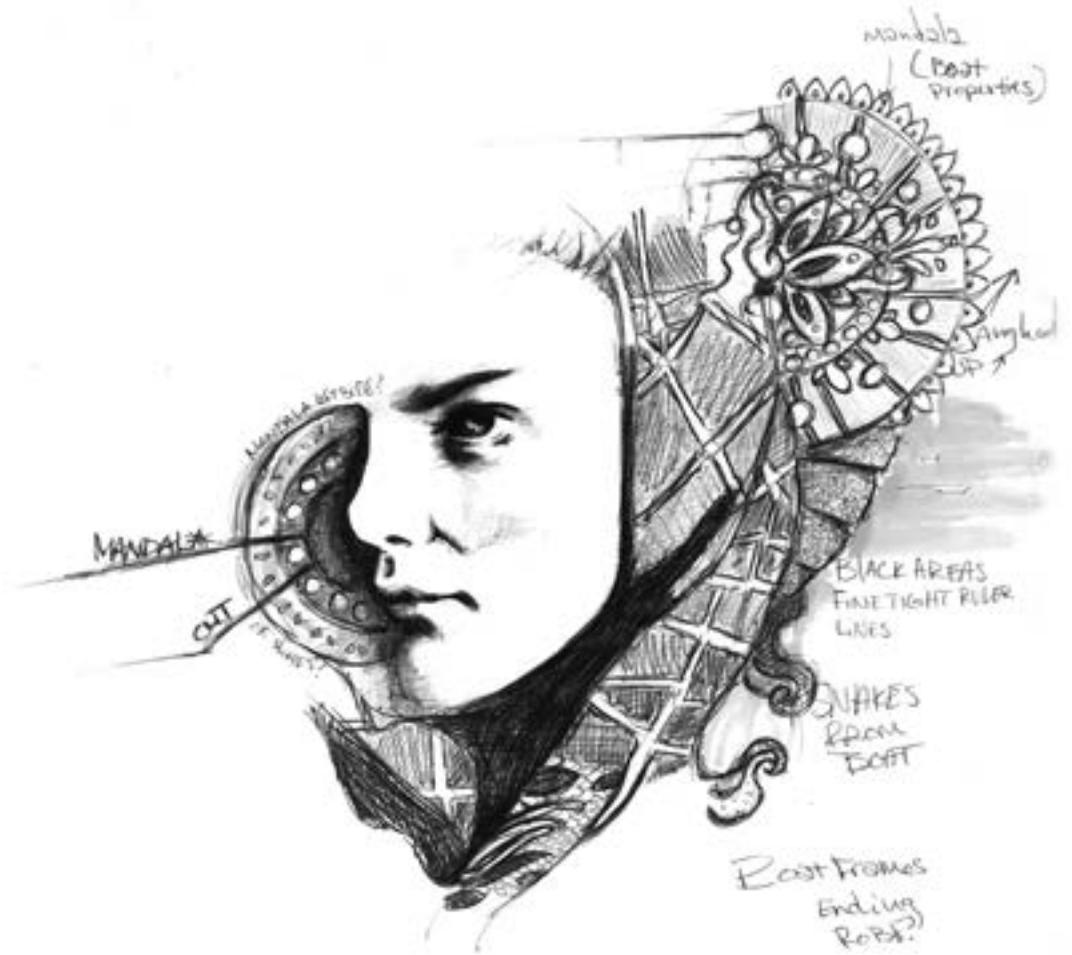
We carry on



Becoming One • Braden Tuck • Digital Photography



Order from Chaos • Jared Kench • Welded Sculpture



Age • Nicole Babcock • Ink on Paper



Riding The Gust • Kirsten Elson • Welded Sculpture



The Lonely Red • Kelly Greene • Oil on Canvas



Kabuki Warrior • Lynnsey Benson • Acrylic on Canvas



Organic Free Form • Lauren Dwyer • Ceramic



Azure Capriccio • Lily Ye • Oil on Canvas



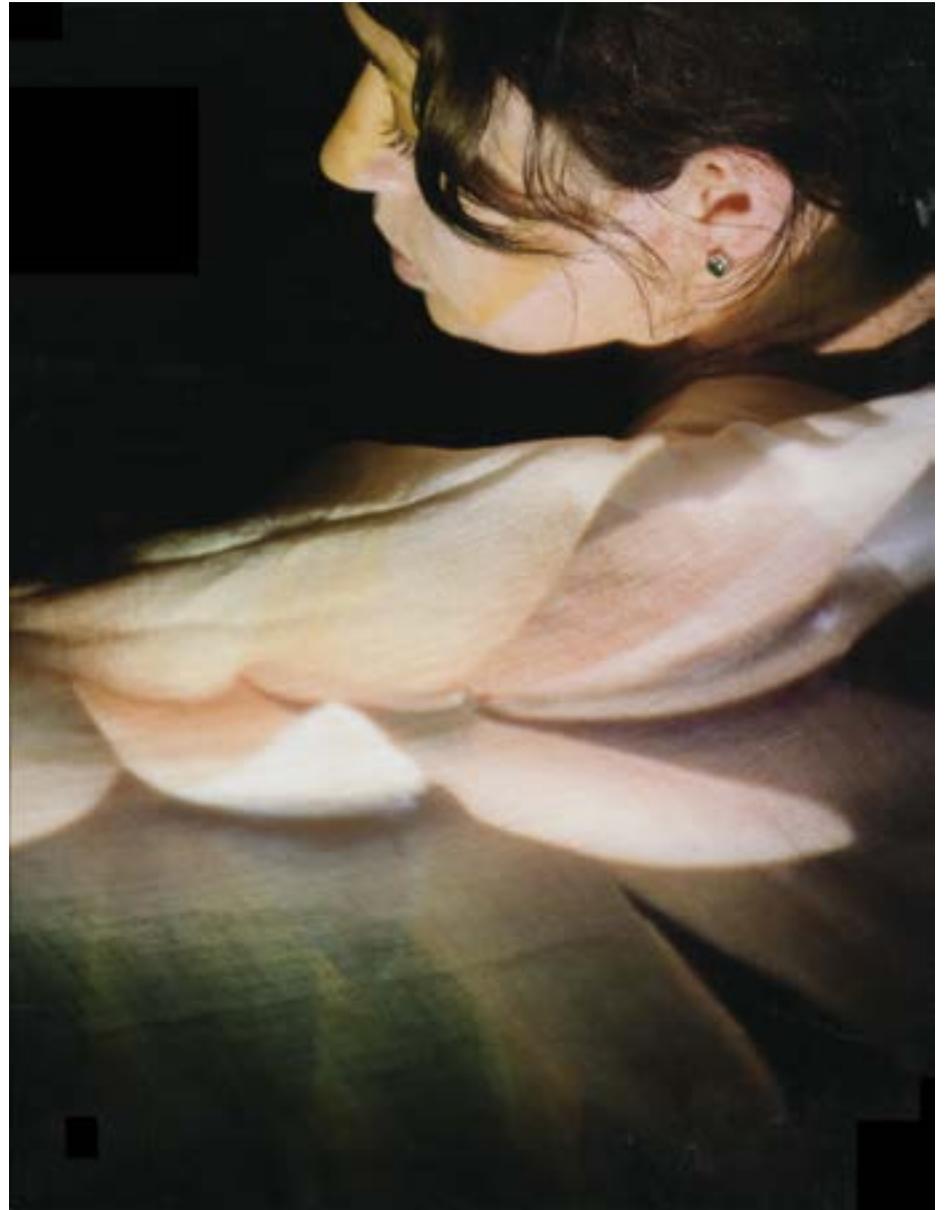
Gate • Joy Margheim • Welded Steel



Eyes Into the Soul • Lisa Archilla • Acrylic on Bristol



Journée d'Automne • Courtney Railing • Ceramic



Birth of Beauty • Jennifer Avens • Digital Photography

Knotted Noose

By James Murphy

Two knots entwined in red lace
Each a valve, a hospice to my blood
A caregiver to my sweet syrup
Once a single loop, time elapsed, and all was dust, a putrid musk left to rust

I am but a Man defining what is, what can
I am but the Wind rolling deep, whistling my tune
A melody she will keep

A sea filled with boats of drunken men
Sad and sorrowful, with delusions, what could have been

One knot, doubled to form the noose
Around this neck, the hospice to my breath



Pathetic Need • Krista Zimmerman • Oil on Canvas



Abrasive Mug and Reitz Sculpture • Nick Svirlich • Ceramic



Where I Belong • Valerie Parrish • Digital Photography



The Orchid • Jennifer Avens • Digital Photography

Playing Chess

By Sarah Collins

Lisa came home today.

From my window upstairs, I watched Dad creep our old Toyota into the driveway and partially onto the yard to get Lisa's door as close to the house as possible. I saw her skinny arm through the window. I could see her pause for a moment to gather the strength to move.

Don't get out of the car. Don't get out of the car. Just drive away.

Lisa got out of the car.

She was so pale. Even from upstairs, I could see that a breeze would blow her over. That stupid hat that she always wore to cover up her head was garish and made her look more colorless. I gave her that hat as a gag gift the first time she went through chemo. Before the remission. Before it came back. Before.

Lisa swayed back and forth as she walked up to the door. Dad quickly came around the car to help her, his long stride eating the distance between them. Just as Dad reached her, Lisa's legs collapsed. She crumpled to the ground like a doll.

I turned from the window and glared at my desk until I couldn't see it anymore. I wiped the tears from my face and paced in my room, taking just five steps before having to turn around. I was trapped. My heart beat, a tattoo in my chest, jumped as I listened to Dad call for Mom. I heard the door open. My parents brought Lisa into the house

to rest. Not to her bedroom next to mine but to the hospital bed that the hospice nurse had set up where the dining room table had been. Because this time Lisa wasn't coming home to rest and recover. She was coming home to die.

Lisa first got diagnosed with leukemia when she was twelve. Being two years younger than her, I had a hard time believing that she was sick. She didn't look sick; to me, she was still my bossy big sister that could do anything. I thought that nothing bad could happen to Lisa.

I was so naive.

Mom and Dad started giving Lisa whatever she wanted. After a few weeks, we were practically living in the hospital with her. After my first few visits, the hospital became a boring place where Lisa lay in bed and the nurses asked me not to run in the halls. So, I started to find ways to entertain myself. The best fun was borrowing a wheelchair and racing other kids down the halls until my activities were brought to my parents' attention. The nurse told my parents that if I kept causing problems, I would not be allowed to stay. For the first time in months, I felt like my parents were actually looking at me. I watched them watching me and was hit by how tired they looked. Mom started to cry, and Dad took me from the room.

I remember standing in that hall looking up at him even though he was squatting down to be eye to eye with me. His big hands held onto my shoulders. He had stubble on his cheeks, and his eyes were red and glassy.

"Lori," he said to me. "I need you to be good. Your sister is very sick right now, and I don't want to have to take you home, because I need to be here." Dad's hands shook as he held me. Maybe he thought if he held me tight, he could will me to be good. To just stay put.

For the first time in months, I felt like my parents were actually looking at me.

“But she doesn’t even look sick,” I said, bewildered.

“Oh sweetheart, I know that she seems okay. But, now that we know what’s wrong, the doctors are going to give her special medicine. The medicine will make her sick, but after all the treatments, she can

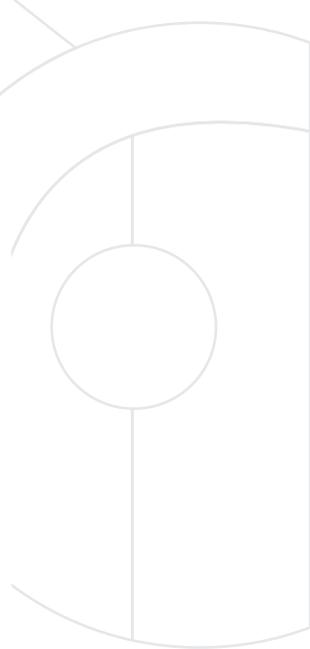
...Lisa ran her hand through her hair and ended up holding a fistful of it in her hand.

come home, and we’ll all be okay.” Dad’s voice cracked at the end. Looking back, I wonder if he was trying to convince himself as much as me.

“It’s so boring in there!” I said. “I need something to do.”

Dad was quiet for a moment, thinking. Then he stood up, grabbed my hand, and we walked through the hospital. We ended up in the gift shop. It was bright and colorful, with balloons that said things like “It’s A Boy!” and “Get Well Soon.” There was a whole wall of cards and hospital paraphernalia, including hats, clothes, and stuffed animals. Dad walked us past all this to the back of the store where we found the games. There was a deck of cards, puzzles, and some old board games. Dad chose a dusty rectangular box: a chess set. I tried to get him to understand how much I needed the stuffed animal on the wall. He didn’t buy into my plea, and instead, I got a puzzle. In the check-out line, I laughed at some weird hats and balloons. It was nice to see something funny for a change. Dad and I walked back to Lisa’s room. Despite having his arms full of games, he held my hand all the way to the room.

Lisa was awake by the time we got back. She looked curiously at what Dad had bought. As Dad explained the rules for his stuffy old game, I dumped my puzzle onto the floor and started working on it. I soon realized that puzzles are a torture device to drive all children insane. I shared this epiphany with Lisa, which made her laugh. Grinning, I jumped onto the bed. I watched Lisa and Dad finish their game of chess.



