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A photograph of a field of yellow sunflowers. The sunflowers have bright yellow petals and dark brown, almost black, centers. Some flowers are in full bloom, while others are still buds. The stems are thin and green, with some showing small leaves. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with a building visible in the distance under a pale sky. The word "dialogue" is printed in a white, sans-serif font in the upper middle part of the image.

dialogue



# dialogue

Volume 48 Issue 1

## Editors' Notes

Dialogue has had a turbulent year. While studying in York this past spring, I anxiously read texts, emails, and Chimes articles about the future of our publication. Our print budget was on the chopping block, and although our previous issues had been some of our finest, we had to prove that Calvin still needed Dialogue. With strong and timely support from the community, we showed the importance of print as a medium and the importance of Dialogue as a creative forum.

But this fall has been a challenging time for the arts at Calvin in general. Program cuts and declining student numbers have left the creative soul of this school in a state of fear and frustration. As we put up the posters announcing the fall submissions deadline, I felt like we were quietly asking a question I wasn't sure I wanted to know the answer to: "does art still matter at Calvin?"

Students answered. With 374 submissions from 161 submitters, reviewed by over 40 jurors, we broke every record we've got. You are holding the most competitive and thoroughly juried issue of Dialogue ever. And by reading, you support an arts community that desperately needs support.

So, I have a simple request. Read it all. Be challenged. Be awed. There's a lot here.

Gratefully,

**Jack Van Allsburg**

I'm so excited for all of you to engage with this semester's issue of Dialogue. As I finish out my tenure on staff, I keep thinking of how critical a role this journal has played in connecting me to the Calvin arts community. Through Dialogue, I've found a whole new world of people that are willing and eager to encourage and challenge me, collaborate with and inspire me. In a troubling time for arts at Calvin, Dialogue finds creativity in all aspects of our world. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

