

# Garfield Lake Review 2022

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Dear Reader,

Each year, students at Olivet College have the privilege of working together to put out a new edition of the *Garfield Lake Review*. If there is one thing that is consistent in each year, each edition, it's change. We live in an ever-changing world. Change is inevitable. Change is difficult. Change is beautiful. This year, we've considered the concept of seasons. Much like the changing seasons of the year, our lives are full of seasons. One bleeds into the next. Sometimes we are in the dark of winter. Sometimes we are in the warmth of spring. But we keep moving forward, knowing that with change comes growth and discovery.

We hope that no matter what season you find yourself in, you will be filled after reading the 2022 edition of the *Garfield Lake Review*.

Savannah Baker

# Editorial Staff

## Savannah Baker- Editor



Savannah Baker is a junior at Olivet College and is pursuing a degree in English. She volunteered as part of the GARF editorial board for the 2021 edition and came back as the editor for the 2022 edition. She hopes to pursue a career in the publishing industry, and has loved her time with the GARF.

## Maggie Berner- Layout Design



Maggie Berner is a sophomore in the Media Production and Communication major at Olivet. She is involved with student media, primarily WOCR, the college's radio station, but she loves being involved anywhere she can be. She is from Bay City, Michigan, where she grew up with an appreciation for all things music, movies, and people.

## Breanne Bess- Layout Design



Breanne Bess is a sophomore at Olivet College and is pursuing degrees in Business Marketing and Media Production and Communications. This is her first time working on a literary journal team. Breanne hopes to pursue a career in content creation/ advertising, so her work with the GARF has been essential for providing hands on experiences with designing content.

## Meredith Dodson- Faculty Advisor



Meredith Dodson has been the GARF faculty advisor for three years. She joined up for the joy of working with literature and has stayed because of the joy of working with students. Every year brings new creativity and energy to a long tradition. In addition to this role, Professor Dodson teaches composition and creative writing and chairs the Arts and Humanities Department.



### Jillianne Post- Social Media Manager; Editorial Board

Jillianne Post is an Art and Business major and a senior at Olivet College. The GARF offered great opportunities for Jillianne to hone her editorial skills and help other artists gain exposure. As one of the editors for the 2022 edition of the Garfield Lake Review, her primary focus is promoting the GARF on social media, and to help spread the word about the GARF in the community.



### Hanna Sauve- Editorial Board

Hanna is a freshman here at Olivet College. She is an English major with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. This is her first time working on a literary journal team, and she's incredibly grateful that it's with this amazing group of people! She's hoping to go into the publishing industry after college and knows that this will be great experience.



### Bray Wright- Editorial Board

Bray Wright is a third year English major and writing minor. She worked with the GARF last year and is super excited to be back for this semester. She loves the process of selecting and editing pieces for the journal. Bray is planning to go into the publishing industry after college, and she is currently serving as the Editor for the Echo, Olivet's school newspaper.



### Reece Yeager- Editorial Board

Reece Yeager is an English major and sophomore here at Olivet College. She decided to join the GARF when she changed her major from biology to her passion (writing and english) and thought it would be an amazing experience, opportunity, and way to possibly share some of her own works. Reece loves to read and write in any free time she has and aspires to be a published author one day.

# Poetry

## Another Springing-Forth

July drones, but no voices  
are heard except ones  
from December that wait  
below ground, wait for  
the later times to emerge  
and become more than  
a way remembered but  
a new way from  
these hardened fields.  
The front door opens to great  
heat and a realization  
of how our homes breathe  
even long after they become  
ruins, all in advance and  
beyond at the same time,  
layers like rock, sand,  
bones and oil that comprise  
and complete us.  
And when the cold comes,  
when the quiet envelops  
where decibels once flowed  
from the soul's tenancy,  
it startles to know what  
the world before and after  
really takes, uses, eats, drinks  
all as sacrament  
for yet another springing-forth.

-L. Ward Abel

# Transmission

What is destroyed by continuing  
joins the list of what is born,  
a long list of matter made of  
even these thoughts.

Panning wide the yellow fields  
belies black earth comprised  
of all the generations underfoot

under root, in the blood of dusty  
wind, the canvas, the veil  
the skin between living and  
waiting to live.

The pronoun bearing names  
can't be held or known  
but hears familiar voices

like what is subtracted here  
adds to somewhere else

with only a thin common line  
connecting.

## 1865

1865, June 19th  
Land of the Lone Star  
Last of the Southern states  
Became the  
Last to receive news of a  
Long, bloody skirmish  
Coming to a close  
Brother versus brother  
Blue versus grey  
Amerikkka versus itself  
Two thousand soldiers from the East  
Brought the magic passage  
That made Africans abandon  
The plantation mansions,  
Previous owners,  
The croplands,  
Psychological trammels,  
Human bondage.  
Upon hearing those words spring from  
General Granger's lips, Blacks, 250,000 of them  
Rejoiced.  
The reason for

Parades, outdoor feasts, erection of public places,  
Expressions of pride trace back to this moment  
When Africans ditched their metal shackles  
And took their first breath of freedom,  
Moved without permission.  
250,000 Blacks were free, granted their autonomy.

By law.  
Autonomy they could have gotten

As individuals through  
Flame, arms, revolt or northbound travel.  
Torches to the master's estate.  
Hard oak to the overseer's head.  
Making tracks by following the North Star.  
Leaving before the dogs caught their scent.  
Departure before rednekkk rifles found them.  
There would've been no need to heed  
The words of a Northern White bluecoat  
Then—

-Dee Allen

## Greenwood Avenue

Whistle blew long  
At 5:08am,  
High-volume  
Encouragement  
For a full civilian  
Army of hate to cross  
Frisco train tracks to the North Side,  
Object of their shared spite.

Machine-guns  
Mounted on rooftops,  
Bi-planes  
Prowled the sky,  
Ill-gotten guns  
Toted on the ground.

It rained kerosene  
That early morning hour,  
Drenched everything  
From emptied cans.  
Lit torches  
From racists did the rest.

Doomsday came  
As immense flame  
June 1, 1921  
To Greenwood Avenue,  
Thirty-five square blocks  
Of Black prosperity—

Acme Brick Company,  
Little Rose Beauty Parlor,  
Booker T. Washington High School,  
Mount Zion Baptist Church,  
Dreamland Theatre,  
Williams' Confectionary,  
Liberty Café,

The Tulsa Star,  
The Oklahoma Sun,  
Dunbar Grade School,  
Stradford, Little Pullman,  
Graysonia Hotels,  
Caver's Cleaners,  
Blue Front Furniture,  
S.D. Hooker & Company Clothing,  
Mann's Drug Shoppe,  
Knights Of Pythias,  
Odd Fellows, Masonic Lodges,  
Hospitals, surgeons, dentists,  
Barbers, jewellers, barristers,  
Pool halls, speakeasies that sold  
"Choc beer", which bore a pale yellow  
Grapefruit juice colour and less expensive  
Than the usual homemade bathtub  
Rotgut in South Side places,  
Days of drinking to Blues,  
Dancing to Jazz,  
Showing off brand new  
Satin dresses, strings of pearls,  
Bowler hats, three-piece suits,  
Fancy cars, solid red brick  
Stately two-story houses  
Belonging to the affluent,  
Self-reliant, self-made

City within a city  
Gone in a day,  
Thirty-five square blocks  
Gone in a day,  
Three-hundred upscale, intelligent  
Black lives gone in a day.

Why?

"Negro insurrection"—Rumours.

"White woman assaulted in an elevator"—Rumours.

Whites in Tulsa saw  
An affront to their ways. Blacks  
Had nicer cars, nicer homes,  
Nicer trinkets, nicer clothes,  
Better businesses and careers  
Than they. Middle-class, upper-class  
Prosperity "they're not supposed to have"—

Doomsday came  
As immense flame  
June 1, 1921.

Envy destroys lived dreams.

[ Inspired by the book The Burning by Tim Madigan. ]

-Dee Allen

## Frequent Flyer Miles

The strangest sense of calm

washes over me as

The cabin lights dim

in the airplane

The coffee cup in my hand

stained with my lipstick and

The upright tray table

locked in place and

The window through which

I can only see the plane's wing

All exude a sense of longing and belonging

The dawn has yet to break

-Sydnie Ard

## Living Room Still Life 01

I did not cry when I  
watched my mother die. And  
I don't know why. Briefly  
a few lone tears fell without  
any real sadness activating  
them.

It was just so intensely  
painful. To see  
my father wailing as  
he held her cold hand. When  
I had no memories of him ever  
crying before.

My sister rubbed  
his shoulders through her own  
sobs. As I was physically  
unable to move. It simply did  
not touch me as I feel  
it should have. When I know she  
was an incredibly kind woman. And  
an undeniably loving mother.

I made my rounds holding  
the hands of various  
family members. In the  
hours it took for her

breathing to stop.

Every one of them looked more  
upset than I even felt. So I kept  
myself in a corner while  
staring at her pale and cracked  
lips. As her chest shallowly  
rose and fell.

I did not cry the  
night my mother  
died. And it pains me.  
Still.

-Sydnie Ard

## **These Shadows of Ours Dance Carefully in the Moonlight**

The woods sound lovely this evening.  
The pixies are back, they're singing pretty.  
And the foxes, they're chanting, and cantering around  
the bushes  
as our feet fall clumsily between one another  
to the backdrop of a bird-led orchestra.

The owls look happy for once  
and you face your fear  
of looking silly when you dance.  
We fall into a rhythm naturally,  
feeling the rays of darkness shroud us in  
A warm cavern.

I feel nervous.  
Like a tree branch knowing what August means for its  
hair.  
I still don't know if you did,  
feel that dome open up in your throat, I mean.

This was what they always wrote about,  
in some way or another,  
that thing in the chest  
or the sweet, lovely birdsong.  
The heart-thumping, stomach-sickening feeling.

But then the sun rises,  
as it always has to someday,  
and we return to our kingdom:  
you on your throne.

And the world keeps turning, for me.  
Silently, vacuously,  
as it always has done,  
and always will

-Georgie Bailey

# Procrastination

Something about the need to accomplish  
Sends me to the keys of the computer  
To get lost in the internet.  
Video after video,  
Post after post,  
The mind-numbing vastness of cyber space  
Hour after hour  
Time slips away.  
So too does my opportunity to get it done,  
Cross it off the list,  
Finish the task.

-Savannah Baker

# Words

Symbols on a page  
Communicate meaning  
Emotion  
Beauty  
Ideas  
Pain  
Joy  
Hope

Words penned thousands of years ago  
Exist today.  
Etched forever in time.  
Words penned today  
spread across the globe.  
Words incite revolution.  
Words whisper love.  
Words are power.

-Savannah Baker

# My Mothers Become the Seasons

## 1. (Summer)

An unfinished mansion used to sit on the southern lagoon of Big Turtle Lake. It looked like a wrecked ship washed ashore, its ragged Tyvek sails flapping in the wind. We'd boat there yearly, me and my three aunts, each of whom broke the waves left behind by my mother's death. They taught me many things. How to trespass, for example: "Look as though you're supposed to be exactly where you are." Approaching that place, I watched wakes ripple off the outboard as we motored ashore. Cattails whispered to the bow. We skulked through mares-tail and pigweed, year after year, and speculated about what stalled the construction— divorce, death, bankruptcy, a bad economy, a perfect storm. We told the house stories about itself, knowing only the wind knew the truth, the wind and the pines that shivered like dissidents in the dark woods. Once, I wrote my name on a wall stud hoping somebody one day would tear into the sheetrock and think I had something to do with that impressive thing. But after we left that year, a backhoe came and dug a huge grave, then pushed the house in on itself and covered it up with dirt. It did not take long for the shoreline to erase any sign of the place. The trees fell back into their ranks, slow at first then all at once. Only a handful of people recall it now, but we are among them: me and my three mothers tiptoeing through this unfinished dream.

## 2. (Winter)

Thin gossamer between me and God, strong as Kevlar, this vault in the waters. It is not enough. The whole world here—endless white splotched with black, eternal Dalmatian. The whole word here too, or maybe just a sliver, a solitary letter, more or less. But not enough. Coffee-colored tree-line, light traffic on the Good 'Nuff road,

rumble-strip diddy, interstate vesper, tom drum of train brake, washboard growl. Insufficient too: these psalms. Frozen river still as earth frozen river full of secrets disguised itself and all its life, river named for a barely famous trapper and little else. Painted turtles like buried bowls, garfish stiff as sticks, bullfrogs deathlike among riprap. And mine are the first tracks on this cold levee. But they are not enough. Puddles stewing in the ruts. Inch of ice on each, easily cracked. Little packages, little pockets, IOU's from the sky. The dog trots back too cold to press on, too cold to pull the carrion from the cowl of snow, acrid as a young boy's breath. Drool frozen to his jowls. Cavernous mouths in tree trunks and the current has cut a channel upstream. Lightless grey of dampened newspaper. There's one bird beating in the sky. There's the drainage ditch my mother drowned in. Enough. Little asterisks of ice everywhere, origamis of eternity. Endless ellipsis. A dinging car door. Enough—

### 3. (Fall)

I can watch the moon move, rising off the reaching horizon. She grows smaller but brighter, a false memory, and a patina forms on the world, twilight astigmatised, faded into itself and folded over, the underside of everything exposed. I miss Aunt C., blind as a mole, a moony woman in her own right. She never gambled on Sundays. "Ishkabibbles!" she shouted, whenever someone stole her trick in Pitch. At her funeral I learned she fielded calls for the suicide hotline. Thirty years and she never told a soul. It makes sense somehow. I can hear her indignant reasoning, "Now why would want to do something like that?" Something tells me she'd still answer if I called.

### 4. (Spring)

My grandmother and I once rescued three snapping turtles from a rock road out front of her home. There'd been five in all, but two had been smashed by passing cars, their bodies painted across the limestone, little

black handprints. They were strange things—deep wrinkles, perpetually scowling mouths, and eyes like pinheads. They didn't age, just grew larger with time. Looking at their faces, a strange feeling befell me. It was no different from when I'd stare at a classmate's features and see in an instant what they'd look like in sixty years. Entire classrooms aged in an instant, flashing before me: an omen, a promise, a future memory. A phenomenon I could only shiver to slake. We lent the turtles names and argued over which was which, never fully knowing. We checked their growth by drawing circles around them on construction paper. At first, it merely took a finger to keep them in place, but almost overnight they outgrew the aquarium. Eventually, we released them near a watering hole in the hills where the neighbor's cows lowed on hot days, placing them in a circle: one facing the pond, one toward the hills, and the last pointed somewhere in between. Instinct told them where the water was and they disappeared in it together. As my grandmother watched them, I saw her as a little girl.

-Nicholas Bertelson

## One Christmas

The divorce was hard on us too  
The boys.  
Dad didn't even have visitations rights to my brother  
Until he turned 5.  
When my brother started talking  
He'd say "Your dad's here" when he came to pick me up.  
I would go every other weekend when mom didn't make  
us hide  
And pretend like we weren't home.  
After work at the steel mill dad would leave the city  
And drive 2 hours to the quiet town mom moved to  
And then drives another 2 hours home late at night  
Empty handed.

I missed my dad.  
We used to go fishing.  
My brother didn't know him.  
Couldn't know him, until he turned 5.  
By then it would be too late.

One Christmas after dad got a new job  
He sent us boys a huge box full of presents.  
I was so excited.  
I missed my dad and wanted to keep any piece of him  
That I could hold onto.  
I rifled through the box and it was the happiest I'd been  
Since we moved away.

Mom was angry.  
Any affection I had for my father hurt her.  
I couldn't love them both, at least not to her.  
She wouldn't let him buy my love, she said.  
He doesn't love you like I love you, she said.  
The presents had to go back, she said.  
I needed to write a letter to him, she said.

Tell him I didn't want his presents,  
but I did.

I said no. Mom was angry.  
She yelled, cried and contorted.  
Her face red with tears and fury.  
I wanted the presents and didn't want to write the letter.  
How could I hurt her this way, she said.

The night we moved into our new home  
Alone in the dark quiet.  
I don't remember what I said,  
but I'll never forget that look on her face.  
A face twisted with rage.  
She hit me open handed with both arms.  
Trapped in the crossfire  
My arms and face absorbed the blows.  
I didn't remember what I said.

Later,  
When I told her I wanted to spend more time with my  
dad.  
Like summers.  
I saw that face, again  
and then the iron skillet.

This time, I didn't know what to say.  
To her, or him.  
I didn't want to hurt her feelings, but I wanted to keep  
the presents.  
But I couldn't have both.  
She wrote the damn letter she wanted  
And late in the night, my head aching raw, I copied her  
words.  
In my own 8-year-old handwriting.  
And the letter went back to dad  
Along with the presents I wanted.

When I saw my dad again  
We didn't go fishing.  
He never mentioned the letter.  
When my dad was working on the car in the garage  
My stepmom wondered how I could do that.

The truth was worse to me though.  
And I never told him the truth.  
That mom made me do it.  
I'd rather he think that I was an ungrateful shit  
Than too weak to stand up to my mom.  
I was ashamed that she had controlled me this way.  
And I was angry at him  
That he left me trapped inside the nightmare  
Of this crazy woman  
Who hated him more than she loved me.

-Jeffrey Layne Blevins

## Seeking an Ideal Mate

Eve says, Joan, you're being too picky,  
Spring is time to connect and grow.  
Joan chirps, I won't date men who are iffy.  
I'd really rather go solo.

Jeff drove a Volkswagen beetle  
to meet at the bar.  
I try not to be judgmental,  
but, that's a chick car.

Drew's paws were too large.  
There's a place for huge hands.  
Just not in my bedroom,  
that's not in my plans.

Ben barely had a chin,  
so no second date.  
A man needs a jaw,  
to be my soulmate.

Taye's voice was off-key.  
like harsh, grinding gears.  
I had to talk nonstop,  
to protect my poor ears.

Bad taste is genetic,  
take that to the bank.  
Black shoes with brown belt,  
goodbye, styleless Hank.

Jim was losing hair so fast,  
it retreated during drinks.  
It would be unfair to my kids  
to give them a bald jinx.

Matt suggested skateboarding.  
Are we still in high school?  
How to dress for that date?

I said, "I'd feel like a fool."  
Being short is okay,  
if they don't compensate.  
Jack had small guy neurosis.  
He's not worth that freight.  
Since Liam was great,  
that made me suspicious.  
Police always say, "That serial killer  
seemed safe and auspicious."  
Some people insist, "It's not you, it's me."  
I mostly find it's them. Don't you agree?

-William Diamond

## **Under a Blue Moon (After Su Tung Po)**

I walk under hanging trees,  
through an infinite night,  
mysterious as the bottomless sea.  
The day disappears,  
the way music disappears,  
yet echoes in the mind.  
I'm longing for things,  
I'll never find.  
Wind rustles the leaves  
as softly as a feather,  
then becomes like a dream  
in a madman's fever.  
As they pass me by,  
clouds gaze at nothing.  
The moon, once so strong,  
has become a faint lantern.  
When young I expected  
to find what I was after.  
But I was wrong.

-George Freek

## Summer Ends (After Lui Yong)

Summer's flowers are gone.  
All I can see now  
are decaying remains.  
The trees are also bare.  
I can hardly remember  
when the leaves were there.  
In the garden an empty hammock,  
where my wife used to lie,  
creaks in the bitter wind.  
Like a brazen thief  
winter boldly approaches.  
I talk to my ancient cat,  
to the moon and the stars.  
As is their way,  
they have nothing to say.  
I try to think of  
the aroma of roses.  
For a moment, it's sweet.  
But I can't make it stay.

-George Freek

## Blue Sky

When I slipped on a sidewalk,  
my skull split into a

fissure. Blue Sky  
saw an opening,

poured her body  
into my receptive head.

I went to school  
with a blue head

of cumulus clouds  
floating in my eyes.

In first period, I gave  
a report on the history

of black smoke  
that's branded

the limbs  
of our circulating Earth.

-Keith Mark Gaboury

# The Birdwatcher

You love the hawks  
that soar over the treetops  
but you also love the songbirds that these raptors prey  
on.

You find beauty in power  
but also beauty in bright colors, in melodious song.

In the violent scuffle,  
when predator swoops down  
on unwitting warbler,  
you set aside your love  
and all ideas of beauty,  
for a willful, depressing awe,  
and a disgust  
at scattered blood-soaked feathers.