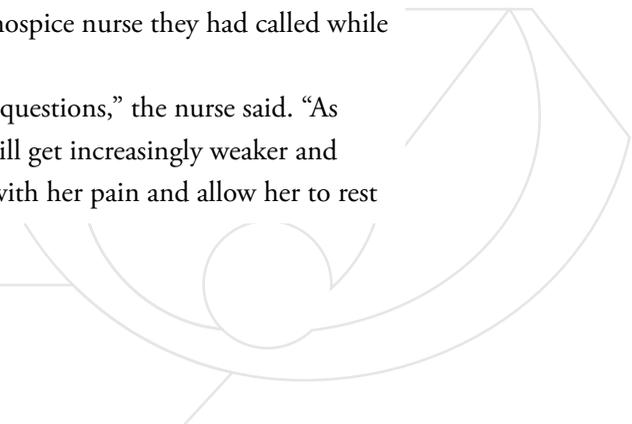
Chess became the obsession of our family. Dad would play with Lisa. Then I would play with Lisa, and Dad would “help” me, at least until I learned the rules and could play for myself. Even Mom would play chess with us. We would keep score of the wins, do mini tournaments, and even play speed chess to pass the time. We spent hours every day playing chess together. Anything to take us away from that hospital room, if only in our minds, was priceless. It was something that we could still do together as a family since Lisa couldn’t do too many things.

But chess didn’t make everything better when Lisa started throwing up. And then she lost her hair. It started out by thinning and eventually came out in huge clumps. One day when we were playing a game, Lisa ran her hand through her hair and ended up holding a fistful of it in her hand. She stared at it with shock and then started to cry. Looking at the hair in her hand, I stiffened in horror, grabbed my backpack, and raced out of the room. Hair was supposed to stay on heads. I ran to the gift shop and used my school lunch money to buy the hat that had made me laugh when I was there with Dad. I gave Lisa the bright, silly hat, and she wore it every day in the hospital.

Now, Lisa was home, and I had to watch her die.

Pacing in my room made it hard to hear what Mom and Dad were talking about downstairs. Was Lisa okay? I knew that she was going to die, but she couldn’t die right now. She just couldn’t. I opened my door and tiptoed down half the stairs and sat there listening to my parents talk to the hospice nurse they had called while I was panicking in my room.

“Give me a call with any other questions,” the nurse said. “As the doctors explained to you, she will get increasingly weaker and unresponsive. The IV should help with her pain and allow her to rest



as much as possible. When the time comes, you call me or the other number that the doctor gave you.” The nurse’s voice was calm and professional. Impersonal, even, because the nurse didn’t know that we had been fighting cancer for five years. Five years of helping Lisa fight to live, a fight that we lost. Lisa was going to die before she even got to turn eighteen. A child forever.

When the nurse left, I continued down the stairs and saw my parents hugging each other as if they could absorb each other’s strength. I knew better. There was no getting off the sinking ship.

I marched by my parents, keeping my eyes focused on what was in front of me. My mission: to see if Lisa was still breathing, because how could I know she was not dead unless I could see her breathing? I needed to hold her hand and know she was alive. I rounded the corner into Lisa’s makeshift room and came to a stop. She was not moving and looked like a ghost: pale, emaciated, and hairless. I observed her from the door, unable to take a step inside to check on her. I watched the blankets rise and fall. A wave of relief passed through me as I realized she was asleep. Not dead. Not yet at least.

I stepped into the room and held Lisa’s hand. It was dry, warm, and so light—almost like she could just float away. I was afraid. I pulled a chair up by Lisa’s bed and just watched her breathe. There is only so long that you can sit and do nothing but worry, fear, and grieve. I got up and fussed about the room, straightening the chairs, drawing the curtains on the bay window, and placing Lisa’s water onto the table by the bed. On the side table, I had a nasty little shock. The beat-up old cardboard and plastic chess set sat ready for a game when Lisa felt up to it. I wanted to crush it. A game. Lisa didn’t have time for a game. She didn’t have time left for anything.

I needed to get away and made my way out of the dining room and into the kitchen. I wasn’t the only one there. Mom was leaning

over the sink, a defeated slump in her shoulders. In the five years since Lisa first got sick, Mom looked like she had aged twenty. Her hair was wispy and had more streaks of grey in it than color. Despite how awful she looked, I was too angry to care.

“Why did you set up the chess set?” I seethed.
“She won’t be well enough to play a game.”

“She loves that game,” Mom said listlessly. She looked so broken. “Whenever we play it together, it takes her mind off the cancer. Maybe just knowing that the game is there if she wants it will comfort her.”

I wanted to disagree with her on principle, but I knew that Lisa loved the game, which was why I didn’t get rid of it when I saw it. One time after the cancer came back two years ago, Lisa and I were playing a game of chess in her hospital room. Mom and Dad were outside talking to the doctors.

“Lis’, why are you so obsessed with chess?”

She thought about it for a while, moved a rook, and then said, “Because I can’t really play it by myself. I mean, I do sometimes play both sides if no one else is here, but that’s no fun. When I get to play with someone else, they focus on me. Try to outsmart me. It’s like a conversation but with game pieces instead of words. Sort of like a connection that lasts for as long as the game goes on. You know?”

I told her that I didn’t know anything about that, but I did know how to take her bishop. She smiled. I took her bishop. Then she took my queen. Checkmate. Drat.

Knowing that I was losing her, I thawed a little and told Mom about our conversation. Her eyes got misty, and she opened her arms wide to give me a hug. I flinched. The weight of her grief was too much. I didn’t want to share it when I was drowning in my own.

She was not moving and looked like a ghost: pale, emaciated, and hairless.

That day, we had all reached a kind of equilibrium. Dad sat in his chair in the den and read the newspaper but never flipped a page. Mom mindlessly did chores around the house and checked on Lisa every half hour. I didn't leave her side, having made Lisa's life was down to one breath at a time, and it was unimaginable to miss that last one... my own little nest of blankets and pillows on the floor next to the hospital bed. And Lisa slept. When she did wake up, she was dazed and disoriented. She was never awake for long. We were all just barely holding it together. But Lisa must not have gotten the memo, because three days into our vigil she stopped breathing.

During my watch, I sat on my blankets with my eyes on her chest and matched her breathing. As time passed, the breaths she took were less frequent, and I counted the time in between. When I counted to fifteen and she still hadn't taken a breath, I frantically called for my parents. I didn't look at them. I was still counting. Eighteen. Nineteen. Twent—Oh, thank God. Lisa gasped another breath. We all watched and waited, unable to turn away even though there was nothing else to do. Lisa's life was down to one breath at a time, and it was unimaginable to miss that last one, the moment when she would leave me. Still, I kept matching my breath with hers. One long sigh escaped her lips, and I counted and counted. Tears filled my eyes. Thirty-nine. Forty. Forty-one. The world started to go grey, so I took a breath. Lisa didn't. The light from the bay window bathed the room in gold, and all I could think about was that she couldn't die on such a nice day.

I felt a touch on my shoulder. Turning, I saw Dad looking at me with tears in his eyes. An awful wailing sound came from Mom as she petted at Lisa's arm as if to wake her up. The world rushed back into focus, and I brushed Dad's hand off. I walked over to Lisa's chess set

and knocked it over and let the pieces stay where they fell. I ran from the room. I ran from the house. I ran until my lungs burned, and I ran out of tears.

I kept running until I ended up at the park where Mom used to take Lisa and me to play. Back when everything was fine and it was Lisa and Lori against the world. A child's world. The laughter of the kids playing in the park on that beautiful sunny day was too much to take. I walked away from the children to the stone tables in the far corner of the park.

I sat down and stared at nothing. I don't know how long I sat there before the old man approached me. He carried a small leather case in his age-spotted hands and stared straight at me. He started making his way across the grass to my table. I glanced around to see if he was looking at someone else, because who actually talks to a stranger? The old man sat down across from me and asked if I wanted to play white or black.

"What?" I said, confused.

"White or black?" he enunciated carefully, like I was the one who might need her ears checked.

The old man opened his case. Inside lay chess pieces but no board. In horror, I realized that the table itself had the board inlaid into the stone. I glanced around and saw two other stone tables being used for the same purpose.

"Chess?" I cried out bitterly. "You want to play chess?"

The old man looked at me and said, "if you don't want to play, then why are you sitting at these tables? On Tuesdays, they are reserved for people who enjoy playing chess. It's better than sitting on a stone bench alone, right?"

"My sister loved the game, too, but it never did her much good. She's dead."

Oh God, she's dead.

I was crying again. Sobs tore out of my mouth. I tried to stifle them, but whenever I thought I had gotten myself under control, I lost it again and cried all the harder. I felt a soft touch on my hand and looked up to see that the old man hadn't left. In fact, he was offering me a handkerchief. I took it tentatively. Finally, I was all cried out, and the old man started talking.

"My Ruth was called to heaven ten years back. A drunk driver ran her off the road. She never even had a fender bender before that. I won't go saying that it's going to get better, because there are days that I can still feel her next to me, and I get knocked sideways that I can't hold her again or tell her about my day. All I can say is how sorry I am that a young girl like you has to be so sad," he said.

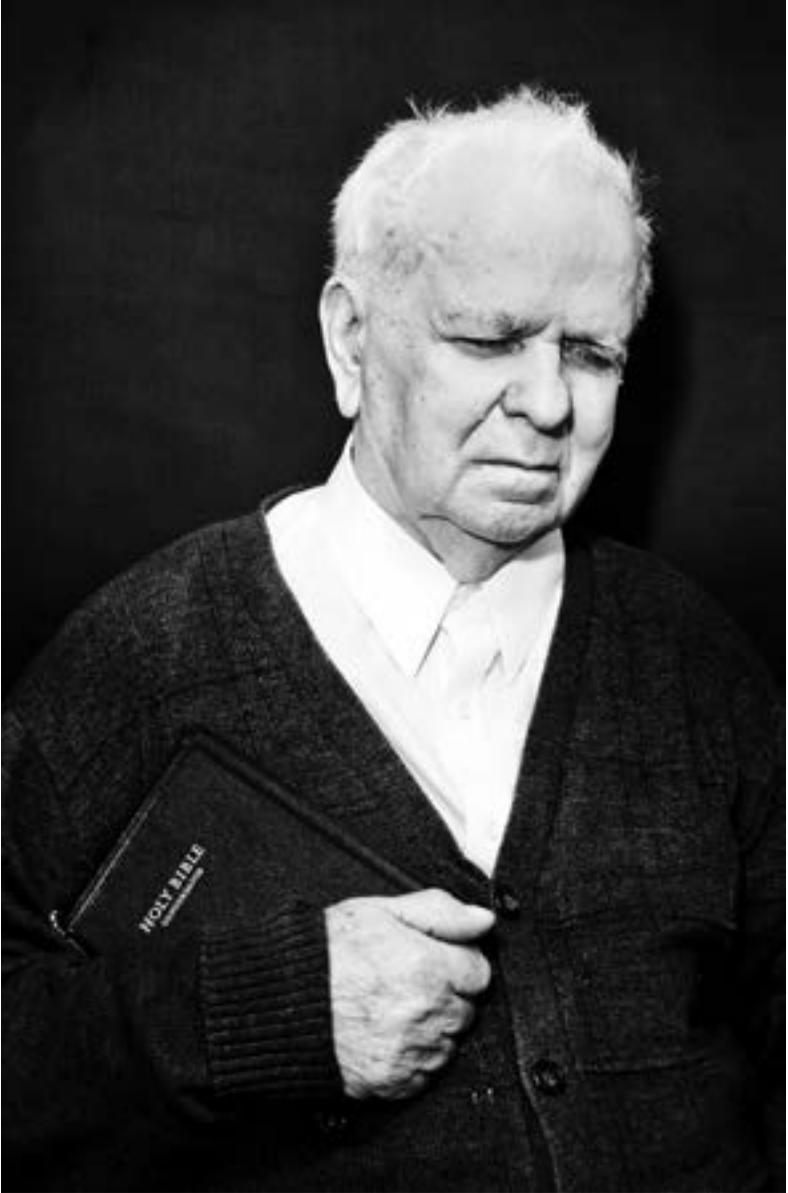
"Lisa, my sister, had cancer. Because she was always sick, she played board games to pass the time. It was a habit that we all started right before her first chemo." I gave a shaky sigh and continued. "Lis' really took to chess. It was her favorite game in the world."

The old man sat there a moment. Then he asked me again, "White or black?"