**Kendra Kamp**

## Editor in Chief

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Matthew Schepers

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Sophia Bryson

Taylor Hartson

## Thanks

Debra Rienstra

John Britton

Meg Schmidt

Chimes

Visual Arts Guild

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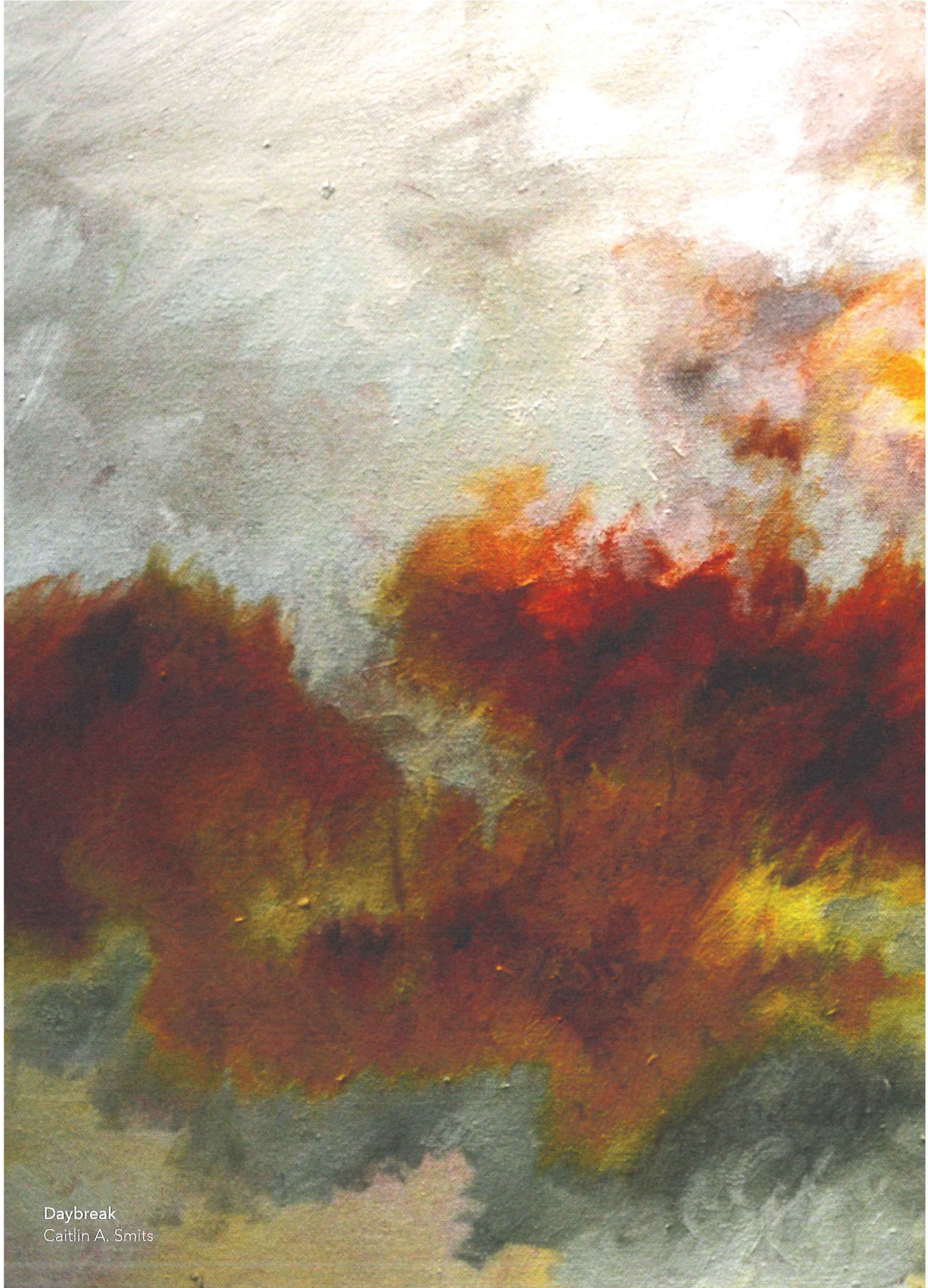
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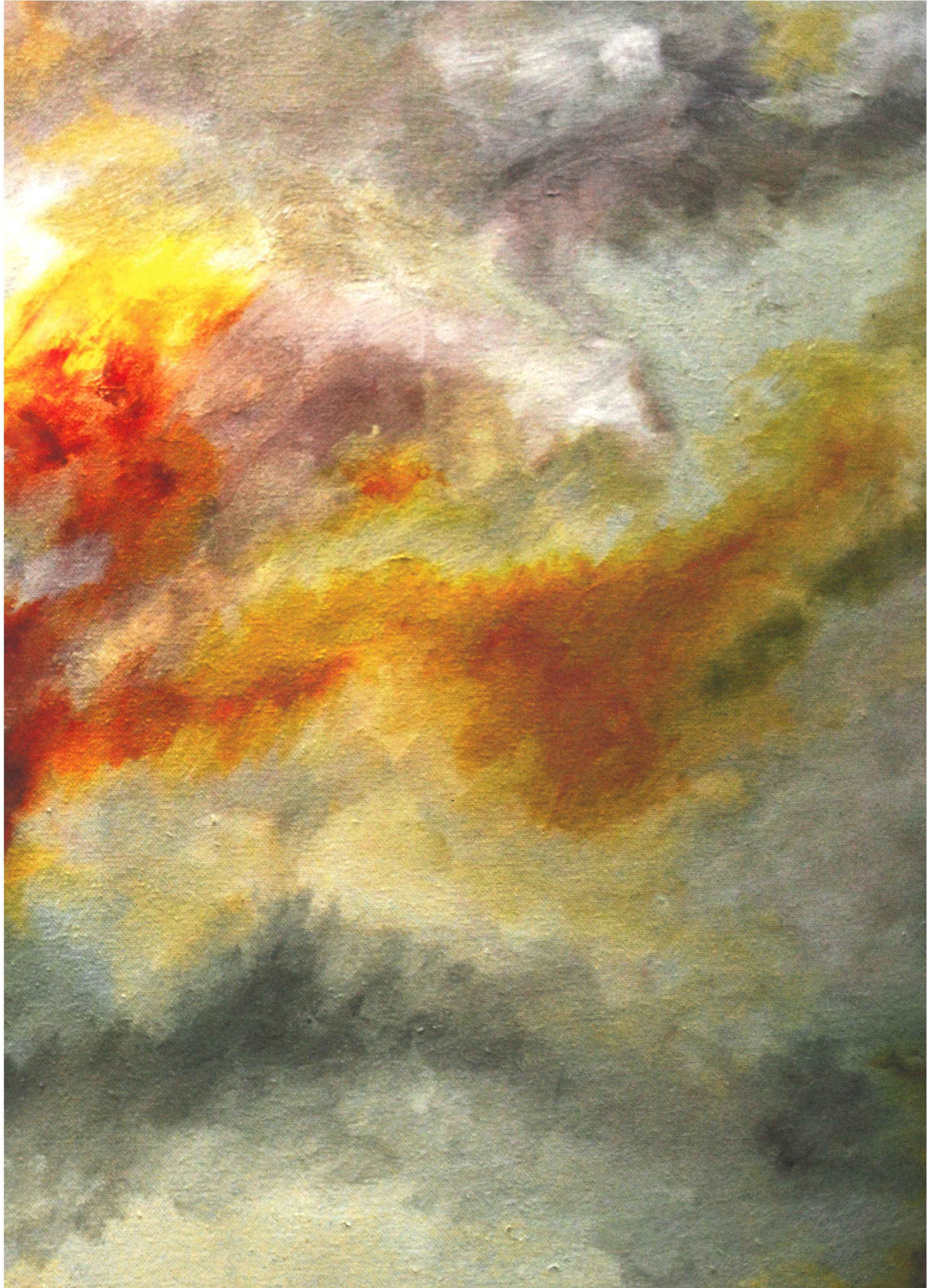
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Daybreak  
Caitlin A. Smits







Backbone  
Paola Koki

## Transitory

Caitria Jade

Cotton candy drips from my pen, leaving thin chalk marks on washable paper. I shake it briefly and the letters slip off, dissolving into sugary puffs of colored cream that I taste only momentarily before they vanish.

We are transitory. Give me diamond heartbreak and granite love; stone me in bronze and build me a statue in syntactical gems that never die. Speak igneous truths and metamorphic memories; weld me into forever. Leave behind these damned sprinkled promises and sugar-cookie dreams; wash me clean of your wash-away lyrics and white-board words. Frame me in onyx and beat me into steel sharpness with hateful honesty. We are transitory. Stone me forever.

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Rock slides, earth quakes, and eruptions surround us in sedimentary uncertainty. Yet I walk; yet I stand; tomorrow, I will not. We are transitory. Give me lost art forms blossoming from ink into marble walls and stone columns; give me brick-built belief and silver slivers of what comes next until something that stands now will stand forever. Give me Pantheons and Davids that never fall; beat cool cello music into my passing pulse. Break down the winds. Stone me forever.

My art does not last in its own fading way; teach me a poem that never dies, a story that always speaks, a dream and a wish and a love that punishes perpetually. No; let the sparkling sugared things die young and let me speak them and watch them fade; let me vanish in the mist we never saw in the first place, and then, remember: we are transitory.

No. None of this. Stone me forever.





Lake Effect  
Hope Hinken

## Where We Go

### Ethan Hohn

You sit back and listen to the modern wave ocean-grunge that is the chaos of our midday city setting and take in the sights of sixteen swans swimming south down the stream. Their wings thrash as they battle against the current, waves crashing upon their heads. You get a beating urge to run to them and help, but the weight of a sedated dream holds you back. Luckily, they see hope and swim to shore, safe and sound.