For a moment,  
killer and victim  
lay bare the cruelty of survival in the wild.

But then the hawk rises high, beloved and beautiful.  
And the canopy denizens revive your love  
with precious hues and trills.

If they can forget, so can you.

-John Grey

## An Inch Above Sea Level

Collapsing like a soufflé, snatched from the oven before  
its time,  
the sun sinks into itself.

Waterfalls underground,  
cascading through abandoned tunnels where subways  
once sped along, getting us to work and home again.

For centuries, an overbuilt grid gnashed its teeth;  
gums bleeding into basements and roadways, buildings  
implanted too close.

Lacking all imagination,  
lazy tax revenues and campaign contributions flowed like  
the rivers  
paved over with Belgian blocks and brick.

Asphalt smeared like impervious butter across bogs and  
salt marshes  
designed to absorb nature's worst, repelling it instead  
with nowhere to go.

The earth howled  
when bulldozers shaved her curves, flattening Manahatta,  
one rocky hill at a time.

But where did all the water go? It fell on ears deafened  
by graft,  
made incurious by favors and gifts  
that greased and green-lit reckless digs.

Only an inch above sea level or even below,  
where did they think  
the sun's tears would go?

-Susan Kathryn Hefti

## Dionysus

A toast like thunder, glasses raised above their heads  
during the summer,  
Thick with heat and perspiration, thin veils covering  
below their eyes, the bridge of their nose, their toasts –  
Chalices filled;  
Ripened berries, rich liquid buried in the golden confines,  
streaming from winter to spring.  
With nothing but the dessert and silence, thunder  
dismissing the quiet,  
newfound strength among the toast, moving, lifting,  
and raise above their heads, a toast like thunder.

Burnt up, and kept locked away in the flames of  
the heat.

the crackle of feasts, the hums of the coals  
hissing, spreading.  
Toasted to the earth, wine dripping across their lips,  
cherished with each swallow, given in oath for  
*Dionysus*.

One - two - three, drink, gone, one - two - three  
chants prosperity.

In the crystal glass, swirls of art;  
varnished reds and reborn breaths,  
Till the sun rises; rebirth, till we fall asleep; a toast.  
Being born again with elixir, a sip of regeneration and  
bitterness  
A once lively dessert, now lifeless, harboring the empty  
tents and chalices,  
Seasons pass and remnants of the ceremonies, dried  
wine stains bloomed,

Rebirth evaporated, life gone.

## Not By The Moon

Warm hands cupping my cheeks,  
    Sand like small pebbles between my toes,  
illuminations of the moon, bright and vivid,  
The solstices changing the tint of color;  
    gold, rose, dandelion, a soft blue. Turn of the  
summer.

The moon I looked up at when grandmother  
    told me tales - when dad brought home  
        Fruits from the market in April,  
when mother would kiss my forehead or  
    my brother would lean against me as  
    beads of sweat formed at the crown of our heads, too  
small  
    to realize we couldn't live in our fairytale land  
        forever.

all there was to  
the home i use to have  
in Singapore, a golden  
View of a childhood - dislodged and unforgiving  
    Warmth in winter, sweltering heat in summer,  
    Hands sore from threshing the dumplings;  
        Surrounded by the crescent of the  
        Glowing moon - the calm  
        mirror  
                of the lake and the  
                waves dancing  
                during  
the monsoons.

Not by the moon any longer - immigrated to a new home.

A place with dry land, lifeless desert,  
A post office downtown, glaring eyes and harsh  
whispers,  
buzzing with tourists, the moon gone - not the  
same  
How I miss my grandmother and the moon in Singapore.  
-Marah Jo Heikkila

\*Dionysus and Not by The Moon dedicated in memory of my mother  
Nicole Wallace Heikkila who passed away in October of 2021 who  
always treasured my writing.

## Solitare

Can I see you?  
I ask, silently,  
into Sky

I see speckled breast,  
a flash of red wing.  
vibrato in the air, my heart

Where does the light go -  
or should I say -  
who takes it?

The green is in my eyes,  
and on the bottoms  
of my bare feet

And still -  
the Red Dirt calls

to me:  
paint me across your cheeks  
and across your breast  
and down your thighs

Will I take flight then?

Can I see you?

Can I see?

Can I see

- *a sigh* -

me?

Will I take flight then?

-Rebecca MLH

## Again

the silver moon  
dips below the edge of the velvet lilac cloud  
blush rises  
in the sky from the points of the trees  
at times I feel painted too  
and gilded  
by the last rays of the sun  
then the night descends  
and the shadows grow deep  
and I remember all the words you have said  
and all the words you have denied  
tiny silver moons leave glittering trails along my blushing  
cheeks

-Rebecca MLH

## After Bubble-Wrap

My life was spawned from underneath  
in bubble wrap, clump globule place,  
beside the strings of weed and toad,  
where boatmen search amongst gnat rafts,  
transporting death as ferry, Styx,  
on cauldron mix, like witch's brew.  
Full ramshorn snails, newts, slimy things,  
their fins, fine crests, fly caddis sticks,  
shrimps, sucking leech, elodea,  
and rotting leaves which feed the fuel,  
stir gene spread thrive in stagnant pool.  
Brief spell, metamorphosis trail,  
like Ovid's tales set by the sea,  
this fluid state within, without  
from dot to frog by withered tail,  
and legs erupting in their turn,  
encapsulates transforming stew.  
This underworld where gangsters thrive  
with dragons, nymphs and beetle dives,  
slaters, skaters, sticklebacks  
is threatened by so much above -  
a starling beak like scuba stab,  
before its murmuration cloud,  
drag fishing net, jar ringed with twine,  
by muddy knees, excited shriek,  
and Eden's asp, snake in the grass -  
all dippers launched from outer space.  
And airy, rising from the deep,  
stream bubbles, photosynthesis;  
when all seems well in mirrored glass,  
from sediment, in clouded view,  
that all-consuming teeth-bared pike.

-Stephen Kingsnorth

## In Phases

In this trick of light we call years, I watch  
our kids grow. My heart believes such hunger  
is forever. The citrus fear I catch  
and bite, how the days of worry linger.  
It is my job, with relentless desire  
to keep the planes aloft, the delicate  
pathways mowed. These protective charms require  
my attention, so I must dedicate  
myself, though they have grown most ungrateful  
for the clingy ways I try to keep them  
safe (and let's be honest, small.) Now they pull  
away, eyes rolling, mouths dripping wisdom  
as only the safe and very young can do.  
I pretend to release them, worry anew.

-Beth Konkoski

# VIBGYOR

We are a pair of siblings  
named violet, indigo, blue  
green, yellow, orange, red  
born and raised in crayon family

We are instrumental in  
conveying human emotions  
that flows across  
the seven seas and oceans

We are the orchestra  
in the symphony of  
painters and artists

We make sunny morning's  
vibrant noon, silver moon  
green forest, brown trees  
blue sky, dark grey clouds,  
sparkle and glow in the canvas

We capture and convey  
the beauty around the world  
the darkness of sorrow  
the rainbow of joy  
the pain and pleasure  
dancing, Shining and  
merging as colors  
in the canvas

We are the shutter  
in the painter's camera  
through us all the warmth of  
the artist's heart  
is captured and conveyed  
in a piece of art

-Kavitha Krishanmurthy

## The Interpreter

I bend, move the bench,  
step around, sit down—  
brush hair from my face.  
Raising my hands, I place them gently  
and breathe.

*I am heartbeat, I am need.*

I softly touch the keys—  
a breeze brushing the surface.  
Light, airy sounds drift,  
become whispers.

*I am expectation.*

Fingers sprint up,  
down the checkerboard  
of keys—body sways—  
chords resonate with tension.

*I am urgency.*

Hands fly, dissonance howls.  
Fingers chop keys, right  
and left clang uncoordinated  
rhythms—sustain pedal chains  
the storm of sounds together.

*I am agitation.*

Sudden silence.

Poised hands lower—melody  
rolls, drops—ever downward—  
abating, steadying.  
I stop, sit a moment,  
drop hands to my lap.

*I am stillness, I am peace.*

-Margaret Krusinga

## Fracture

Thašúnke Witkó  
(Crazy Horse)

used to sleep out on the short grass  
prairie where he could feel bison move  
through his body

Hydraulic pumps mark many of the spots  
where he once slept.

I know that a rod will find water  
the way a tuning fork can reveal  
a fractured bone

When cattle came and replaced bison  
ranchers built fences and the land learned  
news ways of walking

Now, when the sky thunders like a stallion  
Thašúnke Witkó could be walking in the old way  
across those feral pockets of fracture

That are everywhere.

-Jeremy Marks

## Mona Lisa On Pointe

Smiling  
    she pirouettes  
ignoring  
    the burning  
muscles  
    the brutalized toes  
the knee  
    the doctor said  
was almost  
    healed  
the corrections  
    of teachers  
It's necessary  
    *to suffer*  
to be beautiful  
    the motto  
of ballet  
    her backpack a  
testament  
    to this  
culture  
    of pain  
management  
    containing  
medical tape  
    gauze  
ibuprofen  
    anesthetics  
the smile  
    itself  
numbing  
    and numb  
a covering  
    a seal  
a shield  
    a scar  
a suture  
    a staple,  
a conronym  
    splicing  
screening  
    cleaving  
smiling.  
-Joseph Mills

## Crimson Crowds

Have you ever seen crimson flowers  
blushing amidst the green foliage?  
I am a witness to thousands of them,  
smiling with the coyness of a tender girl,  
sprightly springing with the sway  
of the breeze like a cradled baby,  
tantalizing a passing soul  
with the regal robes of beauty.  
Ah! The aesthetic treat  
blinds the eyes, spellbinds the soul,  
the heart stops to beat, dances  
with the crimson crowds in unison,  
aligning with their thousand hearts,  
divorcing me for the moment.

I now understand how the daffodils  
had mesmerized poor Wordsworth,  
arresting him with the soft command  
of subtle beauty. These delicate petals  
have captivated me as well, albeit  
I cannot say their name or the family  
to which they belong. But I will sustain  
their visual aroma in the closet of my heart  
forever like a deep-rooted secret,  
even after I leave this place. Aye, I must  
leave this place like Wordsworth did  
because I have miles to go  
before the nails of the evening prick  
and the cold arm of night nudges me.

-Debasish Mishra

## **Incendiary Woman**

She was the windshield that shattered.  
She was the bruised bride and wilting wife.  
Her face split into Picasso-like angles.

She collected bottles for the windows,  
translucent blues and greens.  
Deliberate calm,  
sadness in this world.  
She was the screech of an owl,  
the scurry of a mouse.  
Finally, she was the bonfire outside,  
igniting branches, consuming the landscape.

-Elizabeth Morse

## Night Numbers

As a child,  
I watched the shadows shift in my room.

They showed their dim teeth,  
threatened with long fingers.

Lying there awake,  
I knew I couldn't call out.

Whenever I had, my mother's irritated voice  
persuaded me that I was wrong.

So I shut my eyes and counted backwards,  
then ran through my times tables and powers of two.

Time was an integer.

Sleep was infinity.

-Elizabeth Morse

## The Silent Rest

“The rest is silence.” —from *Hamlet*

The Nothing that we see when we close our eyes

is blackness, but

a textured black. The optimist—like the optometrist—will tell us it’s the reflection of the last thing that we saw, burned onto our retinas to last a minute or two or three, bouncing back from our eyelids as a negative impression. Not very poetic, not very permanent, but at least not absolutely

nothing.

The Silence that we hear when we block our ears

is spoiled a little by

the murmur of blood flowing through the vessels in our palms squeezed against our heads in our vain, temporary hope to cut out all the noise, pulsing all the more from the pressure applied in our quest for

peace or quiet.

In Sleep, the images long burned become distorted—*re-created*—before being

projected back to our mind and hearts in dreams. Still, though the world’s cut off, it is

not gone.

Likewise are we when in

a state of Inspiration:

primed by drops of imagination, it's unlike anything else, though comes from everything else, falling now like rain which has evaporated, condensed, saturated, supersaturated, till it quenches, first, then cannot help

but pour.

The fifth such nothing state, Death, I can't say anything about

with certainty.

But after Everything, I hope that God has retinas and eyelids, blood and hands and active ears, a mind, a heart, a yearn to recreate, dream, reflect, and imagine; that we'd in fact been fashioned after Him/Her/Them; and that too much silence, haunted by such negative murmurs, will prove, in the end, To Be unbearable,

after All.

-James B. Nicola

## Lake Watching

The morning sheen of an August lake  
the stars come down to swim  
thousands glinting their delight  
sun-charged and beaming  
dazzling, then submerging  
flashing upwards once again  
seagulls skimming, wing-spanning  
tracking the elusion of their sparkle  
close beyond  
the chessboard moves of sailing craft;  
a slow motorboat snugly waking up  
the waves;  
the mini-motorboats called ducks  
  
at the elevated lookout, a squirrel's  
baton tail conducts a breezy air  
  
greening the shoreline below  
the upward yearning vines  
and carefree weeds cuddling a trail  
of hatted human heads  
  
pity the shimmering will not keep  
yet by its evanescence it may  
still lay a claim to perpetuity

-Lauro Palomba

## Taking Down The Nets

The spiritual  
vision being  
cast in stone.  
In the spring  
thaw, work  
resumes.  
Mortar bonding  
anew. Bustle.  
Belief.

Cacophony. Laborers,  
masons, plasterers,  
stonecutters. In  
exchange for toil and  
savvy, sins forgiven  
by religious overlords  
who tour the relics for  
fundraising. Donkeys,  
onlookers, dogs, carts,  
dust. Somewhere in  
the wings, children  
who can't yet foresee  
their roles on this  
stage. The future  
fresco painters and  
stained glass artists.  
The community despite  
gaping strata lending  
a hand. A hope. An  
expression of faith.  
The structure will  
tower – in time – over  
its builders. They  
will not hallelujah  
its completion. Will  
be shades when the  
cathedral - decades,  
even centuries

hence – is  
consecrated  
in pomp and  
psalm. The  
craftsmen who  
carved and laid  
the first stone  
will not shape  
and fit the  
last. Manifest  
to all. Of no  
consequence  
to any.

A dispassionate autumn breeze. Dodges through the  
chain-link fence. Chants to the  
laconic souls there confined. Leaves wither curled round  
the metal. Like desiccated  
minds gripping a memory. Those that vaulted over  
wander the playing surfaces,  
stupored by their fall.  
The club members, after a final hit, are islanded across

four blue courts. Stripping them of nets to deny the frost their ruin. They know what they're about. Instructions superfluous. Collecting the squeegees. Rolling up the carpets that dragged dry summer puddles. Snipping plastic fasteners to lower and fold the windscreens. Slackening and liberating the nets. Mending frays. Conviction in themselves. That after six months of the Earth spinning its wheel of outcomes the pleasure will return for the asking. Re-emerging. Uncrippled in limb and health. Once more setting foot between the lines. The courts restored, available to grant fresh swings. You wonder if some seniors are conceding the odds of outliving the winter. Surely they grasp their helping hands assure neither immunity, reward, nor life hereafter. And yet they serve.

## Solstice

Promptly the summer solstice  
gets the countdown underway;  
even as our bed of roses blooms,  
our complacency beckoned on,  
the mellowing rays  
have been coded for their shortening  
Not a morbid leap then to regard  
the exhaustless day that elapses well  
bridging us closer to the one that won't;  
tipping us off heartlessly the warp and fade is on

Plateaus seldom grace mountain peaks. The body  
vaunting its glory too soon heralds couriers of distress:  
blood in the urine, shortness of breath, swellings not of  
joy;  
trends reverse, tests don't forever signal negative

In lengthening twilight, feigned unawareness of a lost  
equinox

-Lauro Palomba

## Unfaded

I lightly shake hands  
and pretend  
to recall nothing  
of the prowling senior  
in the lab that night,  
a moment that  
rots my bruised soul  
and claws the edges  
of my thoughts. Still,  
I won't sacrifice my pride  
to public scrutiny  
which cannot understand  
what marks us  
is never really passed.

-Christina Petrides

## Reflection

What see you in the mirror, heart?  
A damsel in distress, an aged crone,  
or perhaps a wily fox of fable?  
Some knightly mouse from legend,  
rescuing lions? Or a beast herself  
ensnared by princely pride,  
plunged afoul the crotchety fairy  
who, consulting an eccentric pool,  
sews kingdoms in thickets  
of mystery and fearsome vegetation?  
Or in the glass do you shine silver,  
a creator of charming magic,  
fiercely guarding innocence  
from encroachments of gloom?

-Christina Petrides

## The River in Winter (after divorce)

As we draw closer to the solstice,  
I gather remnants of light  
into my arms—asymmetrical flakes  
of snow scatter down, child I used  
to be wants to stick out her tongue,  
catch one, then two—brief bite of cold,  
I miss and try again.

If I seek quietness, it's found  
in the direction of the river,  
a shiver shaken off  
shoulders: there is no trickle  
or burble beneath its surface.

I rarely walk along its banks after dark  
without my dog, who lives elsewhere now.  
Sometimes, I wonder if he misses me,  
if he remembers our treks,  
our breath curled out, wispy ghosts  
that lingered, or the time he ventured  
onto thin ice and heard it crack  
beneath his paws.

Last October, he turned nine years old,  
his muzzle gray, his body heavy with canine age.

We part with so many things,  
the constant being these seasons—  
their slow turn, axis of time—yet  
I still have two strong legs  
to carry me forward.

I know I cannot reclaim the past,  
but can claim what is—  
crunch of snow beneath boots,  
snap of reeds frozen with ice,  
and the ability to listen, just listen  
and hear the river enunciate each syllable  
of silence.

-Rosalie Sanara Petrouske

## After the April Rains

It was cold that winter, colder than most.

Never melting ice, never ending snow. The days were short. They never seemed to end.

I watched the snow fall. It covered the ground hiding the greenery of all the vegetables I harvested last fall. They made for a beautiful Thanksgiving table and dinner.

She never joined us for this celebration or any other celebrations ever again. Her sickness took a little of her each day. Her beautiful hair was gone. Her face showed the evil of her illness. I could never grasp why she hung on so long.

The snow took over the winter. The illness took over her body.

They told me I couldn't bury her; the ground was frozen. Have to wait 'til spring they told me. The wait seemed endless.

Spring finally did arrive. So did the greenery. Planting my vegetables would come soon.

I planted flowers in the late spring after the April rains ended. I covered the ground where they laid her. I watched them bloom.

It was a long winter, colder than most.

-Gia Porter

## ***Combat!***

All of our fathers were World War II vets.  
It went with the territory, 1966, ninth grade,  
Potawatomi Rapids Junior High.  
Tommy Patterson's dad had been on a ship  
in the Pacific, fought in Okinawa.  
Phil Dulaney's had been in the infantry in Italy.  
My father'd spent the war in Panama,  
a radar man away from the action overseas.  
Even Werner Fischer's papa'd been in the German army,  
shrapnel scars along his jaw  
where machine gun bullets had grazed him.

But when I learned Bruce Higgins' father,  
my high school Civics teacher,  
had been in the Normandy invasion,  
I raised my hand in class one day  
to ask him if he'd killed any Nazis,  
a smirk on my face, a huge fan of *Combat!*,  
the World War II drama that ran for five years on ABC.

A short, slope-shouldered man in a jacket and tie,  
gray hair cut close to his skull,  
it felt like I was giving him a chance to brag,  
but Mr. Higgins did not crack a smile,  
as I'd expected him to, warm to the subject  
of his heroic, patriotic feats.

"There's nothing to be proud of," he replied,  
his voice cave-hollow, face drawn and ashen.  
"We just did what we had to do."

My face burned.  
I saw myself through his eyes,  
the callow youth that I was.

-Charles Rammelkamp

## Threshold

It is no small thing to have come here,  
child that you are,  
remembering what was lost,  
searching the sky  
for that which was wet and beautiful about this place.  
The clouds, for instance,  
half-stained in memory,  
their place on the horizon slowly gathering attention.  
Or the wind, perhaps,  
threadlike and quiet,  
finding its way here again,  
back into this world,  
no longer pressing to the earth.  
Even now the clear green-gold of summer  
is opening into autumn.  
Even now the rain,  
wanting to keep this sound alive,  
is picking up where it left off.

