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Dialogue

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DIALOGUE: SPOTLIGHT
Volume 42: Issue 5
Dialogue is Calvin College’s student-run journal of commentary and the arts, published numerous times a year, including a music CD. 

Dialogue is a magazine dedicated to enhancing productive discourses, nurturing artistic growth at Calvin, as well engaging culture through images, works and ideas. We welcome submissions of articles, reviews, essays, literature, and visual art of every sort. Submissions, questions, feedback, and all other correspondence may be addressed to the editor at dialogue @calvin.edu
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Considering this is the last Dialogue issue of the year, I felt that, as an English major, I should really submit something. However, as has happened before, none of the creative writing I have produced recently would be worth anyone’s attention. In fact, apart from the occasional letter or journal entry, I have hardly done any writing that was not specifically geared towards a class. Of that kind of writing I have done quite a bit; I probably wrote more over the course of these last three months than an average student in my home country, the Netherlands, would do over their entire undergraduate career. I recently had several conversations in which people expressed their regrets about the private nature of writing that inevitably takes up large amounts of our creative energy, time, and brain space but which in most cases only gets to be read by our professors.

Talking about this made me realize how much I appreciate my current English capstone class with Professor Felch, in which all students post their weekly reading reflections on Knight Vision and in which we give each other feedback on final paper ideas. More than any other class I have taken at Calvin, this experience has made me realize what great minds I have the privilege of sitting next to on a daily basis, and how much more we could all make use of each other’s advice, in the meantime probably striking up many unexpected friendships. I understand that for many of you the idea of having friend and foe read your papers might seem a little too intrusive; indeed, reading other student’s writing and listening to their ideas has been a humbling experience for me, making me acutely aware of the limitations of my own writing and thinking, be it in Dutch, English, or whatever other languages I like to think I master to some degree. In exchange, however, for deciding to speak up in my male-dominated philosophy classes and by being forced to share my work and thoughts in my English classes, I have had a great semester in which I felt much more connected to my fellow majors and have had to radically alter many of my initial perceptions of people (so much for any confidence in my judgment of human nature I might have thought I had).

I leave Calvin with a deep sense of gratitude for everything I gained during my total of five semesters on campus, but also with myriad ideas about how I would do things differently if I could do it all over again. (For instance, I would have regularly submitted to this excellent publication and maybe even have tried to become its editor.) Of course these regrets are futile, and to some extent they are unrealistic: I would not be the person to approach things differently now without having gone through the motions before. I do think, however, I could have been a better contributor to this campus and have gained more in the process, if I had been more aware of the power of building class communities that cross the lines of comfortable friend groups and other cliques we tend to form. Sharing your thoughts—and yes, that means speaking up in class, even when you are intimidated by the more articulate or just do not feel like talking today—and sharing work, even when that feels like laying bare just a little too much, are enriching experiences, which, if you are not engaged in already, I hope you will decide not to miss out on. Besides, as Mary Karr kindly pointed out in a workshop during the recent Festival, what’s to lose? None of our writing is all that great anyway!
With that cleared up, I would like to end with some excerpts from the reading responses I have been writing for my capstone. I would much rather have quoted some of the much funnier and better-written responses of my peers, but that would not exactly have matched the spirit of expressed above. I hardly edited them, and I did not place the references in their proper contexts, but viewing these pages as a space for friendly community rather than an arena of academic rigor, I hope you will bear with me and maybe even enjoy some of the realizations my capstone readings and Prof. Felch’s ever-probing writing prompts have led me to this semester. See you in Holland (EU).

Feb. 9 In searching for a metaphor for this seminar, my mind kept circling around the cliché of the journey, a pervasive image that fails to express the deeper, connecting function this seminar has fulfilled so far in terms of my English major as a whole and this last semester at Calvin. In the end, its course title as a “capstone” is quite a good find. The course does indeed “cap” my English major, providing “a fitting climax or conclusion” to my coursework in these last four years and to my Tuesdays this semester. And at certain times, mostly at the start of the weekly pile of readings, or at 6:30 on Tuesdays after I just got out of my gender capstone, it feels heavy like a stone about to tumble off a building to crush me.

