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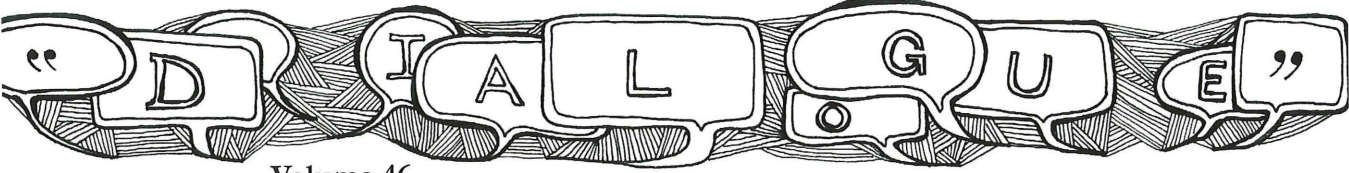
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Volume 46

Issue 2

Hello, My Name Is

Editor's Note:

When contemplating identity, which is the theme of this *Dialogue* issue, our temptation is to ask, "Who am I?" In fact, this is the first question that I asked myself when writing this note. This question, however, is more limiting than informative. We will ask it our whole lives, whether we want to or not, and the answer will always be fleeting. And, if we're honest, you—whoever you might be—are not reading this for *my* answer to that question. Who am I to ask, "Who am I?"

More likely, you've come here with your own set of questions.

About yourself? Perhaps....

But, maybe you've heard that your friends have been published in this issue, and your questions sound more like:

"Wait—what?"
"Are they artists?"
"What did they create?"
"Why?"

Maybe you're a "Dialogger," an avid reader this publication, and your questions are much different:

"How many artists do I know this time?"
"Will this issue be better than the last?"
"Do you think this piece is poetry, or prose?"
"Why are there all these pieces about birds?"

Or, maybe you have no idea what you've gotten yourself into:

"What is this magazine?"
"Calvin has something like this?"
"I can just...take one?"
"Free?"

Dialogue is Calvin College. It exists because you read it, and because people like you and I set aside time to imagine, produce, and—most importantly—question it.

Thank you for your support this year as we've undergone organizational restructuring, and as we have coped with the loss of our faculty advisor, Bill Vande Kopple.

May this issue be a reward to our artists for the burden of their hearts, the labor of their minds, and the humility of their submission to our publication. Now, we—with hopes of your approval—submit our work to you.

With hopes for active wonderment,

Michael Kelly
Editor-in-Chief

For more information about the identity of *Dialogue*, please visit our website:
clubs.calvin.edu/dialogue

Contents

Prose

- 06 Jack Van Allsburg, **Glory Breathes**
17 Neil Gilbert, **The Empty Cage**
26 Alex Westenbroek, **The Photo Albums**
38 Benjamin Rietema, **Bowling**
50 Julia LaPlaca, **When I Was A Child I Spoke Like a Child**
52 Kent Sanders, **A Fish in the Freezer**
52 Cassie Westrate, **A Note in a High School Year Book**
56 Corrin Baker, **June 23rd - Leaving Home**

Visual Art

- 04 Anna Hanchett, **Shoes**
10 Megan McCrary, **Untitled**
11 Tanice Mast, **Twig/Bill**
14 Kellan Day, **Advent**
16 Anna Hanchett, **Blood Orange Towels**
21 Maria Smilde, **The Pardoner's Tale 2**
Continued on: 45
22 Jade Acosta, **Beef Wellington #1**
23 Joel Bulthuis, **TomLigula II**
24 Kendra Kamp, **Ostensible**
29 Anna Hanchett, **Bread Tiles**
30 Dania Grevengoed, **Bone of My Bones**
Continued on: 32, 34
37 Anna Hanchett, **Drapery 2**
39 Katherine Nyczak, **Untitled**
40 James Li, **Phlebas**
42 Teunis Verwijs, **Pensive Model**
43 Teunis Verwijs, **Incubator for Gen Y**
44 Rachel Kok, **Distance**
46 Kelsea Rounds, **Series of Anatomical Drawings**
48 Maria Smilde, **Ferrous Bueller**
51 Anna Hanchett, **Soap Tiles**
52 Steven Zantingh, **Triatecht 2**
53 Anna Claire Lambers, **February Blues**
54 Rachel Kok, **Wendigo**
55 Katherine Nyczak, **Untitled**
57 Megan McCrary, **Hueco**
58 Rachel Kok, **Detail**

Poetry

- 05 Elena Buis, **They Made Us Dance With Boys: A Haiku**
10 Erin Koster, **Effigy**
15 Lauren De Haan, **Taking Flight, The Cardinal**
20 Karyn Ostrem, **Eternal Confusion of the Sleepless Mind**
21 Randy Foreman, **Conversation**
25 Kayla VanderPloeg, **Invective Against Swans**
31 Tanice Mast, **I Am Not Stupid**
33 Matt Coldagelli, **Thermodynamics**
33 Adam Meyer, **Paleolithica**
35 Alex Westenbroek, **For Ellie**
36 Andy Briggs, **At Its Finest**
36 David Noa, **Weeping Willow**
40 James Li, **A Short Haul from Toronto to Detroit**
42 Josiah Kinney, **Emeritorium**
43 Alex Westenbroek, **Steam Shower**
43 Ryan Hagerman, **House Concert**
44 Kayla VanderPloeg, **Nuclear Cupcakes**
45 Lauren De Haan, **La Luz de Feria**
48 Matt Coldagelli, **Exit, Enter**
48 Ryan Hagerman, **A Happy Accident**
53 Andy Briggs, **I'm in Love with an Ideal**
54 Connor Schmidt, **Confusion**
55 Erin Koster, **Sadao Watanabe's The Last Supper**
57 Erin Smith, **Bosnian Coffee Set**
59 Kayla VanderPloeg, **Senioritis (n.)**



They Made Us Dance with Boys: A Haiku

Elena Buis

Your palms are sweaty
Oh, gosh, this is so awkward
Please stop touching me

Anna Hanchett
Shoes
Porcelain

Dialogue 05



Glory Breathes
Jack Van Allsburg

You step in awkward rhythm to land each footfall on a crosstie, staring down at your dress shoes when you stop to take a slow breath. You fidget with the lens cap and check the time. The rail yard looms at the end of the curve ahead. You can already hear distant clangs and bangs.

Clouds smother the rising California sun this far north, but the muted half-light brings color out of the cool green arms and hands reaching over the tracks. Dull spray paint scrapes across cement bridges above. A dog barks lonely.

You pass “No Trespassing” signs and slip between the trains. Your steps crunch loud on the stones, the only sound not muffled by the rusty walls of the cars.

You stop.

You forgot your phone.

Whatever. You didn’t want to talk to them anyway. You stretch and roll your shoulders, shivering as you shove your hands into pockets. You start counting cars but you lose count. There are hundreds. You keep throwing glances to your sides, catching glimmers of wildflowers through the gaps.

The graffiti is a long ways down. If you remember right.

Your stomach tightens. Someone is walking behind you. You brace to explain yourself to a railroad worker, but when you turn, there’s a dog staring you down. Looks almost like a wolf. Either way, the raggedy thing is giving you this crooked, drooling glare.

It starts barking and crunching toward you kinda lopsided.

You back away, but the dog is picking up his pace. You can see his slimy tongue and brown teeth.

You start trying to come up with options, because “Cujo” is looking pretty pissed, and your chances of outrunning him are pretty slim. The railcar to your left is open.

You clamber in and grind the rusty door shut just as the dog jumps after you.

You hold your breath in the dark as the dog flips shit outside. You wait.

Five minutes. You think about your phone sitting in the glovebox. You dumbass. Mom has enough on her mind without this.

Ten minutes. The dog’s barks are getting hoarse now. You must be too far down the track for workers to notice, or they would have heard by now.

Fifteen minutes. You consider trying to fight the dog off.

Nope.

Definitely not worth rabies.

Something jolts. The dog goes nuts.

The train is starting to move.

You drop all the expletives in your repertoire as you slide the door back an inch to look out. The train picks up speed, but the dog keeps pace. You realize that if you jump while the train is slow, you’re going to have to deal with the dog. But if you wait until the train is going fast enough to outpace the dog, you’re going to break your neck.



You fiddle with the lens cap, popping it off. You take a picture of the stupid dog for the hell of it.

You let out a long breath and lean against the cold wall of the car before you sink to an uncomfortable sit. After a sleepless night, even adrenaline can't keep you from feeling like garbage.

You listen to the dog's barks slowly fade. The train is moving fast now, probably about forty miles an hour. You close your eyes.

You think about the time you and Isaac talked about jumping a train to Washington. Isaac always came up with ideas like that. You always shot him down. It took him months to convince you to come spray-painting with him. You imagine him there with you in the car. He would have laughed at you in your wrinkled suit. You would have hit him on the shoulder. He would have grinned at you, and you would have smiled small.

You smile small in the dark. The train hitches and jumps along.

You swallow and push on your jaw, sliding your hand to your neck. You stand up. It's too dark to read your watch, so you open the door a little farther. Seven a.m. You've been riding for almost an hour already.

You look out and see nothing but trees carpeting hills for miles and miles. The train is slowing down. You look out the door and see a sharp curve before a tunnel.

A patch of tall grass and mud is coming up. You wrap the camera strap around your fist. You stretch your legs.

Three.

This is a bad idea.

Two.

This is a terrible idea.

One.

Shit.


You jump.

Your pants tear as you slam into the ground and you smack your lungs empty. You suck a shallow gasp as you prop yourself back to your feet. You watch the train recede into the tunnel before wiping a splash of mud off the side of the lens and check it for damage. Shouldering the camera, you take the first few steps down the tracks in the opposite direction. You keep your eyes fixed on your feet as you start stepping the ties again. Your clothes are soaked in cold red clay. You don't mind. This way you have an excuse to never wear them again. You shiver.

You are nowhere near anywhere.

It's later. The sun is bright now. You loosen your tie and try to think of when you last ate as your stomach groans. You remember dinner the night before, after the funeral. You don't remember eating.





You and your parents had sat at the table long after the relatives left. Dad's glasses were dirty. Mom's hair had one clump standing straight up. You asked for the green beans. Dad swallowed. Mom didn't blink. Nobody moved. It's ok. You hadn't really wanted to eat anyway.

Dad stood up and walked into the living room. He fell into the couch and turned on the t.v. with the volume too high. Mom walked over and fell into him.

They sat on the couch watching infomercials. You sat at the table watching green beans. After a few minutes you stood up and walked to Isaac's room.

On his desk, a concert ticket. On his bedspread, a new jacket with the tags still in the trash. On his nightstand, an open book lying face-down.

You stood in the doorway for a moment. You wanted to say, Isaac, It's dinner time. But you stepped in and shut the door instead. You could still hear the t.v. trying to sell a blender.

You opened the desk drawer and found Isaac's camera sitting on his laptop. You laid the camera on the bed and opened the computer.

You started by reading essays he wrote. You looked through pages and pages just to read his voice, even if you couldn't hear it.

Then you looked through photos. He had documented every piece of art he ever made. From sketches, to wire sculptures, to street art. You started looking through his camera to find the graffiti from the night that he... from that night. You found the big rat he stenciled on the bridge and you found the Muhammad Ali he painted on the warehouse by the rail yard, but you couldn't find the one he did on the train car. You went around the horn again trying to make sure you didn't miss it the first time. But it wasn't there.

You shut the laptop. The clock read four a.m. You had been sitting there a lot longer than you thought. You grabbed the camera and sat for a moment. You tried to decide if what you were going to do was a stupid idea.

You decided it was worth being stupid. You tiptoed downstairs to the living room. The t.v. doubled its offer of knives for three easy payments. You picked up the remote to turn it off, but looked at Mom and Dad first.

They were asleep. Dad's dusty glasses had slipped down his nose. Mom had buried her head in his chest. You set the remote back down with the t.v. still too loud. You slipped your shoes on and walked to your car.

Back on the tracks, your feet are hurting. It's two p.m. You've been walking for seven hours already. It feels like longer. You reach down and slip off a shoe. Blood is starting to mix with the sweat soaking your socks. You gently peel one away. There are blisters bleeding from your heel, and your toes have cracked underneath where they meet your foot.

You close your eyes and let out a shaking breath. You stumble from the tracks over to a slab of granite. You try to cough.

The valley spills from the mountain behind you. Chalky stone pokes out from the green. Mustard lichens and dull mint shrubs mantle the skin of the rocks. Half the trees you see are fallen, white and dry. Bleached skeletons and olive towers. The sun falls heavy, and the air squeezes under



its weight.

You wipe the salt from your eyes and inhale through your nose till the breath reaches the bottom of your belly. You remove the lens cap on the camera and set the white balance. You rest your finger on the shutter release. You lower the camera a little, before turning to your left and bringing the viewfinder back up.

You hold still. Your finger sits on the button. You push down.

You squint at the image on the screen. The colors look different. You cap the lens. The wind sighs around you.