-Sarah Rehfeldt

## What We Remembered When Father Lay Dying

Between my parent's bedroom and ours,  
there was a long knee-high cubby hole  
tall enough for suitcases

that my brother and I could crawl  
through to peer out at our father's body  
in boxer shorts strewn  
on the bed, his mouth agape  
snoring big looping guttural  
snorts that even startled flies.

His bean-pole legs and string-bean  
arms spread out as if he'd fallen from  
an enormous height. If he knew

we watched him, he'd tan  
our hides. At our naptime,  
he snatched and lugged us  
under his arms like sacks  
of dirt. Up became down,  
near became far. Three steps  
at a time, he ascended, then  
flung us on our beds, laughing.  
That's when the giant could nap,

when we crept close to him.  
The floor creaked. His eyelids  
fluttered. We dared not touch.

Mother warned us "Don't disturb  
your father." Yet there we were,  
not after geese with golden eggs,

nor bags of gold,  
not even a golden harp  
that could lull him to sleep.

We craved to be close  
to his quivering lips,  
to peek inside his dreams—

this man who wore three-piece suits,  
who dressed us for success  
in Brook's Brothers navy blazers,  
who climbed the corporate ladder  
yet got stuck at vice-president  
with the keys to the kingdom  
out of reach, and us,  
part of his ambition machine,  
to outdo him, to endure  
the snarl of his temper  
when we didn't act right,  
when we weren't just so.  
We liked him being  
quiet, still. Decades later,  
with tubes stuffed  
in his nose, monitors at his  
bedside, mouth open,  
breath uneven, no longer a man  
to spit commands, but frail  
at the end of life's stalk  
gazing at us wondering who  
had axed his heart  
that would last two  
days, no fairy tale giant  
but a shrunken has-been  
in a hospital bed, his skin  
a yellowish gold in the after light  
of an afternoon in March who asked,  
"Have I lived a good life?"  
as if we were the final arbiters  
of this body we could have lifted  
and, if we had let go, would have floated  
out the window into clouds.  
A good life? we thought. What's that?  
A man who had a Lincoln Continental  
under a palm tree? That he had.

Who had a martini at boom-boom hour  
every day? By all means, Yes.  
A man who was a seeker of truth  
and beauty? He must be kidding.  
But he asked again as if his swats,  
slaps, and insults we'd forgotten.  
What dared we speak?—  
there beside the body, waiting  
as his heart gave out.

-Bruce Spang

## What To Say To a Poet with Lymphoma

Your diagnosis—that word spoken  
and received like news of a hurricane  
that the weatherman in a dark suit  
calls *Grace* as if something  
devastating, aimed right at you,  
can have such a name.

It should be called *cured*,  
a name worth waiting for, a name  
that merits champagne and shoes-  
off, stocking-feet dancing.

After the chemo, the hair  
you combed into a wastebasket,  
may there be an oncologist  
who knows how to handle words,  
who sits close beside you,  
and hands you the word *freed*.

You hold it in your hand and rub  
its soft furry *r* and *e's* and the  
long tail of the *d* and feel the *f*  
nestle into your fingers.

You carry the word  
down the stairs into sunlight  
and slip it into your pocket  
where it coos and settles down  
as you walk to your car  
and remember words  
have been your friends  
as you breathe in a word  
secure inside your pocket.

-Bruce Spang

## **Barrier Islands, St. Petersburg, Florida, 1952**

Waves no higher than a shoe  
and quiet as prayer lapped against our thighs  
as my brother and I, before dawn, waded  
past one sandbar after another  
into the illimitable blue-green  
to snatch anemone and conch,  
still living, sucked up by waves  
as sand drew back, exposing them.

Our plastic pails packed,  
we stomped back to The Sands  
where mother boiled them,  
scooped out their innards,  
and let them dry on the sill.

We pilfered plenty like thieves  
grabbing what we could.

Those keepsakes, every one of them,  
have long since disintegrated on shelves  
or been crushed to smithereens. My brother  
and our mother— their ashes have been  
dispersed in the Gulf as they wished.

Yet the light that tripped over waves  
and spent its first liquid warmth  
on us and the breakers that chased  
us to the shore and retreated  
keeps coming back to me  
as if what we were after,  
what we took and took,  
chest high in surf  
on hands and knees  
were not those shells  
but being there at dawn,  
immersed, alive.

-Bruce Spang

## Beneath the Water

Today was the day he died  
Many years ago now.  
I remember I was at his bedside  
At his passing. He said hello,  
Which I took as his goodbye,  
As he slowly drifted like the body  
Of a down man floating just below  
The water of a green river  
Toward an ocean of great blue beyond.  
There was no poetry,  
Only prose that day,  
As he moved in and out of consciousness  
Like a man lost at sea,  
Bobbing up at intervals and  
Breaking the surface  
Gulping for air.  
There was a priest in a black suit.  
He may have actually worn casual street clothes,  
I can't quite recall,  
Who read the Gospel:  
"What father, whose son asked for a loaf of bread  
Would give him a stone,  
Or a fish and give him a serpent..."  
And it went on:  
"He who loves his life  
Shall lose it, and he who hates it  
Shall find it..."  
I who asked for bread and fish  
Listened hungry and understood.  
And when his head slipped quietly  
Beneath the water,  
I held my breath too,  
Just to be with him  
A few moments longer.

-Douglas G Tanoury

# Spring

Spring comes to me now  
Like either a green hiatus  
Or an abrupt scene change  
In the surrealistic landscape of some dream  
And I am neither fully awake  
Nor completely aware  
Of all its meaning and import.

The willows awaken  
In wisps of pale and subtle growth  
That forms around their branches like a mist,  
A nimbus of color,  
That sways in the breeze on May mornings  
In ways that reminds me of the soft movement of air  
In a woman's hair.

I walk through the day,  
A somnambulist's unconscious journey,  
Seeing, but not seeing,  
Hearing, but not hearing,  
Feeling, but not feeling,  
Perceiving, but not perceiving.  
And when I talk, it is the one sided  
Soliloquy of a sleeper's dialoged  
Where each word I whisper  
Has the visible substance of the vapor  
Exhaled with each breath  
Onto the frozen air of a January morning.  
I dream of spring,  
Of soft breezes and mild mornings  
And of the sycamores  
That awaken ever so slowly  
And will not show a hint of foliage  
Until the first days of June.

-Douglas G Tanoury

## A Dark Little Girl

She was a dark little girl  
And when I say dark what I mean is she was  
Acerbic and leaning toward the real  
And the macabre –  
Not morose or nihilistic but just  
Sarcastic like her daddy  
But sweet out of thin air, too.  
She's closer to woman now  
And last we spoke she was writing a novel  
About a "dystopian future"  
But that was quite a while ago.  
I can't tell you whether her novel was finished  
Or abandoned  
And I don't know whether I'll go on without her  
Or she'll return to me  
And I can have again that measure of happiness I once  
had  
But don't have anymore.  
For now I tuck my thoughts of her under my pillow at  
night  
Where I keep the poems she wrote at my place  
When she was eight years old  
And she was so delicate that when I picked her up  
I felt like I was holding a sparrow in the palm of my  
hand.  
I arrange the thoughts under the pillow a certain way  
And I close my eyes, waiting for whatever comes next.  
Dreaming of the nights she slept in the room next to  
mine,  
Imagining who she might be now,  
Having nightmares about how we've both been wronged.  
  
She was a dark little girl  
And when she hugged me  
I melted like ice cream in the rain.

-John Tustin

# Wunderbar!

Reno, June 10, 2016

Heidi's Bier Haus!

It was a lot of fun on—what?—quarter bets?

I forget.

But two hours and a twenty eventually turned into one hundred thirty dollars.

Silly stuff.

It wasn't the money, really.

More about the nutty polka music—tuba and accordion—  
tinka tinka tinka tinka tonka tonka tonk . . .

Heidi's friendly smile.

Armloads of bright, frothy beer, six steins at a time.

And the mustachioed Barkeeper shouting "Wunderbar!"

I won't play.

You know not to ask.

I won't even touch the button.

I'd just as soon take a handful of twenties and throw them into the Mississippi River.

Which I would never do!

But I love standing behind you.

I sip my own beer, study the crowd, hear the sounds, see the lights.

And watch your delight!

That night in the Peppermill, I split my attention between watching you win and, on the big screen, watching Golden State win.

What fun!

---

And wasn't it great we got to see Bruce earlier that day?

The drive up to Tahoe—amazing!

Passing through Carson City—that was neat, wasn't it?

I think we would have moved there if we'd seen it twenty years ago.

And there she was . . .  
In the parking lot . . .  
Who could miss it?  
Bruce's beautiful old Harley!  
Tan, black pin-stripes, leather saddle bags, sleek  
windscreen . . .  
"82 HOG"—how's that for a vanity plate!

And there he was!  
Early bird, seated in the garden alone.  
Red hair and beard.  
Helmet on the table.  
Keeping company with his Budweiser.

After handshakes, then hugs, a leisurely lunch by the  
lakeside.  
Bruce knew his way around the area.  
He had worked as an installer . . .  
Security systems for big homes on the hillsides.  
He sensed there were some questionable characters up  
there!

Gosh, the lake was such a brilliant blue!  
And the wind whipping up whitecaps.  
It must have blown our napkins off the table—what?—ten  
times?

Bruce and I hardly knew each other.  
We didn't grow up together.  
We had met once or twice when we were children.  
We finally got in touch again—old guys, everything over  
and done.  
Time and distance—they didn't make any difference.  
They meant nothing.  
We liked being brothers.

I thought we would have more time together.  
Maybe go to a NASCAR race once in a way—  
Once I was retired.  
Bruce was a big Tony Stewart fan.  
Crazy, our voices sounded similar.  
And our mannerisms were similar.

We even shared similar temperaments.  
Who would have guessed?  
Stuff we inherit.

After lunch, we all hugged in the parking lot.  
Bruce fired up that beautiful old bike, gave a wave, and  
he was gone—  
Back down the mountain to his single-wide in “Sac”—  
Sacramento.

To get back to Reno, we took his suggestion.  
We traveled up the west side of the lake.  
Oh my! What a gorgeous drive!

And that was that.  
We’ll never see him again.  
Who knew?  
December.  
Dead.  
Found in his trailer.  
They said it was a heart attack.  
Damn, damn, damn!

---

Heart problems . . .  
Stuff we inherit . . .  
All that fun we had in Reno . . .  
It turned on a single phone call.  
The same day—that’s how that great day began.  
Before we even left the hotel.  
The same damn day.  
Dr. Rastalli called early—she was on central time—to let  
you know.  
Since she’s “just” an oncologist, she wanted to be sure.  
She had already set an appointment for you with a  
cardiologist.  
But her diagnosis was for real.  
One in one-hundred thousand.  
Some heart defect—strange name, congenital, possibly  
inherited.

And there you have it.  
Bear children . . .  
Survive a vicious knee replacement . . .  
Knock cancer all hollow . . .  
Even put up with me for forty-plus years . . .  
And here, all along, you've had a heart defect, right from  
the day you were born!  
Who the hell knew?  
Damn!

---

They used to call these things "one-armed bandits."  
Ridiculous, damn machines.  
What are they called now?  
Just a button to push.

Funny, you actually can walk away.  
Once or twice a year is enough for you.  
Me, I'm the addict.  
I'll go with you anytime you like.  
I like to tap my foot to the silly polka music.  
Maybe see quarters turn to dollars.  
You have so much fun with a twenty dollar bill!

Actually, I could go every day—  
Stand behind you—  
Watch Heidi—  
Hear Hans—or whatever his name is—"Wunderbar!"  
It's ridiculous.  
But I love to watch you.  
If anything happens . . .  
If anything happens to you . . .  
I will have to return to Reno.  
On my own.  
Don't make me do it.  
You know I will.  
Don't you?  
I'll do that.  
I'll do it for you.  
Or that's what I'll say—"I'm doing it for you."

More likely it will be for my own sorry self.  
To feel sorry for myself.  
And for my miserable life without you.

Twenties in the machine, twenties in the Mississippi—  
What difference will it make?  
Tell me—  
What am I going to do without you?  
Find Bier Haus in the Peppermill?  
Me—put in a twenty? more? whatever it takes?  
Press that button again and again, all night long?  
Stare into Heidi's eyes?  
Hope Hans will shout "Wunderbar"?  
Or just lay my head on the console and cry?

-Douglas Twells

## Well Then

*to be read simultaneously*

If life is  
the journey  
into death,  
where we are  
born dying  
always on  
our way to  
our unknown  
end...well then,  
life is death.

If death is  
the final  
destiny  
of life, where  
knowing we  
expire makes  
life precious—  
finitude's  
gift...well then,  
death is life.

-Adam Waddell

## The Newlywed

There is a neighbor repairing his fence, again.  
Yesterday's windstorm leveled the dog ear fence panel,  
exposing his cluttered backyard to my kitchen window,  
for the third time this year. His latest use of bungy cords,  
is just another example of his creative innovation.

As I stare at another feeble attempt to delay the  
inevitable,  
I am reminded of my early years of marriage. I was  
young,  
broken, hurting, and confused, trying to love another,  
while lacking love for myself. Self-help books, prayer,  
empty promises—bungy cords, ropes, zip ties.

Moving from the kitchen to the bedroom,  
I see a reflection that resembles the window scene.  
While this reflected fence was once reminiscent  
of the one outside, it is now more connected,  
stable, and prepared for unforeseen wind.

-Andrew Ray Williams

## Newspaper Days

I slept too long

again

dreaming of my newspaper days  
not of the long hours but of closing  
a story—the finishing touches  
on something that might shed light  
on a scandal in a small town,  
the mayor's wrongdoing  
malfeasance by the city manager  
papers given to us under

the door

the quiet frenzy  
or maybe an opinion column  
where I came to the defense

of immigrants

something that would shake our readers  
at any rate  
but it wasn't true. not any more  
because it was a dream and I haven't  
worked in newspapers for a dozen years  
lost the ability, the outlet, to make an

impact

maybe I still could but more likely I cannot  
it's what they call aging, changing careers  
leaving behind hard work in a hurting industry,  
leaving it to others, yet still suffering  
with sympathy, even grief, for what I once  
had, and no longer do

-Dana Yost

# FICTION

## Water Colors

The tubs showed up the morning after Gordon's diagnosis. Twelve of them were strewn throughout the yard, identical claw-foot style, pristine white like dentures. One brushed up against the sliding glass door leading to the deck; a pair squashed the onion bulbs and kohlrabi in the raised garden; another blocked in Kip's car, leaning against his Honda's rear bumper. The others were arrayed at random in the grass, two shadowed by the weeping willow, another snuggled between the Adirondack chairs where Kip and Gordon liked to drink Syrah in the evening and hit each other with clouds of bug spray because citronella candles didn't do shit about Missouri's super mosquitoes.

"Well," Gordon said, "I did always want one of these, ever since I was a kid." He bent down over the tub next to the bird feeder. Kip felt his throat close: one of the symptoms of Guillain-Barre Syndrome was weakness in the legs, and he was sure that if Gordon knelt too deeply, he might never get up. But Gordon looked comfortable. He ran his hand over the tub's edge. "We had one of these in this tiny apartment my parents rented when I was four or five. Besides the smell of fryer oil from the Chinese restaurant downstairs, it's the only thing I remember." He gripped the tub with both hands. "One of the claws had snapped off, and I would rock back and forth during baths like I was on a ship."

Kip couldn't think of anything to say. He had been the one, yesterday, to ask the doctor all the questions. He memorized the timeline, the treatment plan, the litany of drugs: Octagam, Privigen, Gammagard. He made note of what they should expect, which effects were most and least likely. Kip imagined ventilators, feeding tubes, drool spooling out of the corners of Gordon's mouth like fruit juice. He'd had the flu six weeks prior, caught from Kip, who'd been infected by one of his students, and although Gordon's fever and runny nose faded, they were replaced

by an encroaching numbness and then an inability to urinate: temporary paralysis, his nerves refusing to do their daily work.

But he was quick to stand up after giving the tub a couple of echoing raps. Kip's heart fluttered at the ease with which Gordon moved.

"What should we do?" Kip said.

"About what?"

Kip pointed at the tub.

"Oh," Gordon said. "Let's keep it. Keep them."

"And do what?"

"Let's keep our options open," Gordon said, squeezing Kip's shoulder. Grip strength would be something that would come and go, the doctor had said. So instead of worrying about the tubs, Kip closed his eyes, grateful for the strength in his husband's fingers.

\*

They had RSVPed for the party weeks ago, but because of his diagnosis, Kip didn't imagine Gordon would want to go. But when Kip suggested they stay home, Gordon shook his head and said, "I'm not dead yet."

"You're not dying," Kip said.

While Gordon mussed his hair in the bathroom, Kip stared at his Nikes, an obnoxious gassy yellow. Would they ever run through the neighborhood together again? He imagined Gordon's sagging body, everything drooped like cooked linguine, feet slapping against pavement, mouth agape and chest heaving.

"Please don't," Gordon said, peering out from the bathroom. "Whatever you're thinking. Please don't. Not yet."

Kip drove Gordon's car. Gordon made him promise to say nothing about his diagnosis. It was the first time he used that word, still dancing around Guillain-Barre.

"What about the tubs?" Kip said, pulling into the parking lot.

"What about them?"

"Are they a secret, too?"

"Nothing's a secret. I just want to have a nice time."

The party was one of those paint-and-drink-wine things. A woman with gray hair down to her waist, wearing a billowy, shapeless shirt that hung halfway down her thighs and swallowed the curve of her arms and shoulders, dithered about perspective and the color wheel, waving her hands about her head like a crazed orchestral conductor. Kip and Gordon were the only men, invited by one of Kip's co-workers, the biology teacher. She seemed lonely, always talking about her cat, so he'd said yes.

The instructor walked them through how to paint a vase on a blue mat, the glass covered in swirly flowers. The real thing was set up at the front of the room.

When the bottle of wine came around, he stared at it until Gordon started pouring. Kip had not thought to ask the doctor whether he could drink before starting the plasmapheresis treatments, or if alcohol would interfere with the intravenous immunoglobulin therapy.

"What harm can one glass do?" He winked, handed the bottle to Kip—which he passed along without pouring—and took a sip.

Gordon might suffer paralysis from the shoulders down and experience respiratory failure, both of which could be permanent. He might never dance again or be able to lift his own wine glass to his lips or shit in private. He might need an in-home nurse, a mechanized bed, feeding tubes. A hospital room.

Kip watched Gordon paint. He held his brush like a pencil, fingers curled close to the bristles, steady and careful. Kip wondered if the numbness that had settled into Gordon's extremities and grown more intense over the last six weeks was present today; it waxed and waned like moon phases. He showed no signs of fatigue, frowning at his work and practically stabbing his canvas with the brush. Instead of the vase, he painted a tub perched atop a roof.

"I don't think there's one on our roof."

Gordon paused for more wine. "It's surrealist."

The instructor approached, the bangly bracelets on her arms rattling like tambourines. She clasped her hands together and glanced at Gordon's canvas but said nothing. Then she turned to Kip, whose canvas was blank.

"I'm more of a paint-by-numbers kind of person," he said.

"Don't worry. There's no grading," she said, letting out a little laugh that made her long braid wag like a horse's tail. A sympathetic look crested her face, like she wanted to pat Kip's shoulder as if he were a behaving dog.

Gordon set down his brush and peered at Kip's canvas. The instructor waddled off to the next painter.

"Let me help," Gordon said, leaning so that his chest pressed against Kip's back. He was like a layer of chain mail, his weight solid and true. Kip could feel Gordon's muscles, lithe and thick, against his body. He would have to sleep alone, eventually, when he needed a special mattress, a bed that could lift itself up when he was no longer able to walk. Kip would massage Gordon's legs and turn him onto his sides to prevent bedsores.

Gordon drew his fingers along Kip's.

"Which tub is your favorite?"

"Aren't they the same?"

Gordon shook his head.

"I can't pick."

"Yes, you can."

"You don't have to help me."

"Are you not going to help me when I need it?"

"Of course I am."

"Well then."

"This is just painting," Kip said.

"Then let me help you just paint."

"The vase?"

"Fuck the vase. And the tubs, if that helps. What do

you want?"