Feb. 9 However, because of my four years of introduction to the Academy, I have also stopped asking certain questions, be it because of Doubt, or because, like the narrator in Borges’s “Shakespeare’s Memory” I have found comfort in believing opinions and imitating work “as academic and conventional” as my own. To my dismay, I clearly recognize myself in Griffith’s academic reader, whose geography of mind, to borrow Felch’s metaphor, has been reduced to a landscape of doubt, and who, although I appreciate creative digressions in reading, lacks the courage and the tools to write anything but argumentative papers on my own. Again, if I had only studied philosophy, a discipline that places great value in relatively unimaginative but clear argumentative prose, I might not consider this a lack, but my exposure to other methodologies has convinced me that they are enriching. Although I am not sure what my options are, I do know that branching out will be a valuable endeavor that will improve my overall writing skills in general.

(continued to 45)
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Paper bodies is a series that alludes to a spiritual journey that considers the female body in the context of religion. Themes within this body of work include: process, longing, desire and denial. This work seeks to highlight the marginalization of the female body within institutions of religion and its effects upon women’s personal relationships with God.

I sought to utilize materials that naturally accent and embody flesh-like forms, such as papers and fabrics. I am intrigued by the instinctive nature and purity of water-based mediums and many of my compositions are resolved by submission to its fluidity and unpredictable behavior. In creating this body of work, I embarked on a cathartic journey of collecting, arranging, pasting, tearing, and manipulating found images, texts, or fabrics. My process paralleled a spiritual journey itself, involving an alternating of push, pull, struggle and surrender, rebuke and embrace.
BA spotlight: Hannah Piedt

Play with Me? Digital Art
I've never liked the idea of "explaining" my work. For the most part, my pieces have no complex hidden meanings, no urgent messages to get across. I take pictures of things that intrigue me: things that are so beautiful or ugly or horrible or full of joy that they simply beg to be portrayed, that sketch themselves out in my mind until I have no choice but to capture them. I love lines and colors and shapes of all kinds: the way strands of hair interact with a model's face, or how the edges and corners of buildings work within the frame of an image. I don't have to try to infuse any particular meaning into my work: the meaning comes naturally, and is nothing deeper or more complex than a reflection of my perspective on the world and the people and places within it. My photographs are how I see.

Lighthouse  Digital Photography
Outside

I slept outside for five months. No tent, no tarp, no sleeping pad. Not under the eaves of the house, not on the back porch. I slept on the ground for five months with a sleeping bag and a roll of polypropylene twine.

Cody and I came up with the idea during a backpacking trip that spring. While sitting on the mountainside, tossing rocks to watch them roll across the snow and shale, we realized we could sleep outside whenever we wanted. True, we wouldn’t have a setting like out backpacking, but we could still step out of routine. So we drafted rules to a competition, laid out guidelines that would bind us when we lost our initial enthusiasm:

- We could only sleep outside, on the ground.
- We could build a shelter, with rope or twine as the only manufactured material.
- We could only sleep inside a house for two hours per day.

Cody and I convinced my brother, Alicia, and Megan to join us, and for the rest of May, we built our shelters. I sawed down trees in my woods, cut off their branches, and replanted the bare posts to form my lean-to’s frame. For the roof, I used beach grass, tying it in bunches and layering those, the twine cutting my fingers and then callusing them as the weeks progressed.

Meanwhile, Cody explored the woods bordering his property and found a pair of downed trees, crisscrossed for a natural frame. He piled branches on top and carved a den in the dirt underneath. For her shelter, Alicia built a skeleton of downed trees and covered it halfway with branches. Megan felled a truckload of cedar boughs and draped them in a thick mat over two propped logs. My brother outdid all of us, though, abandoning the idea of actually building a shelter and simply choosing a patch of ground under the largest, driest tree in the yard.

Then, on June 16th, the first day of summer, we each put our $10 into the prize pot. We spent that first night on the beach, celebrating the end of school with a driftwood raft and a bonfire.

On the second night, we used our shelters for the first time. But Megan when left her house, sleeping bag in hand, she promptly chose her bed over her dark, exposed cedar nest.

Four left.

Warm air and no rain made our handiwork unnecessary for the next two weeks, so we slept in our yards, falling asleep while watching the stars.

Eventually the first rain hit—just a drizzle, but enough to drive most of us into our refuges. Alicia, though, simply moved off the grass and onto the slightly drier bark dust, pulling a blanket over her head. She woke up in the morning with a wet sleeping bag, but she had nevertheless stayed relatively dry. Alicia never used her shelter after that, and the number of sleeping bags she brought out each night depended upon if and how hard the rain fell.