You walk all afternoon. You walk so long that your toes stop bleeding, and you don't even feel your heels. You walk so long that you stop worrying about anything except getting back. You walk so long that you barely breathe.

The light is almost gone now. You lick your cracked lips and shrug the camera. You look at your watch. Nine p.m. You've been awake for thirty-six hours. You've been walking for fourteen. Your feet fall heavy and your throat rattles.

But you are almost to the rail yard. Just a quarter-mile away. Tie after tie.

Between the train cars again, you start walking a bit faster.

Your heart pumps.

Please be here.

Please.

Then you see it.

You inhale slowly as you look up at the freshly dried paint:

There's a tiny man, drifting out through a turbulent sea in a teacup for a boat. Thick purple blankets about to sweep over him. His pale arms clutching a spoon, slumped against the side of his little craft. But his face. His eyes turned to heaven. His mouth open in perfect wonder. Stars beyond stars above him, burning in piercing orange and electric blue. He's crying.

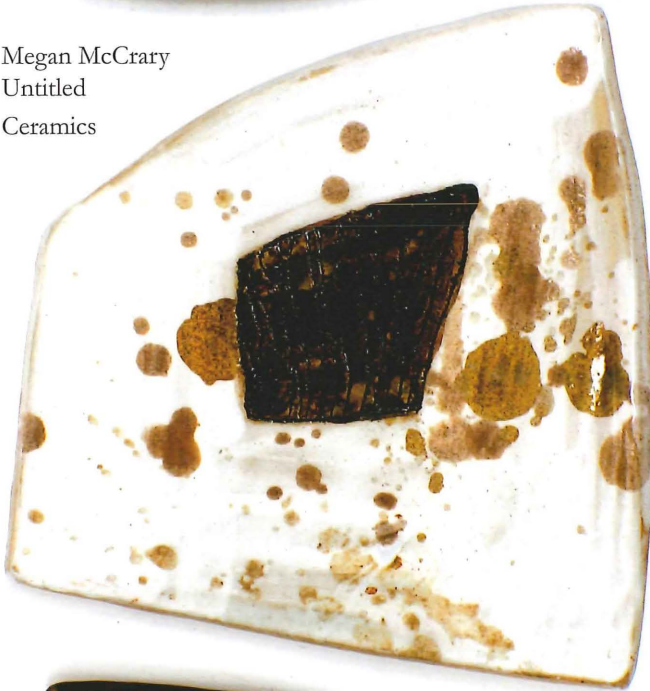
It's the best piece Isaac ever made. You know it, but it doesn't help. You touch the camera, but you don't lift it. The paint is going to rust, but you don't take the picture.

Your fingers trace every letter that Isaac carefully stenciled across the sky above the waves. You cry. You whisper the words over and over:

glory breathes in everything glory breathes



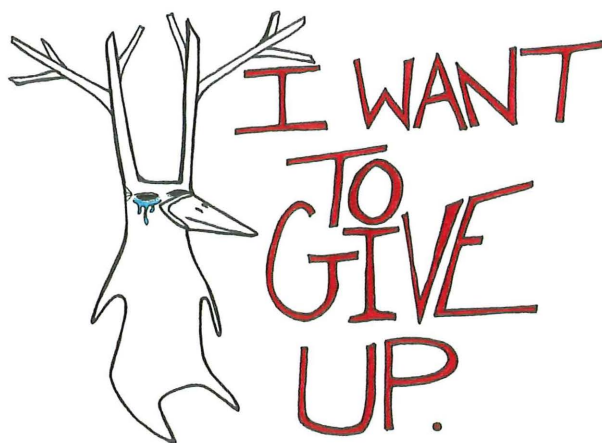
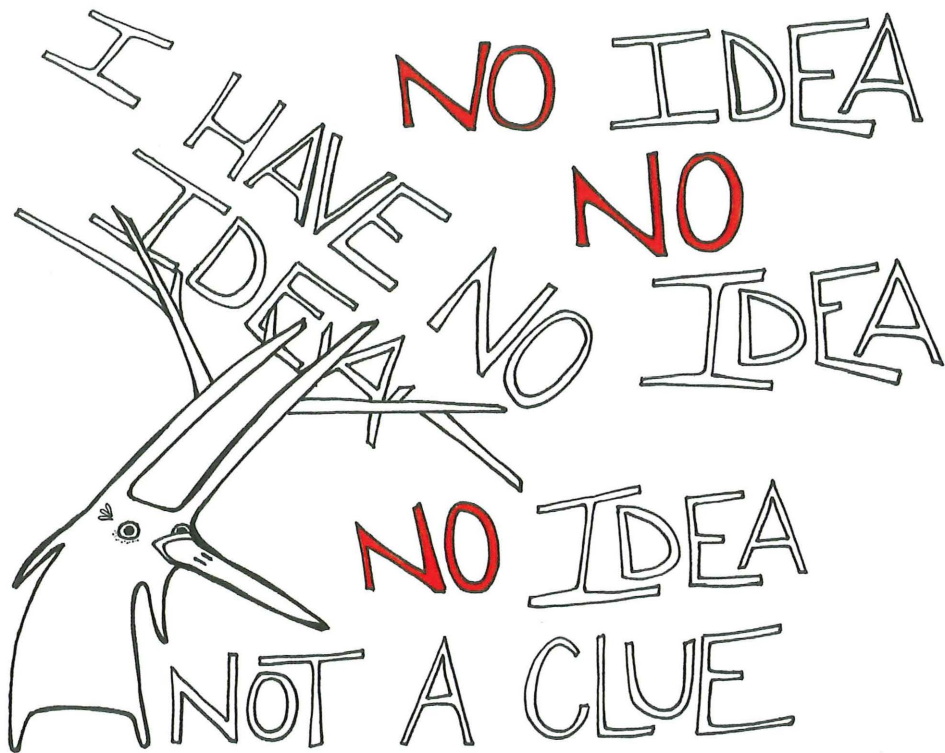
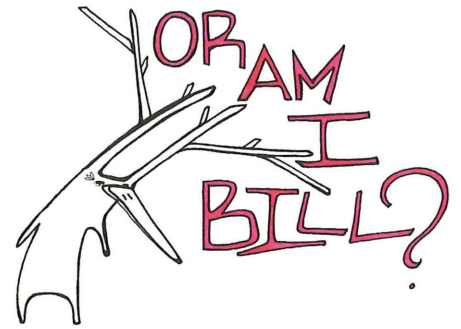
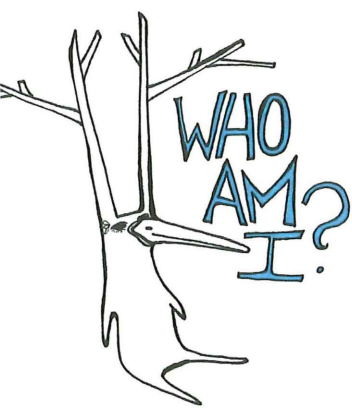
Megan McCrary
Untitled
Ceramics



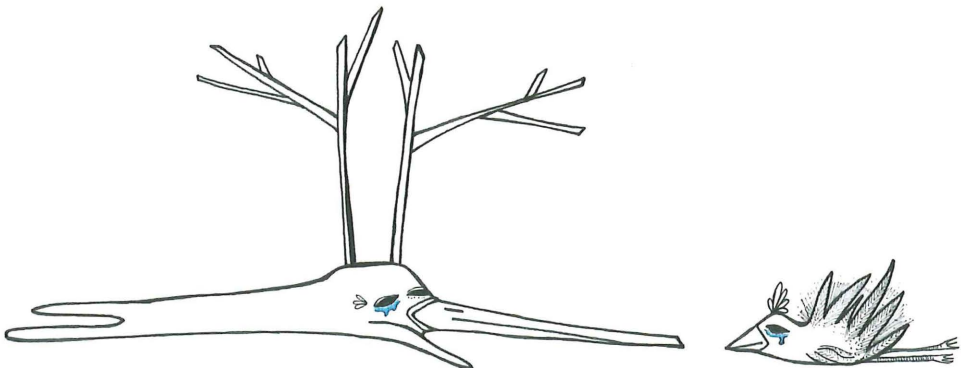
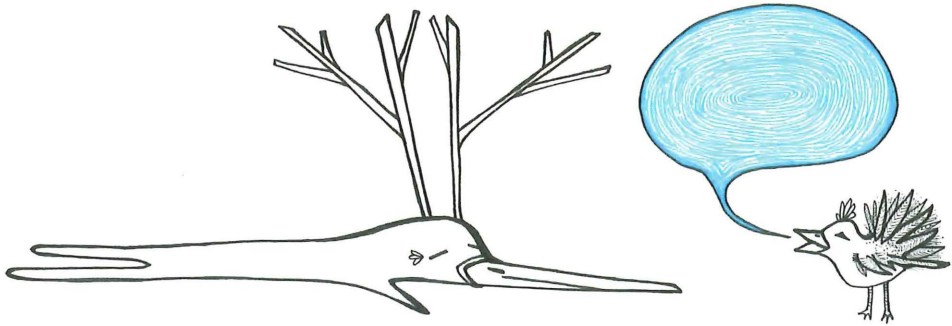
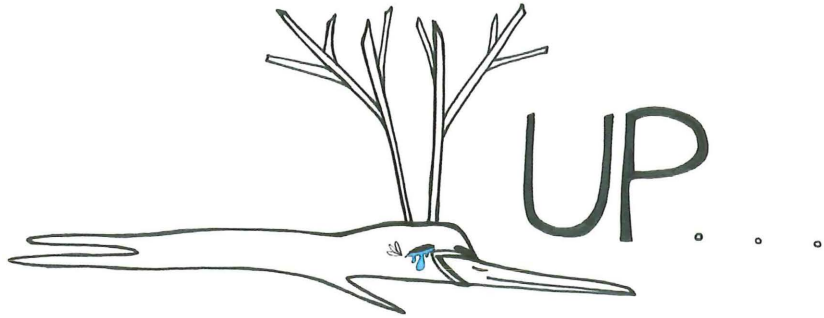
Effigy

Erin Koster

I have to wonder sometimes if you caught just a snatch of the Orphean song on your way past the hall. I admit that I've omitted most of my other wonderings until now, but then we don't often get the chance to talk. As long as I'm admitting things, I guess I'll confess that I miss the way you used to reluctantly let the neighbor's cat nuzzle against your ankles. I also miss your uncanny ability to neutralize any lingering uncertainty with your mere presence and the old jokes you always used to make, straight-faced, about the dihydrogen monoxide that's getting into our water. I don't think I realized how many of my habits had merged with yours until now, when you're gone, and I unexpectedly discover myself doing things that remind me of you, like turning up the collar of my coat or waiting for nothing at the window, just watching the street. While I'm standing there, I often wonder if you'll be as I remember when I finally cross the wide, foggy marsh that separates us.



I
GIVE



IT'S A
TOUGH
WORLD.



Tanice Mast
Twig/Bill
Ink on Paper

Dialogue



Kellan Day
Advent
Fabric, Wine, Ink, Thread, Gold Leaf



Taking Flight

Lauren DeHaan

When I awoke I found that you had left.
Not just you—the fridge was cleared out,
my favorite mug was gone,
and also the dog.

I walked around, decided to stare
at myself in the mirror—
which is, of course,
what one does in these situations.

I made one of those Easy Mac bowls
and sorted through the remainder
of your belongings.

I was going to throw them out the window,
down to the street to air out
your dirty laundry.

It didn't seem worth it.

I folded everything,

placed it in a cardboard box
labeled "Halloween decorations"
and put it outside the front door.

Then I got lonely,

so I went and bought a parakeet.

When I got home, I set the bird
and cage next to the parlor window.

I put a week's supply of food

in the little basket attached to the side.

I stared at the bird and vice versa

then opened the cage door, the window,
and went to bed.

The Cardinal

Lauren DeHaan

My rubber boots crunched through the fresh
powder, breaking the silence and startling the
cardinal as it pecked at the forgotten seeds of
summer. It fluttered past me like a silk scarf lost in
the wind, waiting to be snagged on an icy branch
or hidden in the snow laden treetops. The blur of
red settled on the fine perch of a pine, which in
turn dropped its burden and gained the weight
of another. How nice it must be to trade cold for
cardinal.



Anna Hanchett
Blood Orange Towels
Blood Oranges on Cotton





The Empty Cage

Neil Gilbert

It was an early Saturday morning in June—so early that the gray sea fog had yet to dissipate. José Garza piloted his rusty pickup through the silent streets. Laughter and Spanish peals shattered the quiet—a gaggle of day laborers awaiting work. José remembered those days. They were uncertain days. Morning after morning he had stood outside the donut shop, trying to look nonchalant with his hands in his pockets as he chatted with the others while waiting, praying, for a contractor to stop and hire him.

Things were steadier now. For the last two years, José had worked for his uncle's landscaping company. The pay was barely sufficient. With his wife pregnant again, José had decided to move to a more affordable apartment. Plus, the new complex was much closer to the mall where Raquel worked.