What did Kip want? He wanted Gordon to be healthy, for his voice not to carry a tiny tremor every time he spoke.

"Let's do the vase. At least it's something I can see in front of me."

Gordon nodded and then started directing Kip, a ventriloquist guiding his dummy, smearing a glob of paint on the brush and drawing it across the canvas in a tight, controlled circle. Gordon's hands did not tremble, did not slip and slide. His chin was an anchor digging into Kip's skin that he was happy to let hold him steady.

\*

The tubs were still there in the morning. Their fiberglass surfaces sparkled with dewy condensation. Kip and Gordon stood on the porch drinking Goshen coffee.

"What do we do with them?" Kip said.

"Why do anything?"

"They'll ruin the grass. And look at the garden."

"Nature is resilient." Gordon rubbed Kip's back. "But I have an idea."

They finished their coffees, then drove to an art supply store nestled in the corner of a shopping center, harshly lit by too many fluorescent bulbs and smelling like Christmas. Gordon led them to the paints. He plucked up some cheap brushes and then ran his fingers along the tubes of acrylic like they were piano keys.

"Let's steal one," he whispered.

"What?"

"Just one tube." His voice had an erotic tinge to it, his voice raspy and throated.

"Why would we do that? They're five dollars."

"They'll never notice."

"Gordon."

His shoulders slumped. "Come on. There's no one around. We'll never get caught." Before Kip could object, Gordon plucked up a tube and shoved it into his pocket, grinning and wriggling his eyebrows. "Indulge

me, please.”

Gordon carried all of the supplies. His ability to hold things would evaporate any day now, his hands refusing to clench. The doctor had outlined these various hurdles and degenerations, but always with a caveat: they could come at any moment. The timeline was unclear: every case was different, each one a new, murky set of symptoms you could shuffle like a deck of cards.

Gordon smiled at the girl at the cash register, a teenager with acne-pocked cheeks and scraggly hair pulled into a ponytail. She wouldn't look them in the eye, even when Gordon asked how her day was going. When Gordon handed over his credit card, he smiled at the girl, who finally flicked her eyes toward them.

“Wasn't that fun?” he said when they were safely in the car, thrusting his hips up so he could extract the pilfered paint. He held it high and closed one eye as if peering through a microscope. “But that girl seemed so sad. Bummed me out.”

“So, what are we doing?” Kip said when they pulled into the driveway, easing around his still-trapped car.

“Follow me and find out,” Gordon said. Kip watched him push the door wide and step out with ease. For a moment he wondered if maybe the doctor was wrong, if somehow the blood test had been incorrect. Maybe the doctor didn't know what to look for and had misinterpreted the results. But then Kip saw the way Gordon paused, just for a moment, and took a deep breath, the plastic bag with their wares looking heavy in his hand.

He led them to the back yard. The air was crispy with dew and impending rain, clouds a gray swirl above them. Beneath the willow, Gordon knelt next to one of the tubs and started pawing through the supplies.

“What are we doing?”

Gordon extracted the square glass palette he'd bought for nineteen dollars. It looked too delicate for

human hands to hold, much less to be smeared with paint, the surface perfect and translucent.

"We're painting," Gordon said, holding the palette like a cocktail waitress armed with a tray of Bellinis and whiskey sours.

"Do you even know what you're doing?"

"No," Gordon said. "But who cares?"

Kip shivered. A sudden burst of cold air clawed like a freezer's breath. "Don't we need gesso?"

"What is that?"

"I don't know," Kip said. "It's just something I've heard of."

Gordon balanced the palette on his thighs. "Please stop worrying. Stop talking. Just let me do this."

"I don't really know how."

Gordon shut his eyes and took a deep breath. "I know. I know you do not know how to do this. And I can accept that. After today. Okay?"

"Okay. Fine."

"Thank you."

Gordon started uncapping tubes and squirting blobs of paint onto the palette, which was soon clouded with heaps of magenta and tangerine and aquamarine. A clump of white sat in the center of the glass.

"But the tubs are already white," Kip said.

"Who knows what we'll need or when we need it," Gordon said. He took one of the brushes, fine as a chopstick, and swirled the bristles into a dollop of orange. Then, the palette shivering in his left hand, he reached into the tub and started painting. From where he knelt, Kip couldn't see what Gordon was doing. He told himself it didn't matter, that Gordon would paint what Gordon wanted to paint. Perhaps his strength would fail, or a wash of numbness would scorch down his arm, and the palette would go end over end, smearing the grass with its rainbow of colors. Or the threatening clouds would crack like eggs, send a shower pummeling down that would wash everything away, the deluge

powering through the curtain of the weeping willow's bent branches. Or maybe the tubs would snap out of existence just as quickly as they'd appeared. Or, perhaps, nothing would happen at all.

Who, Kip wondered, could know?

"What are you painting?" Kip asked when Gordon switched to white.

"My innards and blood."

"What?"

"A joke! I'm doing my grave."

"Not funny."

"Of course it's funny." Gordon frowned and flicked paint toward Kips. "Lighten up."

The rain stayed at bay all afternoon. Kip brought them bottles of water, then made cucumber sandwiches. Gordon took a short break to clean out the brushes. He managed to sling paint onto the inside of all twelve tubs, finishing up his work on the last—the one blocking of Kip's car—when the first drops started to fall.

"Good timing," Gordon said. His hands were covered in paint, his shirt and jeans a smorgasbord of color. "Lucky for us."

"About time for some luck."

"Oh, stop. Help me clean up."

They barely made it into the garage before the drizzle became a downpour, the noise of rain echoing off the roof. Gordon was smiling.

"Won't the rain ruin your work?" Kip said.

"No."

"But won't the paint wash away?"

"Some, maybe. When it dries, it's water-resistant. But that wasn't really the point."

Kip wanted to ask what the point was, but he didn't. His jaw felt snapped shut tight like a sprung trap. If he tried to pry it open, he thought, the whole of his skull might shatter.

\*

They both fell into heavy sleep that night, fast, as if

they'd taken sedatives, the noises of wind and lightning chasing Kip into dreams he didn't remember when he woke. As always, he watched Gordon go through his morning routine, looking for signs of struggle. He ate with no trouble, wolfing down a bowl of cinnamon oatmeal and slurping two cups of coffee. He wore a tight tank top, and his biceps twitched as he shoved spoonfuls of gruel into his mouth. The pleasantly round upper edge of his pecs still looked strong.

"Okay," Gordon said when he was finished eating. "Let's go."

"Go where?"

Gordon pointed toward the sliding door. "We have to finish."

"What?"

The morning was fuggy, full of heat and moisture, the grass slick with condensation. Rainwater was pooled in the knots of the decking. Gordon led them to the weeping willow, water sloughing off the low branches when Kip caught them with his shoulder.

"Lower me in," Gordon said, pointing to one of the tubs.

"What?"

"Stop asking that. Just listen to me."

"Are you sure?" Kip said. Water—stained saffron from the paint Gordon had traced along the bottom, a sequence of wobbly, irregular suns starting at the drain stopper—had collected in the bottom, a good three or four inches.

"Yes, I'm sure," Gordon said. Kip held out his arms and Gordon leaned into them, his weight heavy and thick, but then he yelled for Kip to stop.

"What?"

"My clothes. I need to take them off." Before Kip could say anything, Gordon added, "And don't say 'What?'"

Kip kept his mouth shut and let Gordon use him for balance as he peeled off his t-shirt and shorts and

underwear, seemingly unconcerned that the neighbors might see him if they glanced out the wrong window at the wrong angle.

"Now help me in," Gordon said.

Gordon explained: he wanted to go from the tub to tub and sink himself in the rainwater, the little lakes of seafoam, vermillion, and coral. To paint himself with what the storm had let loose.

Kip decided he would go along. Why not? Soon enough, Gordon's body would be unrecognizable anyway. Whether it would ever be the one Kip knew again, neither of them could guess. So why not let it transform in this way, take on temporary stains and streaks of gray and copper and purple? So, Kip made a rack of his forearms and, like an excited newlywed, Gordon jumped into them, roping his arms around Kip's neck. He was somehow both heavy and light.

"You can let go now," Gordon said when he'd been sunk into the low water.

But Kip didn't. He held on, his hands roped around Gordon's shoulders and hammies. His own legs burned with the stretch. But Kip would keep holding on. He would dip Gordon down, then pull him up, over and over, letting his skin become something vibrant and new and unexpected each time.

## That Is How I Want To Remember It

She had been driving the '64 Corvette convertible. I occupied the other seat. The top was down. 287 rumbled under the wheels. I reclined my head, closed my eyes, and let the light through the cypress trees play shadows over me. Fuel thickened the air that rushed, with a whistle, over her secured hair. I rocked my head, spread my arms, stretched my legs, and felt the road give its uneven massage.

That is how I want to remember it. That is how I want the now to be. In the now, I sit at the window in this stuffy room. I watch Mrs. Holloway push her husband about the stone path. Once they complete a lap, they begin another. One hunched figure hunches over another. The wheelchair juts forward with each of Mrs. Holloway's steps. They both frown, faces contorted by the gravity of age.

My own hands have suffered. The skin had grown thin and the bones had grown large without me noticing. My hands shake. The knuckles stand out. It takes a moment after commanding my fingers to close for them to curl like the withering of autumn leaves. When my hands close, they expand on their own. I stare at my hands and repeat the process. Without my notice, the air thickened.

Outside, an orderly, with the white shirt tight around his shoulders and stomach, escorts Mrs. Holloway to the building. He steers her by the elbow, and she steers her husband. The orderly holds the door for the other two. The door stays open a few seconds after the orderly lets go and enters. The glass looks dark and thick. When the sun hits it, the glass just looks thick. The path lies bare. The garden in the middle stirs a bit with either a breeze or bees. The world around the rim of the garden blurs.

They had been people, once. Mr. and Mrs. Holloway had owned a house in the suburbs. They had told me once how they had raised a family and watched that family spread. They had told me once how they

used to take road trips to visit their children. They had seen the St. Louis Arch, had ridden the elevator to the Chrysler Building's observation deck, and had swerved down Lombard Street. The last time we spoke, they had told me the car accident had been the excuse for the children—too far apart, with children of their own—to move their parents into a home. Mr. Holloway's hip aches.

I sigh and flex my fingers. Once again, they open on their own. I rest in the chair. I remember how the car had speed. I feel the heat in my joints, in the too-much space between each and every bone. When she had been driving and I sat in the passenger seat, I felt the heat on my skin. I didn't have to think about it. I didn't have to try. Things just happened naturally. I didn't have to think about the shadows creating a slideshow of all the different patterns sunlight could make. The world happened and I was part of it. At some point, I opened my eyes and watched the diamond sparkle in the canopy.

Someone knocks on my door. I stir as best I can: straighten my back and lay my arms on the armrests. The knock comes again. I tell the person to enter. The door opens and Nurse Lana sticks her head through the crack. She looks at me and smiles before pushing her shoulder inside.

"And how are we today?" she says as she adjusts the stethoscope around her neck. Her scrubs are pink and looks a couple sizes too large. She stands at the door. "Just here for your quick checkup."

I nod and signal. She comes closer. She bends over, hands on her knees, just out of arm's reach. She looks my in the eyes and smiles the smile young people give their elders, like they need easing into the current flow of time. She stood upright and took my wrist. I let her turn my hand, exposing the purple creek underneath the skin.

"Just need to check your pulse and blood pressure." Her two fingers pressed against my tendons. As my heart pumped, she focused on her wrist watch. Her lips moved

with each beat she counted. After half a minute, she releases my hand. It fell, palm still up, on the armrest. The arm doesn't stir when she moves up the bicep, less than there once was, and rolled the sleeve. She produces a blood pressure cuff, which she wraps around the weak muscle. Adjusting the strap, she turns her profile to me, and I remember her profile from all those years ago, when I had watched the light through the cypress leaves then raised my head. She had a serious expression. Her brow and lips were flat. Her eyes watched the road.

Her hands held the steering wheel with the lightest of touches. A dip in the road could break the grip. I could reach over and break the grip. One of my arms dropped down the back of the bench seat. The other hung across the door. I tapped, with different rhythms, on the door, but I couldn't hear it over the wind. I watched her and said her name but couldn't hear it over the wind. After a minute or two, my voice a mile away, she turned to me. Our eyes met for an instant before she returned her attention to the road. My head fell back, and I thought that this was how I wanted to remember the moment: she driving the convertible with me lounged in the passenger seat.

Velcro scratches. Nurse Lana removes the cuff. The sleeve slides. She folds the cuff and returns it to a back pocket. She, in profile, steps to the window. She holds her hands behind her back and taps a foot.

"Your heart rate and blood pressure are fine. We won't have to change your medication. Blood thinners are bad if your pressure's too low." She smiles the same smile, asks if I need anything, and leaves when I tell her I'm all right.

"Please," I say, stopping her halfway through the threshold. "Leave the door open."

She nods and leaves and the door stays open. She walks down the hall. I hear her knock on the next resident's door. When she was new, she was more talkative. She wanted to tell every resident—making

sure to remind us that we are residents—about her boyfriend, about their new apartment, and their new dog, a Maltese. She kept this up for a few weeks. When she stopped, I asked how her boyfriend was doing, and she said that he was just a big jerk. When she would've blushed, she grew pale. Mr. Holloway, when I asked in the rec room, had no more information. I breathe through my mouth. The nurse's perfume remains.

Across the hall, Eddy Waters has his door open. I saw his room, empty until he strolled into view, rolling his oxygen tank. He holds the mask to his lips and passes from view. I stare, or think I stare, at the beige carpet and the repeating floral wallpaper, shared by all the rooms. Cutting a rectangle out of the pattern, his window overlooked the front of the property. I can't see out the window, but I know what the front looks like. The grass stood short and square. Gray stones encircle mulch-rich gardens, in which aloe vera grew.

Eddy Waters steps in front of the window, with his back toward me. A clear plastic tube runs from the oxygen tank to the mask he holds to his mouth. His shoulders rise and fall. His back fills and empties. I don't know why he needs the oxygen. I know his name because, when the orderly directed me to my room, I read Eddy Waters' name off the plate by his room. I didn't see him that first day, or the second. I saw him for the first time when the door didn't close, and I caught a glimpse of Eddy Waters passing in front of his window. He stood with his tank, looking out the window. I didn't call to him.

Eddy Waters' shoulders rise and fall a few more times. He removes the mask, and the hand hangs by his side. His shoulders stay. He looks out the window at something. I don't remember when, but he and I headed down the hallway. We walked side by side for a few feet, sharing only the gurgling human sounds of respiration and digestion. Then he started in an established dialog, "They stop calling. The young people wonder why the

old fall for scams. They wonder why we will give all our money to a double talking salesman. It's because they stop calling."

I stopped and started to ask a question, but we were at our respective doors. Eddy Waters opened his, rolled his oxygen tank inside, and closed the door. I heard the tank's hard wheels glide through the soft carpet, like wind through a girl's hair. I stared at the door and the name plate beside the door. After I entered my room, I heard nothing but my feet, my throat clearing, and my fingers sticking to the walls.

Now, I watch Eddy Waters replace the mask. He breathes deep. I shut my eyes, lay my head back, and think I can hear the air squeeze into his lungs. I think about her profile. She had kept her eyes on the road, and I had kept mine on her, giving attention to the corner of her eye.

She had turned to me again and smiled again. The car had slowed. She pulled into the shoulder. Dirt flew for a second before the wheels ceased. She put the car in neutral and turned off the engine. She rose and sat on the back of the seat then transferred to the door. Her long shins, between black shoes and blue skirt, flashed as she spun outside the car. She skipped to the front and sat on the slick, red hood. She looked over her shoulder, signaling with a single motion of a pointed chin.

I spilled through the door. When I slammed the door, the sound rang and died. She leaned back on her hands. I rounded the front and sat beside her. My heels kicked against the tire. I kicked harder and my heel bounced higher. We looked ahead, at a fence that had once been a solid white. Paint chipped, revealing the natural brown of the wood. Planks and posts slanted and fallen askew. On the other side of the fence, I saw, but didn't know if she saw, barbed wire. Leaves rippled with a wind too high to feel. The shadows moved but didn't disappear. She lifted a hand. She ran her fingernails through her hair, halting when she reached the tie keeping the bun

in place. She pinched the tie, and I watched her, and I knew what she would do next.

I hear hard wheels through soft carpet. I work my jaw and swallow excess saliva. The wheels stop next to my elbow.

"Didn't wake you," says Eddy Waters in the only voice I have heard him speak, "did I?"

I open my eyes and see him tower over me. He leans so that his face appears larger. He breathes with the oxygen mask then straightens. His back pops into place. He turns to the window, eyes half-lidded. I fix my posture and look out the window with him.

"Your view is much better than mine," he says. "I've got part of the parking lot creeping into my view." He takes time to breathe. "Sorry if I woke you up. You did look peaceful."

"No. It's okay. I wasn't asleep, just thinking."

"Better than the alternative." Eddy Waters breathes through the mask, deep, holding the air in his lungs like he's about to take a plunge. He then hangs the mask from the oxygen tank's handle. "Every time I look out the window, I think about the outside. I like to imagine all that I would do. But, when I'm out there, all I can think about is coming back here. Out there my children escort me everywhere. They command their children to spend time with me. In my little room, I get to relax. I don't have to worry about anything except what is already out of my control."

I mumble disjointed sounds. I cough and clear my throat. He stands with his hands behind his back.

"What do you think about?" he says.

"Not much. I guess I don't think about anything in particular. Most of the time I just enjoy the view."

"It is a nice view." Eddy Waters retrieves the mask and grips the tank's handle. He rocks the cylinder onto the wheels. He pushes until he maneuvers from the window. I watch him walk through the open door, across the hallway, and into his room. He leaves his own door

open and stands before his window. I turn to mine, take in the garden trimmed into soft angles. When I turn around, Eddy Waters is gone.

I close my eyes, recline my head. After I had joined her on the hood of the car and she had loosened her hair, we sat in silence for a while. After staring at the fence, I observed her feet kick and bounce against the wheel. She stopped kicking and stretched. She raised her arms above her head, locking the elbows. She fell backward with a slight pop from the hood. Her arms spread and swam over the metal. I waited for her to remove the arm before falling myself.

The engine's heat still radiated through the metal. It burned the spot between my shoulder blades. I turned to her. She looked straight up, where the tree branches reached across the road but didn't touch. The sky was blue, the way skies should be in memories. Her hand found mine. She gripped and I gripped. We interlocked our fingers. Hers pressed into the soft web between my knuckles. I did the same to her.

My fingers hurt. I open my eyes and see my flexed fingers on the armrest. I relax the left hand then the right. I move the fingers and they work. They tremble but bend. I push against the chair, fail to rise, clench my jaw, and push again. I stand with a hunch. It takes me the distance to the door until I reach my full height. I look down both sides of the hallway. Both ends are empty, but I hear the squeak of a wheelchair. When I close the door, the sound disappears.

Eddy Waters' tank made lines in the carpet. I follow the tracks to the window and stand where he stood, where the nurse had kneeled. I undo the latches and raise the window. I stoop to breath in the heat-scented air.

I go to the beige, corded phone, another old creature, on the bedside table. I lift the receiver by an inch and leave it there. My hand trembles, which trembles the phone and cord. I inhale, focusing on the wallpaper.

The carnations stand atop another, in columns, in rows. My hand still shakes. With the phone against my ear, I hear the ringtone's one, unending note. My other hand rests on the buttons. The fingers spread and occupy five different numbers. I don't look to see which ones. I press. The phone beeps.

She and I had lain on the car's hood long enough for the heat to dissipate. At the same time, we turned to each other. I saw my younger self reflected on or below the surface of her brown eyes. She smiled, and I smiled. Fingers still locked, we pulled the other. My shirt and her dress stuck to the hood. The wind blew the top branches and let the sun blind me for the moment, and that is how I want to remember the moment.

Another press results in another beep. The ring tone stops. I return the phone then return to my chair. I ease my hip onto the cushion before pushing on the armrests until I'm situated. Outside, the sun went behind some clouds. Shadows are soft. Mrs. Holloway stands behind her husband's wheelchair, both in profile. He points a wrought finger to the sky. His lips move enough for a whisper. Mrs. Holloway nods her head twice. I could live in the past. I could relive the memories. Except, now, I don't remember her name.