Our families’ and friends’ declarations that we couldn’t last ended with the first month of summer, and even the wry comments about youth and stupidity declined. In their absence, Alicia and I heard rumors. Rumors that Cody
wasn’t actually sleeping outside anymore. So one night, we drove to his house, parked halfway down the driveway. We checked his shelter, his yard, even the porch. No Cody. We told him the next day.

Three left.

Our parents worried when school started, but when our grades didn’t slip, they decided it wasn’t a fight worth waging. But with school came Fall, and with Fall came colder temperatures and more rain. Although my roof could keep out most of the showers, drips still leaked through, exploding like bombs just above my ears when they hit my sleeping bag. By mid-October, the airstrikes occurred regularly, and each night I raced to fall asleep before I started to stick to the bag’s damp lining.

By the end of that month, all three of us depended upon the permitted two hours of inside sleep. At four o’clock in the morning, my brother and I would creep inside, laying our bedding in the garage to dry. But although I could manage the feat without waking my parents, Ben could not.

Two left.

Alicia and I refused to let the other take the glory of victory. So we waited. Into November, one week, then two. We managed four hours of sleep on the best nights—two spent between soaked ground and incessant rain, then two spent inside, with warmth and quiet and peace.

Then came the week of the deluge. Pouring rain, extreme even by Washington standards, dropping through my shelter and turning the ground to mud. So I abandoned my sleeping bag in favor of long underwear, sweats, hat, gloves, boots, rain gear. Thus dressed, I curled up against the trunk of Ben’s tree. Amidst her bark dust, Alicia crawled into four sleeping bags and turtled.

The rain lessened slightly the next day, but still persisted. We both felt exhausted, my clothes still damp, Alicia’s sleeping bags still soaked. And the next day, school loomed. Assignments and lectures and tests.

None left.

In the middle of November, we called the contest a draw. Alicia and I split the $50—two cents for each hour spent outside. I had slept outside for five full months. For five months, I had chosen the ground instead of a bed, beach grass instead of a roof. I had deprived myself of sleep, I had spent nights curled in a soaking sleeping bag, waiting until I could take those two hours of sleep inside on the couch. And for what?

During those five months, I had broken away from expectations. Conventionality abandoned, I had lived as I wished, challenging myself and my resolve. Tired of routines and restrictions, I had bucked my loyalty to “normalcy.” So I did what few do—because few do it.
BA spotlight: Amanda Marcotte
The Cloth, The Kiss in "The Lovers II" by René Magritte

The two share a kiss. Not much

else. No gaze, no touch;
the cloth stays on their lips instead
of spit. They open wide, perhaps, or not at all. Perhaps
they share a bed to share their kiss. Presumably
they love.

The cloth folds and
shadows
her face, the back of his.

The cloth steals
their passion.

Magritte paints his oil on canvas
tongue-in-cheek.
Pawns it off to whomever in 1928.
The two kiss
safely, while guests infer

the who inaccurately.

Jacob Schepers
Found in Translation

I speak a language foreign and unique,
Incomprehensible perhaps to most;
You might make out a word or two, though weak,
But what I say-- in you, becomes a ghost.
I rasp my meaning out in fragile sounds
And hope your hand, when you reach out to grasp,
Does not pass through that ectoplasmic cloud
Like water flees from children's futile clasp.
Why must our tongues thus cease or ring like chimes
And make the gravest words unutt'able?
I might regret my speaking all those times,
If no communication possible.
The paradox of words made clear for few:
Their clanging wakes unspeakables in you.

Kathleen O Bannon
Everyday we encounter people we may never think about, and if we do it is always from a distance. Such people are placeholders and space-dwellers to us. Our relationships consist of smiling as we pass and holding the door for each other. In our institutions our paths may cross once, or maybe three days a week for fourteen weeks. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12:30-2:30 p.m. And yet that common experience, that shared moment of existence, inevitably sends us off in different directions to ultimately engage in the very same sort of relationships with others. These paintings serve as records and reminders of the people I have seen over and over, and have never known. The size of the canvas is intended to serve as a doorway, roughly the size of an average person, for which the viewer is able to place oneself within the observed moment. The faces remain hidden and ambiguous, masked to the viewer, which forces the viewer’s perception of the figure’s identity to be constructed almost entirely in the viewer’s mind. It is this experience of internal contemplation based on limited information that drives my work. The forms and figures are quick and gestural, acting as reflections of the temporality and spontaneity of the moment. The images allow entry and introspection but ultimately block the viewer from complete access to the subjects.
A UBIIQUITY OF CROWS

“"A certain traveler who knew many continents was asked what he found most remarkable of all. He replied: the ubiquity of sparrows.”” —Adam Zagajewski

“I have found the same true of crows.”