It's a breezy fall day and you sway from side to side as clouds pass you by. You pass the beaches of Cape Cod and you're reminded of the way your eyes would become asphyxiated upon the dirt that has been gathering beneath your nails as you ground at your sandcastle in the backyard of your subterranean home, guarded by the Earth. Sounds of laughter and melancholy songs of days passed flood your ears with the same unplaceable feeling you once experienced at a time you can't quite recall. Maybe that's hope you're hearing. You met her once in a coffee shop on the southern coast of the Mediterranean and never saw her again. Every once in a while you're reminded of the way that she would bat her eyes when you were suffocating your emotions. Then you would stop and look up to see her dancing with the fate of sixteen innocent swans.



Body Parts no. 2  
Jaclyn Kuyers





cloud forest  
Nathania Wijaya





cosmos and chaos  
Morgan Hayden

## Never Out of Nothing

Rae Gernant

the coffee stains on my mug are as abstract and thought-provoking as i want them to be; and today they're just more work for the girl behind the counter with an inaudible voice who was hired to make no echoes on the dark, wooden floor.

ask me again at the end about the cloud i just showed you—just don't ask with your voice—because we're all in a rush. second guess it all and seal your lips before explicit conversation can interfere with the mainstream, alternative scene. i'll give it to you echoless:

the real cloud of thoughts remains on the horizon in-between pale blue and brake-light red. so sink into the purple atmosphere of the tri-tone sea painted by the artists of extemporaneous songs that are written for the purpose of the vibe. for the purpose of your cloud. it's all for the purpose of your cloud.

i'll probably end up thinking about this longer; yet, i guess i'll never know, because your cloud's under a sheet in a locked, bronze birdcage just like the other seven billion. and the bird-keeper never repeats the songs and wing-flutters he hears behind the sheets. instead, he says, "ask me again at the end."

it's never out of nothing, because in this echoless world, all we can do is echo. So curl your toes into something warmer and let the raindrops pour from your cloud. make your one hundred and forty character auto-biography for the day. our echoless non-noises—(ex)changed from one cloud to another.







Monument Valley  
Brenna Mahn

## Auburnt

Rae Gernant

Close your eyes and imagine a new color—  
memorize the sound it makes, and envision the bird  
singing it afar in an auburnt tree under a waterfall of stars.

Take the shade apart note by note  
until you can see through the window what transparency shows  
to all who can— their color know.

Watch the stars pour through the threads,  
and touch the weaving wishes of the tune you've just begun to hum  
as you count the wind by its soulful drum.

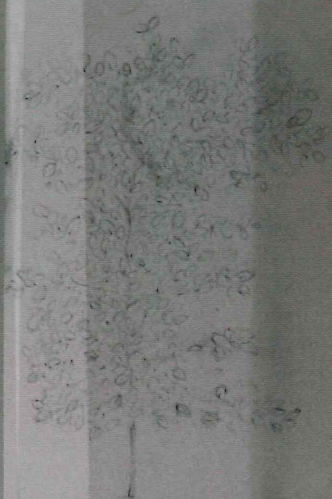
Glide across the rhythms' stream  
measuring the color's swing whenever your finger taps the glass,  
then promise me this color's not your last.



I Am Poor  
Christina Weinman

Home Trees  
Sara Martinie









Bodies Divided no. 3  
Sarah Bass

## Cholera's Nymphs

Nicholas J. Alcock

*"...pero lo que llega es una reunión de cloacas donde gritan las oscuras ninfas del cólera." — Federico Garcia Lorca*

Where cholera's nymphs scream in the shadows

I lie down equivocally.

Above, teeming magnolias bow to their respective suns

For better or for worse.

Where cholera's nymphs scream in the shadows

The coveted rose cranes beneath a jalopy

And the Madonna behind a sofa,

Her virginity a mere speculative glance.

Where cholera's nymph's scream in the shadows

The sophists beg for their nettled halos and the


Priests and eye doctors are all

Neocolonialists and orators impromptu.