"Black," I whispered. ♡



Betrayal • Austin Fields • Mixed Media on Canvas



The Grandfather Project • Irina Burchak • Digital Photography



Independence • Dan Polacek • Digital Photography



Pabst Smear and *One Too Many* • Luke Entwistle • Oil on Canvas



See Through • Crister Korpela • Digital Photography



Bellezza • Chris Masoner • Digital Photography



The Mask • Garry Bastian • Digital Photography

This Man

Courtney Watson

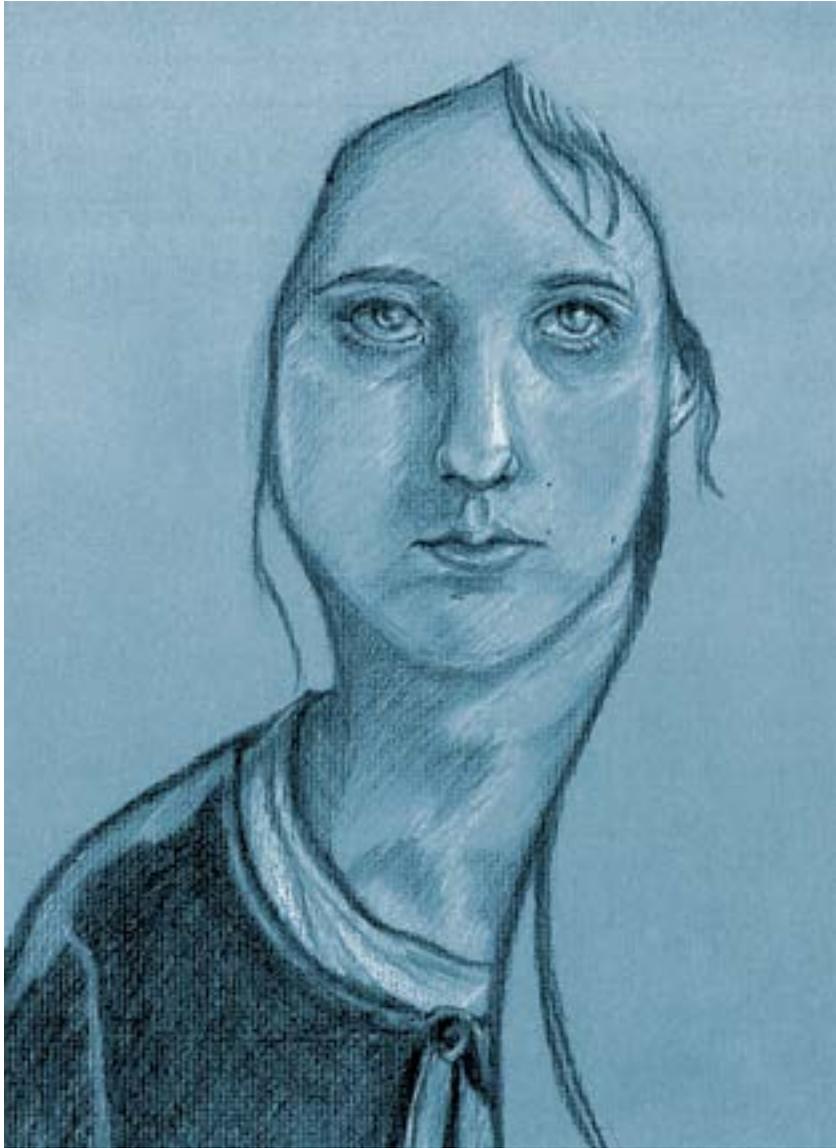
This man
 so covered in moss and dirty growth.
 He has harbored my heart,
 opened my soul.
 And I am binding the branches,
 cleaning the crevices,
 drinking all the muck and mud
 to make a new life.
 Climb inside.
 The hollows are warm and gentle,
 sweet and clean.
 And he is the most remarkable making
 I have ever seen.
 A shining something
 covered in silk,
 kissing on branches of butterfly milk.
 I lie in the grass, at his roots just below,
 staring at the marvel that stands high above.
 And I shout to the treetops,
 I am in love.



Nude in Nude Tones and *Nude at Rest* • Shannon Wonser • Oil on Canvas



Cameo Trio • Marilyn Hughes-Reed • Jewelry



Self-Portrait • Mariah Geiger • Chalk and Charcoal on Paper



Deericorn • Erica Vollmer • Mixed Media Sculpture



Bowl with Lid • Leslie Warren • Ceramic

Slow the River

by Mariah Lewis

I won't get out of bed. Not today. I don't know if I can't or if I don't want to. God. My body hurts.

"They were so young," they say.

"I'm sorry," they tell me.

As if statements make it better. As if sorrys touch the pain. But I have to smile, and nod, and say thank you. Smile, and nod, and say I know, so young. As if their ages meant something. As if the length of their time on this earth directly correlates with the value and meaning of their lives. I want to scream at them. But I won't. They think they're helping.

They. Them. All of them.

I wonder sometimes if they can see it. When they look at me, stare at me. Or, are they looking through me? There isn't much left to see, anyway. Maybe I'm invisible—finally.

I was staring at the computer screen. At a picture of a girl. Her hip cocked out, elbows tucked in, forearm raised. His face plastered on her t-shirt. So, that's what his life had been reduced to? A face on a t-shirt. A fucking mirror selfie. R.I.P. Anthony turned all backwards. He's just like those kids. Legacies turned into forgotten causes, forgotten names.

"Just some kid, Anthony Bradley," they say. The girl that wanted to know who jumped off the bridge.

They. Her.

It's all my fault. I can't stop drinking now. But, I have to fix me. I need to feel important enough to fix.



Anthony and I were having lunch in the art room. We met there almost every day to do homework, to talk. Debate about politics, and religion, and how I thought I knew so much more about his own beliefs than he did. But that day was different. There was a girl there. She was cute. Brenda was her name, legally deaf in both ears, but she had hearing aids and absolutely loved to talk. I liked to hear her. Anthony didn't say a word that day, only blushed when she spoke.

His voice cracked, right at the end. And we laughed because it was funny...

"Goodbye," was all he ever said to that girl. His voice cracked, right at the end. And we laughed because it was funny, because he was just a kid. We all were.

"You're blushing, Anthony," I teased.

"No I'm not!"

"I can see your face! You like her."

"No I don't!"

"You do, Anthony!" I always said his name. And he would smile. Braces. Crinkled green eyes.

The next year he sounded like a man.



Jan's smile didn't have an ounce of happiness when Tom was around. He made her squirm. Made her look down, made her nervous. Scared. He was the jealous type, intimidating.

I hadn't seen her since homecoming. When we dressed up, smiled. They weren't even dating then, but Tom saw her dancing with another guy and ruined her whole night. Pulled her hair at the roots. Made her lean in to listen. Made her cry in the bathroom. Made her quiet.

I remember his smile. I remember he was skin and bones. I remember, and I crumble.

"He's a nice guy," they said. "He's just off, but he's cool."

They always say the same things. Nice guy. He's all right. He doesn't hit her. He doesn't tell her she's nothing. He doesn't control her. No, not him. Someone else. Someone different. I nodded and smiled

then too. But I saw. How she stared at her fingers so intently when he looked at her that way. But...God. I never said anything.



I need a drink every day now. Just to move. Just to think. I can't stop crying. One second I'm okay, then I remember.

I remember Anthony's face when we first met.

"Talk," I'd said. "Just talk to me."

I remember his smile. I remember he was skin and bones. I remember, and I crumble.

"Suicide is selfish," they say. Because it's been a month, and they think it's okay now.

I don't say it's more complicated than you could ever imagine. I nod and smile and agree. The feeling of wanting to die. The need to die. I don't say the selfish thing is telling someone to live while every bit of themselves wants the opposite, just so you feel comfortable. I don't say you can't judge till you're on the edge.

They're all watching to make sure I'm functioning. Breathing. Eating. I've become a burden. So I've stopped talking. They can't see the bottle stashed under the bed. Don't say anything to me anymore.

Not their sorries. They don't touch my shoulder. They're content watching me crack. They might not even notice. But I can feel the little fractures all over me, my skin, my brain. Maybe it's the vodka talking. I'm rotting from the inside out. I feel crazy.



I met Anthony on the bus a few weeks into my second year in junior high. He was quiet. I don't think I had ever seen him talk. He wore a blue sweatshirt every day, pulled over his face, knees scrunched to his chest. I knew what it was like. To be alone. To feel alone, even around other people. So I made my way to him, little by little, at every bus stop.

"What's your name?" I asked him.

"Anthony." He was uncomfortable by me. I could see his little blonde hairs sticking out.

"You seem kind of lonely over here."

"Oh." And he grew quiet. He always got that way.

"Talk!" I said. "Just talk to me."

Soon my friends engulfed him. He was no longer a them, or a they, but an us.

God, the guilt.



We used to tease her—Jan—about the boy in the third grade who left paper hearts and chocolates on her desk. How he wrote her a poem, thought he was in love. Our little hearts fluttered. Innocent and confused. Innocent and curious.

We would laugh with her then, let her know it was okay to smile in the face of embarrassment. Sit in the field of the playground and tie those tiny white flowers into wreaths and bracelets.

We used to tease her, because she was so skinny. And I loved her. In a way that was friendly, in a way that was intense and subtle. In a way that now feels nostalgic. So nostalgic, her face has gone streaked with yellow light from the sun in my memories. Her smile was always perfect and straight and her beauty struck me. Until I told her enough. Of her beauty, of my love. I wonder if she believed me. I wonder if I ever could have convinced her.

I have a system. I drink just enough to numb my innards. To stop the words *I would have done anything* long enough to feel sane again. I just want to get out of bed without feeling like I'll fall apart. Everything inside feels like it's dragging. My thoughts. My actions. I see myself in the mirror, and I don't know who's looking back. Someone who let her friends die. Someone who should have seen the signs. My eyes look sunken. My skin pale. I deserve this. I deserve worse.

I dream about them. Seeing them in hallways, Class of 2011 banners on the walls, the year I graduated—the last year I saw them. Really saw them. In public places with crowds of people, and I catch a glimpse of their faces in the swarm. I look away and back again. Always touch their hands and say, "I'm so glad the stories are wrong! I'm so glad!" Until I wake up. Sweaty and weeping. And I cling to them, those moments. The few I have in my head, even after I know they're gone.

I thought I was going to do it. Last night. Just like they did, but different. I was so scared. Crying, shaking. Bottles of old pain pills

rattling on the bed next to me. I had run out of vodka, but it was okay because I had tequila left.

I cried to someone. Told him about the guilt. How I didn't know numbness could be filled with such pain. I told him how I left roses on the bridge one morning. I looked down, and my stomach churned, and I felt dizzy. Suddenly, I wondered what it would be like to fly. I told him how I thought I was going to do it. The same thing, but different. With pills and liquor. I told him how I made a promise. I told him about the *anything*. I've never cried to anyone before.

I drove over it. The bridge. With my cousin. We had been laughing on our way home from dinner. Talking about boys, talking about music. I got quiet, tense, and she noticed. I could feel her watching me from the corner of her eye. I couldn't breathe right. Right there. The same spot. Where they both had gone. The highest point on the Washington side, said the news.

Identified male; body found three days later. Anthony.

Unidentified female; body never found. Jan.

Didn't they see the mountain? The river? The sky? Did the rain touch their faces? Did they hesitate? Couldn't they see how slow the river goes?

I was on Facebook. Casually scrolling. I used to like to hear about people's lives. I wasn't the sort to get annoyed when someone updated their status about eating a sandwich or going to the beach with their boyfriend. I liked to know that other people's lives continued once I'd

left the room. That mine would continue when everyone else was gone.

“Can someone please tell me who jumped off the Glenn Jackson? I’m losing my mind!” Some girl. I knew her. We went to high school together, just a year ago. I was curious. Morbidly so.

“Just some kid, Anthony Bradley.” That was how the conversation ended. I was blindsided. Stared at the screen like it was a lie. It was a joke. He wasn’t that way. He wasn’t the kind of person you picture when you think of suicide. He was smiley, friendly. Tall as anything. Played basketball, dated, laughed.

I cried so hard. Right then. So hard I couldn’t breathe. I called for my mother.

“So young,” she said. “I’m sorry.”

I would have done anything.



“I’d like you to fill this out,” the doctor said, handing me a small rectangular piece of paper, little boxes filled with little words. “Be honest,” she urged. I had been having panic attacks. Suddenly, they would seize me up, and I knew I was dying, if only for a minute. They were becoming difficult to deal with.

On a scale of 0 to 3 how often do you feel hopeless?

On a scale of 0 to 3 how often do you feel helpless?

On a scale of 0 to 3 how often do you feel you’d be better off dead?

On a scale of 0 to 3...

I lied on the boxes. In my head I scored 24/24 points possible. On the paper I scored a 15. I didn’t want my mother to see. That I want to die.

“It’s a depression test,” the doctor revealed, as if I didn’t know. I was considered high risk.

I wanted Prozac. They gave me Diazepam.



Jan always smiled with her fingers over her lips. I think of that as I press my face into this pillow. I would poke her knees, knobby and round.

“I think I love Anthony,” I told her one night. We had built a fort with sheets that smelled like a damp closet. Twisted ourselves between pillows and blankets and laptops. She studied for her last high school exam. I didn’t do much of anything.

We had built a fort with sheets that smelled like a damp closet.

“Do you?” Another excuse to put the books on hold. She laid on her side and waited for me to speak. She always waited.

“I think I do. He’s not like anyone I’ve ever met. He’s better.”

“A total, beautiful, sexy, superior being?”

“Absolutely.” We laughed for too long. It was late. We didn’t want to wake her parents. We felt innocent again, childish, as we hushed ourselves. The distance had grown between us, but as the eve of our adulthood came nearer, and fear set in, our hearts searched for each other. And there we were.

And even then, I should have seen. The bit of sadness in her eyes.

“He’s one of us,” I whispered once we’d gone quiet, and the air felt still and warm again.

“One of us?”

“Yeah... He understands, you know? He gets it. Life.”

“You haven’t changed,” she said. “You’re the same as you always were.”



“My parents are getting a divorce,” Anthony said. We were in my car. It was cold, I was playing music.

“Oh. I’m sorry,” was all I could think of. I don’t know how to comfort people. I didn’t want him to think I didn’t care. “Are you okay, Anthony?”

He didn't respond. Just said he found out a few days ago. That his mother is moving, taking his sisters.