José had spoken with the landlord two weeks ago when he signed the lease. The landlord was nice—not like the old one, who threatened to call the police when the washer broke or when the baby cried too loudly. He gave José a brief tour of the complex. José noticed a “NO PETS” sign and paused.

“Pets are not allowed?” he asked.

“No. No pets.” The landlord was kind but firm.

“Not even birds? They are clean; they are quiet.”

“No, sorry, no pets. If I make one exception, people will want to bring dogs...”

“OK.” José knew better than pursue the matter. No pasa nada. Solos son pájaros, he told himself. He looked up to see the landlord watching him with pained eyes. Then the two men shook hands and parted ways.

No birds. José patted the cage that rested on the passenger seat. The brown finches bounced from perch to perch, calling. He had bought them three years ago when Raquel was pregnant with María. She had needed company in the apartment while he was working all day.

No birds. That child adored these birds. “¡Pájaritos!” she would shriek, poking her fingers through the wire and giggling as the birds panicked. Now, the birds must go. José had taken the birds before María had woken.

The park appeared, a green island in the endless grid of concrete. José parallel parked and, before exiting, scanned his surroundings. He wasn't sure if releasing caged birds was illegal, but then again, just about anything can be illegal for an immigrant.

He grabbed the cage and strode across the lawn. He had decided to release them in the large brushy area in the park's heart. The finches were small birds, shy birds, and he couldn't bear the thought of releasing them in the barren apartment complex. Reaching the shrubbery, he set the cage on the ground and unlatched the door. The birds hopped around the cage, unaware of their freedom. He shook the cage gently—then one bird saw the opening and dashed out, followed by the other three. With pinging calls they flew into the dense shrubbery.

Adios, pequeños, he thought.

José smiled and picked up the cage—and froze. Voices! Voices speaking English! José dropped the cage and peered around the shrubbery. Gringos—two rich white men, attired in fancy rain jackets and looking into the treetops with binoculars.


This would not do. José couldn't walk right in front of these two men with an empty cage in hand. He shoved the cage underneath a bush and sauntered towards his truck, hands pocketed.

The gringos didn't notice. They kept staring at the treetops. One of them cried, “There it is. See? Told you it was a Black-and-white...”

Relieved, José clambered into his truck and went to work.

* * * * *

Someone had arranged the fifty-odd chairs in neat rows, but the intended inhabitants of the chairs ignored the organization and the folks gabbed in knots throughout the room instead. The snack table was en-



dangered. Two of the three jugs of apple juice were empty; the cookies faced extinction.

Most of the people were, well, elderly. White hair dominated, though unnaturally blonde heads were also common. As with any geriatric gathering, talk revolved around grandchildren, health, and vacations. However, these hackneyed topics always—always—involved birds.

“Hi Barbara, how’s the knee?”

“Oh, thanks, Nancy, it’s okay. But in July, I couldn’t finish the hike to Rustler Peak and missed the Short-tailed Hawk.”

“That’s a shame.”

“Ah, it’s okay, I saw Painted Redstarts, and Vermilion Flycatchers....”

“I need to make my husband a birder. Then maybe we’d go to Arizona for vacation.”

A third septuagenarian shuffled over. “My granddaughter is coming to Marsh Camp next summer!”

“That’s GREEAAT,” chorused Nancy and Barbara.

Barbara started to say something about her grandson, but Jack, the president of Sea and Sage Audubon, silenced the babble from the podium. “Welcome, everyone, please take your seats....”

After the program, the knots again formed. Nancy and Barbara were still talking about Arizona. Dorothy intruded, feeling uncertain of herself. After all, she wasn’t a real birder. She watched birds at her feeder and seldom attended the field trips. And she’d never been to Arizona.

“Ladies, do you recognize this bird? I can’t find it in my field guide.” She pulled out a photo of a bird on her feeder, a small, chestnut-brown bird with scaly underparts.

Nancy adjusted her reading glasses. “Hmmm...I don’t recognize it either. Looks like some sort of escaped cagebird.”

“Andy! Where’s Andy?” called Barbara.

Andy was the chapter’s hotshot. A recent graduate of Cornell, he had returned to his native county to pursue a Master’s at a local university. He excused himself from the adjacent conversation and ambled over.

“What’s this bird?” Barbara asked.

Andy studied the photo. “Nutmeg Mannikin,” he announced. “They’re native to India and Sri Lanka, but they’re common as cage birds.” Nancy glowed with triumph.

“That’s a nice shot,” Andy added.

“Thanks!” beamed Dorothy. “My grandson, Marcel, took it. He’s twelve and loves cameras.”

“You need a haircut,” admonished Barbara, reaching up to ruffle Andy’s flaming red hair. Andy grinned. At Audubon meetings, he had thirty grandmas.

* * * * *

The meeting was reenacted the next month. The same juice and Oreos disappeared from the table at the back; the same ladies talked about birds and grandsons. And again, Jack called the meeting to order. “Welcome, thanks for coming tonight. Please be seated. Before we get started, I believe Andy has an announcement....”

Andy walked onstage, shook Jack’s hand, and leaned down to the podium’s microphone. “Hi, everybody!” he said,

“HI, ANDY!” They loved him. He was the best birder since Sibley and a nice guy to boot.

“I’m here this evening to tell you about a new birding tool the Cornell Lab is releasing.”

An old man leaned to his neighbor, and whispered, “Are these whippersnappers reinventing the binocular?” The neighbor chuckled.

“...it’s called eBird. You—any birder!—can go online and submit your sightings from the places you bird, and your data will go into a database that anyone can access....”

The word online intimidated the populace, but, out of love for Andy, they listened on.

“...so, it’s a great new tool that will change birding. Talk to me if you’re curious.”



After the meeting, the usual crowd of admirers mobbed Andy, curious but skeptical. “Tell me more about that—I-bird...my-bird...” Barbara trailed off, embarrassed.

“eBird?” Andy corrected, smiling. Everyone laughed.

“Yeah—do you have to pay for it?”

“No, it’s free!”

“What if I don’t have a computer?” asked Nancy.

“Aren’t Christmas Bird Counts enough?” demanded Steve, the compiler of the two local circles.

Eventually, interest in eBird fizzled out. Dorothy approached Andy. “Here, look at this,” she said, removing an envelope from her purse, “more mannikins!”

Andy flipped through the photos. Seeing a photo of three mannikins, he paused and asked, “How many birds are there?”

“At least eight. More and more show up.”

“You could track the numbers on eBird—maybe they’ll establish a local population!”

“Maybe I will, maybe I will....”

Sensing Dorothy’s apathy, Andy changed the subject. “Did your grandson take those photos, too?”

“Yeah! He’s so good.”

“You should buy him a pair of binoculars!”

“I’m going to, for Christmas.”

The two birders—fifty years apart in age—exchanged knowing looks and bid each other good night.

* * * * *

Two dozen Audubon members gathered, this time in a pizza parlor. For a change, Andy was not the only person present under sixty. Marcel, now fourteen, had tagged along for his first Christmas Bird Count. The birders separated into their parties and completed their tally sheets over pizza and beer.

Steve stood. “OKAY, LET’S START THE TALLY.” He had to shout over the blaring football game. The birders clutched their grease-smearred checklists in anticipation.

“CANADA GOOSE?”

“YES—yepYESYEAH, yup,”

“HEY, NOW, ONE AT A TIME,” Steve instructed. “SNOW GOOSE?”

They cascaded through the checklist. Finally, after “HOUSE SPARROW?” and the corresponding cacophony of affirmation, Steve paused and asked, “ALRIGHTY. ANY SPECIES NOT ON THE CHECKLIST?”

A dozen hands shot up.

Steve nodded to Andy. Andy was their MVP; without fail he found noteworthy species. Andy, in turn, prodded Marcel, who piped, “Orchard Oriole, Pine Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow...aaaaand Nutmeg Mannikin!”

Indignant grunts accompanied the half-dozen hands that fell. “Hey—we had those too!”

“Yeah, me too!”

“We had ten in Huntington Central Park!”

Andy smiled. Leaning to Marcel, he said, “Yup, I’d say they’re established.”

“Yeah, wait till I tell Grandma, she’ll flip,” Marcel said. “Don’t forget to share the eBird checklists with me.”

* * * * *

José Garza waited for María in his truck outside Segerstrom High School. She was doing so well: an honors student, taking AP Chemistry, captain of the soccer team. And she spoke perfect English.

“Hi, Dad!” María’s exuberant arrival interrupted his thoughts.

“Hi. How was school?”





“Good—great. We went on a field trip! Birdwatching!” her enthusiasm, normally overflowing, was in the flood-stage.

“Where?”

“At this marsh in Irvine.” She stopped, thought. “The leader,” she confided, “was super cute. He had red hair.”


José rolled his eyes. “So, when’s the wedding?”

“C’mon, Dad, quit it. But we should go to this marsh sometime. We saw all kinds of birds.”

“Did you see Big Bird?”

“DAD! No, but we saw these black and white birds with long red legs—stilts. And herons and egrets and ducks. And these brown sparrows that the leader said used to be cagebirds, but then they escaped and are wild now.”

José slapped his thigh and laughed. “Okay. We’ll go birdwatching sometime.” Three blocks later, at a red light, he remembered the pájaritos fleeing their cage. He laughed again. “Let’s go on Saturday, mija.” María beamed, José chuckled, and the old, old pickup rattled through the streets of Santa Ana.



Eternal Confusion of the Sleepless Mind

Karyn Ostrem

When the sun stretches its blinding arms in through my bedroom window,
I arise from my bed where I spent the night
sitting, propped up by pillows, doing homework.
My sleepless eyes yawn, catching sight of my poor
orphaned omelet, left alone hours before to grow cold.
It sits weeping on the table,
cursing me for deserting it last night
in favor of a bowl of bland granola.
Its sloppish body, pale and yellow in the advancing sunlight,
gently nuzzles the spoon which lay asleep at its side,
hoping to encourage me to finish the task I so cruelly abandoned.
I nit back to my bed and hide under the covers,
plugging my ears from its whimpers.
And I wonder;
is it simply a lack of sleep that puppets my cold eggs?
Have my thoughts begun dipping into the murky bog of madness?
Or perhaps it is merely that sometime last night,
my omelet acquired sentience.

Conversation

Randy Foreman

The flowing of the marks and memories of one's soul
To another
A time where the deep scars are retraced
The shallow valleys widened
The fresh cuts receiving Neosporin and leaving no trace

Mouths twitch, eyes lock and wander
Ears perk and plunge, nostrils flair

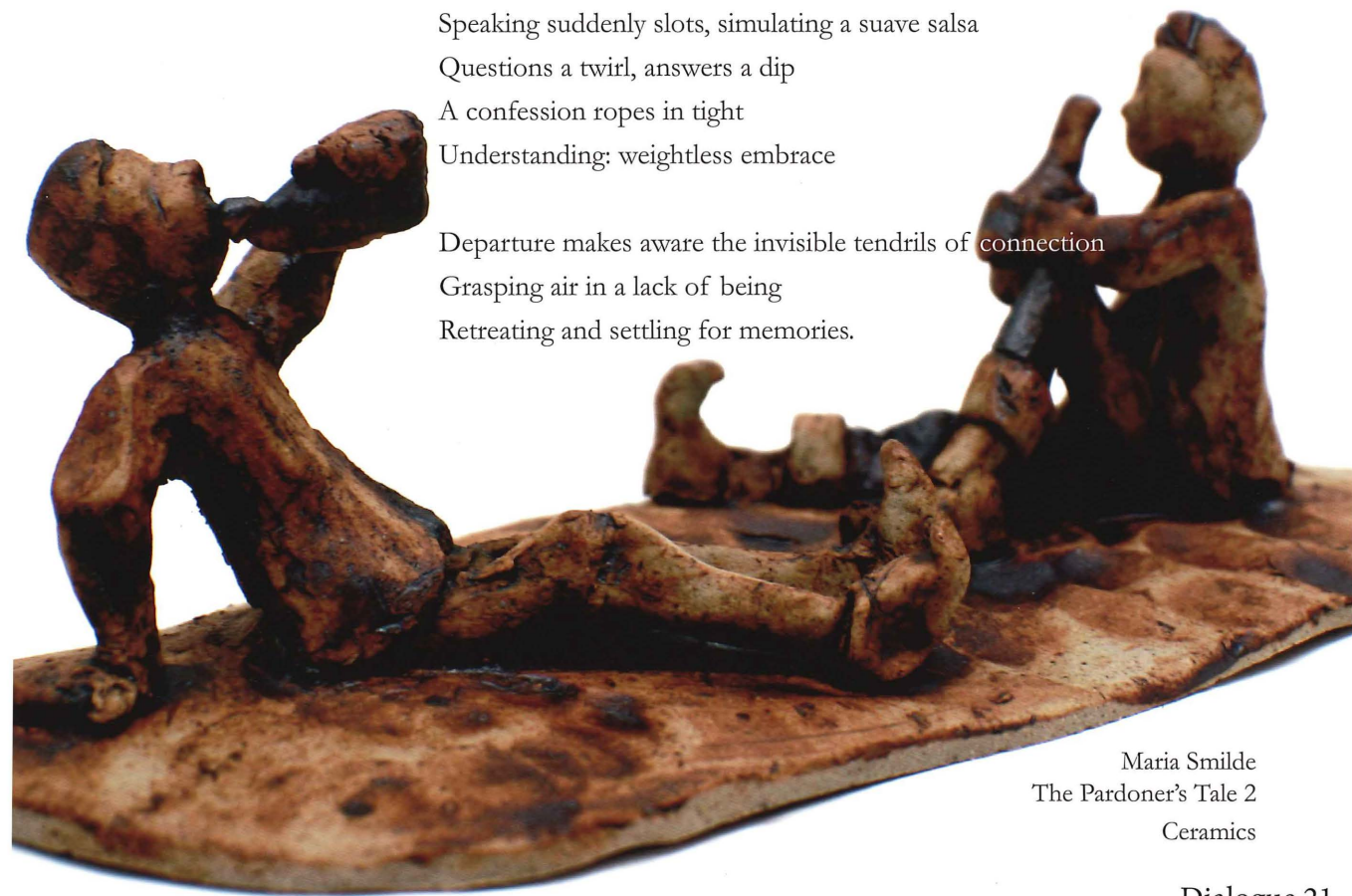
Arms sharing their version of the story
Necks dancing like a tilt-a-whirl
Lips forming a comfortable crescent
Feet, the doll connected to the nervy puppeteer

Time settles them all

The words shoot at cannon speed
Or tarry sluggishly, trying to find themselves

Speaking suddenly slots, simulating a suave salsa
Questions a twirl, answers a dip
A confession ropes in tight
Understanding: weightless embrace

Departure makes aware the invisible tendrils of connection
Grasping air in a lack of being
Retreating and settling for memories.