Before the breadcrust touches ground, crow
Ogling, from every housetop, the eye of a crow
Before and after the church bell tolls, the toll of a crow
Among a murder of wolves, a pack of crows
In a wintry pond, feet froze-stuck, one stiff crow
Inside Pharaoh’s ribs, stone-cold crow
Calligraphy, the art of dismembered crows
On the telephone wire above your mother’s head, (you failed to notice) three gangsta crows
Standing in for Poe’s raven, Sean Penn Old Crow
On a pirate’s shoulder, in parrot’s garb, wisecrackin’ crow
Behind the milk carton in the back of the fridge, one roosting crow
Home early from a business trip, the salesman finds his wife in bed with a crow
On every poet’s mind, the shadow of truth, of crow
A single cornstalk standing in a field of crows

Mitchell Terpstra
Earth is boring from a bird’s-eye view, something about thirty-five-thousand feet that flattens the facts of landscape, deletes one of three Ds, makes mountains miniscule, so unmajestic, and the plains, well, plain. So when some cumulus cloud the picture, whatev; it was just cornbelt chessboard ad nauseum. Night is no better, the canvas below recalling that Lite Brite® from childhood, so I pull down the plastic porthole shade and doze off and dream that God incarnated Himself, in part, because He got sick of the view.

*Mitchell Terpstra*
BA Spotlight:

Loren Henry

Area Amends (excerpt from a series) Digital Photography
“4.15.10”

It takes the average male 22.5 days to get over a break up
And as always, you are above average:
It only took you -17.3 days to get over me,
Which means we were through before we were even over

It takes the average woman, however, 375.86 days to recover after a failed relationship.
I’m on day 582,

And I’m still counting

“12.4.09”

What if I were on a slow descent into madness?
You’d never know:
You’re in the passenger seat
Why
Do we believe in lies
When we should rest in truth?

We identify with fantasies,
And relish in that which will never bring forth fruit.

I bathe in illusions,
Absorb superfluous inexistences
And call myself walking in reality
When I refuse to see what’s in front of me

But lies are secure,
Even if only for a while
I can believe in all sorts of bullshit
And in the end still smile

I’m not real:
I walk in falsities
I feign; I prevaricate;
I pretend; I dissimulate

But I’d rather live in lies
And consistently, the truth, skirt
Because the lies I rule myself with give me only
pleasure
While the truth always hurts

Kimberly Randle

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BFA Spotlight:
Kristen McHugh
I am interested in documenting time; its existence in relation to myself, its manifestation inside overlooked moments, its passing, and that of the past. As a living observer and maker of things, I work to create dwelling spaces in which this documentations may reside. It is through a combination of video, sculpture, mixed media painting and installations that these information alcoves are made present. In doing so, an interaction between viewer and alternative viewing is fostered. While I am not interested in measuring time precisely, these means of notation and the providing of mind-spaces, are not to be regarded as methodologically stale. Both my process and result may be better understood in conjunction with themes: non-traditional memorials, moments as vulnerable, the valuable mundane, and repetition based dwelling. Essentially, I compile and arrange information, objects, ideas, and visuals in conjunction to these overarching themes.
Breath

I cannot possibly be
alive I calculated your
alibi Your design and it didn't
happen Not to me We don't share
this or any first scar
The umbilicus you wish you
ripped
from me

(Did I tumble down
and out wailing, mother Did
you watch the doctor
as he sterilized me?)

no one could have
severed
It was never there Let the word
spill forth, I didn't spill forth
Let me glower at a
glint slipped through
the window as it glances
backwards against
the illumination
in my brain

Fig Tree

If I could sell
my soul I would, if
asked to dip the knife
into my blood.

If I could will
a reckoning I would, if
forced to grip the tightened,
Cronus' glove.

If I could call
my body forth, wooden
broken frame, ask how it stood,
I'm sure that it could tell
me how it fell.