"What does your religion say about divorce?"

"That it shouldn't happen."

"Are you worried?"

He shrugged. And we listened to the music.

He killed himself six months later. October. He didn't even leave a note. I never did know why. If questioning his faith had been too much. What struggles his heart had faced. He left his backpack on the bridge.



It was just past midnight. January 28th. I was still awake. I never slept. The drinking started a week before. I was drunk when the phone rang. When a friend on the other end cried to me and told me that Jan had gone missing weeks before, that she was most likely dead. Drifted down somewhere, nobody knew. They didn't find her body, but passers-by—the drivers that didn't stop, that didn't wonder what a girl was doing on the bridge—they watched as she fell.

"No...No. I have to go," I told her. "I have to go, I'm sorry." I drank more. While her parents threw her things away. Culture, they called it. Didn't want her face on the news. Her own friends didn't know she was gone. Was she meant to fade? Was she meant to be cast away with her things? Her clothes, her books? I thought it an injustice. While I nursed my drink, while I thought of days long gone. Of promises never kept. She would cease to be visible. Culture. And yet, I kept it all to myself.

She had needed me, that friend. My best friend. And I left her.

I had become a them. Become passive and indifferent.

I've let my body imprint this bed.



My friends told me one day while I was at the gym that they couldn't keep worrying about me. I think that was the moment I knew they could see it. I had been starving myself. For no other reason than my medication made food wholly unappealing. The shell of me. The hollow bones and sludge organs. They just didn't want to say. Didn't want to see. Didn't want to hear. That I was so sad. That I was drunk and high and messy and fucked up. That I felt like parts of me were ripped apart. They wanted to think I was doing okay, like they were. That yes, bad things happen, but we move on. I couldn't move on because he left his backpack on the bridge and jumped. Because, she didn't turn to see the mountain, and they threw her things away.

...all I had for comfort were filtered cigarettes and the nip on my skin.

I stopped taking the medication. It made me feel like I wasn't really there. Just drifting. Now I sit and think of their bodies bloated and sinking. Skin torn. Eyes watery and clouded. Infested with foreign life. Eating away. Blood drained. Bones exposed.



I woke up angry one day. I threw all the alcohol away, and that was it. I'd never felt so relieved. Never wanted to change so badly.

I dug it out of the garbage can. Just one more night of sleep.

I'd planned a one-day trip to the beach the next week. I needed to separate myself for a while, see something beautiful. It had been four months, and I wanted to write again. I wanted to draw again.

I could listen to music without the ache. I could smile without the cracks deepening. I wanted to feel connected. I had stopped weeping, stopped the *anythings*.

The beach was cold, rainy, and all I had for comfort were filtered cigarettes and the nip on my skin. How could I expect warmth in March?

I stared at the ocean. I felt my hands hold onto the rocks of the seawall, the bits of earth sinking in until they broke the skin. I made myself walk. Alone. I watched the sun in a state of setting, for that's all it did from the moment it rose. Saw the waves crash. I felt the blank numbness of a Godless sky. Until I found the tide coming in. Fast and frightening, I hadn't noticed, but I'd gone so far, I was away from the rest of the world, surrounded by rocks and sand and a closing tide.

And I felt it. Fear. It rose to my head and fell into my limbs. Each time the water pushed itself towards me, there was a long, drawn-out silence. Nothing was still, but it felt that way. Felt still in the way the air pulled against my ears. And I may sound crazy, but I liked it. There was a serenity I can't describe. I sat back and let the water touch my feet. My shins, my knees. Until the tide shrank away with my panic. It was all so very clear, just for a little while. I knew then that it was all I needed.

I could feel myself breathing. In and out and in again. The misted air, the taste of salted sea. Wet legs and numb fingers. I danced then. I screamed then, alone and distant. I could feel myself breathing, and I wondered...couldn't they see how slow the river goes? That it grows, expands, and becomes the ocean? 🌊



Unknown Beauty • Egle Zalpys • Digital Photography



Peaceful • Deborah Corzine • Digital Photography



Hint of Me • Brooke Thomas • Digital Photography



Coyote Wall • Lauren Dwyer • Digital Photography



Time Tale • Cristi Jenkins • Digital Photography



Sacred Space I • John Mangan • Oil on Canvas



Oliver's Reflections • Elise Cryder • Oil on Canvas

Go Electric

By Justin Henderson

You caught me off guard
Monday morning when you called.
I was only begging for a dream,
only slightly aware,
and I'm sure that you knew
there was a difference in time.
I listened to your message,
and three hours later
I was painting a wall.
I took you there once
to meet Alice; she's dead now,
and I'm hesitant to respond,
but the wall is white again.
It was purple yesterday.

My grandfather built that house
and the foundation it sits on,
the steel beams from the railroad,
and hearing you is like a nose bleed.
I've been working in the
apartment under the house—
the one on the right—
and that's where I was painting the walls.
Tammy lived there, and
she's a drug addict now;
she painted everything purple.
You've given me a lot to think about
while I paint, and everything else.

And I was tearing out these carpets
that looked like the ones in your
basement, where we would feel
real cultured on Fellini and
real prestigious on other things.
Looking back it was kind of
funny, but it doesn't cross my mind.
I did see your recreation of
the dream sequence, and I was
too distracted to tell you anything about
it now, other than I thought that
it was okay, but I really wasn't
paying enough attention to know.

It's hard to admit that I knew you—
not that there's anything wrong with that—
and it's hard to paint over those walls,
because junkies must understand
something I don't. I guess I'd
rather not have you call anymore, and
it would be best if I deleted your message.
Florida is too far for my thoughts, and
I would congratulate you on your baby,
but you know me too well for that.
And you shouldn't have to worry about me;
I stopped seeing those people that
we used to see, and I can't remember
those explosions of chemicals.



Joy • Katerina McCann • Sterling Silver and Blue Star Sapphire



Luda at the Fort • Eva Dodd • Digital Photography



Dash in the Night • Parker Truax • Digital Photography

Caught behind the Lens

By Mariah Geiger

A pill too big to swallow falls from the sky
 Silent as it cuts through the air
 A city sleeps on, quiet and ignorant
 They never had time to see what was coming

I stand upon a leveled mount
 Surrounded by tumbled blocks
 The air still and stale
 I taste the salty ash against my tongue

The river runs a warm slate gray
 The road streams a bright red shade
 The sky becomes a hazy black
 I feel the bile crawl up my throat

They say this is what stopped the war
 So that we can say we won
 Red, white, and blue can now fly high
 Along these streets I walk alone

A child pushes two babes in a cart
 An elderly man sits with a soot-stained face
 Another stands before his dismantled home
 I watch on from the other side of the glass

This is what we wanted
 They say it was either us or them
 Yet no one stopped to think or care
 About the children whose parents will not return home

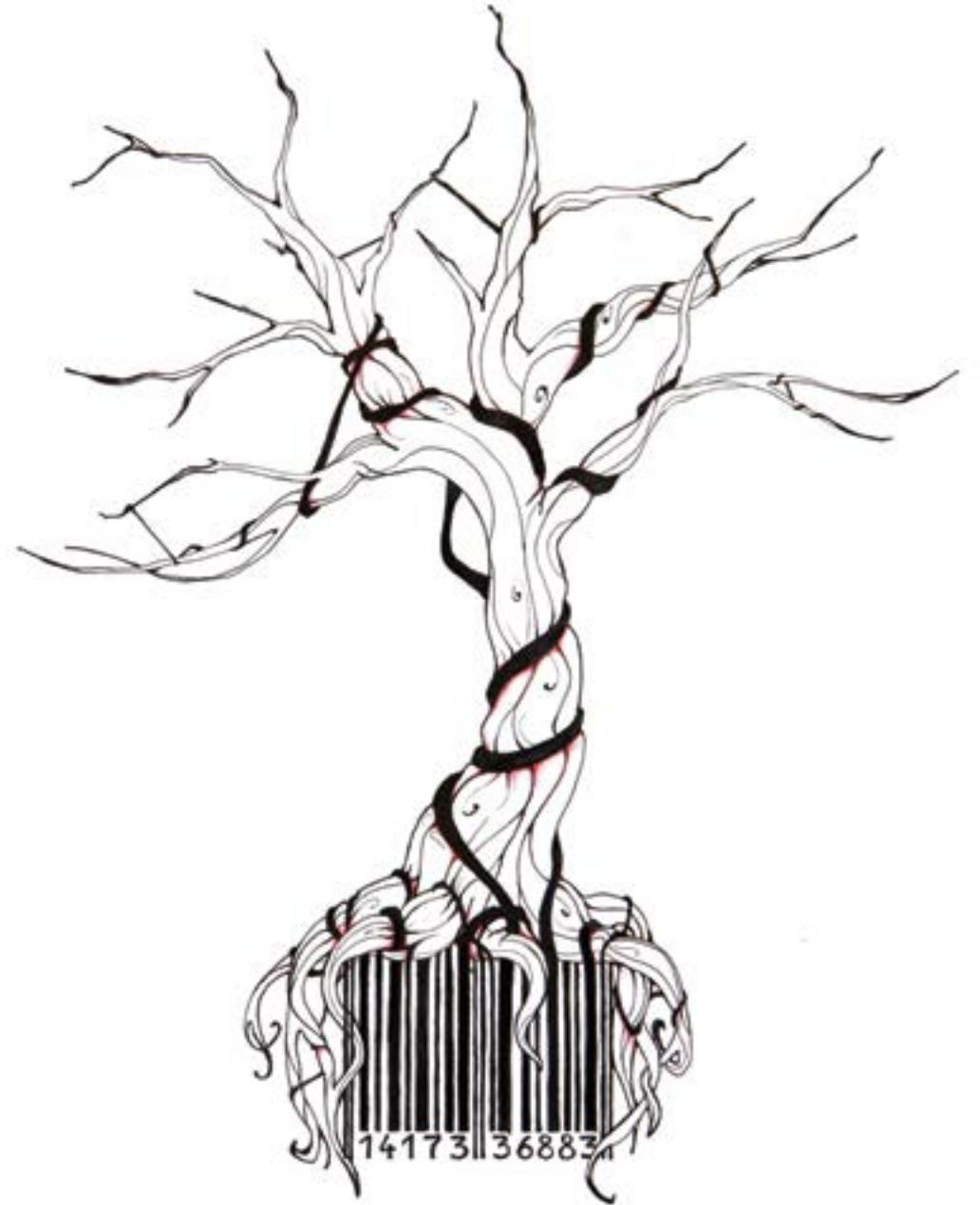
An arm caught within the monochrome rubble
 A doll lost within the dust and sand
 A lock of hair scattered with the wind
 Their deaths now trapped in my lens



Pandora's Twins: Death and Disease • Elizabeth Alexander • Ceramic Mixed Media



Political Machines • Riley Donahue • Digital Illustration



Consumerism • Aleksandra Hanchett • Ink on Bristol



A Box Life • Joshua Alconcel • Digital Photography



Night Shift • Jakob Swan • Silver Gelatin Prints

Unfinished Business

By Beth Means

On the day Madeline died, she sat behind her dilapidated desk with the faded, dingy partitions suffocating her. Every now and then, she'd peek her head out of the opening and gaze through her boss's office across the aisle just to catch a glimpse of the skyscrapers towering over the city.

She hardly thought this was where she'd be at twenty-eight. Originally, she had moved to this city to make a name for herself. Crazy, right? Everyone moves to New York in order to find fame and glory, but it was neither fame nor glory that she was after. It was the idea of freedom, the idea of adventure that made her hop on the plane and leave everything she'd ever known behind. Not that she was leaving much. It was Kansas, after all. Yep, small town farm girl leaves home and travels to a strange and somewhat foreign place. Sound familiar? But other than that one tiny detail, her life hardly resembled Dorothy's. If it did, she would have been able to return home one last time.

Still, it could be worse. While her memories were broken and scattered, Madeline could still remember how she died, which was more than a lot of spirits could say. Some had been in limbo for centuries, forever trapped between worlds. Unless she discovered what she had left to accomplish, it was only a matter of time before Madeline would be confined to limbo for eternity.

It must have been morning. The sidewalk was crowded with

tourists and natives. Through the bodies of the living, Madeline saw Annie gliding towards her. Annie was the first spirit who had said more than an automatic hello to her after she had arrived. Most spirits didn't interact other than simple pleasantries. She imagined that was because they had more important things to think about. Besides, who wanted to make friends in limbo when the hope was to move on as quickly as possible? Yet Annie wasn't that way, and it didn't take much for Madeline to see why. Annie wore a black fitted jacket, brown bodice, and a pair of dirty old boots. Her pale complexion made the dark circles under her eyes more pronounced, and her wavy, dark brown hair had been in the process of graying before she died. Annie had been dead for a long time, and judging by her kindness, she knew there was a slim chance she would ever make it beyond this realm.

"Ello, Maddie." Her voice rang in a thick Irish tone. "How ya faring today?"

That was always her first question, and she was only asking for one reason. "I still remember my death, Annie."

"That's real good." Annie grinned, showing her missing two front teeth. "There ain't nothing worse than not remembering who you is. So no matter what, you hold on to that memory. Ya hear me?"

It was easy to forget how much better she had it than others, and leave it to Annie to remind her. Madeline never wanted anyone's pity, but Annie was different. She genuinely cared.

"I hear you. Don't worry about me. Sometimes I just envy them, that's all."

"Envy who?"