Maria Smilde
The Pardoner's Tale 2
Ceramics



Jade Acosta
Beef Wellington #1
Acrylic on Canvas



Joel Bulhuis
TomLigula II
Collage



Kendra Kamp
Ostensible
Water Color Pencils

Invective Against Swans

Kayla VanderPloeg

Once, while searching the bog for carnivorous plants,
I paused to watch the swans' nest near the dock;
observed the ugly adolescents follow their mother into the water.
One of them limped behind on a mangled leg
and swam in circles as it was left mired in stinking mud.
Swans are ugly and mean and they honk and I hate them.

I went for a walk with a man whose word was my law.
He did nothing but express his admiration for the rusty-necked creatures.
“Don't you see how pretty they are?”
Being of no great opinion about the hissing, invasive fowl,
I managed to remain almost impossibly silent.
He discussed our utter ignorance of the brilliant,
and how all mute swans are the property of the Queen of England.

I contemplated how I am more like a goose:
my neck gets sore so quickly, posturing it in a perfect S-curve
and raising my wings, only slightly, over my back.
And while most swans prefer to remain muted,
I think it most degrading to be quartered.

Remember the house you grew up in. Remember the front yard. Turn left and walk to the corner. Turn left again. Walk until you see the street that starts with an M. Turn right this time. The street is lined with trees—beautiful sycamores starting to lose their leaves. The houses on the street are small and lovely, but don't look at them—mustn't get lost or sidetracked. Walk down the street that starts with M until you see the flagpole with no flag on it. The flagpole towers pointlessly over a clean yard, and in that yard there is a house—orangish brick with burgundy shutters. Go through the door into the house. Now you are here. The story begins.

A woman lives in this house, and despite her oldness, her deafness, her loudness, and her fondness of exotic pets—all of which could earn her a very creative nickname—her neighbors know her as simply The Widow. The Widow used to be a peculiar woman (before becoming a widow, that is), and the recent years have only seen her slip further away. She now keeps snow leopards as pets—six of them (you'll find the cages in the basement). How exactly she acquired these elusive cats is unclear. They showed up at the front door—one by one—shipped in large stenciled crates.

But don't worry so much about the cats. They're not your concern—she is.

Look around. You'll see that she decorates the rooms and hallways with old pants. Hanging in the front entryway is a pair of old grey slacks with the suspenders still attached. Spread over the living room coffee table are two pairs of Lee's dungarees. And, if you pass through the ceiling here to her bedroom, you'll find a dozen pairs of khakis hanging, encircling everything. Every Sunday she washes all of the pants, returning each pair to its proper place before her evening coffee. And after her evening coffee, she hauls out her numerous dusty photo albums and pours herself into them before she falls asleep in a tiny ball in front of the blank, plastic-covered pages at the end of the last book.

She wakes up here, on the living room floor, in front of her photo albums, almost every day. Throughout each day, The Widow eats nothing but pistachios, soy cheese, and cornbread (which she bakes herself). Notice the slow, meticulous attention she dedicates to the removal of the pistachio shells—how she keeps the two halves in separate bowls, and then empties the separate bowls into separate trash cans. Notice how she alternates between eating two pistachios and one slice of cheese, carefully cut, and then finishes each meal with two pieces of cornbread.

Notice, lastly, The Widow's clothing. She wears a full-body snowsuit with the hood up at all times, even when she sleeps, making it difficult to see her curly, grey hair. The suit is bright pink and looks to be decades old. She also wears purple winter gloves, and she removes them only to wash her hands, which she does thirty times a day. When inside, she wears grey wool socks with the legs of her snowsuit tucked into them. When outside, she dons heavy, yellow leather boots.

You spend the first several days secluded in the attic: bumping around against the old furniture, occasionally knocking over old boxes and choking on dust mites. In other words, you've been shy. Go on—go downstairs, show your face (she won't be frightened). You descend through the trapdoor to the upper hall and float down the stairwell to the entryway. You find her down there, but she's shrieking. There's a broken window near the old bookshelf that stands in the corner. There's glass everywhere.

“GONE—GONE—THEY’VE LEFT ME—NO—I KNOW IT—I’M SHATTERED—THE ALBUMS—THE PICTURES—THE GLASS—THE ALBUMS—THE ALBUMS.” Her voice is loud and grating, like a record that's always being scratched. You can hear the snow leopards yowling in the basement. Now she's shuffling—swarming almost—about the living room in her pink snowsuit, and the panic in her voice is accentuated by the playful swish of nylon on nylon. Her arms are stiff and held out away from her body, as if she's wading through chest-deep water. *“NO NO—THE GLASS—JESUS THE GLASS—WHO TOOK THEM—WHERE DID THEY GO—WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?”* She's looking at you now, staring through your blank expression. She's slightly hunched over and her knees are shaking. You look into



her wild golden eyes. You pause, and then finally speak.

“You are The Widow,” you say, stupidly.

“ARE YOU A GHOST? GOOD GOD—ARE YOU THE GHOST THAT’S BEEN BUMPING IN MY ATTIC?” You say nothing. You only turn toward the broken glass and the empty bookshelves.

“What...?”

“A THEIF BROKE IN AND STOLE MY ALBUMS—THEY BROKE THE WINDOW AND GRABBED AND RAN—SO WHO THE HELL ARE YOU ANYWAY?”

“I am a friend,” you say. You feel like this isn’t the whole truth, but you can’t remember why.

“YES YES—COME HELP ME FIND THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS—MY ALBUMS—MY ALBUMS ARE SLIPPING AWAY—WHAT IS YOUR NAME?”

You open your mouth, then close it again.

“I do not remember. I do not remember anything about my old life.”

“I FORGET THINGS TOO—I SAY TONGUE TWISTERS TO HELP ME REMEMBER THINGS—JUST LIKE THE PICTURES IN THE ALBUMS—I’VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN THE NAMES OF MY CATS—ALREADY I’M FORGETTING HIM TOO.”

You don’t ask who “HIM” is. You don’t even think twice about it. Instead, you follow her, floating wordlessly a few feet behind her as she shuffles forward. Now you’re on the street with her, in mock pursuit of some memory stealer. You know that the thief must be long gone by now, and at The Widow’s crooked, shuffling pace, it’s doubtful that you’ll catch anyone or anything. But that’s no matter—soon enough, these memories will slip away, and she’ll forget that she’s ever lost anything.

At the end of the street, by the school, you find three dumpsters. The Widow insists that you start sifting through while she waits, pacing. *“YOU NEVER KNOW—THE ROBBER MIGHT’VE DITCHED SOME OF HIS LOOT—OR MAYBE HE WAS JUST LOOKING TO CAUSE TROUBLE AND DIDN’T KEEP ANY OF IT.”* You comply. In the first dumpster there’s is nothing but wood and nails and old drywall. Now The Widow is shrieking out nonsense: *“ONE BLACK BUG BLED BLACK BLOOD WHILE THE OTHER BLACK BUG BLED BLUE.”*

You’re in the second dumpster now, with big, black trash bags while fat, black flies swarm. If you could smell, the stench would likely be overwhelming.

“SUZY CHOOSES JEWISH SUSHI—YOU—HEY—GHOST MAN.”

You pass through the wall of the second dumpster and float there, facing her, waiting.

“SHOULD I BE SCARED OF YOU—YOU BEING A GHOST AND ALL THAT?”

“Are you?”

“WELL SHOULD I BE?”

“I am a friend.”



“ARE YOU HAUNTING ME?”

“I am a friend.”

“YOU KNOW—YOU LOOK FAMILIAR.”

Now she’s looking at you a different way. Her mouth is closed and her head is tilted, and you see again the frizzy curls of her grey hair. You’ve seen her look this way at the pictures in her albums, her eyes soft with memory, as you watched shyly from behind a wall.

But in an instant, the look is gone.

“HELL—I DON’T KNOW—EVERYTHING LOOKS FAMILIAR THESE DAYS.”

You turn and go into the third dumpster. You find more wood and broken drywall, along with some foamy yellow insulation.

“SIX SICK HICKS NICK SIX SLICK BRICKS WITH SIX PICKS AND SIX STICKS.”

You turn to go, and then you see them—in the corner—a pile of four or five photo albums with old, worn binding. You bring them out to her.

“THANK GOD”

She takes one and begins to page through it. You count four albums, and you know that more than four were taken, but she doesn’t seem to notice. She’s flipping more quickly now, and her face is distressed.

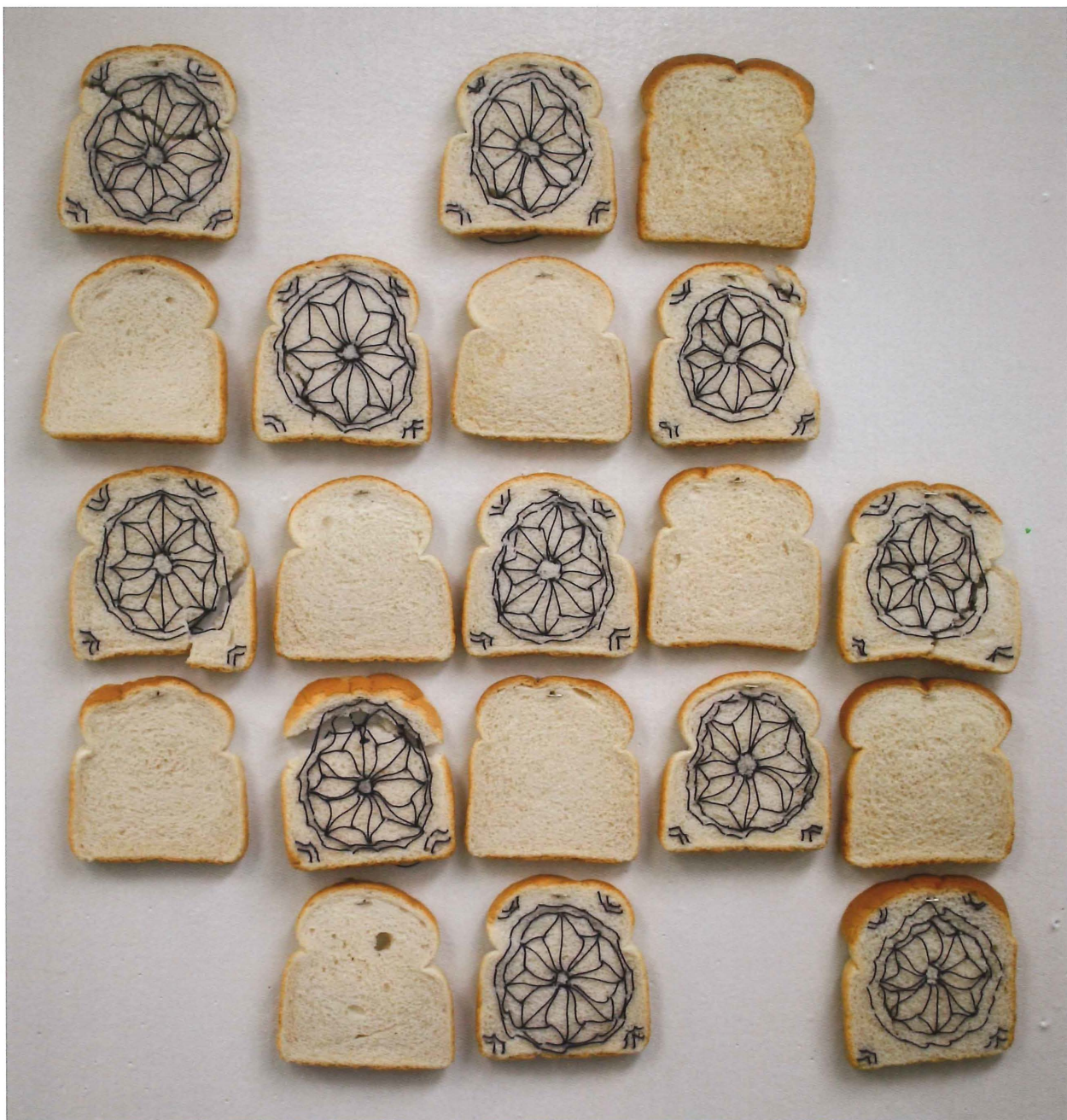
“Are they yours?”