Jacob Eizenga
between colored glass jars,  
the Unetched cry what they must: in this dirt, i --

near the grave-  
yard fence, the woman  
holding mums in daylight sheds  
petals

so the last flowers of the year  
look after the stones  
and wilt upon the dead  
at dark:

no moon vigil.  
only souls  
kicking prayers  
with a boot

whispering over  
bronze votive jars:  
we must be withering stems

[ oh, sorry. ]

in the waiting room  
of evening,  
the stars fidget before  
a neoned dusk

if found lustered dull  
they will be flung  
under the sorry dark

Leah Nieboer
atie Hiskes *Untitled* (photography)
The light once filled the heart of this land...

For today...

That was the past.

...it is not so.

BA spotlight: Joel Klingenberg
BA spotlight:
Kirsten Hix
Earthbound

I have lost you, dearest.
Last time I saw you,
You were swinging your legs from the rafters,
Humming a queer little tune without words;
The stars had stolen the words, you said--
Thieving little sprites, you called them.
You said you were going after them, naturally,
But should be back for supper.
I have been watching the stars for a long time--
You have not yet come home.
A swallow flew by and said
She had seen you with Orion,
Asking if he had seen your words;
Orion had caught a glimpse of them,
Orion had caught a glimpse of them,
But when he raised his voice, they scattered,
As when leaves catch the sunbeams
And toss them broken on the ground.
Your words are not fragile like sunlight;
I have not yet read them, but I have read you,
And you are strong, yes, stronger even than Orpheus,
Whose song charmed the abyss.
Darling, find your words,
Capture them in your net of ink,
And then come back for me.
The night sky, after all, has the stars--
Those thieving sprites, I know,
For they have stolen you, my light.

Erica Jensen
The Color Wheel

Through the high window overlooking the factory floor
the oaken double doors of Mister Carlisle’s Office are visible –
pristine, and sparkling oddly.
One side of the factory makes splatter guards,
and the other side cuts chickens into segments.

FIVE FROM CHINA SIX FROM TURKEY SEVEN FROM SINGAPORE
the dock man’s manifest reads.

****

They put me to work on the Color Wheel –
the vulgar name the other men gave the C141 Fowl Dimidiator.

A rainbow wind of chicken guts carves patterns
into the splatter guard. My apprentice readies
his sponge and Windex
carefully noting my technique.
The conveyor belt takes my half-chickens to secondary dimidiation
and Chickens Receivable sends another one my way.

****

God, I wish the sun would stop shining through the high window
through the tiny, suspended prisms of the rainbow wind
and onto Mister Carlisle’s closed, pristine, oaken doors.

Michael Shade
the sea from where you stand

find an ocean at full tilt to the sun.
let the gleam of the water press hard on the bridge of your nose.
breathe it in—
be blinded by it.
all the shining shapes punctuated by
the black sliding bodies of kelp.

taste the salt on the air and
sense beyond the smallness of your body
the subjectivity of your mind which says

the water gleams white
with shapes like broken glass.

so much depends on where you stand.

walk waist-deep into the light where
the surface displaces meaning, shatters sky,
mirrors you.
and underneath it grips you,
bends you,
fluid though it is.

it is like language,
like story,

which you are now encompassed in

made of,
and making.

Jessica Miller
The Fog

When it is ripped away the world is unbearably bright.
Throbbing, pulsating with thoughts, ideas, and decisions.
Clarity bursting through and blinding me.

I will wrap my mind in it and rest comfortably.
I feel myself floating along, immune from the discomfort of making decisions or dealing with any emotions.
The throbbing at the base of my skull and the burning of my eyes are my most constant and loyal companions.

I never have to lie awake wondering what the future will bring.
No social engagements or pressures to do anything.
My comforting isolationist cocoon is all I know.

In the morning the remnants of confusing, mind-wrenching dreams pierce through, and I groan at another start.
Feelings of inadequacy, fear, terror, and being overwhelmed have ceased to exist.
I feel no joy, no sorrow only a blissfully numbing fog.

Then one day I wake up feeling refreshed
Without the battering of an alarm clock.
My excuses and status as a martyr are gone, moot points.
I am frightfully, eerily alive!
I am so hungry for all I have missed,
Everything and everyone I have numbed out of my daily motions of life.

I was fine until I woke up and now I never want to return.
How will I survive now that I think of my future and dream before I sleep each night?