"The living. Look over there." Madeline pointed to the street corner where a woman stood waiting for the light to change. The woman's long, red hair swayed in the breeze. She rubbed her bare

...Madeline could still remember how she died, which was more than a lot of spirits could say.

arms, warming them from the chill. “I would give anything to remember the feel of a cold wind on my face. I’ve nearly lost my memory of what it was like to touch or to have something touch me.” She lifted her hand to the woman’s arm but stopped herself. She

“Maybe we need to look at things backwards. Starting with where you died.”

wouldn’t feel anything anyway. The more she dreamed about returning to the world from which she was stolen, the more Madeline’s heart sank.

“It’ll get better.” Annie’s eyes shone with hope.

After everything she had endured, the years of anguish at never fulfilling what she was meant to, she certainly had a way of looking on the bright side. “You’ll find peace. I’m sure o’ that.” She changed the subject as an idea formed in her mind. “I’ll help you. Together we oughta find what you’re supposed ta do.”

But they had searched. Was Annie’s mind so far gone that she’d forgotten events that happened in limbo? Last time they attempted to find answers, it ended with Madeline more confused and depressed than before. “We have searched, Annie. I can’t handle any more disappointment.”

“What if we was just lookin’ in the wrong place? We looked at what you thought you left unfinished in your life. What if the answer’s needin’ to come from your death?”

“What are you suggesting?” Madeline asked.

Annie’s nose wrinkled. “Maybe we need to look at things backwards. Starting with where you died.”

Well, that was certainly a different way of looking at things. “Annie, that’s brilliant. I can’t believe I didn’t think of that before.” She envisioned the evening in question, the moment her life ended, but there was hardly anything new that she could pull from it. “I was driving home over the Manhattan Bridge. I had to swerve around a black SUV driving toward me, but there wasn’t enough time. It pinned me against the guardrail.”

She tried to picture the man behind the wheel at the moment of the crash. “Annie, I never saw the driver. Do you think that might be what I need to do? Find out who did this to me?”

“It’s worth a shot,” Annie replied, “and I know just where we should head first.”



Making their way through the crowded streets, it was impossible not to have people passing through them. A man in his late forties, smoking a cigarette, came up behind her. He passed through both Madeline and Annie like they were nothing more than air. He stopped momentarily and zipped up his coat as if there was a sudden drop in temperature. Madeline’s essence shuddered at the thought of the beastly man invading her space. Every time that happened, it always reminded her that she did not belong to their world. However, it didn’t slow Annie down; she was accustomed to it now. The crowd cleared up when they passed a stairwell leading to the subway. Madeline wondered where she would be right now if she had taken the subway that day. Perhaps she would still be working in that dull office, counting down the hours till six o’clock. Or maybe she would be with her family. She hadn’t seen them since her funeral.

It had been chilly that day, but her mother wore a black, knee-length dress with only a silk shawl to warm her bare arms. Her blonde hair poked out under a black cloche hat that tried unsuccessfully to hide her puffy, red eyes. Never once did she look up to view the casket. Madeline had stayed for the whole service, watching as they lowered her deeper into the earth. She couldn’t bear to see her family so distraught. All she wanted to do was wrap her arms around them. Instead, she stood powerless to bring them any comfort.

“Here we are,” Annie said, disrupting Madeline’s thoughts. She had barely registered where they were headed. The steep stone steps

welcomed them to the New York Public Library. Two stone lions sat on either side of the building on pedestals, guarding the entrance.

“Why’d we come here?” Madeline questioned.

“We’re here to find answers, and in order to do that I require assistance. There ain’t many upsides to bein’ like this, but I’m about to show you one.” Annie led the way inside the extensive building. The spacious room held two stories of books, which lined the entire outer wall.

Positioned down the center of the room were long, rectangular tables where people sat, quietly typing on their computers or reading books.

Sitting about five feet away from them was a boy in his late teens with headphones on. His fingers moved over the computer keys.

“This part is tricky,” Annie said, “but if done right, I can manipulate his mind and have ‘im take a look at the news report from the day you died. Could be somethin’ to tell us there.”

“Can it hurt him?”

“Shouldn’t, but to be honest, I ain’t never had the opportunity to ask ‘em.”

“Well, okay,” Madeline sighed. After all, what other choice did she have? “But be quick.”

Annie gave a small nod and moved closer to the boy. One moment Madeline saw Annie behind the boy and the next she was gone, vanished within the corporeal body. The boy stopped typing; he stopped moving altogether. She had never seen a human stop blinking.

After sitting still for nearly a minute, the boy began to type again. Madeline leaned in closer, attempting to catch a better view of the internet page he had pulled up. It was from a newspaper article in *The Times*. On the bottom of the front page was the story of the accident.

At 9:45 Friday evening Madeline Stewart was crossing over the Manhattan Bridge when she was struck by an oncoming car. The driver who caused the accident is none other than New York’s own

entrepreneur Donald Clayworth, the owner of three successful nightclubs located in the Manhattan area.

Madeline paused at the name. She knew that man. Well, at least she had seen him on TV. The nightclubs he ran made him famous. Singers, actors, musicians flocked to his establishments.

... Clayworth was heavily intoxicated... Stewart did not survive the crash.

“That’s it? For killing me he spends 30 days in jail?”

“What happened to him?” Madeline asked the boy with the vacant expression, no longer preoccupied with his state. A moment later, he started typing again. He brought up an article from a magazine.

Donald Clayworth was released today after serving 30 days in jail and agreeing to attend an alcohol treatment center. He will be unable to operate a motor vehicle for five years.

“That’s it? For killing me he spends 30 days in jail?” The top of the page gave her the date she needed, the date of her death: March 10, 2003. Now, what was today’s date? Madeline looked in the corner of the monitor and gasped when she read the numbers: 10/15/2013.

“Ten years! I’ve been dead for ten years?”

Without warning, Annie came hurtling out of the boy’s body. He gasped as he returned to his living state. Turning around, he looked for something, possibly an explanation of what had happened. His face went white. With a quick swoop, he grabbed the jacket hanging on the back of his chair and sprinted to the nearest exit. He didn’t even take the time to turn off his computer. By the look of him, she thought he might throw up.

“Don’t seem as long when you’re stuck here, does it, hon?”

Annie’s words barely registered in her mind. Madeline was too busy focusing on the idea that the person who had killed her was walking the streets a free man. “I need to find him.”



The only information either of them had to go on was the clubs. She had never stepped inside them, but they hardly went unnoticed. The stench of money, fame, and entitlement reeked through the glass doors, and everyone craved a whiff. Before Sinner's Paradise

The stench of money, fame, and entitlement reeked through the glass doors... even came into sight, they noticed the line of people wrapped around the building, desperate for a peek inside. For the first time, Madeline was pleased no one could see her. The club consisted of three stories

of dance floors and bars. The entrance from the street put them on the second floor, right into one of the dance floors. While Annie immersed herself in the crowd, Madeline made her way down the stairs, which opened to a darkened restaurant. The tables were covered with white linens, and in the middle of each sat a tea-light floating in a small vase of water. Although unnecessary, she maneuvered around tables and waitresses carrying serving trays, searching for any sign of Donald. She didn't truly believe she would find anything. Even though he owned the clubs, there was a slim chance she would find him there.

Madeline made her way back to the stairs when she noticed a table in the corner, nearly hidden from sight. She inched closer until the couple came into view. A woman in her early twenties with long, black hair sipped on a martini and laughed at a joke her companion had made. For a moment, Madeline felt she was invading their privacy. Then she caught a glimpse of the man.

Donald Clayworth. He downed the remnants in his martini glass, grinning in an arrogant way that made Madeline's essence run hot.

Are you kidding me? Have you learned nothing? She had a sudden epiphany. *Wait a minute. What if I've unconsciously had this anger toward him that I didn't even realize?* Forgiveness could take a while, but if that was what she had left to do, Madeline thought she could handle that.

Donald glanced up from his empty glass in Madeline's direction. His eyes widened in horror. She looked behind her, but no one was there. It was impossible that he could see her. Wasn't it? She moved slightly to the right, but his gaze followed.

Okay, that was enough creepiness for one life.

She headed back up the stairs, briefly looking for Annie before making her way outside, not caring who she passed through.

What had just happened? No one could see her. That's what being a spirit was all about.

The doors to the club flew open. Donald rushed, glancing in all directions, searching for something. He stopped in mid-stride when he spotted Madeline across the street.

It's not possible. It's all in my head.

A moment later he darted into the street toward her. She wanted to hide, but she couldn't move. What if it wasn't all in her head? Her questions became irrelevant when she saw the blaring lights of a city bus meet eye to eye with Donald. The impact sent him barreling backwards. His body flew through the air in what seemed like slow motion. Finally, he crashed onto the hard pavement in a distorted position. Her face froze with a look of shock and terror. She could not believe what she had just witnessed. One minute he was alive, and the next...how could this have happened? Was she responsible? But it no longer mattered. All her efforts, everything she had been searching for, were dashed away. How could she ever escape now? His death certainly led to her eternal damnation. He had been the key; she was certain of that.

Making her way through the crowd of stunned observers, Madeline towered over him. His stillness confirmed her worst fear. Blood covered his pinstriped suit, seeping into the street.

"Looks like you found 'im." Annie startled her. "What happened?"

"I don't really know. I think he saw me."

“That ain’t possible. Your eyes must’ve been playing tricks on you.” Annie gave a small smile, showing the gap where her two bottom front teeth should have been.

“It doesn’t matter now. Our efforts were all for nothing.”

Annie tilted her head. “Why d’ya say that?”

“Because he’s gone, and I have nothing.”

“Don’t fret, dear. All is not lost.” She smiled, but she couldn’t fool Madeline. Even Annie knew she would always be a lost soul.

A light tingle ran from Madeline’s palm to the tip of her finger. “Something doesn’t feel right, Annie.” The light tingle became stronger, washing over her entire body. “What’s happening?”

“You’re shining, Maddie. Shining like an angel.” Annie’s voice sounded distant. “I’ve seen it happen before. You’re bein’ set free.”

An invisible force tugged on Madeline, pulling her away. She could hardly see Annie anymore. Flashes of past memories ran through her mind. Madeline saw her childhood home, even smelled the freshly baked banana bread. Oh, how she’d missed smells. She breathed deeply, taking in the intoxicating aroma.

As her vision cleared, Madeline saw that she was back in that two-story farmhouse. She ran her fingers along the wooden banister of the staircase. It was not a dream. Clutching the door handle, she opened the front door, welcoming the cool wind on her face. The trees swayed in the breeze as if bowing in respect to the departing sun. This place was hers. This was where her eternity would begin. 🍷



Columbia River Series • Erin Merrill • Cyanotypes



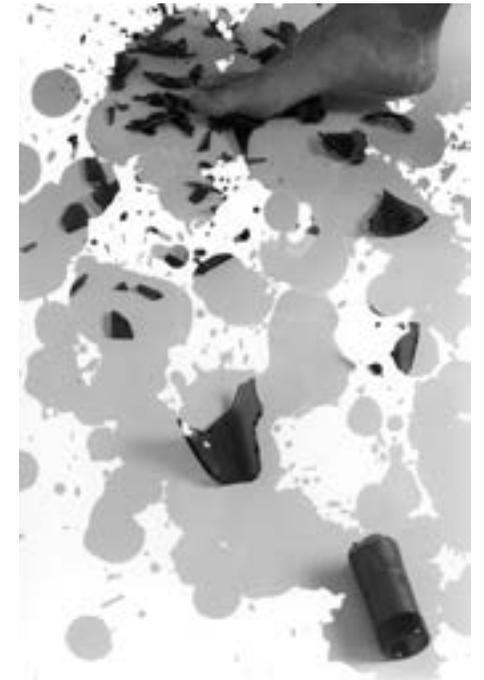
Unexpected Texture • Azure Calder • Digital Photography



Cannon Girl • Luke Acevedo • Acrylic on Canvas



Bedroom Guardians • Elise Cryder • Oil on Canvas

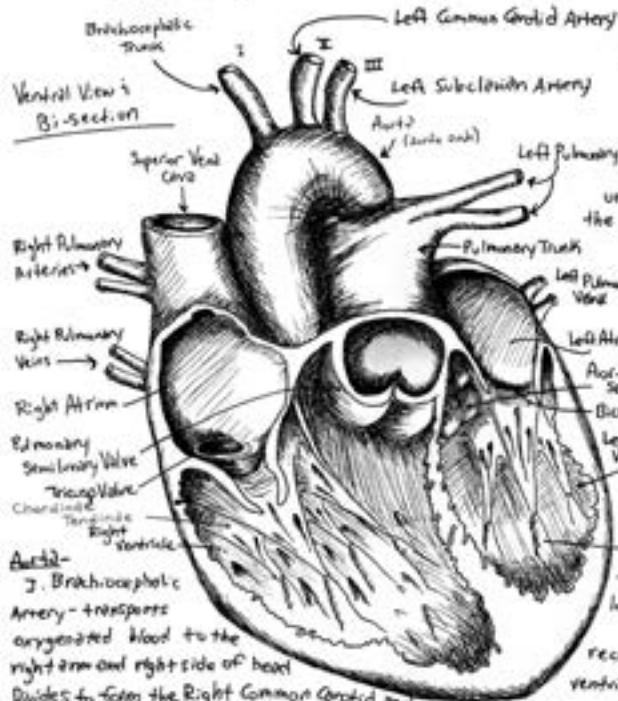


Where My Mind Goes to Play • Jonathan Retchless • Silver Gelatin Prints

The Heart

pg 20

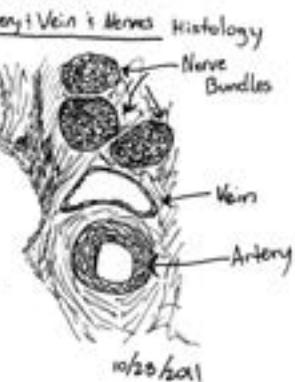
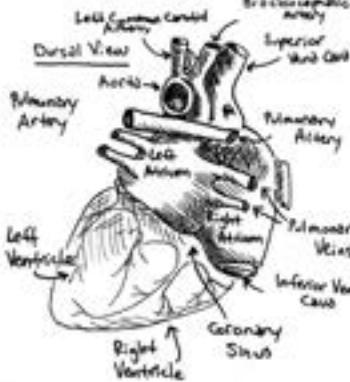
is a hollow muscular organ that pumps blood into the large elastic arteries.
It has four large chambers, seven great vessels, and four valves.