“I THINK—I DON’T—I CAN’T REMEMBER—THEY LOOK FAMILIAR—IT’S ALL FUZZY ALREADY—SUZY CHOOSES JEWISH SUSHI—SUZY CHOOSES JEWISH SUSHI.”

She’s flipping violently now. A couple of pictures fly out of the plastic and flutter and spin into the street, and you draw yourself away from her as you gently sink into the sidewalk. Suddenly she stops on a page near the end. She rests her hand on a picture of a man—an old, black-and-white picture of a young man in a white shirt.

“YES—I THINK—YES—THIS MUST BE MINE—THIS ONE I REMEMBER.”

But even as she gazes gently over the pictures, you see that she is holding her breath and furrowing her brow into a blank frown.



Anna Hanchett
Bread Tiles
Bread and Thread





Dania Grevingoed
Bone of My Bones
Acrylic on Canvas

I Am Not Stupid Tanice Mast

I am not stupid. I see the world differently than you. I clearly cannot see the same letters on the same page the same way you do. We are not on the same page. Reading for me is a labor of love that gives me meaningful sketches for the child of knowledge I've just acquired. My vocabulary is vast but I can spell very little of it. You may mock me for my phonic spelling, but you don't see the word below in flourishing. Typing is the worst. My vocabulary for one thing cannot effectively communicate in one hundred and sixty characters. Characters are the best way to talk about letters. I see them as little personalities. My favorite letter is K. Naturally drawn to it for reasons almost entirely unknown. Spell check also does not exist on my phone that I can not find anyway. I don't really want to find it though because I would rather talk to your face. You make me nervous so I add an f at the end of though to be safe, but there is no safe in spelling. Spelling doesn't work that way. Spelling is magic, it's a spell cast by those differently than me. You are either right or wrong or right. I am not stupid, I thank God for the dyslexia I wield and the spell check on my computer. I read in a way you can only dream of cross-eyed. I see things you only imagine if you could see the planes on a paper shift and overlap like I do. I see words you don't. I see words as words in words on words on words. When you slip up you self-digest yourself for a hot second before approving it like it's hot and forgetting that I live here every day. I get lost in pages and in sentences whose names I can't recall, perhaps the sentence name started with something associated with the words? Every day. My handwriting is not scared when I don't pay complete attention because I have five different ways to hold my pencils. Pencil, I never write in pencil because I would keep erasing. Mistake made, keep moving forward. I draw bold letter words in my art because I dissociate. I forget to recognize that all you see is writing. These aren't words because I can't recognize them anymore. They are images, imagine images that please different it's not nouns and otherwise. I don't know how to spell my middle name until I was in high school and still spell out the rhythm I taught myself to remember how. This is the life. This is my life and I am thankful. I rock at scabrous and baanagrams when I drink beer because I no longer care about shoving off how I see. Puns are amazing and much more common. I take delight in all the jokes you're missing, but sometimes I still stare. It's just in our brains how we literally see things in literature differently. I can read things you can't. Like your face. No I'm dead serious if you only realized all the grammar and adjectives that cover the bridge of your nose. The lines on your forehead house the letters of your emotional vocabulary. Granted it's still a little jumbled and hard to read just like literature. Perhaps it sounds like I'm angry and perhaps I am. I'm angry we're on different pages because all I want is to be understood. I am angry that I am less qualified for my gifts. I wrap up my worth in school, but what kind of failure does that set me up for? These failures are not kind. The kind of failure I speak of is written out on paper that I can't read straight through anyway. More often than not I begin at the bottom of the page. My saving grace would be straight from the Lord. How many saving graces do I need? The Lord God was alone with the word and the word was with God and the word was God. I am afraid of not being able to read God. What if I can not read God? And I still covet your grace while we're texting. By grace and grace alone we may communicate. Let us be gracious with one another and stop reading our GPAs aloud because I can't really read aloud with much ease, so I'll just tell you plain; I am not stupid.



Dania Grevengeod
Bone of My Bones
Acrylic on Canvas

Thermodynamics

Matt Coldagelli

I used to think myself a thinker
My Platonic methods made scholars shudder
And dictators collapse at children's feet.
By mere cognition my foes would combust.

I loosen the noose and unplug the lamp
My pen has a grip, but just enough to be
Useless. Like those little slits on packages
Of fruit snacks and wrists.

Shrieking sirens beckon me to the balcony
Of HMS 1241 Rider Street.
Bacterial neighbors let loose their dragons
And lightning scuffles back into its hole.

My dishes are full of tambourines
And the drummer is made of lions.
Not every acorn becomes an oak,
Most are jawbreakers for the lawnmower
Chugging on and on and off

Paleolithica

Adam Meyer

So the plaining mountains and the mountaining plains
saw rivered deserts fill with flowering flora,
which wafted in the fauna, one by one,
to a metamorphic dance of legacy
with steps of consumption and psychorragus –
a millennium of footfalls and confrontings.
And as the copper dumbfoundingly turquoised,
as the ferric stone redded, exposed,
as the foresting lands rose and talled –
before the tamings or the wheeling
or Babel ever thought to be,
and a just single companion lapped the scraps –
we learned how small was Eden,
and hunted and speared and globed.



Dania Grevengood
Bone of My Bones
Acrylic on Canvas

For Ellie

Alex Westenbroek

A young girl hands me a story she wrote, and from my hands
to her red face I see the shy pride of a new creator.

I remember when my eyes cradled that look.

I was a young boy then, and my heart was still red.

I'm still young, but now my heart is black and swollen,
groaning as it sifts thick ink, iron-rich,
through fat ventricles and twisted capillaries.

It even swells through my pores, and I bleed this strange
life, patching blank pages over my limbs and chest to stop it.

Anyway, here I am, covered in these bandages,
and I see that same look in her eyes. I should warn her,
but—as often happens when I have something to say—
my dumb tongue won't budge. So I peel off
a bandage for her, black and bled-through, and I smile.

At Its Finest
Andy Briggs

On the days where I forget to close my mouth
birds and other insects nest
and the product crunches as uncouthness
replaces my shoe
with my fist.

On the days when I cling to routine
dirty ribbons tie my feet together
while I gather fallen feathers
if they aren't already stained by
sidewalk autumn.

On these days

I tend to stay inside.

Lightpole romances are much better
than my living room window.

On these days

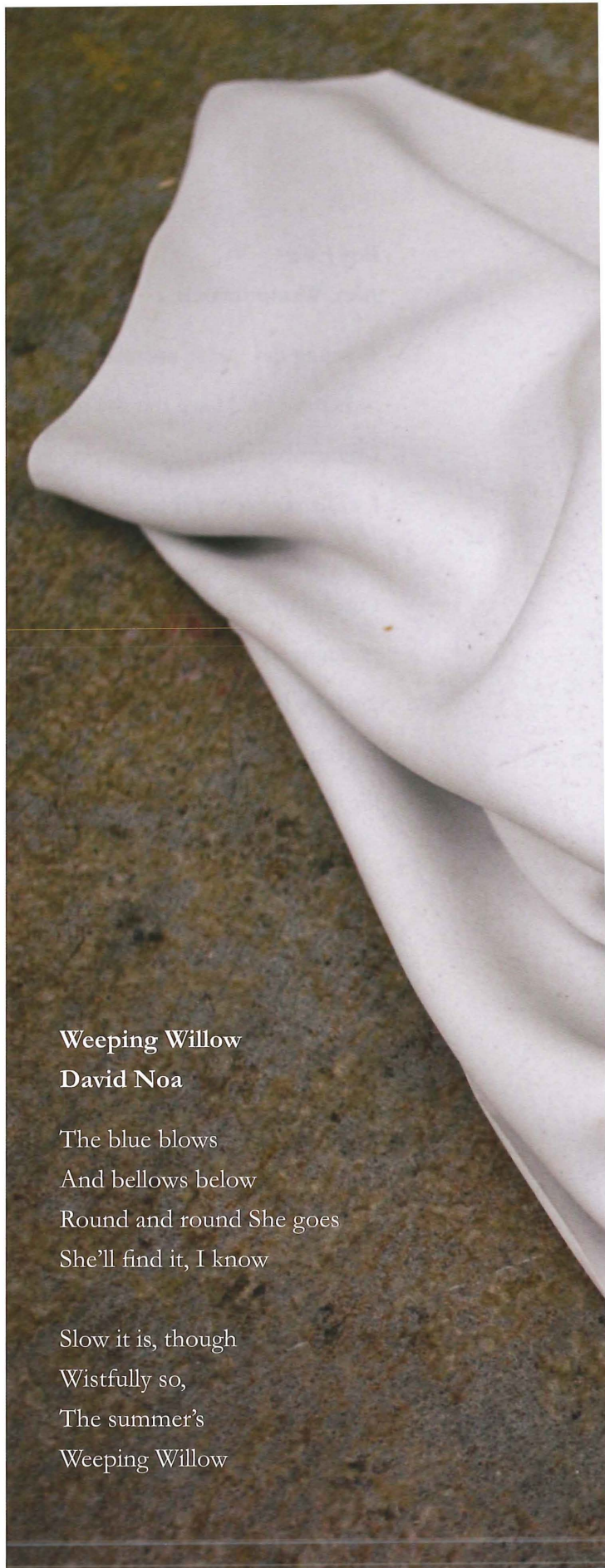
I fill my cups with daring.

Weeping Willow

David Noa

The blue blows
And bellows below
Round and round She goes
She'll find it, I know

Slow it is, though
Wistfully so,
The summer's
Weeping Willow





Anna Hanchett
Drapery 2
Porcelain

Dialogue 37



Bowling Benjamin Rietema

Throughout this semester, I am taking a bowling class, which has offered yet another opportunity to study the human species. After several sessions of observation, I have found that bowling separates us into two distinct subtypes: those who suck and those who excel beyond any rational explanation. It's either I'm going to awe you with my brilliance or with how many objects I can obliterate, like a drunk Godzilla.

Indeed, in the hands of those who struggle, the ball is transformed into a deadly weapon. Usually a ten-pound weight wouldn't be that dangerous, but I am amazed at the broken bones, smashed tables, and craters in the floor that these people manage to create with such a seemingly inane weight.

I've been on both sides of the spectrum. See that's it—it changes without any prior warning. You roll a strike and think *yeah, I've got this figured out. It's when I twist my wrist at a forty-five degree angle while visualizing a sweaty elephant.* And then you fall faster than Icharus on his wax wings, rolling worse than ever.

And you're teammates, who you thought were your friends, abandon you like Sméagol abandoned Frodo, and you're left to face your spidery fear and failure all by your lonesome. Let me break the throes of failure down for you.

First, a couple of bad rolls: okay, so maybe you've had some tough shots. You look back at your bowling compatriots for support, and they give a consoling look and a "maybe next time." They emit pity with a slight twinge of embarrassment for your emotional state.


An indefinite amount of time later (depending on the moral virtue of your friends): your teammates' sympathy is harshly withdrawn like a government unemployment check, and you're left wondering how you're going to make it through the next three frames without breaking down into a state of psychosis that you will never fully recover from. You can't even make eye-contact with these people; you just stare at the ball return, hoping the ball somehow gets stuck on the underground conveyor belt so you can leave and forget this damn sport ever existed.

But only fifteen minutes later, you may soar to heights of success relative to the dismal depths of your depression. This guy in my group got five strikes in a row—I repeat five strikes—and rolled probably the best game of his existence. Everybody had a high-five for him, and attractive women were appearing from everywhere, begging him to marry them. He practically had a cult following that fawned on his ball, imploring to touch it, hoping that some spare luck might affect them. The next game—all had abandoned him as he sunk.

But the nuances of bowling are not limited to whether or not you are winning or losing. All have to don on those slick clown shoes from the 1930s. It somewhat reduces everyone to the same level (fashionably speaking, of course); unless, you have brought your own, more stylish bowling shoes, in which case—you are trying too hard.