Julia Garvelink
These paintings are loosely based on the visual images, bold colors, and textures that I interacted with and was surrounded by while studying in Ghana last semester. I can still close my eyes and see the landscapes and patterned fabric that these paintings stem from. Part of my personal process in recent works has involved freeing myself from restraint and allowing my use of color, paint application, and layering to develop organically. I am constantly pushing myself to embrace—and critique—the color palette that I am attracted to.
touch me beautiful

mornings you touch me beautiful
trailing warmth over my skin with fingertips
roughened and gentle coaxing loveliness
you touch me wanted and i want you
stay with me and be my lover evenings

now your love for me goes over the ocean with you
your fingertips a better mirror to me than glass
than still water in the backyard than words
fumble with foreign change leaving the scent
of copper on your skin for days / i miss you

sometimes you write to me
but never in the familiar sharp-edged hand
that plastered our refrigerator in fall because
postage is expensive and you’re hungry and
everything hurts a hundred and fifty % there
one hundred and fifty per pound and i understand that

i traced your progress with a felt tipped pen
six thousand miles and change to a star on the map
over my bed over london and i wonder if
the city loves you with the same intensity you love it
and i wonder if you will still touch me when you return
touch me beautiful like you did before

Stephanie Kurtz
In the reopening of the former Public Museum of Grand Rapids building for the “Michigan – Land of Riches” exhibition, we saw the opportunity to create a site-sensitive installation and accompanying video documentary. Together, they address this particular museum’s history as well as the more general function of museums everywhere, fusing true history with nostalgic fiction.

In the installation we created the one-room living quarters of a reclusive museum janitor and night watchman who meticulously studies, reorganizes, and catalogues objects and events from the museum displays. His space represents an entirely idiosyncratic approach to historical documentation, allowing the viewer to consider an alternative to the standardized, coherent, and linear version of history presented by most museums.

Without creating images or objects, but rather by arranging and placing them, we imply our imagined narrative. Likewise, the video is an arranged collection of narrated memory. The unconventional structure of the video also questions expectations of coherency.

After the exhibition, the assembled objects will return to their previous places. Museum artifacts will be archived, borrowed objects will return to their owners, and other objects of aesthetic interest will be stored for future uses. The artwork is not permanent, existing beyond the initial exhibition only in memory and digital documentation.
"The shoes aren’t right."
"Hm?"
"The shoes, these shoes," she said. "They’re all wrong with this dress."
He glanced over at her. "They’re fine."

It was the first time he’d looked up in twenty minutes. She was standing in front of the mirror, her entire collection of shoes scattered in hurricane-aftermath fashion around her feet. He was sitting on the edge of the bed with his book. Like always. Like Sunday-morning-through-Saturday-night, one-break-to-watch-the-six-o’clock-news, never-bother-to-find-a-real-job—just like that. There was a book in his hands when he turned off the light at exactly 11:30 every night and when he woke up at 8:00 the next morning. She swore he’d read every book in the house at least six times through.

She kicked off the pair of red heels that she’d never really liked in the first place and walked over to his side of the bed, kneeling at his feet and resting her arms across his lap.

"You promised to take me out tonight, you know." She had extracted the promise from him late the night before, after the book was laid aside, the lights were turned out, and he was half asleep.
"Mm."

She pulled the book out of his hands and laid it face down on the bed. Something by Salinger. Salinger was his favorite, though she never understood why. Dry as dust, that one, and not an ounce of romantic intrigue.

"For our anniversary. You didn’t forget, did you?"
“No.” His eyes flicked back and forth across her forehead and the tip of her nose, but never managed to settle anywhere in between.

“You didn’t forget?”
“No.”
“Do you love me more than those books of yours?”
“Of course.”
“Even Salinger?”

He put a stiff hand on top of her head and made an awkward attempt to stroke her hair. “Even Salinger.”

She smiled ever so slightly—just enough to make him try to smile in return—and stood up. Walked over to the closet and pushed the piles of shoes behind the door with the side of her foot. Went into the bathroom. Took off her earrings and laid them on the counter by the sink. Took off her dress.

The belt of her robe trailing behind her, she came back into the bedroom and gently closed the door. She took the book by Salinger from the edge of the bed, still face down, and marked his place—page 117, was it? Yes, of course that was it. She crawled into bed and leaned carefully across to put the book on his nightstand, right next to his alarm clock, which was set for exactly 8:00am. Just where he liked it.