III Brachiocephalic Artery - transports oxygenated blood to the right arm and right side of head. Divides to form the Right Common Carotid and Right Subclavian Arteries.
II Left Common Carotid Artery - transports oxygenated blood to the left side of the head.
I Left Subclavian Artery - transports oxygenated blood to the left arm.

Great Vessels of the Heart With Associated Structures

- 1 Superior Vena Cava - carries unoxygenated blood from regions of the body above the heart
- 2 Inferior Vena Cava - carries unoxygenated blood from regions below the heart
- 3 Coronary Sinus - carries unoxygenated blood from the heart itself
- 4 Pulmonary Trunk - receives unoxygenated blood from the right ventricle after the blood passes through the pulmonary semilunar valve. Divides into the right and left Pulmonary Arteries
- 5 Right and Left Pulmonary Arteries - transports unoxygenated blood from the heart to the lungs where blood becomes oxygenated once more.
- 6 Right and Left Pulmonary Veins - transports oxygenated blood from the lungs to the left atrium of the heart
- 7 Aorta (aorta arch) - receives oxygenated blood from the left ventricle after the blood passes through the aortic semilunar valve. Has 3 Major Arteries branching off of it.



Vancouver Decay • Caylynn Lasko • Digital Photography

River City

By Renee Soasey

Britta succumbed to the back seat, sinking into its tufted leather depths. Overheated, heavily-scented air drifted in the confined space, cloying at her lungs. She often found herself stuffed into the back of whatever luxury land yacht her mother deemed necessary to elevate their social status over the neighbors, on the way to or from another therapy session or doctor's appointment her mother deemed necessary to keep her only child's edges tucked in properly.

Britta's edges, however, resisted the tidy three-corner folds her mother insisted on. Sooner or later her leg spasmed or her arm flopped out, and then those edges were flapping in the breeze for all to see.

Her hands trembled in her lap. It had been too long—she was past urge and descending into craving. She tried to distract her need. Out the window, lights glistened in the black river water along the highway. As a child, she had imagined a fairy-tale city resided below its surface: a friendly, mysterious, beckoning place. She would arrive to find a warm, long-awaited welcome from her true kin, people who understood and accepted her without reservation. Home.

"I still think we should look into private clinics. This decision seems hasty." Her father's deep voice, always pleading.

"I told you, I already did the research. This one has a high success rate, *and* it's covered by insurance. Must you always second-guess me?" Clipped, irritated tones—her mother's signature style.

Britta slipped her finger onto the metal button and pushed. Bracing air washed over her face. She gulped it in.

"What do you think you're doing? Shut that window! It's freezing outside." Her mother pulled the fur tighter around her taut neck.

"Can't you let her be for once? She won't even be able to open a window to get fresh air in that place."

"Oh for god's sake, a person could drown in all the drama you two come up with. I don't know how I manage to keep a clear head."

Britta sighed and tied another little knot of resignation in the ropes that bound her soul. The land yacht glided from the highway onto the bridge on-ramp. She watched the river recede as they began their ascent.

The city below the water twinkled in the darkness, whispering promises.

Her mother's hands shot out toward the windshield. "Look out!"

The car braked to a stop. Red and blue flashing lights whirled in a frenzy on the top of the bridge. A siren screamed in the distance.

She turned away from the clamor ahead and looked out the now-sealed window. The city below the water twinkled in the darkness, whispering promises. If she concentrated hard enough through the fog infiltrating her mind, she could just make out the voices. Her fingers closed around the door handle. One pull and the only barrier between her and freedom quietly gave way. She slipped out.

The icy metal railing startled her shaking hands into frozen stillness. Her breath misted on the cold air, forming little puffs that rose and dissipated in the wind. Could anyone read their signals? Was anybody there?

"Britta! Britta, what are you doing?" She turned her head to see her father standing against the open driver's door, beckoning at her. "Get back in the car, honey—it's too cold to be out here!" Well-meaning and clueless, as usual. She noticed her mother slide down in the front seat, attempting to become invisible as the curtains rose on the opening act of another drama.

Britta turned back toward the river. The flickering lights intensified in the choppy water, as if trying to send her a message. She strained to make out the meaning. Her numb hands clenched the railing. She placed one red Converse sneaker on the bottom rung, pausing to test its strength—or maybe her own. 🍷



L'Esprit Nouveau • Jean Luc LaFont • Welded Sculpture



Winter Woods • Viktoriya Camp • Acrylic on Canvas



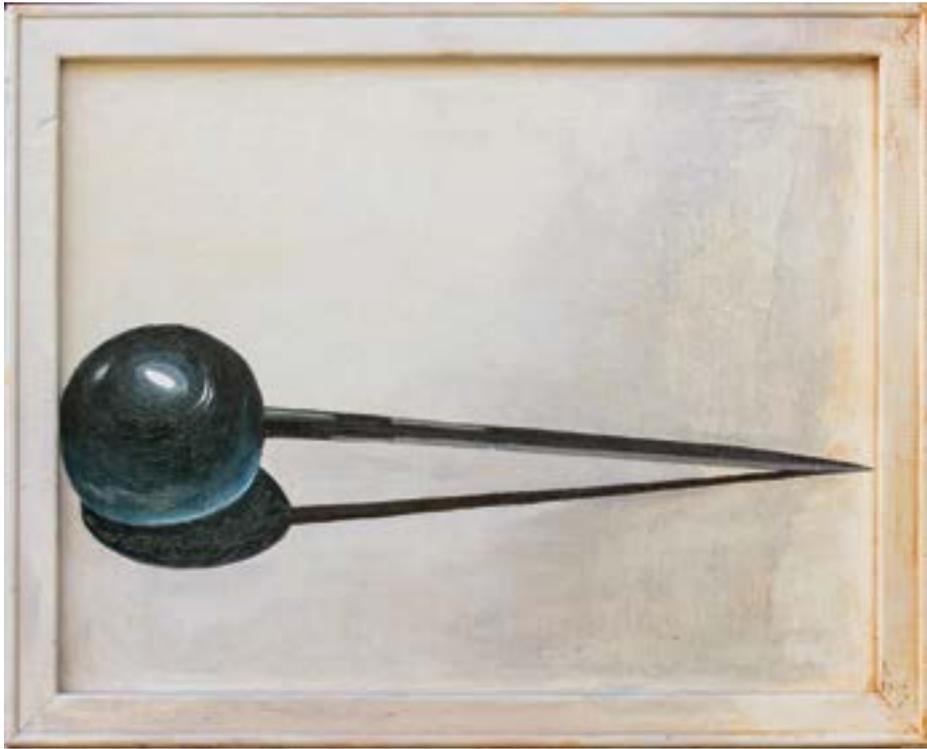
Dream Place • Juvele Canilao • Oil on Canvas



Sunset on Earth • Christine Bourquin • Mixed Media on Canvas



The Forgotten Soles • Tamira C. Blake • Ceramic



Sewing Room Floor • Mona Harris • Oil on Canvas



Blue Ringed and Poisonous • Cassandra Thompson • Oil on Canvas



Minature Monstrosity • Luke Acevedo • Digital Illustration



An Interview with Jonathan Raymond: Professionalizing a Writer's Mentality

By Marlene Hope

Jonathan Raymond is an award-winning writer who grew up in Lake Grove, Oregon, and currently resides in Portland. Known for his novels *The Half-Life* and *Rain Dragon*, his works have garnered both critical acclaim and prestigious awards, including his first collection of short stories, *Livability*, which earned him the Oregon Book Award for fiction in 2009. In addition, he is an accomplished screenwriter with credits that include the films *Old Joy*, *Meek's Cutoff*, *Night Moves* and the 2008 film *Wendy and Lucy*, starring Michelle Williams, which was based on his short story "Train Choir." *Meek's Cutoff* was nominated for the 2011 Sundance Film Festival Humanitas Award. In 2011 Todd Haynes and Jon Raymond were nominated for a primetime Emmy for their teleplay for the HBO miniseries, *Mildred Pierce*, starring Kate Winslet.

On February 13, 2014, I had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Jonathan after his reading for the Columbia Writers Series at Clark College. I asked questions about his writing career, and he also gave some advice for writers that are striving to become published authors. As we talked, I found him to be down to earth, open, and very kind. He is seemingly unaffected by the success he has enjoyed with his work. I hope you find Jon's insights as interesting and colorful as I did.

Hope: I read that you have just returned from working at the 2014 Sundance Screenwriters Lab as an established writer, mentoring and working with new writers. What led you to participate?

Raymond: They just asked me to do it. I don't know how or why I made it onto the list. I have worked with Kelly Reichardt on several movie projects, and we had three of our projects screen at Sundance. I guess there is a history with the Festival. I never asked why. I guess it comes down to when Sundance calls, you say, "yes, I'll do it."

When Sundance calls you say, "Yes, I'll do it."

Hope: I understand that Quentin Tarantino was there. Did you work with different writers, or did you conduct your own workshops?

Raymond: They have a pretty amazing system set up. They bring in 16 or 17 advisors, and then they select about the same amount of scripts that people are working on. Over the course of three days, every screenwriter or screenwriting team ends up meeting with five to six different advisors. Every script has a gauntlet of readers, getting one-on-one attention from very accomplished people. It is amazing for the students, and it is equally amazing for the advisors. It becomes a pretty emotional process for the advisors giving the feedback, and the participants become a tight community for a very brief time. To talk about people's creative material is to jump right into their deepest and most vulnerable thoughts. It's actually really fun.

Hope: You were saying earlier in the reading for the Columbia Writers Series today that you wanted to be a regional writer. We see this in many of your works and the familiar places you weave into your stories. When you concentrate your works on a certain region, does this restrict you in any way in the New York City publishing world?

Raymond: I don't know that there are any generalizations about what the New York publishing world wants or not. Writers exist everywhere, in different corners of the country and the world. Part of the publishing industry's reason for being is to collect those people

and their writing. There certainly is a strong community of writers in New York, but I don't get the sense that editors are less interested in something because it comes from outside of New York. I don't think it matters that much. In visual art it is important to be in New York or Los Angeles, but writers can sit in their little cabin anywhere.

The experiences are private, but in the writing and reading they become public.

Hope: When you adapted your short story "Train Choir" into the film *Wendy and Lucy*, I was pleased to see how closely the movie followed the original short story. The biggest change was the title. Was this your decision? If so, why?

Raymond: "Train Choir" just seemed too poetic. It reeked of an art movie—and it is an art movie. It is a good short story title, but as a title for a movie, it carries a different kind of baggage. It has to be on posters. There is something nuts and bolts about the actual story line of "Train Choir," so *Wendy and Lucy* became a pleasing, simple, stripped-down kind of title that stayed with the spirit of the story. But that was a debate; there was a long discussion.

Hope: In your book of short stories, *Livability*, there seems to be a focus on loss and life's difficulties. We see this in the loss of an old friend in "Benny"; "Old Joy" with friends Kurt and Mark trying to regain a friendship lost through time; "The Coast" with a husband losing his wife; and "Train Choir" with loss of money and companionship. In "The Wind," we see a young boy facing the imminent death of his grandfather and the realities of growing up. Why are you drawn to these types of themes?

Raymond: It can be a little morose. There are a few things that come to mind. Part of the pleasure and necessity of fiction, both as a reader and a writer, is sharing these common experiences. The experiences are private, but in the writing and reading they become public. We come to understand that these experiences are common to other people, and we are not the only ones dealing with these kinds of issues in our own lives. So in that way, as sad as a story can be, the

fact of it becoming a story and becoming a shared type of experience is a form—I wouldn't say redemption, but a form of positivity, like listening to a sad song feels good. You take some solace in the fact that other people are living the same life that you are living. I guess my hope would be that in sharing, being honest, accurate, and precise about the experiences these characters are having, hopefully it is ultimately the opposite of sad for the reader.

Hope: Your novel *Rain Dragon* took a long time to write, didn't it?

Raymond: Yes. For some reason it was a difficult process. I had started *Rain Dragon* before writing *Livability*. I thought that would be the second book I wrote. People talk about second novels being difficult, and I came to find this to be true. It is hard for me to know why one piece is hard and one's easy. If one could predict that kind of thing, one could allot their time differently, but you just never know until you are in the process. Thankfully, I had the short stories to work on, so I felt some sense of accomplishment through the whole process. I wish I could figure out why that was the case. It was tough.