After about five minutes in the shoes, I feel like I've spent fourteen days in Louisiana, slogging through swampland, hoping I don't have gout. Although I think they spray some disinfectant into them, I can't get over the fact that my feet have just been in indirect contact with hundreds of stinky feet, warts, and fungal diseases. Perhaps, it's that I just have a thing about feet, but I think that even a normal person should be slightly disgusted with these gross suckers.

And don't even get me started on the food—the greasy, little, nameless meat franks that have been burbling up fat for three days, the nacho cheese sauce that is probably just melted crayon, and



the soda, which is really diluted water and Splenda. Besides the fifth graders who would eat the gum off a subway handrail, nobody would even think about eating any of that stuff.

But maybe it's this environment that really contributes to the lessening of the seriousness of this activity: the fact that you can be both eating a melting ice cream cone and still be doing better than someone who is actually trying. Every time I tell someone I am taking bowling, they answer me in the same tone, the tone that intimates that bowling is a perfect "sport" designed for people who like to read and bake and generally not participate in regular sports. No one really thinks this sport deserves much recognition, except for the people who wrote my bowling manual, and they take it way too seriously.

Perhaps I'm down on bowling because as the semester has gone on, I have found that the ratio of high-scoring games to low-scoring games has steadily decreased in favor of the low-scoring games. Before I had simply thrown the ball at some pins; now, I paid attention to my leg swing, the exact amount of steps I took, the sub-psychic angular velocity of the ball, stuff like that. And none of it helped. I obtained a general disillusionment with the mystery of this intriguing sport.



Katherine Nyczak
Untitled
Ceramics

Short Haul from Toronto to Detroit

James Li

flying at night over America
the cities look like children
reading with their flashlights on
hiding beneath a blanket of clouds





James Li
Phlebas
Photography

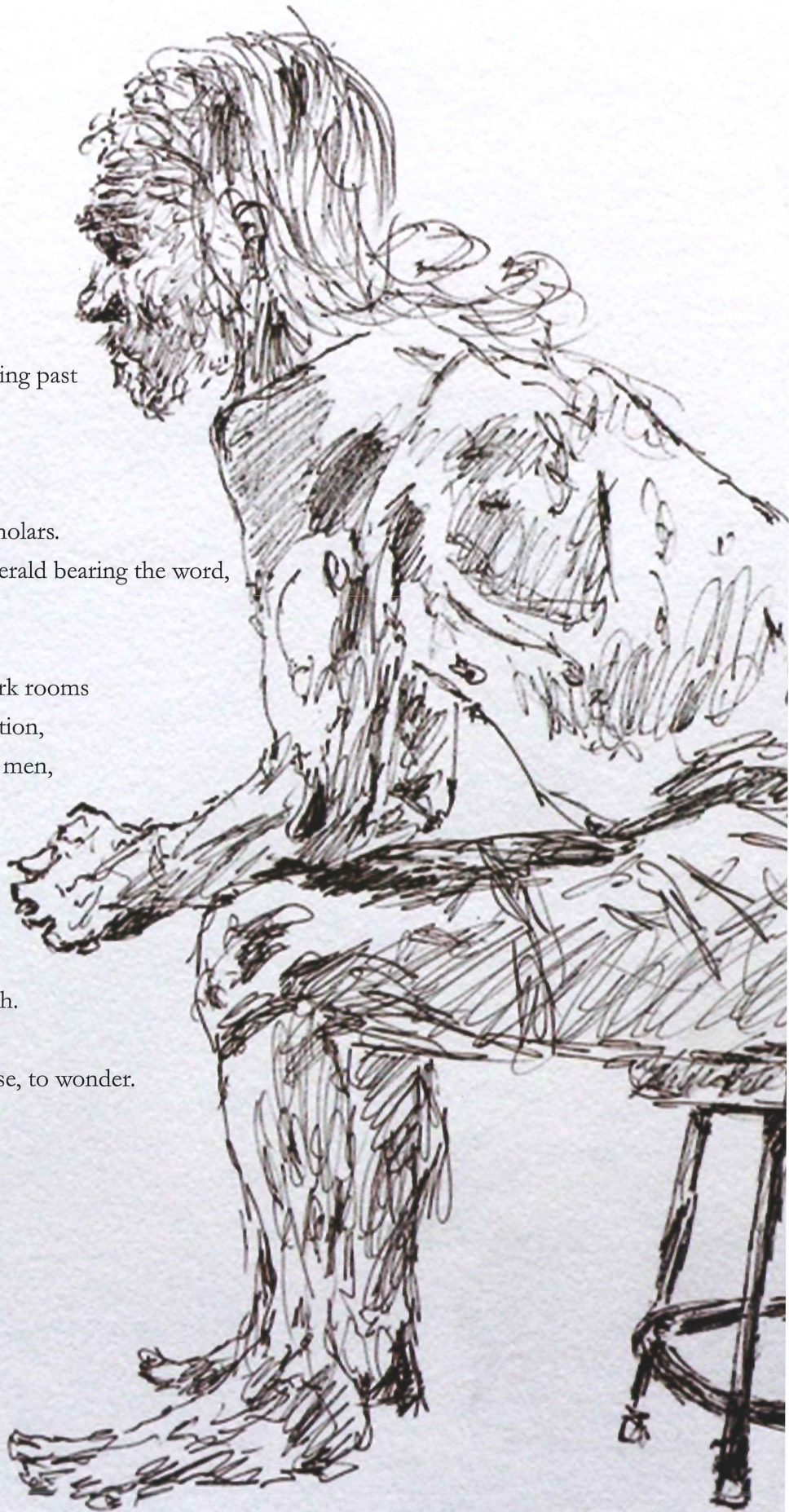
Emeritorium
Josiah Kinney

Countless times while walking past
I glance back, glimpsing
a small, yellowed room
the air heavy with words
of grey gentlemen, grey scholars.
Announced by a maroon herald bearing the word,
“Emeritorium”

Conjuring up images of dark rooms
thick with smoke and ambition,
patricians musing on lesser men,
the propaganda of power.
“Emeritorium”

Truth.
A life dedicated to others,
kingdom living. Giving truth.
Now these emeritus gather
to talk, to reminisce, to muse, to wonder.
Minds still in the making.
“Emeritorium”

Teunis Verwijs
Pensive Model
Pen on Paper



Steam Shower

Alex Westenbroek

The sweltering weight of it was almost too much for me—
just inhaling felt like pressing a hot iron to my lungs.

I twisted the faucet so that cold water poured
over my humid hair, and I coughed out the steam like sweat,
nearly drowning, shaking, in the freezing spring. It was fantastic.

I wondered at that drastic balance:
how cleansing the separation, the bipolar aesthetic,
like shucking the cosmos, pulling apart water and sky.



Teunis Vervijs
Incubator for Gen Y
TV and parts, metal and burlap

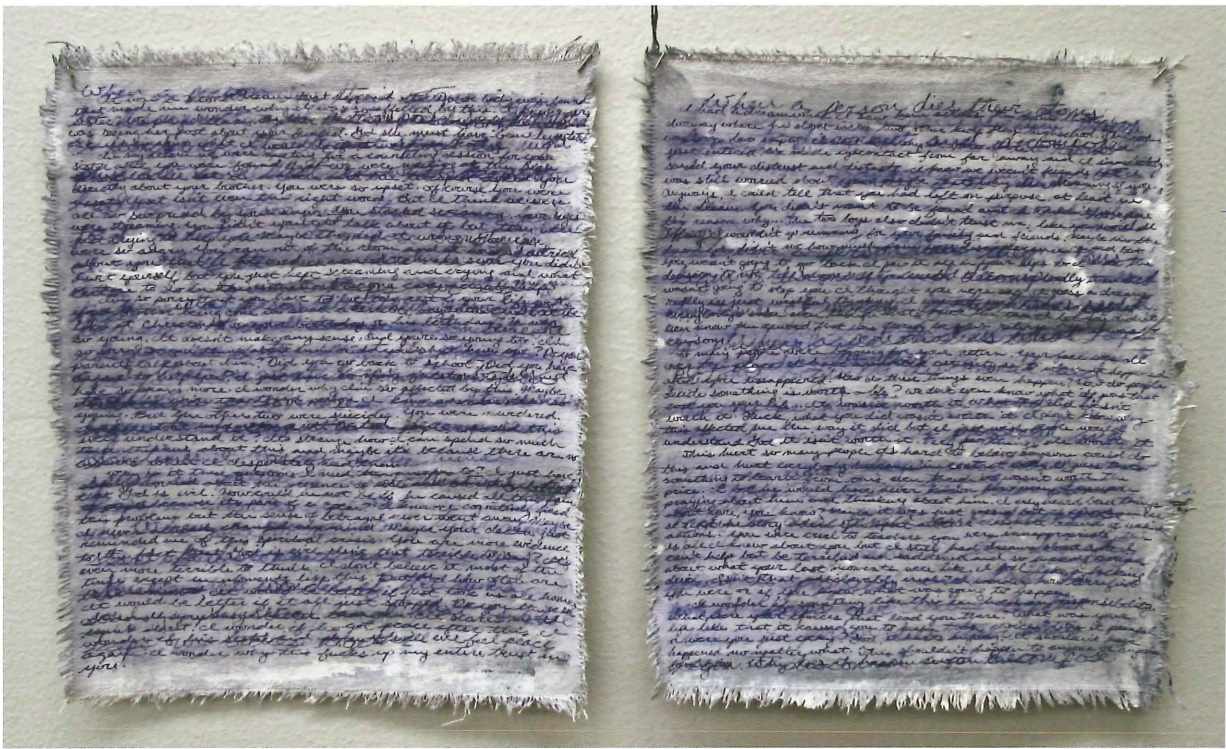
House Concert Ryan Hagerman

There's fire in our walls,
you know.

It crackles in day
with brute
and snaps cool jazz
in nights.

We sweat while eating,
and
Newspapers lay spread out, naked.

Our house is a concert.
It burns down, low,
every hour.



Rachel Kok
Distance
Mixed Media

Nuclear Cupcakes
Kayla VanderPloeg

My favorite third grade field trip was touring Cook Power Plant down the road:

the view of the lake from
the thermonuclear cooling towers is wonderfully green.

In the winter, we drive through the green snow raining down from the towers
of Palisades, and my new
school clothes were bought in the green shadow of the Michigan City Generat-
ing Station.

Remember when we were both running for student council V.P.?

I gave you a chocolate kiss consolation,
but when you offered me cupcakes, Brittany wouldn't let me eat them.

“She doesn't want any of your nuclear cupcakes, Eric.”

If I eat your nuclear cupcakes will I be irradiated?

THE STATE OF MICHIGAN issued me exactly 3 free iodine pills.

To protect my thyroid, of course.

1 for an inevitable mushroom-cloud meltdown, courtesy of AEP©

1 for the radioactive fever of tourist-town escape

And 1 for your nuclear cupcakes.

When the isotope loses all its electrons,
will I gain superpowers?
will I be able to leave the house without being burned to a crisp?