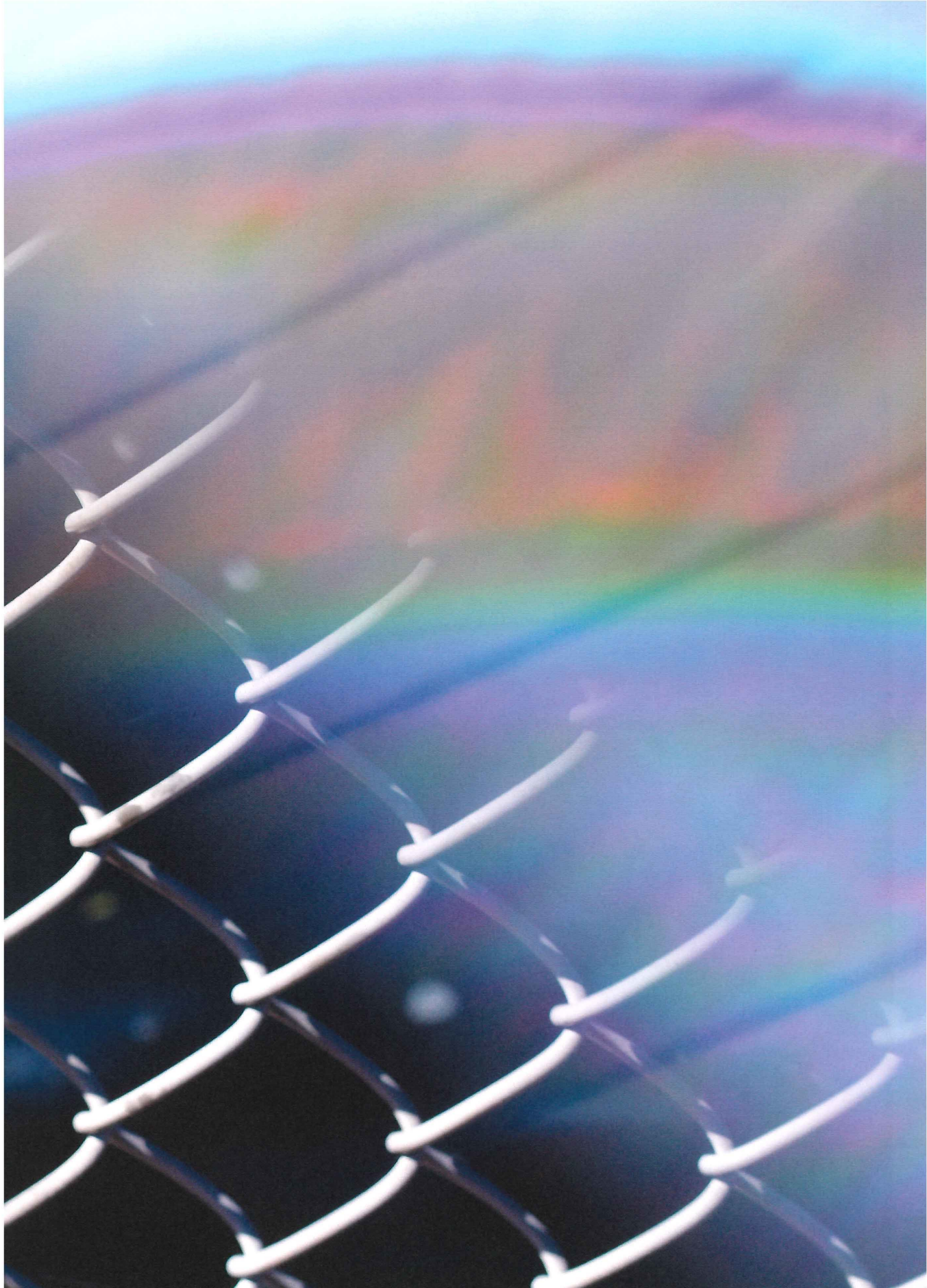
Where cholera's nymphs scream in the shadows

I dilute my own eucharist with selenites—

The posh isolation of being an American.



Restrict/Revive  
Whitney Badge



## an ode to gloom

Rachel J. House

the beam bearing through the boughs has broke  
and where it splintered across the floor  
dim purple remains  
strewn amidst the fibers and the crumbs  
heavy vaporous nothingness pervades  
sallow to the touch  
the pages once illumined now fade  
as the words congeal and dribble out  
devoid of fervor  
rustlings amplify, shouts are silenced  
as brick erodes and fabric cements  
their textures undone  
for gloom uncovers what gleam cannot  
and tepid air stagnates and suffocates  
languid local lives



Giraffe Trees  
Brenna Mahn



The Sky is the Limit  
Mary Kusters





## Swings

Jana Dykhuis

The day you left, I went to the park. I went on the swings.  
And I decided something. Swings suck.

First, you have to wriggle your now-much-larger-than-your-six-year-old butt onto a dirty strip of rubber between two creaky, clanky chains. Once you're comfortable (or have decided it's as good as it's gonna get), you then have to swing your stubby little legs back and forth, exerting yourself like an idiot until you start moving. And then, once you're more than five feet off the ground, you realize in the midst of your frantic, strenuous pumping that you've suddenly got a headache. Oh, and your stomach isn't feeling too hot either. Lest you lose the battle, though, you suffer through it for a few more minutes as your hair flies in your mouth, but your hands, knuckles white, are too busy grasping the chains to get it out. The minute your legs give in, you see all that hard work slowly and all at once slip to nothing until you're in that lame I-can't-stop-yet-but-I'm-not-really-going-anywhere stage. Your feet drag in the dirt, and you perk up for a moment because you made a beautiful smiley face with your sneakers. But one slip and it now looks more like an awkward sad grimace-half-smile thing. And as it stares back at you like a mirror, you realize something. It hates the swings, too.