Hope: As I was reading *Rain Dragon*, I kept envisioning Edgefield as the setting. Was it Edgefield?

Raymond: I did think about Edgefield. It is a composite of several places for sure, but I did think of Edgefield. I just love the idea that this was a former labor camp. McMenamins' gentrified hippie esthetics, in keeping with the theme of the book. It was helpful to just think about a place.

Hope: Following *Wendy and Lucy*, you worked on the teleplay for *Mildred Pierce* with Todd Haynes. How was the experience of adapting someone else's work similar or different to what you did with your own adaptation of "Train Choir?"

Raymond: I think that in some ways one is more protective of a different writer's work. I was more protective of James Cain with *Mildred Pierce* than I would necessarily be with my own writing. I've

been really lucky to work with Kelly Reichardt. She does projects that have originated from my writing. She is such a sensitive and unique filmmaker that I never have any doubt she is going to improve on my writing and that whatever she does will continue the spirit of the story. That is not the experience a lot of writers have. I think most writers come away feeling somewhat violated in the whole process. But I feel for me, and with my relationship with Kelly, part of the contract is saying, “this is your project now.” I just feel like that is a politeness. I am not going to hold on too tight at that point. But on the other hand, to adapt a book that I really love, like *Mildred Pierce*, I feel the need to become involved in more of the century, and I had to make sure we were getting it right.

Hope: I heard that parts four and five were the hardest to adapt. Why was that?

Raymond: Well, there is something strange about that novel. It picks up momentum as it goes; the pacing of the book has an almost centrifugal force. By the time you get into the last third of the book, much larger events are happening at a much quicker pace. To even out the five hours, we had to do a lot more of our own writing in the final two hours to make the movie flow properly and maintain the same tempo. There are bigger gaps between scenes, larger time jumps. It had to do with the peculiarities of the book. We filled in blank spots that [James] Cain [the author of *Mildred Pierce*] was able to leave out.

Hope: Were you part of selecting the actors for *Mildred Pierce*?

Raymond: I guess I got to be part of that conversation, but my opinion was just one of multiple. Todd [Haynes] ultimately made the decision. Kate Winslet came on very early in the process. This was Todd’s idea; he felt Kate would be a great person for the part. We wrote the whole thing, she was the first choice, and she said yes. I remember watching casting tapes, and I did a table reading with Kate early on. That might have been before the casting had even fully been done.

So I got to be part of this process and participate to some extent.

Hope: Of the works you have written—novels, short stories, screenplays, and teleplays—is there any one medium you prefer?

Raymond: I’ve been lucky to do all of these things, and they do scratch different itches. It’s great to do a screenplay for someone because it’s fun to be on a team and to have someone relying on you, to be a part of a deep collaboration between a lot of people. Filmmaking is a deeply collaborative art form. It is totally fun. On the other hand, you do cede a lot of control. When writing alone, it is fun to be able to have one’s own little fiefdom where one is ultimately responsible. On some level, I think that feeling of total responsibility is important to my creative satisfaction. Ideally, I can continue to write in both mediums. They offer different experiences, although they look exactly the same; it all happens on the same keyboard.

Hope: *Phoenix* is Clark’s student-produced literary and art journal. All the works are created by students. Can you give our readers and writers any insight into how you began your writing career and what that pathway looked like? Do you believe an MFA or creative writing degree is necessary for becoming an established writer like yourself?

Raymond: I was always a reader from a very young age. I think for me that is the ultimate bedrock of almost any writer: a very early and devout kind of reading experience. I guess I always wondered if it would be possible to write something of my own. In college, I worked on the literary magazine. I was always involved in fiction to some degree. Following college, I ended up writing in more of a journalist critical way for a few years. I wrote for newspapers and magazines. That was actually really helpful for me to professionalize my mentality in writing. I started thinking of the writing as something that one does in a timely manner and which has constraints on it. It took

...it is fun to be able to have one’s own little fiefdom where one is ultimately responsible.

some of the ego out of the writing on that level. When writing for a daily newspaper, you are radically limited in the kind of expression that you are able to do. You start looking at the writing in a much more functional way and trying to understand what you can do with

I would recommend to any writer to put in the time writing in a professional way... a smaller array of tools. I would recommend to any writer to put in the time writing in a professional way; it could be writing for a newspaper or writing newsletters for a corporation. There is an importance in writing something that is not about you.

At that same time, I was also dabbling in other art forms. I was interested in painting, videos, and just doing lots of different kinds of things. At some point I came to the realization that among all those different art forms, the only feeling of a creative activity that I really enjoyed was writing. I appreciated the other things, but the actual work was not energizing for me. It was in my mid to late 20s that I said to myself, “I am just going to put my eggs in the writing basket and see what happens.”

I feel that an MFA plays a big role and is really necessary to acquire teaching jobs, which is often an important component of a writer’s life. It brings you into that guild, which is important. As far as improving your actual writing, I think it can. Going through the MFA and learning that whole workshop procedure can help people. It doesn’t necessarily open doors, but it can creatively shed light on what you are doing. I think at best it is kind of helpful as a writer.

Hope: As a new writer it is really hard to be published. What do you think of self-publishing?

Raymond: The publishing geography is changing. Small publishers like Tin House have become much more important in the firmament of “literary fiction” as the large houses publish fewer challenging adult books. They publish more and more of everything, but it is harder and harder for books that are clearly not mass market but are

intelligent and sophisticated to find a home. Places like Tin House and Graywolf are taking up a lot of that slack and doing a great job. And self-publishing has become a more acceptable and interesting way of getting your writing out there. I think that there are a lot of things that do very well through self-publishing.

Hope: Have you self-published?

Raymond: When I was younger, I certainly self-published. I had friends working at Kinko’s, and I exploited them incredibly. Now, these were not mass publications. In the culture I was living, that was the way you would do it: just publish your own thing. Then you handed it out to your friends. And for me, that was a crucial part of the writing process; that sense of bringing your work into some form of public sphere is really a crucial part of the process. Even in the smallest way, to create some small public audience for yourself allows you to complete a project and move on cleanly to the next. I think the hardest thing is to let something fester in your hard drive and never see air. I think that can make people a little insane. I have been lucky enough to have people willing to publish my work at a certain point. But you never know. Every project for me has been a spec project, not knowing whether it was going to get picked up or not. So the writing process remains as unsettling.

Hope: Did you ever think that you would earn the recognition you have enjoyed from your peers?

Raymond: (Laughing) There are always bigger and better awards. It’s only the negative things that stick in your mind. In some ways, it is nice to feel that one is part of the conversation. ☺



The Traveler • Frederick Wilson • Ink on Bristol



Jerm Evolved • Jeremy Crane • Acrylic on Bristol



Memo • Almouaid Alzharani • Spray Paint



Excerpts from *Mold Man* • Nathaniel Russell • Ink and Screentone on Paper





Living Energy • Kristina Figurazh • Digital Photography



Emotive No.2 • Matthew Caravaggio • Charcoal on Paper



Le Tableaux Cheval • Jean Luc LaFont • Mixed Media on Paper



Empty Lot • Gary Langan • Acrylic on Paper

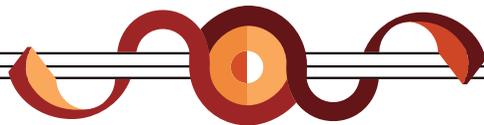


Editors' Choice

This year's Fine Art Award winner is the immensely talented, Elizabeth Alexander. Although we feature her amazing ceramic work in this year's *Phoenix*, to merely call her a ceramic artist would be inadequate. Her works are very intricate, with fully executed details rich with texture.

As she explains, "Taking ceramics is what really helped me realize what I wanted to focus my artistic learning on, mixed-media sculpture building with ceramics...I love combining different elements like metal, plastic and acrylic with clay to create something unique." Once one sees her work, it is apparent why she describes her inspiration for projects as coming from "a combination of the industrial and organic", as well as steampunk elements.

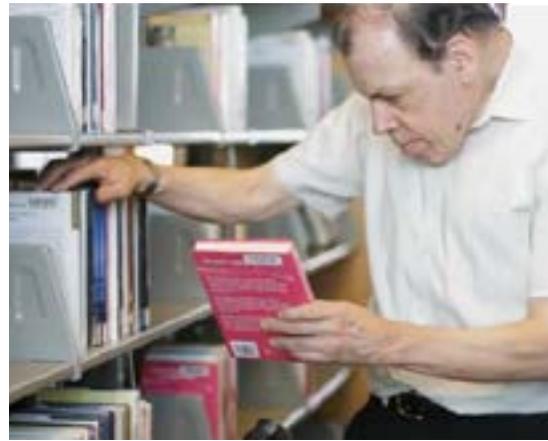
When it came time for the *Phoenix* staff to choose a winner, it became obvious to us as a team that Elizabeth's body of work was immensely strong and deserving of our award. Her first entry, *Death and Disease*, was an immediate favorite and was used as a guiding light in what we hoped to be our overall theme for *Phoenix* this year. When she brought in *Tranquil Disruption*, her attention to detail and ability to fully execute her artistic vision became clear to us. We are sure she is well on her way to her ultimate goal of owning an art gallery and studio and can't wait to see more of her amazing work. Please join us in congratulating her on her achievement thus far and wishing her all the best in her future endeavors.



Tranquil Disruption • Elizabeth Alexander • Ceramic



John • Anni Becker • Video



Craig's Smile • Anni Becker and Cristi Jenkins • Video



Adagio for Buds • Cristi Jenkins • Stop Motion



Chalk and Nature • Jake Henry • Stop Motion



Manny and Tink • Elizabeth Alexander • Stop Motion



Muerto • Aaron Davis • Music

Writers' Statements

Sarah Collins, "Playing Chess," p.48

Raymond Carver's short story, "A Small, Good Thing," has an overarching theme concerning how isolated a person can feel when bad things happen and that sometimes it's the random acts of kindness from strangers and the little things that pull you through the hard times. This theme stuck with me and inspired my story.

Mariah Geiger, "Caught Behind the Lens," p.88

This poem was inspired by the photographers who visited the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan after they were bombed. The photos showed the terrifying devastation that killed and impacted hundreds of thousands of people. I wanted to see if I could write a poem that showed what it may have been like to walk on some of those decimated streets, camera in hand.

Justin Henderson, "Go Electric," p.84

I write to capture feelings I don't understand. This poem represents a strange part of my life and leaves me with the same anxious, confused feeling every time I go back to it.

Mariah Lewis, "Slow the River," p.68

This story is for everyone who has lost someone and for everyone who has lost themselves.

Beth Means, "Unfinished Business," p.94

Everyone knows the saying, "An eye for an eye." Initially, when writing this story, I focused it around that phrase, not knowing where it may lead. In an effort to rationalize where people go when they die too young and with a desire to bring closure to them, this story was born.

James Murphy, "Knotted Noose," p.42

The inspiration for my poem came to me from old Norse and Irish tales. My goal was to tell a short and simple yet astonishing death. I felt using a noose and the wind blowing the ground away from the man's feet could describe how beautiful and inexplicably cruel the world can be.

Ashlee Nelson, "Flatmate's Love Song," p.32

I needed to write of stubborn people in love, the quiet urgency that's always there, buzzing in the back of their minds.

Tim Roduner, "Eighteen Hours," p.22

Combine a fairly stable 1960s nuclear family with a nine-year-old's vivid imagination, and what you get is a window into my childhood experience. Possessing a unique way of viewing the world has lent itself to many interesting and creative situations in my life.

Mike Shank, "Small Things Cost the Most," p.15

I wrote this piece to expose issues which cannot be fixed with discourse or deliberation but with practical application and action.

Renee Soasey, "River City," p.110

Water speaks to something primal in me and inspires creativity. This story grew out of my childhood imaginings of what might hide beneath the river's surface.

Courtney Watson, "This Man," p.63

My current partner is the inspiration for this poem. He is the encouragement and wisdom that helps me conquer every living day. We each had our struggles and differences when we first met, but together have found we can overcome any obstacle.

Artists' Statements

Luke Acevedo, *Cannon Girl*, p.105

Interested in the relationship between paint and surface, I like to experiment with the foreground/background relationship. I only hint at a possible narrative in this composition.

Miniature Monstrosity, p.117

I wondered how these mythically themed characters would exist in a composition. What narrative would be suggested?

Joshua Alconcel, *A Box Life*, p.92

This photo is a representation of day-to-day life, boxed and devoid of facial expression.

Elizabeth Alexander, *Pandora's Twins: Death and Disease*, p.89

These mixed media sculptures are a mash-up of Greek mythology and steampunk. Envisioned as a post-apocalyptic view, they represent the inevitable aftermath of war.

Tranquil Disruption, p.135

This abstract sculpture is a visual representation of the side of human nature that never lets others see all of who they really are, only allowing fleeting glances through their defenses.

Almouaid Alzaharani, *Memo*, p.127

I have been involved in worldwide graffiti for nearly seven years and have had the pleasure of meeting some top graffiti artists in the U.S. I love to spend time doing graffiti or playing with spray paint. Graffiti is my life.

Lisa Archilla, *Eyes into the Soul*, p.40

Inspired by a photograph of a woman in a veil, this is my own version of revealing the woman and her eyes more fully. Her eyes penetrate, as if looking into your soul.

Sunset on Pleiades, p.6

As a piece originally intended to illustrate music, the circles represent how music emanates from its source in every direction. Once completed and turned horizontally, it reminded me of a sunset in a distant solar system.