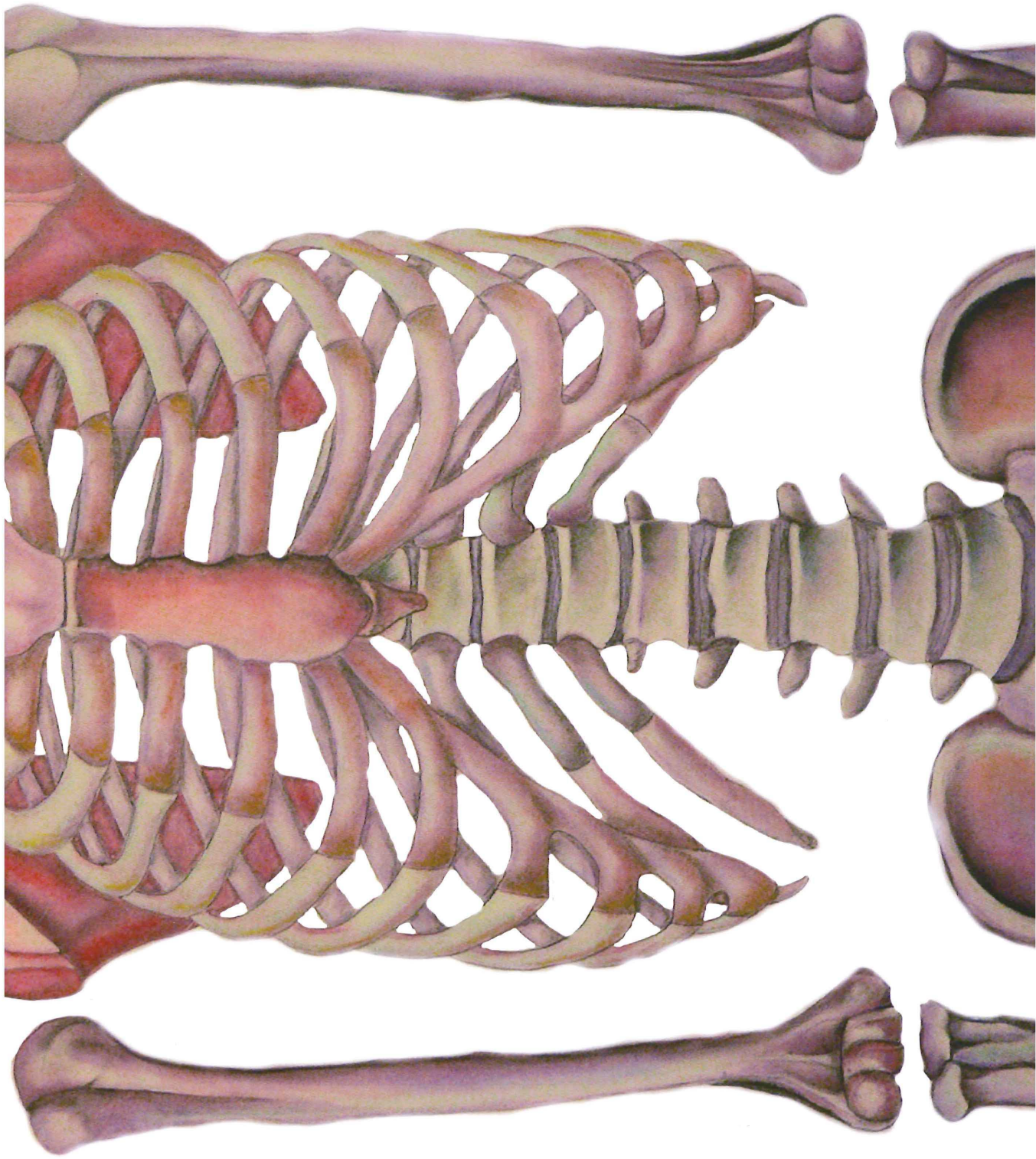
La Luz de Feria

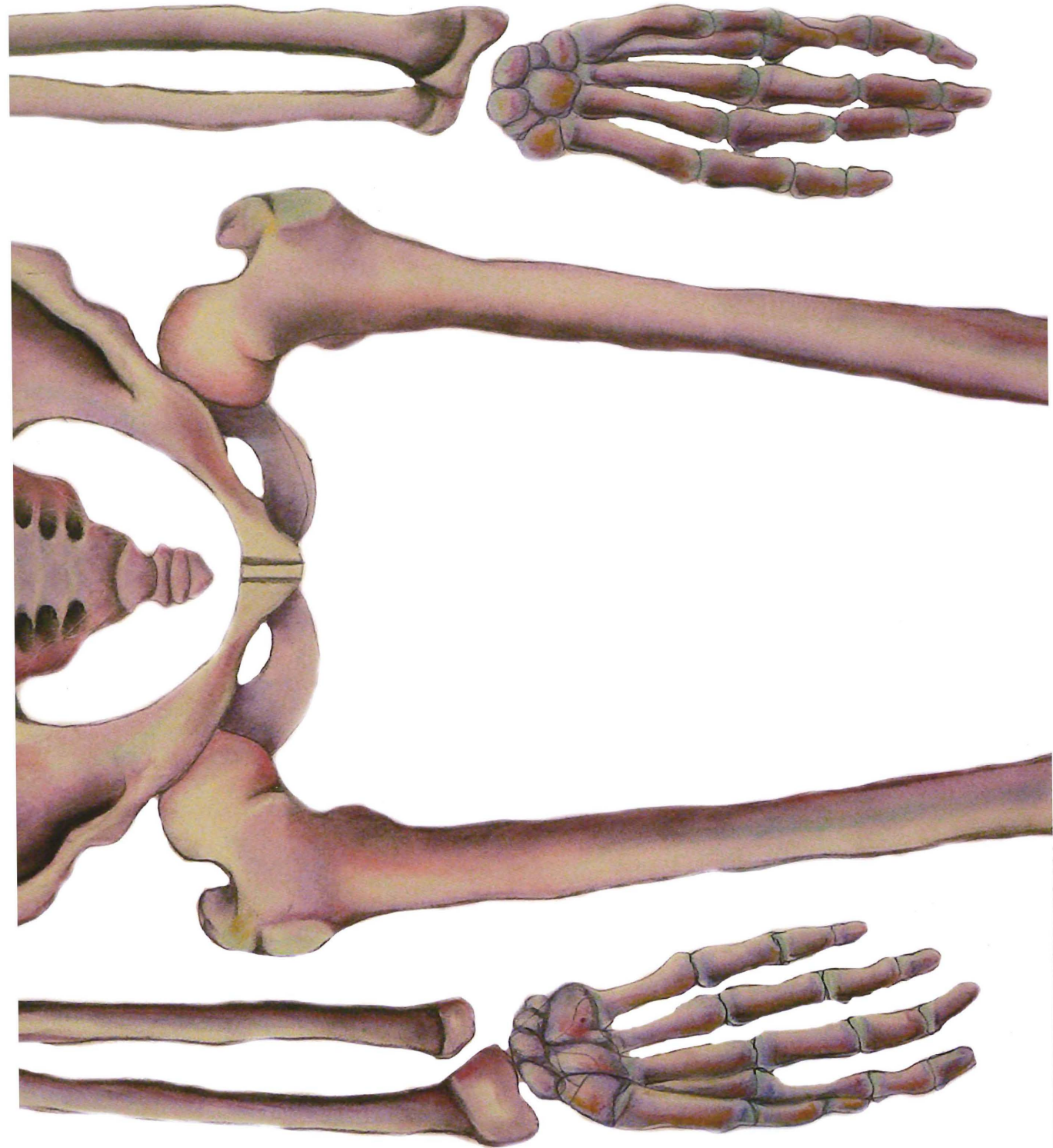
Lauren DeHaan

The lights of Feria illuminate.
Dichotic. Coming from the quagmire
of popes and prostitutes. Lying prostrate
before the division of desire.
We know they are forgettable quandaries,
flowing from las casetas like vodka.
Those of lustful conceit and pieties,
through el camerero to el papa.
Ruthless light. Reflecting the sorrows of
the diverging. Torn. A purgatory
of sorts, within oneself. Lackluster love.
Still, in wandering—celebratory.
For there in fragmented hysteria
they all lie—enlightened by Feria.



Maria Smilde
The Pardoner's Tale 2
Ceramics





Kelsea Rounds
Series of Anatomical Drawings
Graphite and Pencils

Exit, Enter

Matt Coldagelli

Winter's emergency siren
drives a hard bargain and a beat-up old Chevy,
put the heat on full blast.

Bodies take a break from flowing
as the fishermen trade rods for drills

The prodigal sun is welcomed, not spurned,
even by the other brother

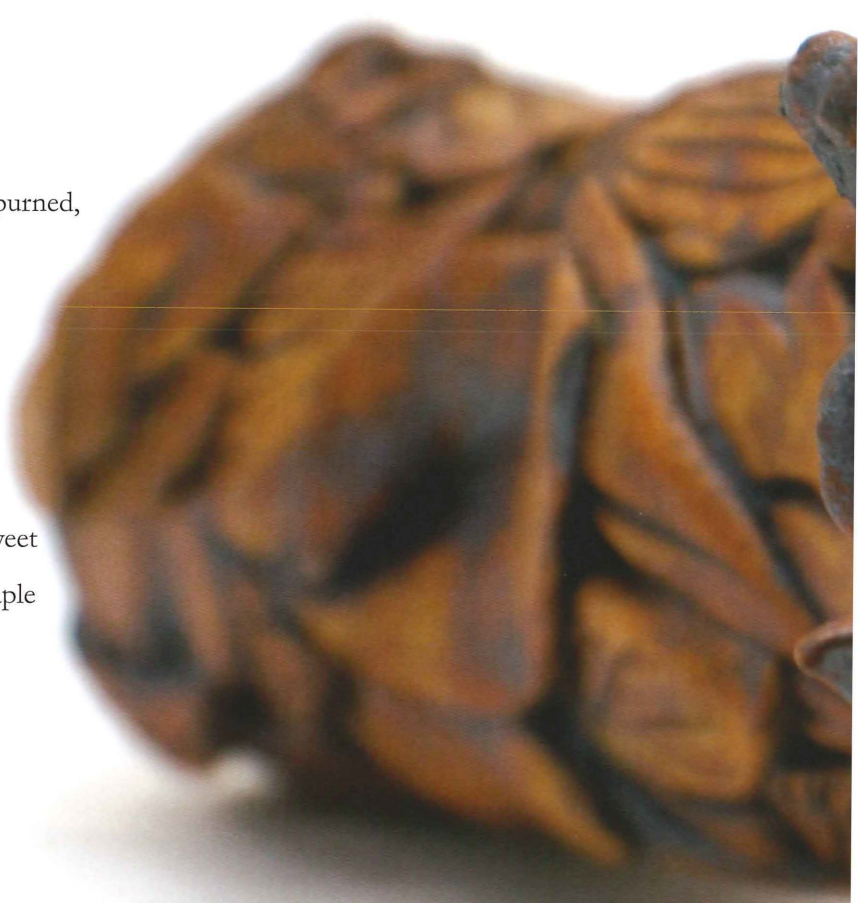
Harlot clouds taunt young boys
who long for winter to be worth it

But would the springtime seem so sweet
if not for fires made of sacrificial maple
and shivers under covers?

A Happy Accident

Ryan Hagerman

The exploding gasoline and the pumping piston
must have been surprised when, in their industrial efficiency,
they gave birth to a fleeting ballerina—
a white smoke dancer—spinning in a perfect Fibonacci pirouette
laughing as the morning light gave attention only to her.





Maria Smilde
Ferrous Bueller
Ceramics



When I was a Child I Spoke like a Child
Julia LaPlaca

“Please, Sylvia, give me a moment to think.” Tommy spluttered, sand flying out of his mouth. “Ow! That hurt!”

Sylvia grasped her brother’s head and pulled it out of the sandbox. “Okay, but you’ve got to promise” Sylvia released Tommy’s thatch of red hair from her small hand, “or I’ll give you the treatment again.” She raised her little fist threateningly and pointed to the bottom of the sandbox.

“You’re really not the boss of me!” Tommy wailed and pushed himself to the other side of the sand box. Sylvia has given him a thorough treatment this time. She called it the desert dunk—a process in which she took Tommy’s face and rubbed it in the sandbox.

“I’m just concerned for your salvation.” Sylvia, age 5, had recently made, as she called it, a ‘progression of faith.’ I’ve accepted Jesus into my heart, and I want you to, too. So you have to, too. I don’t want you to go to Hell!” Sylvia explained.

“Imma not goin’ to Hell!”

“Yes, you are if you keep saying the words mom and dad tell us not to say and hiding your peas under your napkin—those are SINS. And in hell,” Sylvia paused for moment in thought, “In hell they don’t have regular sandboxes— they have FIRE-sand!”

“Fire-sand?” Tommy’s little face started to quiver.

“DON’T CRY!” Sylvia’s looked back toward the house. Mom would be so mad if she found out about the desert dunk.

Tommy was terrified of fire. Two months ago, Tommy and his best friend Hannah had gone to magic show at a kids club at church. The magician began with the usual tricks—rabbit, hat, cards. He saved his fire swallowing routine for last—the lights dimmed and he blared “Muahaha!” into the microphone and stuck a torch down his throat. Tommy and Hannah were in the front row with all the other short kids. The noise and flames scared them out of their little wits, and they had to be carried out of the performances wide-eyed with terror, crying for their moms.

Mom hadn’t let Sylvia have birthday candles on her cake this year because Tommy was too nervous around flames.

By now, Tommy’s sandy face was turning to mud. Sylvia sighed. Maybe she shouldn’t have desert-dunked him after all.

“I’m scared of fire-sand” Tommy’s chin quivered.

“Quiet!” Sylvia grabbed Tommy in a ferocious hug. Sylvia glanced guiltily back at the house. “I’m sorry about the fire-sand Tommy,” she paused, “And I’ve never been to Hell—so I could be wrong about the fire-sand.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, but you still have to promise to make a progression of faith, because that way you can get away from the fire-sand even if there isn’t any.”

“Huh?” Tommy looked confused.

“Just repeat after me.” And in her best Sunday-school voice, Sylvia cooed, “Dear Jesus....”

“Dear Jesus.”