## Deadly Sin

There was a miserly old man who lived in a brown shack with his delightful green-eyed wife and sturdy teenaged son. The shack was on the shore of a transparent lake at the edge of a stone quarry.

The man fished every day in the lake because he said he had no money to buy groceries. His son cleaned the fish, his wife cooked the fish, and the man ate the fish. He sucked on the carcass, slivering shreds between his teeth, then tossed the ribs and gristle to his family. The wife made soup with the gristle and chewed on the bones, but she and the boy grew weaker and weaker.

The wife and her son foraged in the meadow for herbs to eat. They sampled curly dock and sipped the milk out of dandelions, but it was hardly enough.

"I wish we had some bread," said the son, grimacing at the bitter pennycress leaves in his basket.

So, the wife casually approached her husband just before the son's 18th birthday.

"Can you sell some fish so I can buy flour?" she asked.

"We have enough to eat already. Don't be selfish."

At night the wind blew off the water and gusted through the brown shack. The father curled around the fire complaining of the heat. The mother and son huddled together in their corner, freezing to death.

"Can we buy a blanket?" asked the son.

"There is no money for food and less money for a blanket," the father told him.

The mother took her sweater off and wrapped it around the son's quaking shoulders.

One day, the old man returned to the shack with just one trout which he hid under his frizzled grey beard. He picked his teeth with an old tail bone.

"There's no more fish in the lake," he said.

The boy and his mother looked at the father and waited.

"I can no longer feed you," he explained.

The boy and his mother wandered the countryside until the mother tripped over a root and broke her hip.

"Go on without me," she pleaded.

"Momma, I could never do that." The son slammed his fist against the tree.

The son then carried her on his back, trudging up

hills, and sinking through valleys when at last they arrived at a communal farm in Pennsylvania.

The son asked the farmer, "Can I work for you?"

"Are you afraid of hard work?" the farmer asked.

"I'll do anything," the son said, cradling his mother in his sturdy arms.

The farmer jabbed his pitchfork toward the crippled mother.

"She can't stay."

The son met his mother's eyes and said, "I'll take care of it."

He plowed the ruddy fields with his bare hands in order to pay his mother's bills at a nearby rehab facility of some renown. He visited her often and watched her grow stronger each day. She was a saint in his eyes, and he was a blessing in hers.

"I wish I could do more for you," he said.

"We have enough," she reminded him.

When she got an infection, he baled the hay one strand of straw at a time—since the farm paid by the piece—so he could afford to buy her medicine. One day, she coughed, her lung ruptured, and she died. The son's heart cracked apart.

One year later, the old man walked around the lake and a helicopter-shaped seed from a maple tree fell with a tap on his worn foot. He kicked it, then crushed it flat. Its seed pod shattered open and stained the edge of the granite the color of moss. A hummingbird with green glassy eyes flew over to examine it.

"What do you want with me, hummingbird? I have nothing to share with you," the old man said.

"I don't need anything from you," she replied and flitted to a nearby tree.

Satisfied, the old man went about his business. He caught fish and ate them, then tossed the bones and gristle into a pile outside the front door of the brown shack. The hummingbird watched, her grey wings vibrating in the air. He waved her away from his ear.

One day, she spoke.

"Old man, tell me a story," she said, her voice a glistening stream.

"What story?"

"About your family."

"I have no family," he said.

"Do you have any secrets?" she whispered.

The old man swallowed and cleared a lump of phlegm from his throat. "I've been a little lonely."

She buzzed closer. He scratched a scab off his nose and rubbed his beard.

"That's not a secret."

He looked the humming up and down and shrugged. "I can tell you're harmless."

The old man opened his closet and showed her a pile of silver coins one-half mile high, covered with a silken blanket.

"Where did you get them?" she asked.

"I got them from a traveler many years ago," he said. "He asked me to hold them for him so he could swim in the quarry."

He let the coins trickle through his fingers, then neatly stacked them again and again. The hummingbird hovered just above his shoulder and whirred at the icy glitter.

"What a nice thing to borrow," she said.

"They're all mine now. I drowned him." The old man smiled.

"You did? Are you sure?" she asked. The hummingbird skimmed along his jaw.

"I'm sure," said the old man.

The hummingbird spoke as fast as her beak would allow.

"Why didn't you use them to buy food? Then you wouldn't have to fish so much."

"My wife and son would have used them all up. What fun would the coins be then?" he answered.

The hummingbird watched the sun dance off the silver.

The old man spent the days picking his teeth, writing a manifesto, and admiring his new friend. He gave up fishing and started to spend the coins, a little at a time. He ate lavish steak dinners made with Kobe beef and drank filthy dirty martinis, straight up, with no less than three olives. He bought loaves of fresh bread at the local bakery and dipped the slices in oil. The hummingbird watched him carefully.

"You'll run out," she warned.

"I couldn't if I tried," he replied. "there is more money here than I could ever use."

He laughed and let the coins trickle through his fingers again, then stacked them one by one as she watched. He found the hummingbird to be great

company—a good looker, agile, and a quiet hummer. She listened to him, she did not take his food, she could not lift his coins.

Meanwhile, the boy traveled through the countryside, trudging down hills, sinking in the valleys, to return to his father. He cried himself to sleep at night, clinging to his mother's sweater.

As he approached the cabin, he swallowed hard and knocked on the door.

"You," his father said.

He sobbed and told his father the sad news. He put his arms out.

The father stepped back and replied, "Good riddance."

The hummingbird, listening closely, stabbed the old man through his eye with her long, pointed beak and his brains leaked slowly out his ears.

The hummingbird smiled and led the generous and caring green-eyed boy to the treasure in the closet, nearly one-half mile high.

\* \* \*

## Shot Caller

Drive thru was non-stop for almost four hours. Finally, just after 3 p.m., the video monitors showed empty pavement, a greasy paper bag blowing around the parking lot. My headset went quiet. You could almost hear the wind whistling through.

"What's up, Macy." The store manager Julieta breezed in for her closing shift, hair damp, smelling of shampoo. She dumped her bag on the desk in the office and said hi to Dave the accountant, who was counting tills. "Can I get a large diet?" she called to me.

I was already pulling a 22-ounce diet Coke. I took it in and set the cup on the desk.

Plunging in a straw, she took a long sip. "Any chance you can cover a shift tomorrow?"

"Yeah, but it'll put me into OT." I needed the money but Tasty's had a strict no-overtime policy. My half-sister was letting me crash on her sofa, but I couldn't take much more of her or her whiny boyfriend. I nearly had enough saved up for first-last-deposit in a shared house.

Julieta sighed. "Shoot. So, we're short a closer. Dave, think we can hire sometime this century?"

"Maybe next month," Dave said. He snapped a rubber band around a stack of bills.

Drink in hand, Julieta walked past me out to the floor, pulled the shift clipboard from its spot beneath the salad cooler, looked toward the back where Darwin, the day manager, was running the grill area. "I hate this place sometimes," she said, abstractly.

I said, half-joking, "I could clock in as Hattie. She's out for at least six more weeks." Until hip surgery took her off the schedule, Hattie worked the six a.m. shift, pouring senior coffee refills and shooting the shit with the old guy regulars.

"Great idea, Mace," Dave called from the office. "Let's do wage fraud. It's the best."

"Who's doing wage fraud?" Darwin's voice crackled

over my headset.

"That crook Hattie," I intoned darkly.

Darwin glared at me from the kitchen. "You need something to do?" He took pride in keeping us all busy like good little capitalists.

"I could call shots," I offered. "Julieta said I'm allowed, if it's slow."

"Well, Julieta's not running the floor just yet, is she," he said.

Turning away, I shrugged. I'd forgotten how pissy he could be.

\*

When Julieta clocked on at four, she sent me to the kitchen to relieve Darwin. "Julieta said for me to call shots so you can take a break while it's dead," I told him.

"I don't like crew calling shots," he said.

Tempted as I was to be a smart ass, I just waited as he wrapped a burger and slid it into the warming bin. "Judy, your special order is up," he called, not looking at me. He threw out a chicken sandwich that had timed out and wrote it on the waste sheet. Handing me the sheet, he clicked his silver pen to retract the ink cartridge. "All yours."

"I need a pen so I can record waste," I said. Only managers' uniforms had pockets, so I never had a pen on me.

He kept clicking the pen. Open. Closed. Open. Closed. "Macy, if you're off tomorrow, you should come to church. We're having a special speaker." Now he looked at me. Darwin was a Seventh Day Adventist, and an ardent recruiter for the Lord.

"Wow, you really care about me," I said to make him squirm.

"I care about your soul."

"I don't believe in fairy tales," I said. "Pen?"

"Ask your friend Julieta," he said, sliding the pen into his shirt pocket.

I'd known it was a long shot. This was the engraved

silver pen he got at a training class at the Tasty Institute, in Ohio. I'd probably have had better luck asking for his car keys.

The grill crew and I spent the next half hour getting the kitchen ready for dinner rush: steaming grills and stocking up the little freezers and reach-in fridges.

Working fast food was never my goal, but when you need money, things like dignity and ethics slide down the priority list pretty quickly. I'd worked for Tasty's long enough to graduate from the truly shit jobs, like cleaning the lobby and working front counter. Some jobs were even fun, like doing truck, where you counted boxes of food as they rocketed down a metal ramp off the delivery truck. And drive thru, where you wore a headset and your orders took priority because no one wanted a line of cars backed up onto State Street.

The best job by far was shot caller. I liked giving food orders to the cooks and wrapping hot food and keeping the restaurant flowing. Julieta let crew people call shots when it was slow, but during rushes—holidays, or the night of big games--only managers were allowed. A rush meant aces in their places, and sometimes even bringing Dave onto the floor. The shot caller made sure we hit order time and sales goals because you'd better believe Tasty's—or in our case, Jan/Jay Holdings--kept a close eye on everything profit-related.

\*

The afternoon stayed dead, so I grabbed a broom and swept my way into the office. Dave was stacking clean tills in the safe. "You need anything?" I asked.

"A fast woman and a slow clock," he said, closing the safe. He was a big guy, Twinkie-shaped, wide and plushy and bald. "Is there any food about to time out? I'm starved."

I knew he'd already had his shift meal, but when the franchise owner is your brother, the rules are different. "Yeah, sure, anything in particular?" Always make them ask; it's one of my rules.

"If someone's tossing a rocky road shake, I wouldn't say no."

"I'll check." I leaned on my broom. "Just so you know, Darwin invited me to church."

Now he glanced at me. "And?"

"It was right after I talked to Julieta about more hours. Seems kind of illegal."

"Oh, for fuck's sake, he knows better," he said, angry.

"I'm kidding," I said. "It wasn't connected. I promise."

"It doesn't have to be," he said. "It just can't look like it is."

\*

At five, Julieta sent the closing manager back to take over. I clocked out and grabbed my jacket. Julieta followed me out to the lobby. "So, you'll close tomorrow?"

Huh. Slowly, I said, "And I clock in as—"

"Shh. Just do it." She fixed me with a look, her winged eyeliner so sharp it could have cut me.

\*

The timecard scam went great, except Hattie decided she wanted in. I took the first check over to her house to endorse. She sat on her sun porch, cozy in a chenille bathrobe, sipping tea from a mug that said, "When Mom Says No Ask Grandma."

"How's State Street?" she asked, eyeing the lemon poppyseed muffins I'd brought.

"Shitty. They haven't hired, so we're getting our asses kicked."

"Jan and Jay are such fucking tightwads," she said.

"That's kind of why I'm here," I said, and showed her the check.

At first, she was more than ready to scribble her signature, but then she hesitated. "So JanJay are dicking you out of overtime."

"It was my idea. I need the money. I need to get my own place."

"The system is broke! You work your ass off and can't

afford rent—”

“I don’t need the Socialist Workers of America speech. I need cash.”

She picked up a pill bottle from the TV tray at her elbow and rattled it. “Well, maybe we can do both.”

\*

“Hattie wants a raise?” Julieta was on break in the office, picking the breading from a piece of chicken. She was a vegetarian, but she loved the crunchy nugget breading.

“Yeah. So, it all evens out.” I glanced out to the floor, at Darwin standing near the front counter. Could he hear us? Hattie had explained that with a fifteen cent an hour raise, I’d make more than my current pay, and she’d get a slightly bigger cut. Was it worth all this effort? We made less than nine dollars an hour. But Hattie was adamant, and I wasn’t willing to give up my new fat paychecks. I had an appointment to see a room in a four-person house.

Julieta raised one perfectly threaded eyebrow.

“Alright. Just tell her not to fuck this up.”

Darwin came in carrying a cashed-out till. “Miss Lady, language!” he said. I wondered if maybe he had heard us.

Julieta tossed the denuded nuggets in the trash.

“Count that, and take your break,” she said to Darwin.

“Macy, you can call shots since it’s quiet.”

“I don’t like crew calling shots,” he said.

“She’s not running anything,” Julieta explained to him, waving me to the kitchen. “It just needs to look like someone’s in charge back there.”

\*

My half-sister squinted at me through a swirl of cigarette smoke when I told her I was moving out.

“Where did you get money?”

“Work,” I said.

“At Tasty’s? No way. Not on what they pay you.”

I was already stuffing clothes in my backpack. “They

pay better than when you worked there, I guess.”

She exhaled heavily. “Are you selling drugs? Honestly, Macy, if you’re drugging--”

“I’m not.”

“You still owe me for this week,” she said, turning away.

I slept that night in my car, wrapped in a sleeping bag, afraid if I stayed in the house, my sister might weasel the truth out of me, and I’d have yet one more person on my payroll.

\*

Darwin said, “You think you’re pretty hot doodoo, don’t you? Shot caller?”

Startled, I dropped the burger I was wrapping. Darwin seemed to appear from nowhere. The bun bounced around on the tiled floor.

He added quietly, “I know there’s funny stuff going on. Timecard scams. Giving out food. It all needs to stop.”

“You tell Dave no,” I said. Dave was a big boy. If he wanted to eat himself to death on free burgers and fries, who was I to stop him? No one ever scammed extra salads.

Someone up front yelled they needed a manager override, and Darwin went to go deal with it. I picked up the fallen bun. When I looked back up front, he was staring at me over the warming bin. Be sure your sins will find you out, he mouthed, into the headset.

Beans beans the magical fruit, I mouthed back, but I was rattled.

The next few days, I waited for Darwin to pull me aside and demand a cut of Hattie’s wages, for the police to roll up and start making arrests. None of this happened, and I worked a few more Hattie shifts, but once spring break was over, the store wasn’t as busy. To spread out payroll, the managers started sending crew to the new store at Taylor Plaza. I took a second job at a CVS so I could make rent at my new place.

A month after that, I clocked in at State Street and was told by Julieta, one perfect eyebrow twitching, that two Department of Labor inspectors were in the breakroom and wanted to interview me about a wage theft complaint filed by Ms. Harriet Beasman.

I went in, sat up straight, and assured the rat-eyed men in pressed slacks and tidy moustaches that I was a hard-working, know-nothing small potato.

"Did Mr. Davidson ever ask you to sign anything?"

When I looked blank, Moustache One added, "Dave. The accountant."

"Never," I said. As they scribbled in their fake leather portfolios, I added, "Nice pens."

"Have one," the one on the left said, nudging a box toward me. Inside were dozens of Darwin's pens, lined up like shiny silver missiles.

"Really?" I said.

"We order 'em by the case," the one on the right said, still scribbling.

I grabbed one, excited to whip it out the next time I worked with Darwin, but the next day, State Street was completely shut down so the audit could continue. Some employees got reassigned to Taylor Plaza, including me and Julieta, but not Darwin. He was almost completely written out of the schedule. So even though I lost money on the deal—there were hardly enough hours for any of us—the fact that he got screwed more than I did somehow made it feel alright.

It was a metaphor for life, I guessed. We all had our scams, and we were all getting screwed over by the jerks at the top. But as long as things looked okay and I sometimes got to call shots? Hell, sign me up for more.

-Elise Glassman

## Letter from Post-War London

Half a block from home, I spot my wife at the end of our driveway, hand on hip, watching my approach. I always walk home from work at this time and Mildred's always inside, coaching the children through chores and homework, or getting everything ready for me to cook dinner.

Is she upset? Have the children misbehaved?

Her left hand holds a powder blue piece of paper, the size of an index card, which she raises shoulder high when I draw near. Clutching the edges, the tip of each thumb points up while her fingers angle downward, firmly gripping the – summons? Eviction notice? What could it be?

I move closer. There's dampness around Mildred's eyes, yet her lips form a thin smile. Is that tension or eagerness in her shoulders?

My pace quickens. Dark blue shapes in the top right corner of whatever she's holding turn into a series of stamps, four on top with two pasted below. A rectangular patch of even darker blue is in the left-hand corner. After two more steps, I see a stylized bird above the words, "BY AIR MAIL." Who do we know overseas? Every friend we have lives within eight blocks of this street.

An arm's length away, the bold profile of King George VI becomes clear on each postage stamp. Imagine the British Monarch following me, Alfred Gregory, all the way to Canada, only to find me in a rented house along the north shore of a great lake in 1948.

"Who is it from?" Born a Yorkshire lad, the London postmark provides me no clues.

My wife flips the envelope and taps one long finger next to the sender's name, scrawled above the return address. "Lily Knowles."

Lily is my sister's name. It could be a coincidence but two bracketed words, "née Gregory," remove any doubt.

Life continues in real time – men laugh as they wash

engines at the firehall down the road, Mildred's hair waves in the breeze – while I drift back to 1916 and my earliest memory.

“Did you ride your horse home from the war, Daddy?” My giddy sister's eyes radiate joy.

I'm four and we're in the front room of our tiny, stone home on Ladysmith Avenue in Sheffield, England. Besides my baby brother, Percy, there are two Lilys in the room (mother and daughter) and two Alfreds (me and my father). He's home for the first time in ages.

Behind him, sunlight streams through the window and open door. Backlit, he's a silhouette until Mum switches on the overhead light. The look of him there, the sheer look – a humble fitter's laborer transformed into a gleaming cavalry sergeant of the Great War, his shabby factory clothes replaced by a crested officer's cap, brass-buttoned jacket, bandolier, trousers, putties and leather ankle boots. Spurs shine above his heels.

Spurs!

On my hands and knees, I reach for the tiny, rotating, spiked disc protruding from a silver wishbone of metal above each heel. I spin one rowel, then the other, then both at once. Father watches and laughs.

“Sorry, darling Lil,” he answers my sister, “I left my horse in Belgium.”

We're both disappointed. Lily stamps her foot but hugs him anyway because having Daddy home from war is all that matters.

But he isn't home to stay, he's on leave. A brief leave. We're sent to bed early and he's gone by morning. After three months, Mum announces we have a brother or sister on the way. She later gives birth to a healthy boy but dies during delivery. My sister names him Sydney.

We never return to Ladysmith Avenue. An uncle claims us from the hospital on Union Road but he and his wife can't raise seven cousins at once, not in such a tiny home – two rooms upstairs and two down, with an outhouse in back.

My sister assures me they'll find our father in Belgium but he never comes. Just before Christmas, 1917, we're living in the Sheffield orphanage when we learn of his death weeks earlier, during the Battle of Cambrai.

"At least we have each other." My sister embraces the positive but four abandoned siblings stand no chance together. We're separated to increase the likelihood of adoption but are doomed to grow up alone and unwanted.

A final memory from the United Kingdom surfaces. I can't remember which city. Manchester, or maybe Leeds, Barnsley or Huddersfield. I'm in a damp, drafty room, empty except for a desk and chair. A fat, uncomfortable man has been given use of the room to speak with me. I glimpse his white collar but he's cloaked in darkness. A heavy overcoat reaches his knees. His trousers, tie, shoes, bowler hat, hair and mustache, even the frames of his thick-rimmed glasses, are black as night.

He removes his hat and offers me a choice. "Mother England is happy to raise you but Canada needs you more. They have lovely foster families whose goal is to turn little boys and girls into good, strong citizens of the Empire."

I have one question. "What did my sister choose?"

The man lowers his head. "I'm afraid I've no idea. I have no information about your sister. No one does. Time to be a man and make your own choice."

Shivering in short pants, a blue tie and old, scratchy woolen vest, I have a runny nose and need a hot bath. The stranger unfolds a pamphlet and my stomach rumbles as he points to a photo of a smiling family enjoying a roast turkey dinner. All I want is to reunite the remaining shards of my family. I imagine Lily, then Percy and Sydney when they're a little older, looking at this same picture, with its promise of hope and warmth.