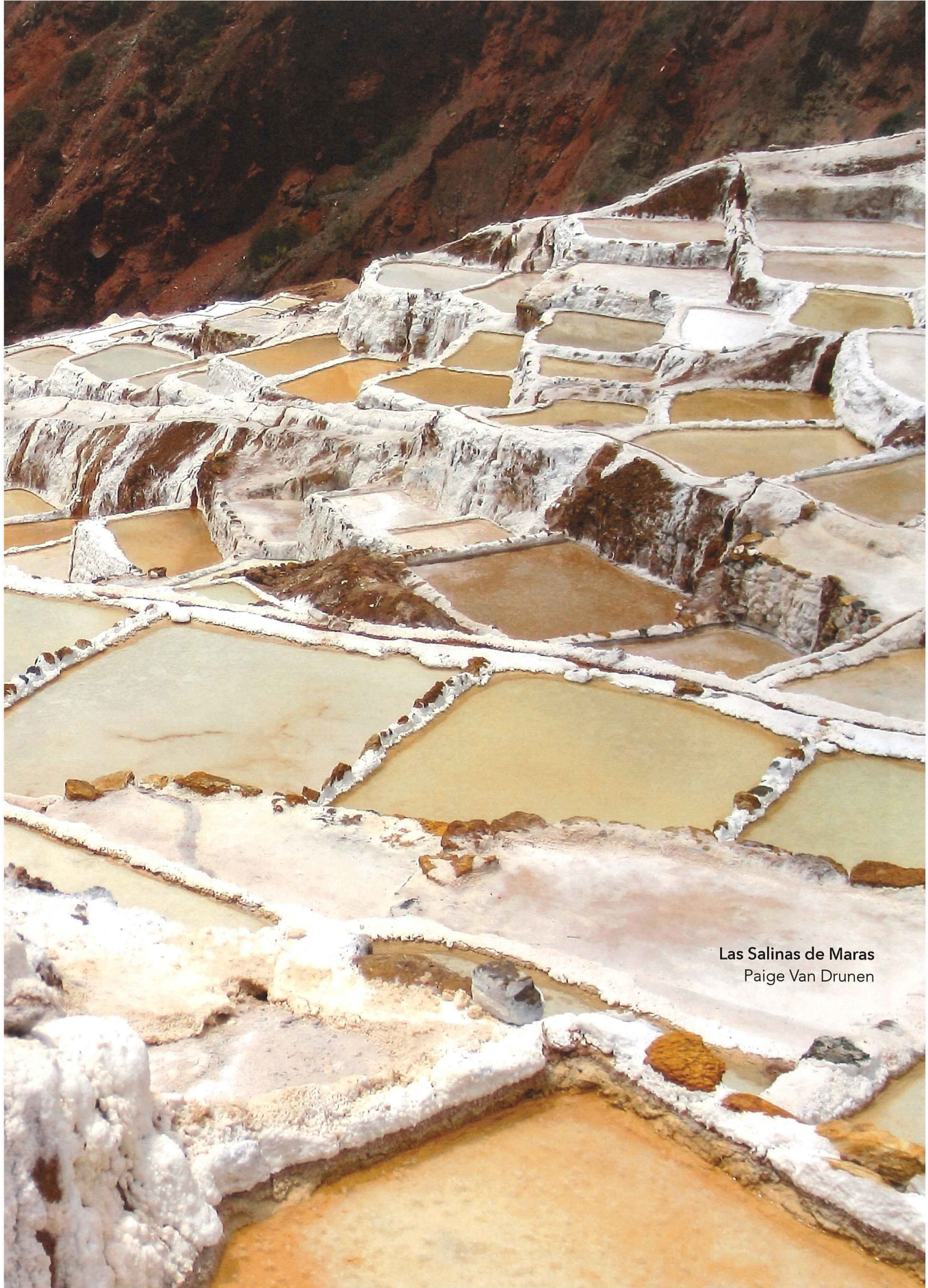
It hates how one little slip smudges its good run and totally puts a damper on the whole ride. It hates how the throne of blissful childhood ignorance that could once fly you way up into those clouds with the silver lining now just tugs you right back to crummy old earth the minute you get even remotely close to dreams, happiness, you name it. But I think the thing it hates most is the lonely creaking of the chains when there is no one in the next swing over.

The day you left, I went to the park. I went on the swings.  
And I decided something. The swings miss you, too.



**Tessellate**  
Whitney Badge





Las Salinas de Maras  
Paige Van Drunen

## Bones

Katelyn Van Kooten

Bones of metal make  
limbs that are cold and so  
heavy. They don't break;  
they keep me human-shaped  
so I can keep on pretending  
(and even my skull is grinning,  
though it feels so  
heavy). Someday I'll die,  
and the bones they'll  
bake and crack and break:  
bone-dry. The life I had,  
the life they held,  
turns to flowers sprouting,  
sprouting from the marrow:  
petals clothing cartilage.



Secret Wishes  
Mark Randall

## Catchup Mustard

Amy Van Zanen

While playing guitar on my front porch, some family friends, who have become rather distant due to the fact that my mom dislikes the wife of my dad's best friend, walk by. They live right up the street so this wasn't unusual. We talked. I'm charming with adults if I don't say so myself. I can look like the golden girl when I want to. My brother shows up. He's been looking for a job and meanwhile doing random tasks around his neighborhood or volunteering different places. The job hunt is still rather unsuccessful. When these family friends ask what he's been doing this summer, though, he calls his work

"diverse"

Oh, how great we are at making ourselves look okay.

Earlier that day I had gone to my university's library to pick up some of my textbooks that I checked out for the semester. I was intending to swim as well, but the pool opened at 11:30 and my dad needed me back in my mom's office by 12:05. I decided it wasn't worth the trouble to swim for 15 minutes. I should have. But logging onto Facebook on the computers I've typed numerous papers on, I saw... pain. So I sent a quick text not expecting a reply, either because I think less of myself or that's the way these texts tend to go.

"I'm praying for you"

It doesn't really warrant a reply and I'm not really praying because I don't pray, but it's one of those things people like to hear and I don't feel guilty lying about it. The guilt comes later so I do pray that night

*just in case*

I get a response. More than one. More than expected and suddenly I find myself driving on a freeway all the way across town with red flags springing up in my brain. These decisions are usually silly/stupid and driven by a selfish motive. But I don't stop to analyze the motive.

I just drive.

I think I will probably get in trouble with my parents that night or the next morning. (I do.) And I think perhaps there will be more trouble tonight, but I'm not sure if that is a motivation or an observation.

I drive on.

We walk.

Past a large church, into a fenced off construction site (his idea not mine because I'm not a risk taker), around some catalog houses, all the while catching toads, naming them, and telling silly stories of little kids we love (but I won't admit that I do). A summer at camp changes you.

"I agree"

I tell about a dumpster fire and he tells about a disaster

*and we laugh*

It was a different conversation than I had expected, but I should have guessed. No one wants to talk about their dying mother.

We end sitting in the grass on the edge of a parking lot and a field with sprinklers only a few feet forward from an intersection with tall orange traffic cones (one of which he is tempted to steal and bring home— he doesn't). He makes a bird's nest on my knee while telling me about the God he loves (and the one I do, too). He says,

"it makes me sad"

*me too*

When we reach the silence I anticipated, I make an attempt to ask, subtly, all the questions stirring in my mother's head. He doesn't understand what I mean (classic). And instead he says,

"I just really want  
to kiss you right now"

classic.

honest.

so like him.