Jennifer Avens, *Birth of Beauty*, p.41

While studying Asian art history, I became interested in the meanings and symbolisms behind the beauty in our world. As a result, I incorporated my new knowledge into my photography, emphasizing the human condition specific to struggle, strength, love, and wisdom.

The Orchid, p.45

Inspired by the botanical works of Imogen Cunningham, this series of orchids was my take on her piece, *The Magnolia*.

Nicole Babcock, *Age*, p.35

This sketch, showing my intentions, was submitted as-is because it has a sense of both simplicity and chaos that the final piece didn't quite capture as well.

Garry Bastian, *The Mask*, p.62

My goal with this series of the seven deadly sins was to represent human weakness through pictures. This one is insecurity.

Lynnsey Benson, *Kabuki Warrior*, p.37

This is a depiction of a Kabuki samurai actor in a sort of modern Ukiyo-e style.

Tamira C. Blake, *The Forgotten Soles*, p.115

A once thriving lifestyle in the Wild West is now just a mere fashion statement.

Irina Burchak, *The Grandfather Project*, p.58

This photograph depicts Ivan: my grandfather, my hero, my friend.

Wash Over Me, p.20

This subtly toned digital photograph is a self-portrait.

Azure Calder, *Unexpected Texture*, p.106

Old, beautiful Hollywood is the underlying feeling in this photo. It is meant to draw the viewers in through the eyes.

Us Vs. Them, p.29

This is a political montage executed in watercolor with a modern day Wizard of Oz theme.

Viktoriya Camp, *Winter Woods*, p.113

I looked out my window late at night when the fog was thick and the naked trees were outlined against the city street lights with random flashes of color from the traffic lights.

Juvilee Canilao, *Dream Place*, p.113

I have always wanted to paint houses and buildings. I set this scene in Amsterdam because I see myself there in the future.

Matthew Caravaggio, *Emotive 2*, p.131

I despise Helvetica.

Claudia Carter, *A Full Life*, p.21

This series of masks, from the *Men and Women in Myth and Time* series, was created in coupled pairs and is, as the title suggests about the history of men and women throughout time. I put my emotions and feelings into the clay.

Deborah Corzine, *Peaceful*, p.79

My work captures Mother Nature's art: the beauty of nature.

Jeremy Crane, *Jerm Evolved*, p.127

Jerm is an alter ego, a new thing I am playing with.

Elise Cryder, *Bedroom Guardian*, p.106

This is a study of layering images and is a representation of my comfort zone.

Oliver's Reflections, p.83

This multi-paneled painting of my fish is composed from various viewpoints and moments in time. Watching my fish swim and painting are both things I find relaxing.

Eva Dodd, *Luda at the Fort*, p.87

A juxtaposition of two worlds: the fur trade industry of the Oregon Territory's past, in contrast with the modern day's high fashion industry. The common thread between these two is man's long love affair with fashion.

Riley Donahue, *Political Machines*, p.90

This collection depicts our current and past superstar politicians as "political machines." Under the surface, through the intricate detail, one gets an internal glimpse of the machinery.

Tyson Duerr, *Carnage*, p.11

This artwork is a montage of images creating a vivid scene in which each viewer may form his or her own interpretation.

Lauren Dwyer, *Coyote Wall*, p.81

The final sun rays of the day on top of Coyote Wall.

Organic Free-Form, p.38

My inspiration came from objects of the sea, such as shells, coral, sponges, and barnacles.

Kirsten Elson, *Riding the Gust*, p.36

My sculpture is a whimsical look at the interaction between elements in nature.

Luke Entwistle, *Pabst Smear One and One Two Many*, p.60

Using a monochromatic palette, this series focuses on the duality and hypocrisy of alcohol consumption.

Austin Fields, *Betrayal*, p.57

This work represents a search for hope through all obstacles.

My Town, p.31

This is the most interesting project I've worked on yet. It's designed to be printed and set up in a diorama to then be photographed and turned digital again.

Kristina Figurazh, *Living Energy*, p.130

A project to showcase energy, power, and strength through yoga and light.

Derek Fuller, *Alone with My PTSD*, p.11

I struggled alone, lost in an endless void with my only companions being my own thoughts and fears, in a vast emptiness that stretches on forever. After eight years I began to see a glimmer, a small spark pushing back at the darkness. It is hope; it is enough.

Mariah Geiger, *Self-Portrait*, p.66

This self-portrait is a favorite because it is real. I appreciate it more because I see me and not some perfect version of myself.

Kelly Greene, *The Lonely Red*, p.36

I found a lonely little red leaf hanging on a bare branch of a tree in my yard. The fiery, passionate red gave beauty to the dreary gray day, and I decided to capture the moment in time.

Jeffrey Grimes, *Wave Sine*, p.6

The centered forces of energy push innovation as it rides the wave of technology.

Aleksandra Hanchett, *Consumerism*, p.91

Consumerism enslaves Life.

Day in a Life, p.47

Things I like to do in life.

Emma Hanna, *Mini Drinkables*, p.12

The vintage tiny toy has lots of character to capture from many different vantage points.

Mona Harris, *Sewing Room Floor*, p.116

In this piece, I depicted a single pin lying on the floor.

Bernd Hoffman, *Unholy Trinity of a Creepy Mannequin*, p.7

In this Cubist study I used three separate still lives, blending multiple perspectives of the forms and space, which are fighting to exist in the same plane. I deliberately chose three commonly used historic angles, in a statement about religious iconography.

Marilyn Hughes-Reed, *Cameo Trio*, p.65

These necklaces are named for my daughter and her friends; each one reflects beauty in its own style.

ly Huynh, *Portland Lumberjack*, p.30

A profile of the rare Portland native.

Vi Huynh, *Study of the Heart*, p.108

This drawing studies the little mechanics that run the main pump of the human body.

Cristi Jenkins, *Time Tale*, p.81

The passing of the seasons over time reminds us of the continuous cycles of birth and death.

Jared Kench, *Order from Chaos*, p.34

With this piece I was mostly interested in seeing what was possible as a beginning welder. I tried to create something that would require me to use several different techniques.

Jessica Kench, *Pavo*, p.19

I combined several semi-precious metal texturing techniques in this work, and I would like to thank Beth Heron.

Monica Kinnunen, *Cover Girl Collage*, p.29

This watercolor is painted from a preliminary collage of many different magazine covers and the pictures inside.

***Watering Cans*, p.9**

My most recent still life oil painting of a watering can.

Korpela, Crister, *See through*, p.61

I wanted to create a feeling or an image of heart inside my subjects rather than just the outer appearance.

Jean-luc LaFont, *L'Esprit Nouveau*, p.112

Our spirits and our art are very much alike. In order to emanate our true brilliance we must release ourselves and all of our greatness unto this world. Without freed thoughts, and absolute faith, we cannot release ourselves from the shackles that we have allowed to be placed upon our souls.

***Le Tableaux Cheval*, p.132**

As a child my mind was wild, imaginative, and provocative. With this painting, I invite you to explore the forgotten child within yourself, open your mind, and seek your real self, however wild and free.

Ana Lai, *Philosophy of Formation*, p.19

Each step to develop a photograph is complex and intricate, just like the human mind. In each viewing of a photo, the shapes and forms within the image change to satisfy one's creative imagination rather than the constructed reality that is constantly present.

Gary Langan, *Empty Lot*, p.133

This exploration is about breaking the composition down to simple colors and shapes.

Caylynn Lasko, *Vancouver Decay*, p.109

I've always found beauty in what other people might consider worn out and ready for the trash; one person's trash is my treasure.

John Mangan, *Sacred Space I*, p.82

This place is part real and part imagination. My intent was to capture nature's stillness...and add a little magic.

***Train Sky*, p.18**

Every city or town has its own look and feel. Vancouver's look includes trains, trucks, and barges. I enjoy them as if they were large, movable sculptures out in nature.

Joy Margheim, *Gate*, p.39

With this piece I aimed for a simple, curved form that expresses the heavy, solid qualities of steel.

Chris Masoner, *Bellezza*, p.62

I tried to stretch my comfort zone, while remaining true to my photographic style. I aimed for an elegant essence and a classical feel, like something you'd find in a gallery or at a winery.

Katerina McCann, *Joy*, p.86

This pendant was based on the center stone, which was originally in a ring given to a family friend by her husband.

***Pink Marble Bracelet*, p.46**

This is a cast sterling silver center piece adorned with a pink marbled cabochon stone and matching bead work. I wanted to try something different with setting the stone that gave an element of originality and showed attention to design.

***Struggle*, p.46**

An exploration into the casting process, the piece ended up being more unique because of the problems I encountered, and I was extremely surprised at the end result. I carved the word "struggle" on the back to remind myself that without struggle I would not be the person I am today. I should embrace life's struggle and strive knowing it will only open doors to that which I am truly capable.

Erin Merrill, *Columbia River Series*, p.103

This is a spot on the Columbia River that I frequent with my friends during the warmer months. My interest in working with alternative processes drove me to create these cyanotypes from original black and white film negatives.

***Endings*, p.18**

This image was taken at Gas Works Park in Seattle. My friend and I had never been before, so the photos I took were merely documenting this new place we had only ever seen in movies.

Shannon O'Connor, *Into Darkness*, p.8

These pictures take you to a dark place: a haunted house from your neighborhood when you were a child with a gate that screams "Don't open." But now you want to go in that house and see what's inside.

Valerie Parrish, *Where I Belong*, p.44

Every person on earth has a place where they feel at home, where they feel they belong. In this series, I explored many locations and diverse individuals. I wanted to show two different subjects in one photo: a person and a place. I placed the location in the profile of the individual so it was a part of them.

Dan Polacek, *Independence*, p.59

Independence can be represented symbolically in a photograph in many ways. The idea of self-governance and self-reliance is thematically rich and full of possibilities.

Dean Popek, *United We Stand*, p.10

Two unstable arcs welded together create a strong, stable form where one supports the other. It represents us as a people, strong and focused toward whatever goal we wish to achieve.

Courtney Railing, *Journée d'Automne*, p.40

Walking across campus, I would see the autumn leaves falling to the ground. I chose the brightest leaf I could find to create out of clay. I strove to capture the warm color of the leaves that had first inspired me.

Jonathan Reichless, *Where the Mind Goes to Play*, p.107

These photos are taken from my dream series. My goal was to create a window into the strange world that we visit when we sleep by using dreams that I have experienced.

Marisa Roberts-Hauptman, *Hipsters in Love*, p.31

I have a love/hate fascination with hipsters. My aim here was to show them as charming and endearing. The couple, Fiona and Magnus, are featured against the Portland skyline.

Nathaniel Russell, *Moldman*, p.128

These are excerpts from a comic book I created entitled *Moldman*. It is the comedic story of a man with the ability to eat and spread mold.

Nick Svilarich, *Abrasive Mug and Reitz Sculpture*, p.43

Both this sculpture and the mug were inspired by works of potter Don Reitz and his spontaneous work ethic.

Jakob Swan, *Night Shift*, p.93

I wanted to capture the empty feeling of places that function with the exact same proficiency in the desolation of night as they do in the bustling hours of daylight.

Brooke Thomas, *Hint of Me*, p.80

Just a hint of me.

Cassandra Thompson, *Blue-Ringed and Poisonous*, p.116

Based on the highly toxic blue-ringed octopus, I painted the vibrant blue rings that appear when the octopus is threatened.

Parker Truax, *Dash in the Night*, p.87

I've always been intrigued by city lights and the downtown environment. The motion blur emphasizes the lights seen downtown.

Braden Tuck, *Becoming One*, p.33

Love can bring two individuals together so tightly that they seem but one in their own little world.

***Liquid Glass*, p.13**

When I see water I do not see a dull, mundane, transparent fluid, but millions of sharp crystal shapes floating within space, performing an ever-flowing liquid dance.

Erica Vollmer, *Deericorn*, p.67

I chose to decorate this deer skull with delicate, pressed flowers and a powerful crystal to represent the sensitivity and intuition the deer spirit can bring into your life.

Leslie Warren, *Bowl with Lid*, p.67

With this piece I found that trying different glaze combinations can get great results.

Kiersten Wesley, *Bubba*, p.28

I envisioned a canopic jar, but Americanized. I imagined what would have been hieroglyphics on the base of the jar replaced instead with the most "American" brands I could think of.

Frederick Wilson, *The Traveler*, p.126

The task for this 2d design project was to convert a picture to line art. Ink, charcoal and acrylic were used on two panels.

Shannon Wonser, *Nude in Nude Tones*, p.64

My goal was to show the beauty of the model's form in the light as simply as possible, while still using classic techniques.

***Nude At Rest*, p.64**

While working with a live model, I wanted to create a work with a classical feel, thus the burnt sienna tones.

Lily Ye, *Azure Capriccio*, p.39

I merged eastern and western cultures through a synthesis of Shang and Han dynasty motifs and abstract modern figures, animals and humans, the mythological and the real. In the combination of dreamy blue colors, the imaginary coalesces with the real to express hope for universal harmony.

Egle Zalpys, *Unknown Beauty*, p.79

From a series of photos taken at Lacamas Lake using the natural lighting of the sunrise and just after. The sun was out for just the hour it took to take these. As I left it clouded.

Krista Zimmerman, *Pathetic Need*, p.43

A piece about nostalgia, longing, and pathetic need.



Salon des Refusés • Multiple Artists

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Colophon

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