Guessing they'll do the same, I choose Canada.

Nine years old in 1921, I sail from Liverpool and cross the Atlantic – but never find my siblings. I perform child

labor in a series of foster homes and am shuffled from town to town, until I settle in Port Colborne.

Another global war rages and fades, shattering countless more lives. Twenty-seven years pass before my long-lost sister's name and a London address appear on a powder blue envelope. It's the first shred of proof that I made the wrong choice.

But then I see Mildred, the Canadian woman I met on the Clarence Street Bridge in 1932. Eyes glistening encouragement, auburn hair tucked behind one ear, she presses the blue envelope into my hands. Then we embrace and I think of our children, and our dreams for the future. I thank her for turning my mistake into a beautiful life.

-Dave Gregory

## Before

Before the rubble showed the building for what it had been, we left the windows open like invitations to the butterflies and birds and light wind. Before the harshness came a string of sweet soft words that lasted decades to the point that we knew no better than to expect them. Before the lampshade left the head and was placed out for bulk trash pickup, the light had been soft, romantic, and miraculous. Before the white elephant of a neighbor arrived at the gate, we were a happy family, large enough to feel protected. Before the exclamation points all died, we listened to the lilt of conversation flow across the lawns as manicured as sculpted snow. Before the chill arrived, we held the comfort of our skin and met each night with comfort, and as we dreamed we knew eternity as we imagined it would last.

-Sheila Murphy

## Cliff Notes

Francis stood at the base of the peak and sucked in deep breaths. Dark clouds scraped the top of the mountain. A stiff wind blew from the northwest. But he felt determined. The two-mile trek to the top would get his heart pounding, lungs burning. Just what the doctor ordered. I should have done this years ago.

He had the mountain to himself: the only other vehicle in the parking lot, a pickup with a gun rack and a "Drain the Swamp" bumper sticker. Francis smiled, shook his head then moved up the trail at a cautious pace. The new knapsack stuffed with his lunch and emergency supplies rode securely on his back, felt integral to his bending and twisting frame.

Gradually, the city that filled the valley below became more of a texture than a collection of individual buildings. The trail snaked across a steep chaparral-covered slope. Francis stared westward at the Pacific's blue line, at the advance of a storm front with wisps of virga extending from its bottom edge. Better get moving before the heavens open up.

As he neared the summit, a cold January rain enveloped the mountain. Moving quickly, he donned his hooded yellow poncho, snapped the sides shut, and huddled beneath a rock outcropping. The valley below disappeared. Maybe I should go back. But I'm so close and these clouds could clear quickly.

The storm hammered the mountain, big drops that sounded like gunshots against his poncho. Tiny hailstones covered the trail but quickly turned to water. The clay trace glistened in the dulled sunlight, looked slick as ice. Francis tucked his chin to his chest and closed his eyes, thoughts drifting back to the stack of field folders containing data that needed to be entered into the university's mainframe, organized, then transmitted to various research managers. Maybe I should have just worked today, caught up. I could be drinking hot cocoa

right now.

The rain stopped and the clouds broke apart. Sunlight illuminated the washed-clean city. Mountainside shrubs sparkled with diamonds. Francis put on sunglasses and stood. Moving carefully along the slippery path, he pressed onward. At one point he tripped and barely saved himself from tumbling downslope. Heart thundering, he paused to let his body calm. Rounding the final turn of the switchback trail, the peak's stone summit beckoned. He surged forward, climbed the final stretch of trail and stood on a boxcar-sized boulder. The ascent had taken an hour and a half.

The wind picked up. Shivering, he descended the near-vertical north face to a generous ledge where a granitic spine gave some protection from wind and rain. From his perch, Francis gazed across the valley to the university and the patch of red-tile roofs where he worked. Can almost see Aaron and Celia in their cubicles sucking in that stale air. Have to be nuts to stay inside on a day like this. Or maybe they're the sane ones. Hard to tell these days.

He unpacked his lunch: a fresh croissant stuffed with curried chicken salad and a massive chocolate-chip cookie. He ate slowly, savoring each bite while enjoying the unfolding panorama of cloud shadows that crisscrossed the valley floor. Rain showers dusted the screen of his iPhone as he took multiple shots of the storm's passing. He emailed one to Celia at work just before he got a "low battery" alarm and his cell died. At least they'll know where I am. Eat your hearts out, nerds!

Francis unpacked a lone bottle of Belgium beer, leaned back against the mountain, and sipped. Every few minutes a rainsquall made him duck for cover, the poncho well worth thrice its price.

The afternoon sun finally prevailed and the wind died. A grunting noise came from nearby and downslope, sounding like a wild Javelina. Francis leaned forward and studied the terrain below. A stone outcrop blocked his

view of the mountain's lower slopes. The sound repeated.

"Anybody down there?" Francis yelled.

The sound stopped. "Hell yes," a man answered.

"Where are you? I can't see you."

"I'm right below a big chunk of rock."

"Can you stick your arm out and wave? Maybe I can spot you."

From below a hand appeared waving a baseball cap with a Confederate flag sewn onto its front panel. Francis groaned to himself. Just my luck. Probably the redneck that owns the pickup parked at the trailhead.

"I see you. I see you. How the heck did you get down there?"

"I flew. What do you think?"

"Are you okay?"

"I fell the last fifteen feet. Think I busted my leg below the knee."

"Are you bleeding?"

"No, but my leg's all swoll up, so it might be leaking inside."

"How long have you been stuck there?"

"About an hour or so. I probably saw you on the trail coming up. You the one wearing that geeky poncho?"

Great. Here's a guy with a broken leg making fun of my rain gear. "Yeah, that's me. Are you wet? Do you have a cell phone?"

"Left it in my other jacket. Didn't plan on being stuck here in the rain."

"Why did you climb down the north face anyway?"

"Saw the storm coming and tried to get down quick. It's steep but a lot shorter than the trail."

"Yes, falling off a cliff will get you down quicker too."

"Hey, dude. Don't get smart with me."

"Sorry."

"You're sorry all right. You probably drive a Prius."

Francis shook his head and smiled to himself. Am I that predictable? Maybe I should just paint myself blue to make my politics clear.

“So have you tried putting weight on your leg?” Francis asked.

“Not gonna work. I think the bone’s about to come through the skin.”

An awkward silence set in. Francis rejected the idea of trying to reach the guy. Besides what could he do if he succeeded? And two people falling wouldn’t solve anything.

“Hey, look,” Francis called, “the only thing I can do is to go for help.”

“Yeah. You sure you’re gonna do it? You sound like one of them elitist dudes from the College.”

“And you sound like one of those far right guys that likes to bash heads.”

The guy snickered. “Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“So why are you up here anyway?” Francis asked.

“None of your—”

A loud shriek came from beyond the rocks, then silence. Francis held his breath and listened. Nothing. He finally called. “Hey, are you still there?”

“Yeah, barely. I’m sitting on a ledge maybe two inches wide. The rain’s made it slick . . . I’m slipping.”

“Hang on.” Francis tore into his knapsack and withdrew the new spool of paracord he’d bought online. “Hey . . . I’m going to throw down the end of a line. Tie it around yourself.”

Francis wrapped one end of the cord around his wrist and heaved with the other hand. The pink cord uncoiled in the air and dropped over the edge of the rocks that hid the stranded hiker.

“Can you get to the cord?” Francis called.

“Yeah, I got it. What kind of pussy buys pink cord?”

“The pussy that’s gonna save your life.”

“Yeah, yeah. Just throw down the other end.”

“Why? I can tie you off from up here.”

“I know what I’m doing. I trust myself more than you.”

Francis shook his head in disbelief. “You’ve got to

trust me at some point.”

“Why should I?”

“I’m the one who’s going for help . . . or not.”

After a long pause, “Just throw down the line. I’ve got a good place to tie it off.”

Francis let go of his end of the line and watched it drop then being reeled in by the man. More grunting and groaning came from downslope.

“How’s it going?” Francis asked.

“I’m tied off good. Now get outta here and get help. I’m shaking like a fuckin’ leaf and my leg’s killing me.”

“All right, I’m going, I’m going. It’ll take me awhile to get down. Try not to move.”

“Quit tellin’ me what to do. Just GO!”

Francis hurriedly zipped up his knapsack and regained the summit. He descended the trail, slipping on the slick clay and falling several times. What the hell are you doing? Killing yourself won’t help anybody. Rainsqualls continued to pound the mountain. Notes to self: check weather conditions before setting out on hike. Also, check cell phone charge. In the background, faint sounds of the city returned: semi-trucks blasting along the Interstate; multiple sirens near the hospital; and the afternoon AMTRAK leaving the station.

In about an hour he reached his car and climbed inside, chest heaving. Pulling out of the parking lot, he stopped. To the right lay the way home, to a welcoming wife and the first glass of tart Zinfandel. To the left lay the route to the fire station and help for the untrusting right-winger. What are you waiting for, idiot? There are some things more important than blue and red.

Francis drove straight to the firehouse, pushed through the office doors and approached a public counter. A young man in uniform greeted him.

“How can I help you, sir?”

“There’s a man stuck on the north side of the mountain. He’s got a broken leg and needs—”

“Just a moment, sir. I’ll have my supervisor talk with

you." The fireman spun and disappeared into an office, but immediately returned with a solemn-looking woman.

"Hey, this is an emergency," Francis complained.

"We understand, sir," the woman said. "Was the stranded hiker a relative of yours?"

Francis immediately noticed her use of the past tense. "No, no. I don't know the guy. I was up on the mountain and tried to help him. He's got a broken leg and got stuck—"

"I'm sorry to inform you that the man didn't make it. He fell to his death. A downslope homeowner saw it happen."

"But . . . but I gave him my paracord to keep him from falling. He said he tied himself off."

"Yes, the pink cord. It's what the witness noticed."

"But what happened? That stuff's supposed to support 500 pounds."

"Well, it looks like he tied the cord around the base of a thick shrub. But the ground was sodden and he left too much slack in the line. When he fell, it ripped the shrub clean off the mountainside and down he went."

"But . . . but he said he had a good . . ."

"I'm sorry, sir. We'd appreciate it if you would come in and write down what happened. Your notes will be important in completing our investigation."

"Yes, yes, of course."

Francis sat in a windowless room and stared at the laptop's screen before him. He tried writing but couldn't shake the image of a man tumbling end-over-end down the mountain's north face, a pink cord tied to a shrub trailing him. He tried to think about the beautiful views of the valley from up top, about the drama of the oncoming storm, about sunlit shrubs crusted in diamonds. But he knew that he might never trust himself to climb a mountain again.

-Terry Sanville

# NONFICTION

## Dear Younger Me

### The Ballet Episode

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

-Matthew 19:14

My pink leotard was smooth and soft, as if a second skin; the tutu, a dancing cloud around my middle. Twirl, plie, leap, laugh. A brick wall to my back and a mirror in front of me. I danced, carefree, in my hand-me-down tan ballet flats. Then something caught my attention. I studied my reflection and the reflections of my fellow five-year old ballerinas. I saw girls in perfect pink, hair perfectly arranged, bodies perfectly thin. I became aware of my body in a way I never have before. Looking down over my legs, I started to feel a funny flicker of shame. I need to cover my legs. Too fat. Thus, the word "fat" was inaugurated into my vocabulary.

...

Oh five-year-old me, how I long to scoop you into my arms and whisper in your young ear that you are healthy and beautiful and strong, and to never believe the lie that your legs or your stomach or your hair or your shoulders or anything else about your body degrade your worth.

### The Leggings

She is clothed with strength and dignity...

-Proverbs 31:25

Growing up, leggings were a banned item in my family's household. It was a subject of much contention. Why can't I just wear leggings like all my friends? This is so unfair. You guys don't know anything about fashion. Good grief, why does this have to be such a big deal? But still, the answer was no. It calls too much attention to your backside. We compromised with yoga pants. It'll do.

"Wow, your butt looks so good in those pants!" came the words of an encouraging friend. I was on top of the

world.

“Thanks! Do you think [cute boy] noticed?”

...

Dear seventh grade me, so that is why you wanted to wear leggings? Maybe you should have just listened to your mom.

### The Baffling Confession

Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

-Proverbs 31:30

“Ugh, sometimes I just hate being so pretty. Guys just have no respect for me.” Um, excuse me, what? Okay, the last thing I want to hear is how your life is so hard because you are too beautiful. Beauty is pain? I’ll take some of that pain, thank you very much. I couldn’t fathom a life burdened by my own surpassing beauty. Jealousy raged in me. I slowly felt the cold hand of bitterness grip my heart. Must be rough, getting all that attention and having guys at your beck and call.

...

What you don’t know, Younger Me, is that her life didn’t exactly turn out to be a blissful fairy tale. Her life is filled with as many ups and downs as yours. May this be a lesson that beauty isn’t only where it’s at.

### The Face Dilemma

Man looks on the outward appearance,  
but the Lord looks at the heart.

-1 Samuel 16:7

15 years old. I found myself looking into the mirror. Tears pooling down my face—again. Red scaly patches circled my nose, wrapped around my mouth, and spread like wildfire up to my eyes. This mystery rash. It felt like an enemy invader had taken up permanent residency on my face. It was itchy. And ugly. Could there be a pleasant face underneath this mess? Big glasses and makeup became my salvation.

...

Don't worry, 15-year-old me, it will go away. It will disappear, and believe it or not, you will almost forget this monstrous ordeal. Almost.

The Pink Aéropostale Shirt  
For the Lord will be your confidence...  
-Proverbs 3:26

Sitting in a fifth-grade history lesson about a war that a lot of people died in a long time ago, I started to feel uncomfortable. My lunch was sitting heavily in my stomach, which seemed to protrude out of its own volition. Try as I might to suck my tummy in under my skintight pink Aeropostale graphic tee, it stubbornly refused. I sat there; arms folded over my distended middle, with those feelings of Pre-K ballet bubbling up in me. My stomach is fat, I thought as sadness and self-consciousness wracked my mind.

The Diet  
Taste and see that the Lord is good.  
-Psalm 34:8a

My childhood best friend decided to start a diet when we were in our mid-teens. Clearly the ideal body standard was the law. My skinnier-than-me friend needed to lose weight? Geeze, what did that say about me? Thus, at the age of sixteen and at a heathy weight for my height and build, I launched headfirst into the world of dieting. Ice cream and cookies? I'll stick to my cottage cheese and turkey, thank you very much. My confidence rose as I watched the weight fall. I was being healthy, right? Tied as I was to the scale and conscious of every calorie consumed? I soon felt shame and guilt as my constant companions when life went on and it became harder and harder to stick to the rules. The scale, which had gotten so low, slowly started to tick back up, pound for pound replacing what I had lost.

...

Younger Me, if only you had been encouraged to fuel

your body with foods that are nourishing and life giving, not restricting and depriving of proper nutrients. Maybe it would have saved you so much confusion, shame, and fear around food.

### The Letter

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.  
-Psalm 139:14

Dear Younger Me,

You interact daily with a world that screams the preeminence of beauty. You have been engrained with the message that beautiful and sexy girls who fit a highly specific standard of beauty are worth more. You have internalized the lie that if only I could lose the pounds, perfect my hair, do my make-up just right—only then would you be valuable. I'm here to call B.S. Guess what? The world does place a disproportionate value on beauty. But you no longer have to comply to the same rules. You don't have to accept the same assumptions and paradigms. You can change this narrative for yourself and others. Do you have feet that carry you? Legs that allow you to run and move and dance? Arms to embrace and comfort? Shoulders that are strong and able? A mind that thinks and grows and learns? Eyes to witness sunsets and mountains and oceans? Ears to enjoy music and listen to the words of a loved one? If you try to measure up to the world's standards, you will never be enough. You just won't. It is like chasing a moving target—always just out of reach. But if you surrender your desires to hit perfection and just live, you will find yourself breathing easier, at peace after all the chaos. Can you image what would happen if instead of being so consumed with yourself and your appearance, you spent that energy loving those around you? There is so much beauty around you. Don't become distracted by the beauty you think you lack.

-Savannah Baker

## Musings Upon the Harvest Moon

The harvest moon is not the largest, or a so-called "super moon," but to marijuana farmers it is the most noticeable and most significant of all the 12 or 13 moons experienced in the yearly lunar rotation. The harvest moon reminds me that perhaps between 17 to 23 percent of my life is left if I am fortunate indeed. I don't sleep very well on those evenings when the harvest moon shines bright in the October night sky because I know that there is less time lying ahead than the time that is now behind me.

I toss and turn at night haunted by the ghosts of my past and the ugliness of the things I have seen. I've seen single mothers unable to break the bonds of the invisible umbilical cord taken advantage of by their parasitic sons who never really become men, but rather, dark vacuums of need. I've seen caring families unable to give up on hopeless drug addicts ripped apart and ultimately destroyed by them. I've seen the mistreated and neglected children of said drug addicts grow up to repeat that dysfunctional cycle. The sins of the fathers and mothers are most certainly visited upon the sons and daughters; and visited upon the supposed innocents who were unwittingly codependent or otherwise complicit in their destructive actions. A lowering tide strands all boats. I've seen myself naïve and bewildered that these things could happen before my disbelieving eyes, unable to grasp that such bad things could happen in my sphere which is a mystery indeed because bad things were happening all the time.

I am mystified by my inability to perform the basic psychological triage necessary to see who is worthy of my friendship, and more importantly, my trust and who is not. In my sleepless nights I repeatedly ask myself: why do I confide in those my better instincts reveal I should dislike? Why do I unveil my deepest secrets to those who will ultimately betray me? Why do I reach out my hands to help to those who denigrate even the noblest

and most generous of my efforts? Why do I cast my pearls at swine? The answer, as it most frequently does, lies in the first five years of my life, none of which I can actually remember. I am entirely perplexed that a man entering his seventh decade of life cannot completely rise above the events that occurred before passing from his first decade of life; but I have no doubt that these events have shaped, corrupted, damaged, and occasionally defeated me. And so I determine to make the first five years of the lives of the children under my care as magical and comforting as I possibly can, and it frustrates me when I fail at those efforts. I would like to be the loving and guiding hand that sees them into adulthood, and I live in mortal fear that I will die before accomplishing that goal.

Those people that I have tried and failed to help have no real skin in the game. They are as quirky and as flawed as the most despicable of characters in a Flannery O'Connor story. They are conniving and manipulative and the only thing that they truly want is to take as much as they can convince their marks to give them while doing as little as humanly possible to acquire such things. They feign friendship and they seem to have a sixth sense concerning all the others in my life that they perceive to be taking advantage of me. Sowing discord is their stock in trade, and they are well aware that the fastest way to gain control over a person is to separate them from their friends. Their primary goal is to convince you to take them in, and they know from past experiences that if you say they can come, then you can't tell them to leave. Just try calling the police to assist you in trying to extricate these leeches from your life, and they will either laugh in your face and/or admonish you for being such a rube as to ever get involved with them in the first place. They will tell you not to expect them to solve your problems – that's quite simply not their job.

So I determine to ban the unworthy from my life no matter how lonely that may cause me to become. If I

can't separate the wheat from the chaff, I won't winnow the wheat at all. I will determine to concentrate on those things I like and to let the grandchildren share in those things with me because I never want them to see me sloppy and mean, but rather, as kind and generous to the deserving, and at ages 11 and 5, they are most certainly deserving.

I like popup Christmas cards and the joy and humility of the multicolored twinkling lights. All those strictly white light setups are for the rich, for unimaginative interior decorators, for adults who can't imagine what it is like to be a wide-eyed child anymore. I like being a sentimental old fool because those emotions are the spice of my life. I like seeing the grandchildren thrive. I like being able to set an example while I still have the strength to do so. Most of all, I like them to see me at work and to know what it is to be tired from the best of efforts. I like when I'm the good kind of tired; the kind of tired that comes with a sense of accomplishment such as turning and enriching the soil in spring. There's a dull ache to the muscles that is oddly warm and comforting. I like it when they see me that way. And, I most definitely like them to see me still grasping onto my dignity.

There's something to be said for dignity. Even as I see the end approaching, I'm trying to live with what dignity I can. Even as I see the inescapable humiliation of being incapable of taking care of myself, I'm trying to maintain a positive and decent self-image. I'm determined to wring as much heartfelt joy and laughter out of the tapestry of my life while I still can.