But also rather surprising given I was expecting the conversation to turn to hospital rooms and gross casseroles and deflating balloons and too many fucking flowers (why do people send those things).

But the strange thing is



*I feel no fear*

none.

Which is only strengthened when  
he says,

“don’t let me”

and I say,

“I won’t”

and quieter,

“I learned my lesson”

We pinky promise to be friends (just like kindergarten) and I make sure I leave before we can break that. I love this kid. I always have. He breaks my heart and then gives me hope again and again. I know he will again before we are through.

I get lost on the way home—tired and disoriented. But I make it home. I eat string cheese and chocolate-peanut butter no-bake cookies and then fall asleep reading about why I should believe in God. They almost got me convinced

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*but not quite*

I wake up in the morning realizing that every time he touched me I shook a little. That was the fear.

I get a text from her saying I’m all clear, he’s not coming, which makes me just the least bit disappointed. But glad that the letter, which I stared at for a whole minute before pushing up the little lever thing so that it would fall out of the blue tray onto a whole bunch of other hopes and dreams and love collected at the bottom of the mailbox just outside the campus store, will have time to reach its destination.

*I swear he walked by right as I let go*

in a crowd of mostly boys and two girls  
with his lanyard hanging out of his pocket,  
just like always.

“hey hey there”

it’s been a while, hasn’t it?

wanna talk?



hand sketches no. 1  
Morgan Hayden

hand sketches no. 2 & 3  
Morgan Hayden







hand sketches no. 4  
Morgan Hayden

dear you,  
Taylor Hartson

if i could give you my feelings, i'd give them to you in all the things that make me.

i'd give you my twisted thoughts in the acoustics of my favorite songs, in the melancholy chords of voices filled with angst and helplessness. the tempo keeping time with a heartbeat that isn't sure whether it should be racing or slowing.

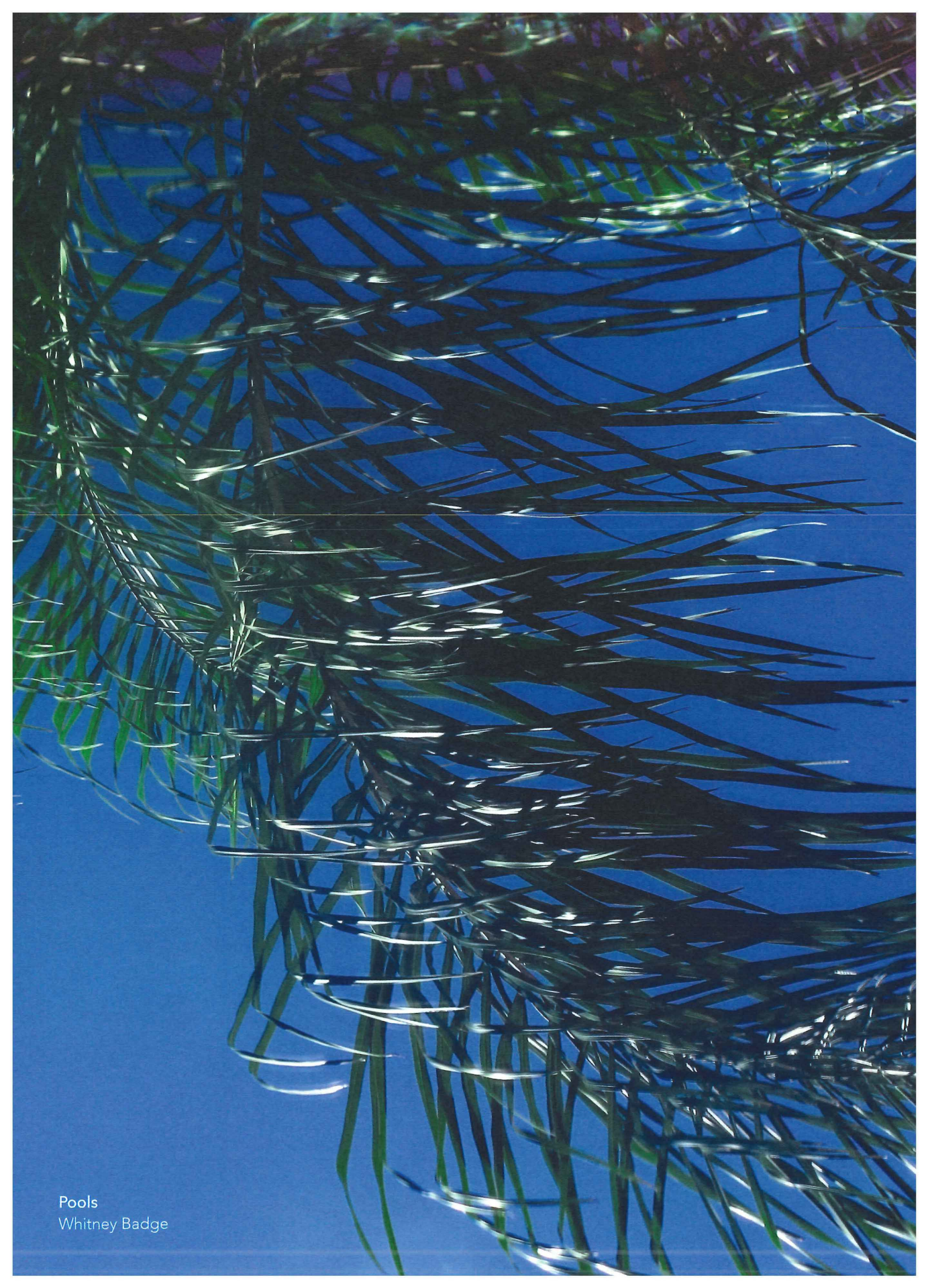
i'd give you my introspective mornings in a cup of coffee situated on a countertop, in a lone fingertip spinning circles around its rim. the steam slowly working its way between the cracks in a palm that can't seem to pull itself away from the burn that slowly begins to take hold.