11:30pm. She switched off the light. After a few minutes, when she knew he would be just starting to fall asleep, she rolled over toward his side of the bed.

“It’s our anniversary tomorrow, you know,” she whispered, her lips brushing up against his pillow. “You’ll take me out somewhere, won’t you? Somewhere nice, so I can wear that new dress you bought me? Maybe we could even go dancing, just like we used to. You’ll take me, won’t you? Promise?”

And his pillow, as silent, as cold, as empty as it had been for 17 years, gave a promise just as cold and empty as it had given every night before.

dialogue 41
ALZHAMER’S
Pathway in the brain a mine

Room and Pillar, Longwall Shearer: claw me into seams

Of coal

Galleries of ganglia

Cave, caving in: Lillian, Lillian

When will you lead me by the hand?

ECHO & REPLY:

Now must you and I from the collapsed lung

Gasp of darkness

Climb up to the lip of the adit

and seeing the Sun

Will you then become a child again

dialogue 42

PENCIL

Point of graphite
incise
this hide of papyrus

Retracting fang
recede into cedar

Blunted blade
ebb away
to the rubber

Friction of erasure
cauterize the cut
Cast

the specter of a scar

Cameron Morse
BA spotlight:

[Image of ceramic sculptures]
How are we to examine the meaning of truth and beauty? In this particular installation I have used unlikely materials such as plastic bags, twine and wood stain to create a grotesque beauty. Through history, the grotesque and beauty have been linked as opposites. This is an interpretation/exploration of my struggle with the idea of beauty. The disturbing nature of the installation has helped me come to terms with the ever so confusion notion. To me, this is the essence of beauty; a raw glimpse into a disturbing truth.
Mar. 17 What struck me most in today’s readings was the power of the act of writing in taking these writers “where they needed to go,” often transcending their own original intentions. Augustine said he only came upon new ideas by writing. For Mary Karr, a book is never about what she thinks it will be about. Patricia Hampl writes in order to find out what she knows. Blanchot says it makes us discover something we cannot lose. For an artist who works with words or colors or notes, time stops when the real starts becoming a poem, a painting, or a memoir. Although I recognize that sensation of becoming an outsider, standing out of experience for just long enough to envision, say, a whole novel, based on a certain conversation (a la Henry James), I think I am mostly too scared to simply sit down and take the time to let my thoughts develop through writing, thereby missing great opportunities to “learn to speak two languages”: one attuned to the possible, one to the impossible (and how they interact).

Feb. 2 Nostalgic, suspiciously beautiful, and blurry around the edges like an Impressionist painting, some of my earliest memories pertain to the transition I made from sitting under my father’s desk, my finger following along the lines in some oversized anthology, pretending to read to sitting under that same desk, following along the lines of a book of my own, and actually reading. Safely tucked within that confined space, I already had a clear sense of entering into a relationship with something much bigger than the world as I had experienced it until then.

Feb. 2 Similarly, in Rushdie’s Haroun and the Sea of Stories, although evil forces may try to dam it in, the generating capacities of the Source of all the stories itself are beyond anyone’s control. In “The Library of Babel,” Borges notes that while man “may be the work of chance,” the universe or the Library (a term both Rushdie and Borges like to capitalize), “can only be the handiwork of a god.” For both these authors this window on a bigger reality seems quite crucial to their message of awareness. Through intricate layers of metaphor, they are eager to point out the limits of what we can know. Ironically commenting on extremes, between “unbridled hopefulness” and disproportionate depression” or between a world without nights and a world without days, both navigate the middle ground, the twilight zones that are risky and inherently filled with multiplicity.

Feb. 2 Although I am sure I lacked awareness of my place within the Library, like these authors, as a four-year-old, I, too, found the stakes for participating in the newly discovered activity of reading to be quite high. With my kindergarten teacher refusing to teach me because I knew how to read, I was forced to skip a grade, a measure that by making me both the youngest and the shortest person in my class changed my way of being in the world for good. I do not consciously recall any motives of revenge involved, but in the years before I started my weekly Tuesday afternoon expeditions to the library at the other side of town—carrying an average of twenty books by myself, I considered these outings physical exercise as well—I repeatedly took reading books from school home with me, telling my mom the teacher was getting rid of them. Surprisingly, I cannot remember these burglaries having any consequences apart from forming the
Butterflies fluttered in her stomach, dancing like a mischievous breeze. But later did she make up her mind, that those were no butterflies. They were gentler feelings, more fleeting and slightly more ticklish. Resembling colorful soap bubbles; pop and rise. *Fascination.*

That was when she met him for the first time. "Tea?" he asked, He did not greet before hand, Yet he did not forget to include a sly smile. Oh he knew. He knew well she could not say no. She followed his steps. The clock struck its faithful hour, the sound echoed down the empty corridor. Only he and she. Tick-tock. Tickety-tock. 5 o'clock.