Admittedly, we are hanging on by our fingernails, and I have asked myself why don't we sell out and retreat to someplace less expensive? Why do we struggle with the monthly bills and live in mortal fear of any unforeseen expenses that would make our lives more difficult than they already are? In response to these questions I look to the fate of an old friend after he moved back into the house where he was born. He thought he would die

quickly, but he didn't die; he slowly rotted.

After the marijuana harvests that are portended by these harvest moons, I go to bed high every night and I listen to the music that I like. Who am I hurting, and what have I done to deserve the condemnation and judgment of others? I endeavor to enjoy life while I'm still alive. I sincerely believe that everyone has the right to enjoy life so long as they are not hurting anyone else in pursuit of that enjoyment. To live and let live, and to die with no regrets is the greatest of all gifts I can give to my fellow man, and the greatest of all blessings that could ever be bestowed upon me.

I go to the funerals of friends when I'm compelled to, but I don't go to graveyards much, and I will forgive all those who won't come to visit me when I am in the grave. Life is for the living, and death is not the celebration of a life, but rather the unmistakable end of it. The harvest moon is an omen that the end is coming, but thankfully, it is not here yet. I try not to dwell upon my impending death too much as I hope and pray that I may yet get a decade worth of harvest moons to continue to muse upon.

-John Christopher Krieg

## Looking Glass

The newspaper on my coffee table is black and white and covered in half-baked accounts of regional conflict, reports on actors implicated in a drug bust and athletes breaking Olympic records, pictures of missing people. The radio station I listen to on the drive to school is dotted with information about traffic congestion and asks callers how their day is going. Mirrors, too, tell the stories of others. Standing outside a room of mirrors, I hope to catch them whispering. My anticipation is doused in silence.

Masterpieces when in motion, mirrors are attuned to change. Without hesitation or judgement, they respond adeptly to the transient urges of whoever encounters them. I ache to steal some of their mimicking power, to mimic them in this way.

Google defines the verb 'reflect' as the action of 'throwing something back without absorbing it,' and as 'thinking deeply or carefully about something.' Confining mirrors to the former interpretation, we fail to recognize the magnitude of their understanding. We overlook the fact that they embody both surface and depth. We fall short of capturing the essence of a relationship between original and copy that transcends the physical. When a friend's girlfriend breaks up with him, the first thing—the only thing—he smashes is a mirror, in furious rejection of its earnest request to peer beyond his collected façade.

Though they constitute frames slimmer than those of the newest MacBook, mirrors keep hold of considerably more information. Intricately imbued with every fragment of knowledge there is to collect about yourself, they are tasked with imparting this insight in small doses. Making the process feel inadvertent, they falsely hand you ownership over each new realization and adorn you in empowerment's guise.

At sixteen I contemplate the frightening possibility that any one of the mirrors I've looked into may

have actually been two-way glass. I'm taught how to determine whether mirrors are, in fact, mirrors or tinted windows instead, by placing my fingernail against the reflective surface in question and checking for a gap between my nail and its reflection. Still, this test is subject to the mirror's size, the angle at which it's hanging, and the lighting in the room. Certainties desert me. A fundamental assumption is reduced to something fuzzy, uncertain, precarious. How can mirrors, designed to reveal truths, obscure them? How can they abandon the very function they claim to serve?

Epitomizing unpredictability, mirrors may adopt unanticipated forms, shapeshifting with ease so ontological that it renders them unrecognizable. My mother and I argue day and night. When I'm far from home and the homesickness that invades my stomach rises, it doesn't just spill out of my eyes, but hers too. I'm increasingly told we look alike; we are alike, perhaps more than I realize. The sea's wrinkled face reflects the expanse above it, exhibiting in its reflective motion the beauty of the shapeshifting clouds. The sky finds a self in each droplet's meticulous imitation of its surface. A disquieting feeling, but an intimate one.

I stare at my reflection in an austere, tall mirror with no frame. The woman across from me returns my gaze with a palpable intensity. She opens her mouth, yet words don't materialize. She refuses to act of her own volition, assuming shelter in the shadow of my movements. When I brush my knuckles against hers, the warmth of my hand pours gently into the smooth, frictionless surface, making distinction fade and ambiguity's residue reveal itself. I become unconcerned with recalling who's who. I begin to drift between two bodies, two identities. I start to wonder whether our separation is an exercise in futility—whether, in delineating ourselves as two separate entities, we are living our life through folded eyes.

-Anika Somaia

## Valentine Heart

It's been almost six years since you and I crowded into that tiny room at the hospital and waited. We waited and we hoped. And, eventually, our hopes grew desperate. We were there for an ultrasound; you were eleven weeks and counting. Two different technicians handled the transducer. They tipped it, turned it, slid it along and around your abdomen. The gel was warm, you joked, but the room was not, and in the hideous, low light, I stared at the grainy images that floated on the screen and tried to make sense of what I saw. You looked at the ceiling, then at me, then at the technicians. I think about what happened that day all the time.

\*\*\*

One of the technicians wiped your belly and handed us off to a nurse who took us down the hall, through a corridor lined with rolling file cabinets, and showed us to a tiny room crammed with a round table and a handful of chairs. You entered first and I followed. We sat at the table, and the nurse smiled faintly.

"The doctor will be in shortly," she said. Her voice hung just a shade above a whisper.

"He'll explain," she followed. Then, before either one of us could form questions, she turned and pulled the door closed behind her.

I looked at you and you stared at the table top. My heart beat against my Adam's apple, and I couldn't swallow right. All sorts of noises clattered off the tile floor out in the long hallway and rattled underneath the thick, closed door that separated us from everything else.

I reached up on top of, then across the table and grabbed your hand.

Your foot tapped the carpeted floor, so reckless and seemingly unhinged. I wasn't sure if it might break or break something.

I wanted to sweep us away, to take us anywhere but the very place we were.

\*\*\*

His name tag read Dr. Mich. G. Hart, but I don't remember him ever actually introducing himself. He just knocked lightly and walked in.

"Mr. Forsten?" he asked dully.

"No," I replied. "Darling. Um, Tyne." I cleared my throat. "Tyne Darling." I pointed to you. "She's Emma. Emma Forsten."

He squinted and nodded. Then, he just started talking as if we knew exactly what he was going to say, as if what he said had been scripted, then rehearsed and repeated over and over and over again.

His eyes were the absolute worst. I won't ever forget them. They barely met ours and when they did, they tore away immediately, as if we were the fire.

But we weren't the fire.

And, even though he wasn't old—probably younger than you or me—his eyes were wrapped in lines that crossed over and got tangled up in themselves. His voice slipped and slid, and you and I leaned into his words as if they threatened to push us off the edge of the Earth.

Both of us knew something was terribly wrong.

He never actually used the word miscarriage. Even there, in the hospital, no one, it seemed, dared to utter that awful, spoiled word.

"So what are you saying?" you asked, finally.

The words just kind of spilled out of your mouth. They weren't lazy or accidental, but they spilled out of your mouth like milk knocked from a glass onto a dark marble countertop.

That never would have happened under normal circumstances. You hardly ever spilled anything. You were too careful, too precise.

"Are you saying that there's no baby?" you shuddered. He nodded.

"What I'm saying," he sputtered, "is that there is no baby." He paused, and time slipped, moved sideways.

"These things, they happen," he added.

He said some other things about formation—things

that I just couldn't pay attention to.

Maybe you did, but I didn't.

"I—I—I—need to talk to someone else," you choked.

"You want to speak with someone else?" he replied.

"They will tell you the same." I squeezed your hand too tight.

"We just want to speak with someone else," I said.

"Can you get someone else—"

"The woman—" you poked, your voice sharp and dangerous. It could've stabbed right through the walls if you would've let it. "The one we talked to last time," you added. "Dr.—"

You worked through a curtain of tears to find her name, a name that ran ragged somewhere deep in your mind.

"Dr. Wyeth," I suddenly remembered. You nodded and tears dripped from the very tip of your nose. "Is she available?" I continued. "Can you get her?"

"I'm not sure," Dr. Mich. G. Hart replied. "It's irregular." He puzzled, his face all screwed up. "You want to speak with her?" he asked.

"Yes," I said. "We want to speak with Dr. Wyeth." And then, almost without pausing, I added, "We want to speak with her now."

"Well," he countered, "if you'll be patient and just let me just finish—" I cut him off.

"No."

My eyes dug into the shallows of his face. "We need to speak with Dr. Wyeth now." "She will just tell you—" "Please," I repeated. My voice leaked something other than exasperation. "Please. We want to speak with Dr. Wyeth." I paused. "Please."

\* \* \*

Tillie.

That would have been her name. She'd have been almost six-years-old by now.

Tillie.

That should've been her name. I'm still not sure why

it isn't.

\* \* \*

After it all happened, after you spilled what was left of her out on the bathroom floor, once, twice, then a third time, and after I cleaned it up, scrubbed the hexagonal grout lines until my callouses were gone just to be sure that there wasn't anything left, anything you'd have to see and be reminded of, we watched the Yankees. It was the 18th of September and the Blue Jays jumped out to an early three-run lead. It was nearly impossible for either one of us to care, but then the Yankees plated four in the top of the eighth inning and, like magic, erased a three-run deficit.

You fell asleep with your head in my lap, and I ran my fingers through the tangled strands of your shiny, blonde hair as you snored lightly and dreamed about things I can hardly even imagine. I cried, stifling my sobs for fear of disturbing you as Mariano gave up a ninth-inning, lead-off single to Adam Lind, followed immediately by a Colby Rasmus base hit. My eyes grew cloudy, and I could barely see Munenori Kawasaki's botched sacrifice attempt. Tears streaked my cheeks and neck and soaked the collar of my t-shirt as Rivera struck out J.P. Arencibia on three straight pitches to notch the final save of his 17-year Big League career.

I wondered, as I watched Rivera tip his cap and leave the field to a standing ovation, if anything would feel okay ever again. Then, as if pushed by some force both inside and outside of myself I wondered if anything ever had actually been okay. Maybe, I suddenly considered, that's why we told stories and watched movies, played games, wrote and read books, went to bars and got drunk and fought and fucked and fought some more. Maybe we did those things just so we could feel something, anything, other than the sense that nothing ever was or would be okay.

The TV caught my attention again and Mariano entered the frame, his hat pushed back on his head, a

towel lightly draped around his neck and shoulders. At the time, no one knew it was his last save.

The interviewer, a tall, blonde woman from the YES Network, hinted at it, though.

“Mo,” she said, “you’re inching closer and closer.”

Rivera smiled.

“And you know soon, it’ll be over.”

Mariano nodded and wiped his face and forehead with a corner of the towel.

“What will you do after this?” she asked. “I mean, now that such a glorious career—a surely Hall-of-Fame career—is coming to a close.”

And watching Mariano, I could’ve sworn that his smile suddenly disappeared, but then quick as lightning, it came back, which made me wonder if, in fact, it had actually disappeared in the first place.

“And how will you fill that space?” the reporter added. “We’re all wondering,” she smiled, “what will Mo do?”

And Mariano, being Mariano, simply said something about the Yankees’ playoff hopes, then added something else about staying focused during the remaining handful of games. He left the frame, and the TV cut to a commercial break. You were asleep, your head still in my lap, and I sat there and thought about what that reporter said to Mariano. I thought about his smile and whether he hadn’t answered her question on purpose.

I thought about how empty I felt, and how I couldn’t really imagine what it was you were feeling. I reached for the remote and clicked off the cable box, but the TV stayed on and became a perfect rectangle of alarmingly bright blue light that stained everything: the floor, the walls, your face, my arms, everything. I shut my eyes, the rectangle still somehow visible through my closed lids. I took a few deep breaths, my eyes still closed, breaths to match yours. The blue light pushed at my eyelids and tried, it seemed, to pry them open as if it wanted to fill all of my empty spaces, the ones in my head and heart and chest. I kept my eyes closed, my

breath slow and deep and still more or less in rhythm with yours. I didn't let that blue light in, didn't let it fill my empty spaces. I wanted to but to do so felt like some sort of betrayal. Still, the light pushed and it pushed. Finally, I fell asleep.

In the morning, when you woke, I asked if you were okay, and you nodded. I lied and said I was, too, and then wondered if it really was that easy.

You said you wanted to get out of the house, and so did I, so we slid on jackets and shoes, and went outside. We walked around the neighborhood, your hand tightly clasped in mine. We barely said anything at all. It was Thursday, and most everything was empty, deserted with men and women at work and kids at school. The park and the playground, the baseball diamond and the sidewalks sat idle begging to be used or maybe grateful for the break. The sun was out, and perhaps under other circumstances, it might've been beautiful. I looked at the light as it pushed through the turning tree leaves, leaves still mostly green but fading toward yellow or orange and red. I thought about how in a month or so, those leaves would fall and reveal bare branches, branches thick at first then thin and thinner still toward the ends. I thought about how much space there would be when all those leaves were gone. I thought about how much light would get through with no leaves in the way.

-Tommy Vollman

## At the Driving Range

There was a father and son hitting balls next to me. The son was young, maybe six years old. The father, I could tell, was a serious golfer and wanted to spend that time working on his game. The son spent a lot of time playing around with clubs and tees before he finally lined up in the box. "Hey dad, watch this," the son said as he readied his stance. The father directed his attention toward his son and watched. The son swung and sent the ball dribbling maybe twenty feet. After he finished his swing, he turned toward his father. He laughed and did a little celebratory dance. The son called for his father's attention before every swing. Each time, the father stopped what he was doing to watch his son—on more than one occasion he cut himself off mid-swing. After each swing, the son turned to see if his father was watching. He never once looked to see where the ball went.

-Riley Winchester

Fine Art

## Light of Life



-Abigail Bonnoto

# Baltimore Oriole



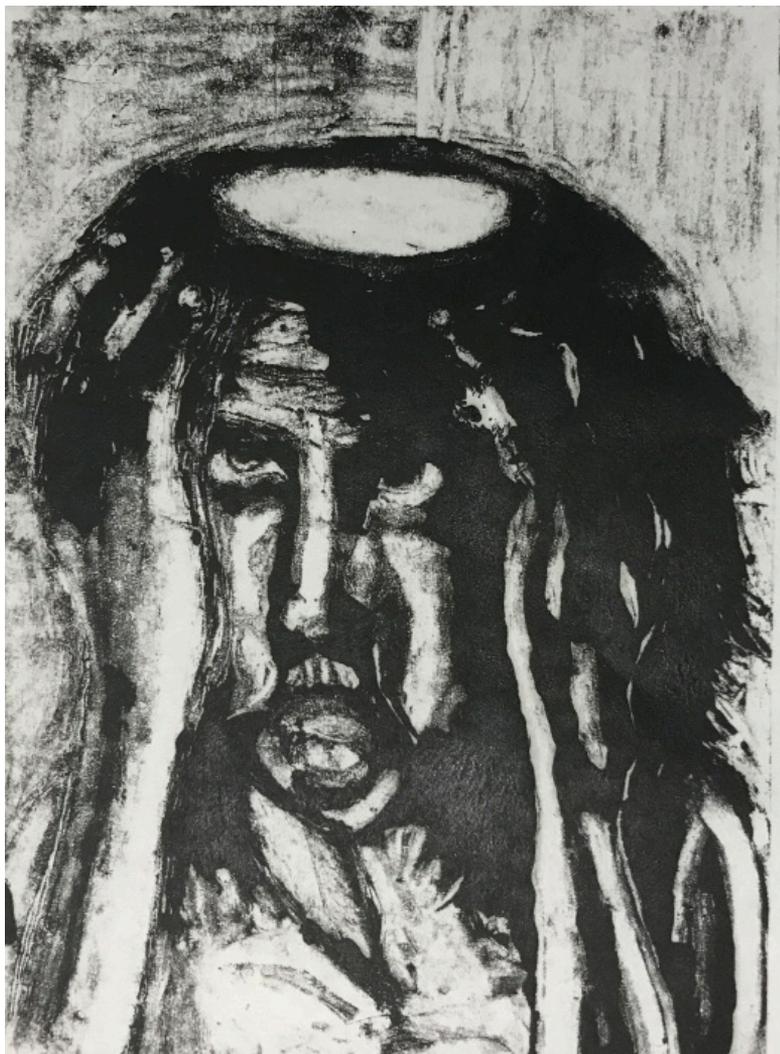
-Christine Craft

## Still Life with Tea, Donuts, and Flowers



-Christine Craft

## Where is My Mind?



-Christine Craft

## Colours of Prodigal Bodies



-Joshua Effiong

# Fall in Full Bloom



-Courtney Kissinger

## First of Fall in the U.P.



-Courtney Kissinger

## Peace Among Koi



-Abby Licht

# Quarantine



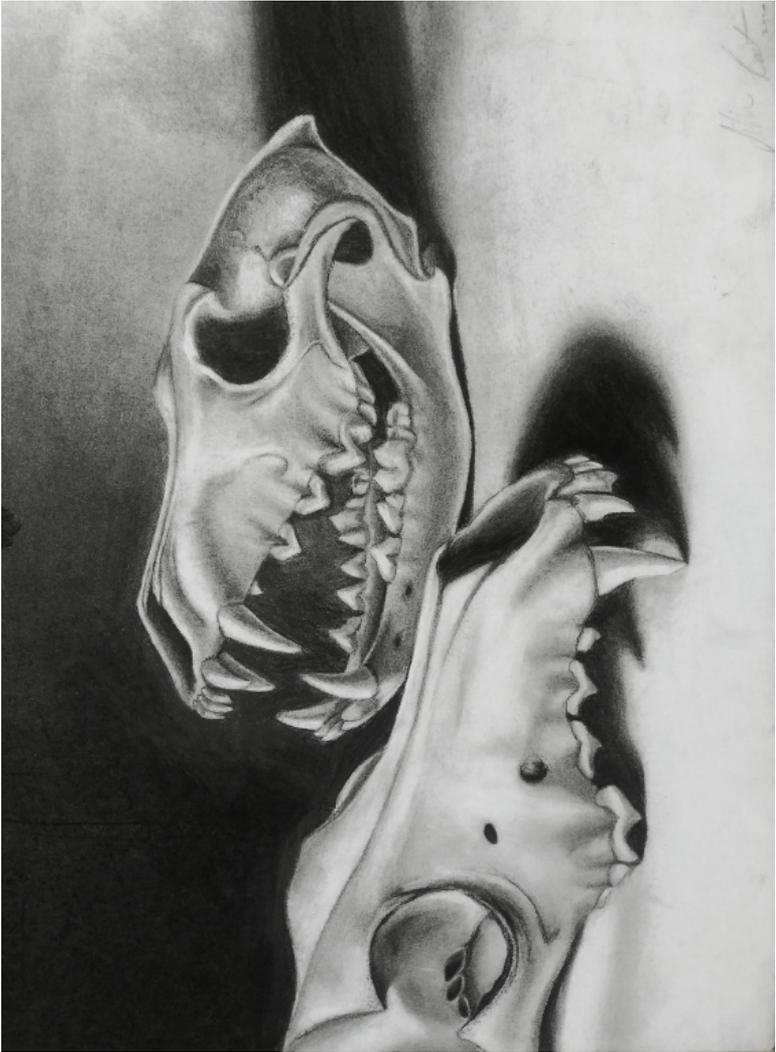
-Abby Licht

# Sunset



-Abby Licht

## Coyote Skulls



-Jill Post

# Gray Horse



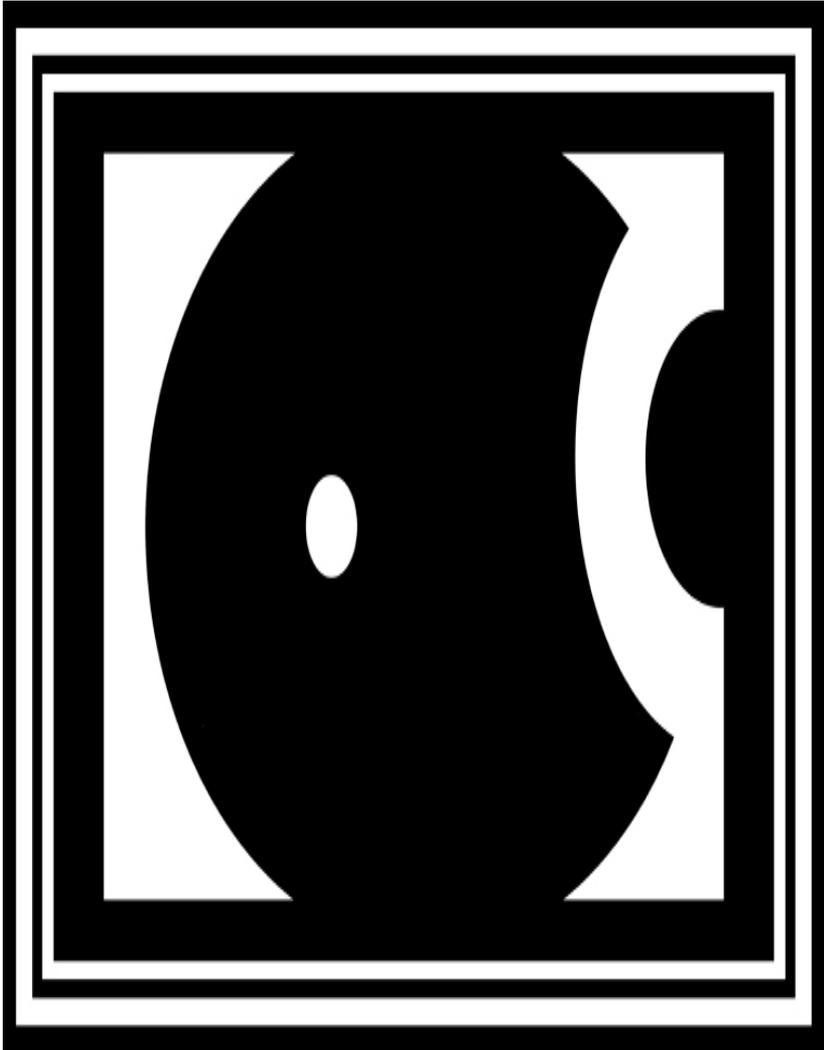
-Jill Post

# Whale in Blue



-Jill Post

# If and When



-Edward Michael Supranowicz

## Abstract Portrait



-Hanna Wright

# The Warmth of Harvest



-Amber Zbonick

## Author Bios

### Poetry-

L. Ward Abel's work has appeared in hundreds of journals, and he is the author of three full collections and ten chapbooks of poetry. Abel resides in rural Georgia.