i'd give you my gut-wrenching nights in a hand cramp that ghosts the fingers gripping a slowly dying pen, etching the words of pain and hurt into the lines of a tear-stained scrap of paper. the ink soaking into every pore and coursing through every vein.

i'd give you my blissful dusks in the words that are tucked away between the pages of my favorite books, the ones that, despite being picked up and turned over in my hands over and over again, never get worn out. the shaky lines outlining the presence of memories contained in those words.

i'd give you my empty corners in the stars that house something i've lost but can't quite identify, the something that always seems to be missing but never found. hidden in-between the spiral of galaxies and at the center of black holes and quasars lies some meaning and purpose that on even the best of days eludes me.

but feelings weren't meant to have form. they were meant to stay tucked away, making us long to give them to someone else, just to know that we're not the only ones.



Pools  
Whitney Badge





afternoon tea  
Taylor Hartson

a neighbor's report of a shaven beard

betrays a failed obligation

stammered excuses from a half-  
conscious state

struggle to gain any ground that might  
enable escape

calloused hands decorated with scars

intent on gleaming retribution

a gathering place of rich conversation  
and shared experience

told to keep its opinions to itself while  
business is taken care of

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faces of pity

forced to watch

five trembling pairs of hands

clench at dust that seeps into lungs

sadistic laughter

accompanies each lash

a searing, twisted pain

extracts soul from flesh

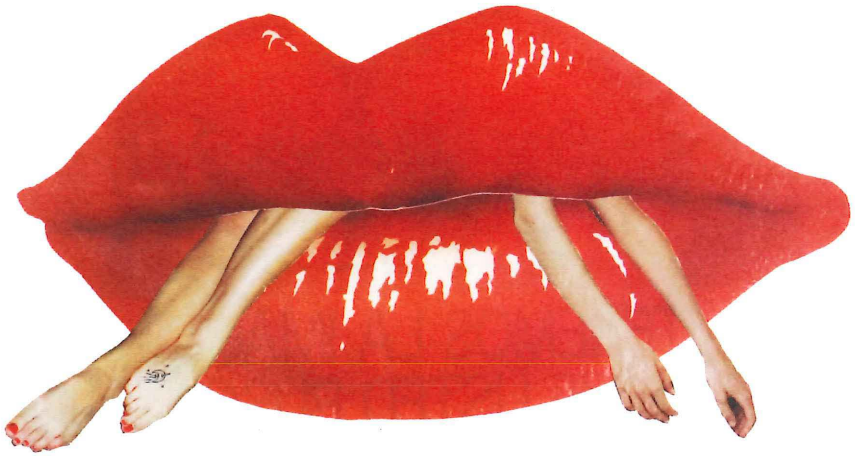
twelve

then black

yet somehow, there still exists a concern for  
mismatched teacups



Cleanse  
Mark Randall



Bodies Divided no. 2  
Sarah Bass

## Ephemerality & the Asymptote

Marshall Morehead

Two monarchs—Queen and King—flutter together, having strayed away from their swarm. Together they hover far above a maze of footpaths, raceways, spires sheathed in glittering crystal. Together, alone in their community, is where We belong.

Far below, the streets are teeming, congested with bags of elastic skin and resilient bone sheltering one-million hearts; souls giddy with enthusiasm. Ours could be an intense intimacy; an all-consuming, trembling fire.

Gliding over these streets, ears assailed by thunderous cries of endearment and the pounding of feet; Ours is a kinetic correspondence. We bear our burdens upon our backs; I'd gladly take yours on—here, let me hold you.

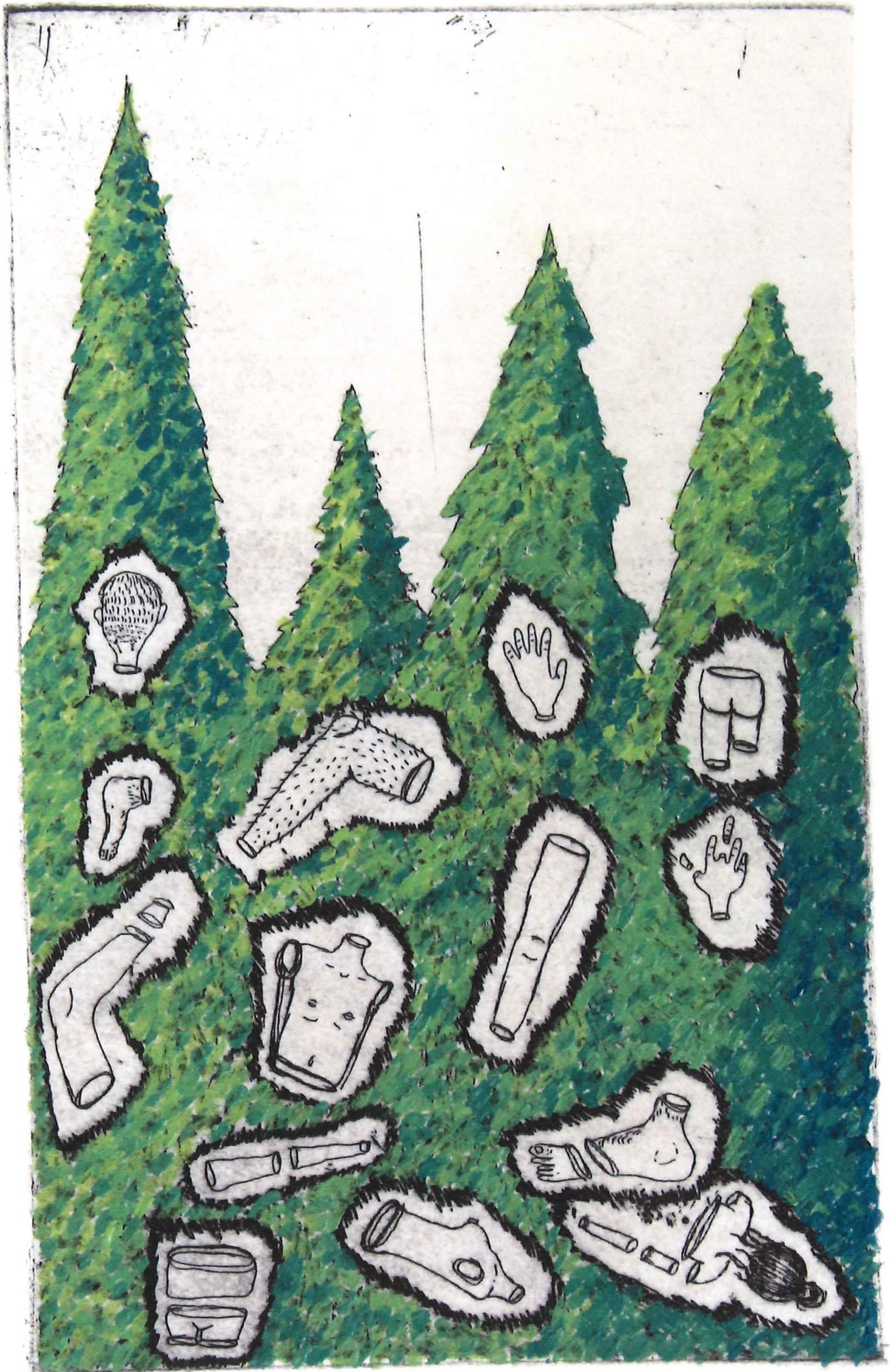
Thirteen pairs of legs dangle by the lakeside. The waters below our feet could kill in a week, though the currents appear as clear as the skies above. Any one of these boats could ferry us home, and it'd take a glorious stretch of time; one eternity and a day.