Anna Hanchett
Soap Tiles
Soap and Towel



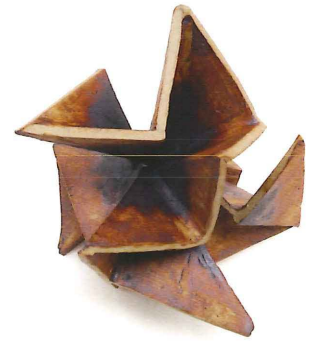
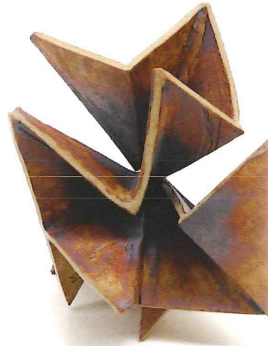
A Fish in the Freezer
Kent Sanders

Every time I began to talk about it, I felt worse, so I stopped talking about it. I stopped mentioning it and, for the most part, stopped thinking about it. I'd dance around their questions in a vague panic and feel my cheeks flush red in the dead of winter. There was never a direct sense of urgency to arrive at some extravagant explanation. I gently soothed my desire for affirmation with every laugh I got from my witty and sarcastic remarks that changed the subject. I simply never felt like answering, like explaining that I didn't know why I should have an explanation for my prolonged stay. But it hurt. It burned a bit, too, but mostly ached, sat in the pit of my stomach, and weighed me down. It stayed there and I didn't mind. I still don't. Some things are just better left hidden behind smiles and tears, bags of frozen chicken and explanations of the half-truth. Because I don't want to relate to anybody. I want to be mysterious and sad and a bit moody because I am and can't change it. I can't explain it. To be left alone in the company of catfish, who always ask the same question.

“You've been in here quite a while, are they ever going to eat you?”



Steven Zantingh
Triatecht 2
Ceramics



A Note in a High School Yearbook
Cassie Westrate

I *noticed you* noticed you during seventh-grade Bible class when you stopped the skit, dropped your lines, and said, “I don't blame Jonah. If I was Jonah, I'd rather be swallowed by the whale.” The class laughed; the teacher turned red and took you out in the hall to have a “small talk,” which must have been very small because you came back to the classroom still wrapped in an old bed sheet. There had been no tearing of cloth, no rubbing of ashes, no weeping. You were silent. And you were silent the next two days during detention as you copied down the entire book of Jonah. When you handed your scribework to the teacher, she did not even ask you if you had changed your mind; I do not think she wanted you to repent in your runaway faith so much as she wanted you to regret disrupting the status quo. So you spent the rest of the year staring at your desk and carrying around a copy of Moby-Dick, and I saw you write on a piece of paper once: the whale was probably just trying to protect Ahab. But maybe Ahab wasn't afraid of his Nineveh, like you were. I know you've always been afraid of walking into something because you don't know who you are, but you don't have to be afraid. The truth is you never know who you really are because you're always, every second, changing. But you have to let it happen. And stinking, stinking, and half-digesting in the belly of a whale—where it's too dark to even mime shadow puppets on the ribcage wall—will never help you realize who you are. You are who you are. Say it: “I am who I am.” And don't be afraid of Nineveh because you're not brave enough yet, not bold enough yet, not sure-of-what-you-believe enough yet. You're always, every second, becoming who you are. But you have to let it happen.



Anna Claire Lambers
February Blues
Ink on Paper

I'm in Love with an Ideal
Andy Briggs

On the days where
autumn rain hits the glass,
I'm in love
with that empty space next to me
the empty space between my fingers.
I'm in love
with nights that shared
hot chocolate secrets
and lunar lullabies.
I'm in love
with clichés and matinées.

I'm in love
with the icy
with the goose poop covered blanket
with the slack-jawed
soliloquies
In the entryway.

I'm in love
with meteor showers at 3am
I'm in love
with freefall and cotton-candy clouds
with purple post-its and
fuzzy Milk Duds.

Why am I in love with fuzzy Milk Duds?

Confusion

Connor Schmidt

Lately, I've stopped my routine.

I take them as I please:

Trazodone hydrochloride

Tons of syllables but

Less thoughts and,

Everyday is changing.

When I'm on, I tell them,

Have no fear!

I'm still myself.

Those oval yellow pills

Even now are changing me,

Little by Little I begin to hesitate

I'm the same.

Even now

Still convincing myself



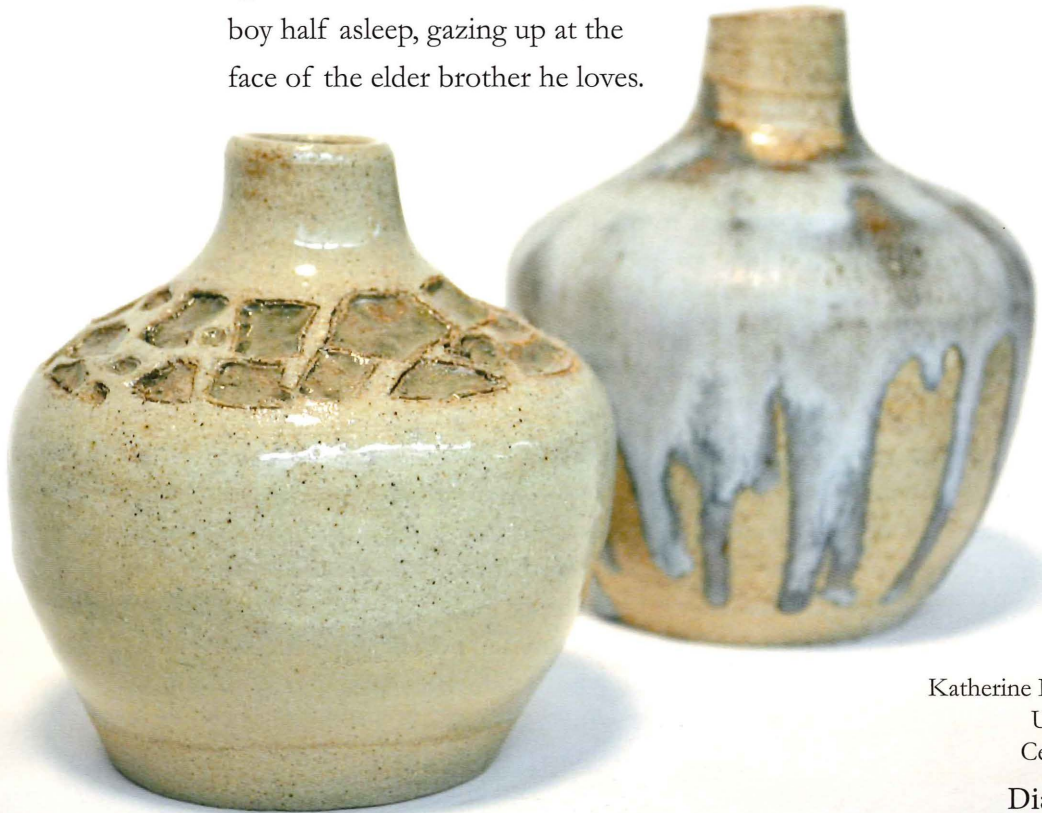
Rachel Kok
Wendigo
Ceramics

Sadao Watanabe's *The Last Supper*

Erin Koster

The Last Supper is as traditional
as the first — two common fish,
like the ones that fed five thousand,
but these will do for a dozen,
saké bottles arranged between the bowls
of rice and chopsticks all around.
The table itself almost looks like
a fish, surrounded by these fishers
of men and their master, but
flying, its fins like wings extending
from the backs of the two
disciples at its foot.

The eyes of another off to the right,
wide open, almost seem to be covering
themselves, and his neighbor might
be seen as holding suspicion in
his, but next to him, John rests his head
against his master's shoulder, like a
boy half asleep, gazing up at the
face of the elder brother he loves.



Katherine Nyczak
Untitled
Ceramics

“Absurd, adj. Of a thing: against or without reason or propriety; incongruous, unreasonable, illogical” (OED).

The media said to take the four Ps: People, Pets, Prescriptions, Papers. My mom decided to take all the meat in our deep freezer. As she pulled out steak, roast, and stew meat, Mom argued with my sister Audrey about whether we needed to take my mother and grandmother’s wedding dresses.

“We don’t need them, Audrey. Why do you want them?”

“But Mom! I want to wear those dresses!”

While this petty fight took place, my dad walked around the house with a video camera, taping every room so that insurance would be able to replace everything. A couple of the men on our church counsel were grabbing pictures off the walls and putting them in their mini vans along with books, blankets, games and, of course, my mother’s precious meat. A family friend who had evacuated to our house earlier that day, unplugged our computer tower and stuck it in my car with our dogs.

I put three days of clothes into my backpack along with my flute and, ironically, Norman Maclean’s book *Young Men and Fire*. Because my workplace sat deep within the evacuation zone, I figured I should probably grab something to read for the next day. The book seemed like an easy choice because it sat out on my bedside table, where I had placed it the week before. When I finished the book later in the summer, I realized the eerie similarities between Maclean’s fire and mine. Maclean’s book chronicles his experience researching a fire which blew up in the mountains of Montana in 1949, killing 14 young firefighters. Both fires exploded when a small storm cell that had failed to produce rain collapsed over the fire area, causing wind gusts between 50 and 60 miles per hour. In addition to this, both fires occurred in the steep, rocky hill country of the Rocky Mountains, an area where forest rangers resorted to extreme methods to stop wildfire. Even though the Waldo Canyon blow up seemed like a repeat of the Mann Gulch blow up, there was an essential difference. Fire generally travels fastest uphill, often covering a mile within a few minutes time, as happened in Maclean’s book. But the fire that burned so close to my home did not burn uphill. It burned down, which fire experts say should slow the progress of the flames. The Waldo Canyon fire did not slow up when faced with a downhill. Instead, it roared down the mountain, covering four miles in 30 minutes and leading 30,000 people to flee their homes, including us.

Young Men and Fire sat next to me in the car as I waited to evacuate. If we wanted to leave, I felt like we should just go. Sitting around, deliberating between which finger painting best represented my brother’s artistic skill at the age of eight, negated the panic that accompanies a real evacuation. If we really needed to leave, then we didn’t have the luxury to decide how we would remember our lives post-house. The amount of freedom that we had in our packing process made me think that we didn’t have much to worry about.

As we drove away from our house, I knew that I would see it again. I felt embarrassed by my family’s attachment to stuff. The fire had to cross two major roads and an industrial area to get to our house, which was on comparatively less complicated terrain than the housing development that was burning to the north and west of us. Our friends who evacuated from that area had no help or extra vehicles. We had six extra people and three empty minivans, which we filled completely. The next day, the news reported that our housing development had never actually been evacuated. They misreported through confusion and we were completely safe the whole time.

Bosnian Coffee Set

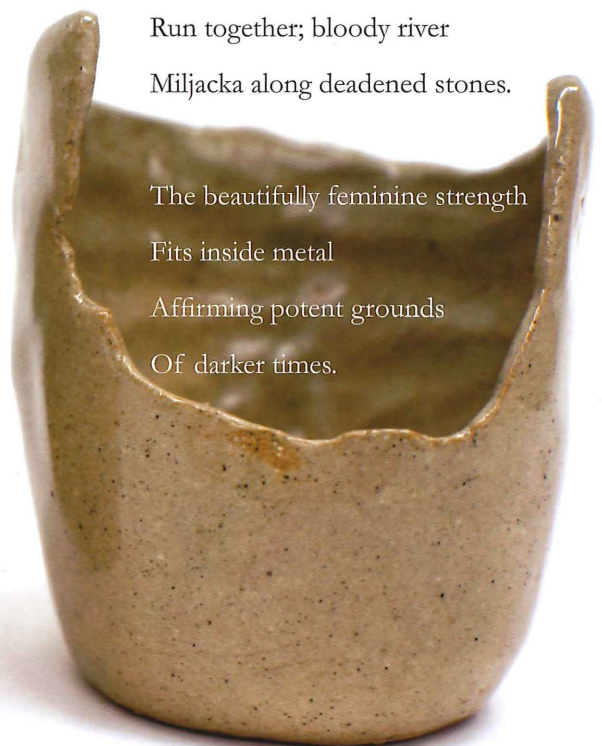
Erin Smith

Reverentially placed in peace,
Spiced inlaid copper
Remembering dark eyes;
A coffee set.

Olympics, yellow hotels and
Genocide

Run together; bloody river
Miljacka along deadened stones.

The beautifully feminine strength
Fits inside metal
Affirming potent grounds
Of darker times.





Rachel Kok
Ecclesiastes (De
Mixed Media

Senioritis (n.)

Kayla VanderPloeg

When caught in its earlier stages its not necessarily terminal,

Though a fairly aggressive disease.

In a study composed of fifty-seven uncontrolled senioritics, it was found that the hosts' deoxyribonucleic makeup unfurled with the administration of An Argument Against the Sophists rather than in the presence of helicase.

When asked to show my inner workings,

I can tell you that there are multiple sizes of infinity and

I did the math and there are exactly

13

10

10

8

4

+2

47 hours of my week I occupy and the other

$(24*5)-47= 73$ hours I lie in bed and pretend to sleep for 2 of them

And spend the other hours hating myself.

And when I open my mouth the only thing I can voice

Is endless binary, a new size of an infinite number of

1100101001111000101110111010001011010000101110101001001010

0101000101101001010110010001001010110100010110101000101110

Try1ng t0 reconflgure my m1nd and get the bugs Out

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