Dee Allen is an African-Italian performance poet based in Oakland, California and has been an active creative writer & spoken word poet since the early 1990s. Dee is the author of 7 books: *Boneyard*, *Unwritten Law*, *Stormwater*, *Skeletal Black*, *Elohi Unitsi*, and coming in February 2022, *Rusty Gallows and Plans*, and has 42 anthology appearances.

Sydney Ard is a 22-year-old elderly caretaker from the picturesque and lonesome rice fields of Louisiana. She enjoys singing folk music with her pet parakeet and eating her weight in chocolate.

Georgie Bailey is a working-class Poet and Playwright from Bordon, Hampshire. He is a graduate of Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's Writing MA, and mentor's new writers of all ages through creative projects. His works have been seen in magazines such as *The Horizon*, *Ropes Literary Journal* and *Trouvaille Review*.

Savannah Baker is an English student at Olivet College. She hopes to one day work in the publishing industry and help others get their own works out into the world.

Nick Bertelson is a farmer from southwestern Iowa. His work has appeared in multiple journals. He is a James Hearst Poetry Prize finalist and author of "Harvest Widows" (NDSU Press 2019).

Jeffrey Layne Blevins is a Professor of Journalism at the University of Cincinnati and a freelance columnist, but a poet at heart.

Bill Diamond lives in Colorado where the Rocky Mountains are an inspiration and distraction. He writes to try and figure it all out.

George Freek's poetry has recently appeared in "Ink, Sweat and Tears"; "A New Ulster"; "The Gentian Journal"; "Miller's Pond"; and "The Whimsical Poet."

Keith Mark Gaboury earned a M.F.A. in creative writing from Emerson College. In 2020, his poetry chapbooks appeared through Duck Lake Books and The Pedestrian Press. He has a forthcoming chapbook from Finishing Line Press. Keith lives in Oakland, California. Learn more at [www.keithmgaboury.com](http://www.keithmgaboury.com).

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published

in Penumbra, Poetry Salzburg Review and Hollins Critic. Latest books, "Leaves On Pages" and "Memory Outside The Head" are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in Lana Turner and International Poetry Review.

A NYSCA/NYFA Writing Fellow in Playwriting, Susan Kathryn Hefti's work has been published, developed or presented by Smith & Kraus; Lark Play Development Center; New York Theatre Workshop; The Playwrights Center; Rattlestick Playwrights Theater; The William Inge Theatre Festival New Play Lab, among others.

Marah Heikkila holds a B.A. in English and Cultural Studies from Olivet College. They are currently working on their M.A. in Literature at EMU. Published in Garfield Lake Review (editions: 2019-2021), Toe Good, and Havik. When they aren't teaching, they are spending time with their two dogs, family, and nephew.

Rebecca MLH lives in Apex, NC with her husband, two dogs, cat, and horse on a little piece of land in the woods. Her poetry and essays focus on the transformative simplicity of nature, and she is currently putting the finishing touches on her first novel prior to seeking representation.

Stephen Kingsnorth (Cambridge M.A., English & Religious Studies), retired to Wales from ministry in the Methodist Church, has had some 300 pieces published by on-line poetry sites, printed journals and anthologies.

Beth Konkoski is a writer and high school English teacher living in Northern Virginia with her husband and two mostly grown kids. Her poetry has been published in journals such as The American Journal of Poetry and Gargoyle. She has two chapbooks of poetry, Noticing the Splash and Water Shedding.

Kavitha Krishanmurthy lives in Chennai, India. She is a PMO by profession and a writer by hobby. She looks at writing as a platform to give color and shape to her creativity and imagination. Her work has been featured in Indian periodical, Unlikely Stories Mark V, Mono fiction and Topical poetry magazine.

Margaret Krusinga lives on sixty acres she and her husband manage for wildlife. Her poem, "Diagnosis" appeared in the June 2021 publication of The Beautiful Space- A Journal of Mind, Art, and Poetry, and her poem "Seasoned" appeared in the October 2021 publication of The Drummond Island Digest.

Jeremy Nathan Marks lives in Canada. New and recent work appears/will appear in places like Eastern Iowa Review, 365 Tomorrows, Every Day Fiction, Microfiction Mondays, and Ginosko Literary Journal. His full length collection, Of Fat Dogs & Amorous Insects, is published by Alien Buddha Press (2021).

Joseph Mills is a professor at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, he will publish his seventh book of poetry "Bodies in Motion" in the spring of 2022. His book "This Miraculous Turning" was awarded the North Carolina Roanoke-Chowan Award for Poetry for its exploration of race and family.

Debasish Mishra is a Senior Research Fellow at NISER, HBNI, India. His recent poems have appeared or are forthcoming in North Dakota Quarterly, Penumbra, trampset, Enchanted Conversation, Amsterdam Quarterly, The Headlight Review, and elsewhere.

Elizabeth Morse's work has been published in literary magazines such as The Raven's Perch and Hazmat Review, and anthologies such as Crimes of the Beats and The Unbearables Big Book of Sex. She has her MFA from Brooklyn College.

James B. Nicola is the author of six collections of poetry, the latest being Fires of Heaven: Poems of Faith and Sense. His decades of working in the theater culminated in the nonfiction book Playing the Audience: The Practical Guide to Live Performance, which won a Choice award.

Lauro Palomba has taught ESL and done stints as a freelance journalist and speechwriter. Approximately ninety of his poems and stories have appeared in North American literary journals.

Christina E. Petrides lives and works on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. Periodicals around the world have published more than two score of her poems in the last three years. Her first children's book, Blueberry Man, was published in 2020 by Tchaikovsky Family Books; the Korean translation appeared in 2021.

Rosalie Sanara Petrouske has authored three chapbooks of poetry, the most recent being What We Keep (Finishing Line Press, 2016). One of six finalists in the 2020 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize sponsored by Cultural Daily, this past year she was also a finalist for the distinction of U.P. Poet Laureate.

Gia Porter is a writer of flash fiction and poetry. She has two bachelor's degrees and two master's degrees. She loves writing and signing. She likes to study people and societal situations. They give her the best inspiration for her creative writing. This is her first poetry publication.

Charles Rammelkamp is Prose Editor for BrickHouse Books in Baltimore. Two full-length collections were published in 2020, Catastroika, from Apprentice House, and Ugler Lee from Kelsay Books. A poetry chapbook, Mortal Coil, was published earlier this year by Clare Songbirds Publishing.

Sarah Rehfeldt lives with her family in western Washington where she is a writer, artist, and photographer. Her poems have appeared in many online journals and print publications such as Presence; Blueline, Appalachia; and Weber. You can view her photography web pages at: [www.pbbase.com/candanceski](http://www.pbbase.com/candanceski)

Bruce Spang, former Poet Laureate of Portland, author of two novels and published five books of poems, is fiction editor of the Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine. His poems have been published in Connecticut River Review, Kalopsia Literary Journal, and others. He lives in Candler, NC with his husband.

Douglas G. Tanoury has been published in print and online for many years now. He has written over 20 chapbooks, including: Cloud Boulevard, The Physics of Tea and Avon Poems. Areas of interest for him are ekphrasis works and the connections between poetry and place.

John Tustin's poetry has appeared in many disparate literary journals since 2009. [fritzware.com/slash/johntustinpoetry](http://fritzware.com/slash/johntustinpoetry) contains links to his published poetry online.

Douglas Twells served in the Peace Corps in India, studied Sanskrit and Hindi at the University of Chicago, and taught English in Iran. After returning to India to complete a research fellowship, he pursued a career in university administration. Retired, Twells lives in St. Louis, writes, and occasionally teaches.

Adam Waddell is a candidate for ordination in the ELCA, and a MDiv student. He works in higher education. A writer and poet, he has been published in several magazine and online sources. Adam lives in Memphis with his family. He/him/his.

Andrew Williams is a family man, pastor, professor, and poet living in Pennsylvania, USA.

Dana Yost was an award-winning daily newspaper journalist for twenty-nine years. Since 2008, he has published seven books. He is a three-time Pushcart nominee.

## Fiction-

Joe Baumann's fiction has appeared in Phantom Drift, Passages North, and others. He was a 2019 Lambda Fellow. His first short story collection, The Plagues, will be released by Cornerstone Press in 2023, and his debut novel, I Know You're Out There Somewhere, is forthcoming from Deep Hearts YA.

Bennett Durkan's fiction has appeared in Short Story Town, Atomic Flyswatter, and Volney Road Review. His poetry has appeared in Willard & Maple, Ikleftiko, and Five 2 One. He

was also a finalist for the Authors Marketing Guild's 2020 short story contest.

Nancy J. Fagan's recent work can be found in *Breath & Shadow*, *You and Me Medical Magazine*, and others. She holds a BA from Mount Holyoke College and is a candidate for an MFA in Writing from VCFA. She lives in western Massachusetts with her husband and two ridiculous cats.

Elise Glassman is a Seattle writer and assistant fiction editor at Pithead Chapel. Her stories and essays have appeared in journals such as *The Colorado Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *The Portland Review*, *Per Contra*, and *Spank the Carp*.

Dave Gregory is a Canadian writer, a retired sailor, and an associate editor with the Los Angeles-based *Exposition Review*. His work has most recently appeared in *Reckon Review*, *Perceptions Magazine*, & *Freshwater Literary Journal*. Please follow him on Twitter @CourtlandAvenue.

Sheila E. Murphy is the recipient of the Gertrude Stein Award for her book *Letters to Unfinished J.* (Green Integer Press, 2003). *Reporting Live from You Know Where* won the Hay(na) Ku Poetry Book Prize Competition from Meritage Press and xPress(ed).

Terry Sanville lives in San Luis Obispo, California with his artist-poet wife (his in-house editor) and two plump cats (his in-house critics). His short stories have been accepted more than 440 times by journals, magazines, and anthologies. Terry is a retired urban planner and an accomplished jazz and blues guitarist.

## Nonfiction-

Savannah Baker is an English student at Olivet College. She hopes to one day work in the publishing industry and help others get their own works out into the world.

John C. Krieg is a retired landscape architect and land planner who formerly practiced in Arizona, California, and Nevada. He is also retired as an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certified arborist and currently holds seven active categories of California state contracting licenses.

Anika Somaia is from New Delhi, India. She is a student at Cheltenham Ladies' College in the UK.

Tommy Vollman is a writer, musician, and painter. For many years, he was a baseball player. He has written a number of things, published a bit, recorded a few records, and toured a

lot. He has some black-ink tattoos on both of his arms.

Riley Winchester's writing has appeared in *Ligeia Magazine*, *Miracle Monocle*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Across the Margin*, and other publications. He lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## Fine Art-

Abigail Bonotto is a graphic designer with a love for all visual arts. She enjoys experimenting in other mediums and testing her skills.

Christine Craft is a recent 2021 Olivet College Graduate pursuing her passion for Graphic Design.

Joshua Effiong is writer and artist from the Örö people of Nigeria, studying Science Laboratory Technology at University of Calabar.

Courtney Kissinger lives in Michigan with her loving family. Figuring out photography was her passion took longer than most, but she has decided to make it her career. She loves being on the water, camping, hiking, any outdoor activities, sports, reading, taking pictures, and solving mysteries.

Abby Licht is a Senior at Olivet College. She's majoring in Graphic Design and Visual Arts with a Studio Art concentration. She enjoys painting and playing video games in her spare time.

Twenty-year-old artist, Jillianne Post, has had a lifelong passion for art. Jillianne specializes mainly in charcoal and graphite, but she prides herself for being a well-rounded artist. Jillianne attempts to depict the world realistically in her art, while still allowing her creativity to flow in each piece.

Edward Michael Supranowicz is the grandson of Irish and Russian/Ukrainian immigrants. He grew up in Appalachia. Some of his artwork has recently or will soon appear in *Fish Food*, *Streetlight*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *The Door Is a Jar*, *The Phoenix*, and other journals. Edward is also a published poet.

Hanna Wright of Keavy, Kentucky uses her experiences from growing up in rural South-Eastern Kentucky, teaching special education classes, and living with OCD to inspire her unique works of art. Hanna Wright uses bold lines and bright colors to create abstract figures with relatable and at times deeply emotional expressions.

Amber R Zabonick is a small-town photographer and artist.

## A History of Olivet College and the Garfield Lake Review

Olivet College, the home of the Garfield Lake Review, has a storied history beginning even before the founding of our nation. Pilgrims that traveled across the ocean seeking religious freedom were the first Congregationalists, the founders of the earliest colleges in the United States. These same Congregationalists also funded the defense in the court case of the Amistad, a slave trading ship, in which the slaves won their freedom. These revolutionary efforts would trace their way to Olivet, Michigan. Naming Olivet College after the biblical Mount of Olives, Rev. John Shipherd founded the school in 1844 in a small area of south-central Michigan. Because of Olivet's unorthodox view – offering anyone, including women and minorities, an education – the state of Michigan refused to grant Olivet a charter, so it opened as a private institute.

Into the early nineteen-hundreds, Olivet College transformed from a primary school for educators into a true liberal arts college. By the nineteen thirties and forties, young president Joseph Brewer pushed forward with innovative educational policies that allowed Olivet to become a haven for scholars.

By the late 1990s, Olivet had experienced many changes, and the faculty created a new Olivet Plan to encourage students to combine the founding principles of the Congregationalists and the reforms of President Brewer. The Olivet Plan still exists today, allowing students to focus their education on the global mindset. It is a nationally recognized educational plan.

One of the school's proudest accomplishments is the Garfield Lake Review. The Garfield Lake Review is a production of Olivet College students interested in creative writing, artwork, and music; it began in 1971 as a project in a creative writing class. The founders of the program were Professor James Coleman, Brent Danielson, James Hudson, Andrew Johnson, Amy Leithauser, George Parmenter, and Norm Wheeler.

The Garfield Lake Review is the annual literary and visual arts magazine produced by Olivet College students, and it is a proud member of the Olivet College Media Board. From its inception, the policy for the Garfield Lake Review has been to accept submissions from students, staff, and alumni. Submissions from outside of the college are accepted as well. Submissions for the magazine are accepted every fall; see guidelines at [garfieldlakereview.com](http://garfieldlakereview.com).

Works are chosen through a blind screening process that was introduced in 2006. The blind screening assures that no author will be judged by race, creed, sexual orientation, or political ideology. The selections are reviewed, selected and edited by students on the Garfield Lake Review Editorial Board.

Readers interested in donating financial support for future issues of the Garfield Lake Review should contact the Olivet College Advancement Office at (269) 749-7000. The Olivet College website is

[www.olivetcollege.edu](http://www.olivetcollege.edu).

Olivet College is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. The college, in its employment, student admissions, recruitment, and personnel policies and practices, will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of age, color, sex, gender identity, disability or disability status, height, weight, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, military or veteran status, or sexual orientation.

## COLEMAN PRIZES & STEVENS AWARD -Projects of the Bill Buchanan Fund-

Bill Buchanan died in Sri Lanka before he could return for the celebration of his 80th birthday. Well over one hundred of his former students, colleagues, neighbors, family, and friends gathered in Dale, Michigan to remember him. They came from around the country to recite poems, play music, and tell stories. The service ended after three and a half hours. Throughout the night, conversations continued. Five years prior to that event, many had gathered in Klock Commons to celebrate Bill's 75th birthday, as they had for his 70th birthday.

Throughout Bill's 16 years of teaching at Olivet College, his classes were not as populated as the required courses, although they were no less important. The Bill Buchanan Fund was established with the Capital Region Community Foundation on April 2, 2003. The purpose is to incentivize and support the liberal arts. As the Fund grows, so too will the amounts of the prizes and the award.

The first Coleman Prize was established in memory of Tim Boal, Class of 1969. As a young professor, Jim Coleman met with some students at the Garfield Lake Tavern on the outskirts of Olivet. It was there that the Garfield Lake Review seemed like a good idea. And, so it is.

The Stevens Award recognizes an excellent educator, in the tradition of Arthur R. Stevens & Charlotte Whitney Stevens. Both taught in Olivet: Art at the college and Charlotte at the high school. The first award honoring Art and Charlotte was presented to Professor Laura Barlund-Maas at the Honors Convocation held on April 17, 2019.

Institutional memory matters. The Bill Buchanan Fund was established to honor an intention, a tradition, and an era, not merely an individual. You may support the purpose and the projects of the Bill Buchanan Fund by making a contribution. Address your gift to the Capital Region Community Foundation. 330 Marshall Street. Lansing, Michigan 48912 Attention: Bill Buchanan Fund. Contributions also may be made online at: [www.olivetcollege.edu/fundraiser1](http://www.olivetcollege.edu/fundraiser1).

Advisors to the Bill Buchanan Fund include Marty (Mason) Jennings, '67; Dr. Stephen R. Burton, '68; Rev. James W. Briney, Jr. '69; Dr. Robert B. Rickle, '71. We intend to gather with contributors to the Fund in 2023. The idea is to mark the centennial year of the birth of Bill Buchanan and the 20th anniversary of the Bill Buchanan Fund. Eventual projects of the Bill Buchanan Fund include: Stevens House and the Student Integrity Prize.

Olivet College members whose work is published in the 'Garf' are eligible for the Coleman Prizes in the areas of poetry and prose. The honoree is chosen annually by outside judges.

Past honorees:

- 2020 Kailey Collins, Class of 2022
- 2019 Emma Cole, Class of 2018
- 2018 Adam Walle, Class of 2017
- 2017 Linda Jo Scott, professor emerita of English
- 2016 Meghan Eldred, Class of 2015
- 2015 Camieo Green, Class of 2014
- 2014 Meghan Wilkerson, Class of 2013
- 2013 Jennifer M. ten Haaf Hodges, Class of 2012
- 2012 Jennifer M. ten Haaf Hodges, Class of 2012
- 2011 Jacob "Coby" Heller, Class of 2012
- 2010 Anabel Montalvo Hall, Class of 2009
- 2009 Anya Letson, Class of 2008
- 2008 Katrina Williams Thigpen, Class of 2007