But eternity passes swiftly. Twenty-thousand sensuous steps, come and gone before the sun has the chance to set, and the world returns to ink. Still, somehow, two monarchs manage to settle their feeble frames upon the culmination of Our crowns.

## Non-Controvert

Evanne Zainea

I stood upon the soapbox yesterday.  
I raised my fist.  
I raised my voice.  
But someone simply spoke back  
To me, and I  
Used the soap instead to wash my hands.  
I let  
bubbles of protest slip silently  
Away, and Pop!  
They were gone, and I  
Filled the empty box  
With newspapers,  
And notebooks, and conviction,  
And passions, and flames,  
And bars of chocolate,  
And a U2 album. And I  
Shoved it under my bed  
Before the simple someone  
Could barbecue it  
Around a bonfire,  
To the tune of dissentless prose.



Truncated  
Megan Grimm



From the Elephant Café  
Hailey Jansson



Elephant Explorations  
Quinn Bugner



## Cardboard Cutouts

Ericka Buitenhuis

Usually, most people put burbling fountains,  
rose trellises,  
or even the occasional garden gnome  
in their backyard.

Not here.

Typically, most people try out being God,  
brightening up the cottage siding  
by planting lilacs, rhododendron, and peonies  
hand-picked from the flower beds at Home Depot.

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Not them.

Generally, most people picture a forgotten tire swing,  
listing on the breeze,  
a rusting set of monkey bars,  
or the hot metal kiss of a slide  
when they think about growing up.

Not me.

The monument of my childhood  
has laid,  
unmoved,  
in the palm of a carefully clipped lawn

for as long as I can remember,  
the tips of a thousand summer suns  
passing slowly  
across its wrinkled and weathered face.

He had companions,  
but they've long been captured  
and caged away  
in some forsaken wooden barn  
leaving him to stand alone,

presiding over that distant pond  
whose waves lap  
at the corner of my memory.

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Here, at the lake,  
a child  
found her sea-legs,  
learned how to set a hook,  
and catch mayflies  
in the fading fever of August.

All while under  
the unblinking gaze

of the all-seeing walrus.



HOMINIAS  
ANTIGUAS



Pacaya  
Hope Hinken

**waves**  
Martin Cervantes



## Jurors

Alexa Vander Leest  
Alexandra Johnson  
Andrew Lowe  
Anneke Kapteyn  
Bekah Inman  
Bethany Fennema  
Brenna Mahn  
Caitlin Smits  
Corrie VanderBrug  
Cotter Koopman  
Daniel Baas  
Daniel Teo  
Eunlee Cho  
Evanne Zainea  
Hailey Jansson  
Hannah Kaylor  
Jay De Man  
Jeffrey Peterson  
Johnson Cochran  
Jonas Weaver  
Jonathan Manni

Jordan Petersen  
Josh Parks  
Josiah Kinney  
Julia LaPlaca  
Kari Bormann  
Katelyn Guichelaar  
Kendra Larsen  
Lucas Balk  
Maddy Wiering  
Matt Lesky  
Matthew Schepers  
Meg Schmidt  
Michael Lentz  
Morgan Hayden  
Patrick Jonker  
Quinn Bugner  
Sara Martinie  
Sophie VanSickle  
Tyler VanZanten  
Whitney Badge  
Zack Smidstra

## About *dialogue*

Founded in 1971, Dialogue is Calvin College's student-run creative journal, showcasing pieces submitted, edited, and curated by undergraduate students.

Dialogue publishes work in five categories: prose, poetry, visual art, photography, and music. Blind student juries for each genre evaluate all submissions and select the finest pieces for publication.

In addition to submissions, the Dialogue editorial staff is always looking for students interested in doing layout, helping with promotions, or serving as a juror.

Visit [calvin.edu/dialogue](http://calvin.edu/dialogue) to get more information on joining the staff, joining a jury, or submitting your work.