His voice was soft, Even more like alluring. It had a certain power to make the listener crave for more. She tilted her head towards him, expecting more of its magic. "Milk tea?"
he asked holding the little porcelain pot.
"Yes, please." she managed to say.

His hand grazed hers as he reached for her cup.
She flinched unwillingly.

Her emerald eyes
reflected on the recently poured tea;
they quivered.
He smiled knowingly.
"Is this alright? Or a little more?"
he offered.

Puzzlement crossed her innocent eyes.
"But my cup is as full as it can be..."
"Ah yes. But you see, mine is quite empty."
How queer," she thought to herself.
It would be rude to say it aloud.
Everything he said made sense.

He had cast a spell on her,
Yet she didn't wish to break from it ever.
He gave a sip. He scowled.
He patted the dust off his coat.
"I am quite fond of obsessions, you know?"
he enigmatically remarked.
"Is it so?"
She merely said.
He smiled upon her. Her mind went blank.
"Yes, everyone is mad here"

Wonder.

He suddenly stood up and asked,
"Do you wish to kill time?"

His back was on her.
"A thousand years of madness. Can you do that?"
There was a troubling sensation
attached to each word,
yet strangely, she felt her heart at ease.
A thousand years of madness with him?
Even eternity would not stir fear.
"Yes, please."
She whispered as if she was asking for more tea.
She caught a hint of golden in his eyes.
They swept off her feet from reality.
Shimmering...
"Yes, please."
She muttered once again, enchanted by him.
His confident smile surfaced again.
She felt a shiver.
She hoped she had said what she meant.
"Let's kill time."
He handed her another cup of tea.
She drank it as if it were poison,
when it was an elixir of life.
A thousand years of madness... or more.
The tea party would go on and on.
Yes, Tickety-tock.
Forever, 5 o'clock.

Ae Hee Lee
the foundation of my very own Library and setting a habit that, even now, makes me inclined to take as much as I can carry from every "Free Books" table I encounter.

Feb. 2 I do not want to justify my criminal record, but I do think my taking these books home in order to reread them numerous times taught me something important about the practice of reading. Every time I encounter a text with the intention of, in a hospitable and charitable way, getting the most out of it, I commit to not only passively consume the words but to simultaneously actively engage my own imagination. Whether you are reading a philosophical essay for a class or a novel for fun, reading something multiple times will bring new aspects of the text to your attention, while old and new reading memories will start to connect. As a child I never grew tired of rereading old favorites. Now, with the pressure of reading lists and the constantly expanding reservoir of Books to Read Before I Die, I hardly ever do. I wish I still had the patience to invest in reading things more than once, because as in many life situations, in reading, my first judgments often turn out to be wrong or incomplete at best.

Feb. 2 Even when knowing the larger context of a story is not necessary for "getting it," however, I find myself wanting to know more, especially when the text is obviously referring to other works, such as in the case of the religious and scientific references in "The Library of Babel." The Library we live in is a fascinating place, and our curiosity to explore it further is a good, but in this desire, too, I think Rushdie and Borges do us a favor in making us aware of our human limitations. The danger with more easily accessible, beautifully crafted texts such as Haroun and even Borges's story is to think that our reading is complete and correct, and to stop questioning our interpretation or even feel threatened by alternative readings. On the other hand, endlessly searching in vain for a "total" interpretation or letting cynicism keep you from taking a stance, however, is at least as dangerous. If I want to find the right balance, whether it concerns my place within the universe or my opinion on a specific issue, the activity of reading and the multiple stances narratives have allowed me to explore with every book and every reading of it, ever since I was sitting under that desk, is without a doubt my Source of Choice.
Thanks to all those who submitted their work, and thanks to our readers. Have a good summer!